

Editorial

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UNL Police cut Law caught in numbers game

Everybody is getting caught in the numbers game — even law enforcement. University budget cuts have forced the UNL Police Department to reduce the number of full-time commissioned officers from 45 to 27.

UNL Police Chief Gail Gade said, "It's impossible to increase the number of officers when the entire university is suffering from budget cuts."

That's too bad considering that the number of crimes has increased this semester. Gade said crime statistics are increasing because more people are reporting crimes than in the past. The most frequently committed crime is theft, he said. Sexual assaults have increased, but not significantly, he said.

Campus crime is at its highest at the beginning of the semester when students are trying to get adjusted to new surroundings, Gade said.

The administration is faced with a difficult task, and in order not to take too much from education they have to look elsewhere to make cuts. UNL Police is one such area.

Gade said if the department had more officers, it would expand its foot-patrol program and

other crime-awareness programs. Currently crime-prevention programs include a foot patrol on campus; officers also visit residence halls, fraternities and sororities and present programs on crime prevention and awareness.

With a decrease in the number of officers, students' responsibility for their own safety increases. Avoid walking on or around campus alone at night. If it is necessary to be on campus, pair up with a friend or two when coming and going. Safety can always be found in numbers.

Be aware of the location of the emergency phones on campus and do not hesitate to call the university police when you think there is trouble. Many times students are not aware of the university police department's jurisdiction.

UNL officers have the same authority and arrest powers of any other law enforcement agency in the state, Gade said. University police jurisdiction extends to campus and only call in Lincoln police when necessary.

Until the severity of the budget cuts lessen and UNL police can return to a "full" force, students are encouraged to be careful. Avoid taking risks; it's your safety.

Statistics are scary Alcoholism at Offutt base apparent

The image of members of the armed forces drinking after stressful periods has been ingrained in the American psyche, thanks to shows like "M*A*S*H" that showed the 4077th crew drinking at least once an episode. So maybe it shouldn't be a surprise that Offutt Air Force Base near Omaha, one of our most important military installations, has people who can't handle their liquor.

It's not a surprise, but it is scary.

The evidence can be seen in the number of arrests of Offutt personnel for driving while intoxicated (DWI). Last year, 165 of the base's 12,000 people were arrested for driving drunk, up from 138 in 1984. This year, Offutt officials estimate more than 200 will be arrested for DWI, which would set a record for the base.

Actually, one could say the problem at Offutt isn't really worse than it is for civilians in the surrounding area. The number of DWI arrests of Offutt personnel represent 1.7 percent of the base population, while DWI arrests in nearby Bellevue last year represented 1.3 percent of the population.

But other reports from the base indicate the DWI figures are a symptom of a bigger alcohol problem at Offutt. A story in the Chicago Tribune notes that "keg parties" are common at Offutt after nuclear alerts and protests by anti-nuclear groups.

Keg parties, cocktail hours and other events involving alcohol were advertised in the base's daily orders as well.

Lt. Col. William Schunk, Offutt's chief of security police, confirmed those reports. But he said he has ordered the alcohol plugs reduced in the daily orders and directed that non-alcoholic alternatives be included in them in the future. The base also has a policy of refusing access to classified information to personnel arrested for DWI and placing them in an alcohol-rehabilitation program.

All these moves hopefully will reduce the drinking problem at Offutt. Still, it makes you wonder: What would happen if the United States were attacked suddenly and key personnel, not expecting an attack, were drunk at the time? Military personnel at less vital bases might be less of a threat to national security. But it's worrisome that those manning one of the first lines of defense against nuclear attack might not be performing at 100 percent.

Because of the dangers of addiction, it's dangerous for anyone to regard alcohol as a great way to reduce stress. It's particularly dangerous when such an attitude toward alcohol apparently holds sway at a key military base like Offutt. Officials there have recognized the problem and are doing something about it — but you get the feeling we've been lucky.

'Wipe hands on pants . . .'

'Pet Peeves' note modern equivalent of 'Kilroy was here'

Well, the elections are over, the conference on the Holocaust is, like the event itself (or not), history, ASUN has been boringly quiet for the past few weeks, and things are generally quiet on the Husker front. This means I have an opportunity to carry on a column tradition without feeling like I am neglecting something particularly newsworthy or failing to grant yet another disgruntled reader the chance to express outrage at my humble observations.

So here we are: the semi-annual Sennett Pet Peeve column. Every time I write about things that bug me, get under my skin, or irritate me in other metaphorically graphic ways, I do this not just as a chance to let off a little steam, loosen my collar, or otherwise metaphorically ease mental tension. I also offer this service in order to touch the nerves, pierce the hearts, and otherwise metaphorically speak to the frustrations of the millions of you who have also had your bells rung, your cages rattled, and other parts of your metaphorical anatomy violated by these and similar outrages of minutia. Here are the winners in this semester's Aggravation Altercation:

Hand Blow-Dryers in Public Restrooms. If they are going to allow these things, there should be some ordinance requiring the parallel provision of hand towels for those of us with more conservative tastes. Maybe ASUN could handle this — sounds to me like discrimination of the highest order.

Of course, the towels also would serve the interests of those who want to get their hands dry. Be honest: Have those blow things ever worked for you? I remember one hand dryer that had been appropriately vandalized. Under the list of directions — "1. Push button; 2. Rub hands together; 3. Turn off automatically" (that's a direction?) — someone had scrawled, "4. Wipe hands on pants." I rest my case.

Sidewalk Conversations. Have you ever wondered why they call those things "WALK-ways"? I think it has something to do with their inherent purpose. But you'd never know it the way some people decide that the middle of the walk is the best place to stop and carry on a heartfelt encounter that makes them totally oblivious to those around — like, say people conven-



James Sennett

tional enough to want to walk on the sidewalks.

Do me a favor — if you absolutely must stop and talk, at least move to one side and let those who are going somewhere go somewhere.

Loud Vehicles. I live on 16th Street, and the cacophony of straight pipes, eight cylinders, bad mufflers and low-gearing 18-wheelers is enough to make property in those sassy subdivisions look incredibly attractive. I realize that many people have little control over the decibel destruction their vehicle enacts, but it gets to me nonetheless.

Of course, what is really difficult to understand is those who make them run like that on purpose. There is supposed to be something about a jacked-up rear and tires nine feet wide that makes one impressive to his peers. I guess my dad was right — manhood can come really cheap.

Non-punctual People. They'd never know it in my 10:30 Kant class, but I really do have a penchant for being on time. I think promptness says something about courtesy, concern for

others and the value placed on the topic at hand. But that's serious stuff, and this is not a serious column.

It really irks me to be on time, only to have things held up because others are not. When things are in my control, I start on time; I refuse to reward tardiness. I grew up in a home where it was believed that if you left the house by the time you were supposed to be there, you were on time. So, I guess it's Freudian or something, but this one really gets to me.

Things. I don't mean "everything" by this. I mean things — mechanical things, gadgets, doo-hickies and whatchamacallits. This pet peeve goes out to anything that must be put together, assembled or otherwise metaphorically extended. Also, it includes those that must be fixed, repaired, adjusted, tuned up, annually checked or periodically upgraded. If I have to do it, it won't get done. It's not that I don't try; there's something metaphysical going on here.

I'm the first to admit that my initials appear nowhere in the words "mechanically inclined." But is it too much to ask that, when I follow the directions, things turn out the way they look in the picture? I have often imagined that the Instruction Manual of Life has an asterisk at the end of each line, with a footnote at the end that says, "Unless your name is James Sennett, in which case nothing will work."

Well, that's all the time we have for today, boys and girls. Be sure to join us next time when we once again explore the world of beefs, bellyaches and other metaphorically maddening moments that make up life on this spaceship we call home. Until then, remember the words of George Carlin's Al Sleet, the Hippy-Dippy Weatherman: "Inside every silver lining, there's a dark cloud." Sennett is a campus minister with College-Career Christian Fellowship and a graduate student in philosophy.

Granting doctorate to Syrian terrorist denounced as loss of self-respect

For sheer compounded barbarity, it ranks as one of the crimes — attempted crimes — of the century.

Nezar Hindawi, a young Jordanian, planted a bomb on his girlfriend, pregnant with his child, as she was about to board an Israeli airliner carrying 375 passengers. But the crime was not his idea. The trial at London's Old Bailey showed that Hindawi received money, documents and instructions from Syria. Three hours after the guilty verdict, Britain broke diplomatic relations with Syria.

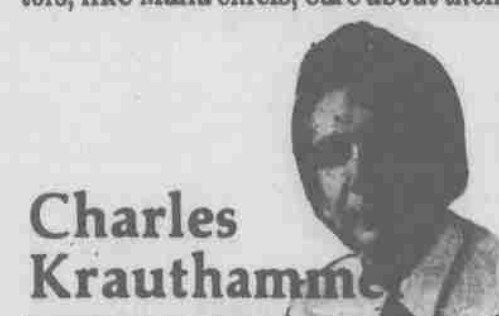
British hostages are being held in Lebanon, and Lebanon is held by Syria. But with the Hindawi verdict, the British government was forced to act. More than diplomacy was at stake. So was self-respect.

French diplomacy puts less of a premium on self-respect. Last month, a series of terrorist bombings by a shadowy Lebanese group rocked Paris, killed six and wounded 162 others. France responded by dispatching its Minister of Cooperation to Damascus to see about the bombings and about seven French hostages being held in Lebanon. The French government was loath to draw a connection between Syria and the bombings. Mr. Minister, arrived in Damascus, was met with demands for more economic aid. French newspapers now report (and the government denies) that France is negotiating the sale to Syria of \$450 million worth of arms, including 100 AMX-13 tanks and artillery shells.

But appeasement does not stop with paying ransom and protection money. It seems that Syrian Defense Minister Mustafa Talas has something more in mind. He has been making noises that he might use his brutal good offices on behalf of French hostages in Lebanon if France would consider granting him excellency . . . a Ph.D. And French President Mitterrand reportedly pres-

sured the Sorbonne to accept him as a doctoral candidate. Thesis due in November. General Talas, the butcher of Hama (when 20,000 Syrians were killed), doctor of philosophy.

Talas' vanity is a lesson for those who say that diplomatic sanctions, such as those imposed by Britain, can have no effect on thug regimes. Dictators, like Mafia chiefs, care about their



Charles Krauthammer

image. That is one of the reasons they get into the dictating business in the first place. They don't like to be called thugs. They prefer to be called *docteur*.

Some regimes are beyond the reach of shame, but not beyond the reach of embarrassment. There is a difference. Shame requires conscience, a capacity for remorse, something hard to attribute to people who plot airline massacres or propagate blood libel. But embarrassment requires only self-love, with which dictators are amply supplied. They are thus acutely susceptible to rebuke. The Syrian regime has been stung by Britain's actions. It is hardly likely to stop sponsoring murder. But it is likely to be far more careful. And the more careful, the less murder.

When Britain asked its European allies to show support — just a temporary recall of ambassadors from Damascus — the EEC countries assumed their usual prostrate position. Led by Greece and France, they rejected the British request. A statement was issued instead. It expressed "outrage" at the crime (Greece refused to concur even in this), but found it indelicate to

mention Syria. The United States (and Canada) did follow Britain by withdrawing its ambassador from Damascus. Nonetheless, the response is far from adequate. For one thing, there is simple loyalty. Margaret Thatcher took a huge risk in allowing the United States to launch its raid on Libya from British air bases. Now, on Syria, Britain is abandoned by Europe and stands alone and exposed. The least we can do is join Britain in breaking relations.

Moreover, our past equivocations in the face of terrorism have always been prefaced by the claim that we lacked adequate evidence.

But what about the peace process? "Observers" and "Western diplomats," for whom appeasement is a profession (albeit one to be practiced anonymously), are forever popping up in the newspaper to raise his objection to any anti-terrorist action. Well, what about the peace process? Even assuming it exists, Syria is not involved.

By its own choosing, Syria, leader and sponsor of those who reject the idea of a negotiated settlement with Israel, has a foreign policy best described as a war process. The idea that, if the United States goes easy on a Syrian plot to blow up a civilian airliner, Syria will be more likely to make nice and make peace rests on a logic so tortured it should embarrass into anonymity any "observer" who advances it.

Britain and France were both at Munich 48 years ago. They appear to have carried away different lessons. Britain has engaged in terrorist state with the most serious and severe of diplomatic sanctions. France deploys the Ph.D. weapon. The United States has too much self-respect to follow the French example. It should now find the courage to follow the British.

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Krauthammer is a National Magazine award winner.