

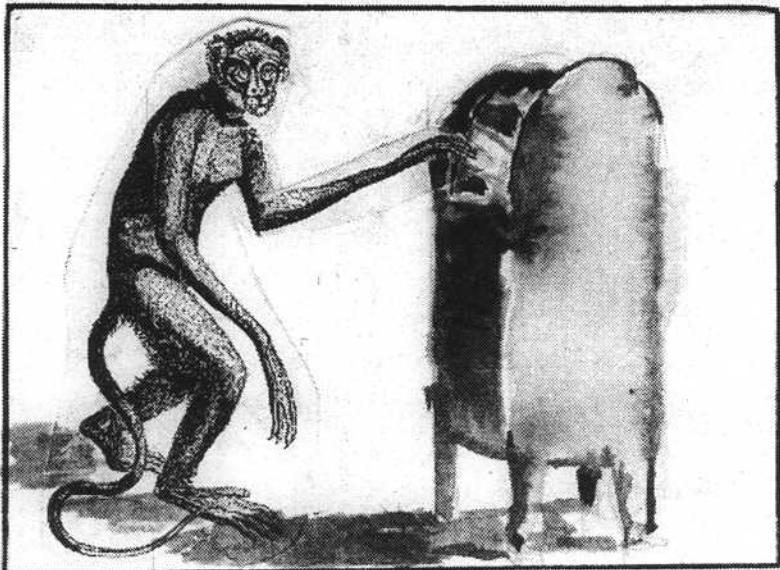
# OPINION

Thursday, February 8, 1996

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Daily  
**Nebraskan**  
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## Democracy?

*Mail-in vote could solve country's woes*

Presidential candidates are already wearing down the leather on their wingtips.

Some of these candidates will continue for months, making the long walk to November's election, bringing their messages to the doorsteps and television sets of Americans.

Despite the importance of the upcoming election, Americans hardly have been captivated by this race. Voters are more apathetic than ever, and a three-way presidential race in 1992 between Bill Clinton, George Bush and Ross Perot resulted in yet another low voter turnout.

The United States unfortunately has become one of the most illegitimate democracies in the world. The number of Americans who actually will mark ballots in this year's election is becoming a serious concern for our country. A society with little political participation is a society in grave trouble.

One solution may be mail-in voting, which has been tried in some areas of the country with impressive results and is being proposed for special elections in Nebraska.

The recent Oregon election to replace Sen. Bob Packwood was the first senatorial election to use mail-in voting and produced an impressive 65 percent turnout. Fifteen other states use mail-in voting for certain elections.

Nebraska legislators are considering a bill that would allow voters in communities with fewer than 5,000 residents to mail in their votes for special elections.

Why not expand the use of mail-in voting?

In addition to increasing voter turnout, mail-in voting could save costs, something important to any government operation.

Concerns about voter fraud should not stop "postage polling." Mail-in ballots would be checked against previous handwriting samples, which isn't even being done now. And the benefits of a more involved electorate are too great to turn down.

When one considers those benefits and adds the idea that voting may one day be done using computers or other interactive technology, it's hard not to ask why someone didn't think of this sooner.

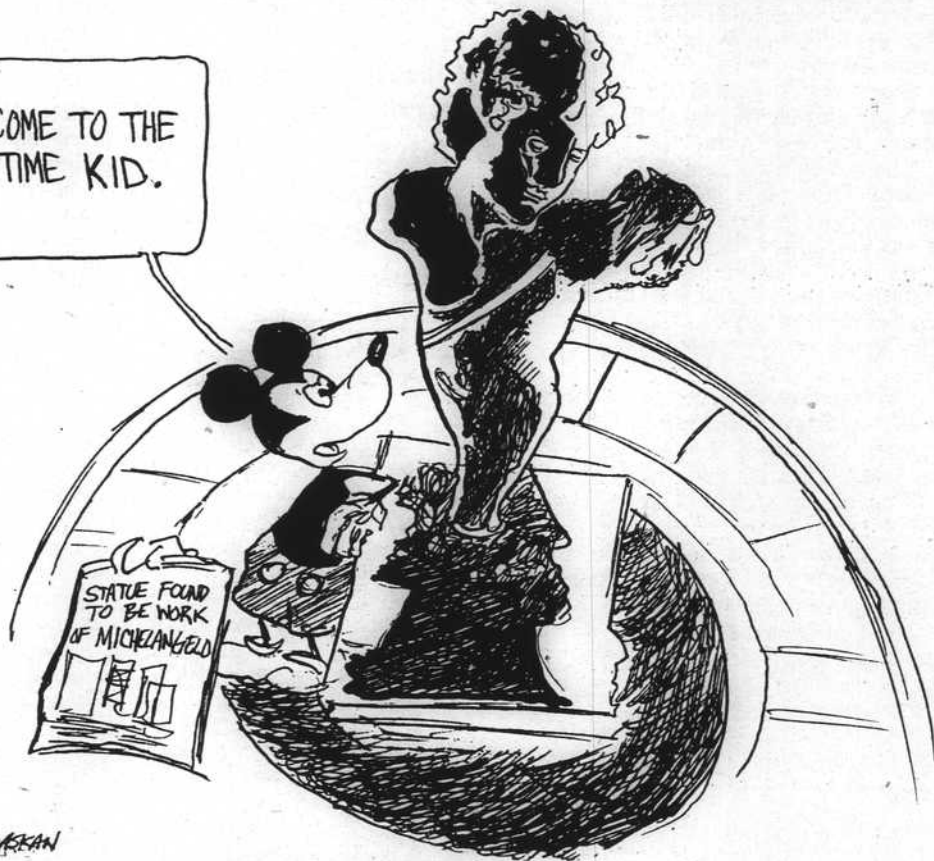
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MEHLING OF THE DAILY NEBRASKAN

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### Reach out and touch someone

Here's a bit of an addition to the clip-and-save petition to Bill Byrne that appeared in Wednesday's DN. If you want to write Mr. Byrne e-mail instead of mailing him the form (or in addition to, as I'm doing), his e-mail address is bbyrne@unlinfo.unl.edu. Maybe if he gets enough mail and e-mail, he'll be able to get it through his thick skull that the students of UNL are tired of his football vision.

Bret A. Hermesen  
junior  
computer science via  
e-mail

#### Death deterrent

I feel the need to respond to Veera Supinen's article "Uncivilized" (Feb. 7). In the article she talks about how capital punishment is wrong and uncivilized, and gives several reasons for thinking that. I think that several of her reasons are pure "bunk." I consider the death penalty a hell of a greater deterrent than the threat of life imprisonment. The death penalty means that a convicted criminal will die by the electric chair or other method. All that life imprisonment means is that the state will feed, clothe and house the prisoner and provide free cable and free medical care, and many other luxuries until the day the prisoner dies. Under life imprisonment, many criminals live a better life than many honest, hard-working Americans. That doesn't sound like much of a punishment or a deterrent to crime.

Also, how could Ms. Supinen possibly think that it would be cheaper to provide everything that a modern inmate demands in prison for the rest of their lives vs. the small amount of money for the



electricity used in an execution. I think that Supinen needs to check her facts.

Philip Paider  
sophomore  
general studies  
via e-mail

#### Death penalty ethical

This is in response to Veera Supinen's letter "Uncivilized." I was very impressed with how you were able to express your ideas about how "unethical" capital punishment is, and yet you were able to avoid every aspect leading up to the punishment itself. I don't think that you are quite aware of what a person goes through when a family member has been brutally murdered. But God does, and He says that if a person murders another, then that person should be put to death (Genesis 9:6). So considering that many people get their ethics from the Bible, I guess we can't claim capital punishment is "unethical," can we.

If you would bother to look at some of the numbers in recent studies, you would find that much of the information you gave is outdated. For one, capital punishment has been shown to have a small

impact as a deterrent. If this means that we have to execute 10 murderers to prevent an innocent person from being killed, then let's do it. You also stressed the idea that capital punishment goes against our "human rights — the right to live." I think you need to focus on the human rights of the person who had a right to live but can no longer do so because their life was taken away.

David Frye  
sophomore  
criminal justice

#### More about ... you know

Concerning the ongoing "naughty, naughty monkey" debate, I need to make an important point. I don't care if you do it or if you don't, just as I don't care about the rest of your personal life. I, along with many other people, just don't want to hear about it. I think that there are more important issues facing us today than the discussion of the pastimes of a few students.

Timothy G. Hoff  
sophomore  
journalism/political science

Post it

...to the

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Send your brief letters to:  
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