

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

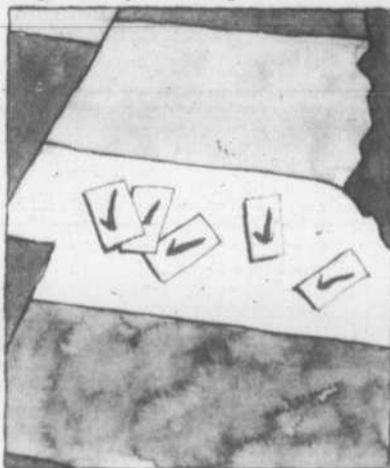
EDITORIAL

Steering clear

Campaign trail should include Nebraska

Nebraska has been ignored in the race for the presidency. Candidates have steered clear of the state on the campaign trail. They don't realize Nebraska could provide them with some bonus votes.

To win the presidency, a candidate must receive a majority — 270 — of the Electoral College votes cast. Electoral votes are acquired by winning in individual states.



David Badders/DN

Most states work on a winner-take-all system. But Nebraska's electoral votes are awarded by congressional district instead. All three presidential candidates could win an electoral vote in Nebraska by carrying one of the state's three districts.

Nebraska's other two electoral votes will be awarded to the candidate who wins the state. Those votes come from Nebraska's two senators who are elected by the state rather than by districts. In all other states but Maine, the presidential candidate who wins the majority of the votes receives all the states' electoral votes.

That means any one of the candidates could pick up a few extra votes from Nebraska.

Granted the state has only five electoral votes. California has 54, New York 33, Texas 32.

Iowa has seven electoral votes. But Bill Clinton campaigned in Iowa Saturday. George Bush was there this morning. No one came to Nebraska.

Well, almost no one.

Barbara Bush was here this summer spreading love and cheer to youngsters by reading them a book. Marilyn Quayle came to the state and did something of equal importance. Jerry Brown was even in Scottsbluff, for heaven's sake.

The highest-ranking government official to cross the state's boundaries was Al Gore when he visited Omaha last week.

But Lincolinites who wanted to rally in direct support of Clinton or Bush this week had to drive three hours.

Nebraska has more than 1.1 million people of voting age. And normally those voters lean toward the right come polling time.

In 1988, only six states — Florida, Idaho, New Hampshire, South Carolina, Utah and Wyoming — had a higher percentage of Republican votes than Nebraska.

Bush may think he has the state wrapped around his finger. The World-Herald, the state's largest newspaper, has already endorsed the Bush/Quayle ticket.

But both candidates should realize that Nebraskans aren't all Republicans. A growing crowd of Democrats exists on liberal college campuses where students are exposed to the real world and the way it works.

That fact should scare Bush. It should motivate Clinton to campaign stronger in this state. But so far it hasn't done either. And more than likely, it won't.

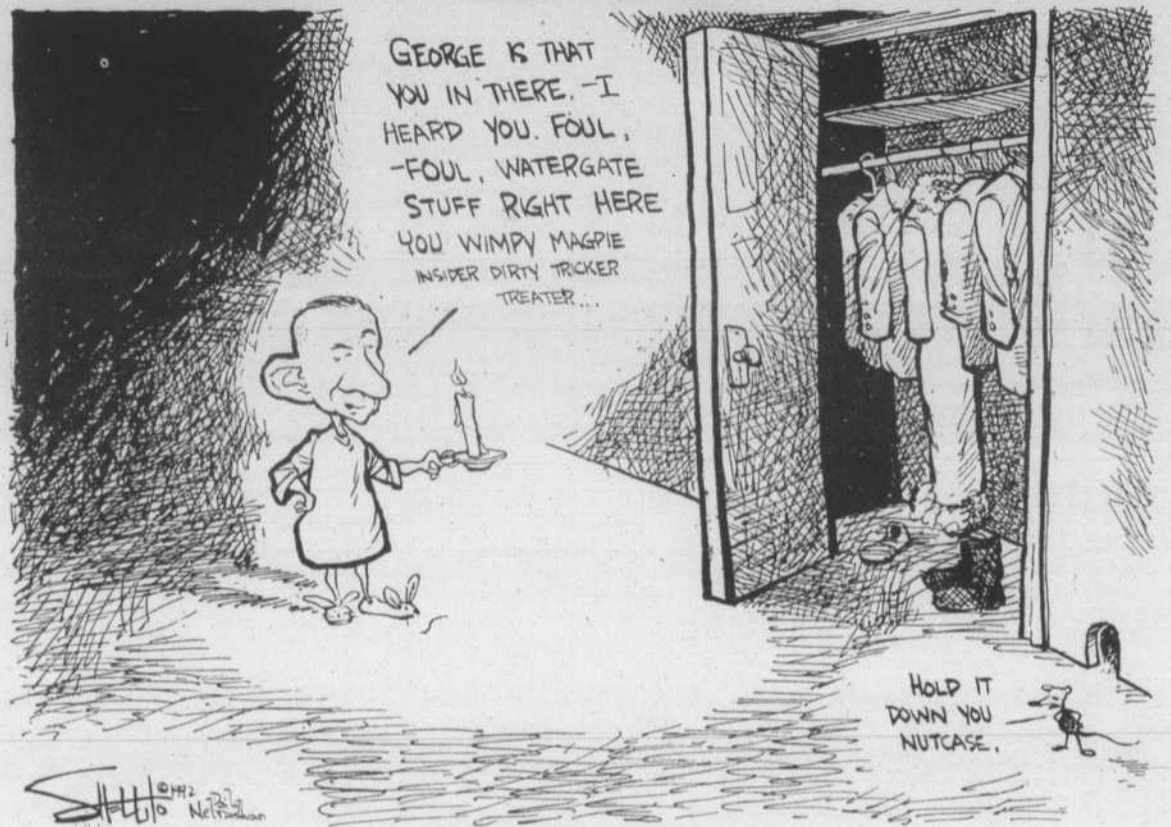
Nebraskans must realize their vote still counts, even though the state will be ignored by both candidates.

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.



JEREMY FITZPATRICK

Finding refuge in the final frontier

The space shuttle is in space again this week.

I'm not sure exactly what the astronauts are doing. Putting a satellite in orbit, I think.

Most people aren't paying much more attention to the space shuttle than I am. Many Americans seem bored with space missions.

Some question whether the missions are of any use at all.

That attitude is unfortunate, because space is the last safety valve left for our increasingly crowded planet.

When the rest of the world became too crowded — politically and otherwise — the first Americans came across the ocean and settled here. When early America became too crowded, explorers moved out again, settling states like Nebraska.

People have always had a new frontier to settle if conditions became too constraining. People could always start over by moving.

Now the United States is growing more crowded again, as witnessed by our increasing social problems, but we have nowhere to go. Nowhere, that is, but up.

Space, as it has been noted, is our final frontier.

But just when space could serve so critical a role to our country, we seem to be giving up on it.

Sure, there is still talk of putting bases on the moon or going to Mars. But are we really excited about it? Do we really care if we go or not?

Somewhere we lost that drive — that vision. Somewhere we stopped dreaming of such things.

It's time we started again.

We need to revive the spirit that began the space movement, the spirit with which John Kennedy pushed Americans to land a man on the moon.

"We chose to go to the moon and do the other things," Kennedy said in 1962, "not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one we are willing to accept and one we intend to win."

Space then provided us with a na-

tional goal and direction.

Now with the end of the Cold War, America needs such a focus again. We have spent so long fighting to keep the world free that we don't know what to do now that freedom reigns.

Many areas that have been neglected in recent years need our attention. Education, healthcare, economic competitiveness and our deteriorating cities are only a few.

But it would be a mistake in turning our national attention inward to turn our eyes downward. We should keep them raised to the stars. Space can provide us with a national goal we need so badly.

We do not have to become an old and tired nation as we leave this century and enter a new one. Space and its possibilities can make us young again.

Think of the potential that space offers us. Imagine what we might accomplish.

Now is the perfect time for America, wandering aimlessly after the Cold War, to turn its focus back to the stars. It is a natural role for a nation of explorers.

Some will say space exploration is too expensive, or too foolish. But the same people would have laughed at explorers coming to America, or the Wright brothers, or someone who said that one day men would walk on the moon. America was made great by people who were not discouraged by such voices.

In these days, with our cities crowded and our national purpose unclear, we need a common goal. America is coming apart at the seams, and we need something to pull us together.

Space is that opportunity. It would require us to have courage. It would require us to dream. It would require us to work very hard.

But Americans — when challenged — can do those things better than anyone in the world. Working together, there is nothing we cannot accomplish.

What will we discover? What will we gain? Who might we encounter?

That we cannot know. Columbus, preparing for his voyage 500 years ago, could hardly have imagined what would result from his journey. But the

world would have been different had he not sailed.

Explorers coming to America could not comprehend that they began what would become one of the great nations of the world. But still, they came.

Today, we cannot know what will become of our efforts of space exploration. We cannot look 500 years into the future and see the results.

But the results will be great. Because the inevitable course of humanity is toward progress, and space is the next step in that journey.

The citizens of the United States can decide to pick themselves up and lead the world in that effort. Or we can choose to refuse the opportunity because it is too risky, because it is too expensive, because we don't have it in us anymore.

The choice is ours to make. Our generation will be remembered as the first explorers of space — or as a people too timid to try.

I think we should try. And I think we will.

Robert Fulghum writes that when a bystander asked Benjamin Franklin at the launching of the first hot air balloon what good it could possibly be, Franklin replied, "What good is a newborn baby?"

The exploration of space is yet a baby. The good that can come from it is completely up to us.

Fitzpatrick is a junior political science major, a sports and a columnist, and a news reporter at the Daily Nebraskan.

