OPINION PAGES

GUEST VIEW

Bellyaching

Union leaders impede reforms in education

From The San Diego Union-Tribune

Bob Dole's promise to take on the politically potent teachers unions to bring about badly needed education reform has produced predictable bellyaching from the biggest impediment to reform — the union leaders.

No sooner had Dole issued his challenge than the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers sounded the false alarm of teacher-bashing. Never mind that Dole was chastising the obstructionist unions — not dedicated classroom teachers — for inferior public schools.

The union leadership views the 1996 presidential election as a clear-cut choice between someone they can control and someone they cannot control.

They're right.

Bill Clinton, like every Democratic presidential nominee of the last two decades, is basically a captive of the teachers unions. He routinely extols the virtues of public schools while enrolling his own daughter in a private school.

Ditto for Vice President Al Gore and many other Democratic lawmakers who do the unions' bidding while reflexively opposing legislative efforts to enable poor families the opportunity to send their children to better private schools.

Dole, on the other hand, refuses to countenance the cynical strategy of holding low-income students hostage in dysfunctional schools. He believes all children — not just those of affluent parents – should be able to attend good schools. Which is precisely why the teachers unions are prepared to spend whatever it takes to prevent him from winning this election and taking on the education establishment with opportunity scholarships.

Fully one-eighth of the delegates who were at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago are members of the NEA or the AFT. This special interest has earmarked millions of dollars toward Clinton's re-election and that of like-minded Democrats. The education lobby's strategy is to maintain the stagnant status quo while trolling for more federal funds.

During the early 1980s, after the NEA demanded of Jimmy Carter and therefore received a Cabinet-level Education Department, a union official boasted that his people were roaming the halls of Congress, reordering the nation's priorities.

He didn't mention roaming the halls of urban high schools, where police officers often patrol to protect students from harm; or seeing to it that all children receive a quality education.

Then again, the union leadership is more concerned about looking after its own interests than in dealing with such mundane matters as reading, writing and arithmetic.

That is why the NEA and the AFT are terrified by the prospect of a President Dole.

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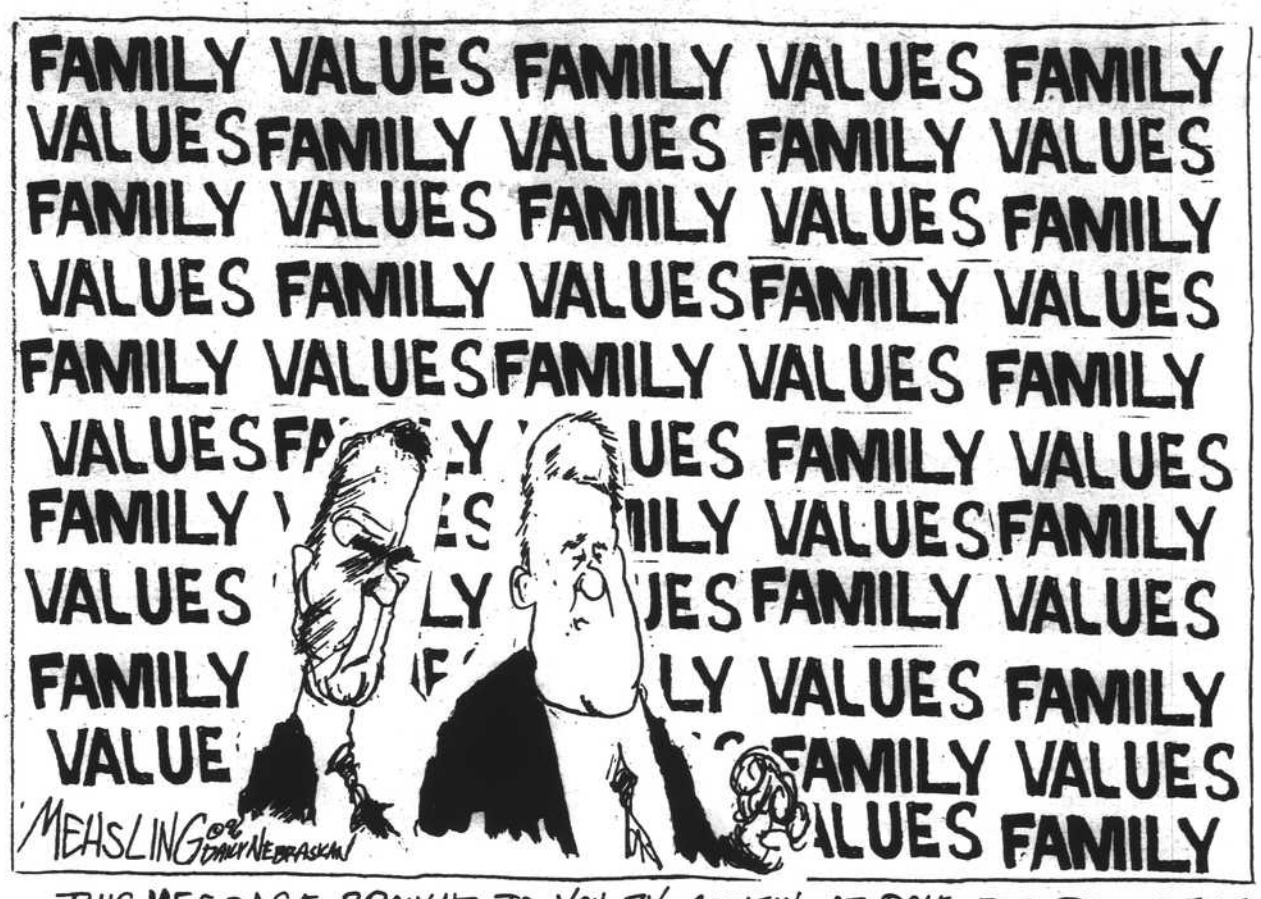
MEHSLING'S VIEW



THIS MESSAGE BROUGHT TO YOU BY CLINTON OR DOLE FOR PRESIDENT

LETTERS

Way out there

Mark Albracht's editorial in the Aug 28 DN compels me to write in response. His admission of the extent of how far Generation X (and their older counterparts) have been conditioned by the media bombardment of "alien culture" is appalling and frightening.

Mr. Albracht's theory that "we're being tested and buttered up for the big news," that we are not alone in the universe, that we are being prepared for the coming of "aliens from outer space," is right on target. As a former Sci-Fi fan and trekkie, I can attest to how well this conditioning is working. However, it is not an alien culture from another region of the universe that is doing the work, but an agency right here on Earth, and only here on Earth. One need only study the Bible to find the responsible party, and that is Satan and his legions of fallen angels. The Bible states that there are indeed other worlds and other intelligent beings out there — but they are watching the drama being played out on this planet with intense curiosity, from a distance. They have no desire to come to this world and become trapped in the same snares that hold our world in bondage.

This generation (X or otherwise) is in grave danger of being fatally deceived. If you would know the truth, study the Bible, go to church, talk with a church elder, find a fellow Christian and seek earnestly for enlightenment before it is too late. To believe in the coming of aliens with "excited anticipation" is to welcome the enemy into your heart and mind. The truth is far more wonderful and marvelous than anything that Satan and/or the media can invent.

David M. Newman
"perpetual UNL student"

Adjust the facts

I can appreciate views that differ from mine when they are based on facts and presented in a logical manner. Brent Pope's column on Thursday did neither.

Putting aside for the moment the inconsistency of holding Dole to a standard for which Clinton is exempt, consider the following exposure of Pope's falsehoods: Jack Kemp at 61 will not be "the oldest vice president for a first term president in American history," if elected. George Clinton was 69 when he was elected as the vice president for first-termer James Madison in 1808.

In his entire acceptance speech, Bob Dole never said anything like,"Bob Dole likes ideas," as Mr. Pope alleges. You would think that in Dole's 57 minute speech Pope could find something REAL to criticize, but instead he made something up, assuming that no one would check up on it.

As a senior broadcasting major, Pope should know better. As a reputable paper, the Daily Nebraskan should have a little chat with Pope about the ethics of journalism.

As a student of this fine University, I hope Pope is not typical of what UNL is producing these days.

Glen Th. Parks
junior
philosophy

Disarming ideas

I found the column "Watch the government; It watches you," in the Aug. 27 Daily Nebraskan to be highly offensive and inflammatory and inappropriate for inclusion in a responsible newspaper. The writer, Mr. Nick Wiltgen, obviously has extreme anti-government views and makes wildly exaggerated statements about "invisible guns" and "armed robbers" to justify his apparent belief that each person should be free to obey only those laws he thinks are "just." The human race has struggled for millenia to raise itself out of savagery to achieve its present imperfect state of civilization. To do this, it has instituted governments and codes of behavior called laws. Respect for the laws of a community means respect for the people of that community. If Mr. Wiltgen really prefers anarchy to law, I can think of several other countries which he might find more to his liking.

He is obviously interested in drugs, and in that connection, writes of "victimless crimes." However, a large fraction of the murders, assaults, robberies, burglaries and other crimes are drug-related. We are all victims, and the use of illicit drugs has costs that all of us have to bear.

In the name of responsible journalism, I hope that the Daily Nebraskan will let Mr. Wiltgen blow off steam from a soap box out on some street corner instead of giving him space in the student newspaper.

M. Eugene Rudd
professor emeritus
physics

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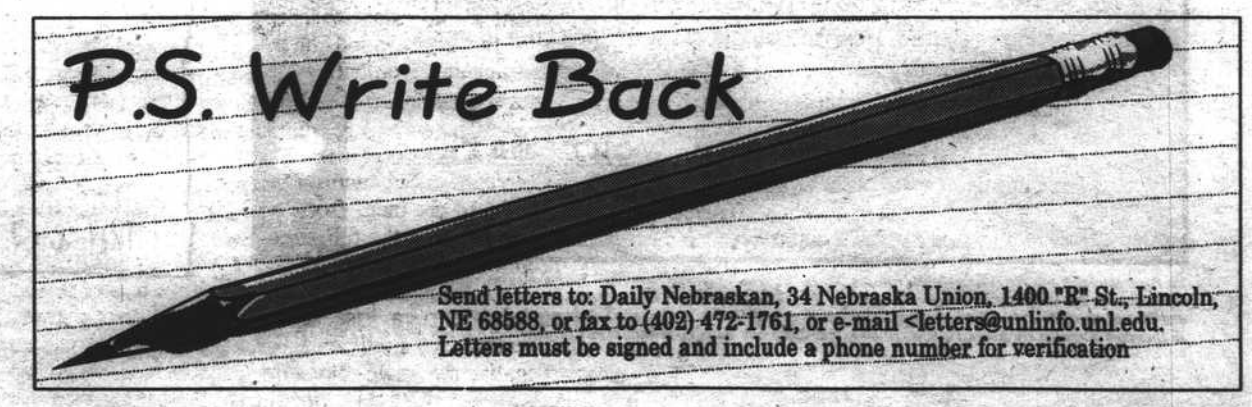
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