

Daily Nebraskan  
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### EDITORIAL

## Get real

### New surgeon general sets worthy goals

The U.S. Senate showed it is ready to deal with real and important health issues by confirming Dr. Joycelyn Elders as surgeon general.

The confirmation was debated for several hours Thursday night and was set back a month ago by some Republican senators. Despite the wait, Elders will get the chance to share her views on abortion rights, condom distribution and sex education.

After being confirmed, Elders emphasized her role as a healer. She said she wants to "look forward ... to a time ... when all American children are immunized, when all American citizens have the security of quality health care and when all dread diseases are a distant and haunting memory."

Some senators said they disagreed with her views, which they considered to be outside the political mainstream. But immunized children and a stop to the spread of diseases like AIDS should not be considered political issues.

Perhaps these senators should look at the real situations surrounding them. For example, teen-age pregnancy has become an enormous problem in the United States. Sex education can only help youths understand the circumstances that can arise when they decide to have sex.

Senators also know the surgeon general does not set policy. This is probably why Elders' nomination was not delayed further. Instead, Elders' job will be primarily to promote awareness of health issues.

Undoubtedly Elders will continue her crusade for the issues she has strongly supported in the past. Maybe the policy-makers will listen to Elders' suggestions and work to make them more than just ideas.

## No kidding

### Youth offender plan's benefits defeat costs

If the recommendations of Nebraska's Youth Services Planning Commission are followed, minors who get into trouble with the law may have a better chance of being rehabilitated.

The commission is developing a report that will be submitted to Gov. Ben Nelson and the Legislature on reforming how juvenile offenders are treated in Nebraska. A preliminary copy of the report argues that Nebraska's current system is not responsive to the needs of youth or to public safety.

The plan envisions a system that would be aimed at rehabilitation of youth instead of simple retention.

Juvenile offenders in Nebraska now are put on probation or incarcerated at an adult prison or a training school. The commission's report recommends giving the state more options for dealing with youth who have been convicted of crimes.

Individual treatment plans involving the participation of family members, foster homes and group homes are options recommended in the report as alternatives to traditional methods of correction. The report also recommends creating an Office of Youth Services to coordinate programs for the state's juvenile offenders.

The Youth Services Planning Commission's preliminary suggestions are sound and should be acted on by Gov. Nelson and the Legislature. If more youth could be rehabilitated and taken out of the revolving-door criminal justice system, fewer of them would be back.

The plan will likely cost more money than Nebraska's current system, but that cost will be made up in the future by the number of youths who won't have to be incarcerated as adults.

### EDITORIAL POLICY

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MATT ZIMMERMAN

## Network news yellows with age

In this age of hundreds of cable channels where channel-surfing has been raised to an art form, it would seem logical that everyone would be able to find a niche in TV land. I know, I know, TV isn't exactly high art, and being in college and all should keep us occupied 24 hours a day, but let's admit it. We all indulge ourselves a bit more than we should. Give me a week-long Seinfeld marathon, and my textbooks won't see the light of day. Letterman's new show hasn't helped a bit, either.

Competition for viewers gets pretty fierce among the different channels, and more often than not, it gets dirty. Desperation among the networks is always fun to watch, and sweeps week is certainly a treat, provided you can stomach it.

In recent months, though, the intelligence level on television has sunk lower than normal, if that's possible. For someone who likes to create the illusion of being a responsible, well-informed adult, I quickly realized that I couldn't rely on the network news to obtain even a basic grasp of what was really going on in the world. They were too busy generating their own news and taking minor stories and blowing them way out of proportion. I was, well, shocked.

As summer has begun to reach its final stages, a few real stories have surfaced on the international scene and have finally returned some sense into the national consciousness. But just so we don't forget the good times we had keeping up with nothing over the past few months, I've taken it upon myself to compile a list of the top five non-stories of the year. Oh, to relive those exciting times once again.

No. 5: The "Dateline NBC"/GM truck fiasco. Did they really think that they would get away with this? Sure GM trucks will burst into flame when NBC, heh heh, sets fire to them first. It's one thing to exaggerate a problem. It's quite another to invent one. This one could have cost GM millions in



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No. 4: Gays in the military. No, no, not the entire issue, but the alleged homosexual pornography ring in California. Unnamed military officials told reporters that they believed that a number of enlisted men were participating in the production of explicit homosexual pornographic videos being sold in the area.

The evidence? Er, well, the men in the videos had military-style haircuts. No, really. Rather pathetic of the networks to run a story like this that was obviously manufactured to cast doubt on the new gays-in-the-military policy. Makes you wonder, though: Who was watching these videos in the first place to make the charges?

No. 3: Gen. John Shalikashvili. Clinton's choice to replace Gen. Colin Powell as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was hit with accusations that his father was a member of Hitler's SS. There is little evidence to support the claim, but if indeed it is true, so what? Defense Secretary Les Aspin doesn't care. Sen. Carl Levin of the Armed Services Committee who will vote on Shalikashvili's nomination doesn't care. The Simon Wiesenthal Center, a Los Angeles-based Nazi-hunting organization doesn't even care. Being victimized for the sins of your father generally died out long ago. Nevertheless, it was one of the top stories on all the networks.

No. 2: Heidi Fleiss. So she ran a prostitution ring and slept with a handful of Hollywood's elite. This is big news? I thought the rest of the country already saw Hollywood in

this kind of light. I'm sure we will be mortified if and when we see one of the people involved. Then again, probably not. Come on, guys. Do the made-for-TV movie and get it out of your system.

And the No. 1 non-story (so far in 1993 is ... the Michael Jackson child abuse story. Good Lord, leave the man alone. Stories like this destroy careers whether they are true or not and this one has looked like an extortion or slander case from the beginning. No charges have been filed and no evidence has been presented so knock off the witch hunt. As someone who does not listen to Jackson's music and who looks forward to a Jackson concert as much as root canal work, I still think he's getting the shaft on this one. If there isn't any real evidence, don't run it.

Just because the Star and the National Enquirer run a story doesn't mean the "legitimate press" has to. I forget who it was, but last fall during the presidential race, a major TV newsman said the network didn't like running the Jennifer Flowers story. But since "A Current Affair" and other tabloid TV programs had already done it and gotten the issue into the national spotlight, his network was obliged to do so, too. I don't think so. I didn't see any arm-twisting going on. If the tabloids want to jump off a cliff ... you should show them the quickest way, not follow in their footsteps.

Zimmerman is a junior English major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### Apollo 009

After reading the story on the Apollo 009 space capsule and its troubled history (DN, Sept. 3), I was reminded of an idea that I had last year when the administration was trying to find it a new home. Instead of storing it away in a shed or giving to another, more caring archive, why not find a suitable place to display it here at UNL?

Imagine this: Place the capsule on one of the corner mezzanines in the Bob Devaney Sports Arena. Place a sign next to it describing the capsule's history and possible futures. Then place a box next to the capsule asking for donations to be used for restoration and a permanent display. Think about

it. There's plenty of room. It's a controlled climate. Thousands of people would see it every year during basketball games, gymnastics meets, the state fair and other activities. The capsule might even pay for its own restoration; and even if it did not, its display would at least be in the spirit for which it was donated to UNL in the first place: to educate the people of Nebraska.

Michael A. Amundson  
graduate student  
history

#### Somalia

In response to Fitzpatrick's Sept. 3 DN editorial concerning American involvement in Somalia, it is apparent

that yet another American citizen has been blinded by yet another of our government's smoke screens. I agree with him when he says, "Clinton has yet to sufficiently explain the role of American forces in Somalia"; but the idea that it "was no doubt well motivated" is suspect and begs the question, to serve what end?

Anyone who buys the slogan "operation hope" probably still believes in "operation dope" in Panama or that we were saving those poor misguided Nicaraguans from themselves by blowing up their hospitals and schools. Obviously we are there to make sure the "right side" wins.

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English department