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Campaign '96 ENDORSEMENTS Vote Clinton *America can stomach presidents' policies*

Spinach or brussels sprouts. Voters in this presidential election year should have some newfound sympathy for children faced with that choice.

Ross Perot and the other various unpalatable third-party candidates aside, Americans have an equally unenviable decision in choosing who will occupy the White House for the next four years.

On one side, there's former Sen. Bob Dole. Like cooked spinach gone cold, he's still got a fair amount of substance and grit, but his ideas lack cohesiveness and he lacks presentation.

On the other side — President Clinton. The brussels sprouts he has to offer may leave an equally bad taste in the mouth, but they at least hold their shape over time, and Clinton seems to have a decent recipe on how to spice them up.

By most accounts, Clinton has performed better than expected during his first term in Washington. He has met the traditional criteria Americans place before their presidents — not with flying colors, but with solid marks, nonetheless.

Crime has been held in check. Clinton has made good on promises to add thousands of police officers to America's streets and to crack down on violent crime. He has been instrumental in passing the Brady Bill for handgun control, and he has signed legislation to take assault weapons off the streets.

Under Clinton, the economy has remained solid and grown at a steady rate. Unemployment is down, and job creation is up. Inflation is low and interest rates are steady. Wall Street is stronger than ever, and the federal budget deficit is falling.

Clinton should also be commended for his proposals to strengthen higher education. His plan would offer families making under \$100,000 a year a \$1,500 tax credit and up to \$10,000 a year in tax deductions to help defray the costs of attending college.

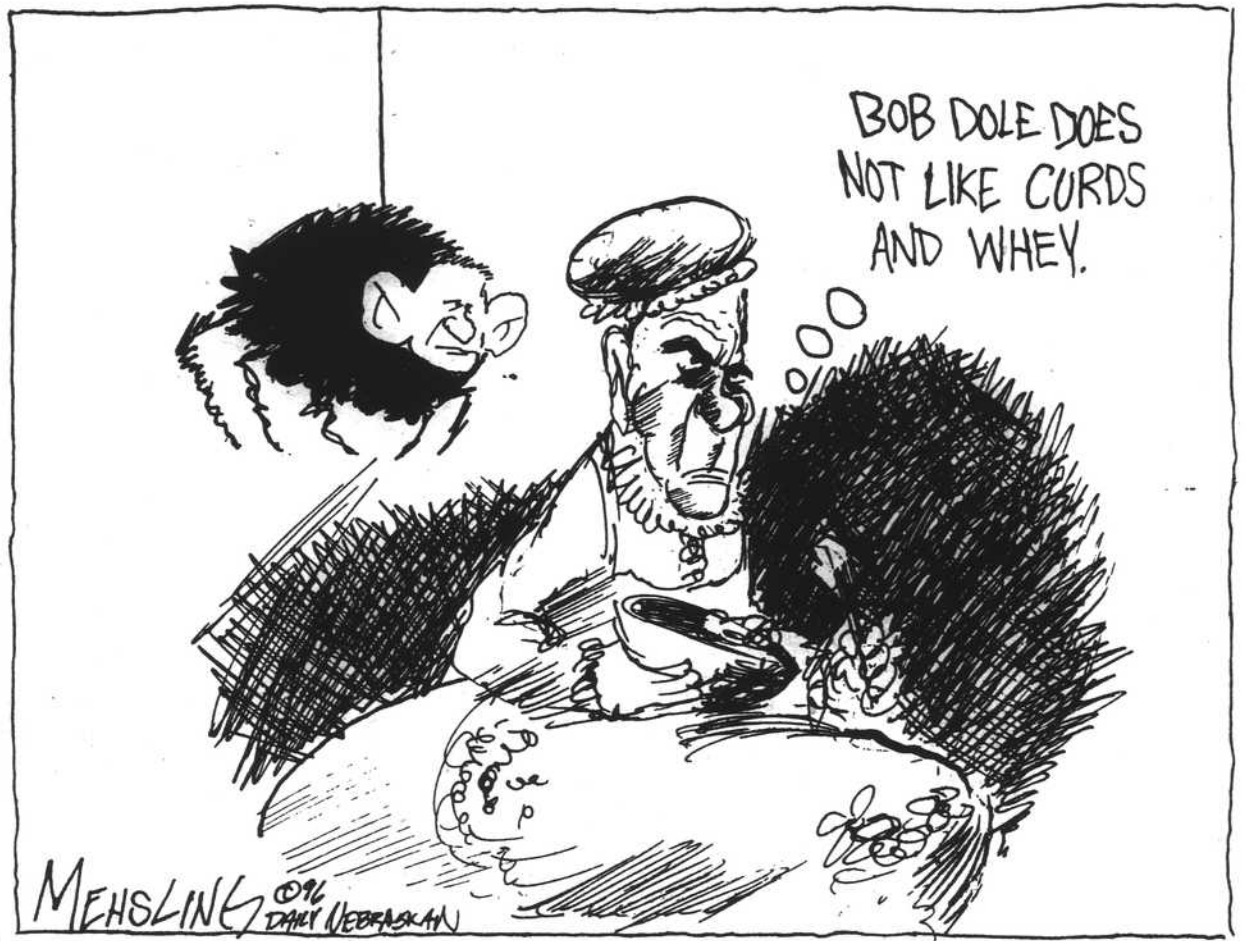
Clinton recognizes the importance of educational loans for college students. "We must make two years of college just as universal in four years as a high school education is today, and we can do it," he has said.

Most important, however, Clinton is simply presidential. Minus a few lapses early in his term, he has become the moderate leader Americans seek. He possesses the diplomatic poise to earn respect from America's allies and demand it from enemies. His foreign policy successes in Bosnia, Northern Ireland and the Middle East have overshadowed his missteps in Somalia, Russia and Iraq.

Clearly, there is no "best choice" this election year. But President Clinton is the better choice, and for that, the Daily Nebraskan believes he deserves a second term in the White House.

So suck it up, eat your brussels sprouts — and hope that dessert is on the menu in 2000.

MEHSLING'S VIEW



Steve
WILLEY

Cafeteria Catholic

I've lost my taste for guilt

In case you couldn't tell by the hidden religious themes in my previous columns, I used to be a devout Catholic. I grew up in a Catholic home, attended a Catholic church and was an altar boy in my Catholic church.

I say I "used to be" a Catholic because I am currently serving a 30-year suspension from the religion for "gargling" with the wine during a Mass back in 1988. Now that I think about it though, my dismissal was probably a blessing in disguise. The Catholic faith was just too constrictive for people like me.

Unfortunately, there's probably little chance that the Church will loosen up either. That's too bad.

Historically, the Catholic faith has always been rigidly stern. Early records indicate that the religion was founded by a man named John Lustivoli, who later became the religion's first pope.

Lustivoli was somewhat of an outcast at the time and was well-known throughout Italy for bopping strangers on the head with loaves of unleavened bread. John was said to have been extremely unsatisfied with his current religion, mainly because he was having trouble finding other people who were likewise interested in worshipping armadillos.

So to entice more people, Lustivoli created a religion that would make people feel guilty no matter what they did.

In his 84 A.D. diary, John wrote, "Whoever in my religion committeth a sin against thy heavenly Father shall be made to feel solely responsible for all the sins of the world. And robed female angels shall descend from the heavens and striketh the sinner on thy knuckles with a wooden measuring stick of some kind." (Of course it's obvious now that the soothsaying Lustivoli was referring to nuns and rulers.)

In no time at all, John's religion



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spread wildly, attracting thousands of people who were, for decades, feeling absolutely wonderful about themselves. The Catholic faith would change this of course.

As its popularity increased, the Catholic faithful began flexing their religious muscles and by the 1200s, they were forcing people of other faiths to convert to Christianity. People who remained faithful to other religions were tortured, sometimes until death, by the Catholics. (Now that's what I call strict!) This persecution came to be known as the "Disposition." (EDITOR'S NOTE: That's "Accusation," you idiot! As in the "Spanish Accusation." Jesus Christ!)

During both the Roman and Spanish (Accusations?), one of the

most popular forms of torture was to have the sinners led into the pope's chambers where they were forced to listen to his pet basset hound sing "Ave Maria" for hours. One historian wrote that the pope's basset hound, with its horrendous voice and alternate lyrics, was personally responsible for the conversion of thousands of non-Catholics.

Today these strict teachings are still enacted as Catholic schools across the nation hold their own "Interpositions." So many of us who have survived Catholic schools still "hiss" like frightened cats whenever we see a nun. I still have the telltale physical indentions of a plastic ruler across my forehead from my Catholic-schoolin' days in Mississippi.

At my Catholic school, we were forced to wear uniforms. Now, I realize that many schools nowadays require uniforms, but our uniforms were actually miniature pope costumes — only, for some reason, we were required to wear our sash vertically.

My school was so strict, the students were collectively referred to as "Demon children." Nuns are always so realistic about life, you know. I remember honestly being told by Sister Mary, in grade school that I was "too fat to be an astronaut."

It was, for me, just another push in the back away from the religion.

Who knows, maybe one day I'll return to the religion I was baptized in. But it probably won't be until the Catholic powers that be relax their policies a little bit.

Telling me I won't have any time in purgatory, for example, might be just enough to bring me back.

Former Bishop Steve Willey says the first thing he'll do when appointed pope is to install a "mayonnaise-style buffet" inside of the Vatican.

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