

Daily
Nebraskan
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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Quibbles & bits

Neil Smith scores 4 out of 50 on test

• The National Football League administers intelligence tests to draft selections to give teams a better idea of how quick new players can pick up each club's system. The best a player can score on the test is a 50, while the lowest is a three. The NFL average is about 20. Nebraska's Neil Smith, the Kansas City Chiefs' No. 1 pick and the No. 2 selection overall, scored a four on the test, according to an article in The Chicago Tribune.

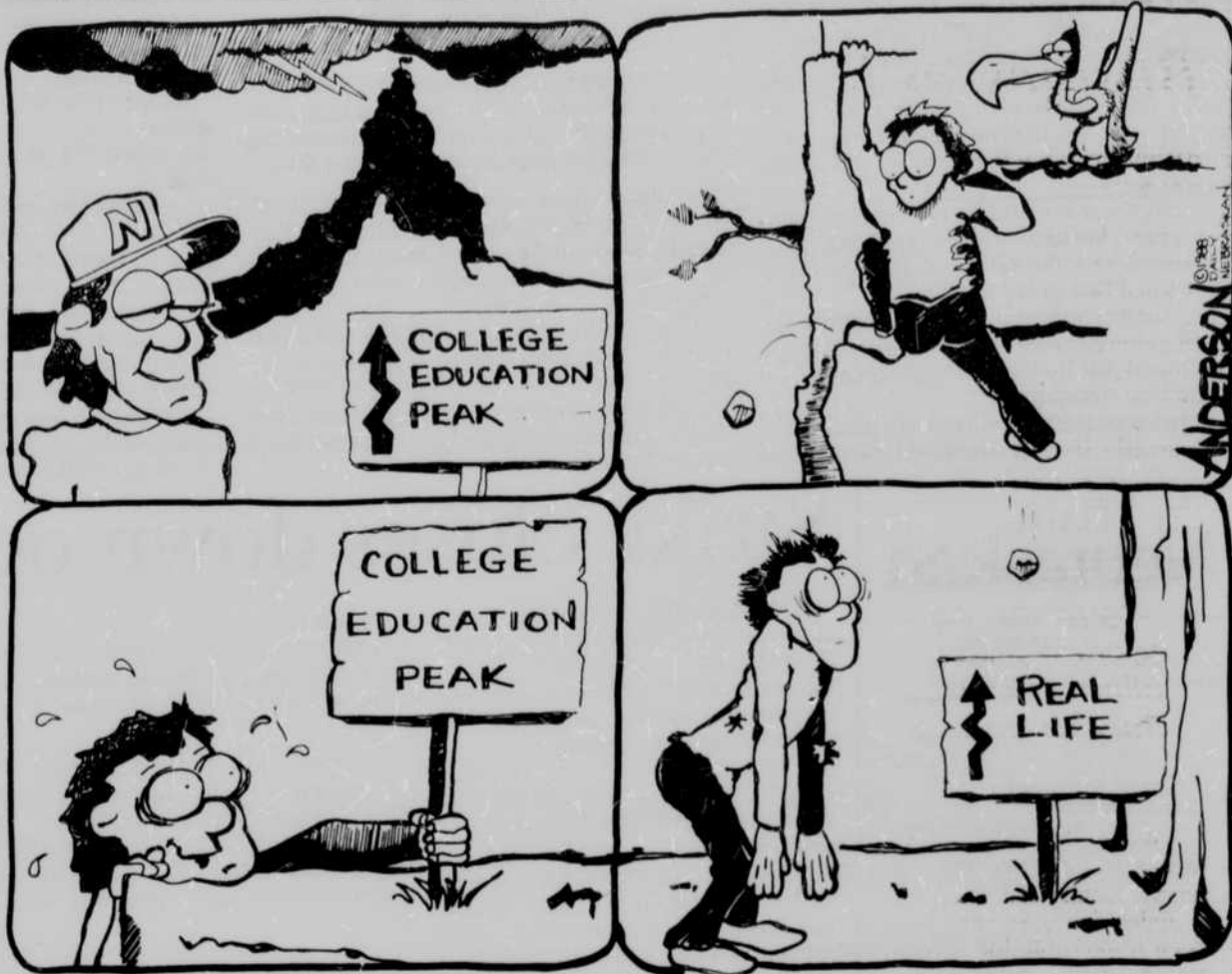
• Apparently there's no hope for the readers of the Daily Nebraskan, according to columnist Jim Gayley. Gayley's column appeared in the April issue of the UNL Good News, the university's conservative Christian monthly newspaper. "People hold their sin very dear, even... Christians," Gayley wrote. "If you don't believe me, pick up the Daily Nebraskan, or any other publication, and you can see people both exploiting sin and clinging desperately to it."

Yep, even on a slow news day,

Jim.

• While Greek Fight Night was a tremendous success on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus, Greeks at Indiana University were planning to square off outside the boxing ring. According to National On-Campus Report, a rumored fight between two fraternities prompted Indiana's dean of students to cancel all campus social events during the last weekend in March. The rumor circulated in the wake of a brawl between two other fraternities at IU's McNutt Quad.

• An alleged prank by two men didn't draw any chuckles from the manager of the University of Pennsylvania's Class of 1923 ice rink, according to On-Campus Report. The manager plans to prosecute two men who are accused of stealing the rink's Zamboni ice-laying machine and taking it for an early morning joyride. Philadelphia police caught the suspects only five blocks from the rink.



Minister takes in brutal ex-con

Rev. Smith's Oregon neighbors not as compassionate as he is

It's obvious that the Rev. Thomas Smith Jr. is a compassionate person, a man who believes that nobody is all bad and that even the worst of us can be redeemed.

So why would such a decent, compassionate clergyman fear that some of his angry neighbors might want to bump him off?

Well, it's unfortunate for the Rev. Smith, but some of his neighbors don't share his brand of compassion.

The minister recently decided to provide a home for an ex-convict named Lawrence Singleton.

Singleton, 60, isn't your ordinary, run-of-the-mill ex-con. He wasn't a stickup man, a burglar, a car thief or a swindler.

No, he went to prison in California for a crime that was so brutal, even his fellow inmates thought he was creepy.

About 10 years ago, he kidnapped a young girl, raped her, then chopped off her arms with an axe and dumped her in a gully.

He assumed she would die, but miraculously she survived. Singleton was arrested, convicted and imprisoned.

Because of California's dippy penal laws, he was paroled after less than eight years. That's four years for each lost arm, if you want to figure it that way, with the rape thrown in free.

Not surprisingly, the parole created a public uproar. And it created problems for the parole authorities.

A parolee has to live somewhere. But every time the state tried to move Singleton into a community, the residents would raise hell about having a convicted arm-chopper in their midst.

So the authorities kept moving him around, until finally they gave up and let him live in a trailer on the grounds of San Quentin prison.

But now his parole is over and he becomes a free man. He can live anywhere he chooses.

And that's where the Rev. Smith comes in. He had heard about how one town after another rejected Singleton, and his preacher-heart was touched.

So he offered Singleton a job and a home on the grounds of his church in rural Oregon.

However, those who live near his church have less tender hearts. And the preacher says, they have shown their displeasure. When the preacher and his wife go to the small local town, the natives sit in their pickup trucks and glare and scowl at them. He sometimes hears guns being fired in the distance and suspects that this is an ominous message.

the factory closed down after a merger."

I suppose it's just human nature, but most people don't feel compassionate when they're told: "I'm taking in this ex-convict who raped a girl and chopped off her arms with an ax. But don't worry, he's mended his ways."

And it's possible that Singleton has reformed and won't chop off any more arms. As one of his prison counselors said:

"There are a lot of wonderful qualities about Larry Singleton."

I don't doubt that. Even John Gacy, Chicago's most famous mass murderer, did other things besides kill 30-plus young gay men and bury them under his house. He was also a hard-working political precinct captain, performed as a clown for children's shows and had a modest talent for painting. But that's the way narrow-minded people are. Kill a few dozen young men, and who remembers your great clown act?

And as Singleton's prison counselor also said: "The public has to look at the fact that we're supposed to be a country of laws. The man served his time. He's done all that's required through our legal system. Give the man a fair chance."

He's right. Singleton served the sentence the law demanded and he deserves a fair chance. Of course, if the law had required that he be dropped head-first off the roof of a tall building, that might have been a much fairer chance.

I suspect that the Rev. Smith isn't in as much danger from his neighbors as he fears.

But if he's really concerned about his safety, he'd be wise not to give his handy-man Singleton any chores that involve using an ax.

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Royko is a Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist with The Chicago Tribune.

Letter

UNL given a 'B' for services rendered

As a soon-to-be graduate of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, I feel I have earned the right to evaluate the UNL "experience." I wouldn't even pretend to know everything about UNL, but there are a few areas about it that I would like to express my opinion on.

First of all, I should say that I graduated from a small-town high school in central Nebraska with a class of 32. Moving from a small town to UNL proved to be very rewarding as there were many situations and kinds of people who I had never been exposed to. Being forced to live in the residence halls during my freshman year was probably the best thing that happened to me as all types of people lived there. I learned that if I didn't fend for myself, then most likely nobody else would, either. In the greater UNL community, the opportunity for exposure to people of other attitudes, cultures and beliefs is abundant. Various clubs, organizations and groups provide this and people only have to have the desire to get involved in order to meet these ideas from their own. I think this is important as one must become accustomed to different opinions and beliefs to become tolerant of them without necessarily agreeing. It is a part of becoming a more-rounded person.

Having never been part of the Greek system, I will reserve judgment on it. However, I will make the observation that the system must be doing something right or it wouldn't survive year after year. Overall, the instruction received by myself has been very good. While there have been a few poor excuses for instructors — one of which told the class he was there only because he couldn't find another job — by far the majority of my classes have been conducted by very professional people and I appreciate that. I don't even mind professors showing up to conduct a class in blue jeans as long as they act professionally. I was happy that the bill passed through the Legislature to raise faculty salaries.

Next to the students, the faculty is the most important body of the university and it deserves to be satisfied.

There also are some areas I am critical of, and the first is financial aid. From my experience and from talking with others, the story is always the same. As a freshman, one receives some financial aid. As a sophomore the aid is cut and by the junior and senior years, if people don't have a four-year or departmental scholarship, they will receive practically nothing. It seems aid is offered to get students far enough into their college career to where it is impossible to turn back. These are the students you see at football games telling mom to send money.

While I am speaking of how money is distributed, let me say that the two biggest expenditures during my college days have been for the Lied and student recreation centers. I can deal with the Lied much easier than the rec center. I don't care to get into the football argument because I would get mad and start name-calling and that isn't the purpose of this letter. A good example of spending was the decision to install air conditioning and upgrade Morrill Hall. I think another good choice would be to install about 5,000 parking stalls in two or three locations close to campus, forget the parking meters and charge \$40 a year to park there. It would pay for itself in five or 10 years.

Well, this really isn't all I have to say, but it touches the highlights. Overall, I think the university has done much to change me as a person, mainly for the better. I carry no long-standing grudges, but only minor ones that one fun-filled summer will wipe out. Thus, I am compelled to give UNL a "B" for services rendered.

Greg Gillham
senior
math/pre-med

P.S. There was no scale.

Mike
Royko



With sadness he says: "We believe we will be killed, my wife and I." And he says that he and his wife have wept for those who have threatened to raise their hands against him.

Well, it is a sad situation. Here you have a clergyman who is just doing what clergymen are supposed to do — show compassion for the underdogs, the needy.

Of course, one could make an argument that there might be people more deserving of compassion and help than Singleton. Our cities are filled with homeless and destitute souls who have never chopped off anyone's arms, or even fingers. Their only crime is to be without skills or jobs. Some have skills, but no jobs.

So it's likely that Smith's neighbors wouldn't be nearly as upset if he had said: "I'm taking in this couple. The husband's been out of work since a machine crushed his foot in the factory where he worked just before

Letter Policy

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. Letter should include the author's name, year in school, major and group affiliation, if any. Requests to withhold names will not be granted.

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