

# OPINION

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**Daily  
Nebraskan**  
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## EDITORIAL

### Truth be known

*Autopsy report would end skepticism*

The city of Lincoln is in a mess right now over the death of Francisco Renteria.

Residents still are unsure of the circumstances leading up to the death of the Hispanic man. Blame is being placed everywhere — on the grand jury, the police, the special prosecutor, the fire department, the university.



Kai Wilken/DN

On top of it all, the public has lost confidence in its police department. The grand jury and special prosecutor Robert Bartle could have cleaned up most of the mess. They failed to do so, however, because they did not release Renteria's autopsy report.

Letting Renteria's cause of death be known may cause a lot of pain in Lincoln, but it is the one step to making the situation better.

Many were amazed last Friday when they saw that only two of six police officers who were on scene Sept. 30 received indictments. They were further amazed that the indictments handed down were for third-degree assault — a misdemeanor offense.

It would be premature to side with these views because the public simply doesn't have enough information. Revelations about Renteria's death have been sporadic to this point. We've heard he had bruises to his neck and head, a seizure, vomiting. This is not enough.

The conclusive autopsy report needs to be released. Thus far, Bartle has refused. Until this is done, the speculation and clamor will continue to polarize Lincoln's communities.

If we knew Renteria's cause of death was tied to the police, there would be a context in which we could criticize the grand jury. It seems an outrage that a man is dead and no one is charged with anything more serious than a misdemeanor.

Without a cause of death, however, we can't say if the grand jury went far enough in its indictments. We can only trust the 19 members did the right thing.

But trust has been hard to come by, especially trust in the police department.

Lincoln police are in a tough position right now. They cannot work effectively without the public's confidence. Lincoln should be justifiably concerned if its officers are found to be at fault in Renteria's death. But that has not happened yet — we must remember an indictment is not a proof of guilt.

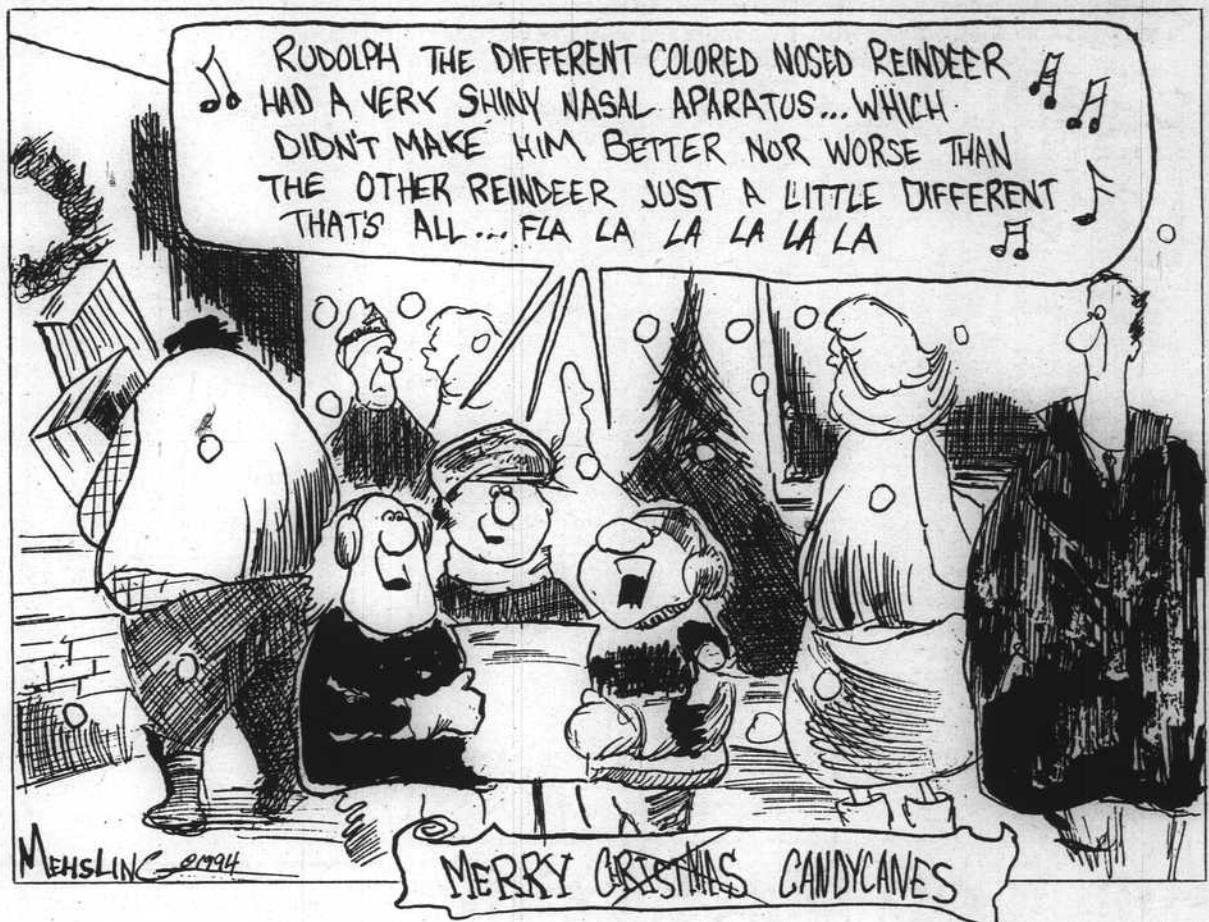
The citizens of Lincoln need more information on this case now. Holding information — specifically autopsy results — until the trial will only feed people's skepticism. The longer the public is mired in this mess, the greater the skepticism will grow.

## EDITORIAL POLICY

Staff editorials represent the official policy of the Fall 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

### 'Running Scared'

I'm writing in response to Jamie Karl's column (DN, Dec. 2, 1994) "Immigrants need to assimilate."

Hey, don't stop with just halting all immigration, legal or otherwise! I suggest we propose legislation that would throw out all those damn "foreigners" that are related to families that moved (many illegally) to America over the past 250 years. It is about time we get rid of those cultures with their pagan religions (Christianity, Judaism) and strange cultural customs (Christmas, Oktoberfest, football bowl games).

Let's get back to the basics of hunting buffalo! America for "true" Americans, I say! By what "right" do they have to move to a different land bringing their different tribal customs with them? Let's keep America clean from all outside influences. Let's study the true history and language of America! By the way ... how's your Lakota Sioux, Chief Running Scared?

Robert Stevenson  
Lincoln

### Not chilly

In response to your editorial "Code of Silence," (DN, Nov. 30, 1994), it is either time for you to be silent on the issues in CBA or to broaden your outlook.

I attended the Board of Regents meeting regarding the Committee W report last February. Concern was expressed over the accuracy of certain information in the report. In fact, your (then) Senior Editor Jeffrey Robb quoted Chancellor Spanier as calling the report inaccurate in a Feb. 21, 1994, account of the meeting.

Many sources quoted in the Committee W report were anonymous. Since the Daily Nebraskan refuses to publish anonymous letters to the editor, certainly you, too, would reject such a report. Why do you continue to refer to it and quote the same individuals over and over? The resolution at the meeting was that Senior Vice Chancellor Joan Leitzel would survey all faculty members confidentially, which she did. Her conclusion was that the CBA faculty were a diverse group with different ways of viewing events. That is supposed to be good. So why are you writing this as if it were news?

No one in either the university



Amy Schmidt/DN

or local community should make the mistake of believing that everyone, including women faculty, in CBA shares the same view as those repeatedly quoted in the Daily Nebraskan and Lincoln Star. There are many of us who, rather than believe the climate "chilly," find it welcoming and supportive. CBA must address individual problems, most assuredly, but this blanket criticism of CBA must stop.

It is time for the students and faculty of this university to get back to worrying about what is important: the quality of education received by our students.

Roberta Schini  
UNL assistant professor of  
finance

### No common sense

I am a junior transfer student from Saint Louis University in St. Louis, Missouri, and after having completed close to a semester at UNL, I've made some observations about this school.

The first is that a golden rule seems to be in effect here: "Common sense shall have nothing to do with anything." For example, when my housing bill was due, my financial aid had not come in yet because the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid's computer had been down for two weeks.

I didn't worry about it, because I figured that the financial aid office would communicate to housing that its computers were down and that they would refrain from harassing certain students because their payments would be late through no fault of their own.

First, nothing is ever a bureaucracy's fault, it's yours; and second, that kind of communication

is apparently a lot to ask of two major offices at UNL.

As I found out through all this, UNL will take your tuition money out of your financial aid, but not your housing payments. At SLU, they did both, and one didn't have to do ridiculous things like take out short-term loans to satisfy one office while another was dragging its feet.

Another observation: Parking here has got to be someone's idea of a sick, twisted joke. At SLU, there were parking lots right in front of or across the street from the dorms. Here, I have to drive for 20 minutes to find a spot, and I end up parking somewhere in East Jesus and walking another 20 minutes to my dorm!

It's not that I mind walking; I just don't like to do it at midnight when it's freezing out. Especially when I keep hearing this rumor that there used to be a parking lot in front of the Union. I understand the trend toward having more green space on college campuses — at SLU they were obsessed with it.

But I have a hard time believing that the people we pay and trust to run this place would do something so completely out of touch with the UNL community's needs. Getting rid of a parking lot to make green space would be the epitome of a rule that dictates "no common sense."

Once again, the department of my major is grossly underfunded. At SLU, the communications department took a backseat, as did everything else, to the pre-med program. Here, I'm not sure which department is getting all the cash, though I have my guesses. But you know something has to be wrong when the broadcasting department needs new cameras and newer radio equipment and the business school has a satellite uplink.

And about the engineering college. I am from Omaha and came here to Lincoln because I really wanted to study at a good journalism school; anyone in Omaha who really wants to be an engineer will do the same thing, so don't spend a whole lot of money building what you already have.

It will mean breaking that golden rule, but it's probably about time that happened anyway.

Chris Hegarty  
junior  
broadcasting