

Stop, collaborate and listen

DN strives to encourage active editorial discussion



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Hi.
Let's get this out of the way up front. Don't kill the messenger because of the message; don't kill the idealist because of the ideas.

What you're going to see on these two pages in the coming months will often make you feel uncomfortable, and that's a good thing, because it means that we're getting to you. Ideas are meant to get under your skin even if you don't agree with them. And that's what the opinion section is.

Pages of raw ideas.
In the past, opinion editors before me have talked about the positive effects that the newspaper has had on them, as well as how they got into journalism. They tell you a little about their life story, and then a lot about the DN.

They talk about the great things that have happened to them while they've been here at the university. They offer positive advice to incoming students and tell old war stories about days of yore.

Basically, they BS for a few pages to make you feel better.

Me, I'm the kind of guy who likes to pick a fight.

I'm not here to hold your hand and tell you that the university isn't a scary place. It is. I'm not here to tell you all the people you hated in high school are gone. They aren't. In fact, there's more of them, whomever they are. I'm not here to give the university nothing but praise, nor nothing but criticism. I'm no cheerleader, but I'm no doomsayer either. I'm a realist, and I'm here for a reason.

I'm here because I want to make a difference.
Yeah, it really sounds cheesy when I say it, but I'm here because I think somehow, something I have published will stop and make someone think. I'm hoping two students will get into a dialogue over something they've read here.

I want people to really think.
No matter what you may think about the columns, the cartoons, the editorials or the letters, they aren't done just to get on your nerves. There are quite a few people on this planet, and each and

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every one of them has something different to say.

I want them to say it here.
The Daily Nebraskan isn't a place where a bunch of elitists come, sit down and say "Well, what can we do to tick off the students of the university today?" We are students just like you. We're concerned about what's going on, and we want to keep you informed.

The editorial section is your chance to keep your finger on the public pulse. It's your voice as much as it is ours. Maybe they're the same voice. Or maybe just a very out-of-tune chorus of voices.

These pages represent a battlefield of ideas. This is where conflicts begin and problems see at least a little closure. This is where people come to discuss. If you haven't got an opinion, wait awhile. You'll form one. We all know what opinions are like. We've all got one.

This is where we talk.
And talking is important.

I know, you're thinking that you've heard this lecture about communication before, and it was from your parents. At least they raised me for 18 years, you're thinking, so what gives this guy, who's never even met me, the right to pontificate about opinions to me?

I'm trying to save you some of the hassle I went through.

College isn't easy. I've been here for three years, and that's the lesson I've learned best.

You'll do more growing up here than you have the past 18 years of your life. Not only are you surrounded by thousands of people who have nothing in common with you, you have to get along with them.

Some people you'll like. Some you'll hate.

But no matter what you think of the people sitting next to you in whatever boring class you're reading our columns in, those people can teach you as much as any teacher on this campus can. And there are plenty more people just like them.

Every person has at least one story to tell.

Columnists will talk to everyone through the DN, and everyone has the chance to respond. They're stating their opinions, and they

don't reflect on me, the newspaper, their fraternity/sorority, their place of birth or any other group of people. These are their opinions.

Columnists are allowed to talk about anything, as long as what they're saying is new or insightful. And that's what I'm asking out of all of you.

This is a discussion, a dialogue if you will. And one person can't do it alone. While two people make a conversation, imagine how much more interesting it'll be when everyone starts getting involved. A university full of ideas, rather than a house of lemmings.

Think before you rush blindly into the sea because the guy next to you told you so.

New concepts, new dreams, new problems - new answers.

College is about stripping away all of what your parents taught you, your high school taught you, your friends taught you, television taught you and the media taught you, then building from scratch on whatever's left.

Because what's left is you.

It won't always be smooth sailing, not here nor in whatever dorm room or apartment you're in. We at the DN are idealists, and I'm hoping you will be too, when you get deep down inside yourself. But being an idealist isn't easy.

I know things aren't going to work out in the end, and wearing rose-colored glasses just means you've got red in your eyes. Problems do exist. We'll never be without them, thank God, or I'd be out of a job. I think most of us are cynics at heart, like me.

But that doesn't mean we can't strive to right what's wrong.

And remember, it's us I'm talking about, not just me.

You belong here as much as I do, or as any of these columnists. You have ideas; we want to hear them. We want you engaged in these debates. We crave your letters, be they resentful, proud, angry or just plain funny. We need you with us. We can't do it without you.

It's not my paper. It's not your paper. It's our paper.

Welcome to the Daily Nebraskan.

I'll be seeing you.

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How to Get Your Opinion Heard at the Daily Nebraskan!

1. Keep it short. We get a lot of letters and the longer they are, the more likely it is that they'll get cut or not printed at all.

2. Write your name, major, year in school and telephone number at the bottom of the letter, otherwise it won't be printed. We only print letters after calling to verify their source.

3. Don't go through and point-by-point challenge a column. People want to hear your opinion, not watch you dissect someone else's.

4. Type the letter. Bad handwriting ensures a one-way ticket into the paper-recycling bin.

5. Don't beat a dead horse. We will choose to print fresh ideas over letters about stale subjects or subjects many printed letters have dealt with recently.

6. Don't include profanity. It has yet to advance any argument.

7. Write well. If you want to be heard, make sure you have something to say.

