

# OPINION

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Daily  
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Bret Gottschall/DN

## Dissatisfied

*Middle class 'unhappy' with economy*

It looks good on paper.

The American economy is the healthiest it's been in three decades, President Clinton said in his State of the Union address on Tuesday.

The numbers seem to back him up. Unemployment and inflation are low. And 7.8 million jobs have been created since Clinton took office.

But after exploring the positive side of the economy in Tuesday's speech, the president was quick to double-back and address the malaise of the middle class.

All across the country, the average American is shouting out that he or she doesn't feel the benefits of this strong economy.

The middle class shouted in '92 and elected Clinton. They shouted in '94 and elected a Republican Congress. But average Americans have yet to be answered. They are still shouting.

Why is the middle class so unhappy?

Both Time and U.S. News and World Report in the last two weeks featured articles that chronicled the discontent of America's middle class workers.

According to U.S. News and World Report the gap between the rich and poor is widening while the middle class isn't moving. The problem is wages, the magazine says. Median household income has remained steady for the last 20 years.

Time magazine says Americans are forced to use that decreased spending power for services like medical insurance, day care and college tuition that are rapidly rising in cost.

The result is a large segment of the population that is working harder and seeing less for its efforts. And this group of disgruntled workers is sure to be one of the focal points of the '96 presidential campaign. Unfortunately, solutions to their problems have remained elusive to politicians.

This is the same discontented middle class Clinton targeted in his '92 campaign, and although economic improvements were made during his term, he will have to work on winning over the middle class again from now until November. And Republicans will have to do the same.

Whoever wins the White House in '96 will have to convince middle-class America that its problems can be solved.

Good luck.

### 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.

MEASURING THE DAILY NEBRASKAN



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### No heroes

Mr. Ray believes (Jan. 19) that we need a hero (Colin Powell) as president. We don't. The job doesn't require a Rambo. Excepting Washington, former commanders of armies have not made inspirational presidents. Remember Grant? Eisenhower? Both led great armies to victory. Neither inspired the populace to increased social consciousness or a higher plateau of civic achievement. Each simply assumed that the presidency was just another promotion.

Our great presidents (Lincoln, FDR and JFK) have been idealists, social visionaries, people whose greatness had little to do with battlefield exploits.

A good political representative of the people must have patience, compassion, the ability to generate and accept compromise, and the inclination to translate all proposed actions into their effects upon the most vulnerable elements of society.

When the Republican Party urged W.T. Sherman to run for the presidency in 1876, he turned them down, probably because he admitted to himself that he didn't have what it took.

Powell made the same choice, possibly for the same reason. It was a good decision. It involved elements of modesty and maturity that are to his credit.

We will never see a great president who is a graduate of West Point, but we may find one teaching in a daycare.

Robert J. Tobin  
graduate student  
Geology

### Rhetoric, It's what's for dinner

In response to the January 23 article, "Pro-choicers blame improper rhetoric," I have to disagree with Kay Siebler. Pro-life advocates are gaining ground not because of "improper rhetoric," but because people are finally hearing the truth. Siebler is also wrong when she states that pro-life people feel that women who have had abortions deserve to die.

Pro-life advocates are for life. Project Rachel is one of the programs that the pro-life group has started to help women who have had abortions. The only people who use

"improper rhetoric" are pro-abortion advocates. The pro-abortion movement is based on lies that have killed 35 million babies since the 1973 Roe vs. Wade decision, making abortion legal.

Mary Eller  
senior  
special education



Bret Gottschall/DN

### Touché

I teach the Astronomy 103 classes described by Kasey Kerber in his column (Jan. 23). While I agree with his statement that "Technology should be used only when it makes a task a whole lot easier and when there is a clear purpose for it," I do not agree with his description of use of the Morrill Hall Planetarium or of my video-taped lecture.

Far from being an example to the contrary, a planetarium is a good example of technology both being used for a clear purpose and making a task easier. A planetarium is a unique tool for helping clarify some of the hardest concepts in astronomy — how things move in the sky. There are things you can show in a planetarium that cannot be shown in any other way. Students frequently tell me that visiting the planetarium is one of their favorite parts of the class.

Several times Mr. Kerber referred to my "high-tech" laser pointer and implied that I use it for my own enjoyment in class! It's no secret that I enjoy teaching Astronomy 103, but the real reason for using the pointer is that most of the class

would not know what I was referring to in the planetarium sky. I did not use it!

Astronomy 103 is one of the most popular courses on campus so our sections are almost always full and very large. Each of my sections has around 160 students. This is twice as many people as the planetarium seats. I am therefore forced to divide each class in half. In the past, I have had graduate students give lectures to the half of the class not in the planetarium. This semester, we are short-handed and the department was unable to provide a full graduate teaching assistant for the astronomy classes. Lack of a substitute to give the live lectures was the main reason for the video-taped lecture. It was nothing to do with "the joy created by ... having your face projected on a 10-foot screen."

I was never under any illusion that a video-taped lecture would be as good as the real thing. Although there certainly were problems in seeing some of the notes in the video tape, Mr. Kerber has exaggerated them. He does not mention that all notes were read out during the lecture, usually more than once, and some words spelled out. Finally, as he did mention, some notes (actually some diagrams not in the textbook) were posted in the glass case outside the classroom. I have almost 500 students. I've seen few people copying anything from the glass case and nobody has been to see me to copy down any other notes.

At the start of the video, I asked the class to sit near the front of the half-empty room. I'm told nobody moved forward. Today I asked a couple of my sections for a show of hands on the ease or difficulty of seeing the notes. Not surprisingly, the people who had the most difficulty tended to be those toward the back of the room.

I share one of Mr. Kerber's concerns: technology should be more closely examined before being thrown at students. I believe strongly in the importance of human interaction in learning and I'm concerned by a growing trend toward dehumanizing the educational process. Often this dehumanizing is proudly hailed as technological progress. Unfortunately, we're going to be seeing more of this, because computers are cheaper than people.

Martin Gaskell  
associate professor  
physics and astronomy