



Letters to the editor

The *Daily Nebraskan's* recent editorial concerning the actions of the American Agriculture led farmers in Washington, has, like most of the area papers and national coverage, simply missed the point.

The actions taken by the farmers, while most certainly are out of character, are not at all out of proportion to the desperate plight they face back home on the farm. These men and women are literally fighting to save their farms, their homes and their livelihoods. To them, at this point in time, a stern lecture on civil disobedience and maintaining public composure is a waste of their time.

It is not necessary to reiterate the statistical story behind that long tractor drive to Washington. Suffice it to say, that except for a few bright spots, such as the cattle market which is finally coming out of a five-year depression and the dairy market which is already supported by government programs, the farm economic picture does not look bright. Grain farmers are especially hard hit and it is this section of the economy that is most visible in Washington.

What matters to these citizens is not that their actions have caused them to lose face, but instead that no action at all would have been even worse. Too dismiss the movement as one founded on rhetoric is to deceive oneself and his paper's readers. This movement, like the Populist movement of the 1890's and the Farmer's Holiday Movement of the 1930's before it, is founded on simple economic desperation. The American farmer, penalized on simple productivity, is struggling to maintain his assets against a wave of inflationary costs and low on-farm prices.

The problem, of course, runs deeper than that. The increasing control of corporate power in the food industry, and the incessant upward spiral of prices in the supermarket are but indications that something is seriously wrong with the system. The recent comments of Secretary Bergland only serve to indicate that the Department of Agriculture, as comptroller of that system, is so far off target in emphasis and outlook that major revamping may be necessary.

So if the tractorcade in fact turns out to be a public relations disaster, the blame ought not rest with those farmers in Washington. Their job, after all, is feeding the world, not public relations, and their anger at the politicians' ineffectiveness in dealing with inflation in this time of depressed farm prices ought to be a concern we can all sympathize with. But action, not sympathy is what these farmers deserve from Congress. We who sit at home can only hope that their sacrifice and message will not be lost in a front page barrage of burning tractors and swinging nightsticks.

Kurt Hohenstein
Dakota City, Nebraska
Junior at Law School

Television women

I feel I must speak out regarding the guest opinion in Monday's paper. I too, have been disgusted with the portrayal of black people on television, but Stearns' lengthy prose failed to reiterate the fact that television programs do not depict reality at all (even about white America), and programmers, in addition to being racists, are sexists as well.

Black women have been severely discriminated against and misunderstood long enough to be silent on this issue, and I'm disappointed that Stearns' only published concern about black women on television is that they be portrayed as beautiful ladies, and not as heavyset or as strong "Aunt Jemima" types.

I take offense with Stearns' demand that we need strong, assertive males in every family situation and need beautiful black women as our leading ladies. Is it just an oversight that he does not ask that television portray strong, assertive black women in real life and family situations? Real life for a vast majority of black women is raising children alone in poverty and not playing beautiful leading lady to a male-head-of-household family.

If Stearns' is so concerned with reality why does he want to have fictitious television shows about male-headed households? The nuclear family is a recent development for blacks; in the past most black families were matriarchal units, with women (strong, sometimes heavyset, not always beautiful, real women) struggling to raise their children in a male-less environment.

I agree that we need to develop positive self-images for black people to identify with and that we need to raise the level of respect for all minorities in America. But we must remember that the word "people" includes women; whose damaged and negative self-images must also be dealt with when developing ideal role models for television. We will never accomplish expressing reality if our goal is to flood the television situation comedies and "real life" dramas with beautiful ladies and strong, assertive males. There must be a better balance of portraying old people (men and women) with young people, plain people with beautiful people, and poor people with the not-so-poor. And we must not be afraid to portray women as strong and assertive and as thinkers and doers.

Only when we remember (and act upon) the fact that women are people too, will we have something real to be proud of.

Sue Tyrrel

All people are alike

If Clyde Stearns wasn't so blatantly prejudiced, his

guest opinion might have more value than it does now. People always complain about something or other in television, but leave it to Clyde to complain how it unrealistically portrays black people.

As for oppressing whites because blacks (and others) have been oppressed in the past just doesn't. . . I think the courts have said enough (Bakke).

Mr. Stearns states: "We need strong assertive males in every family situation. We need black people characterized as complete families on each and every program. . . but most of all, we need it to be real!"

It would be great if that was real, Mr. Stearns, unfortunately for a lot of people it isn't.

You have good intentions, I'm sure, Mr. Stearns, but you are too radical to convert many people. This and previous articles of yours have only too clearly shown this.

David M. Spier
Sophomore
Animal Science

RHA opposes expansion

The University of Nebraska Board of Regents approved a 9,000 seat addition to the east stands of Memorial Stadium in Lincoln at their January meeting. We, the members of the Residence Hall Association (RHA), as concerned students, are opposed to this action for three reasons:

(1) The regents, by and large, devote too much attention to football and the football program. The football program at Nebraska provides excellent publicity for the university and the state, but education should be the university's primary concern; too often it seems that educational interests take a back seat to the interest in football.

(2) The proposed method of funding for construction is unsound, based on sell out crowds (including the new seats) for over seven seasons of home games. The Nebraska football program has been successful in recent seasons, but there can be no guarantee of success in the future. Decreased attendance, due to one or more bad seasons, would make the present revenue predictions invalid.

(3) Approval for the expansion was given at the January meeting of the regents at a time when classes were not in session. This allowed for inadequate student input into a decision which closely affects students.

For these reasons, RHA considers the following provisions regarding the addition important to the interests of students and the citizens of Nebraska:

The proposed ticket surcharge to help pay for

construction should not be placed on student tickets. In addition to high tuition and other college expenses, students should not be asked to pay for an expansion which they generally oppose.

Further, students should not be required to buy tickets in the new section unless they wish to. Student participation is important during the game; its effect would be diminished by a major change in the traditional seating arrangement.

As concerned students we feel that the student voice should have more influence in future decisions concerning students and the university. We would also urge the regents to devote more of their efforts toward continual improvement of educational quality at the University of Nebraska. If such efforts are not made, this stadium addition will stand as a monument to the neglect of basic educational needs.

We suggest that all Nebraskans express their opinions on this issue to the regent of their district.

University of Nebraska
Residence Hall Association



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