

Editorial




Nebraska fans continue 'class act'

Football is here and the time is right for cheering, hype and hoopla. Big Red fans are notoriously devoted to their team. Not long ago they were simply notorious. People getting drunk, throwing oranges and making illegal bonfires gave the university, the football team and the fans a bad reputation. Two years ago, a UNL police officer was severely injured after he was hit by a frozen orange. He suffered because of an irresponsible, over-zealous fan who should have spent time in jail.

The Lincoln Police Department, the campus police, NU administrators and the athletic department reacted by taking extra security precautions, and the result is laudable. Among the precautions, which are in effect again this season, are using police officers for crowd control, a video camera and surveillance system to identify throwers and rowdies and arrest them for disorderly behavior. Gate attendants will not admit individuals with oranges, alcohol or coolers. Bob Fey of the UNL campus police said

that last season went "remarkably well." Arrests were few and no injuries resulted from thrown items — it was a good season. Fey said Nebraska and other schools may be changing their attitudes. Fans are enjoying the games without getting violent or rowdy. That's good — after all, it's only a game and it's not worth getting upset about. The trend has continued thus far this season, he said. UNL police made no arrests at the Wyoming game last Saturday.

LPD Capt. Jim Baird said Lincoln police made only one arrest on Saturday — an intoxicated person. The devotion and civilized behavior of the fans last season led Sports Illustrated's Douglas S. Looney to describe them as the "classiest in America." "They love football, travel anywhere and lose with grace," he wrote. If the fans continue the trend they've initiated again this season, I'm sure they'll continue to be No. 1 in the public's eye, even if the team isn't.



Letters

'Negative' world outlook questioned


Your Sept. 7 column "Birth evokes mixed emotions in mother" by Elizabeth Burden about the future of her black daughter is an over-dramatized story. If the mother were so poor, how could she possibly afford a college education? Another question comes to mind. If the world is so bad (our society), then why did she choose to have a child? There is free birth control available in Lincoln. Most people get married and have stable incomes before they start a family. This way they ensure a good life for their child. Our society allows change — if people are willing to put time and energy towards it. I think the writer of the article I'm questioning should consider doing things now, to make the world better, rather than being angry and criticizing the white man. This negativism projects a poor self-image and makes change even harder to accomplish.

Beverly Mayer
unclassified graduate student

Reported rapes continue to mount despite decrease in violent crime

Reported rapes increased last year despite a 5 percent drop in violent crime nationwide. Either more sexual assaults are being committed or more victims are speaking out. Lincoln Police Lt. John Becker said the department used to think one of every 10 rapes was reported. Now, through the combined efforts of the force, the Rape-Spouse Abuse Crisis Center and city hospitals, the number of reports have increased. The figures are staggering. The Federal Bureau of Investigation reports that by the time a woman is 17, there is a 25 percent chance that she has been sexually assaulted. One of the biggest myths, Becker said, is rape happens only to others. Another myth is that most rapists are dirty old men

they were pregnant or have venereal disease, herpes or cancer. When walking at night, Becker suggested pooling with others and sticking to lighted streets. He said you should be aware of shadows along buildings and of someone stopped in a car. When someone approaches, Becker said, look them in the eye and acknowledge their presence. This does not necessarily mean saying hello to them. If this fails and you find you are being followed, you might want to make sure by changing directions or go someplace where there are people. Becker suggested walking into a grocery store, the police department, a hospital emergency room, parking in a fire department driveway or approaching a lighted house. If the suspect follows you to the door, do not hesitate to break something. You can pay for it later and may draw enough attention to prevent yourself from being assaulted. If you are being assaulted, Becker said one option may be calling for help. An even better alternative may be screaming "fire." Neighbors are more likely to get involved if they feel threatened, too. Some people advocate meeting the violent act with violence. Becker said the police department does not take a stand on this, but there are drawbacks to carrying a weapon, usually a gun.



Kema Soderberg

who hide in the bushes waiting for their victims. Becker said most rapists look like "ordinary men" and that most rapes are planned. He said the rapist and victim usually know each other but may not be on a first-name basis. Although the rapist may look ordinary, most have an abnormally strong desire to control other people. Rape is not a matter of lust, but an act of violence. Becker said sex is not the goal but the means to gain power. He said most rapists will continue committing assaults unless they are stopped. Becker said a rapist's victim usually looks like a victim. He said rapists generally do not pick people who look invulnerable but someone they can dominate. Potential victims (and that includes everyone, male as well as female) should assess their lifestyles. If your day is planned to the point when someone could correct their watch by virtue of where you are between work, classes or studying, you should vary your schedule. Potential victims also should evaluate their strengths and weaknesses. They should think through how they would respond to an assault. An avid jogger may decide running would be the best answer. Others may feel mentally strong enough to talk the rapist out of the act. Some women have brought a rapist back to reality by saying

• Guns are usually kept at the bottom of a purse and may be inaccessible when needed.

• Most victims are not violent people and have a hard time responding to the violence. They may threaten to use the gun but be unable to follow through.

• Using violence may make the rapist angrier and cause an even more violent response.

• Any weapon carried for protection may be taken away and used by the attacker.

Rapes do not take place only on the streets. Many "date rapes" also have been reported. A woman may go out with a man and come home sexually assaulted. This and all rapes should be reported. Rapists generally do not quit on their own initiative and will attack others. If you are assaulted, go to a hospital, call the police department or contact the Rape Spouse-Abuse Crisis Center, 476-3327.

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