

Daily  
Nebraskan  
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EDITORIAL

## For the future

### Children in poverty reflects on America

The Census Bureau reports that the number of poor Americans jumped to 36.9 million last year, more than at any time since the early 1960s.

The poor are defined as those whose income is below the national poverty line. For a family of four, the poverty line is \$14,335; for someone living alone, it is \$7,143.

But it's important to look at who these Americans are. Black and Hispanic Americans were about three times more likely to be poor than whites.

Households headed by women were also likely to be poor. Demographers attribute this to the fact that women are often paid less than men, some can't work full time because they need to stay at home to care for their children, and these women must depend on one income rather than two.

But most poor Americans are children. One child in five is living in poverty. Two-thirds of preschool children in female-headed households are considered poor.

These statistics provide frightening proof of the problems of poverty that surround Americans. They also prove that efforts to fix this problem in the past have not worked.

The government needs to study these facts carefully and recognize the patterns: Minorities, women and children need the most financial help to survive. Aid services, such as welfare, need to provide these disadvantaged groups with the financial help they need.

Even those who do not approve of welfare and other aid services cannot deny the need to support the children of America. When 20 percent of America's children live in poverty, something needs to change.

## Killing zone

### Troops in Somalia unsafe, unnecessary

At least 12 U.S. soldiers were killed and 75 others were wounded Monday in what has now become a small war in Somalia. It is an undeclared war that is needlessly claiming the lives of Americans.

The Somalis dragged the body of an American soldier through the streets of Mogadishu and danced around the wreckage of U.S. helicopters and armored personnel carriers destroyed in the firefight.

President Clinton would be hard-pressed to explain to the parents of the dead servicemen why their sons were killed. The United States has no clear policy in Somalia. Every flag-draped coffin that comes home from the country represents a life that should not have been lost.

The United States has responded to the fighting by preparing to send about 200 infantrymen, bolstered by tanks and armored vehicles, to help U.S. forces battered in the fighting. As more troops are killed, the Pentagon sends more into the killing zone.

More U.S. troops will only be exposed to danger and will not be able to solve the problem. The Somalis do not want U.S. forces in their country. The United States cannot help people who do not want to be helped.

President Clinton should stop the bleeding and bring U.S. troops home before more have to die. If Clinton had to explain the reason 12 Americans died in Somalia on Monday, he wouldn't be able to answer the question.

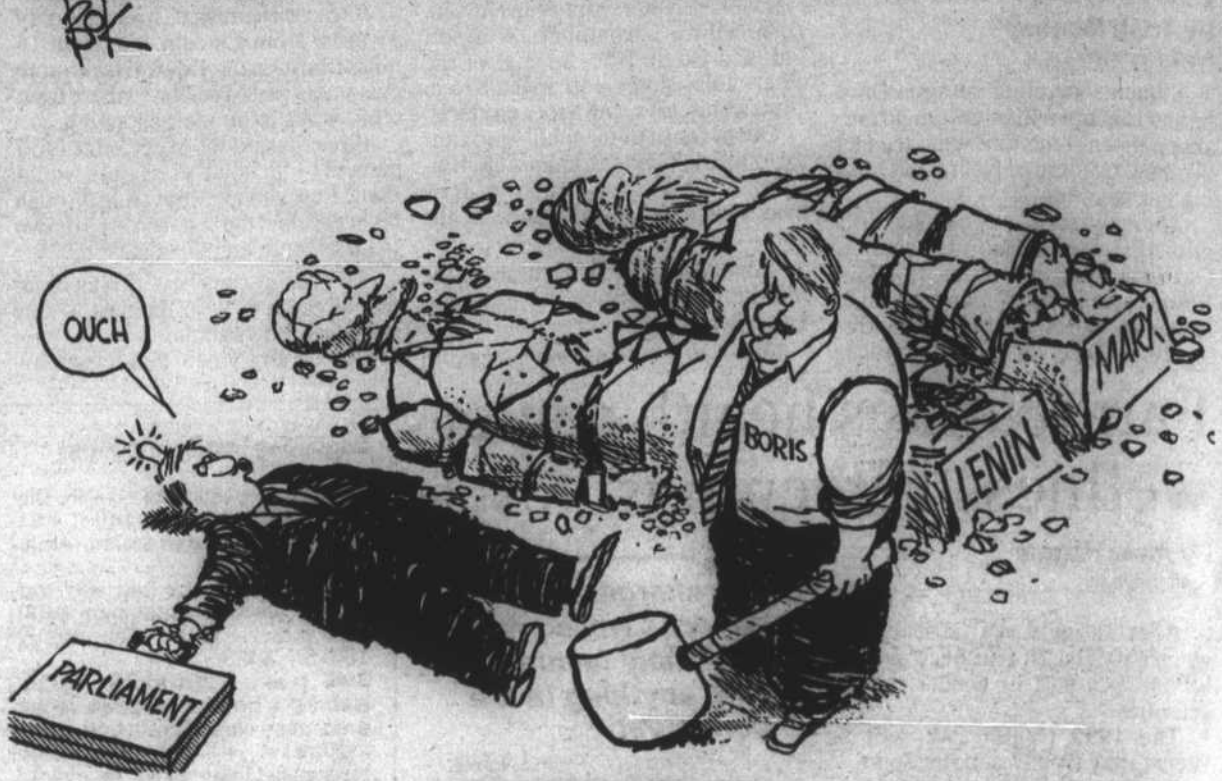
EDITORIAL POLICY

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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.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Health

I am writing in response to the DN's recent article concerning the University Health Center and the possibility of it closing down after 11 p.m. (DN, Oct. 4). I was shocked, and a little bit sickened, at the justifications that the center's director, Kunle Ojikutu, made for closing early. His assertion that in a four-month period, only 161 students used the health center between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m., and therefore apparently not worth the "staggering" \$236 for care per student, is beyond my comprehension. Does Mr. Ojikutu place a dollar amount on a student's health? Apparently so, or else he could not have made such an idiotic and bureaucratic statement.

And to say that only 57 needed immediate care is just dumbfounding. Only 57 students needed immediate care or were considered urgent we should obviously close the center to cut costs. To heck with the students that do need care. They can just staunch their bleeding with some mud and a little bit of grass and peddle their broken bones all the way to Bryan Memorial, assuming they have a bike. Otherwise, I guess they'll just have to walk.

When this school, or this nation for that matter, starts to place budget costs over a person's health, I think it is seriously time to step back and take a long look at what is being proposed. To eliminate the evening health-care program on campus just because you don't feel that the high per-patient costs were not an efficient way to run a business is foolhardy, Mr. Ojikutu. I hope with all my heart that you reconsider this possible course of action. A student's health shouldn't come in second to the all-mighty dollar.

Blaze Skinner  
freshman  
technical theater

### Addiction

I am certainly impressed by what I can learn when I read a newspaper. Why, just this morning I learned that meat is a drug. I got that bit from the opinion page (DN, Oct. 4). Good thing it wasn't on the science page. The person who wrote in was claiming that meat is addictive.

The town I come from is so small, we never had any official that would write to the local paper to tell us meat was a horrible, addictive drug. We thought we were eating meat for bodily nourishment and because we enjoyed it.

But sometimes I think water is

addictive, just like meat. One time I figured that water was the root of all my health problems; so I wouldn't drink anything that had water in it. After two days, I got so thirsty I just had to have a cool glass of water. I suppose I should have contacted a therapy group or counselor but I could never get myself to admit that I was actually addicted to water. Maybe I'll die someday from a water overdose.

I may die from eating potatoes. Why, everyone I know who's died has been an eater of potatoes. Mashed, fried or in a potato salad — it didn't matter. They're all dead. Come to think of it, they all drank water, too.

Lowell Gould  
graduate student  
animal science

### Environmentalism

Wouldn't it be nice if being an "environmentalist" was as simple as moving a few parking lots out of sight or throwing some pesticides and nitrates on some bluegrass? Unfortunately for us lazy humans, being an environmentalist requires so much more; it requires change and sacrifice and a willingness to admit that our parents made some mistakes. Basic environmentalism starts at the individual level. Turning off light bulbs behind us is a good start since most of these "clean-burning" bulbs are energized by coal-burning plants that produce radiation, acid rain and global warming.

Environmentalism also involves recycling glass, plastics, tin, aluminum and paper. Eating lower on the food chain is another effective sacrifice since it takes six to 10 times as much energy, land and water resources to produce a pound of animal protein than a pound of plant protein. Walking or riding a bicycle instead of driving a car is a great idea, too, and like reducing or eliminating animal products from our diets, results in a healthier body.

Green space environmentalism? It's so easy, but unfortunately does nothing for the environment. Who are we trying to fool, ourselves?

Paul Koester  
senior  
soil science



David Badders/DN

### Discrimination

Dionne Searcey's front-page story on the NU presidential search (DN, Sept. 28) stated that efforts are being made to ensure "that candidates who break the age-old presidential mold will be given a fair shot at the job." The question becomes: "Will those applicants who happen to be white males be given a fair shot at the job as well?"

The endless pursuit of "diversity" on this campus and in every other segment of society has led to the death of meritocracy. Whatever happened to the notion of hiring the person best qualified for the job without respect to race, gender or disability?

The one-time goal of the civil rights movement of creating a "color-blind" society has given way to the new and essentially realized goal of imposing a system of reverse discrimination more repulsive than the original discrimination it was designed to rectify.

Ross A. Buntrock  
second-year law student

### Comics

I do not read comic books. Not anymore, at least. But I've read enough in my time to become affiliated with them; to become bored and disgusted with their cotton-candy rhetoric. More often than not, there is little or no substance in these stories.

I suppose that it was in an attempt to create a connection between Batman and his readers that in William J. Harms' article (DN, Sept. 22), "Detective Comics" editor Scott Peterson said that Batman — described as "ruthless, unforgiving and extremely brutal" — is "a reflection of our times." Also, "this whole MTV generation has a very cynical view of the world, and Batman is a reflection of this." Relate to "superheroes"? I can't even relate to this Peterson guy!

Cynicism is not necessarily synonymous with ruthlessness or extreme brutality. In fact, I don't believe that it is totally out of character for a cynic to forgive.

Comic books are generally meaningless, but at least they had hitherto been harmless. It's one thing to insult the reader with poor writing, quite another to make such a pointless and insulting claim as this.

Michael Munn  
sophomore  
philosophy