

# Park it, pal

*Saving Wilderness Park is an environmental and economical issue*



**GRAHAM EVAN JOHNSON** is a graduate student in German and environmental social studies and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

Go to Lefler Junior High, 48th and D Streets, tonight at 7:00 p.m.

Why? Because you shouldn't just get out and vote. You should make yourself aware of the issues that affect your dollar and your interests.

The Friends of Wilderness Park is holding a meeting tonight to let developers explain why they think it is a good idea to build an elevated highway over Wilderness Park, therefore connecting Yankee Hill Road south of town.

The politicians and developers in this city have been longtime partners in crime. They publicly acknowledge the urbanization of our small town and its future. It is up to all of us to interject our opinions about their policies and help them intelligently build a city that the public finds suitable.

In this style of capitalist-democra-

cy, the public is responsible to watch their own backyards, or have them sold for the capitalists' (developers') gain.

There isn't a state agency to help us out, at least not one that is concerned with sustainable development. The general concerned public also isn't usually as heavily endowed with monetary backing as the capitalists, and therefore, doesn't have as loud a voice.

The Wilderness Park issue exemplifies the general problem of shortsighted city planning without an environmental ethic. The paving and expansion of the United States is one of the most dangerous problems confronting our society and is the cause of increased social, environmental and economic disruption. We have to change it.

The cities in the United States are becoming unmanageable in many ways because of exponential expansion, and it will be only a short time before the United States comes crashing down in more arenas and more severely than during the Great Depression.

Don't know much about Wilderness Park and don't care? Let me tell you why you should.

Wilderness Park is a piece of land that stretches from Van Dorn Street south to Saltillo Road along Southwest 12th Street to South 27th Street. It was created in the 1970s to be a buffer zone that absorbs the imminent flooding of the Salt Creek.

Recently, an area near South 14th

Street between Pine Lake and Yankee Hill has come under attack from numerous entities wanting to build near this area, on top of fertile agricultural land and bordering the buffered Wilderness Park.

Let me tell you all - this is a very, very bad idea.

You see, Wilderness Park is not only an important habitat for wildlife and an enjoyable recreation spot; it is a seriously important area located on the floodway and floodplain of the Salt Creek.

If development were to occur as near to the park as is planned, not only would the ecology of the park suffer a great deal, but the possible consequences of nearby and downstream flooding of the Salt Creek are severe. The economic ramifications are as severe as the ecological problems.

Remember what happened in Texas this year? Besides the devastating heat wave, they experienced a very severe flooding that ruined much of the area surrounding the city of Del Rio.

Did you hear what happened in Kansas City two Sundays ago? If you were watching the Chiefs vs. Seahawks game, you saw it get postponed for an hour. That's because they received six inches of rain in an hour. They've been trying to recover from the damage since then.

It is for these reasons Wilderness Park was created. It buffers such sudden, severe flooding, which are imminent in our part of the world too.

A park like this is not ordinary, it is extraordinary. That's because it houses so much wildlife and also plays a critical role in preventing seriously damaging floods in the southwest portion of our city. Besides the necessary part it plays in protecting immediate surrounding neighborhoods, it is also necessary to protect neighborhoods downstream, right behind our downtown.

Any type of building abutting the park, all of which is supported by Mayor Mike Johanns, is terrible, shortsighted, unsustainable city planning that neither looks at the long-term effects and damages of the buildings themselves, as well as surrounding areas, but also proposes building simply for employment and profitable opportunity.

There are several issues concerning the park, but I only have room to list them, because it is necessary to explain further deleterious effects as well.

1) Proposed elevated roadway connecting Yankee Hill Road.

2) Bond issue on November 3rd ballot (Vote no!): Transformation of Colonel Densmore Park into a recreational megacomplex with four lighted baseball fields, numerous tennis courts, soccer fields and playground.

3) Proposed strip mall abutting the east side of Wilderness Park (the deal was made before the zone change was approved in the County/City chamber in front of a strong disapproval by the neighbors).

4) Lincoln Public Schools building

a new high school.

5) Optimists Club sale of land northwest of Old Cheney Road. Some idiot wants to make an "Old West" tourist attraction and serve the remaining buffalo we have with mustard and ketchup.

All these proposals are very, very ignorant. They will cause light pollution, noise pollution, solid waste pollution, pavement runoff pollution, etc. These will cause great damage to the ecosystem of the park.

Any of the proposed building will cause great disruption in the stability of the land to prevent flooding. Excessive amounts of land moving and cement placing will deeply disrupt the effectiveness of the park to be a buffer zone for flooding.

If it does flood, the enormous amounts of money that taxpayers would have put into these public developments will be jeopardized.

Furthermore, the destruction that will occur to such buildings on top of such land will lead to further repairs, costing taxpayers even more money.

As you can see, there are obviously better areas to build strip malls and schools on, because not every area in Lincoln is resting on top of floodlands.

The Friends of Wilderness Park meets tonight, October 14 at 7:00 p.m. at Lefler Junior High School. Go there and voice your concerns.

Help establish thoughtful, sustainable planning choices in Lincoln, rather than costly, shortsighted and downright ignorant ones.

# Miscellaneous debris

*A morning of community service reveals the seedy underbelly of UNL's campus*



**ERIN REITZ** is a senior theater performance major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist

Community service: It ain't just for criminals anymore!

I'm thinking about submitting that as a new public service announcement suggestion. Let me know what you think. (Feel free to write letters and/or send money.)

You may be wondering, "What is prompting this sassy little column?"

Litter. Litter after football games. Litter at 8 in the morning.

I've had the good fortune of being able to dodge community service for many, many years. A few weeks ago it caught up with me.

"ASUN's first community service project of the year will be cleaning up Memorial Stadium! Bring your gloves and gas masks!" spake one senator at our last meeting. My gas mask unfortunately had been run over by a truck recently, and I had left my gloves at home, so I was a bit worried.

I was being asked to perform deeds once only reserved for convicts, but that's not what was bugging me. Instead, I think it had something to do with the kind of (physical) stuff I was anticipating dealing with.

It turned out to be as bad as I thought (even though I got lucky and snagged one of those cool squeeze-upper-thingies).

I would like to do a run-down for you detailing some of the things that were found in not-so-inconspicuous places on this lovely (littered) campus of ours:

A green plastic hanger. I'm not sure what was going on there. But hey,

free hanger!

Empty condom packets. These were right by the stadium. Come on, people. Tact, tact, tact! ("Dammit honey, not now, the game's still going!")

Empty and FULL alcohol containers. These were all over the place. Some people had the courtesy to place them in neat little piles, but most didn't. (Note: Bees LOVE alcohol! If you want to torture a bee-phobic community service worker, leave lots of it everywhere.)

Kentucky Fried Chicken receptacles. I'd like to stress that the time for healthy living is now, but Nebraskans don't seem to give a flying fig. We really seem to like our KFC. Finger-lickin' good!

Plastic bags full of water. I'm guessing these were used in coolers as ice packs, but people are devious. I think I saw an S&M special on HBO involving these. By the way, thanks for emptying them out when you left.

Lots of pieces of Styrofoam. Maybe they came from the trashed-out coolers of the Washington fans who destroyed them out of anger and pure humiliation.

Layers upon layers of unidentifiable crap. Not literally crap, but something rather close to it. Yummy!

When I got to the stadium on that beautiful Nebraska morning, I was expecting a job of about 20 minutes, considering we had many teams of six or seven dynamic, hard-working super scoopers.

It took a little over an hour.

I am aware it was probably non-students who came to the bloodfest that made this campus a wreck, but, guess what? (You're never gonna believe this one.)

Students were partially responsible.

It really warms my heart that we care so much about our campus.

If you are residing beneath

a rock, you are exempt from realizing why this is irritating. This university has done pretty much everything they could in the last few years to make our campus a pleasant place to be. Landscaping has become an important priority here, and I dig it.

Maybe we should check out what we're taking for granted and start to appreciate it.

Just because you are aware that there will be people cleaning up the morning after the semi-weekly annihilation doesn't give you the right to destroy the land you're walking on.

This campus is now a darn groovy chunk of land to hang out on,

and I, for one, would like to see it stay that way.

I'm not trying to be one of the nightmare tree-huggers from PCU. All I'm asking of you is this: Use those foreign contraptions scattered around known as trash cans. Please. They may smell funny, but they are your friends. They will not bite you.

Use the cigarette disposal pillars, too. One of my fellow super-scoopers picked up about a thousand cigarette butts that morning.



"The Man" has been telling you all your life to keep your butts in check, so do it. (Pun intended, people. Pun intended.)

Clean up after yourselves. You won't get shot if you help clean up after others, either. Volunteer to tidy up after UNL sporting events when you have some spare time.

Keep UNL spanking clean. You'll help to keep our facilities sparkling and maybe even get that warm, fuzzy feeling deep inside you.

It's a good way to ensure the alumni will keep giving us money. (Cha-ching!)