

Daily
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University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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Ceiling caves in Students' safety wasn't a high priority

It's just a good thing no one got hurt. Last weekend, as students enjoyed the Labor Day weekend, the ceiling of Burnett Hall's language lab fell in, leaving extensive damage and a lot of asbestos behind for university dollars to clean up.

Now, many students will not be able to use the labs to practice their language skills for at least two weeks, even though they are charged a \$5 fee to use the lab.

And as an emergency contractor struggles to clean up the dangerous asbestos and debris, students lose crucial lab time in their first weeks of school.

Accidents are bound to happen. The only problem is -- this one could have been prevented.

Two years ago, Hans Gilde, assistant professor of modern languages and literatures, told maintenance personnel that the ceiling in rooms 305 and 306 Burnett needed to be replaced. He requested that the ceiling be fixed again this summer.

A good indication that Gilde meant business could have been that parts of a ceiling fell in this summer in the hall next to the lab.

But Gilde said maintenance paid him no mind.

"I got no response . . . If they would have fixed that ceiling last summer, we would've only put out about 200 students. Now it's 2,000," he said.

Obviously, a ceiling that poses a threat to students' safety wasn't high on university officials' priority list. Nor is the presence of asbestos in many university buildings.

Jerry Delhy, manager of building maintenance, said many buildings on both City and East Campuses contain asbestos. However, only those that show signs of wear or stress have the asbestos removed, he said.

Judging from the way officials ignored last summer's incident, that doesn't seem true either.

This weekend's cave-in, which is sure to be expensive for the university, should be a big enough hint that unsafe ceilings -- and health-threatening asbestos -- need to go. A little foresight is worth the cost, in lives and dollars.

-- Lee Rood
for the Daily Nebraskan

DN mascot mix-up caused confusion

I realize that for the casual Nebraska football fan, all those "minor" Big Eight teams tend to blur. And when there are two from the same state, the problem is only intensified. However, as a duty to my home state of Kansas, let me offer a few distinctions:

There is a name difference: the University of Kansas (KU) as compared with Kansas State University (KSU). Neither is found at the end of a yellow-brick road; KU is located in Lawrence, while Manhattan is the home of KSU.

Unlike their counterparts from a state a little farther south, neither football program has either attained NCAA probationary status or

amassed great winning records (wait 'til basketball season).

K-State's official school colors are "purple and white," while KU sports "crimson and blue" in true "scarlet and cream" fashion.

But most importantly, contrary to what may be erroneously concluded from the graphic accompanying the Opponent Preview column of the Friday, Sept. 1 edition of the DN, the mascot of KSU is the Wildcat; the Jayhawk, a Kansas original, belongs to KU.

I hope this clears up any confusion which previously may have surrounded the subject.

Christy Brown
junior
math

Who rules what art is 'obscene?'

I would like to ask a few questions of Andrew Meyer, that I doubt that you have the answers to. First, I'd like to ask if you know anything about the grants-to-the-arts program. I am no expert, but I believe that money is granted to an institution (be it art gallery, museum or university), and that institution supports artists who have works in progress.

The government doesn't "buy" finished art, it supports artists so that they can produce their art. I find the examples given by Senator Helms to be personally repulsive, but who am I to judge their value?

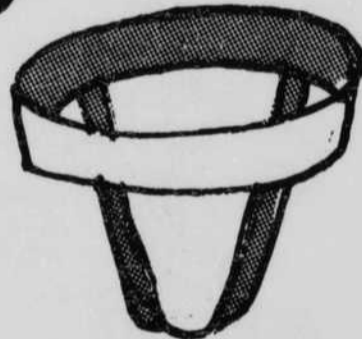
Now let me ask you my second question. Who defines obscene? The Supreme Court has struggled with

that issue for around 20 years, and still cannot come up with a viable, working definition. If the United States allows closed-minded twits like yourself and Senator Helms to enforce your morality on the entirety of a nation, where do we draw the line? Do we allow some fundamentalist to censor everything that is profane to his religion? Do we allow a feminist to ban all she sees as exploitive? Or do we allow all expression, whether it be repulsive or no, so as to allow all people the most important freedom of all, the freedom to be different.

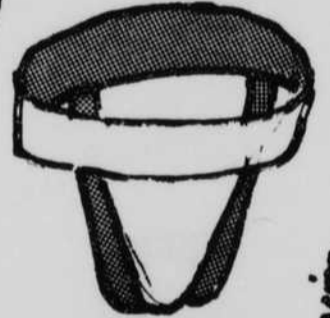
Randy Eliason
junior
speech communications

Q: Why does athletic supporter (a.) cost \$6.99 and athletic supporter (b.) cost \$1500?

(a.)



(b.)



A: Athletic supporter (b.) was worn by Tom Osborne.

Drug crisis vs. pennant race

Ignoring problem only possible solution to 'national scourge'

"I think you're wasting your time," said Slats Grobnik.

In what regard?
"Worrying about drugs. Forget it. Concentrate on the pennant races."

How can I forget it when it is, in the words of many a pundit, a national scourge?

"Sure it is, but what's the sense of worrying about it when nothing is going to happen?"

That's a negative attitude. We must seek solutions.

"That's what I mean. You can look for solutions, but you won't find any solution because nobody can agree on what the solutions are."

For every problem, there must be a solution.

"No there ain't. That's why I'm bald."

It's not the same thing. This is a man-made problem, so man can solve it.

"Then why haven't we solved it? It didn't start the day before yesterday, you know. The grass and the coke have been pouring into this country for years. There ain't enough rehab joints to take care of all the dopeheads. The judges can't send the dealers to jail because there ain't enough cells to hold them. The narcs say they can't keep the dope out of this country. So what's new?"

What's new is that the public recognizes the crisis and wants something done.

"Sure, that's what people say, but what do they want done?"

Well, there are those who say that certain drugs should be legalized, controlled and taxed. That way the criminal middlemen would be taken out of it. Street crime would go down. The money we spend trying to catch the drug smugglers would be saved. And everybody in the Colombian government wouldn't have to wear bulletproof underwear.

"Yeah, but there are just as many people who say that they don't want to legalize stuff that turns someone

into an addict and scrambles brains. You'd have the parents of every kid who died of an overdose screaming at their congressmen. You got all kinds of religious fundamentalists who are against everything they don't do. And, who knows, the dope dealers might put together one of those political action committees and start making campaign contributions. So you can forget about legalizing it."

You're probably right. But what about harsher penalties? Why not a federal death penalty for clear-cut cases of major dope dealing?

There must be a solution.

"Sure there is. Everybody stop using dope, OK? Problem solved. Now let's talk about if the Cubs can win it."

That's unrealistic. We both know that there are many people who will use drugs regardless of the consequences. So talking to them won't change their self-destructive, addictive personalities.

"Right. So why don't we get a new motto. Instead of 'just say no,' let's say, 'It's every brain for itself.'"

What does that mean?

"It means that if you want to scramble your noodle, it's your noodle, so go ahead and scramble it."

That is a rather unfeeling attitude.

"Maybe. But have you ever read about any Nobel Prize winners or Rhodes scholars croaking from a crack overdose?"

No, but what has that to do with it?

"What it has to do with it is that people with sense either don't do it or know when to stop. But you can't protect some dummies from themselves. So if they want to turn their heads into Jello, that's their lookout."

In other words, you want to ignore the problem.

"Hey, Ronald Reagan ignored it for eight years, and they want to put him on Mount Rushmore."

The people who came up with that idea must be smoking something strange.

"See? It's everywhere."

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Mike Royko



letter

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Readers also are welcome to sub-

mit material as guest opinions. Whether material should run as a letter or guest opinion, or not to run, is left to the editor's discretion.

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