

# OPINION

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Page 4

Daily  
**Nebraskan**  
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University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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## OTHER'S VIEW

The American Council on Education sponsors an ongoing nationwide survey that ventures to capture the shifting opinions of the nation's college freshmen. Its most recent conclusions drew up many interesting trend shifts in more than 1.5 million first-time higher education students.

Compared to less than a decade ago, a typical 1990s freshman now mixes a splash of added conservative values with a dash of liberationists while simultaneously being less likely to pay interest to or become involved in the political process.

For example, common support for legalized abortion is on the decline as is the advocating of casual sex — yet the same student is likely to be more liberally oriented toward marijuana legalization.

Backing for that drug's legalization is at a 15-year high. Endorsers of casual sex have fallen 9 percentage points in the past eight years while there has been a dramatic 20 percent declining shift in criticism against homosexual relationships. Likewise, the steady 1980s rise in abortion advocacy has now declined for the third year in a row.

One of the more startling inclinations of the modern freshman is a growing apathy toward politics and influencing social values. Today only one in four freshman make a commitment in keeping abreast of political affairs, a drop of more than 50 percent since the mid-1960s. This air of disfranchisement is bolstered by a continuing decline of interest in environmental issues, racial equality promotion and participation in community-sponsored programs.

Such freshman inertia is cultivated by a widespread political ideology that drifts further and further to the mild center-right.

More than half of the survey population labels themselves as middle-of-the-road, while those with specific liberal or conservative viewpoints tend to have more polarized philosophies. If such behavior continues, American politics may soon rearrange itself in a bell-curve fashion. And as the majority drift toward middle-ground patronage, there is a growing sense of powerlessness in bringing about change.

Such marginalization is ingrained within a deep-rooted cynicism toward an out-of-touch government that is run by too many dark-suited politicians with their ears firmly bent toward lobbying groups instead of the common citizen. It should therefore be of little surprise that one of the study's findings was that more than one-third of freshmen believe individuals can "do little to change society."

Even though student apathy is at an all-time high, today's average freshman is more conservatively seasoned politically and more liberally adjusted socially. Such contrasts are exemplified in a survey finding that showed a general freshman reluctance toward supporting affirmative action programs while concurrently offering broad-based sponsorship for the use of race as a basis for college admission.

Although many of the American Council on Education's results may come as little surprise and their conclusions basically mirror the feelings of society as a whole, there is much to be concerned with in regard to the future of this nation as a whole.

As stoicism rises, so too does a malaise with government and authority. When this is intertwined with ambivalent conservatism, the end product could easily result in a spiraling gap between the individual and the political process.

— The Daily Athenaeum, West Virginia University

### Editorial policy

Staff editorials represent the official policy of the Fall 1995 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: Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St. Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448.



MEHSLING 09/1  
DAILY NEBRASKAN

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Tunes

I am writing to express my disappointment in your coverage of the Cornhusker Marching Band. I believe I've seen one brief mention of the band this season. We started before the fall semester began, from 9:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. with only two one-hour breaks for food. Every school day we met from 7:30 a.m. to either 8:30 or 9 a.m. On game days, we would meet usually at 7:30 or 8 a.m. and work up to the game. Our band went to every game, home and away. What does it take to get noticed around here? I'm sure if we didn't show up, people would have something to say. We traveled to the Fiesta Bowl to watch the Huskers cream the Gators, and in March we are traveling to Ireland to represent not only the university but the state of Nebraska. We also recently earned a national award for continuing contribution to excellence. I think we have earned some recognition, especially from our own school paper.

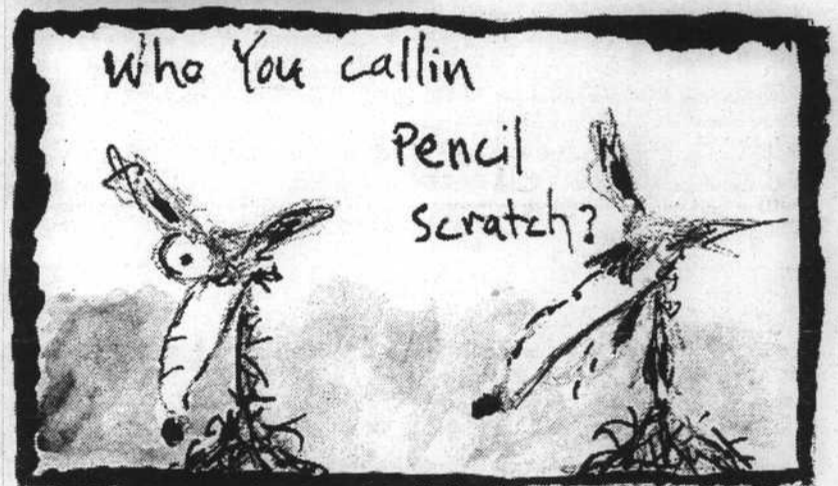
Rebecca McClung  
freshman  
English/pre-law

### Toons

On behalf of your confused readers, I would like to express my displeasure with the nonsensical drivell accompanied by random pencil scratchings that is called "The Monkey Cafe."

I'll be the first to admit that even the best cartoon art could not replace Calvin and Hobbes. However, the DN knew that Calvin was leaving weeks ahead of his exit. During that time, why couldn't the DN find the truly humorous, nationally syndicated cartoon that its readers so richly deserve? Why must I be subjected to Jim Mehlsling's monosyllabic, pseudocreative bunk on TWO pages of your paper?

A cartoon should be humorous, endearing or even enlightening. In other words, it should have a point. "The Monkey Cafe" has none of that. Many times, I cannot discern its shapeless words from its formless characters. The result is a meaning-



James Mehlsling/DN

less sort of pictogram that I couldn't decipher unless I regularly referenced the Rosetta Stone.

The bottom line is that the DN needs a different cartoon, something that will put your readers in a frame of mind to use your paper's only valuable feature — the crossword. How about Dilbert? Or Peanuts? Good grief, even Mary Worth or Ziggy would be better. Keep Mehlsling on the editorial page with the world's other unintelligible information. Get a professional to create a 10-second fantasy world that, if not humorous, is at least comprehensible.

Mark A. Byars  
senior  
accounting  
via e-mail

### Toons two

Instead of having Mehlsling write a couple comic strips a week, why don't you take the money that was going to Calvin & Hobbes and put a new strip in the paper, along with Mehlsling's. I would suggest having a vote on what strip to put in the paper. You could have votes cast by e-mail, dropping votes by the office or filling out a ballot at some neutral spot. I, and others, would like to see something new to cover up the hole Calvin and Hobbes left.

Ryan R. Horner  
senior  
architecture  
via e-mail

**Editor's note:** Because we agree that no one comic strip can replace the beloved "Calvin and Hobbes," we have begun evaluating several strips for an expanded cartoon section. Our selections will be announced soon, and the new strips can be expected within the next few weeks.

### Econ 101

On January 16, Kasey Kerber wrote that \$209 can buy 209 meatball subs. However, he forgot to add the sales tax. After including sales tax, \$209 can buy 204 meatball subs (\$1.02 each with tax) with 92 cents change. I'm not going to tell you how much to spend on subs.

Kerber wrote that the Library 110 course should be optional. Well, that a lot of students know how to do basic research in library does not imply that they know how to utilize library materials effectively and efficiently. Education will not produce a linear growth to your knowledge, same as meatball subs to your appetite. I agree that qualified students should not be required to take Library 110. One of the solutions is to let students test out of Library 110 and let them save their money and time.

Plato Chan  
graduate student  
economics

Please  
Write Back!

Send your brief letters to: Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 "R" Street, Lincoln, NE 68588, or Fax to (402) 472-1761, or e-mail <letters@unlinfo.unl.edu>. Letters must be signed and include a phone number for verification.