

OPINIONPAGE

Our VIEW

Walk the walk

Johanns must deliver campaign promises

Tuesday's elections awarded most of the state's available top offices to members of the Republican Party, including the governor's chair.

Although the Daily Nebraskan endorsed several candidates on Democratic tickets, we call on the elected Republicans to keep the best interests of the entire state — not just special interests — in mind as they pursue their political careers.

Despite some Nebraskans' opinions, we live in a state with a richly diverse population composed of gays, blacks, Hispanics and non-Christians, among many others.

Yet Mike Johanns, governor-elect of Nebraska, refused to sign a proclamation for Lincoln Coming Out Day in October 1997. The petition was submitted to him by members of a local gay rights group seeking support for its cause.

His justification was simple: He is a Catholic. It is an easy statement to make in a state heavily populated by Roman Catholics and devout Christians of other hard-line denominations.

But they are not the only citizens who count.

As governor, Johanns' responsibilities include defending minorities as well as representing the people as a whole. This means looking beyond personal beliefs to the needs of all citizens.

Johanns' opponent, Democrat Bill Hoppner, promised a seat at the governing table for all Nebraskans regardless of creed, color or economic status. We hope Johanns picks up on this dedication to the people of the state he governs, not a select few who have similar convictions — or access to his wallet.

Big business fueled his campaign to victory that cost nearly twice as much as Hoppner's. Now Johanns must prove he will not be a slave to the money that helped him guarantee his gubernatorial victory.

Johanns must follow through on his campaign commitments to farmers and to education. He also should keep close the work ethic and sincerity that defined him during his campaign.

He must work through his introverted nature in order to lead and to hasten the decision-making process, when necessary.

He also must remember that, though his party refused to take a stance, he opposed Initiative 413. He should continue to oppose similar measures that threaten education — the greatest determinant of citizens' success in an increasingly competitive global economy.

Though he has promised to keep tight reins on the state budget, Johanns must stay true to his promise that he will not sacrifice quality education.

If he remembers education and the interests of the common Nebraskan, Johanns will end his gubernatorial term as successfully as he ended this campaign.

Mook's VIEW



DN LETTERS

Class act

I'm a University of Texas alum who attended the Nebraska-Texas game last weekend. It was the first time that I had flown to Lincoln to watch a football game.

Not only did I take away with me the memories of a great game but also one lasting impression: Nebraska fans are just about the classiest fans I have ever had the pleasure of meeting.

Decked out in my UT gear before the game, I have never had total strangers who were fans of the other team come up to me and wish me good luck before the game, let alone congratulate me after the game. If you watched the game on TV, you saw Nebraska fans clapping for Ricky Williams and the Texas squad as they left the field.

I was embarrassed to think that it would be highly unlikely for Nebraskans to have received the same treatment if the game had been played in Austin. While I can't change all my Texas brethren, this is one Longhorn fan who will greet you warmly and wish you good luck when you come down to Texas next year. Thanks for a great time.

H.R. Pan
Houston

Pay to play?

(Cliff Hicks') column ("Adding To Apathy," Tuesday) spoke volumes on the issue of paid political advertising. I currently reside in the state of New Mexico, but lived in Nebraska for 37 years.

I've lived in New Mexico only three years and have been utterly appalled at the campaigning here. I realize it's probably just as bad in Nebraska. But take this example from (New Mexico).

We have the son of the wealthiest family in New Mexico running for a seat in the (federal) House of Representatives. He is running on the Democratic platform and has personally spent more than \$6 million of his own dollars on his campaign. That does not include the monies that the Democratic Party or the PACs have given to his campaign.

This guy may have a lot of integrity, but I don't know that from his record or his experiences. All I know is that he's been a career politician (and he's young) and probably has never had to work to support himself. I question how can he relate to the people's needs.

He is running against a career military officer who did not have this kind of access to cash. But that doesn't

mean that the Republican Party has been lacking in helping her. This trashing campaign has been going on since the early part of this year. You ask why so soon? We had an unusual situation here: The incumbent died while in office the early part of the year.

His term was going to be finished this year, but they needed a replacement from June until now. According to New Mexico law, a replacement had to be elected from the New Mexico population, so they held a special election in June. Whoever got the most votes total in June was going to be sent to the House of Representatives, and whoever got the most votes of each party was going to have to run again in the general election (Tuesday).

From the day that the honorable Steve Schiff died, we've been bombarded and blasted with nonstop attacks. They've been using telemarketers, mailings, TV, radio, you name it. The ad agencies covering both of them have profited significantly.

We've had not only President Clinton here three times in this state in one year, but have also had the first lady visit on separate occasions. Al Gore was here last week, etc. It was all in the name of promoting their party to get votes for their party candidates.

Yes, I exercised my power to vote and am so thankful I won't have to hear the disgust for awhile. I'm beginning to also think along your lines about the need for more parties.

At least down here we have strong groups with the Greens and the Libertarians. There was a Green or Libertarian candidate in almost every category for offices here.

In Nebraska, I used to be a registered independent, but you can't do that here and vote in primaries. I did not vote straight party line even though I was registered as such, because I felt it more important to vote for the best qualified person.

I'm all for cutting them off from paid advertising in any form — let them beat the streets and take their talks to the people instead of via the ad agency pockets.

Jan Bostelman
Albuquerque, N.M.

Not location, state of mind

Sarah Baker, I'm actually very happy that watching "The Brandon Teena Story" made you feel uncomfortable ("Nebraska bashing: Stereotypes ruin 'Teena Story,'" Tuesday). It is supposed to do exactly that. However, it's too bad you completely missed the point of the film as you worried about the

"unflattering" way in which rapists, murderers and their accessories (as all of us who stand by and do nothing about hate and violence indeed are) were portrayed.

Hate crimes "aren't exactly pretty." You're worried about scenic shots? Did you realize that Teena Brandon, Lisa Lambert and Philip Devine were murdered in cold blood on a farm surrounded by "barren snow-covered fields?" Perhaps that is why such scenery abounds in the film.

Homophobia "as a whole has an unflattering and unwelcoming feel to it, [and] the story it tells is by no means a happy one." This story is not just about Falls City or Humboldt or Lincoln or even Nebraska.

A small nucleus of intolerance? Is that what you think allowed Teena Brandon to be raped, and consequently ridiculed and murdered when she talked about it? Obviously, you have never heard of institutionalized oppression.

"The Brandon Teena Story" indicts our entire society. You compare the most vicious manifestation of hatred and intolerance to common stereotypes about Nebraskans. How insulting. When was the last time you heard about someone being fired from a job, beaten, raped or murdered for being a "trashy, homophobic chain-smoker" who listens to "annoying" country music? Would you feel better, a little more distant and safe from association with homophobic violence, if the film were set in Iowa, or perhaps Wyoming?

This film made you, as a Nebraskan, feel uncomfortable. Again, I say good. That is exactly what it is supposed to do.

Hatred and violence exist in Nebraska, and in every state. Acknowledging oppression and unlearning it is very uncomfortable. Susan Muska and Greta Olafsdottir made a courageous and important film, and I thank them from the bottom of my heart for doing so. Nebraskans, Americans, should feel very ashamed about hate crimes, for we are responsible for their existence. Until we all accept this responsibility, hatred and violence will always exist here.

By the way, the Ross Theater is showing four extra screenings, not two, as you mentioned. It is unfortunate that there is only time for two more nights of this film, as it should be seen by every Nebraskan.

Andrew Ascherl
freshman
women's studies
Mary Riepma Ross Film
Theater employee

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