

Editorial

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U.S., Polish trade America forgets Solidarity

When you insist on a stiff price for something valuable but then agree to sell it for half the price, others get the idea that thing isn't really that valuable. The Reagan administration's recent overtures to Poland, just five years after the Solidarity crackdown, suggest our favor can be bought at clearance-sale rates.

The Associated Press reported last week that Rozanne Ridgway, assistant U.S. secretary of state for European affairs, met with Polish Deputy Foreign Minister Jan Kinast at the Americans' request. What apparently triggered the meeting was the Polish government's September decision to release all its political prisoners, including several Solidarity leaders. That apparently meets one of the U.S. conditions for lifting the remaining sanctions imposed after the Solidarity trade union was put out of business in December 1981.

Relations will improve further, Polish government spokesman Jerzy Urban said, if the United States removes the sanctions, which include a ban on new financial credits and denial of most-favored-nation trading status. A government-backed Catholic newspaper in Poland suggested the United States is trying to find a way to justify removal of sanctions because "the United States has lost its main argument (for sanctions) because of the amnesty for political prisoners."

For once, it sounds as if a Soviet-bloc newspaper is reporting accurately. That's too bad, especially if the administration

has lost sight of the other condition for lifting sanctions: recognizing Solidarity and other independent organizations outside the government. It appears the United States has forgotten release of political prisoners is almost meaningless unless the second condition is met as well.

Despite the amnesty program and solidarity leader Lech Walesa's relative freedom to speak out, the Polish government refuses to live up to the Gdansk agreement of 1980 that led to Solidarity's founding. Every time Solidarity attempts to re-emerge from underground, the Communist leaders make it clear that any legitimate activity by the union will not be tolerated. This attitude manifested itself again Tuesday night, when riot police broke up a march through Warsaw by several thousand Solidarity supporters.

It didn't make any sense two years ago to remove some sanctions without Polish movement toward reapproving Solidarity. It makes even less sense now. The recent U.S. moves demonstrate why many regard economic sanctions as a joke: The countries imposing them lose their will after a time.

If the United States still supports the desires of the Polish people for freedom as expressed through Solidarity, there can be no question of conducting business-as-usual with the Polish government. Doing so leaves the impression that we really don't care — and that the United States can be "haggled down" when its price includes freedom.

What is pornography? Censorship needed in some cases

Where does one draw the line in terms of obscenity and censorship? What is obscene to one person may not be to another. Is it fair for the government to place restrictions on pornographic materials or should a person have freedom of choice?

And is the First Amendment weakened when the government censors pornographic materials? Burton Joseph, a former national board member of the American Civil Liberties Union and special counsel to Playboy Enterprises, thinks so. The Daily Nebraskan does not. Some type of censorship is needed — a line needs to be drawn somewhere.

Joseph, in a speech last Saturday at the fifth annual Nebraska Civil Liberties Union Foundation Bill of Rights dinner, said that people who suppress sexually explicit materials are advocating the restriction of free speech as guaranteed by the First Amendment.

He criticized Edwin Meese's Commission on Pornography,

calling it a farce and the members "undistinguished and unqualified." The Meese Commission found that there was a direct link between pornography and sexual violence. An earlier study, done under President Lyndon B. Johnson, made no such connection.

It's hard to fathom materials that show acts of sexual violence do not stir some people to violence. The report from the Meese Commission should not be ignored.

The Daily Nebraskan does not condone the complete suppression of pornographic materials. But any magazine that shows the degradation of women and demonstrates acts of sexual violence should be censored.

The Supreme Court has kicked around several cases over the past years and still hasn't come to any real conclusion as to a definition for obscenity. The questions are muddled and the answers are worse.

What does freedom of speech really mean?



Singin' them birthday blues

College version of mid-life crisis is no icing on the cake

It's a college senior's version of a mid-life crisis.

The 22nd birthday. The first birthday when nothing seems to change.

It's not a landmark. Your friends don't send you personals that say, "The bars will never be the same." You don't get your driver's license. You don't earn the right to vote.

It's easy to write — two 2s — but hard to get excited about.

It's tough to blow out that many candles to get your wish. And wishes seem so much more complicated.

Most people I know who have neared or zoomed past 22 say "the 20s" all seem to run together. They say the next most significant birthday to look forward to is 30. The birthday when people start giving you those stupid cards that hint you're "over the hill." The one where people get you gag-gift packs of Geritol and Grecian Formula.

I have a friend who turns 30 next week. I think she plans to rearrange her furniture.

Somehow that doesn't match the magic of birthdays past.

When you're a kid, you count down your birthday for months. It's the day when you have all your friends over for cake, candy and pin-the-tail-on-the-donkey. You get to say what you want for dinner, and your sister has to be nice to you. You feel older, taller, more grown-up. And you like that, a lot.

Your parents probably took pictures from birthday one. Mine did. (I'm the kid with the cake stuffed all over her face.)

I look at them and remember old friends and old thrills. At 10, we all got a kick out of being "a decade" old. I remember my 12th birthday because I

got this neat flowered halter top and matching pants outfit. The 13th is when you become a "real teenager."

And there's birthday surprises. On my 15th, my mom told me to go downstairs and get the clothes out of the washing machine. I was mad, because I thought birthdays were meant for being lazy. Then I went to the basement and about 10 friends jumped out at me.

I got another surprise when I was 18 and my best friend put tons of balloons and an obscene sign in my locker (right across from the principal's office).



Lise Olsen

But things weren't all balloons and icing on birthdays. There's also the dark side. They could be cruel. You could exclude the kids you didn't like from your "guest list."

It was also a big day for lying. You wanted to have a perfect day. But you sometimes got ugly sweaters or albums you hated or books you didn't want to read. So you gritted your teeth and said, "Yea, this is just what I wanted, thanks a lot." And you got them something they hated when their birthday rolled around.

Even worse, was when your friends didn't remember your birthday at all.

These days, I'm surprised when someone does remember my birthday.

Sometimes I don't want to be reminded. It's kind of sad to think

about birthdays. Most of my friends in those photos my mom took year after year aren't around. Or at least I don't see them. We outgrew each other or moved apart or something else. I don't know where a lot of them are anymore.

Most of the friends I'll see on my birthday this year will have known me for three years or less. They know the 20 to 22-year-old versions of who I am. They don't know the part of me that likes pin-the-tail-on-the-donkey or smearing a piece of cake on a wall.

I've helped many of them celebrate birthdays. Mostly at bars. And lately I've been noticing a new birthday behavior that's not so familiar from the old (young) days.

Birthdays become a day of reckoning for the 22-year-old (and ages beyond), an adding up of pros and cons and a re-examination of decisions that often can't be changed. College seniors say things like:

"When I was younger, I thought 22 was really old."

Or "I thought I'd be married by now."

Or "I feel so old when I go to parties."

Or "Why am I still here?"

It's all kind of silly when you think about how many people seem to have fun well beyond 22. Take my grandmother, who had a stripping gorilla dance at her 70th birthday party.

But for most college seniors, a birthday becomes a solemn occasion. Maybe it's because they're on the brink of a ton of changes, decision and farewells.

After all, the 22nd birthday is often the last one to be celebrated in this place, with these friends.

Olsen is a senior news-editorial major.

Letters

GOP targeted Senator Vickers

James Sennet was right about the worst of the election (James Pappas being re-elected), however, he looked over another race that turned out just as bad. Senator Tom Vickers; the best friend of education this state has ever had was defeated by a 60 percent to 40 percent margin. It boggles my mind why people will listen to negativism rather than what is important, the issues.

One of the major reasons Sen. Vickers lost was because he changed parties. He grew up Republican but soon after being re-elected in 1982, he switched to the Democrat party. He said he didn't change philosophies, the Republican party did. The Republican party targeted men like Sen. Vickers, others including Sen. Don Eret and Sen. Vard Johnson who changed their parties because of their integrity to stick with their philosophies rather than wilting to the seemingly inexhaustible money machine that so characterizes the Republican party. That money however, paved the way for people such as Owen Elmer to claim victories for themselves instead of victories for the constituents of the 38th district and the rest of the state.

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junior
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Health Center image blackened

My roommate Diane had been going to the Health Center for a while for tonsillitis. On Monday, Nov. 3, they sent Diane to a specialist who diagnosed her condition as much more serious than she had been led to believe. The specialist prescribed two different drugs. We took the prescription to the Health Center Pharmacy to be filled because it was less expensive.

Later that night, Diane took her first dosage of Drug A. Observing them more closely, she noticed the name on the Drug A pill was the same as the name on the Drug B bottle. After further examination, we discovered that they'd put the pills in the wrong bottles.

After a conversation with an after-hours nurse, I felt no better about the situation. She told me that this had been the first year students had been allowed to work in the pharmacy and, in fact, this had been their first day. I wondered if it should be their last.

Something needs to be done to make sure this doesn't happen again. First we need to decide who is at fault, the student, the pharmacist or the university in general.

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