

OPINION

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Daily
Nebraskan
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University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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Speed up

65 too slow for Nebraska drivers

Just can't drive 65?
Soon you may not have to.
President Clinton is expected to sign a bill this month that would repeal the national speed limit of 55 mph on most roads and 65 mph on rural interstates, giving back to the states the power to set limits.



Bret Gottschall/DN

With the change, Montana — where penalties for speeders have been notoriously lax — will essentially do away with speed limits altogether.

Wyoming state law requires that speed limits be raised with the repeal of the federal law, and starting next month, the state will phase in a 75-mph limit on its interstate highways.

Similar plans are in the works in other rural states, including Colorado, Utah, Kansas and South Dakota.

And they should be in the works in Nebraska, too.

A speed limit of 75 mph along rural stretches of Interstate 80, which spans more

than 450 miles across the state, is not unreasonable.

Those living in the Omaha and Lincoln areas can easily forget how vast and how rural this state really is.

There are just as many exits off I-80 in the Omaha area alone as there are between Lincoln and Grand Island. And in the stretch of more than 300 miles west of Grand Island, the interstate passes only two towns with populations greater than 10,000.

The landscape is sparse. The topography flat. The road rarely bends.

Ask anyone who must drive this stretch of I-80 how heavy the foot can feel on the accelerator.

Interstate highways were built to accommodate high-speed traffic, and lower limits were imposed only when the foreign oil embargo of 1974 brought the national limit down to 55 mph. In a 1987 mass transit bill, Congress allowed states to raise the limit to 65.

But with automakers in the '90s building more fuel-efficient vehicles with better emission controls and higher safety standards, Nebraska and other rural states should follow the leads of Montana and Wyoming.

A case can be made for maintaining the status quo between Lincoln and Omaha, where traffic, by Nebraska standards, is often heavy. And Nebraska's two-lane highways are in some spots as treacherous as they come, and 55 mph seems an adequate speed. But any four-lane divided highway or Interstate should be fair game for review.

A higher speed limit would require even greater driver responsibility, which the state should promote. How about adding "Buckle up" to all those new highway signs?

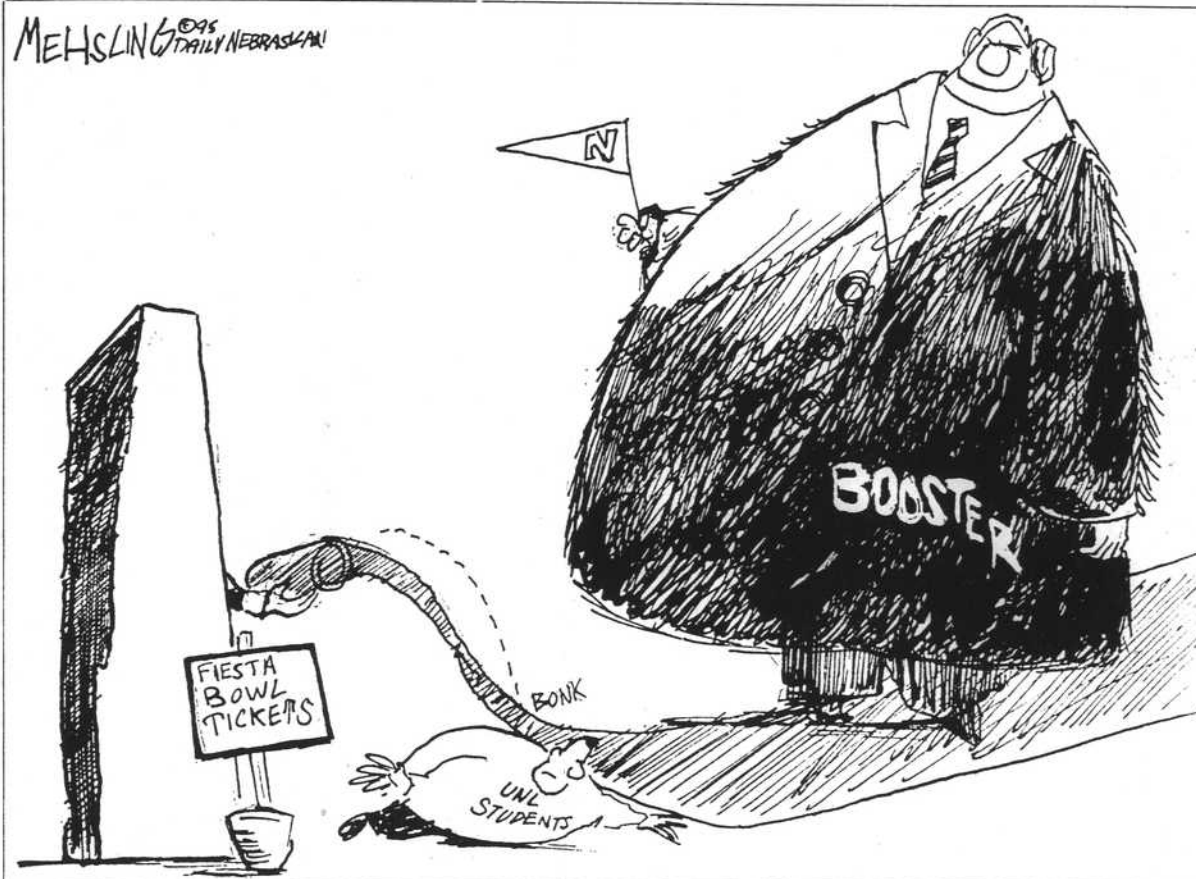
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Letter policy

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: Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St. Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448.

MEHSLING'S DAILY NEBRASKAN



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Reefer madness

I am writing in response to the "pot smoker's view" by Matt Chimelewski.

I am sitting in my room not smoking marijuana in compliance with what I think is a federal law.

My room smells terrible with marijuana and incense.

How is this, you ask? I'm not smoking it.

Hey, you know what? My neighbor could be, maybe that is why it smells.

The other day I was walking past a room and heard a ticking noise, you know, the sound a bomb makes.

I didn't think anything of it and just kept on walking.

What if it was a real bomb?

He is making it "in the privacy of his own home," so leave it alone.

Hey, Matt, maybe people don't like the rich smell of marijuana, did you ever think of that?

I believe that is their right if they don't want to put up with it.

R. Tyler McClymont
Junior
Business

Fanmale

I am writing to congratulate Mr. Baldrige on another wonderful column ("Eye opener," Nov. 27).

I have faithfully read every piece of writing he has put in the DN this semester. He consistently challenges me to think.

That is something that is lacking in today's society of short attention span television and other forms of entertainment.

I have also read letters from other readers who attack Mr. Baldrige and his work.

These people need to open their minds to differing opinions and points of view.

I do not agree with all of Mr. Baldrige's ideas or opinions, but I respect them.

He has even swayed my ideology in some areas, a feat not easily accomplished.

In short, I hope to continue reading his work next semester and I hope that others will



Bret Gottschall/DN

Sing a song

The recent article in the Daily Nebraskan ("Seow unveils Singapore's evils," Nov. 16) prompted me, a Singaporean, to express a few things.

1) Francis Seow, the invited speaker of the E.N. Thompson Forum on World Issues, painted a picture of Singapore not known to me.

There are traffic jams in Singapore, believe me. There are potholes, beggars, the poor and homeless, graffiti, and the streets are not necessarily "safe to walk alone at night."

That is why they have police officers, social workers repairs on the roads and Michael Fay.

Put another way: Although there is the death penalty for trafficking drugs in Singapore, it doesn't imply there are no drugs — there are a dozen or more convicted traffickers on the death row.

2) Singapore is still a tropical island paradise — when compared to other cities in Southeast Asia, she outshines them by a large margin.

3) Why was Seow chosen for the forum? Did the Singapore Embassy know an "exiled" Singaporean was representing their country? Perhaps the organizers owe everyone an explanation.

Kirti Doshi
Sophomore
Business

come to appreciate his column for what it is: food for the mind.

Matt Wieser
Junior
Biochemistry
via e-mail

Gross error

In response to the letter from Vicki Claassen (Nov. 17) accusing Attorney General Don Stenberg of throwing his weight around "without any regard for humanity" concerning the placement of a foster child, your readers should be aware that Claassen's letter contains a gross misstatement of fact.

Claassen opens her attack by stating a 3-year-old boy was removed from his home "per Stenberg's order" because his foster mother had AIDS.

First of all, the child was removed from his foster home by the Nelson administration after it was learned the foster family had lied on their application.

The attorney general had nothing to do with this decision.

Secondly, the attorney general's appeal seeks to keep the child with his new foster parents, where he has been for six months. It would indeed be cruel to force the child to readjust to a new foster home all over again, only to witness the death of the former foster mother.

Apparently, Claassen does not let the facts get in the way of a good cheap shot.

Steve Grasz
Deputy Attorney General



...to the

Daily
Nebraskan

Send your brief letters to:
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Letters must be signed and
include a phone number for
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