

Editorial

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Peaceful protest Non-violence commended

The lead story on the front page of Wednesday's Daily Nebraskan carried the headline, "Hail Mary" proved to be a silent night. And a silent night it was as over 200 people protested the showing of the movie Sunday, Aug. 17. . . peacefully.

University officials took precautions for fear of violence and demonstrations. Property damage had been reported in other cities showing the film.

Dan Ladely, director of the Sheldon Film Theatre, said the movie was rescheduled to be shown at the Nebraska Union instead of Sheldon for fear of damage to the art displayed in the gallery. Bob Bruce, director of University Information, said three uniformed UNL policemen and one plainclothes officer were in attendance at each showing of the film.

As moviegoers viewed the controversial film by French filmmaker Jean-Luc Goddard, outside protesters sang hymns, prayed, carried signs and distributed literature in a peaceful

manner with no signs of intervention.

Del Ridder, a member of the ad-hoc committee formed to organize the protest, said the protesters had no intention to interfere with the film. "We're here standing up for our own First Amendment rights."

University officials and the protesters both should be commended for their behavior. Many times the worst can surface from a touchy, controversial issue. And "Hail Mary" is no exception.

George Neubert, director of the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, cancelled the film last spring after receiving a letter from State Sen. Bernice Labedz threatening economic sanctions against Sheldon if the film was shown. The film is a contemporary retelling of the birth of Christ. Opponents of the film found several scenes offensive.

The protesters proved that violence is not necessary to convey a message. Their presence alone was enough to bring attention to their message.

Military spending skewed Pentagon is not being cost-efficient

Protection from harm, be it personal or national harm, can never be wholly guaranteed. Measures taken to guard against injury are not costless, thus, in deciding upon protective measures, benefits must be weighed against costs.

This is no less true regarding national defense. Commitment to an American defense program second to none does not mean that the Pentagon should be given a carte blanche.

Even on a personal, common sense level, few of us purchase costly alarm and household protection devices (such as guards) because we are not persuaded that such "investments" would produce a benefit equal to the cost. Instead, we take reasonable "gambles" with our security because we believe the money could be better spent on other, more useful, goods and services.

All too often, questions of cost and benefit, when raised with respect to military spending, receive only a quick dismissal with charges that the questioner is not committed to a strong defense. Yet pursuit of skewed priorities can do as much harm to national interest as an open military conflict. This can be seen when examining the economic impact of current patterns of defense spending.

Writing in the Wall Street Journal last week, Columbia University professor Frank Lichtenberg argues that widely different levels of investment in the research and development of U.S. goods is one significant reason why the United States is lagging behind other industrialized nations in the arena of international trade.

He argues that "one factor contributing to the superior trade performance of Japan and

Germany, relative to that of the United States, the United Kingdom and France, is the former countries' significantly higher rate of civilian R&D (research and development) investment relative to their GNPs (gross national products). . . A high rate of military R&D spending perhaps contributes to our military strength, but it weakens our economy by reducing civilian R&D investment and thus our ability to compete in global markets."

Two beliefs undergirding the U.S. defense decision-making process create this inefficiency. The first is the perspective that the only adequate defense is the one that totally protects against possible aggression. Marginal, or "cost-benefit," analysis is a better rule and would preserve the total national interest rather than sacrifice domestic programs to defense (or defense to domestic "pork barrel" projects as occurred during the 1970s).

Secondly, defense decision-makers seem fascinated with technological sophistication. This is not in itself bad, except that technological sophistication requires the commitment of large amounts of money — money which could have been spent on simpler defense systems which would have resulted in overall greater security.

The United States recently has begun to taste the bitter fruit of economic decline. No longer are we the unquestioned leader of the world economy. Sluggish sectors of the domestic economy reflect the new reality. To avoid the problem getting worse we must ensure that all governmental spending — including defense spending — is justified by the benefits it will produce.



The Great American Desert?

Nebraska's prairieland is a peaceful oasis, not wasteland

I learned before we left UNL this spring that one of my good friends would be spending the summer working in my home town, Ogallala. For those of you who are ignorant of Nebraska west of Lincoln, Ogallala is a town of about 6,000 people, five hours west on Interstate 80, about 20 miles east of Colorado's northeast corner and right in the middle of "The Great American Desert."

My friend comes from a semi-small town in Iowa, but she's such a fan of Lincoln's faster lifestyle that I wondered whether Ogallala would drive her crazy. But when I returned home two weeks after a summer in Iowa at The Des Moines Register, I was surprised to discover my friend had turned into a diehard western Nebraskan. In fact, she told me, she loved the area and lifestyle so much that she didn't want to leave.

That was refreshing to hear. I've heard time and again that Nebraska's a boring place with nothing but sandhills, cornstalks and Cornhuskers. You hear that sentiment most often during weekends from non-natives sitting around the dorm, moaning, "But what do you do in Nebraska?" My friend's conversion again made it clear that Nebraska's not a bad place to live.

I love Nebraska. I've seen plenty of places to compare it with during my college years: California, the Pacific Northwest, Europe and Des Moines. Life moves faster in all those locations — yes, even in Des Moines — and they all offer many more "things to do." Yet I wouldn't trade any of those places for my home state — for reasons other than the appeal of Nebraska football.

Nebraska's attractions don't leap out at you like the neon signs in a downtown bar district. They're found in more subtle, peaceful locations like an

open prairie at sunset or the quiet of a Great Plains cemetery. Those scenes are part of Nebraska's stereotype, but you can find others here that are even more breathtaking if you have the determination to find them. I found both old and new ones this summer.



Todd
von
Kampen

There was the day when I found myself "laying out" on the grass in a remote corner of Lake Pawnee a few miles west of Lincoln. With one of my best friends at my side, I spent three hours in the shimmering heat as the cool lake water lapped on the shore, "Fresh Aire" played in the background and the two of us spoke of where our lives were going. A couple and their dog were in a nearby boat, but they soon left us alone in our private prairie paradise. I felt great for a week after that.

Try driving down the North Platte River valley from Scottsbluff to Ogallala — a trip I made often last summer when I worked in Scottsbluff. I took a trip up there a week ago and rediscovered the string of landmarks so familiar to the Oregon Trail pioneers: Court House Rock, Chimney Rock, Scotts Bluff. To top it off, my tape deck played Dan Fogelberg's "Sutter's Mill," which provided a perfect counter point to the land where the wagons once lumbered west.

I drove up into the Sandhills another day in search of the perfect photograph of a Hereford bull. Up in "God's cow country," few people disturb the soli-

tude of cattle and prairie, as the cattle reminded me when they suddenly rambled away to graze in peace. But first they stood motionless and stared at me with wide eyes as a black horse came up, looking for a snack. You'd expect such a scene in a Western movie, but you can find many such scenes up there.

And I once again viewed Nebraska's "ocean sunset" from a ledge overlooking Kingsley Dam and Lake McCaughy north of Ogallala. On a clear evening, the sun's a brilliant orange ball sinking in the light blue sky into the dark blue waters. The lake extends beyond the horizon, and with good reason: the lake is over 20 miles long and has 105 miles of shoreline. I always find it a lovely oasis in the midst of a supposedly barren land.

Those scenes reminded me how good life is in Nebraska. Even if the economy is a bit weak now, the air is clean, the land isn't crowded and the people are friendly. Although you'll always find a few looking for a larger arena, many of us feel the quality of life here can't be topped. For a small investment of time, here you can find relaxation and contentment.

If I've captured your imagination, take this Labor Day weekend or some other weekend and see what this state has to offer. If you're stuck in Lincoln, however, I can offer you a small taste of what I'm talking about. Turn on Nebraska ETV (channel 12) about 11 p.m. and watch its signoff. Let the lilt of pioneer melody sink in as you view the scenes of Nebraska's pioneers and prairie. It will provide some of the essence of Nebraska — a state which isn't such a bad place after all.

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DeCamp, other newsmakers receive "Ms-Anthropic" honors

Every year, in memory of my historic foremothers, I celebrate the Aug. 26 anniversary of the passage of women's suffrage, by recognizing those who have done their utmost in the past 12 months to slow the progress of women.

This annual event, known as the Equal Rites Award ceremony, stirs butterflies in the stomachs of finalists, and competitive fever among those who push their favorite candidates. Once again our one-woman jury had the delicious task of sifting through dozens of entries to find the gems.

The highest prize, the Ms-Anthropic Man of the Year Award, was won easily this year by a real gem of a gent, "Diamond Don" Regan. It was Diamond Don who said at the Geneva summit last fall that women are "not going to understand throw weights." He then divested

himself of all good sense, explaining our South African policy this way: "Are the women of America prepared to give up all their jewelry?"



Ellen
Goodman

Ferdinand Marcos, another leading contender, will have to settle for The Chivalrous Chauvinist Award. It was Marcos who said in December that he was "embarrassed" to be running against a woman. "It's better if it's a man. If it's a woman it might lead to something bad." Like defeat, Marcos'

award is not accompanied by a prize because he already has Imelda. Who could ask for anything more?

The Ms-Match Maker Award, an attractive panic button with shocking voltage, goes to Newsweek magazine for its doomsday cover story, noting that a single woman over 40 was more likely to get killed by a terrorist than to get married.

While we are on the subject, the Maternal Understatement of the Year Award must go to the mother of Anne Marie Murphy, the pregnant Dublin woman who was put on a plane with a special going-away gift — a bomb — by her alleged terrorist beau, Nezar Hindawi. Said Mom, "I do not think very much of this boyfriend."

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