

# OPINION PAGES

## Our VIEW

### Right and reasonable

*Culture, education take priority over cuts*

Perhaps Minnesotans are now reaping the rewards of electing a former pro wrestler to govern their state.

Gov. Jesse Ventura, who rode a wave of cynicism for traditional politicians to the state Capitol in November, unveiled plans last week to eliminate state funding for Minnesota public television and radio.

Though the cut would eliminate only 2 percent of Minnesota Public Radio's budget, Ventura's message is obvious: Culture — including MPR's much beloved "A Prairie Home Companion" program — is not important enough to be supported by state tax dollars.

Fortunately, the Nebraska state government seems primed to buck the trend of penny-pinching at all costs.

In his 1999-2000 executive budget, Gov. Mike Johanns recommended increasing state funding for the Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Division, the umbrella organization for services including public television and radio, as well as the state's growing distance-education infrastructure.

He proposed giving another \$400,000 to the division's budget, which would raise its annual state funding to \$7.6 million — about one-third of its total operating budget.

The division had asked for a \$2.2 million increase but said it was pleased with the governor's support.

Johanns also supported buying an essential \$17 million public TV satellite transponder and spending \$41 million to phase in digital television over six years. The federal government requires all public television stations to broadcast in digital and analog, the Nebraska ETV Network's current format, by May 1, 2003.

These blocks of spending will undoubtedly raise the ire of some traditionally tight-fisted Nebraskans calling for tax cuts and questioning the importance of public broadcasting and distance education.

The \$58 million in technology update projects is sure to cause debate inside the Capitol walls, but the Daily Nebraskan hopes that legislators will bear in mind the importance of quality public programming.

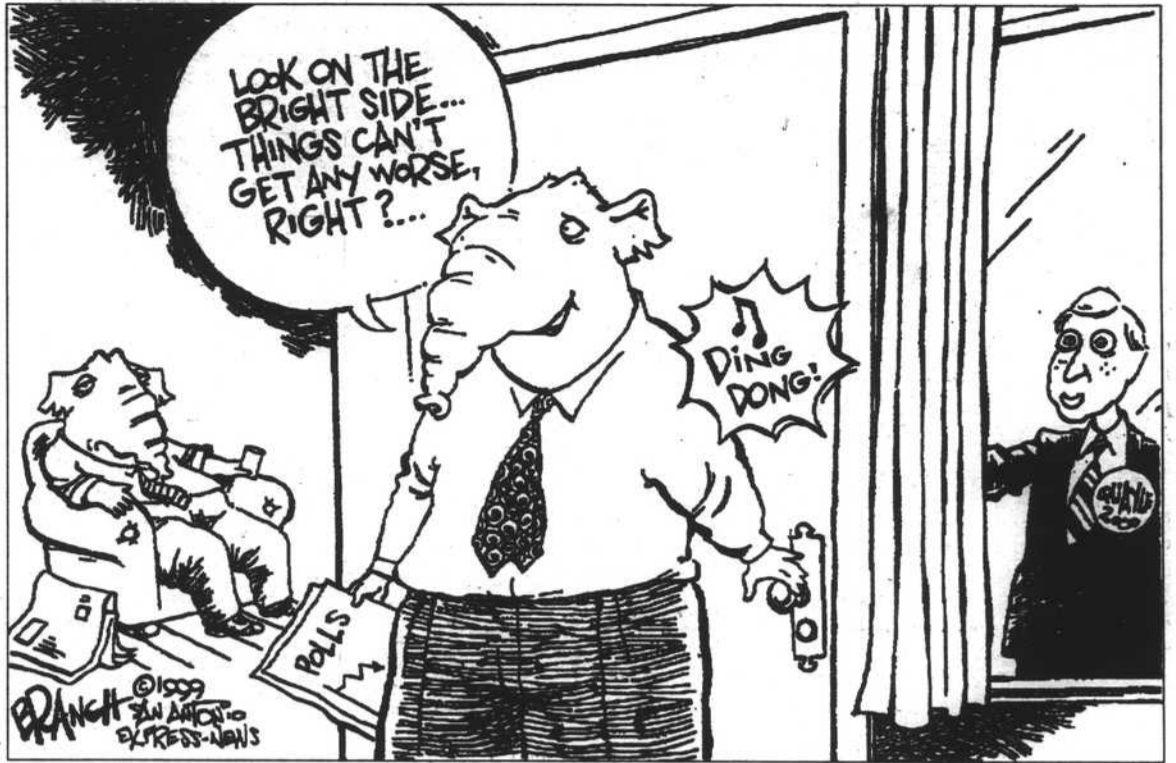
State senators should respect Johanns' telecommunications budget recommendations and focus on Nebraskans' cultural and educational needs, not just their pocketbooks.

We hope our senators will understand the importance of public broadcasting and of distance education in a state where the miles between towns, their inhabitants and state educators can threaten cultural isolation and impede technological progress.

For if Nebraskans, and the country, are to continue to enjoy NETV-produced programs such as "The Farmer's Wife" — now ranked among the most important PBS documents of the decade — NETV must be fully funded.

If not, some of the most important U.S. programming may be swept aside for the World Wrestling Federation.

## Branch's VIEW



## DN LETTERS

### Honorable intentions

Several residence hall issues are not understood. The UNL campus is devoted to diversity, as is the honors program. For that reason, special-interest floors have been created all over our campus, and campuses around the nation. Honors housing is just one of hundreds of these special-interest housing options.

The goal of special-interest floors is self-explanatory: to create an environment where everyone feels some common interest. All of the non-honors students currently in Neihardt will be able to live in Neihardt for a year and a half; however, they have the opportunity to apply to the program just like any other on campus student. The deadline is March 1.

The honors program does not discriminate on the basis of sex, age, disability, race, color, religion, marital status, veteran's status, national or ethnic origin or sexual orientation. Not everyone who has stellar grades applies to the honors program, and not everyone in the program has a 4.00.

Brian Opplinger's point was that being in the honors program does not make you smart, but being informed does. Grades are not the only criterion for diversity. The Pound 9 and 10 representatives seem to believe that diversity and segregation can be based upon GPA alone. The honors program contains members from all backgrounds and disciplines.

Being in the program requires an application process just like any other honorary organization, and the textbook scholarship is, like its title implies, a scholarship. Anyone who holds a scholarship of any kind realizes that benefits and responsibilities exist to maintain it. Scholarships are decided on the basis of the people who apply and are awarded after a competitive process.

Academic segregation, as some have chosen to call it, has always occurred. Universities are set up to distinguish people based on

grades. Some people graduate based on the grades they have earned, and some people do not. The honors program is not set up to say that it includes all the smart people; it is set up to contain a portion of people who desire a certain path in their curriculum, much like choosing a major.

The sociology department does not let a math major just have a sociology degree without doing the work or taking the classes, and the honors program does not admit any students who do not apply.

Having never lived in Neihardt, I agree that some honors students will choose to and are capable of living elsewhere. However, having special-interest housing for the honors program is not any different than it is for any other types of special-interest housing.

**Crystal Lynn Keeler**  
senior  
biology and sociology  
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assistant

### The line is drawn

As an author of a controversial Web site, one must follow certain guidelines in order to stay "within the bounds of the First Amendment." After reading the story about the "anti-abortion terrorists," I can't help but think, "What the hell?"

We are fortunate enough to be blessed with something so powerful as the First Amendment. But in order to use this right effectively, we must realize that our right is not absolute! One cannot go into a crowded theater and yell "FIRE!" This would be in direct violation of everyone else's liberties. It absolutely boggles me to hear that the defendants of

this case believe their First Amendment rights are being violated. As soon as one uses their rights in a way that violates the rights of another, they no longer have the protection entrusted by the Constitution. If I were to put myself in the shoes of a doctor on this "anti-abortion hit list," I would be running scared, too. The Web can be a very powerful thing. Its power is easily abused in cases like this one. The question is: Where do we draw the line?

I would consider the Web to fall under the qualifications of "freedom of press." The problem is if we attack one slander case (as in the case of the anti-abortion site), then it's our duty to attack them all. If someone feels the need to publish a Web site that graphically slanders myself with a headline of, "Marcus is a homosexual!" do I have the right to prosecute this individual for slander? Society and government need to reevaluate these types of cases.

We could find ourselves swimming in a world of a government-controlled Internet if we aren't careful. Right now the Internet is probably the most free form of ideas and communication. We also have to realize it's the simplest to access.

Exercise your rights ... but remember (as my mother still says to me), "If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all."

**Marcus Graham**  
Lincoln resident



MATT HANEY/DN

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