

UNL employees deserve equality

*Gay domestic partners should
get same benefits as their
straight counterparts*

By ruling that gay domestic partners should be allowed the same benefits as married partners, the justices of the Vermont Supreme Court had to look deep inside themselves to do what was right.

The same issue of domestic partner benefits was brought to an NU committee three years ago by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln faculty senate, which strongly supported gay benefits.

But the universitywide Fringe Benefits Committee didn't look deep within itself at all.

Instead, it looked to the Legislature.

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Because the Legislature didn't back gay marriage, then neither could NU, said Agnes Adams, chairwoman of the committee.

The board members didn't share the UNL faculty senate's convictions, so they tabled the proposal until the state approves gay marriages.

Some benefit board members have tried to bring it up, but the subject was quickly changed.

No state in the union supports gay marriages, but that didn't stop the Vermont Supreme Court from supporting domestic partner benefits.

It set its own precedent because it felt it was time to be fair to the gay community.

UNL faculty's demand is not out of line. Currently, three of UNL's 11 peer institutions, the University of Iowa, Iowa State University and the University of Minnesota, offer domestic partner benefits to gay employees.

They didn't need their state's blessing, so why should UNL?

It's time for NU to be progressive and think for itself.

The benefits board needs to discuss the request and give it serious consideration.

Any gay professor seeking respect and benefits will not choose UNL. He or she will instead choose Iowa, Iowa State or Minnesota, and that is something for students to be worried about.

If UNL wants to be a first-tier university, it can't sit dormant and watch its peers pass it by.

But if the benefits board keeps hindering UNL by not making a decision, it at least owes students a valid explanation.

As other universities have proven, the Legislature doesn't control this issue, the university system does.

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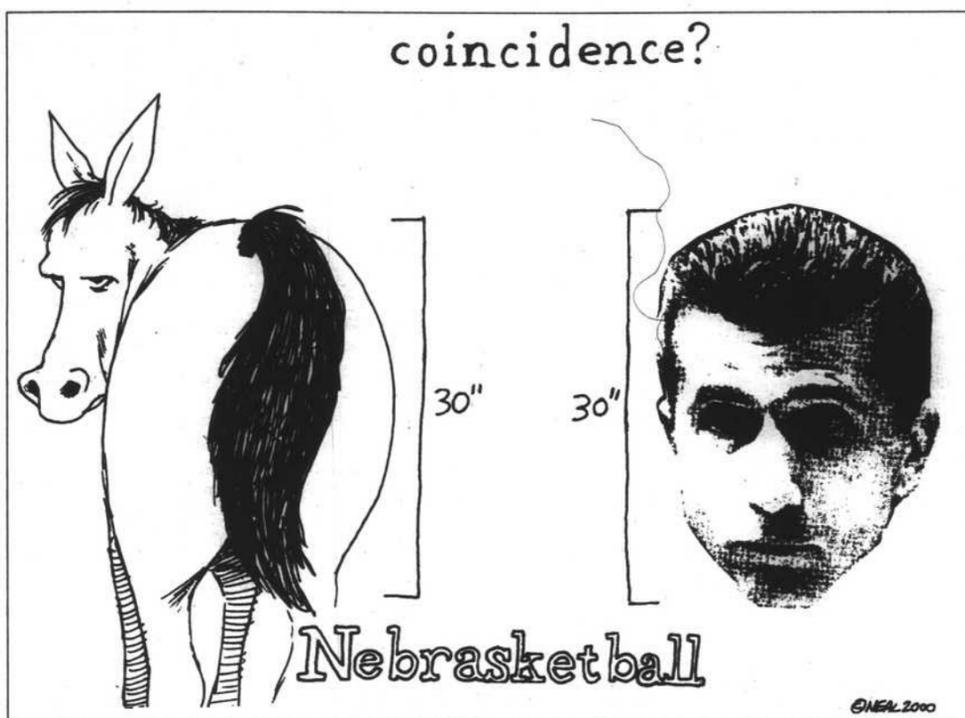
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Obermeyer's VIEW

coincidence?



Charging forward

Changes in technological world just the beginning



It's been a big couple of weeks in the technological world, full of surprises and shakeups. Now, I know many of you are thinking, "Hey Cliff, what's all this mumbo-jumbo mean to me? How am I gonna notice?"

Let me help you out and break everything down for you, a few weeks worth of technology news decoded and decrypted. It's big news, and you can't afford to miss out on news that's going to change your life.

America Online takes over and merges with Time Warner. Yeah, I know - it came out of deep left field for me, too. It is, however, a logical step in the ongoing Internet War. The reasons AOL made such a bold move are two-fold.

The first and main reason is that the Internet War is changing battlefields. The days of modems dialing up to some other computer on the other end of a phone line are nearing extinction. In the future, say five to 10 years, the broadband revolution's going to change everything.

Broadband means a faster way to connect to the Internet, like the university's connections in your own home. Some of us are already on the broadband überhighway - I got an Asynchronous Digital Subscriber Line over the break, and I dust you modem users.

What does all this have to do with AOL-Time Warner Inc.? As I'm sure you all know, Cablevision was taken over by Time Warner, which makes Time Warner one of the largest cable companies in the nation. One of the broadband options is, surprise, surprise, through cable modems. AOL knows its days as a dialup provider are limited, and they're thinking about the future.

Good for AOL.

The second reason is that the role of an Internet Service Provider is changing. ISPs are going to be com-

"Get ready for the chaos years, though, folks. The next five years are going to be bumpy ones."

pletely different in five years. If, for example, cable does win the broadband war, everything in your home will run out of that fiber optic cable - television, Internet and telephone.

Long-distance bills may become a thing of the past. Can you imagine that? Calling Australia for free and talking as long as you want? I hope phone companies are shaking, because that possibility is just around the corner.

The same is true if ADSL wins out. When you look to the future, you will see one box controlling everything.

So how will an ISP like AOL thrive in the future? Exclusive content. This is where the rest of Time Warner comes in. Think of it like this - AOL now controls Warner Music and thus, R.E.M. AOL now controls Warner Bros. Studios, and thus, Bugs Bunny. Tell me this isn't power.

Ten years from now, how will everything look? Pretty damn different.

The Internet will have effectively taken over all other forms of communication, melding them together in one giant amalgamation. You'll pay one fee for "Input" into your house or apartment.

And you won't just have one option either, because either AOL-Time Warner Inc. will have competitors in the home input market, or it stands a chance of getting broken up like Microsoft might.

You have to play fair and not overstep your boundaries. It's one thing to have a monopoly; it's another to abuse it.

Madman Gates has stepped down as Chief Executive Officer and has become Chief Software Architect instead. What does this mean to you and me? That nothing's really changed - Gates is still chairman of the company, and you know the new CEO, Steve Ballmer, will follow Big Boy Bill's every command to the letter.

Gates says he wants to focus on

the future of technology, and, to the surprise of absolutely no one, he says that it means more Windows/Internet integration. All of this comes on the heels of the slip from the government about wanting to break up Microsoft. The actual decision in all of that won't be made until March, but the prognosis does not look good for Microsoft.

All signs point to the company being in trouble.

Mind you, "being in trouble" to Microsoft means it simply won't make as many billions as it did last year. The AOL-Time Warner merger is in fact a kind of response to Microsoft's heavy investment in AT&T last year. Maybe Microsoft will try to absorb Disney in response to the AOL-Time Warner merger.

Steve Jobs is now the official permanent CEO of Apple, and I say good for him. I'm not a big Apple fan, but I still respect the company, and it is getting better. At the beginning of the Mac movement, the machines had more bugs than "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom," but now Apple is starting to get its act in gear.

Apple is trying to get software developers to release Mac versions of software at the same time it releases its PC versions. Some of the big entertainment developers - id Software, Blizzard, Epic Games - have started to get behind the movement and maybe, in the future, Mac may become a full-fledged alternative instead of competitor slowly building steam.

Since Jobs' return, Mac has gained followers and made significant technological steps forward. Despite their glitzy looks, the iMac and the G3s and G4s have sizable power under the hoods. Still, as I stressed before, it all comes down to software.

I always want competition to foster, though. It's good for technology.

Get ready for the chaos years, though, folks. The next five years are gonna be bumpy ones.

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