

OPINION PACKETS

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Our
VIEW

Eliminate the negative

Religious right is only hurting GOP politics

Last week, we learned American voters don't enjoy being told they're going to hell. They don't like to hear the country's going south with them, either.

Voters ousted many Republicans last week because those messages have ruled the GOP's channels since President Ronald Reagan and his "America is hunky-dory" message left office, and the religious right claimed the party.

In the past decade — especially in the past nine months of the Lewinsky affair — the GOP's message of fiscal conservatism has been polluted by an odd obsession with anti-sexuality preaching and moral condemnation.

Many GOP leaders have devoted their waking hours to telling the country it ails from a general cultural decline, falling morality and a lack of social control.

If the post-Reagan GOP is to thrive again, its leaders must make the party's message more positive — and that means ousting the religious right.

The religious right should create its own party to disperse its radical message, and the Republican Party should define itself away from Christian moral preaching and toward the party of fiscal conservatism and restraint.

Reagan's brand of American morality could suit the party just fine. He walked a reasonable line between politics and moral culture. He pointed out moral heroes instead of condemning immorality. He opposed abortion, but he never attended an anti-abortion rally.

But more recent conservative politicians, including Nebraska's Jon Christensen, inextricably linked politics and morality.

Christensen, who was divorced just like Reagan, couldn't let off the moral preaching on family values. He felt fine bragging that his fiancée was a virgin, and voters rejected him.

Yet the Christensen message reflected the mainstream conservative politicking of the past few years. For instance, at a June 1997 conservative conference in Washington, speakers advocated a spiritual cure for homosexuality.

Ken Starr wrote that Americans have a right to a "private family life." He declared nonfamily private matters fair game and thus justified his mass dispersal of immoral porn.

Combating abortion was added to the Republican Party platform, although polls showed more than half of Republican Party members supported the procedure's legality.

Many Republican candidates campaigned as instruments to create a more moral America, saying our society produces marriage-ending, illegitimate child-producing, drug-using hooligan homosexual gang members on welfare.

The message is fitting for a radical third party. It is not fitting for one of two mainstays in American politics.

If the Republican Party cannot separate itself from hellfire-and-damnation morality preaching, its popularity will go down with the country.

Mook's
VIEW



DN
LETTERS

K-Statement

TRULY AMAZING! Yes, I am shouting. Nebraska Cornhusker fans are actually gauging the success of their season based on whether the Big Red can "upset" the Kansas State Wildcats — a team NU hasn't lost to since 1968.

Big Red fans are some of the best in the country. However, it is evident that the victors have been spoiled. How long did it take Tom Osborne to get his first championship — 20 years? Then when he learned how to win it, NU won a bazillion games in a row and created the most dominating football program in history.

Now, NU has a little bump in the road, and the folks are getting restless. If there's anything people should learn from NU, it is that consistency breeds success. The fans, administrators, coaches and players understood this. Now you see what it is like for so many other programs throughout this country to experience a little adversity because there was a change.

K-State has learned from Nebraska. We have learned that it takes a great commitment from all people, the fans, the players, the coaches and the administration, and guess what? We are winning. It just so happens that this year we were unlucky enough to get the Huskers with two losses.

We all wanted the national championship to be played Saturday in Manhattan, Kan., but now it is just another hurdle (a big hurdle). Does anybody really believe that the challenge is not with the Wildcats? After all, we are the ones who have to overcome 30 straight losses, we are the ones who have to believe we can win, we are the ones who have to prove it.

So please do not even think about

how beating the Wildcats will restore Husker honor. If you doubt this, think how your reaction would have been had the Big Red been undefeated Nov. 14.

A loss to the Wildcats would not have been about restoring honor, so what has changed? NU is a great football team that is dealing with challenges; y'all have not lost any honor. The game will be played on the field and will be a great example of two of the best teams in the country trying to achieve the same thing — greatness. I look forward to a great football game. Good luck to the Big Red.

Jack Messer
Manhattan, Kan.

Scholarly substance

I have thus far steered clear of the Peru State College debate, but the editorial in Monday's DN "Time to say goodbye: Peru State is a waste of taxpayers' dollars" really angered me. They say \$27 million is too much to

spend on the school. Is it too much for students at UNL? Peru State is not worth increasingly less than taxpayers should pay for.

In the state of Nebraska, school districts are constantly asking for and receiving bonds from Nebraska taxpayers and for good reason. Schools are worth the money. Why should smaller schools be worth less just because they don't have a championship football team?

Peru State's campus is not failing to meet the needs of its region. If this school were not there, many local residents would not be able to attend school, and this includes my mom. She lives and works in Falls City and drives 40 minutes to classes every day, carrying a full-time load. All she wants is the bachelor's degree she's never had. This is the same story for a lot of other non-traditional students who attend this school. Without Peru State, many would not be able to attend a secondary school.

So the school is failing academically too. This must mean that my mom's 4.0 GPA she has maintained is worthless. So all the time that she studies for physics, chemistry and math make her stupid because the curriculum is not hard. This is wrong. Her classes are just as hard as mine, sometimes harder. We both took the same class last spring semester and, comparing notes and class content, she learned more.

So if you consider Peru State a failing school, I'm sorry. It certainly isn't failing in my mother's or my eyes. Give opportunity a chance. Peru State needs to be renovated, no doubt. Maybe our future of Nebraska's oldest college is worth paying and standing up for.

Naomi Kohles
senior
fisheries and wildlife



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