

# OPINION PAGES

## Our VIEW

### Computer illiterate

*Suspicious minds breed foolish thoughts*

"They've got to be kidding us, right?" the younger senator asked the older senator. The two sat in a smokers' lounge, talking about one of the latest memos.

"No, son, it's quite a serious matter," the older senator replied as he puffed on his cigar. "These are matters of national security, you know. We can't have the commies using our own technologies against us. We have these laws for a reason."

"Look, Apple's making home computers, not some sort of superpowered code-cracking machine!" the younger senator fumed. The proposal, in his mind, was a simple one.

Apple is requesting a change in the laws that govern the export of "supercomputers."

"It plays frickin' videogames, the younger man shouted, 'not break into the Pentagon!'"

The definition of that word, Apple argues, hasn't kept up with the technology itself.

"See, that's how it might appear to laymen like you and me, but the boys who handle national security, they think about these kinds of things all the time."

The younger senator looked at the memo, dumb-struck.

"It says here that they are still currently debating over whether or not the new PlayStation will be considered a supercomputer or not."

"And?" the older senator asked.

"It plays frickin' videogames," the younger man shouted. "It doesn't break into the Pentagon!"

"Ah, but it's fast, and speed's all one needs anymore. These hackers, they can redirect technology and corrupt it for their own uses."

"Tell me again why we're supposed to take this argument as valid?"

The older senator nodded. "It's a matter of national security, son. If the boys over at the National Security Agency say something might be dangerous, then we need to keep our eyes on it."

"Letting Apple sell its G4 personal computers to foreign countries is going to cause a breach of national security?"

"Ah ah ah. Supercomputers."

"Right. How?"

"Well ... well, I don't know exactly, but just the possibility is enough for me."

"Right, and I wondered why people think Congress is full of dimwits," the younger man said as he ground his cigarette butt into the ashtray. "Now I know."

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## Obermeyer's VIEW

THE OBSCENE CALLER MYSTERY UNRAVELS...



## DN LETTERS

### Let's Do Lunch

I enjoyed Josh Moenning's column "Third Party Predicament" (DN, Sept. 14).

I think you're right on the money that if Buchanan joins the Reform Party it would hurt Bush's chances at getting elected. As a liberal, I've long been hoping that either Buchanan or (Gary) Bauer would join a third party and leach votes away from the Republican candidate.

The most important outcome of the presidential election is that three Supreme Court justices are expected to retire by 2005. The winner of the election will have a chance to shift the balance of power on the court.

I found your use of the term "militant and maniacal gay rights activists" interesting. A common tactic of a group is to brand its opponents as insane, perverted or evil. As a member of the ACLU, I support equal rights for gays and lesbians (rights such as employment, housing, marriage and adoption). I often want to stereotype all Christian conservatives but then I remember that I have friends and family members who are Christian, and they're not all bad people.

If you're interested, I'll buy you lunch some Saturday, and you can see what a gay rights activist is really like.

**Jeremy Patrick Lincoln**

### Forced Choices

I would like to enthusiastically thank Jessica Flanagan for speaking out against this murder that society calls "partial-birth abortion."

The name itself, "partial-birth," even suggests life, yet some ignorant people blindly refuse to see this parallel. The fact that the former surgeon general, many physicians, medical experts and even some abortionists acknowledge that this "procedure" is never necessary should be enough for legislators and the American public to see the wrong in this act.

To address Mr. Baldrige's side: Isn't the inalienable right to life of the child greater than the woman's right to choose?

Especially because thousands of women are forced into abortion by men who refuse to accept responsibility for their offspring.

**Rachel U. Ronning**  
sophomore  
undeclared

### Freshman Refresher

Amanda Lighter could use a refresher course in freshman English composition. Her letter to the editor (DN, Tuesday) was, for a senior, poor in logic and worse in English, one of her listed majors.

Regardless of your stand on Jessica Flanagan's comments about the women's studies program, when you use poor logic and horrible English to attack someone, you only display your ignorance and destroy your argument.

**Karl Baumgarten**  
technician  
geosciences

### Boat Rocking Artists

The recent uproar in New York regarding an art exhibit represents a common problem with our society's "support" of the arts and of its perceptions of free speech rights.

Conservatives and liberals are both bashing this publicly funded Brooklyn Museum exhibit, which supposedly portrays the Virgin Mary with cutouts of pornographic magazines and elephant "dung."

The Catholic Church's position seems to be an outcry of the violation of church and state. (Which I find amusing coming from an institution seemingly bent on a theocratically ruled nation.) I doubt, however, that there would be anyone staging this as an important issue if the artist had painted a Christian religious icon in a positive light.

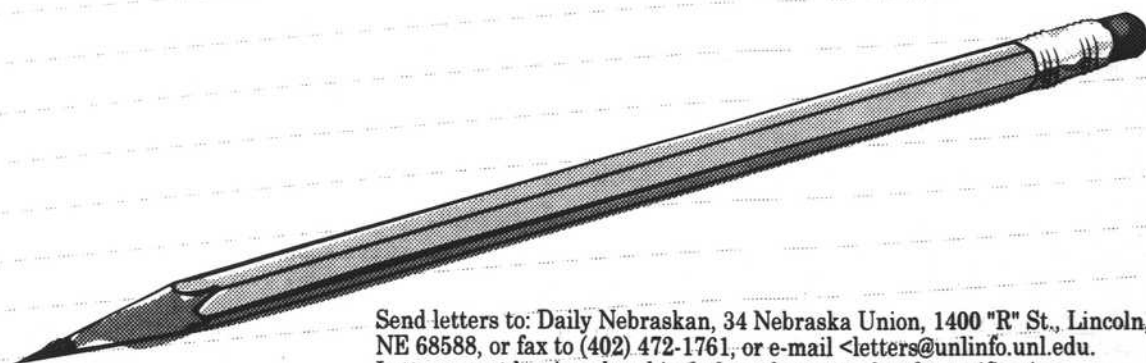
The issue everyone is trying to mask as a church and state violation is really a matter of free speech. Call a spade a spade - this is a clear example of censorship.

It's ludicrous for a nation to say, in effect, we support the arts but only to the extent that an artist does not mean or imply anything with which we may disagree.

If we want to live in a country civilized enough to recognize the importance of artistic expression, then we must be strong willed enough to realize that we are a nation of highly divergent opinions to which we must be tolerant.

**Nolan Gaskill**  
senior  
music education

## P.S. Write Back



Send letters to: Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 "R" St., Lincoln, NE 68588, or fax to (402) 472-1761, or e-mail <letters@unlinfo.unl.edu>. Letters must be signed and include a phone number for verification.