

By Jan Schultz, The Imperial Republican News Editor

Bloated budgets and trillions in debt that our federal government is amassing are what last week's "tea parties" across the country were organized to protest.

You might think differently, though, if you watched some news coverage of the events.

□ Significantly held on April 15, the anti-tax, grass roots protests were organized in as many as 2,000 cities in the United States (including several in Nebraska), which drew thousands. Some reports said, in all, there were 250,000 people who attended tea parties across the country, while others reported close to one million total.

□ Government spending has been a concern among millions of people in this country since the federal bailouts started last year, followed by the \$787 billion "stimulus bill."

From that frustration arose the tea parties as demonstrations against government spending. The "TEA" in tea party stands for "Taxed Enough Already," and they came 235 years after the original Boston Tea Party.

There were Republicans, Democrats and Independents at these rallies, all who wanted to send a message they're concerned with the spending and with how all of it will be paid back.

However, some of the national media wanted the rallies to appear as something else.

In some of the tea party coverage I saw, one particularly on CNN, the reporter asked a man why he was there. She aggressively cut him off, as he started to give his reasons, walked away from him and then cut off her report, sending the coverage back to the studio, saying it wasn't "family viewing."

Some of the news outlets portrayed the tea parties as anti-President Obama rallies, even going so far to call the participants "racists."

I guess they must believe that if you protest against some of the policies being supported by our first African American President, you are then a racist.

I find that troubling, because the information I received about the tea parties didn't center in on him at all. Rather, the frustration is with our senators and representatives, who are voting for this spending, such as our own U.S. Sen. Ben Nelson, who voted for the stimulus bill, and was the only Nebraska representative to do so. To Nelson's credit, he voted against the recent federal budget proposal put forth by Obama when it came to the Senate.

There were a number of tea parties in Nebraska, which were covered well by the local media, both newspapers and TV.

North Platte was one of the sites for a Nebraska "tea party" as were Lincoln and Omaha, and a number of other Nebraska communities.

Most of the local coverage by reporters avoided inserting their personal opinions about the "news event" they were covering.

It's a whole different story, though, on the national front.

It's a very sad day when groups who protest against what's happening in Washington D.C., are ridiculed for their actions by what is supposed to be an unbiased media.