

Daily
Nebraskan
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EDITORIAL

A class act

Despite glitches, NRoll is an improvement

For students trying to register Monday morning, NRoll may have seemed like just another cruel joke of the computer age.

The new enrollment system was down for about two hours because of computer problems.

But we must expect a few glitches in the system. It's only natural that NRoll should have some problems on its first day. We should be patient.

Later that afternoon, the system was fine and most students were able to get through on the first try.

NRoll is more than just an experiment; it's a move forward for the university. In the past, students woke up early to drop off preregistration packets by 8 a.m. to receive priority processing.

But you wouldn't know for weeks if you had made an error, or if you simply didn't get into your classes. Even if you did everything right, you still might have had to go to Drop/Add. This could have meant waking up at 6 a.m. to join hundreds of others in a line that snaked through three floors of the Administration Building.

If NRoll is successful, it most certainly will be an improvement. With NRoll, you know right away if you have a time conflict or if the class is closed.

If you need to drop or add a class, you just call. And you can call from anywhere. No lines. No bubble sheets. No early morning time card trips.

So we should try not to be cynical with NRoll. Sure, it might not be perfect, but how could it be worse than the previous system?

Dirt cheap

Special soil for green space is worthless

The debate over green space has moved from a discussion about parking to the ridiculous.

When University of Nebraska-Lincoln Chancellor Graham Spanier introduced the idea of the green space, there was legitimate debate over how it would affect parking. The NU Board of Regents voted on the proposal and approved Spanier's plan to remove the parking lot north of the Nebraska Union and replace it with a grassy area.

Now the process of building the green space is under way. What was the first issue that came up?

Dirt.

Yes, dirt. Contractors, architects and other potential project bidders were on campus Monday at a conference, examining the area that will become green space. The conference was a chance for interested bidders to review the project before the March 22 bid date.

UNL is asking that Kennebec dirt be used for the green space. Kennebec dirt is harder to find, more durable and more expensive.

But Gary Varley of Land Construction said the special dirt wasn't necessary.

"Somebody in the agronomy department or the landscape department is so set in their ways that they have to have the Mercedes of black dirt on their campus," he said.

Varley said the Kennebec dirt might add as much as \$30,000 to the bid.

Howard Parker, UNL campus architect, defended the special dirt. Parker said it was necessary because cheaper dirt would cost more to maintain.

If UNL can get by with cheaper dirt for green space, it should. But whatever dirt is used, UNL should avoid senseless debates over an issue that already has seen too much controversy.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Staff editorials represent the official policy of the Spring 1994 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

Agriculture

In response to Paul Koester's column on prairie dogs (DN, March 7, 1994): Yes, it is a very large ecosystem for rattlesnakes, badgers and coyotes, all of which are pests. Of course, the prairie dogs also have their unique talent for destroying the land and grass for many years. I cannot honestly say they take only 4 to 7 percent of the grass. I think they leave only 4 to 7 percent. Anyone who has had the pleasure of owning a large prairie dog town knows that cattle receive very little grazing benefits in these areas.

Their tunnels wash out after heavy rains and later cave in, leaving a big hole in the land. After eradicating our 40-acre dog town, we saw that we could place a considerable number more cattle to pasture. We have no regrets of exterminating them, and we sure don't miss them. It costs money to feed the prairie dogs, turkeys, deer, coyotes, badgers and all the other animals of the ecosystem. I think we are overrun with wildlife. For ranchers, it is a full-time job to protect your investment from the wildlife that urban dwellers just have to preserve.

I am tired of Koester's negative comments about agriculture. I don't feel farmers and ranchers have destroyed the environment or that they don't care.

For example, the Sandhills' ecosystem has improved dramatically over the last 150 years because cattle graze and keep the grass short. This reduces the wildfires that would ravage the whole land. So there is one good point about agriculture and especially the beef industry. Another point of interest is that agriculture feeds the world and without agriculture, there would be world starvation.

William R. Williams Jr.
junior
agricultural economics

'Fallacious argument'

Christopher Winkelmann's letter on, I believe, the topic of homosexuality in the March 11, 1994, DN is a truly remarkable document. I did not think it possible to provide so many examples of fallacious evidence, language and reasoning in so short a letter. Yet Winkelmann has succeeded. I pray that this future engineer's mechanical systems will be designed with more care than his arguments.

Fallacies of evidence included non-representative instances, insufficient instances and false repeated assertions. For fallacies of language, obscuration was employed with particular maladroitness. Fallacies of reasoning included the entire repertoire of appeals to ignorance and popular prejudice, faulty comparisons, oversimplifications and straw argument.

Over 100 years ago, England's Cardinal Newman asserted the purpose of a liberal education was "to free

the mind from the tyranny of fallacious argument." Alas, Winkelmann has avoided or neglected the tools of an education heavily subsidized by every tax-paying Nebraskan, including gays, Afro-Americans, Native Americans, Hispanics, et al.

Today the essential purpose of America's Constitution is to free us all from the tyranny of those who choose passion over reason and prejudice over knowledge.

Charles M. Pinzon
assistant professor
College of Journalism and Mass
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James Mehlsing/DN

Islam

As I was reading Neal King's letter concerning Louis Farrakhan (DN, March 11, 1994), I couldn't help noticing the ignorance that has plagued not only himself but also a large majority of the population. For some unknown reason, he uses the word Islam to describe the Nation of Islam. As a Muslim, I feel obligated to inform him that he has erred.

If a person practices and follows the teachings of the Nation of Islam, he or she is not considered a Muslim. You may ask who am I to judge such a person. I'll respond by stating that by definition, what makes a Muslim a Muslim is that he or she has to believe there is one God and that the prophet Mohammed was the last messenger of God. Any alterations to this first pillar of Islam immediately disqualifies an individual from calling himself or herself a Muslim.

Members of the Nation of Islam believe in one God, but at the same time, they believe that Elijah Mohammed (the leader of the Nation of Islam during the '60s and early '70s) was also a messenger of God. The Islamic world does not accept this as being part of Islam.

It was for this reason that Louis Farrakhan was refused permission to

enter Mecca in order to perform the once-in-a-lifetime Muslim pilgrimage. He first had to convince the Saudi Arabian officials that he no longer followed the teaching of the Nation of Islam in order to be granted permission to enter. Being the man he is, Farrakhan reverted back to his old beliefs once he completed his pilgrimage.

I agree with some of the things King said about Farrakhan. I believe he should be regarded as a potential "Black Hitler." All I ever hear him talk about are the injustices the Afro-American population has suffered under a predominately white-run society. His speeches and comments are very similar to what El Hajj Malik El Shabazz (Malcolm X) was preaching when he was still with the Nation of Islam. Fortunately for Malcolm X, he changed his ideologies after he realized the corruption that existed within the Nation of Islam during the early '60s.

He realized the Afro-American cannot go around perceiving the white man as the blue-eyed, white devil who caused all the problems they are going through. Unlike Farrakhan, Malcolm began to focus on uniting the black and white races.

I've always believed Farrakhan molded himself with the Nation of Islam because of personal aspirations of political power and wealth. Kimberly Spurlock mentioned in her column (DN, March 10, 1994) that Afro-Americans needed someone like Farrakhan to publicly address their problems and grievances.

How can someone like Farrakhan be considered a leader when he has saturated himself with the wealth of the poor man he has verbally pledged to help?

In my book, the definition of a true leader is someone solely committed to assisting his or her people without amassing personal wealth in the process. Someone like El Hajj Malik El Shabazz would fit this description.

Mahmoud Al-Alawy
senior
agronomy

'Worked up'

What the hell is Christopher Winkelmann's deal (DN, March 11, 1994)? Why is he so worked up over homosexuality? For someone who asks such odd, confused questions of the DN's readership, then makes vast assumptions about anyone who isn't as worked up as he is about something as ordinary and harmless as homosexuality, it is surprising he has passed enough classes to become a sophomore.

Scott Ferguson
sophomore
Spanish, English