

Daily
Nebraskan

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Words and waste

Alaska oil spill offenses continue

Apparently oil and water do mix. That seemed to be the argument Exxon Corp. adopted to try to convince a federal judge last week that it shouldn't stand trial for the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska. An Exxon Shipping attorney said the federal Clean Water Act lists only waste products as pollutants. The Associated Press reported, so the spill should not be considered waste. "The crude oil on board the Exxon Valdez was not a waste," attorney Edward Bruce said. "It was a commodity."

Oil is a commodity when it enters a car's tank; it's a waste when 11 millions gallons of it end up in the ocean. And it's a waste when it's responsible for killing thousands of birds and marine mammals.

Fortunately Exxon's arguments didn't wash with U.S. District Judge Russel Holland, who refused the company's request to dismiss a five-count criminal indictment stemming from the tanker's spill in March 1989.

But in trying to pin responsibility for the spill on Exxon, the government has committed some outrages of its own.

The Los Angeles Times reported that government officials have quietly ordered the killing of hundreds of birds, some seals and perhaps other mammals for studies that could strengthen their court case against Exxon.

Federal officials in Alaska confirmed that they authorized the killing of birds for at least eight different studies to determine how many animals were killed by the spill. The bird carcasses, some oiled to simulate the spill, were tossed into Prince William Sound and tracked.

It is clear at this point that the spill caused many animals' deaths. Certainly it is not necessary to slaughter more animals simply to determine the exact number of animals killed by the spill. A government-ordered extermination of more animals — even if prosecutors think it would stiffen the case against Exxon — still is not justified.

Pictures of dead oil-covered birds, seals and fish and reports of oil-choked beaches tell the truth. That's all the evidence a court should need.

— Emily Rosenbaum
for the Daily Nebraskan



Stadium not meant for silence

Cornhusker fans should be able to enjoy games however they see fit

If I had ever been told that someone could get kicked out of Memorial Stadium for showing too much spirit, I would have laughed.

But now that it's happened, there's nothing funny about it.

Two weekends ago, at the Nebraska-Missouri football game, Jeremy Felker was kicked out of the stadium. Felker, a junior political science major, said he was removed because people sitting behind him and his friends demanded that they sit down. Rather than go to the source of the problem, he said, the complainers grabbed the nearest police officer.

Felker said that when he and his friends complied with the officer's orders to take a seat, some people in the block began chanting "Sit down, shut up, we can't have no fun." Because he was chanting and sitting on the aisle, Felker said, he was arrested — he was a conveniently accessible target of the short arm of the law.

Sit down? At a Cornhusker football game? What happened to good ol' college spirit? A top-10 ranking? Pride?

What happened to all of that? Well, on that particular day, it and Felker were escorted to the nearest exit. At the Homecoming game, no less.

Last Saturday, Felker said, at least two others were removed from the same block. "Just because," he said, was the reason given by the Lincoln police officers who did the removing. Herbie Husker, who happened to be in Section 10 at that time, joined the fans in that block. Felker said the police grabbed the mascot and told him to leave the area or face arrest.

Suppression of free expression has come to Memorial Stadium. Sgt. Milo Bushing of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Police Department said that UNL doesn't have any particular policy on removing people from the stadium.

"If there is a complaint, our officers and Lincoln police officers will naturally check into it," he said.

No one could be reached for comment at the Lincoln Police Department.

Bushing said police officers generally deal with problems in the stadium at their own discretion.

Apparently, the officer at the stadium thought Felker presented a clear and present danger, and that the world would stop spinning if he and his nasty college friends were allowed to stand and enjoy the game the way they wanted to.

It's utterly amazing. It's like being



Chuck Green

arrested for disturbing the peace at a Motley Crue concert. God forbid that someone should stand up and make noise at a Nebraska football game.

It's no secret to Nebraska's regular opponents — especially the good ones, what few there are — that Memorial Stadium crowds ain't what they used to be.

Seldom are the 76,000-plus fans a major factor in the game's outcome. When the visiting team takes the lead, most of the fans choose to sit on their hands and grumble. When the Huskers build a lead, the red-clad faithful chat smugly, stopping now and then to clap for a good run. Many of them blow off the rest of the game, knowing their team has mathematically eliminated another adversary.

That's where 9-2 seasons come from.

Seven of the Huskers' 14 regular-season losses during the 1980s came in the friendly confines of Memorial Stadium. Sometimes, the only thing that distinguishes Memorial Stadium from Love Library is the absence of books and a ceiling — and the fact that Love Library is usually noisier.

At many colleges and universities in the South, fans — students and non-students alike — stand for the entire game, screaming their lungs out in support of their beloved team.

It's little wonder why football teams at schools such as Miami, Florida State and Auburn have such success. If 80,000 screaming fans let the other team know it's not welcome in their stadium, it's difficult for the other team to play well.

But not here. In Lincoln, if you

yell too loud or too long, you're whisked away like a piece of lint on a sweater.

The fact that Memorial Stadium fans like to initiate the wave when the Huskers have the ball should be a clue that many Nebraska fans are clueless.

Nebraska is a state in which things go slowly, and many of its inhabitants like it that way. However, there is a time and a place for everything.

Being in Memorial Stadium on a crisp, fall Saturday, with the smell of hot dogs and national championships in the air is neither the time nor the place for a nap, nor for inhibition and vocal prudence.

Yet some jerks still complain that they can't enjoy the game because someone is in their way.

OK, fine. Let's try this: For the last home game of the season, against Colorado, try your damndest to stand the whole time, not sitting down once.

It's doubtful that the Lincoln Police Department would be able to handle complaints from people if all 8,500 student ticketholders stood the entire game, screaming like maniacs. After all, there's only one home game left this year. Why not make the most of it?

Although it's important that people be allowed to enjoy the game however they see fit, no one's method of enjoying a football game is better than anyone else's.

Fans need to realize that knitting and quiet conversation are experienced better at home.

An escape to a crowded college football stadium to have fun, see old friends and meet new ones, and generally let loose and blow off steam can be the best three hours of someone's weekend, particularly in a football-crazy state like ours.

This season, Nebraska is fortunate enough to have another excellent football team with a good shot at capturing the national title. For a long time, students, faculty members, alumni and boosters have had a football program they could be proud of.

Maybe now, it's time to give the football team fans it can be proud of.

Green is a senior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan night news editor, sportswriter and columnist.

opinion READER

Suicide is misunderstood; seeking help worth effort

I would like to applaud Chuck Green's column (DN, Oct. 16) regarding suicide. It seems to be a sad fact of life that human beings will often do anything to avoid confronting difficult and unpleasant subjects; apparently, it makes no difference whether that subject is suicide or AIDS or even the federal budget deficit. Of the unpleasant realities of human life, suicide seems to be one of the least understood. Depression can strike anyone at any age, and it can be as lethal as the most virulent forms of cancer. Fortunately, like cancer, it can be arrested, if not cured. However, because of the complex relationship that this disease holds with a person's identity, help can seem impossible.

The cycle of depression is particularly vicious because, in our society, the victim is often labeled as loony, crazy, nuts or even stupid. People need to understand that the person suffering from depression is a victim of a disease and that self-destruction can be the ultimate outcome of the disease. There is often, without help, very little decision involved. To say a depressed person made the choice to kill herself or himself is akin to saying someone chose to have a heart attack. There is choice involved, as in the heart patient's case, but only after a problem is recognized. Also, relief requires hard work, much harder than changing one's diet and exercise

program. Psychiatry and psychology have made tremendous progress in helping people, but these fields are very inexact sciences at best. The victim of depression may have to make numerous attempts to get help before she or he finds the help that works. Some health insurance will not cover the costs of even the most basic mental health care, and of course there is the stigma of seeking help to be dealt with.

I do not speak with any authority other than my own personal experience. I have recently enjoyed my first depression-free year in nearly seven years. The road I took to recovery was a hit-and-miss affair. Looking back, it seems a wonder that I made it at all. I nearly lost everything that was dear to me because of depression, and my recovery is due largely to my family and friends who stood by me until I was able to get help. Of course the ultimate decision to get help was my own. I hope there will come a day when the stigma of mental illness is removed and the path toward recovery more easily taken. I do not even feel secure in disclosing my name for this article. Mr. Green is correct; no answers will be found in scapegoats. Answers will only be found through conscious effort and understanding.

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