

Editorial

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Quips and quotes Winter's reprise hits hard

Is anybody out there? Last weekend the Daily Nebraskan staff stumbled upon the same problem many UNL students came across: how to get back to Lincoln. The untimely snow storm left many students stranded. Those staffers who made it back were wary of putting out a paper for today because we didn't know if anyone would be back to read it. For those who made it...welcome back.

● Congratulations to the Nebraska men's and women's basketball coaches. Danny Nee and Angela Beck found success in their first year at the helm. Beck guided her team to a 16-13 record and a fourth-place finish in the Big Eight. Her feats earned her the Converse District V Coach of the Year award.

Nee put excitement back into Nebraska basketball as he guided his team to a third-place finish in the National Invitation Tournament and finished the season 21-12. Many people never expected the Huskers to win 20 games. In fact, many never expected them to finish above .500. The same went for the women.

● Two weeks ago the ASUN electoral commission penalized the Unite party for violating electoral-commission rules by

exceeding their campaign spending limit. Before the election can be certified by the commission, Unite must agree to four conditions. Their biggest task: signing a contract to prepare a manual on the proper conduct of an election campaign. The guide must be approved by the ASUN director of development and a faculty adviser before Sept. 1.

It's too bad Unite got off on the wrong foot, but it may be beneficial in the long run. The manual Unite will prepare should aid future candidates and instruct them on possible pitfalls.

● The Chronicle of Higher Education reported in its March 18 edition that the athletic department at the University of South Carolina has given \$504,000 to the campus's libraries. The donation represents athletic-department earnings from the broadcasts of two of the university's football games last season on ESPN, a cable TV channel.

Of course, South Carolina probably isn't being hit by budget cuts as hard as NU is. But the NU athletic department should take note for future reference.

A spokesman from the South Carolina athletic department, who knew the libraries needed money, said it best: "We're part of the same university."

Kiss of the Snow Queen

Book banners are freezing the heart, mind, soul of America

"Are you still cold?" asked the Snow Queen, and she kissed him on the forehead.

Oh, that was colder than ice; it went quite through to his heart, half of which was already a lump of ice; he felt as if he was going to die; but only for a moment; for then he seemed quite well, and he did not notice the cold all about him.

—"The Snow Queen,"
Hans Christian Anderson

Her name is Vicki Frost and she found herself one day in control of the apparatus that legally freezes hearts and minds. Like those shards of the goblin's mirror in the Anderson tale, the splinters Frost left in the hearts and minds of the children of the South reflect and perceive only ugliness and intolerance. And like the goblin's glass, the pieces of Frost's perceptions spread across the land until no one noticed the cold anymore.

For Vicki Frost took a most unlikely case to court. Its premise was so entrenched in the paranoia of the ignorant and so riddled with ambiguities that even the right-wing intelligentsia found her logic repellent. Frost wanted any books that mentioned, even in passing, nudity, witches, the imagination, fantasy, the sexual act, "unwholesome" attitudes, and gods other than the one and only, banned from Tennessee schools. Frost won. In court. Her children and the children of other fundamentalists could leave the classroom whenever "disputed" materials were used and could refuse to do any assignment that violated their religious beliefs. God as an excuse for redneck belligerence.

The worst is yet to come, for Frost shattered her mirror of narrow-mindedness over the Reagan-era court system in a thousand pieces. The jagged-edged glass spread throughout the South, resulting in the banning of 40 school textbooks that promoted "secular humanism" in Alabama and the ridiculous line of reasoning by District Judge W. Brevard Hand that "secular humanism" was as much as religion as fundamentalism. Hand (yet another name

resounding of a fairy tale), in the face of the Parents for the American Way and the American Civil Liberties Union, once again introduced into the letter of the law a pack of ambiguities and a legally irresponsible rationale for book banning.

But whereas the ACLU used to be able to simply grunt in disdain at the decision of some backward good ol' boy in long black robe and prepare for an appeal before someone who made the advance from single-celled organism with more grace, now even the chances of appeal look discouraging. There's glass everywhere. I wonder if Vicki Frost still has enough of it to apply her rouge properly.

Charles Lieurance



And while court decisions are being made to force publishing companies to turn their textbooks into annotated Bibles, legislators are tackling other sources of learning and exposure (pun absolutely intentional) from the blind side. In Nebraska LB117, sponsored by Senator Carol Pursh, and LB181, sponsored by Loren Schmiot and Scott Moore, are slinking their way through the prairie priapism, each coldly and flatly supporting the kind of boorish censorship most thought had disappeared when Judge Woolsey of the U.S. Supreme Court let Joyce's "Ulysses" into the United States. The same eternally arguable terms pop up again and again in both bills: "obscene materials," "harmful to minors," "prurient interest," etc. Both bills already have advanced beyond committee.

LB147 would make it a felony for a bookstore to sell "obscene" material. This puts an unjust and unprecedented burden of critical judgment on a bookseller. The merchant would be hard pressed even to find a version of the Bible that floundered in the kind of abysmal mediocrity this bill suggests.

The only positive side effect such a bill might produce would be a reduction in stores' stock of novels by Danielle Steele, Sidney Sheldon, Judith Krantz and their execrable lot.

LB181 turns booksellers into moral administrators and bookstores into sterile warehouses full of sealed packages. The bill bans the display of books or magazines that are "harmful to minors" in stores that allow minors to enter. Apparently any work that "contains descriptions of nudity, sexual conduct or sexual excitement" cannot be displayed in public bookstores.

Of course this eliminates almost any book of consequence, including most books of paintings, the greatest novels of the last 100 years and the edifice by which all obscenity is judged, the Bible.

That bills and court decisions like these are once again slithering under the foundations of the constitution and gnawing away at the First Amendment is enough to make the ACLU and most progressive lawyers begin beating their heads against jurisprudence like shell-shocked veterans. Once again, lawyers have to pound away at the sketchy definitions of obscenity and deal with words like "evil," "unwholesome" and "prurient interest" in a profession built on specific facts and details. The bills are passed and the judges gavel the unconstitutional into being. Then the decisions are tied up in legalese from Tennessee to Oregon, wasting the world's time for the benefit of those who want the complexity of the universe, of a single human life even, in a manageable nutshell.

A nutshell made of ice. And with all things frozen and children's minds rendered inoperable, the world will be simple, and the sexual act and the physical universe will be reduced to grunting in the dark like animals for the sake of procreating more souls made of solid ice.

The only light will come from the burning of books, a fire colder than the kiss of Vicki Frost itself.

Lieurance is a senior English, philosophy and art major and Daily Nebraskan senior reporter.

Letters

Too much smoke in the union TV areas

The amount of space designated as non-smoking in the Nebraska Union by the large-screen television is ridiculously small. Over 90 percent of this room is allocated to those who feel the need to pollute the air and commit suicide.

A recent article in the Lincoln Journal (March 16) notes that only 25 percent of Nebraskans now smoke. With this statistic in mind, a much fairer division would be to designate the south end of this room as the smoking area.

This more equitable distribution of space would have other benefits as well. Many of the smelly and unsightly sandbox ashtrays would be eliminated, reducing the number that accidentally get kicked over. It would also reduce the number of chairs and rug areas that are burned because of cigarettes that inevitably get dropped.

Quoting the American Lung Association in the same Lincoln Journal article, "Non-smokers have the right to breathe clean air, free from harmful

and irritating tobacco smoke. This right supersedes the right to smoke when the two conflict." This article also stated that cigarette smoking kills more Americans each year than cocaine, heroin and other illicit drugs, alcohol abuse, car accidents, homicide and suicide combined. It is hard to believe that students attending a school of "higher education" even smoke, knowing this!

We have strict standards on the quality of water we drink; the same standards should apply to the air we breathe indoors. A smoker should not be allowed to pollute what is otherwise clean air. If smokers wish to have breath and clothes that smell like ashtrays, let them, but not in such a large area that non-smokers are forced to breathe it too!

In fact, a much better solution would be to prohibit cigarette smoking indoors.

Harry Heafer
graduate student
teachers college

Gillette Dairy Company complimented

I am writing in response to the uninformed critics of the Gillette Dairy Company's campaign to solicit funds for the new recreation center.

First, some have suggested that Bob Devaney's and Tom Osborne's pictures on Gillette milk cartons has replaced pictures of missing children. This is incorrect. The Gillette Company ran the missing-children campaign for approximately two years, and the campaign ended more than six months ago. The rec-center fund drive is not preventing missing children from being reunited with their families.

Others have suggested that it is pathetic to see Bob and Tom on milk cartons trying to solicit donations for

the rec center. Gillette therefore has donated the space on their milk cartons to support the rec center because it feels that it will benefit NU and the community. I think this generous offer is far from pathetic and should be commended.

I would like to thank the Gillette Dairy Company for its generous donation in support of UNL recreation, and I hope that in the future people are open-minded enough to get all the facts before forming an opinion about the rec center.

Jeff J. Warren
senior
computer science

Too many youngsters at Beasties shows too few parents really care

The Beastie Boys' March 15 show at Pershing Auditorium produced a flood of indignation that would be hilarious if it weren't so ominous.

Controversy centers on the presence of an untoward percentage of junior-high and younger children at a concert which was, if not X-rated, certainly a hard R. The show included profane profanity, several hymns to the glories of beer, a caged go-go dancer and a 40-foot erect penis that emerged center stage during the last song.

The letters in the Lincoln Journal on the subject have been running about 2-to-1 against the Beasties. One particularly ironic letter (March 23) was from a mother who took her sixth-grade daughter to the show and was aghast at how "obscene" all three acts were that evening. This person closed with a wish that "there will be a more thorough screening of the types of groups we allow to perform in our city."

The irony here is obvious. If she was so shocked at what her daughter was being exposed to, why didn't she just screen it herself, take her daughter and leave.

I attended the concert. I was impressed with the show's vitality and professional execution. I was encouraged by the enthusiastic but well-behaved crowd and by the fact that both black and white young people attended the show. I found the concert, overall, very positive.

I agree, however, that the show was much too raw for pre-adolescents and that too many young children were there. Like many Lincoln parents I am indignant that young children were

exposed to this.

But my indignation is not directed at the Beastie Boys or at Pershing Auditorium or at the Lincoln city government. The only people who rationally can be held responsible for children's exposure to a concert beyond their level of maturity are the children's parents.

Chris McCubbin



The content of this show was not a secret. If parents had read the Journal's preview they would have known about the dancer and the group's glorification of alcohol. If they had played the album, they would have known that the Beasties use nasty language. If they had watched the video, they would have known that the band advocates non-conformity and rebellion. If they had listened to the Beasties' No. 1 hit song "Fight For Your Right," they would have heard lyrics like "Your dad catch you smokin' man he said 'No way/hypocrite smokes 10 packs a day' and 'Your mom threw away your best porno mag.'"

Obviously, few parents did this. There is a growing, dangerous attitude among parents that the moral education of their children is the responsibility of the government, which must ensure, by law, that their children be exposed to nothing unwholesome through any medium.

Another example of this attitude is the controversy surrounding the book "When The Sky Begins To Roar" by Alice Bach. Although many educators find this book truthful and well-written, a group of Lincoln parents has taken action to have the book removed from public-school libraries, because of its graphic depictions of real problems that young people face today.

In today's society children will be forced to make choices about sex, drugs, alcohol and crime.

The Beasties Boys' show illustrated that few parents are willing to give their children this help, even to the simple extent of listening to a hit song and saying, "I don't think you're ready for this. I don't want you to go." These people want the government to do this job for them, even if it means depriving older or more mature individuals of a pleasant evening's entertainment.

I think a parent would have better luck with an approach like: "This song is about rebelling because sometimes parents are hypocrites. Do you think I've asked you to do anything which is hypocritical? If you think I'm being a hypocrite, let's talk about it. Promise me you'll come and talk to me if you ever want to do something dangerous or illegal like drinking or taking drugs."

I know it's not easy to be a parent. I know this because I wasn't easy to raise. I do not envy you parents all your work and pain. But monitoring your child's entertainment is your job. Yours and nobody else's. Please do it.

McCubbin is a senior English and philosophy major and Daily Nebraskan Divisions editor.