

Editorial

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University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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Big step forward

New nuclear issues class worth taking

A new sociology class next spring will teach students about causes and realities of the nuclear threat — a giant step forward in terms of liberal arts education.

Robert Benford, assistant professor of sociology, said he helped start a similar class at the University of Texas-Austin that has been offered since 1982. He said he knows of a number of universities that also offer similar courses including Georgetown University in Washington D.C.

Because nuclear war, weapons and power are a part of our lives, students, who can begin registering today, should seriously consider registering for this course.

Benford said he hopes to make it a regular class but that will depend on the response.

The course will offer information that students will need in

order to make informed decisions about the nuclear debate, Benford said in a Daily Nebraskan article Friday.

To provide different points of view, Benford said, he wants to bring in speakers from all sides, including the military and peace movements.

The nuclear issue is a large problem that our society is just beginning to deal with. Recent controversy about eliminating mid-range nuclear weapons by the United States and the Soviet Union is just one example of how misconceptions and ignorance about these issues can affect people's opinions.

Nuclear waste is also an issue that needs to be discussed by informed people, not just by high-strung, emotional protesters.

Providing students with such timely, practical knowledge benefits the community as well as the individuals.



Modern-day moral witch hunt

Fingers should point to false sense of values, not at victims

Ask Cybill Shepherd. These days, you've got to be morally upstanding to peddle

meat. Shepherd's not running for president. She's just your average Hollywood star who wants to cash in on her fame with a few product endorsements, namely American beef.

But some ranchers think Shepherd is morally unfit to represent them in a beef commercial with the slogan, "Real Food for Real People."

According to a national wire story The Associated Press ran last week, some ranchers want to fire Shepherd from the beef campaign because the brazen hussy conceived twins out of wedlock.

Two days before her marriage to Dr. Bruce Oppenheim, the star of the TV show "Moonlighting" told the press that she was pregnant with twins, the article said.

Ranchers were unhappy with Shepherd earlier this year because she said she was trying to "cut down" on red meat for health reasons. As the December renewal date for the campaign nears, ranchers are strongly questioning whether or not Shepherd should continue plugging beef.

Donovan Yoachim, a member of the Cattlemen's Beef Production Board, told AP that he has received several letters from ranchers complaining about Shepherd's questionable morals.

He added that although Midwestern ranchers have a beef with her, the commercials have done quite well on the coasts.

Evidently, Shepherd's situation is just another cog in the machinery of

moral censure America currently is obsessed with. We're at the apex of a modern form of McCarthyism I call The 1980s Moral Witch Hunt.

Ranchers want Shepherd to be a "real person" who promotes "Real Food for Real People." As today's social mores seem to say, "real people" aren't human. They are, instead, immortal pillars of pristine ethics who can do no wrong. Real people are not the following:

- People who cheat on their spouses.

Scott Harrah



- People who have drug or alcohol problems
 - People who, God forbid, have premarital sex.
 - People who have AIDS.
 - People who cheat on tests in college.
 - People who get pregnant before marriage.
 - People who aren't Christians.
 - People who are gay.
 - People with political convictions other than those of the American mainstream.
 - People who realize red meat isn't always the most healthy thing to chow down on.
- Although some of the things men-

tioned above aren't necessarily noble, they are all part of life's peccadilloes and are quite common.

The ranchers have a right to choose whomever they want to represent them. It's also true that an endorser's character could affect sales and profits, but if they truly wanted an all-American paradigm to represent them, they should have done some investigative work before they chose Shepherd.

As a journalist, I have ambivalent feelings about the media's treatment of scandal. Sure, the press sometimes sensationalizes an issue, but it also mirrors society's sentiments about morality.

Maybe it's time for America to stop worrying about who's doing what to whom and focus on public figures' credentials instead of their headline and coffee klatsch gossip potential.

Gossip is fun when it's used in a humorous tone, but when we start destroying careers with it, then we've gone too far.

In this year of slinging mud, perhaps it's time we realized that our traditional values simply do not work in the modern world.

We should stop blaming the scandal victim and instead pinpoint our anger on the false sense of values that created the hoopla.

So the next time you read about someone in a situation similar to Cybill's, remember Joan Crawford's infamous line from "Mommie Dearest": "I'm not mad at you — I'm mad at the dirt."

Harrah is a senior news-editorial and English major and a Daily Nebraskan night news editor.

Letters

Reader tells reasons for Christmas retail

I read with interest the article written by Bill Allen (Daily Nebraskan, Oct. 12) "Santa's coming to town — and staying," as I have heard many others complaining about the same problem — Christmas being in the retail stores months before Christmas ever arrives. Having managed a retail store that depended on Christmas sales for over 25 percent of that store's retail yearly sales dollars, I would like to point out, or clarify, some issues regarding Christmas retailing.

Although there are many reasons why stores begin to display Christmas merchandise early, there are two main reasons. The first deals with producers and their demands and incentives for the retail stores to order and buy their Christmas items early. Many suppliers either offer large discounts for accepting delivery of Christmas items early (which helps the producer plan), threaten that your items you desperately want to sell (for examples Carebears in their prime) will not be shipped unless you take delivery early, or, in the "normal" course of business, some suppliers have very early order and delivery dates (Hallmark stores, for example, place orders for many of their Christmas items in January). In any case, if a retailer has the Christmas merchandise, they feel that they may as well put that merchandise out and attempt to make money on inventory that is otherwise sitting in the back room. Which leads to the second, most important reason stores put out Christmas merchandise early. People buy the merchandise. Retailers in the United States work with the capitalistic theories of supply and demand. Items will not be sold if there is not a demand for these items. This is one of the "It's your fault, not mine" type of argument that doesn't hold up. How many times have you heard people with pride (and justifiably so) in their voice saying, "I've got all my Christmas shopping done early and now I can enjoy the holidays"? Who doesn't (myself included) already have a couple of boxes of Christmas presents in their closet

and yet it is October? You can bet that K-Mart, ShopKo, or any other retailer would yank that seasonal merchandise off the shelf if it didn't sell.

Tim Moravec continuing studies business major

Science and religion have to be 'objective'

James Sennett's column (Daily Nebraskan, Oct. 15) was interesting reading. It neatly exposes some important aspects of the "science vs. creation debate."

Whatever else it is, science must be the objective investigation of ideas. Scientists must be willing to ask — and be asked — outrageous questions. The job of a scientist is to devise objective means of answering questions — even unorthodox ones. Sennett is thus entirely correct in saying that establishment scientists should seriously consider ideas and evidence advanced by religious dogmatists. The converse is also true, of course. Creationists interested in using the methods of science must be willing to objectively evaluate even their deeply held beliefs.

Having made that important point, Sennett proceeds to illustrate the difficulties of dialogue between scientists and non-scientists.

He starts by exhibiting a degree of imprecision that makes his presentation hard to discuss. His errors of fact and interpretation may be the result of either fuzzy thinking or misinformation. I think, though, that he misrepresented the ideas of catastrophism and uniformitarianism intentionally so that he can paint science into a corner. He uses inaccuracies to identify "troubling issues" about "the ice age and formation of mountains." From there he goes on to suggest that all of science is somehow questionable. In the end, then, Sennett presents a clear example of the intellectual dishonesty that unfortunately characterizes much of a creationist rhetoric.

Peter Bleed associate professor anthropology

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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.

Letters and guest opinions sent to the newspaper become property of the Daily Nebraskan and cannot be returned.

Anonymous submissions will not be considered for publication. Letters should include the author's name, year in school, major and group affiliation, if any. Requests to withhold names from publication will not be granted.

Submit material to the Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448.

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