

Readers deride Lied, DN, disagree on war protests

Lied's accessibility to handicapped called appalling

A story in the Feb. 2, the Lincoln Star reveals that the only elevator providing access for people with physical disabilities in the Lied Center was shut down about a month after the facility opened last February because it is unsafe. The article also states that the elevator does not have space for a person to accompany a person in a wheelchair, nor does it have a safety gate, "which could cause a wheelchair to become caught in elevator apparatus or cause a person in a wheelchair to catch a hand, for example, between the chair and the wall of the lift." I am appalled that such a dangerous inadequate apparatus was chosen for installation in a brand new multimillion dollar building on the UNL campus and that it could be inoperable for nearly a year with officials unable or unwilling to either fix it or install a safe, workable elevator.

Although, as the story points out, access to the Lied has been available through the Johnny Carson Theater, no one seems to have realized that this still causes severe problems for some people. The only handicapped parking at the Lied is near the front door; therefore, a person must walk the entire block, up a ramp, and then several hundred yards within the building to get to her or his seat. Such a walk leaves some people exhausted and frustrated; some people with heart problems simply may not be able to do it. When I called the Lied to ask about this, a spokesperson told me that there was no handicapped parking near the Johnny Carson Theater because "those people" usually have someone else drive them! He did not know that some of "those people" drive themselves.

I call on university officials to rectify this situation immediately. Their actions so far show no real understanding of what accessibility means or why it is important.

Barbara J. DiBernard
associate professor
English

Soldiers regard war protests as personal attack

In response to Jon Dokter's letter (DN, Feb. 12), you are totally wrong about a soldier's feelings. Contrary to your beliefs, protests do affect soldiers. I was an active duty army soldier for three years. I know how a soldier thinks and feels. When you and your peacenik friends protest, the soldier sees it as a personal attack on him or herself.

The soldier is in the military to protect your freedom and rights. When they see a protester jumping up and down yelling "No Blood for Oil," it affects them in a very profound way. You see, it's the soldier's blood that might be spilled. The soldier is willing to die for you. Yet you will spit on them when they come home. So you and your peacenik friends just keep on protesting. Don't worry, the soldier WILL protect your freedom and rights. Just don't act like you know how a soldier feels, because you don't!!!

Adam Tyrrell
freshman
computer science

'Support troops' slogan becoming ambiguous, unclear

What, precisely, does "supporting the troops" mean? A lot of people keep saying it lately, even those who don't support the war. But how can anyone "support the troops" by attacking the war they're fighting?

Does "supporting the troops" mean that we should hang flags from every stick and cover the country with hundreds of thousands of yellow ribbons?

Does "supporting the troops" mean we should — at all costs — avoid another Vietnam and the shameful treatment of its veterans? And to this end, should we fall on Iraq like a wrathful host of metal and fire furies, destroying as much as we can, as quick as we can?

How far must we go? Does "supporting the troops" require us to hate Iraqi people, as our soldiers are taught?

It bothers me that people insist we "support the troops" by supporting the war, as if the two were synonymous. They're not.

As citizens of a participant democracy, is it not only a right, but an obligation of each of us to let our minds be known? And, if we honestly disagree with the war, for which our troops are dying and killing, shouldn't we say so?

It seems a queer sort of logic, don't you think, to say that we should "support the troops" to lift their morale, yet it is obvious that the best possible thing for their morale would be to come home alive!

Joe Bowman
senior
anthropology

First Amendment freedoms precious but not absolute

A lot of debate has taken place on the editorial page concerning the right to debate. While I happen to support our current action in the Persian Gulf, I also fully support the right to protest for those who wish to do so. However, I feel certain distinctions need to be made. Not all methods of protesting are entitled to special protection.

First Amendment freedoms are precious. They ought to be defended. People who use their freedom of speech to debate the policies of their government have a constitutionally protected right to do so.

Opponents of government policies who bring honest, reasoned arguments to the debate are entitled to be treated with respect.

However, waving a banner calling for victory by Saddam Hussein, as some protesters did during an anti-war demonstration in Washington, is a gross abuse of the freedom of speech.

So is asserting that the president of the United States is a murderer who steered the country into war to improve his reelection prospects, or to divert the country's attention from domestic economic problems.

Those aren't statements of opinion. Those are lies, and lies have no place in the national debate over U.S. policy in the Middle East.

Not everything said or done in the name of dissent deserves constitutional protection. As Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote in 1919, "The most stringent protection of free speech would not protect a man in falsely shouting fire in a theater and causing a panic."

Justice Holmes wrote those words as part of a unanimous opinion in which the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the conviction of defendants who had promoted draft resistance during World War I. Justice Holmes said the Constitution doesn't protect words that "create a clear and present danger that they will bring about evils that Congress has a right to prevent."

Things have been done in the name of dissent that went far beyond the bounds of constitutionally protected expressions of opinion. The bombing of campus buildings to protest the Vietnam War was one. The vandalizing of missile sites in the 1980s was another. The First Amendment doesn't guarantee the right to take the law into one's own hands.

Just as there are legal bounds, there are also bounds of taste. War protesters who shout down lecturers whose opinions about U.S. foreign policy are not the same as the "Politically Correct" campus view, do not enjoy special privileges. Nor should cretins who boo the singing of the national anthem at the football game enjoy any special protection. They ought to

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

be escorted promptly from the stadium.

Andrew Meyer
junior
pre-med

Reader restates views on protest, freedom of speech

This is in response to Jim Friend's letter (DN, Feb. 8).

It appears that you missed the point of my last letter. I seriously doubt you want to reread the letter, so let me restate the points so they are perfectly clear.

1) Assumptions and labels do nothing to further your argument, especially when they don't fit. You labeled others as "loud-mouthed, long haired, unkempt professional protesters" for holding some of your own views. That, Jim, is hypocrisy. Unless, of course, you label them that for only holding some of your views and not all. That would not be hypocrisy, but it would be something much worse. (I won't specify since you seem to take my views personally).

2) The world is not black and white, and there is no right or wrong. Dissenters are not wrong; they simply dissent. And yes, it is possible to support the troops and not support the reason they are there. I support the troops and wish for them to quickly succeed and return home. That doesn't mean I think they should have been sent in the first place. Another question I have, though, is do they know you have been appointed to represent their views? Are we to take it on blind faith that they find my position untenable?

3) Yes, Jim, you have a right to express your views. If you had read my letter you would have seen that I did not question that. What I said was that others have a right to express their views without being labeled treasonous or unpatriotic. I find your analogy to flag burning and the KKK marches in Skokie, Ill., troubling. Are you suggesting that the right exists, but that no one should be able to practice that right because it is "wrong?" If so, then it would be a pretty illusory right. And the semantics are oxymoronic if a "right" can be "wrong." But I digress.

4) As for the "blatant manipulation and misrepresentation," I hardly think so. Show me where I misrepresented or manipulated anything you said. If you can, then I will apologize.

5) Lastly, the attacks were not intended to be personal, and I am sorry if you took them to be. You either ignored or disbelieved me when I wrote that I respect you and your convictions. If I wanted to attack you, I would have called you various names, some of them probably libelous (that is, of course, if they were untrue). I didn't. I challenged your views. I do respect you, Jim, and I understand your views. I just disagree with you. And I ask that even if you cannot respect my convictions and those of the protesters, at least try to understand them before you attack them.

B. Gail Steen
junior
College of Law

DN should run in-depth story on fundamentalist

I, too, know of a young man like Simon, whose story was given in the last Friday's Daily Nebraskan. I'll call him Paul.

Paul's life was miserable, a seeming "hell on earth," as Simon described his junior-high-school years. There seemed to be no purpose to Paul's life. He just didn't fit. Friends made fun of him, calling him "sissy" a lot. Frequent remarks were made about him behind his back and even to his face. People wondered if he would ever have a date. Paul couldn't handle all the cruelty that seemed to find him wherever he went.

He cried out for help and finally found what he was looking for; a genuine love and acceptance that he had desired was now a reality. He faced his pain directly and found relief from it.

So Paul wanted to tell people to "come out of the closet," so to speak. Yet, like Simon, he feared rejection. "What would people think?" questioned this young man, "What would they say? They will still treat me like I've always been treated."

So the young man finally mustered up the courage to tell others his story. True, he experienced rejection, but at least he was free, no longer concealing the true person within.

So why would we not read a full-page story on this young man? Because he is what so many people call a fundamentalist. This man came into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. But, for some reason, we can read about the plight of Simon, feel sorry for him and applaud his courage to come forth, but we cannot offer the same courtesy to the young man who

admitted who he really was inside. We call Simon brave. We call Paul narrow-minded. We praise Simon's fortitude. We think Paul is ignorant. We make Simon a hero. We make Paul a homophobe.

Please try not to place all Christians in the same box and label it "hypocrite." Maybe someone will soon do a story for their depth-reporting class on the struggle to be a Christian.

Kevin W. Shinn
Lincoln

Oil spill disaster makes war hell for 'progressives'

To paraphrase George Will: War really IS hell for "progressives" when the opponent of American military intervention creates an environmental disaster.

Henry Eugene Brass
Lincoln



Every Sunday Night!!

SUNDAY NIGHT SPECIAL

5 - 8 P.M. ONLY

3 Tacos or 3 Softshells
for only \$1.25

245 N. 13th St.
Location Only

FREE drink refills anytime

Now! 3 Value Menus.

Free Microcomputer Classes

The Computing Resource Center is offering free microcomputer seminars to UNL students. The seminars will feature Microsoft Word and Excel on the Macintosh and WordPerfect on the IBM.

No reservations required

Intro. to WordPerfect on the IBM
Thursday, February 14 2:00-3:30 p.m.

Advanced WordPerfect on the IBM
Tuesday, February 19 2:00-3:30 p.m.

Advanced Microsoft Word on the Macintosh
Wednesday, February 20 3:00-4:30 p.m.

Excel on the Macintosh
Thursday, February 28 3:00-4:30 p.m.

Macintosh seminars will be held in the Andrews microcomputer lab.
IBM seminars will be held in the Sandoz microcomputer lab.