

opinion/editorial

Teacher requirements insufficient

In a state where many students attend small rural schools, the concept of preparing prospective teachers to teach in many areas of study is admirable. However, the program recently developed by the UNL Teachers' College falls short of the desired objective.

In compliance with a rule passed by the Nebraska Council on Teaching, the Teachers College this fall instituted a broad field language arts teaching endorsement.

Rather than specializing in one or two subjects, persons in the broad language endorsements program will study and then teach a wide range of related areas. The language arts endorsements would qualify persons to teach English, speech, theater and journalism in grades seven through 12.

In addition to a sizeable English requirement, only 12 hours of speech, nine hours of theater, six hours of journalism and nine hours of writing (including beginning news writing) are required for the endorsement.

It is doubtful that a person could adequately teach any of the subjects after such limited training. The usual teaching endorsement with a

double major requires about 30 hours in each area of study.

If, for example, to fulfill the journalism requirements a person takes photography, a journalism theory class and beginning news writing, that person is likely to be lacking knowledge of production, editing, and communication law. Even at a high school level, journalism students face tough technical, ethical and legal problems.

Despite doubts about the program's quality, it has been defended as necessary in order to train versatile teachers for small schools where instructors must teach a variety of subjects.

However the concept has several flaws. First, it seems unfair that students in small schools will get a lower quality education. In a time when we are questioning why Johnny can't read, it is even more absurd. Where instructors must teach more subjects, they need to be more qualified, not less.

The program also appears to be unwise for the teachers themselves. Now when we are told there is an abundance of teachers, requirements such as these not only make it easier to get a degree but seems to limit their opportunities.

'Understanding' both awe-inspiring awful

BOSTON—I know an Understanding Woman. No, not the sort of woman who'll jog along with you a while until she gets tired. I mean a marathon understander.

The Understanding Woman is a good listener and a good human historian. Over the years people have come to her when they were really out of shape and she's paced them over some pretty rough terrain.

She can put pieces together; she can figure out why one person behaves this way and another person behaves that way. She has empathy endurance. And she'll tell you that once you really comprehend someone else's life, it's tough to criticize them.

ellen goodman

I've watched the Understanding Woman over the long distance. I've watched with the awe I reserve for feats I can't imagine performing. I am better for an intense short sprint. I fade early.

But lately I've been wondering whether this capacity for understanding is awesome or really kind of awful. If understanding is a good thing, I wonder if she has too much of a good thing. I wonder whether she does the hard work and everyone around her stays flaccid. I wonder if understanding why things happen one way can't become a substitute for making them happen another way.

The last time I saw her I thought about the men in her life. I remember the husband who said he needed space. And she understood.

I remember the guy who was, from time to time, unfaithful. And she understood.

But I also suspect that a person can spend so much energy analyzing someone else's needs and track record that they analyze away their own. Psychiatrists always say that understanding is the first step of change, but I guess it can also be a substitute for change. A lot of women end up running in place.

No, I'm not saying that this is exclusively a "woman's problem." There are a lot of men who go the distance everyday. But we're trained for it from the time we get our first sneakers.

Continued on Page 5



Bicycle rider discovering he is an automatic patriot

WASHINGTON — I don't think of myself as a patriot, mainly because most of the current, self-proclaimed breed links America's greatness with its power to push around the rest of the world.

But President Carter has me thinking that perhaps I am having a few patriotic movements that go beyond cheering on Uncle Sam the Global Bully.

colman mccarthy

Several months ago, Carter called on citizens to avoid using their cars for 15 miles a week. We're in a fix, he said, and voluntary gas rationing would keep the nation secure against the fuel shortage.

The President's do-your-bit message stirred me to begin seeing my bicycle as a noble means of contributing to the national good. Although I had been biking 15 miles between home and office for the past five years, weather and legs permitting, I never had reason to think that national interests were coming before my own interests. It was enough that my daily 15 provided a trinity of personal benefits: exercise, a slower pace and the pleasure of denying the oil industry a few coins.

Perhaps I should be more of the sophisticate, but I admit that in these past months behind the handlebars I have enjoyed the feeling of patriotism. I am even some-

thing of a super-patriot: the President asked for 15 miles a week, and I'm donating 75.

TRoubles have come, though, like potholes on the bike trail. The first of them is in the danger of admitting to anyone that I took seriously Carter's call for getting out of our cars. We have developed such a harsh fundamentalism in our distrust of the government that even a President's mild plea for personal involvement in voluntary conservation is greeted with jeers or snickers.

Let him first give up his limousine, we think, then we'll leave our cars home and car pool, bike or take the bus to work. And what about those secret gas pumps beneath the Capitol for Tip O'Neill and the big shots in Congress? Why no gas for them? Why should we do anything when the government won't level with us about what is surely a hoked-up fuel shortage?

The questions aren't asked in hope of securing answers. They are blankets meant to provide covers for the cynic, the person for whom the sharpest pain is to be duped. Amid America's immense wealth and power, the fear of being snookered — whether by Big Oil or Big Brother — is the new and uneasy sensation. Barnum said there is a sucker born every minute, to which we fretfully add, yes, and another one to fleece him.

TO GET OUT of cars for 15 miles a week would be accepting the humiliation that some anonymous fleecer has gotten the best of us. Worse, it would be an admission that you aren't important. When J. William Middendorf, a former secretary of the Navy, installed a 4,000-gallon gas

tank in his front yard in McLean, Va., he explained that he was no commoner: "I find myself in a situation where I have to get places. I'm in constant demand from a business, social and political point of view." With his home tank filled, Mr. Constant Demand has seven year's worth of gas to make his high-blown rounds.

Should I see Middendorf along the avenues of Washington — him guzzling gas and me guzzling fumes — I'll likely feel more like a chump than a patriot. There goes a real American, I will think. No one is suckering him.

If it is bad form to do what the President asks, it is worse to admit that you are willing to make a sacrifice for the common good of the country. I have picked up beer cans in the park, but only after looking around to be certain that no one would see me. People might view me as lowly. Trash men are paid to clear away the litter.

IN THE PRODUCE section of the supermarket, I once stooped over to gather up some apples that had fallen to the floor. A fellow shopper berated me. "Don't do that," she said. "Now I can't tell which are the bruised apples."

I've been waiting for another call from the President that asks citizens to sacrifice for the common good. Some stirring speeches wouldn't be so bad. But he appears to have dropped the idea, as though he himself has a tin ear for any huge call to patriotism.

Meanwhile, I've noticed traffic is back to its old heaviness. Fewer patriots are on the bike lanes. But the ones who are can still pump with purpose.

(c) 1979, The Washington Post Company

letters

The Daily Nebraskan welcomes letter to the editor and guest opinions. Timeliness, clarity of writing and originality are considered when selecting material for publication.

Material should be typed if possible and submitted with the writer's name, class standing, academic major or occupation, address and phone number.

Mail or deliver letters and guest opinions to the Daily Nebraskan, Room 34, Nebraska Union, Lincoln, Neb. 68588.

