

Editorial

**Daily
Nebraskan**

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Mike Reilley, *Editor*, 472-1766
Jeanne Bourne, *Editorial Page Editor*
Jen Deselms, *Managing Editor*
Mike Hooper, *Associate News Editor*
Scott Harrah, *Night News Editor*
Joan Rezac, *Copy Desk Chief*
Linda Hartmann, *Wire Editor*

Selling suicide

Novelty products for kids glorify death

For whatever reasons, teen suicides over the last few years have increased by massive proportions. About 600,000 10- to 24-year-olds try to kill themselves every year, and 5,121 youths between the ages of 15 and 24 succeeded in ending their lives in 1985, according to the National Center for Health Statistics.

Gesner Militia in Washington, N.J., sells double-edged razor-blade pendants through the mail. Triple M in Venice, Calif., sells hats with "suicidal" printed on the bill. Plan 9 from Lodi, N.J., sells coffin-shaped skateboards. RIP is a heavy-metal rock magazine that advertises products like these.

What purpose do these products serve? Do any of them have redeeming qualities?

Cash.

Hawking "suicide" products is fast becoming the new American growth industry, according to a Nov. 5 Gannett News Service article in The Des Moines Register.

The occurrence of teen suicides is skyrocketing fast enough without the added glorification of the act. Making money the easy way is great. Everyone likes to make a buck. But profits from the sales of these products do not replace the loss of teen lives.

Sam Heilig, a psychiatric social worker in the Los Angeles Suicide Prevention Center, said the popularization of suicide reflects the despair of some of today's teens.

"This reinforces the idea that may already be in someone's mind," Heilig told the GNS writer. "It can be the straw that breaks the camel's back."

But RIP Executive Editor Lonni Friend denied his magazine is cashing in on teen suicide.

"That would be wrong," he said, adding he doesn't think teens are influenced by suicide products.

"Kids are a lot sharper than that."

Too bad nearly 6,000 teens in 1985 weren't.

Court ruling sets dangerous precedent Must landlords pay?

A Douglas County District Court judge has awarded a rape victim \$90,000 to be paid by her landlord for providing inadequate security.

If this decision is not overturned, there could be dangerous repercussions. If landlords are to be held responsible for crimes committed in the buildings they own, the effects could be dangerous.

The Omaha woman who brought the suit sued the landlord for ignoring repeated requests to repair a lock on her apartment door. The building didn't have a lock either.

The victim claimed the landlord should have foreseen the

possibility of rape.

The suit was filed in 1984 and was dismissed. After an appeal to Nebraska's Supreme Court, it was sent back to District Court.

The apartment building, at 19th and Jones streets in Omaha, is not considered to be in the "safest" area.

If the woman felt uneasy about the security she should have hired a locksmith to repair the lock and sent the bill to the landlord, or she should have moved.

To hold the landlord responsible could have serious effects on costs of living to compensate for insurance increases.

Cleaning out politicians' closets

Those fat, stupid and tacky dudes have no place in public office

Well, I must say that I am quite relieved that we're not going to have a pot-head on the Supreme Court. What difference does it make that the guy hasn't touched the stuff for more than a decade? Do you know how long that stuff stays in your system?

Chances are, at a most crucial moment in jurisprudential history, Douglas Ginsburg's rational faculties would have been replaced by some delusive notions concerning the balance of universal karma, and the next thing we know it would be illegal to buy bananas by the pound. I want to thank those who so forthrightly came forward with the shocking news about this facade of a model American.

**James
Sennett**



In fact, all across America it's spring cleaning in November as politicians, judicial officials and garden-variety public servants of every stripe are dusting out the closets and 'fessing up or reassuring constituents that they have nothing to which to 'fess. Our own Nebraska representative and would-be senator Hal Daub announced last weekend that he has never touched a tainted substance. In addition, Dapper Daub reportedly asserted that no one who has ever broken the law should seek public office. Hal must be the only person in America who has never gotten a parking ticket.

First we were shocked by the news of Pat Robertson's close-but-no-cigar premarital tryst, and now we learn that federal judges are former joint-tokers. It is good to see that no level of immorality or illegality will be tolerated by this newfound social consciousness of ours. In fact, I've got a few other confessions I'd like to see

forthcoming from those who dare to suppose themselves worthy to lead our local and national business. Who knows what tawdry secrets have been swept under rugs, kept under wraps and otherwise metaphorically excluded from public perusal? We've uncovered immoral and illegal activities; now here are some more categories of questionable behavior I'd like to see explored.

•Fattening. This is the natural third counterpart to the two aforementioned atrocities. In this health-conscious, new-age fitness world of ours, we cannot tolerate those who have once engaged in, or currently do engage in, culinary customs invidious to the body beautiful. How many closet junk-food junkies line the halls of our legislative houses? How many benches are filled by those who have spent many a hard-earned dollar on Hostess Twinkies or have never even counted the first calorie? Jesse Helms sure doesn't impress me as a Richard Simmons devotee. Some hotshot reporter better get on this right away. There's a lot of contraband sugar flowing through the veins of American leaders.

•Stupid. No matter how hard we try, we cannot make everything that ought to be discouraged illegal. It is quite possible for a person to live a life completely clear of lawlessness and yet never rise above the level of just plain dumb. I want to know how many of those who think themselves capable of determining my future have ever acted in any way that is regrettable, unforgivable or even dull city. The aforementioned statement by Daub, while clearing him in the illegal category, makes him a prime candidate for this one. What evidence is there that public officials do not have both oars in the water, are not hitting on all cylinders, are missing the two of clubs, are three bricks shy or are just half a bubble off plumb? We have a right to this information.

•School Days. I don't know about you, but I was surrounded all through school by kids getting into trouble.

How many of them are now ostensibly serving our best interests? How many truancy violators want to be your next county commissioner? Did Orrin Hatch ever smoke in the boys' bathroom? Detention, suspension, and writing "I will not talk in class" 100 times — any one of these is enough to disqualify anyone who might think himself or herself worthy of my vote. Incidentally, if a guy named Ned Nadderson ever tries to run for mayor of your town, get in touch with me. The stories I could tell you . . .

•Tacky. This has to be the grand-prize category. There is a lot of tastelessness in this country, and it has no place in the halls of justice or the seats of power. How many current leaders once owned Nehru jackets? How many weekend polyester paladins are setting public policy? Rumor has it that an announced Democratic presidential candidate, as yet unnamed, was once seen shopping for black-velvet paintings while listening to Slim Whitman tapes. We cannot have this kind of behavior. If these charges are not investigated, we could wind up with Naugahyde furniture in the Oval Office.

As you can see, the potential for corruption is staggering. We can only be kept safe by our own intolerance. Inch-getters are invariably mile-takers. I have only scratched the surface. A few moments of reflection will reveal how many other areas of life there are in which unacceptable behavior might be displayed. And we cannot have anything less than perfection. The definition of perfect is, after all, a matter of record. Just ask me — I'll tell you what it is. Who are these people that want to run my life anyway? Where have they been, and what have they done? Inquiring minds want to know.

Sennett is a graduate student in philosophy and campus minister with College-Career Christian Fellowship.

Jefferson's forgotten rule: Government is best which governs least Republicans change tune

What the Democratic presidential candidates had in common in their first debate in Houston was hostility for the Contras and for the Strategic Defense Initiative. This is ahistorical, since the Democrats were the great anti-isolationist political force of the 20th century, at times Wilsonian in their appetite to move in and make the rest of the world more like ourselves. And it was Democratic leadership that gave us the key to nuclear physics and to a man on the moon. Now the Democrats are increasingly isolationist and Luddite.

**William F.
Buckley Jr.**



The Republican candidates in Houston had in common, or very nearly so, an enthusiasm for what the state can accomplish. Listening to them there, one waited in vain for the anti-statist rhetoric associated with Ronald Reagan and with the intellectual forces that led to the ascendancy of Reaganism. There was one bracing moment. It came when Pete du Pont (if George Bush persists in calling him "Pierre," du Pont should retaliate by calling Bush "Poppy") said the emphasis being placed on peace was not entirely reconcilable with the biographical emphasis correctly placed on George Bush's record as a

war hero. He didn't have a chance to elaborate, but du Pont was saying that there had to be something more important than peace if George Bush was to be acclaimed, as he should be, for his role not in waging peace, but in waging war in pursuit of a certain kind of peace. The kind of peace, measured in modern times, for which the American people will settle is a peace that leaves us free of Soviet domination, free from totalitarianism.

The enthusiasm with which most Republican candidates regard the potential of government neglects the main axle of traditional conservative thought in America, which is anti-statist.

Why is peace so desperately sought after? Because it is in jeopardy. What is that jeopardizes the peace, if not statist control of scientific skills and military concentrations? John Dillenger was a threat to the peace, but in a pretty limited way.

We struggle, all of us, against poverty, but poverty is induced by state action everywhere, whether in Ethiopia by errant Marxism or Mexico by statist greed and incompetence. Human beings struggle whole lifetimes to save money, whose value is eliminated in a year or two by statist inflationary activity. Statist control of public schooling causes the worst to survive, often at the expense of the better. State-enforced regulations imposed Jim Crow and seek to govern prices, retroactively to confiscate landlords' property, to regulate for-

eign commerce, to define usury, to set minimum-wage laws.

The man next door may be a murderer, or he may run over our child while driving a car drunk, or he may steal from us or swindle, or he may infect us with a deadly disease or set fire to our house or rape or seduce our daughter. We are all sinners, as Congressman Kemp correctly pointed out, pre-empting the point from Pat Robertson.

But the sins of the individual are transmogrified when institutionalized in the state. And the agents of statist action have a way of going through life with relative impunity, whether former President Echeverria, mourning the impoverishment of the Mexican people from his multifarious palatial estates; or Adolf Hitler, paying for the deaths of the 10 million needed to stop him with his own niggardly death. It is a pity that Hitler had only a single life to give for his country.

The Republicans should not sound like anarchists, nor think anarchy. But they shouldn't lightly abandon the most refreshing insight of postwar Republicanism, which acknowledges the insight of the earliest Democratic president. It was Thomas Jefferson who said the government is best which governs least and who reminded us that the government can only do something for the people in proportion as it can do something to the people.

© 1987 Universal Press Syndicate.

Letter

Voltage is questioned in UNL residence halls

We are writing in response to the article (DN, Nov. 9). In the article about microwave use in residence hall rooms, we were told that we could use microwaves in our rooms because they now use less "voltage" than the older inefficient models. We were wondering how this could be. The change in "voltage" was mentioned several times, so we are fairly confident that it was not a simple misprint. We see two possibilities. Appliances do not have control over how many volts they get, so the first possibility is that the volts that are provided for us by UNL must be lower than the standard 120 or so. This makes many, many students very

concerned, because much of the electronic equipment that we own needs 110-115 volts to operate correctly. Is it still safe to leave these things plugged in?

The other possibility is that the UNL maintenance department really doesn't know what it is talking about much of the time. This is very disturbing as well, but not very surprising.

Jeremy W. Burgeson
John M. Willman, III
juniors

Editorial Policy

Unsigned editorials represent official policy of the fall 1987 Daily Nebraskan. Policy is set by the Daily Nebraskan Editorial Board.