

# Editorial

**Daily Nebraskan**

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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## Ruling favors NU NCAA gets mud on its face

The first principle of justice is that the guilty should be punished and the innocent should go unpunished. The second principle of justice is that the penalty should fit the offense: Being neither more punitive than the offense requires, nor less punitive than the offense requires.

Nobody every denied the fact that UNL football players violated clear NCAA regulations on pass admittances. As was made clear from the first, the Husker coaching staff in fact encouraged the offending players to "come clean" before NCAA investigators. The significant ground for appeal was that the punishment did not fit the crime. In yesterday's NCAA action, the position of Coach Osborne and the university was vindicated on appeal: The penalty was deemed too great.

For the NCAA's action, the

university can only say thanks. For all the grumbling about the unacademic emphasis on football at UNL, the fact is that Big Red is a unifying force for the entire state that transcends the university. In more senses than one, the imputed reputation of the entire state was on the line in the NCAA action.

Let basketball coaches resign in disgrace; let the state's Attorney General be impeached (almost); let state senators be arrested for violating their own laws and the state remains untainted. But let uncleanness be imputed to Big Red and the entire state feels just a little soiled.

All in all, however, it is the reputation of the NCAA itself that comes out of the situation smelling worse.

Boy, what a lot ado about little.

## Profit-motive media Return to accuracy needed

This week's Newsweek underscores a major and growing tension among news organizations and in the media at large: the increasing influence of a narrow business mentality.

The two poles of the tension lie, on the one hand, in the proposition that the goal of news-reporting is to communicate facts (of course, within a context sufficient to give meaning to the facts, yet without biasing individual judgments about the facts). On the other hand media organizations in the United States are in vast proportion, businesses run for profit.

There's the catch. Reporting the truth is something unpopular and therefore conflicts with the goal of profit-maximization.

Marketing experts consequently been pushing news organiza-

tions, such as CBS news, to adopt a format that is more "entertaining." The new model for news-casting, according to CBS news commentator Bill Moyers, is the inane "Entertainment Tonight." Among the print media, USA Today come closest, at times, to a similar inanity.

There are many reasons for the media's decline into measuring newsworthiness by entertainment value. But one of the most important is the decline of a civic consciousness with the broad public mind, that demands hard news. Thurs, in the current shift, the media is supplying only what the public demands. A renewed national commitment to truth and accuracy, even at the sacrifice of passing titillation, is required if there is any hope of preventing good news organizations in the long-run.

## Letter policy

The Daily Nebraskan welcomes brief letters to the editor from all readers and interested others.

Letters will be selected for publication on the basis of clarity, originality, timeliness and space available. The Daily Nebraskan retains the right to edit all material submitted.

Readers also are welcome to submit material as guest opinions. Whether material should run as a letter or guest opinion, or not run, is left to the editor's discretion.

Letters and guest opinions sent to the newspaper become property of the Daily Nebraskan and cannot be returned.

Anonymous submissions will not be considered for publication. Letters should include the author's name, year in school, major and group affiliation, if any. Requests to withhold names from publication will not be granted.

Submit material to the Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448.

## Editorial Policy

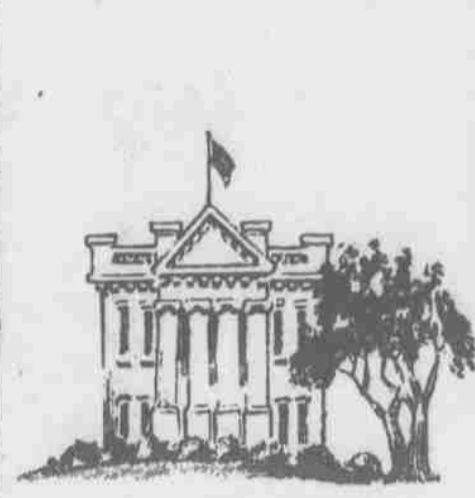
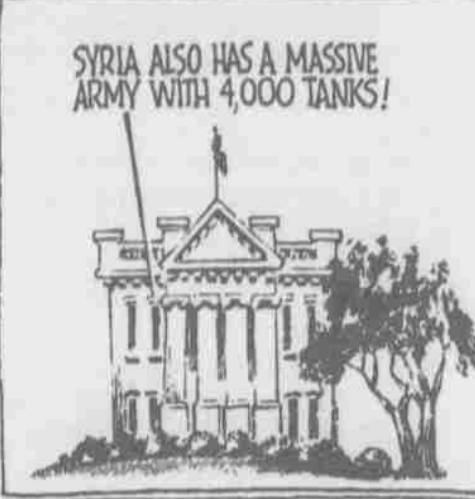
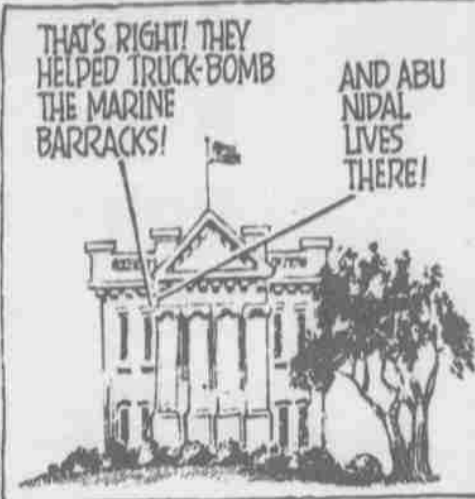
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Editorials do not necessarily reflect the views of the university, its

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The Daily Nebraskan's publishers are the regents, who established the UNL Publications Board to supervise the daily production of the paper.

According to policy set by the regents, responsibility for the editorial content of the newspaper lies solely in the hands of its student editors.



## Columnist a feminist advocate

Overt efforts of non-sexist behavior fall short with language

Over the years I have had a fascinating love/hate relationship with the feminist movement. I have had to reject many radical notions by those who would reverse the status of men and women rather than equalize them. Yet I hold fervently to most of the ammo in the liberation arsenal.

As a minister with an ostensibly conservative background and theology, I have taken a lot of heat for what many consider to be a radical position — I believe in the humanization of women in the church. I also hold it to be a travesty of monumental proportions that women are still the objects of public discrimination and scorn — even, apparently, within the state governmental structure soon to be headed by its first female chief executive.

It is somewhat amusing to me, therefore, that I have been reproached at times for my refusal to spend much time worrying about the matter of inclusive language. I guess my hours of study and debate, my overt efforts at non-sexist behavior and conversation and my willingness to withstand a religious tradition I love when I believe it is wrong, count for nothing. If I slip up and let a generic "he" or "his" sneak in, then I have revealed myself to be the demonic, archaic chauvinist that I really am. My capacity for self-deception is staggering.

I admit that I have not made the matter of inclusive language a priority in my fight for feminine freedom. This omission has been deliberate, for a number of reasons. First and foremost, I do not see the matter of generic masculine pronouns to be a major roadblock to the breaking of feminine fetters, and I do not believe an attack upon this phenomenon will effect any significant change in the social psy-

chology contributing to such oppression. It just seems to me that energy expended here could be put to far better use in some more significant aspect of the battle.

But I also object to the inclusive language thesis as an avocational linguist and a writer with some love for style and formality in the use of our language. I just don't see any promise among the proposed alternatives to the generic "he" in English. To say "he or she," or "him or her" becomes laborious in a matter of seconds, and a single use smacks of the most unpardonable prose. When those demigods of writing style, Strunk and White, elucidated the three most important rules for good writing, they came up with "Brevity, brevity, and brevity."

**James Sennett**



The most common generic alternative in the vernacular is that horrible use of the third person plural. You've heard it: "Each person should do what their conscience tells them to do." Well, this may be acceptable stylistically in 30 years or so, but I'll be too old to care then. For now, I guess I'd rather sound chauvinistic than illiterate.

There is one practice I have heard that holds some promise. Many people have gone to arbitrarily inserting generic feminine pronouns in conversation. That is, one time when generic pronouns are needed, "he" and "him" may be employed, and the next time "she" and "her." Keeping track would defeat the purpose and make it tedious

beyond desirability. But if we could truly train ourselves to choose arbitrarily among the pronouns when we need generic reference, we would have accomplished something. I must say, though, I really doubt the sociolinguistic feasibility of such a project.

Of course, the most natural thing to do would be to employ the sexless pronoun already supplied by the English language: "It." But we can't even refer to unborn babies, whose sex is yet undetermined, with "it" (just try it around a pregnant woman and you'll see what I mean). I doubt seriously that we could pull off this coup.

But I also have philosophical objections to the inclusive language agenda. I'm not comfortable with the ethics of forcing ideology through artificial language manipulation. There is something disturbingly Orwellian about a plan to alter the language so people won't think the way you don't want them to think. Or, at least if they do think that way, they will not have the linguistic tools with which to communicate their ideas readily. In the '60s we were forced to stop saying "Negro" and to start saying "Black." The results were beneficial to the Civil Rights movement and advanced our nation — but I wonder if the heavenly ends really justified the newspeak means.

The feminist agenda is one which, by and large, must be heard if we are to maintain our integrity as a land of the free. But the message can be communicated without worrying over an artificial and ultimately peripheral issue. The English language — complete with its generic "he" — is a sufficient tool for building a society where all people are created equal.

James Sennett is a graduate student in philosophy and campus minister with College-Career Christian Fellowship.

## Nuclear test agreement pointless, injurious to national security

A man is accused of taking a kettle and returning it damaged. His defense: First of all, I never took it. Second, it was broke when I took it. And third, it was fine when I returned it.

Lawyers call that "arguing in the alternative." Listen to the arguments being made for the latest idea-in-vogue, the comprehensive nuclear test ban, now stampeding through Congress.

The 1963 Limited Test Ban Treaty stopped nuclear tests in the atmosphere. That was a good idea because it keeps strontium-90 out of our milk. Last month, the House of Representatives passed a one-year ban (matching a Soviet moratorium) on U.S. underground tests. The idea? No one claims that current underground tests pol-

lute. Banning them must have other reasons: to prevent the development of new nuclear weapons. In essence, a test ban is a nuclear freeze by another name.

**Charles Krauthammer**



What's wrong with that? What's wrong is that not all new weapons are bad. Some are needed to stabilize deterrence. When you freeze nuclear

systems, you halt only half of the arms race. Improvements continue on (non-verifiable) non-nuclear defensive systems. Ban nuclear tests and the other side can proceed to, say, harden targets and improve its ability to shoot down bombers and hunt down subs. Since you cannot improve your offensive weapons ("modernize," in the jargon) to make sure that they still can get through, your deterrent erodes. And the melancholy fact is that your safety and mine (Gorbachev's too) rests on deterrence.

Consider one example. Deterrence is strengthened, and thus the world made safer, if nuclear subs can hide in more parts of the ocean. But for that to

See KRAUTHAMMER on 5