

Daily Nebraskan
Editorial Board
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Chris Hopfensperger..... Editor, 472-1766
Dionne Searcey..... Opinion Page Editor
Kris Karnopp..... Managing Editor
Alan Phelps..... Wire Editor
Wendy Navratil..... Writing Coach
Stacey McKenzie..... Senior Reporter
Jeremy Fitzpatrick..... Columnist

Round one

President Bush prepares for first bout

All of a sudden President Bush wants to pull on the gloves and get in the ring. After dodging debates for weeks, the president on Tuesday challenged Democrat Bill Clinton to go head-to-head on the last four Sundays of the campaign season. "Let's get it on," Bush said.

The president should have been wiser than to use a boxing allusion with the candidate he has been painting as a heavy-weight throughout the campaign.

"If Governor Clinton is serious about debating, he will accept this challenge," Bush said.

But if Bush was serious about debating, he would have put up his verbal dukes much earlier.

Clinton, who has been bashing Bush because the president has refused to debate under the rules proposed by the bipartisan Commission on Presidential Debates, should be more than willing to go four

rounds with the current champ.

Bush's offer does come at an opportune time to stop the bleeding of support and ward off further negative effects of Ross Perot's possible re-entry.

Obviously oblivious to the potential two-on-one situation, Bush also invited the non-candidate into the fray.

Let's get ready to rrrrrumble.

Save-the-economy

Environmental president threatens parks

President Bush, the environmental president, is about to open the door on another ecological disaster.

Bush, whose lip service to the environment was revealed at this summer's summit in Rio de Janeiro, has already helped relax restrictions that protected wetlands and limited oil exploration, mineral mining and logging on federal lands.

Now, a new Interior Department regulation, set to become final shortly after the Nov. 3 election, will alter the interpretation of a vague 15-year-old law protecting America's national parks.

The change will allow coal companies to gain access to coal buried beneath 40 million acres of the protected lands. It is a technicality that could result in the destruction of 16 percent of the parkland.

But instead of allowing the policy change to be made, the ambiguity in the original law should be cleared up.

When a national park is established, the government saves money by buying only what is on the surface. The previous landowner holds — and may sell — anything below ground.

The environment is already threatened by Bush's save-the-economy, not the trees, policies. The regulation could turn the national parks into an endangered species.

President Bush should take a stand to protect what earlier, greater presidents set aside.

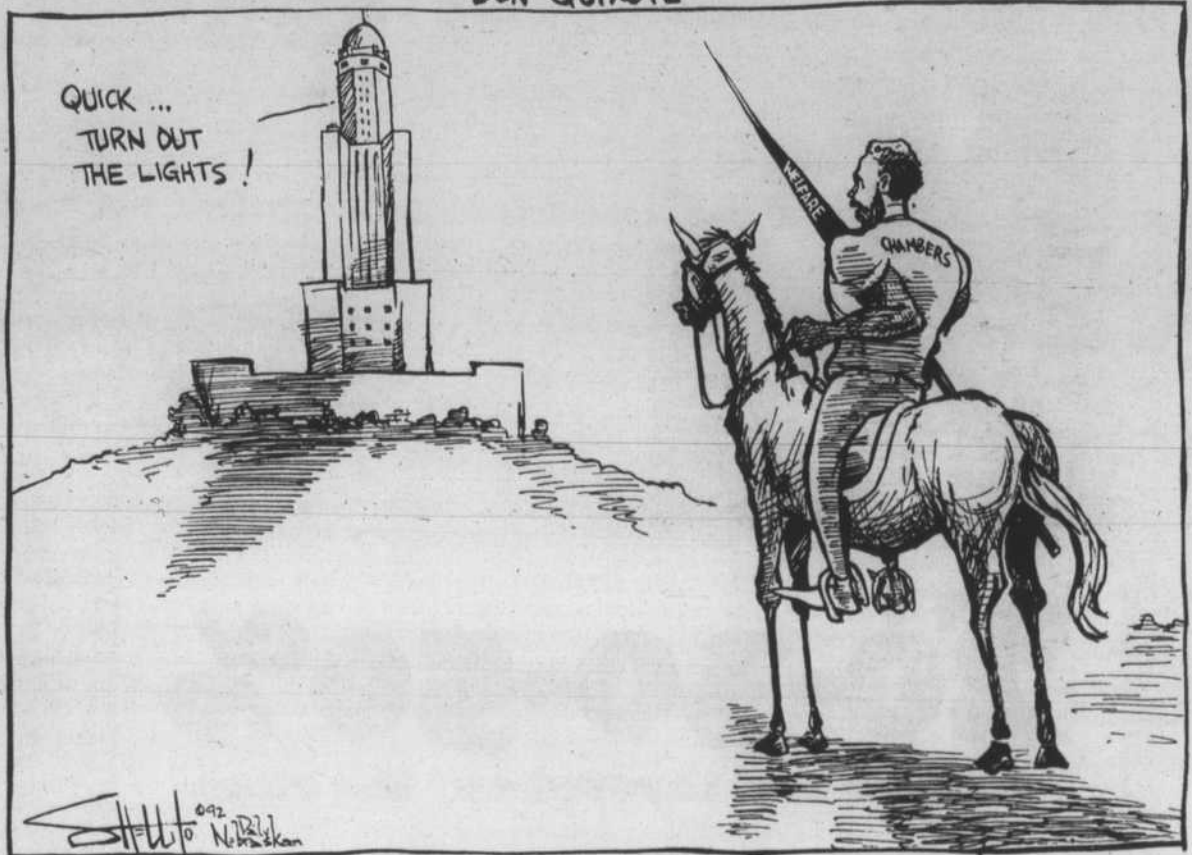
EDITORIAL POLICY

Staff editorials represent the official policy of the Fall 1992 Daily Nebraskan. Policy is set by the Daily Nebraskan Editorial Board. Editorials do not necessarily reflect the views of the university, its employees, the students or the NU Board of Regents. Editorial columns represent the opinion of the author. The regents publish the Daily Nebraskan. They establish the UNL Publications Board to supervise the daily production of the paper. According to policy set by the regents, responsibility for the editorial content of the newspaper lies solely in the hands of its students.

LETTER POLICY

The Daily Nebraskan welcomes brief letters to the editor from all readers and interested others. Letters will be selected for publication on the basis of clarity, originality, timeliness and space available. The Daily Nebraskan retains the right to edit or reject all material submitted. Readers also are welcome to submit material as guest opinions. The editor decides whether material should run as a guest opinion. Letters and guest opinions sent to the newspaper become the property of the Daily Nebraskan and cannot be returned. Anonymous submissions will not be published. Letters should include the author's name, year in school, major and group affiliation, if any. Requests to withhold names will not be granted. Submit material to the Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448.

DON QUIXOTE



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Black language

In a letter to the editor (DN, Sept. 23); Scott S. Boito challenged Kim Spurlock's assertion (DN, Sept. 17) that Black English is a language in its own right, with roots in Africa and the experience of slavery. Boito condescendingly "offers the suggestion" that Black English is instead "the result of generations of lesser education of minorities." In other words, merely ungrammatical English, rather than the language that Ms. Spurlock celebrates as having a power and beauty of its own.

Boito has said nothing new here: The opinion he expresses was once widely believed, even by educated people. Unfortunately for him, the theory that Black English was just bad English was conclusively disproved more than 20 years ago. When linguists finally got around to studying black speech patterns carefully, they discovered that the differences from standard English were consistent and regular and could be explained by well-known linguistic principles. That is, Black English is not ungrammatical English, but a dialect of English with a grammar of its own.

For example, the use of "to be" in Black English varies significantly from the standard dialect. Where the standard dialect requires a form of "is" to be grammatical (My sister is late), Black English does not: "My sister late." However, if a Black English speaker says: "My sister be late," she means that her sister is habitually tardy—a distinction that the standard dialect makes with modifiers rather than the verb: "My sister is always late."

For another example, where standard dialect uses "s" to indicate plural and "s" to indicate possession, Black English relies on word order and semantic content: "Two boy come into Mr. Brown store." "Two" tells us how many boys, making the final "s" unnecessary for clarity, and the relative positions of "Mr. Brown" and "store" make clear whose store it is.

Or take multiple negatives. The standard dialect insists that multiple negatives logically cancel each other out, so that "I will not do nothing" means "I will do something" or "I refuse to do nothing." But Black English typically rejoices in multiple negatives as a way of creating emphasis: "Ain't nobody leavin' for no football game till this mess cleaned up." And in fact, standard English used multiple negatives for emphasis in the same way until the 18th century, when grammarians invented the logical cancellation argument, based on the rules of Latin grammar.

These features of Black English, with many others I have omitted for brevity's sake, are also found in those

West African languages spoken by most of the blacks transported to slavery in America. Linguists postulate that Black English results from the combination of English vocabulary with the grammatical structures of the slaves' native language — thus supporting Spurlock's comment about the roots of black speech.

Anyone interested in more details about Black English, either grammatical structure or its cultural role, can consult Geneva Smitherman's "Talkin and Testifyin: The Structure of Black English, or any of several other volumes on the subject available in Love Library.

The suggestion Boito has offered so confidently is, in fact, simply wrong, - a theory based on ignorance and prejudice that was exploded a generation ago. I offer him the suggestion that, if he wants us to take his opinion on such matters seriously, he should find out the facts first. They are readily available.

Kathleen L. Spencer
Lecturer
English department

NU sports

Growing up in Lincoln has been rewarding and overall, very exciting. As a little boy, I grew up six blocks from Memorial Stadium. Football was king, especially because of the back-to-back national championships that Nebraska won in the early '70s.

Football, needless to say, has been very exciting to watch over the years. Sports such as baseball, basketball and volleyball have risen to new heights in the '80s and early '90s — all of which I can barely remember as a boy. It is great to see other sports at UNL continuing their grand traditions, and the future looks very bright for all of Nebraska's athletic teams.

One thing has changed definitely for the worse. Enthusiasm at husker sports events has gone downhill. As a freshman in 1987, I can remember very clearly how Nebraska fans would stand and create total mayhem throughout the entire game (or at least the second half).

Crowd noise can be a big factor that can provide the home team with momentum and spirit that will more often than not spell victory.

Don't get me wrong — Nebraska fans are still the most loyal in the nation. But more craziness and all-out fun needs to be created. Pep rallies, pre-game parties and other related events are almost always attended by very few.

Certain areas of the football stadium look like a morgue. Students need to fill in these "pace maker" sections and get the true spirit back that we once had. You saw very clearly what happens when a home team

(Washington) makes a lot of noise. It does not matter what sport you are attending — the wilder you are, the better. Just don't get caught running around on the playing surface before the game is over. Good luck to all sports.

Steve Kruse
senior
speech communication

Unexplained

The issue of Diversions on unexplained phenomena (DN, Sept. 28) was incomplete in its coverage because it failed to mention courses offered at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln that are directly relevant to understanding reports of psychic powers, UFO sightings and abductions, cattle mutilations, etc.

Two such courses are now being offered each year in the psychology department. The first course (Parapsychology: Skeptical Perspectives) has been offered as a summer reading course for the last six years and is expected to be offered again next spring. This course is intended as general education and involves reading three books, two of which were reviewed by Deborah McAdams in the Daily Nebraskan. The books represent the modern skeptical perspective that has developed in recent decades.

The second course (Special Topics: Science and Parapsychology) will be offered for the first time next semester. This uses some of the same reading material as the skeptical perspectives course but considers in much greater detail the methodological and statistical shortcomings of popular treatments of paranormal phenomena as well as the variety of alternative explanations that are available from a number of different research traditions within modern psychology.

This course has a prerequisite of Psychology 350 and is intended as an "applications" course of psychology majors; the focus of this course is the application of methodological considerations of modern science to parapsychology and the use of well-established principles from perceptual, learning, social, physiological and abnormal psychology to provide alternative naturalistic explanations of reports of paranormal events.

Because of the similarity in content in the courses, credit can be earned from only one of them. Interested persons can call me at 472-3144 for more information.

Donald Jensen
professor
psychology