

Editorial

'Bad news' press can bring hope, change

No one said it would be easy. Or fun. Or feed me. Or pay my bills. But if nothing else, a job at the university newspaper is enriching, for times shared with friends and the experiences — good and bad — that come with learning.

One of the most common complaints about the press (there are many to choose from) is that it has nothing better to do than report "bad news."

As news editor, I'm supposed to sit down daily and plan for the day and the week all the *thousands* of interesting things happening on and around campus — all the important issues that affect us. Something we call "story ideas."

I'll be honest and tell you there were days this semester when I sat down in despair to look at the stories coming in for the day and felt I was responsible for deluging you with world famine, assassination, suicide, drug abuse, and domestic violence all in one issue.

But there are times, I've learned, when the press acts as more than only the bearer of "bad news."

Early in the semester we ran a series of series. Probably one of the most effective, to me personally, was a series we did in conjunction with National Collegiate Alcohol Awareness Week in mid-October.

The week following the series, a friend of mine admitted to myself and others that he was an alcoholic. More importantly, he admitted it to himself. I am moved by the reality that duties I had sometimes regarded as "only the job" are in fact more. People are everything in journalism.

This holiday, my friend is off getting professional help. Before leaving, he dropped this note in my mailbox:

"Thank you for your patience and understanding. It's impossible to describe what goes through your head in the midst of a self-destructing disease but supportive

sympathy is just about my last glimmer of hope. Thank you...And I'm gonna try to get well."

Despite the hardships of the job and the headaches, the complaints and the frustration of wanting to please all readers and be everywhere at once, there are those special times — like this, for instance — when the press can act as a catalyst for healthy change, and inspiration, a hope for new life. Those are the times, especially, when being "the press" ain't too bad.

Michiela Thuman
Daily Nebraskan Senior Editor



Letters

Doctor: Student lacks facts

I wish to respond to the guest opinion by pre-med student James E. Ruley Jr. concerning the Baby Fae case (Daily Nebraskan, Nov. 19).

Ruley states: "The first priority of a good physician and researcher is to gather and analyze all of the facts before making a decision."

Ruley broke that rule by condemning the physician who worked on the Baby Fae case. He does not have all the facts in the case and yet, on the basis of what he has read in the news, he makes a decision to condemn.

Rule No. 2 is: "Do not trust what you read in the news media."

Ralph A. Ewert, M.D.
University Health Center

'Boss' fan disputes criticism

It seems to have become fashionable for anyone with a gripe to blame it on those decadent hooligans who lined up for Bruce Springsteen tickets.

At one time, I had already decided it wasn't worth my time to write a response to any obviously fragile attempt at logic that would be forgotten in a week, but after seeing another self-righteous letter/editorial condemning Springsteen fans, I feel a slight need to defend myself. Springsteen fans have been blamed for everything from the MX, social decay, trashing our beautiful campus, alarming our fine alumni, interfering with the almighty Big Red crowds, keeping handicapped people out of the union to possibly even the heartbreak of psoriasis. This is ridiculous.

Sam Umland, Liz Burden, Kema Soderberg and others: who are any of you to throw stones? All of you can condemn others for lining up for concert tickets when we haven't done anything socially significant, but I can't help but wonder, "what's the connection?" Do we have to say a Hail Mary and protest something unjust to earn a trip to a concert? What's the price to visit relatives? You say, Umland (Daily Nebraskan, Nov. 7), you doubt this student body

has done anything to prevent the MX in Nebraska, yet I doubt you or your fellow editorial stone-throwers have done any more than I have. I am also opposed to the MX, and to U.S. policy in Central America, and am far from apathetic about it, but a concert in Lincoln is something I can see and attend now. These social idealisms are not, and they have no relation to each other.

Last but not least, there was Kema Soderberg's alleged editorial Oct. 26, which probably started this nonsense. Was there a necessity for big headlines saying, "Boss Fans Wreck Campus Havoc?" Wreck havoc? If a tent in the grass means havoc to you I shudder to think of your reaction in a real crisis.

So, the point of all this is that if you have a legitimate gripe or complaint, by all means say it. The only way most problems get solved is when they are brought to light. But, to place blame on something unconnected or blown out of proportion is absurd. Leave the Springsteen fans alone. Your problems are not our fault, just as ours are not yours. Place blame where it belongs, not where it's convenient.

Geoff McMurtry
sophomore
broadcasting



Memories evoke longing for boyhood days gone by

It was yesterday. We rolled down the last dusty mile in the old green station wagon and parked in the farmyard in front of the house. Grandma walked out, untying her apron, and Grandpa stood in the doorway. Both waited for the onslaught of children the green Ford was about to unleash.



Grandma always hugged me first, I'm sure of it, and as I ran past Grandpa toward the kitchen for buttermilk and prune kuchen, he quietly said, "Christowhatfer." Grandpa always spoke quietly, except when Mike drove Dad's car into the ditch while having a little fun on the roads between the farm and our catfish lines in the Big Blue. But he must have been tempted to raise his voice when I spaced off my turn at Spit and Spite because of the suspense on "Jeopardy."

"You playing cards or watching TV?" Grandpa asked.

Pirochle was the big game in Grandpa's living room. Grandma taught me how to play pinochle in the kitchen while the big folks played around the card table with Grandpa in his rocking chair chewing Redman. Grandma smelled like cinnamon rolls, Grandpa like tobacco — their house smelled like home.

The cold upstairs bedroom had in it what Grandpa called a peepot so we wouldn't have to go too far into the cold from the quilt-

laden big brass bed. I fought with anyone who wanted to sleep with Grandma; once, when I lost, I tried to sleep under the big brass bed with the daddy longlegs.

In the morning, after breakfast, we ran to the barn to pet cows and watch them at the water tank. We climbed into the hay loft, where we played cow-boys and cops and searched for tunnels. When the hay was high enough, we could swing from the pulley on the roof, slide along the cable across the loft, let go of the hood at peak speed, fall into the hay and race to get back on the pulley.

Back in the house, we played Chinese Checkers and listened to stories on Grandma's ample lap. We ate more kuchen and cinnamon rolls and spun around in the living room swivel chair until it was time to go into town.

We sat in one of Hebron's two bars, or both. Grandpa and Dad drank a beer and I had grape or strawberry Nesbitts and beer nuts.

Everybody wore overalls and everybody knew Grandpa.

"Hey, Joe. Who's this? One of Max's?"

I wanted some overalls and a beer. But no Redman.

We went back into town for mass on Sunday morning in Grandpa's '64 Ford Custom. Old Monsignor Rezabek looked and sounded the same at Grandpa's and Grandma's funerals as he did at their 50th wedding anniversary — "The Lord be with you," he drawled into the smell of cinnamon rolls and chewing tobacco.

Now only swallows fly through the hay loft. Nobody chases cows into the pond or shoots at toads with the old '22, and nobody is baking any prune kuchen in the kitchen. Somebody else cuts the milo and mends the fences, but nobody says "Christowhatfer."

You can't go back. And I don't like it. I know it won't change, but I don't like it. Grandpa would say "Tain't funny." Tain't.

Editorial Policy

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Other staff members will write editorials throughout the semester. They will carry the author's name after the final sentence.

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EDITOR **Chris Welsh, 472-1766**
GENERAL MANAGER **Daniel Shattil**
PRODUCTION MANAGER **Kitty Policky**
PUBLICATIONS BOARD CHAIRPERSONS **Nick Foley, 476-0275**
Angela Nietfeld, 475-4981
PROFESSIONAL ADVISER **Don Walton, 473-7301**

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