

OPINION PAGES

DN Quotes OF THE WEEK

"What such people really need to learn how to do is keep their nose out of other peoples' crotches."
— Sen. Ernie Chambers of Omaha on the issue of same-sex marriage

"We must keep our old democracy forever young. Guided by the ancient vision of a promised land, let us set our sights upon a land of New Promise."
— President Bill Clinton, inaugural address

"We certainly don't need to redefine marriage to accommodate homosexual couples."
— Doug Patton, executive director of the Nebraska Christian Coalition

"The message is that we can all be friends, that we can all work together. It's important for kids to overlook color and sex and continue doing that when they're adults."
— Carrie Nunez, floor supervisor, Lincoln Children's Museum

"We should never lose by 37 points. They just completely took the wind out of our sails."
— NU wrestler Tolly Thompson on the Huskers' loss to Iowa at the Cliff Keen National Duals

"Half the fun is to be able to see what God created. It sure beats the architecture in New York City."
— Marshall Mahler, UNL alumnus, during the UNL Outdoor Adventures' Snow and Ice Climbing Seminar

"I don't expect to come back. I think I'm going to win. Someone has to."
— Kimberly Weir, Miss Nebraska on the Miss USA competition

"It's like a soap opera. It's just rock 'n' roll, for God's sakes."
— Heath Cole, singer/guitarist, Wide

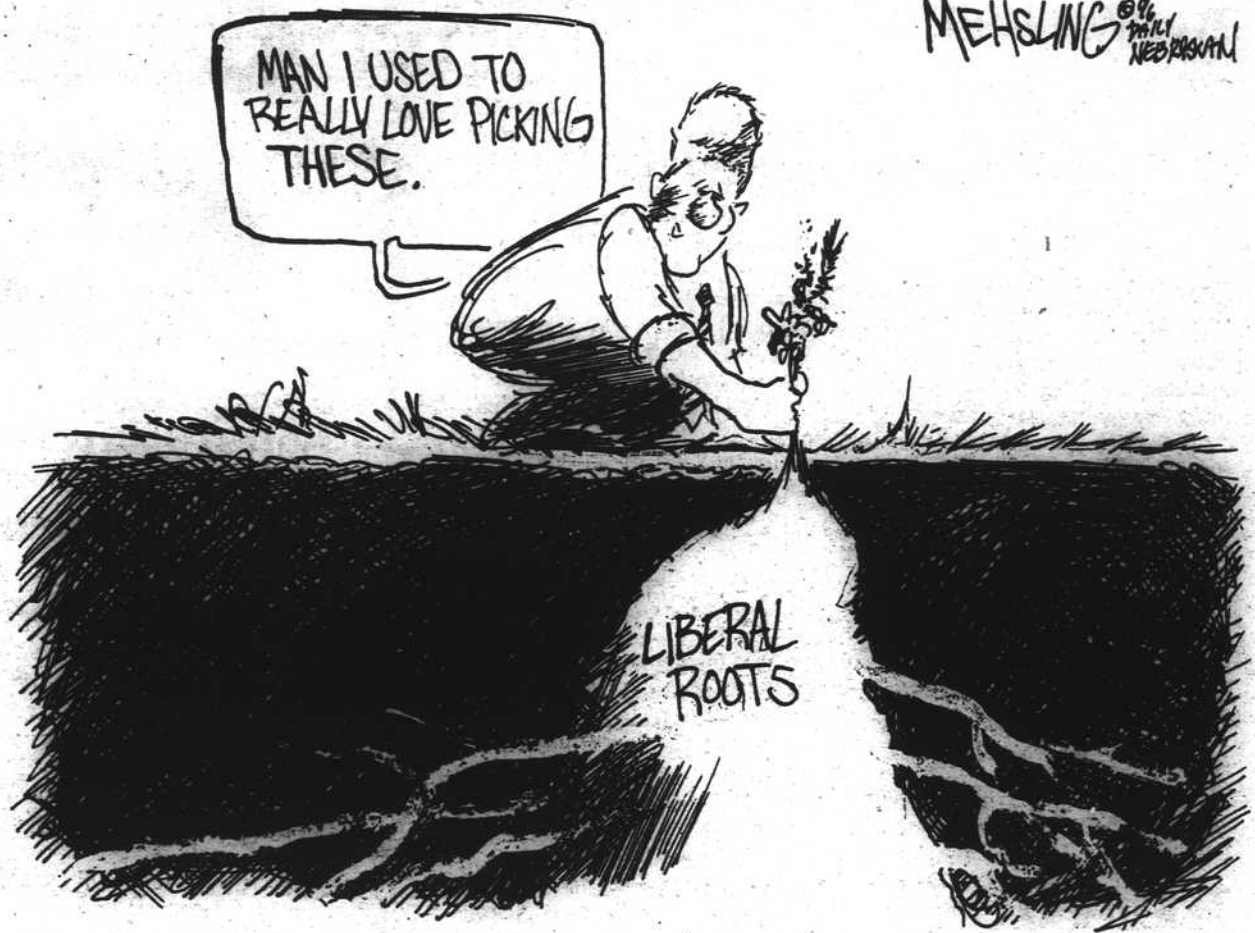
"We had to prove ourselves after losing to Colorado."
— Nebraska center Mikki Moore after the Huskers victory over Missouri

"The same thing happened to us last year. We beat them here by 18, and went down there and lost by one, but I expect us to be a lot more aggressive."
— NU point guard Tyronn Lue on the Huskers' prospects in Columbia after routing Missouri on Saturday

"It left my hands, and it felt good."
— NU guard Cookie Belcher on his missed free throw sealing Missouri's win on Wednesday

"I think the contract's great. I know I'm getting the minimum, but beggars can't be choosers."
— Former Nebraska defensive tackle Christian Peter on his \$131,000 contract with the New York Giants

Mehsling's VIEW



DN LETTERS

In the same boat

I want to commend Anne Hjersman on her column, "Politics Gets Too Personal with Teen Pregnancy," that was featured Thursday.

I also have a sister, Jodi, who had a baby at the age of 17. My sister went through many political issues too. One particular example of this was when she was not allowed to be chosen to attend Girls State, which is sponsored by the American Legion. (Girls State is a program in which one girl is chosen to represent each town in Nebraska, and they come to Lincoln to learn about the Government.)

Jodi was not chosen because the American Legion has a rule that any female that is pregnant or has a child can not attend.

My question is: Do they screen male applicants to see if they are currently fathers or expecting a child within the next nine months when choosing them for Boys State?

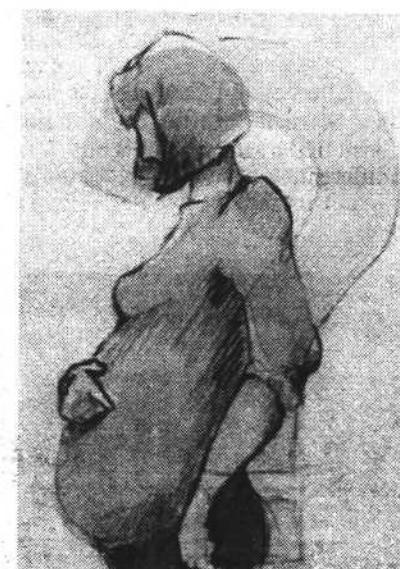
The same year Jodi's class was given an assignment in history to write a paper about the great qualities of the American Legion. The papers were then to be used in a contest that was sponsored by the American Legion.

My sister proceeded to write about her experience with them. I doubt the paper got any farther than the history teacher's hands, but I was proud she stood up for herself.

Many pregnant teenagers do not have parental, financial and the father's support. We all need to understand these young women are the ones who truly need our support as a community.

Jodi has been successful and has not let anything stand in her way. She is raising a beautiful 2 1/2-year-old boy, Tyler Robert. She was married to Tyler's father, Steven, last December. She attends Grand Island Community College and is in an honorary sorority. She will graduate in May and will be a registered nurse.

I am not going to say it has been easy for her or Steven. They have had to face reality and mature very



AARON STECKELBERG/DN

fast. I am proud of my sister and I often wonder how she has done it all. Again, like Anne said, "if my sister represents the downfall of society then I can only hope to go down with the ship."

Jill Martinsen
graduate student
secondary business education

Mis-conception

It astonishes me that Anne Hjersman would print an account of her obviously misconceived notion of teen pregnancy being anything less than "the breakdown of the American family," (DN, Thursday).

Anne, are we to understand that you have ~~blinded~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~ ~~world~~? And did you really think we would believe that teenage pregnancy is really "not all that bad," or what? Let me bring you in on a little secret.

More than 30 percent of all births were reported as illegitimate in recent studies. That number is climbing as we speak — projected to reach 40 percent by the end of the century.

Most people probably don't have personal problems regarding your

sister, but, no matter what you would like to think, she is contributing to the downfall of society by becoming one of the people who bring illegitimate babies into this world.

You said yourself that your sister and her boyfriend were going to get married now because of the baby — which unfortunately results from a lot of illegitimate births.

What kind of a life can a 17- or 18-year-old mother have when she's married and has a kid? You might think that is a rewarding life, but please don't look to her with a blind view and think that just because it's "your" sister that we should all give her our blessings.

That is a very naive perception. If that little girl carries a label on her shoulders it is because of the fact that she was brought into the world by two people who should have been responsible enough to know that pregnancy can never be 100 percent avoided.

"Illegitimacy" may be a politician's word, but, like it or not, a child born without a true family has already been put into a world that may not look as promising as it might have been if he or she were born into a loving family environment that is ready to handle the responsibilities of a child — without having to obtain the help of relatives on a daily basis.

Your sister is a statistic, Anne, and she chose to behave in a way that made her such and created her "new" life.

She is a statistic — the same way every young man or woman murdered ~~in~~ ~~circumstances~~ ~~every~~ ~~day~~ is a statistic.

We can all learn from the mistake your sister made and from the mistakes Americans make every single day — and not make the same ones. Maybe you should rethink your journalistic views if you truly think what you have expressed is even in the vicinity of being truthful.

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