

editorial / opinion



innocent bystander



Trend-setter pays for sins

By Arthur Hoppe

My Uncle Gotham is in terrible trouble. As you might expect, the dramatic news really united the whole family. They couldn't be more delighted.

"The wages of sin," said Aunt Duluth, nodding contentedly over her knitting needles.

"It couldn't happen to a more deserving guy," agreed Cousin Cleveland, rubbing his hands.

"Now maybe people will pay more attention to me," said Sister L.A., the teeny-bopper, dabbing on another layer of green eye shadow.

It's hard to say why the family is so down on Uncle Gotham. I think maybe they're jealous.

Uncle Gotham was always the biggest and brightest member of the family. The trouble was that he never minded being the first to say so.

He lived big, taking in a new show every first night, drinking champagne out of slippers and dancing around in his top hat and white tie singing songs he had made up about how wonderful he was.

He never had much use for the rest of the family. His only friends were London, Rome and Paris. I guess he thought we were pretty provincial.

Worse yet, he set himself up as the arbiter of our taste and fashion. A real trend-setter. When he started wearing wide ties and wide lapels, before we could think about it, we were wearing wide ties and wide lapels. If he said a magazine or a play was good, we went out to buy it or see it. If he said it was bad, it folded. Just like that. You can see why we resented him.

But when his creditors start dunning him, who does he turn to? Grandpa Jerry, the head of the family.

"Jerry, old boy," he says nonchalantly, "kindly slip me a little of the ready to tide me over till next June."

"You are an irresponsible wastrel with a hole in your fiscal pocket," says Grandpa Jerry. "You must learn thrift and self-reliance. I won't give you a nickel until you put your affairs in order, if then."

"You mean you'll only give me a loan if I don't need it?" says Uncle Gotham, stunned. "But think what will happen to the family's credit rating if I go bankrupt!"

"I'm sure we'll get along without you very well," says Grandpa Jerry. "You will make an excellent bad example for the others."

"I'd like to help you out, Gotham," whispered Grandma

Washington, who's very generous with the family money. "But if I did, the others would skin me alive."

And I'm sure they would. You could see the way they relished poor Uncle Gotham's plight as he slouched off in utter defeat. I can understand that. But one thing still worries me.

Like I say, Uncle Gotham's always been a real trend-setter.

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always be a convict; someone too different to be a part of their world.

He has paid, paid dearly, for his infraction against the laws of society. He asks now for a chance to become a useful part of the community. Will he get it?

Yes, because as a result of that letter to the Daily Nebraskan he has found a friend. A friend, who in every respect, meets the standards of this position. C. Raymond Beran described this person perfectly when he asked, "What is a friend?" and then answered, "Someone with whom you can be yourself."

Harry B. Harrison

to the editor



Dear editor,

During the first week of this semester, a letter appeared in this column asking for people to take the time to correspond with an inmate of the Nebraska Penal Complex—an inmate who sought help in bridging the "gap" between himself and society, a man who wants very much the forgiveness and acceptance of those persons (society) whom he wronged.

Most of his fellow inmates ridiculed him for "copping out" to those who were responsible for his confinement. They predicted zero response to his appeal, since "society doesn't give a damn about convicts."

It's now two months later and the value of that letter to the Daily Nebraskan can be evaluated. Not every person who read it rushed home to write to him; not even 100 did so. But some did, and that made his letter very valuable.

From just one well-used postage stamp, a man's life has taken on a new meaning, a new depth and a new direction. He knows that with an honest effort he can overcome the

stigma of being a convict, and again be a man.

The task before him will be quite difficult: it's going to require a lot of effort to rid some people of their biases and prejudices against him, since these things are very much a part of them and somewhat justified by the high recidivism rate of offenders.

At the same time, he's fully aware that there are some who will never accept him as just a man. To them, he'll

ASK not what it could have done

One of the wisest moves made this year by UNL student government was the temporary disbandment of the Associated Student Ko-op (ASK).

Plagued by lack of organization and good management since its inception, ASK now should be allowed to fade away permanently.

One of the biggest problems with ASK has always been that it was not really a co-op. Its members—card holders—put money into the effort, but no work was asked of them.

If future efforts are made to provide students discounts at local businesses, the project should be clearly defined as a business venture. Its managers should be hired, and paid, accordingly.

A truly cooperative effort, on the other hand, would demand more than just money of its participants. ASUN's Book Exchange is an example of a quite functional—if transitory—cooperative, run by students and stocked by students.

That the book exchange continues to work proves our point. If the exchange could be expanded into a year-round project, it might provide a model for other student co-ops.

Three cheers for Omaha Police Chief Richard Andersen, who so far is scrupulously avoiding comparisons of his division's new Emergency Reaction Team (ERT) with the Special Weapons and Tactics Units (SWATs) popularized by one of the most mindlessly violent shows on television.

Members of the new team would be called into action to deal with such incidents as the Elza Carr shootout of 1974, in which one police officer was killed and several others wounded.

Such incidents do not often arise. The ERT should not be looked at, especially by its members or by other police officers, as an offensive weapon. Let us hope the Omaha Police have not given that city a SWAT in ERT's clothing. The team can be an asset only if well-used.

Lincoln this year has enjoyed one of the most beautiful autumn seasons in this writer's 16-year experience of Nebraska weather.

The golden part of the year is almost over, and we hope Daily Nebraskan readers have stopped now and then, if only for a few minutes, to enjoy the contrasts of white clouds and brilliantly blue skies, of still-green grass and red trees, of warm days and brisk nights.

The gray approach of winter is no less beautiful in its own way. Its brief, scattered night rains will stick the leaves to the sidewalks, then moulder them to produce that peculiarly autumn aroma which is a prelude to the smells of Christmas baking and freshly cut evergreen.

Do not let this part of the year get away from you unnoticed.

Rebecca Brite

The Daily Nebraskan welcomes letters to the editor and guest opinions. Choices of material published will be based on timeliness and originality. Letters must be accompanied by the writer's name, but may be published under a pen name if requested. Guest opinions should be typed, triple-spaced, on nonerasable paper. They should be accompanied by the author's name, class standing and major, or occupation. All material submitted to these pages is subject to editing and condensation, and cannot be returned to the writer.

the word unheard



Individual rights diminishing

By Del Gustafson

It is refreshing to discover that not all feminists come out of the Bella Abzug mold; some, like Germaine Greer, actually think.

Greer, rather than wasting everyone's afternoon bemoaning the fact that the human race is sometimes referred to as mankind, launched an attack upon the burgeoning pseudo-scientific mentality that elevates, above every other tenet of traditional morality, the imperative that mankind ought to be preserved; and therefore concluding that the state has the right to compel the use of birth control for the good of all and the purification of the gene pool.

The conflict arising over the exercise of societal control over the most minute and traditional spheres of individual choice may provide the final battlefield in the future struggle between the autonomous man and the Brave New World; it is a battle which will not be waged in the street, but in the laboratories, courts, and legislatures of the world.

While it inevitably will be a protracted conflict, the final victory of the social scientist will be a total one; for when the state has conquered human nature itself, there can be no revolt.

It is comforting that Ms. Greer will be on the right side in that battle; but it is a pity that her speaking engagement was paid for by the very subordination of the rights of the individual to the welfare of the group that she so eloquently decried in her talk.

And when she denounced the tyrannous control of the collectivity over the individual as a return to barbarism, I suppose all the fee-mongers in the crowd dutifully nodded their empty heads, congratulated themselves on bringing in such a fine speaker, and pledged themselves to the exaction of more money from the students in order to bring in more "right on" speakers; and, naturally, all of it will be done for the good of all.