

# Editorial

## Tolerance needed to help prevent foolish accidents

The number of close calls between cars and pedestrians on and around the UNL campus has never ceased to amaze me.

Fortunately no one has been injured in a car-pedestrian accident within memory, according to UNL Police Information Officer Bob Fey.

Hardly a day goes by that students cannot be seen blindly crossing R street in front of a driver who often yells obscenities at the dazed walker. Sometimes it's a group phenomenon. A small herd of students, absorbed in themselves, will blithely cross in front of a car that barely has time to stop.

Lincoln's ordinances regarding pedestrians say a car should yield to a pedestrian at a crosswalk. But, a pedestrian should only walk in front of a car if it has sufficient time to slow down or stop before running into them.

Pedestrians break the law and the confines of common sense when they cross outside the crosswalk. It's illegal for a pedestrian to cross a street any way except at a right angle at an intersection or a crosswalk.

Sometimes drivers don't think they have to yield because there is no sign.

Two of the worst places for car-pedestrian runs are the intersections of 14th and Vine streets and 14th and U streets.

Cars going south on 14th street rarely yield to the pedestrians crossing at the crosswalk, with the "walk" light at U or Vine streets — I've only seen a car yield at those intersections a few times.

About two weeks ago a young man crossing Vine was nearly struck by a car that turned left. The driver rudely turned in front of him as he crossed Vine with the light. He gave the car a good boot on the rear quarter-panel. Vigilante justice done.

Cars should yield at those intersections — they are breaking the law if they don't, according to UNL traffic officer Lt. Ken Cauble. He said cars legally must yield to pedestrians in a crosswalk.

That is, when the pedestrian is crossing on a "walk" light within the bounds of the crosswalk.

What is needed for pedestrians is a trip back to those first grade classrooms across the state. Walkers on campus seem to have forgotten the golden words that were again and again drilled into our under-developed skulls: "Look both ways before you cross the street."

So simple. Such undeniable good advice is hard to come by these days.

The reasoning behind the words is simple. Ultimately, law or not, pedestrians are small bundles of fragile flesh and bone. Cars are large, resilient, high-velocity things driven by fallible flesh and blood. The logistics make it smart to wait until there aren't any cars in sight before crossing the street. Although drivers should be courteous, walkers should be very cautious. Both parties need some tolerance, and some compassion.

—Chris Welsch



## Coed locker room just weird?

I'm afraid I need your help again.

More and more I have been accused of being behind the times in matters of social custom and so-called "lifestyles"; modern America marches boldly on, and sometimes I feel as if I am straggling at the back of the parade.



**Bob Greene**

So when I started hearing rumors of a health club in Pennsylvania that allegedly featured one communal locker room for both men and women, I automatically figured that this was just one more example of how I really don't belong to the '80s.

According to the rumors, the health club in question asked its male and female members to share locker, shower and toilet facilities; according to the rumors, the male and female members willingly went along with this.

I remember when the Equal Rights Amendment was being widely debated; opponents of the ERA always charged that if it became law, then men and women would be forced to share public bathrooms.

Proponents of the amendment heatedly argued that this was ridiculous; such a thought was a red herring designed to turn people against the ERA.

But now . . . if this health club rumor was true, then perhaps the ERA opponents had — gasp! — been right after all. Perhaps we really were entering the era of unisex restrooms — and locker rooms.

This is one of those rumors I didn't want to look into too closely — if it was true, it would threaten to ruin my year. But I could not ignore it, and thus I made some phone calls and located the health club in question.

Alas, it is true.

The facility is called the 21st Century Health Club, and it is located in Springfield, Pa.

I talked to two employees of the club, neither of whom was overly eager to discuss the policy. But they gave me the basic details of how the club works. It's not as racy as the rumors would have you believe — but it's still enough to make you wonder.

The 21st Century Health Club is one of those exercise places designed for the new generation of Americans who are obsessed with the idea of staying fit. On Mondays and Wednesdays, and on Fridays up until 3 p.m., only women members are allowed to use the club; on Tuesdays and Thursdays, only men members are allowed.

But on Fridays after 3 p.m., and all day Saturdays and Sundays, the club is open to both men and women. And during those hours, the locker room facilities are indeed coed.

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## U.S. can't justify Latin policies

Catch phrases like communist aggression and leftist insurgents raise hair on the nape of just about every red-blooded American's neck and enable those who spew such spittle to slide even the least plausible arguments past the logic guards of their adoring public.

Administration officials are relying on narrow-



**Christopher Burbach**

mindedness and stupidity from a nation of *National Enquirer* readers to win public approval of their military package for Central America.

The truth is the United States is the bad guy in Central America.

Even a quick look at readily available facts suffices to sink three major administration justifications for American military activity in Nicaragua and El Salvador.

Supporters of that activity claim Nicaragua is spreading communist rebellion via arms and troops throughout Central America, and to El Salvador in particular. They are very quiet about a Central Intelligence Agency study last year which revealed no arms traffic between Nicaragua and El Salvador and about the fact that most of the weapons wielded by Salvadoran rebels are American arms

taken from El Salvador army troops.

Another attempt at justification claims American intervention in Central America supports freedom. That is false on both the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran fronts. The rebels the United States supports in Nicaragua are, for the most part, remnants of the deposed Somoza regime who are interested not in freedom, but in regaining their lost properties and power.

In El Salvador, less than 10 percent of the population owns more than 90 percent of that country's wealth. Most Salvadorans are not free — they are serfs. They struggle against starvation in a feudal system in which those who do not own land are virtual slaves to those who do.

The most laughable of all attempts at justification is the claim that the rebellion in El Salvador constitutes communist aggression. That revolt is a violent reaction to hunger. The rebels, largely illiterate serfs, have no ideology. Their rebellion is left wing only because the government is right wing. If they turn to Soviet aid, it is not because they embrace or even know anything about Marxism, but is because the United States is their enemy.

The message which American military activity in El Salvador and Nicaragua sends to the people of those nations and other Central Americans is clear — "We are not concerned with your welfare or your freedom if they come at the expense of our interests." Americans who fail to see that are being duped.

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