

# OPINION

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Daily  
**Nebraskan**  
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## EDITORIAL

### Stamp of approval

*New postal rate increase bearable*

This will be the last holiday season that a Christmas letter to Aunt Mary will cost 29 cents. As of Jan. 1, 1995, the cost of a mailing a letter will go up to 32 cents.

The Postal Service requested this increase that would make up for the \$1.3 billion they lost in the just-completed fiscal year and the \$1.7 billion they lost the year before. The three-cent increase would bring in an added \$4.7 billion in 1995.

As long as this money goes toward improving efficiency and not toward redesigning the Postal Service logo again or giving each postal worker a BMW, digging an extra three cents out of the couch will not be a problem.

Compared to other nations, America's postal service still runs with higher efficiency and quality.

When a three-page letter can travel from Maine to California in about three days for less than the cost of a three-minute long-distance phone call, it's a bargain.

The difference between three cents for a single stamp and \$3 for 100 stamps will not have a life-altering impact. The cost can be absorbed by using six coupons for next week's groceries.

The Postal Service predicts the increase will cost the average household 60 to 75 cents per month. As long as increasing postal rates does not become a yearly trend, Americans can manage.

## OTHERS' VIEW

The U.S. Court of Appeals decided in October that the University of Maryland at College Park could not have scholarships restricted to African-Americans students. It is remarkably sad that a U.S. court would favor a move that essentially defeats the entire purpose of the scholarship-award process.

The scholarship in question was a federally funded, merit-based award covering the full tuition of 30 African-American students at the university. It was originally established as part of the University of Maryland's desegregation more than 13 years ago. Why should a move toward desegregation be any less important today?

The most significant argument against the court's decision is that the award was merit-based. The recipients were not simply handed the scholarships because of their skin color, but rather their academic record.

Also, the court should have acknowledged the competition factor. Permitting a state university to have such scholarships is vital because it allows the school to compete with the dollar power of private institutions. With the ever-increasing emphasis on diversity at universities, one would think these scholarships would be a priority, not a thing of the past.

By ruling against the scholarships, the U.S. Court of Appeals has essentially blocked an effective means to increase campus diversity. Hopefully, the Supreme Court will do something about it.

— The Daily Illini  
University of Illinois

## 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.



JEFF ZILENY

### It's time to deal with struggle

Since the age of 20, Tom Casady has been an officer of the peace in Lancaster County. Working for local law enforcement agencies has been his career. Arresting suspects and watching them go through the legal system has been his passion.

Monday, Casady was on the other side of the courtroom gallery standing before a judge — the same place where many criminals he has arrested have stood. Casady, who is in his first year as the chief of the Lincoln Police Department, was arraigned on misdemeanor misconduct charges.

No one was pleased by the grand jury indictments handed down last week to Casady, Lincoln Police Officers Luke Wilke and Stephen Schellpeper and Fire Department Capt. Dan Wright.

Police supporters say the charges are too severe, while members of the Hispanic community say the misdemeanors are simply a slap on the wrist.

The indictments have created an uneasy tension in the Capital City. They have created more anger. They have created more questions, which for now far outweigh the known facts.

We do know Francisco Renteria is dead. We also know that six police officers are the only people who are certain of what happened during the Sept. 30 struggle near 24th and Holdrege streets.

But during the past two months, the public and the news media seem to have forgotten one thing — where the struggle really started.

While the physical struggle did indeed start when University Police Officer Charlotte Veskrna mistakenly stopped Renteria, the real struggle has been going on much longer.

It is a struggle that has separated Lincoln's white majority from its growing diverse population. With this struggle comes pain.

The case, which forever will be



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dubbed "The Renteria Incident," was bound to happen in the city of Lincoln. Prejudice, naivete and misunderstanding are common throughout the city. Many people don't understand one another and don't seem to be willing to try, which is where the fear begins.

At the Star City Holiday Parade on Saturday, a group of Hispanic children and adults dressed in their traditional wares represented the Hispanic Community Center. As the group marched from O Street onto Centennial Mall, I overheard a lady in the crowd voice her ignorance.

"Are those the people that are causing all that trouble?" she told her child as the Hispanic group marched by.

One primitive comment like that can cause significant damage. The child, who doesn't know any better, could go to school and spread her mother's prejudice.

But naivete comes from many directions.

Renteria obviously was naive of the authority law officers carry in the United States, which probably scared him on that Friday night.

Veskrna also was naive. Knowledge of other cultures certainly would have helped her understand Renteria, but since she didn't possess that knowledge, she also must have been scared when her orders to stop were not obeyed.

By the time other officers had been summoned, it was too late to understand one another's language or culture. Within 14 hours of that struggle a man was dead. The upheaval, blame and defen-

siveness began almost immediately.

The blame continued during Monday's arraignment.

Lincoln Police Detective Sgt. James Spanel said the charges were being pursued because of a "special interest group."

"Ever since the Rodney King incident occurred, there have been people in the city of Lincoln looking for their own Rodney King incident," Spanel said after the arraignment.

Those comments typify the prejudice that exists at the police station. Until now it was hidden to the majority of the community, now it has been exposed. This exposure is the first step in healing the wounds opened by the Renteria incident.

The city of Lincoln already has received national media attention on this case. Every 30 minutes Friday night, CNN Headline News broadcast a "police beating" in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Some police officers said Monday that they were angered by the national story. Well, anger is the first step to solving a problem. It is obvious there is a problem, but a solution could be a ways off.

This case is expected to go to trial by early next spring. It should become known then if police did beat Renteria to death.

But until then, it is time to put speculation aside and try to understand one another.

Perhaps soon, the struggle will end.

Zeleny is a senior news-editorial major and the Daily Nebraskan editor.

### P.S. Write Back

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