

Editorial

State must keep record of molesters

Gov. Bob Kerrey Tuesday proclaimed Sept. 17 through 21 as "Sexual Violence Against Women and Children" week. The proclamation indicates the increased concern and attention child abuse is getting. But concern and attention are not enough.

Child abuse prevention programs are forming everywhere. But prevention programs are not enough.

Some parents have become alarmed and far more cautious than they thought they had to be. They are suspicious of practically anyone who looks at their children. But alarm, caution and suspicion aren't enough.

No matter how publicized the issue becomes, none of these efforts will ever be

enough because once child molesters are convicted, sentenced and eventually released, they are often free to commit their crimes again.

In Miami, Francisco (Frank) Fuster, 36, and his wife Ileana, 24, owners of the Country Walk Babysitting Service, have been held without bond since Aug. 23. USA Today reported Monday that the Fusters are charged with 10 counts of sexual battery of a minor under 11.

Most alarming is that while Fuster was on probation from a 1982 child molestation conviction, the state did not keep records of his whereabouts or his activities. USA Today reported that Florida's state Corrections Department did not in-

form the Health and Rehabilitative Service agency of Fuster's conviction.

Fuster was licensed to care for children after he was convicted of child molestation. The Health and Rehabilitative Service agency still failed to uncover the details of Fuster's past after an anonymous tip two months before the Fusters' arrest.

We can't ignore the events in Miami, saying that it wouldn't happen here. Fuster could have gone anywhere in the country and opened a day care center because no one bothered to keep track of him.

We need to go beyond the prevention programs, beyond the publicity, even be-

yond stricter sentences. We need to keep track of every convicted child molester released from prison in every state. It's bad enough that child molesters are even allowed near children. But it's not too much to ask that they be kept from hurting more children.

Frank and Ileana Fuster could be sentenced to 25 years or life in prison. If they are convicted and if they are paroled, I hope that they are not forgotten. I hope they aren't allowed to molest another child. But the way the system works now, there's nothing to keep molesters from striking again.

Stacie Thomas
Daily Nebraskan Staff Editor

Woe, the trials of turning mushrooms into cash!

Jeff and John and Jean have mushrooms growing in the bathroom of their second-story Lincoln apartment.

Nestled next to their bathtub, mushrooms regularly spring up from the shag rug (ugh) next to the 19th century water pipes.

Mona Koppelman

The three of them have been keeping the mushrooms around for a conversation piece. Profit-minded as always — with a wary eye on the calendar for rent and bills due — I considered the possibility of turning the fungi into a cash crop.

"Fine," said Jeff and John and Jean. "You can be our marketing consultant."

Woe is me. That wondrous title meant hours of unpaid research, facing raucous laughter by professionals day after day...

The road to the pot of gold was a long and winding one.

First, I considered the food market. Visions of swiss steak with mushroom gravy, salad mushrooms and pizza mushrooms danced in my head.

I called the UNL Human Nutrition and Food Service Management department. Four secretaries nearly laughed me off the telephone.

Eventually, I found out that although mushrooms can be a cash crop, messing with wild mushrooms can be dangerous business.

Those innocent-looking mushrooms — killers?

"Possibly," said Lora Lea Brennan, a registered nurse and coordinator of the Omaha Poison Control Center.

"We don't try to identify mushrooms over the phone," Brennan said. "It's difficult to do even with a sample. As a safety precaution, we routinely recommend that people call their physician and vomit the mushrooms up."

Trouble in Mushroom City. The four most common poisonous 'shrooms Brennan listed were false morels, amanita phalloides or the "death cup," amanita muscaria or the "fly agaric," and the coprinus atromentarius or the "inky cup."

Curiouser and curiouser. But maybe food wasn't such a good idea anyway. Too many complications. Better put my cash crop in the hands of experts — like pharmacists.

"Mushrooms used for medicine? Is this a joke?" asked the secretary at Dorsey Laboratories of Lincoln.

Dr. Robert Gibson, Dorsey's clinical research scientist, pricked my balloon.

"There are no medicines developed commercially that are derived from mushrooms," Gibson



said. But Dr. Gibson was a really friendly person, and I learned a little mushroom history.

"Folk medicines using mushrooms may still be available in older cultures — a Chinese herbal pharmacy or a Mexican herbal pharmacy," Dr. Gibson said. "But there isn't really any proven basis for the use. Kind of like mustard plasters. You'd only find mushroom medicines in places where they don't have an FDA."

Some chemicals found in mushrooms may be used by pharmacists in small amounts, however.

"Atropine, for example, can cause diarrhea and vomiting," Gibson said. "It's found in toxic mushrooms. But taken in small, controlled doses, it could be used

to clean out your system."

Well, you can relax Kaopectate and Ex-Lax — I'm just not cut out for the B.M. business.

Of course, there was one option remaining: illegal drugs. Not that I would ever consider it, of course; I was just curious.

Steve Blum at the Valley Hope treatment center said psilocybin is the active ingredient in mushrooms abused as hallucinogens.

Three different types of mushrooms can be used as hallucinogens: opilocybe, panaeolus and conocybe.

Abusers can eat the caps of these mushrooms — from two to 40 caps, depending on the type of mushroom. The effects last two to four hours and are similar to the psychedelic effects of LSD.

Blum said street use of psilocybin in Lincoln is usually confined to man-made chemicals in capsule form. Street use is relatively rare, Blum said; abuse of LSD is more common.

Obviously, not much of a market even if I was foolish enough to try. The primary market for those 'shrooms is in Central and South America where it is still used in obscure religious ceremonies. Street value in Lincoln is supposed to be just \$7 to \$8 a gram.

And besides, I don't even have the right 'shrooms: the three hallucinogenic 'shrooms are only found in Central America and the Pacific Northwest.

And, the darn things are look-alikes for the toxic mushrooms that make you vomit, or worse. So be warned: do not mess with wild mushrooms.

The moral of this column is this: if you have mushrooms growing in your bathroom, don't call the cops. Don't call your local supermarket. Don't call your druggist. Don't call your friends.

Call your plumber.

"We call 'em wood-rotting fungi," said Dr. Wendell Gauger, UNL biology professor. "The spores are nearly universal. All they need is wood to eat and some water. I assume the water is coming from the bathtub pipes."

Great. Some market analyst. I was going to pay the rent. Now the landlord will probably up the rent to pay for new pipes.

Daily Nebraskan

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The Daily Nebraskan (USPS 144-080) is published by the UNL Publications Board Monday through Friday in the fall and spring semesters and Tuesdays and Fridays in the summer sessions, except during vacations.

Readers are encouraged to submit story ideas and comments to the Daily Nebraskan by phoning 472-2588 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The public also has access to the Publications Board. For information, call Nick Foley, 476-0275 or Angela Nietfield, 475-4981.

Postmaster: Send address changes to the Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448.

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Exploitation of women is not myth

Once upon a time, in the nation-state of Rome, there was a beautiful slip of a woman named Lucretia. She had curves in the right places and carried them well. Lucretia was a talented spinstress, she could weave. She ran a tight household. She probably said the right things at the right times. Above all, she was virtuous.



Kema Soderberg

Lucretia's virtue was something her husband could bet on. Once, while hunting with the prince and other men of high rank, he expanded on this quality. His peers could not believe it. They had been grumbling about their loose wives who carried on while they were on expedition.

A spy mission into the city found all was not well in Rome. The women were garnered in jewels, tipping wine glasses, talking socially and (gasp) feeling a new sense of equality with men.

Not Lucretia, though. She was enjoying an evening with her spinning wheel, visiting with her servants. Though dressed plainly, she was a vision to behold.

When the spies reported back to camp, Lucretia's husband said, "I told you so." He chuckled to himself, rolled over and fell asleep. The prince, however, humped it to Rome and knocked on Lucretia's door.

"Sleep with me," he said, admiring her hourglass figure, "or I will bring a slave man in your quarters, strip you both and leave the two of you to be found dead in the morning."

Virtuous Lucretia had no choice but to comply.

However, the next morning she summoned her husband and father and told them of the scandle. Then she did what only a virtuous woman could; Lucretia killed herself.

Once upon a time in the United States, there was a slip of a woman named Vanessa. She was judged by a panel to be a "Woman Ideal in Human Form." Vanessa had learned to carry herself at an early age and was taught to explore outlets for her talents. She had never done anything illegal except to be exploited.

But the Prince of Porn, Bob Guccione, could not control his greed. He sold her image and ruined her career.

The panel scoured the land for a replacement — a good, old-fashioned girl who was the "right" color and didn't smoke, drink or gamble. They sought someone who didn't support abortion or (gasp) strive for a system that would promote equal rights for women.

"I guess they were looking for someone like me," Sharlene Wells, the new Miss America said.

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