

Kent State reopened

The Kent State tragedy never has been satisfactorily explained. Witnesses who have testified in the federal grand jury investigation of the 1970 shootings, in which four students were killed and nine wounded, are not offering much help.

Ohio National Guardsmen who fired at the crowd of students aren't talking. Most refuse to testify without full immunity, pleading the Fifth Amendment, which provides protection from self-incrimination.

Such actions only further point to a disturbing possibility that the Kent State story still has several unfinished chapters. It's not surprising that some persons close to the case suspect a coverup.

No Guardsman or Guard officers ever have been legally charged with violations, although their conduct has been denounced by FBI investigations and a presidential commission.

Some observers claim there was a conspiracy among the Guardsmen to fire at the students. Only a Guardsman could confirm or convincingly prove false that report.

Justice Dept. officials say that the Guardsmen's defense that they opened fire to protect themselves apparently is a fabrication. The department poured over about 8,000 pages of FBI findings and concluded that Guard units summoned to Kent State were not surrounded by hostile students and that they fired at students when they were in no real danger themselves.

Things look grim for the Guardsmen. If they indeed are blameless, it's difficult to understand why they are so close-mouthed. The federal grand jury ended its first phase Friday, after 28 days, and is scheduled to reconvene Feb. 25 with more witnesses. It is hoped that the truth will be easier to ascertain then.

Mary Voboril

to the editor

Letters appear in the Daily Nebraskan at the editor's discretion. A letter's appearance is based on timeliness, originality, coherence and interest. All letters must be accompanied by the writer's true name but may be submitted for publication under a pen name or initials. Use of such letters will be determined by the editor. Brevity is encouraged. All letters are subject to condensation and editing.

Dear editor,

This letter is in response to "Hell-met on Wheels," (Daily Nebraskan, Feb. 4). It consisted of a defiance of LB795, which would require helmets while on the seat of a motorcycle.

I've been riding motorcycles for a while on and off the roads, and I am thoroughly convinced that wearing a helmet is far safer than without. One helmet manufacturer plugs its product with the slogan: "Is your head worth \$12?", referring to the fact that the cheaper helmets offer less protection. At the moment I wear a helmet that goes for \$65, but that may not be really necessary. Even a \$12 helmet offers better protection than none.

So-called "worthless" helmets have saved my life and my friends' lives too many times to count them out. I was hit by a car once, and although my helmet was scratched up I didn't even get a bruise. A friend of mine lost control of his bike once and flew over a cliff. His helmet had a huge crack, but again, no damage to his head.

Helmets on the market have been tested against shock and some tests are pretty brutal. The Snell Foundation drives a pointed instrument on them to determine what force it takes to penetrate. Anything that doesn't pass test is not given approval. Before buying a helmet, check to see what organizations have approved them.

As for hearing and sight impairment, it's practically nil if not improved. While traveling at speeds in excess of 50 m.p.h., the wind blowing against your ears causes more impairment than a helmet covering them. Helmets are designed to allow maximum peripheral vision. The only way your sight can be impaired with them on is if you put them on backwards.

Though 85% of all automobile deaths are caused by head injuries, I wonder how many of the 85% would be alive today if they had worn seat belts?

Daredevil motorcyclist Evel Knievel endorses motorcycle helmets by claiming he'll never mount a bike without one on. I agree with him wholeheartedly.

Just remember, "Is your head worth nothing?"

Dale Yamamoto

Truckers generating heightened self-image

The recent strike and violence of the various associations of independent truckers seems certain to add another chapter to the myth of the American trucker. There has always been a fascination with these men of perpetual motion; perhaps it's their ceaseless journeying that holds an attraction to the wandering American spirit, or maybe it's their image as tough, hardtalkin' individualists that gives them their special place in the American pantheon of folk heroes. But whatever their glorified image, it appears that the truckers are intent on shaping a new image for themselves.

Though a majority of American truckers already belong to some type of union, most notably the Teamsters' Union, the emergence of the various associations of independent truckers bears a striking resemblance to the early union struggles of the '30s, complete with destruction, scabs and death. Now, the picket lines are invisible, enforced by shippers and high powered rifles.

But this heightened self-image is not limited to the current strike; it is evident in other aspects of the modern

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truckers' realm as well. Nowhere is this new attitude more evident than in the new breed of truck stops, or truck plazas, as they now are called.

On a recent trip, I stopped in Raphiner, Va., at one of these new truck stops. The plaza was designed like a modern hunting lodge, complete

with stuffed animal heads, oak beams and gun collections. When a person enters one of these establishments, there is no doubt who the preferred customer is.

This particular stop featured a separate truckers' dining room complete with overstuffed chairs, special menu, free juke box and special waitresses, plus a large aquarium. In addition, for those drivers not on a tight schedule, there was a private pool and game room, a truckers-only sauna, an all-night barber shop and a special truckers' gift and equipment shop featuring customized rig accessories, stereo components and an array of 100% American bumper stickers. In a more professional vein, the truck stop not only supplies a small technical library and a bulletin board for job notices, but it also supplies up-to-date news and weather information via two teletypes.

But most devastating to the ego of the nontrucker is the training and attitudes of the plaza employees. They seem to know many of the truckers by name and are interested in the special terminology and problems of trucking. To a nontrucker they seem to say, "Well, if you're not a trucker we'll tolerate you for a while, but you don't really belong here. Truckers do come first." And this philosophy seems evident in their every word and deed.

Special privileges for truck drivers are nothing new, but the popularity of the new truck plazas seems to point toward more than a desire for special treatment. Drivers are congregating in the private dining rooms to talk, rather than grabbing that important hour or two of sleep in the cab. The individual driver is no longer isolated from the mass of his fellow professionals.

And it is this new, complex sense of unity that spawned the grassroots rebellion to the energy hoax.

It is now evident that their success against diesel prices is only the beginning. Other chronic complaints

are also surfacing: displeasure over weight limitations, speed limits, individual state licensing.

In fact, it is beginning to seem that the strike by the independent truckers has worked too well. The truckers spoke, and the government not only jumped, it danced.

It is only too clear, in light of England's current problems, that a prolonged strike by a group such as the truckers could indeed "bring America to her knees."

It is now up to President Nixon and his czar to decide if it could indeed happen here.



"Berkeley, '65!" "Columbia, '62!"