

## Rationing—stamp of approval

It seems the U.S. won't have gasoline rationing if the government does what President Nixon wants. Nixon, when quizzed by newsmen at the Associated Press Managing Editors' convention, emphasized that he is opposed strongly to any gasoline rationing.

He attributed the energy shortage to the short-sightedness and stubbornness of Congressional Democrats who refused to approve six of the seven pieces of energy-related legislation which he sent Congress two years ago. The other measure, which he has signed into law, is the Alaska pipeline bill, the wisdom of which still should be questioned.

He hammered away at his anti-rationing theme, saying rationing worked during World War II but probably would fail now since there are no questions of patriotism or loyalty involved. He also speculated that the American people would resent the large bureaucracy necessary if rationing is undertaken.

Nixon's anti-rationing stand indicates that the administration must be leaning toward the imposition of an outlandishly high gasoline use tax. It has been reported that Nixon cohorts are considering asking Congress or using presidential power to impose a 5 to 50 cent per gallon fee.

While no one wants the inconvenience and sacrifices implicit in limiting gasoline

purchases, it would be more unfair to impose the proposed tax.

The tax would mean that those with money would be those who would drive. It would hit the poor when mass transit service in 43 cities is being curtailed because of gasoline shortages.

The tax also would encourage inflation. Price and wage hikes would be necessary to meet the increased gasoline expenses. There are few corporations which could hold the line on prices if a major overhead expense soared.

Rationing would be a more realistic approach. It would guarantee that Americans, regardless of income, would have gasoline for most necessary purposes. As during World War II, special allotments could be made for those who have an occupational need for the fuel. Farmers, trucking companies and persons who must travel to make a living could be allowed a larger ration for those purposes.

A blackmarket might develop, but it could be deterred through tough legislation.

If the Nixon administration imposes a gas tax, it will help prove the saying that Republicans are friends of the rich, not the common man. It should be hoped that will not be the case.

Michael (O.J.) Nelson



## Belly-dance spectators' 'performance' laudable

It was the strange music, or maybe the infant dancing hopefully before an aging couple.

The dancing was intriguing to watch, yet it seemed a somewhat out-of-place in the street front bar.

I returned the following evening and spent several hours talking with the musicians and dancers. I had gone with what I hoped was not a malicious preconception of the types of people who would dance in a bar wearing scanty clothing, seeing them as more exotic and different beings than myself.

Instead I found people with worries and concerns much like anyone else. So rather than discuss the

dancers themselves, we talked about the audience, for they are almost as interesting to observe as are the dancers.

When I asked about the types of spectators who come to the bar, both the dancers and the musicians rushed to say that this style of dance is a new experience for Lincoln and some people don't quite know how to react.

When pressed, the dancers came up with five basic ways people in the audience respond. The "gigglers," don't really know how to act or perhaps feel a little uncomfortable, and release their feelings by laughing. The second group is the "I don't see you's." These people avoid the glance of the dancer, and when the dancers come for tips, they are busy fiddling with their cigarettes or drinks.

The third category is the "sophisticates," who watch intently and respond with "Yes, very interesting". The fourth type takes the act of the dancer seriously and immediately assumes that she is madly in love with him. The final group is the people who accept the dance for what it is and play along.

Yet the dancers told me that more important than these categories are the distinctions between the way a group will respond, and the response of an individual. They were speaking particularly of the small groups of college men who come to watch. As long as the focus of the dancers is elsewhere, these groups of males will laugh, holler, and thoroughly enjoy themselves, especially when the dancers haul some less-than-willing fellow up on stage with them.

Yes, they have a fine time, until the dancers head toward their table. Then suddenly they're silent, and when the dancers circle them, effectively isolating each individual in what he feels to be the spot light of the public eye, they freeze, victims of self-conscious paralysis. "Where be your gibes now? Your gambols? Your songs? Your flashes of merriment that then were wont to set the table on a roar?" (courtesy of W.S.) The dancers expressed amazement at the ease with which these hulking boys could be intimidated.

The biggest problem they seem to have with their audience concerns the tipping. Toward the end of each dancer's set, the girl dances out among the audience from table to table collecting tips, usually in the form of dollar bills, which are slipped into the dancer's scanty costume by the patron.

"The problem comes again from people not being used to this type of performance," said a dancer. It seems that while most consider the money to be a tip for a good performance, some patrons see it as payment for services to be rendered. "They think it entitles them to something extra, like a pinch or a squeeze."

Along these lines, I asked a dancer to compare her dancing to other types of provocative bar dancing.

Her reply bears investigating. "It must be some sort of male conditioning, that the minute they see a girl dancing on stage, they say, 'Take it off,'" she said.

How can such an ancient form of entertainment as the belly dance hold its own against other more modern and more physically revealing styles of dancing?

john michael  
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First, despite the fact that it's less revealing than, say, a topless act, it is still much more sensual, mysterious, and down right interesting. Belly dancers can always add a new twist to their performances, but how many new twists can a topless dancer add? Now Jim, that's evolution.

Second, it's "fair to stare." That is, with a belly dance, the audience is expected to watch closely the movements and control of the dancer, while at other sorts of performances it's best not to look too hard, preferably not to appear to be watching at all, and only now and then sneaking a quick glance.

Perhaps belly dancing's greatest selling point, though, is the direct performer-audience contact. It is difficult to be bored. The music is interesting and not at all unpleasant, while the dancers certainly have no problem in holding one's attention. Perhaps it is the sterility of other forms of dancing, the lack of this type of contact, that makes watching belly dancers such a different experience.



daily nebraskan

The Daily Nebraskan is published by the Publications Committee on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday throughout the autumn and spring semesters, except on holidays and during vacations.

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Second class postage paid at Lincoln, Nebr. Address: The Daily Nebraskan, Nebraska Union 34, 14th and H Sts., Lincoln, Nebr. 68508. Telephone 402 472 2588.