

# Editorial

## Remember the vets, shame and protests

Ten years ago this month, the United States lost a war for the first time in its history. It's been over for a decade, but the Vietnam War continues to have a profound effect.

We not only lost, we can't even be sure that we were the good guys, unlike World War I or World War II, when American involvement clearly aided other nations whose freedom was threatened. The fact that the North Vietnamese were the bad guys wasn't — and isn't — sufficient to make U.S. forces the good guys. The consciences of those of us who were not there (who are old enough to remember) are indelibly marked with the image of a naked Vietnamese girl, burned by a U.S. napalm strike, screaming in terror and pain.

The Americans who were there can't forget either. "Everything I see is blown through with smoke, everything is on fire everywhere. It doesn't matter that memory distorts; every image, every sound comes back out of smoke and the smell of things burning," writes Vietnam veteran Michael Herr in his book "Dispatches."

Herr and the other men who fought in Vietnam came in out of the smoke to a homeland that didn't seem to want them. Americans were ashamed: They were ashamed of losing the war, ashamed of the pictures they had seen on the news of burning villages. Americans were mortified at hearing body count after body count, seeing body bag after body bag. Such a society threw no ticker tape, gave no parades, sang no hymns for the returning warriors: It faced the other direction.

Apparently, Americans are doing another about-face on the Vietnam War. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial was dedicated in Washington, D.C. in 1983, mostly with money raised by veterans. The memorial lists the names of the more than 58,000 American soldiers who died in Vietnam. It is symbolic of the long overdue acceptance of veterans by American society.

For many veterans, acceptance — and the memorial — are too little too late. But it is too much for veterans, indeed, for anyone to expect glory for what was an ultimately inglorious war effort.

The realization that American involvement in Vietnam could have been wrong is the lesson to be salvaged from the smoke.

The Vietnam War was an indigenous war. It wasn't a war for the French or the Americans. The French learned after many years and thousands dead that the people of Vietnam would not tolerate their presence. They left. The United States came in to pick up the pieces and in the process ended up a shattered country itself.

Ho Chi Minh was immensely popular with the people of Vietnam. His troops were the people. His form of government promised rule by the people of Vietnam, not colonialists. His troops spoke Vietnamese and lived and worked among the farmers of Southeast Asia. Americans could not speak the language, did not understand the culture, nor did most attempt to. We bombed the North Vietnamese incessantly, never learning that bombs only set the people harder against us. Vietnam was truly a "quagmire" for the United States, as David Halberstam so succinctly put it. The more we struggled, the deeper we got.

It's true that we had the best of intentions. But our methods lost the war before it started. The people never wanted colonial rule after France in any case, in any form.

The rule the people of Vietnam have now is less than ideal. But, as France and the United States learned, that was not for outsiders to decide.

It's good that we're no longer turning our backs on the Vietnam War. It's good that, as the April 15 Time magazine reports, U.S. colleges are offering hundreds of courses on the conflict. We have much to learn from the war which was at once a blessing and a curse — a curse because it permanently sullied U.S. history and scarred both soldiers and civilians, and a blessing because it demonstrated for us the wrongful use of American military might.

While we should remember with respect those who served, we should also remember our shame and horror. We should remember the power to question exercised by anti-war demonstrators, and exercise that power ourselves.

Ten years after Vietnam, there are still lots of trouble spots out there ripe for intervention, and there are lots of empty body bags waiting for our dead.

NEWS ITEM: ANOTHER UNICORN SIGHTED IN NATION'S CAPITAL.



## 'Romantics' make love meaningful

Now is the time for love, hope and crabgrass all to spring eternally. Old Man Winter has gone and in his place we have received a beautiful show of nature at its best and brightest. Summer is here in all its glory, bringing with it thoughts of carefree days and warm sun-filled nights. For many college students summer is a time for travel and experience. For others, tied down by family or occupational considerations, it is a time of rest from the drudgeries of school. For almost all of us, however, it will be a time to meet new people, and perhaps for some, to fall in love.

Schwartzenegeer and Bo Derek. Amazing isn't it?

It has been said that sexual pleasure is the only really unlimited resource we have. All other activities use resources that are limited, but as long as men and women exist, sexual pleasure can be had indefinitely. Moreover, those pleasures that are limited (the number of books made is limited to the number of trees grown) are also much harder to obtain than simple sex.

From this line of thought came the theory that social rules concerning behavior between the sexes evolved as an attempt to harness the desire for each other and channel the bottled up energy into more socially productive activities. This has almost always meant building those harder-to-obtain resources that everyone can enjoy — a school or a library, for instance.

Furthermore, the logical extension of this theory is that what we perceive as "romantic love" really does not exist. The feeling that out there somewhere is Mr. or Ms. Right, and all you have to do is wait for him or her is actually an artificially created desire. This way the need for pleasure is unsatisfied, forcing people to look elsewhere, usually to material goods. His desire for pleasure may be eased somewhat if he buys a new stereo or waterbed, but it can never be fully satisfied because he really wants romantic love, which doesn't exist. A good example of this is that, for many men, a car serves as a temporary pleasure-giver until they find what they believe to be "the real thing."

In any event, it is easy to see how vitally important it is to the manufacturers in this country to keep us unsatisfied.

Unfortunately, the result of this kind of "social brainwash" is a perverted and corrupted social view concerning sexual attitudes. Dissatisfaction often leads to frustration, which often leads to anger, which in turn can become violence. When people find that the traditional method of "waiting for fate" has not gotten them the satisfaction that society tells them they want, they may turn to unhealthy methods to look for it. For instance, incest, sodomy

and rape have been viewed as alternate methods for finding satisfaction for a person who has been frustrated too much.

The psychologists tell us that we must destroy romantic ideals and learn to be satisfied with ourselves and the relationships we have. The search for that special someone is ridiculous because it could be anyone if both people are willing to work at it. They say that a great deal of the social inhibitions on sex should be removed because, after all, nothing is more plentiful.

So naturally someone subscribing to this theory of sexual oppression would be pleased to see the relaxation of social taboos on physical sex, like we have now. In fact, according to a recent government study, only one woman in five waits until marriage to have sex. That's down from almost 50 percent in 1960. There is no question that people are becoming much more free with their passions.

The problem with the theory is that sex is viewed as a purely physical act, with the sole purpose of giving ourselves pleasures. Love, on the other hand, is something mysterious and has nothing to do with sex at all.

Unfortunately, in the search for love people have begun to use sex as a yard stick to determine if they have found that "perfect someone." If it doesn't work out, they just shrug their shoulders and look forward to the next encounter with eager anticipation.

This is wrong. Sex is more than that. It can be a physical expression of a deep commitment to oneself and to one's partner of love and understanding. You cannot "make love," you build it. And physical attraction is one of the tools to use. It should be highly valued and sparingly given. And, like any true gift, it should be given freely and with no strings attached.

For those of you who have already found "that special someone," I congratulate you. You have found something rare (no matter what any stupid theory says), and you should guard it with your life. For those of you still searching, I'm afraid you'll have to settle for cars and stereos for a while, but don't give up. And don't compromise your values or self respect. You've got too much to lose.

## Van Kloempken

It seems that this topic never wanders far from our minds at any time of the day or night. We constantly are bombarded with it. Magazines, books, movies and worst of all, commercials, saturate us with someone else's idea of what sex and love are. Interestingly enough, a person can witness the results of such a bombardment right here on our campus. Some of the things that students do to attract the eye of the opposite sex can be quite interesting. And while off-campus activities can become even more outrageous, they still are regulated by a person's desire to be the essence of whatever popular image is "in."

It is undeniable that the commercial nature of our society is responsible for a large part of our preoccupation with sex and love. The sole purpose of corporations involved in selling a product is to create some sort of dissatisfaction among us, the consumers, so we will feel the need to rush out and satisfy ourselves with their product.

The diet drink commercials are a perfect example. They show us pictures of beautiful bodies and try to make us feel ashamed of our own. And after we are totally indoctrinated to believe that is what we want, they claim their product is the way to get it. Just one diet Pepsi a day and you'll look like a cross between Arnold



## Cartoon misrepresents NRA firearm owners

I was sickened at the sight of the anti-National Rifle Association cartoon in the Daily Nebraskan on April 18.

The cartoon, in my opinion, is a flagrant misrepresentation of gun owners as well as members of the NRA. I was raised in a small Nebraska town of 5,000. My father has owned guns all his life and was once a member of the NRA, although I am not.

My father and I have enjoyed many hours of trap shooting and range shooting,

## Letters

as well as countless hours of hunting without injuring ourselves or anyone else.

Most members of the NRA are more responsible than the average person with firearms because they want to protect their investments by leaving them in a locked gun cabinet.

Granted, a number of small children accidentally shoot themselves each year in the United States, that is unfortunate. My question to you is, how many of their fathers belong to the NRA?

David M. Butler  
sophomore  
accounting

## Letter Policy

The Daily Nebraskan welcomes brief letters to the editor from all readers and interested others.

Letters will be selected for publication on the basis of clarity, originality, timeliness and space available. The Daily Nebraskan retains the right to edit all material submitted.

Readers also are welcome to submit material as guest opinions. Whether material should run as a letter or guest opinion, or not run, is left to the editor's discretion.

## Daily Nebraskan

EDITOR Chris Welsch, 472-1766  
GENERAL MANAGER Daniel Shattil  
PRODUCTION MANAGER Katherine Policky  
SPORTS EDITOR Ward W. Triplett III  
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR Stacie Thomas  
GRAPHICS EDITOR Steve Hill  
ASSISTANT Tony Schappaugh  
GRAPHICS EDITOR Joel Sartore  
PHOTO CHIEF Mark Davis  
ASSISTANT PHOTO CHIEF Chris Choate 472-8788  
PUBLICATIONS BOARD CHAIRPERSON Don Walton, 473-7301  
PROFESSIONAL ADVISER

The Daily Nebraskan (USPS 144-080) is published by the UNL Publications Board Monday through Friday in the fall and spring semesters and Tuesdays and Fridays in the summer sessions, except during vacations.

Readers are encouraged to submit story ideas and comments to the Daily Nebraskan by phoning 472-1763 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The public also has access to the Publications Board. For information, call Chris Choate 472-8788.

Postmaster: Send address changes to the Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448. Second class postage paid at Lincoln, NE 68510.

ALL MATERIAL COPYRIGHT 1985 DAILY NEBRASKAN