

editorial

'Medical Center' candor refreshing

The Columbia Broadcasting System's (CBS) "Medical Center" began its fall season Sept. 9 and Monday with a two-part segment that should win high status in television history.

The subject was transsexuality—a publicized, but little understood condition involving gender identification with the opposite sex.

The CBS show, about a prominent male surgeon who seeks and is granted a sex-change operation, was beautifully and courageously handled.

The plot threw a number of pitfalls in the path of the surgeon character; any of these obstacles would have given a less brave network an excuse to cop out and play the story only halfway.

The writers and producers of "Medical Center," however, did not waver and took the operation to a successful conclusion while raising the consciousness of several secondary characters.

En route, they took time to clearly explain the difference between homosexuals (who are attracted to their own sex), transvestites (who feel the need to dress as a member of the opposite sex) and transsexuals.

Also included in the show's dialog was a moving and convincing argument against the "macho" school of masculinity. If for nothing else, the program deserves praise for trying to rip apart some popular conceptions of what a man "should" be.

In contrast to the courage of the Monday CBS show was the American Broadcasting Company's (ABC) craven editing of *Cabaret* Sunday night. ABC took a fine piece of cinematic art and

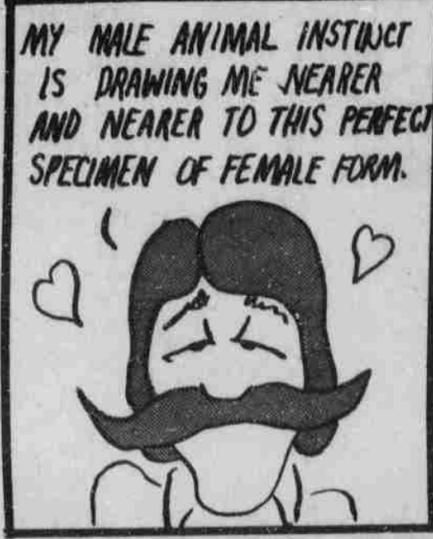
reduced it to a confusing shred of the original film by cutting—and not too skillfully—the key scene, in which it is revealed that the male lead has been sexually involved with another male character.

The scene was vital to an understanding of the film's statement. Without it, *Cabaret* was tinsel. If television is ever to be an effective educational tool (a goal we sometimes despair of), it must eliminate the kind of cowardice displayed Sunday by ABC and by the season-long horror of "Family Hour" rules.

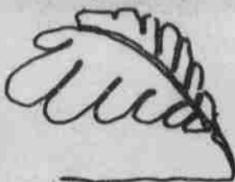
CBS no doubt will be deluged with angry letters protesting the "Medical Center" subject matter. Daily Nebraskan readers could support intelligent television programming by writing the network with positive feedback about the show.

Rebecca Brite

RALPH by *Rothman*



to the editor



Dear editor,
Last Saturday, my wife and I went to our first Cornhusker football game. We were having a lot of fun until late in the fourth quarter when some pinhead hurled a liquor bottle into the crowd.

From what I could see, the bottle seemed to smash on the back of some girl's head, and our little fun-loving moron was not caught. I can't believe that nobody saw him throw the bottle.

Because the Daily Nebraskan is so instrumental in informing UNL students, I would hope it might act as a clearinghouse for information on this incident. I hope, also, that the fans feel it is their duty to see to it that it is safer in the stands than it is on the football field.

I believe the bottle was thrown from the top of section 12 or 13. It was about a one-quart brown, cylindrical bottle. Surely one person saw somebody who might qualify as a prime suspect, or might know about where they were sitting.

Of course, maybe I'm just an alarmist, and this sort of thing is common at Big Red football games. If so, would anyone like to buy a couple of slightly used football tickets?

RVW

Readers should laugh

Dear editor,
I think credit is due Ron Wheeler for the cartoon series he did on "people" last week in "Ralph." I would like to remind you that he did not pick on any one group; he hit them all—black, white, men and women.

As a white, female employe, I could have taken great offense at the "assets" or "fine points" described on the females applying for the secretarial job. As a former "farmer's" daughter, I could have been upset with him portraying young men coming off the farm as blundering, overweight, backward idiots. And I could also have been offended to think my father could be considered a "Big Red(neck) football rooter."

I was not offended by any of these put-downs; I was simply amused because people, no matter who they are, are funny. Anyone who was offended by these cartoons has a real problem to deal with, and that problem is not mine nor the cartoonist's.

Let's take a cartoon for what it is; we've gone too far and we have too much to lose if we can't even laugh about people.

Connie Barry

Freedom defended

Dear editor,
Ron Wheeler should be ashamed of himself, I very strongly object to his obviously narrow-minded, prejudiced and bigoted view of Big Red supporters.

First of all, not all fans are overweight, nor do they all wear little red suits and funny hats. As a Big Red supporter, I am very much offended by this racist attitude.

Does this sound ridiculous? It is no more ridiculous than the many examples of irate, immature and reactionary letters that the Daily Nebraskan received as a result of Ron Wheeler's innocuous cartoon about football.

I agree that it wasn't very funny, but not for the reasons given by the letter writers. It was not funny because it was ill-conceived and poorly executed. However, in spite of some of Ron's failings as a cartoonist, I feel compelled to defend his freedom of expression.

Ron was not attempting to depict all black people with

this cartoon, but all must agree that some black football players do come from the ghetto and some do have thick lips and big noses. I have a big nose and yet didn't find myself the least upset.

Perhaps the most ridiculous thing of all was the mealy-mouthed way Rebecca Brite, in her acquiescing, hand-wringing letter, made lame excuses for Ron's work. The most important thing an editor can do is stand behind her staff's freedom to express a view, even if that view is not popular.

Ron Wheeler's editorial impact is now so seriously compromised that he almost has no other choice than to resign. I think that would be a tragic mistake.

Maybe in the future Ms. Brite will have the nerve to resist the pressure from special interest groups and stand behind her staff. I am not able to use my name because you can imagine what might happen to me for defending a cartoon that inspired so much hate.

"Freedom of Speech"

Vine street irregulars UNL grad students left out; UNO group collects money



By Michael Hilligoss

With a roast beef sandwich in one hand and an Oly in the other, Yossarian ushered me to a corner table at Lebsack's.

"You know, Hilligoss," he said as we sat down, "I was serious when I said last week that graduate students should stand up and be counted. There's too much money at stake just to sit idly by."

Yossarian explained that "standing up to be counted" is about the only way graduate students are going to get any kind of direct return on the student activity fees they are required to pay every semester.

"Do you realize," he asked, "that the organization representing the 2,100 grad students at University of Nebraska—Omaha got \$1,350 in funding last year while the 3,100 grad students at UNL received only \$400?"

"And this year," he continued, "the UNO grads were given \$1,100 while the UNL grads didn't get anything at all!"

"That's quite a discrepancy," I said. "What's the problem?"

"Apparently the UNL grad student organization didn't ask the Fees Allocation Board for funds for this year," replied Yossarian. "They just never stood up to be counted."

"Should they really have to ask?" I questioned. "Isn't it coming to them without their having to request it?"

"You might think so," said Yossarian, "but you have to realize the official organization which represents graduate

student interests at UNL is treated as though it were just undergraduate activity club when it comes to funding.

"Rather than recognizing the Graduate Student Association for what it is, the representative assembly of 3,500 graduate students, it is apparently regarded by many as a small club with a handful of members. It is not recognized that each so-called member is a duly elected representative of a graduate program in a department on campus," he observed.

"It's time to change that image," said Yossarian. "I'm asking every Vine Street Irregular to encourage the graduate students in his department to send sharp, tough representatives to the GSA, representatives who are willing to work and who will stand up and be counted when our collective interests are at stake."

"That's rather stirring," I said. "Do you think anyone will listen to the urging of the VSI?"

"Well, I figure the GSA is due to collect at least two or three thousand dollars if it presents its case properly. That ought to perk up a few graduate ears somewhere out there," winked Yossarian as he finished the last mouthful of his sandwich.

Special Message for "Hawkeye": If you had asked your friend Yossarian, he could have told you that Carolyn Grice is a graduate student in the School of Journalism. Her appointment to the search committee for the new chancellor was made without consultation with the GSA or with the graduate senators to ASUN, however.