

opinion/editorial

Vietnam out of American closet, onto silver screen

The night was full of irony. There was John Wayne, looking like a pale shadow of himself after his bout with cancer, announcing the Academy Award for best picture of 1978. Among the nominated films were *Coming Home* and *The Deer Hunter*, two movies which vividly exhibit the physical and psychic scars suffered by a nation and its soldiers in a brutal, unnecessary war. The Duke, of course, was one of the more vocal supporters of that war.

There was Jane Fonda, once vilified in Hollywood for her anti-war sentiments, now being feted by that same establishment for her role in *Coming Home*. Actors Jon Voight and Christopher Walken, of *Coming Home* and *The Deer Hunter*, won acting honors for their roles in those movies. Director Michael Cimino was honored for his direction of *The Deer Hunter*.

Clearly, the Vietnam War is no

longer a taboo subject. The war, which was an American embarrassment for so long, seems, at long last, to have been let out of the closet. It looks as though the establishment has finally found the strength to face up to the specter which has haunted the American subconscious all these years.

It's healthy sign, but with the success of these two films there most certainly will be a glut of Vietnam films in the near future. Success

invariably spells imitation. It won't be surprising if television soon jumps on the Vietnam bandwagon.

Copies, particularly if they are inferior to the original, will do nothing but lessen the impact of the basic statements made by those originals. Although it's nice to see society finally looking at Vietnam in the proper perspective, a string of diluted, repetitive Vietnam statements will do nothing but turn real heartfelt sentiments into bland, thin soup.

'Le ski' in the Pyrenees brings out French friendliness

The train heading south from gray Bordeaux enters within two hours the rolling foothills of the Pyrenees. These mountains from the French-Spanish border and nestle among their peaks the tiny principality of Andorra.

Nicknamed mountains of "eternal snow" because of their altitude (as high as 3,300 meters), the Pyrenees are dotted with ski resorts.

mary jo pitzi

And it is to these ski resorts that the French, generally not renowned for their love of sports, flock during the winter months.

"Le ski" is quite the passion in France, attracting the genuine ski bum as well as the Dior-clad sunbather seeking a pre-season tan. In between these two extremes are the knee-high youngsters who go shooting across the slopes with no hesitation, the Parisien who comes for his annual weekend of "sports d'hiver" (winter sports), military men on vacation or in training and an assortment of foreigners whose cries of pain or joy are easily understood, language barrier or not.

Bunny slopes

From a skiing point of view, the Pyrenees are like northeastern United States. Not as well known as the Alps (The Rockies of France), the Pyrenees are pooh-pooed by Alps fans as a bunch of bunny slopes. But it's better to put aside such regional loyalties, pack your gear and go find out for yourself.

A prerequisite for ski trips is the answer to the continued question of is there enough snow. This winter has not been too abundant, so ski fanatics living in regions far from the mountains (the Bordelais still talk about the winter of '59, when the last known snowflake was sighted) eagerly scan the papers for snow reports.

You can also call for the latest snow conditions, but leave it to France to make it necessary to call Paris (which is north of Bordeaux) to get snow reports for the Pyrenees (which are south of Bordeaux). People talk about centralization of France in Paris, but this is getting ridiculous.

Low-keyed slopes

Since the Pyrenees are not as world-renowned as the Alps, they tend to be lower-keyed than their towering neighbors to the east. Prices, ski reports and crowds are generally lower, smaller and less international than in the Alps.

At a small ski resort several miles from the Spanish border, I was surprised to hear no Spanish whatsoever. The man who ran the ski lifts replied, with a half-smile on his face, that the Spanish tend to stay in their own country for skiing.

Contrary to the general stereotype of the French as a closed, reserved people, the ambiance at the ski resorts is incredibly friendly and open. This positive attitude was aided by the fact that, at this particular small ski resort, two friends and I were the only English-speaking people around. If there's one thing traveling has taught me, it's that being a young American girl almost always works to your advantage.

Signed, sealed and delivered
If you enjoy anonymity, and happen to

be a foreigner, it's better to avoid the small resorts. The lady at the grocery store stopped one of my friends to tell her about the last time an American had passed through the village. Another friend, inquiring for something at the hotel, was referred to a nearby store and found her request practically signed, sealed and delivered before she could even ask for it.

Learning to ski in French opens up a whole new area of vocabulary. It's hard enough to learn to stay upright on skis, much less to have foreign words adding to the confusion. Of course, a mumbled "I don't understand that word" takes some of the sting out of the ski instructor's stare when you fail miserably to imitate his swooping turns.

Bumping into people

Skiing, as I've already mentioned, attracts a variety of people, and meeting

them is as easy as opening your mouth to say "bon jour." (It is not recommended to start conversation by colliding with someone, for all they'll be able to do is wince in pain).

Sometimes it's not even necessary to speak French, as I found out when I asked an American friend what time it was and got a response in English from a Frenchman who was standing nearby. Turns out he learned English when working as a double for Omar Sharif in a Columbia Pictures production seven years ago.

The return voyage from the Pyrenees is just as beautiful as the sights from the slopes. Once you are down from the ski lifts, the majority of snow disappears, revealing the grassy, rocky terrain of these jutting mountains. Stone and wooden houses with thatched roofs nestle comfortably into the sides of the mountains,

practically blending with the gray-brown landscape. The houses appear deserted, until you detect a short, pudgy man, beret included, breaking the ground for the spring planting.

Pastoral scene

Further down the winding road descending the mountains, I was struck by how vividly green the grass was. Flocks of sheep dotted the already-verdant pastures and the first signs of mountain flowers were beginning to appear.

Streams fed by the slowly melting snows tripped and tumbled down the mountainsides, following the paths they had cut years ago.

This rolling pastoral scene continued as the road wound through town after picturesque town, ending its display of early springtime mountain beauty as it flattened into a straightaway into the overly-commercial town of Lourdes.

letters to the editor

As concerned students of UNL, and being actively involved in the workings of this university, we have in the past, observed the performance of our student government, ASUN.

Although we do not think of ASUN as a "joke," and feel that a strong student government is essential to a better university, the track record of ASUN seems to be following a trend of little improvement from year to year. Everyone must realize that student government is in a difficult position on any university campus, and that job of student senators and executives is not an easy one. But we feel that something can be done to improve this situation and improve the effectiveness of ASUN.

The senatorial elections are over, and a run-off election for president of ASUN is being held right now in the union and various buildings and living units on campus. The chance to start this change in ASUN is today.

Both candidates for president are top-quality people, and both are deserving of the office, but we feel only one candidate has committed himself to the change in ASUN we as students see as important for this university.

This change must come in the responsiveness to students, administrator and faculty, and of more importance, the NU Board of Regents. ASUN cannot allow itself to continue so caught up in the organizational and administrative aspects of student government that it neglects the most important feature of this university—people. Granted, procedures are the routes that have to be taken to get things done, but human potential and energies are the basic force that must be motivated in the right directions before we can see any progress.

Students have to be listened to, not just pacified by senatorial commissions. They

want clear, simplified feedback on their problems. The administration and regents, who are responsible for the operation of this university, must be worked with, not against. History proves working against the regents gets us nowhere, and it shouldn't.

Considering these things, and analyzing the true motives for both candidates' desire to be ASUN president, we feel that only one of them will respond to the direction we need and has this commitment to the university above his personal goals.

As students who care and have taken the time to consider UNL's present situation, we are supporting the candidate who can initiate these changes in ASUN by voting for Bud Caca in today's election.

Jane Matzke
Pete Allman
Liz Meier
Michael Phillips
Tracy Taylor
Gail Stork
John Minnick

Scott Behm
Bryan Stone
Inta Rizis
Andy Tomsen
Mary VanHousen
Lee Chapin

Irritated student

Dear Regent Prokop,
Would you like to know where I have been these last two years while you and your fellow regents have held your meeting? For the last two years, sir, my Saturdays have not been spent at football games, boozing, co-habiting or even studying. I, sir, am one of those taxpayers you claim to represent. I work all day Saturdays, Sundays and afternoons and evenings Monday and Thursdays. I also spend my Christmas and spring and summer vacations working. My mother does not finance my schooling, nor does my husband. I have earned it, sir, and paid taxes on my earnings. And although it just may shock you to learn this, there are a number of students at both

UNL and UNO who are working their way through school. Imagine, students being taxpayers as well.

But, sir, should I or any of my fellow student-taxpayers take time off from work to attend a regents' meeting? Would you make it worth my while to attend by listening to me? Do you listen to our student regent now? Since the student regent is not allowed to vote, I assume that the answer is "no." Did you listen to those 5,000 students who petitioned for the right to have speakers paid by fees? Or did you listen to those that were reported to have attended your meeting concerning speakers to the extent that the room was filled to overflowing? Will you listen to our newly elected ASUN senate, elected by 22 percent of the students (a figure comparable to predicted voter turnout in the Lincoln primary election)?

Do you even have the remotest idea as to why so many student taxpayers (and even a portion of non-student taxpayers) oppose another stadium expansion or even a new stadium?

Your worship sir, please try to understand something: there are a great number of students who are actually here at UNL for, of all things, an education! Not to party, not to shout "Go Big Red," but to learn. And perhaps that pursuit of education, or the means to pursue an education, takes precedence over, God forbid, a regents' meeting.

I'll be thinking of you, sir, while I'm working and you're attending the meetings. But, will you be thinking of me and all those like me?

Jeanne M. Miller
Junior
Actuarial Science

P.S. Sorry I don't have any titles to put after my name yet. I'm still working on them.