

Daily Nebraskan
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University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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EDITORIAL

Second guessing

NU regents indecisive about Massengale

The members of the NU Board of Regents have apparently changed their minds about outgoing University of Nebraska President Martin Massengale.

In January, Massengale announced he would not seek an extension of his contract as NU president after speculation that the regents were not satisfied with his performance became public.

Now the regents are extending their hands to Massengale. They approved a plan Saturday to keep Massengale as president until a successor takes over and then granted him a \$115,000-a-year agronomy professorship.

If Massengale accepts the offer, the salary would make him the highest-paid agronomy professor at UNL.

Certainly, Massengale is qualified and would be an asset to UNL's agronomy department. But paying him a \$115,000 salary in a time of severe budget constraints is questionable.

This incident is yet another example of the haphazard fashion under which regents have supposedly been supervising the University of Nebraska this year.

First, speculation that the regents were unhappy with Massengale played a part in his stepping down. Now they are magnifying their mistake by attempting to make up for it by offering Massengale a contract that is out of touch with the budget realities faced by NU.

Helping out

Russian reforms may need American aid

Boris Yeltsin won another political victory over the weekend. But his political position is still not secure.

A secret ballot of the Russian Congress of People's Deputies fell 62 votes short of a two-thirds majority needed to oust Yeltsin. The move against Yeltsin was led by former communist officials now in the Congress.

Yeltsin's victory is a relief to the United States and other free countries. He has managed to bring the former Soviet Union into the free world and has established an unprecedented friendship with the United States.

It would be a great loss to the United States if Yeltsin and those who favor democracy were removed from power. We have only been able to make strides at improving our country domestically because the threat of conflict with Russia has been removed.

If Yeltsin falls, it might mean the return of Cold War relations with Russia and the end of the domestic reform movement that has taken hold in this country.

The Russian leader is far from secure. He still faces daily challenges to his position as president.

President Clinton and the Congress need to take extraordinary steps to demonstrate the United States' support for Yeltsin and democracy in Russia. If democracy is set back in Russia, it will be set back here as well.

Foreign aid is never popular, but the United States should be prepared to offer a significant emergency-aid program to Russia if that is what it takes to keep democracy alive there.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Staff editorials represent the official policy of the Spring 1993 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.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Rights

I am writing in response to Todd Burger's column "Police deserve respect for job," (DN, March 18, 1993) for it begins to uncover one of the reasons why there are so many violations of people's civil rights, such as the beating of Rodney King, taking place in this country.

Burger stated that the reason Rodney King was "overwhelmed" was because he "rebelled against the power (of the police)."

I suggest to Burger that perhaps the reason he was beaten was because of you, and others like you, who are so willing to accept the authority of the police without judgment. A society that accepts that "Police have... more credibility — its own kind of power — in the courts" is a society that frees police from the same kind of accountability for their actions that the rest of us have.

When you say, "It is the police that have the power and we who have no choice but to respect it," you imply that we have no choice but to give up our pride as individuals, our rights as human beings and our position as the ones who should hold the police and courts responsible for their actions.

The fact is, we do have a choice. Blind submission to authority encourages abuses, it does not eliminate them. When we realize this, we will be a long way toward putting respect and accountability into a system diseased by megalomania.

David Johnson
Lincoln

'Police state'

Todd Burger's column (DN, March 18, 1993) stated that, "When a police officer wants to stop or detain you, you'd better stop and meekly obey," and that if we all compliantly accept the fact that we have to respect their power, "no one else will have to end up like Rodney King."

Although I agree that police officers have a tough job and we should show them respect, lack of respect should never be a license for police to inflict punishment on an individual or make racial slurs. Not only are these behaviors not part of their job descriptions, but they are illegal activities. It appears that Burger has no objections to living in a police state, but he, being white and overly compliant, will never have to deal with police brutality although he seems to be OK with it going on.

Rodney King did not "have to" be

beaten any more than those officers of the peace had to call him a nigger. Wouldn't a better way of keeping people from being beaten be to quit placing bigots and psychopaths in positions of power? By weeding out these individuals who are giving police officers as a whole a bad name, police officers can regain their respect, no more people will be brutalized and people will be much more cooperative.

Paul Koester
senior
agronomy



James Mehling/DN

Hot dog

I am writing in response to the article by Jeremy Fitzpatrick (DN, March 16, 1993).

You don't honestly believe that a fully automatic weapon is as easily picked up as going out to the street corner to a hot dog stand to get a hot dog? Automatic weapons are illegal. The National Rifle Association isn't the one we should be pointing the finger at. It's the person giving the drugs and guns to kids so they can kill each other off.

You must be 19 years old to receive a handgun, and you just can't walk into a Wal-Mart and buy one. There are restrictions on getting handguns, much less a fully automatic gun.

Darin McDaniel
sophomore
business

Prediction

I'd like to respond to Paul Koester's

letter (DN, March 17, 1993). In his letter, he blamed George Bush and Ronald Reagan for poverty-stricken children, low-birth-weight babies and moderately low immunization rates.

Well, Koester, it is sure easy for you to point the finger at the one man in the office. However, you failed to make any mention of the Democratic Congress which, for 12 years, road-blocked every program Bush and Reagan tried to establish. Of course they couldn't get anything done with guys like Ted Kennedy in the way. If you want to know who is to blame for the mess America is in today, look in the mirror and at all your liberal peers.

Koester, you also said actions speak louder than words. Well, I advise you to hold onto your wallet. Slick Willie and his Democratic Congress are going to be dipping their fingers deep into your pockets while claiming to need the money for their social programs.

I assure you that over the next four years our taxes will increase while our social programs get worse.

Brian J. Svik
freshman
undeclared

Diary

I'm writing in regards to your no-name "Diary of a Madman" production (March 19, 1993). Compared to the otherwise ever-so-high standards of your newspaper, don't you think the "no brains parking guy" pseudo-comic deserves a place in a first grader's rag (actually, that might be an insult to their intelligence) instead?

Chris Brantner
assistant German professor

Guns

There is no justification for automatic weapons in the hands of private citizens, and semi-automatics are only marginally less dangerous. A bolt-action rifle is certainly adequate for any citizen's needs. Muzzle-loaders are more challenging, for that matter.

And what about pistols? We really don't need pistols, certainly not semi-automatic ones, and modern revolvers are only slightly less dangerous, if at all.

It's time to consider society as a whole. The Constitution does not specify the types of firearms allowable in John Q. Public's hands. Restrictions should be imposed. Let's limit ourselves to bolt-action and muzzle-loading firearms.

Robert J. Tobin
graduate student
geology