

## UNMC revolution

*Sexist practices have no place in class*

Feminist Gloria Steinem called for a mini-revolution Thursday night in Lincoln. Two University of Nebraska Medical Center students took her advice.

The students — Carey Nesmith and Jo Falkenburg — used the question-and-answer period after Steinem's speech to call attention to sexism at UNMC.

Nesmith and Falkenburg said they and other women students were required to leave a living anatomy class while men learned to perform rectal and pelvic examinations. The women said instructors informed them that NU Board of Regents had received complaints about men and women disrobing in front of each other.

The women were told they could set up times outside of class to learn the procedures, Nesmith and Falkenburg said.

NU Regent Charles Wilson, who attended the Steinem lecture, said he had no knowledge of any regents' policy regarding male and female students disrobing in the same room. He said he would investigate the charges of sexism.

Unfortunately, other officials are not as open-minded. Dr. William Metcalf, chairman of the UNMC anatomy department, said it was impractical to have male and female students undress in the same classroom.

But it would be more impractical to have medical students lack the knowledge to perform rectal or pelvic exams.

"What are we going to do?" Metcalf told The Omaha World-Herald. "Have females do rectal exams on males in an open class or males do pelvic exams on females in open class?"

Would it be unreasonable to assume that a doctor — male or female — is required in his or her day-to-day practice to perform rectal or pelvic exams?

Practicing the exams is voluntary and some male students decline to do them, Metcalf said. But women students aren't given that option; they are merely shown the door.

Metcalf said Nesmith and Falkenburg were "overreacting" by protesting the policy.

If it's overreacting to expect and demand equal and fair treatment for all students, then Nesmith and Falkenburg certainly fit the bill.

But they're not blowing the incident out of proportion. By the time students make a mature decision to attend medical school, they should be free from childish concerns over the differences in the male and female anatomies. They're learning a profession, not playing doctor.

The regents have set aside time at their April meeting to address gender equality issues at NU. That would be the ideal time to start Steinem's mini-revolution right here in Nebraska.

—E.R.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Leaders, not troops, make war

Lisa Donovan wrote that she cannot support the troops because they conduct the war (DN, Feb. 19). Lisa, are you for real? Call me stupid, but it usually is the military who conducts war. I can't believe that a senior from this fine institution can hold such an uneducated view. Listen up Lisa, I'm going to teach you a lesson.

People, regardless of their stance on the war, support the troops because over the past 20 years, while you've been sleeping, the rest of America has learned something. America has learned that when policy fails, you put the blame on the policy-makers, not on those who carry out the policy. Twenty years ago, Lisa, people in this country actually spat on the troops when they returned. America shit on the troops, Lisa, end of discussion. There is no nice way around that fact. But now, people have realized that the soldiers are not the ones who decide when to wage war. It is the GOVERNMENT that determines this policy.

The military is only an instrument of that policy. General Colin Powell

did not go to President Bush one day and say, "Is it OK if I go make war today?" Soldiers are the ones who detest war the most. They are the ones who have to fight and die.

Regarding the journalism department, shame on you! If Lisa Donovan's warped thinking is the quality of thought your department produces, then you really ought to review just what it is your department is trying to accomplish.

Lisa, it's great that you don't support killing, but your view of the troops is the same view that caused Americans to blame our loss in Vietnam on the vets. And it is the same view that left those government leaders responsible for our involvement in Vietnam unchecked. As one of my teachers puts it, let me know where you're getting your drugs from, Lisa, because I'm sure I can find you a better dealer.

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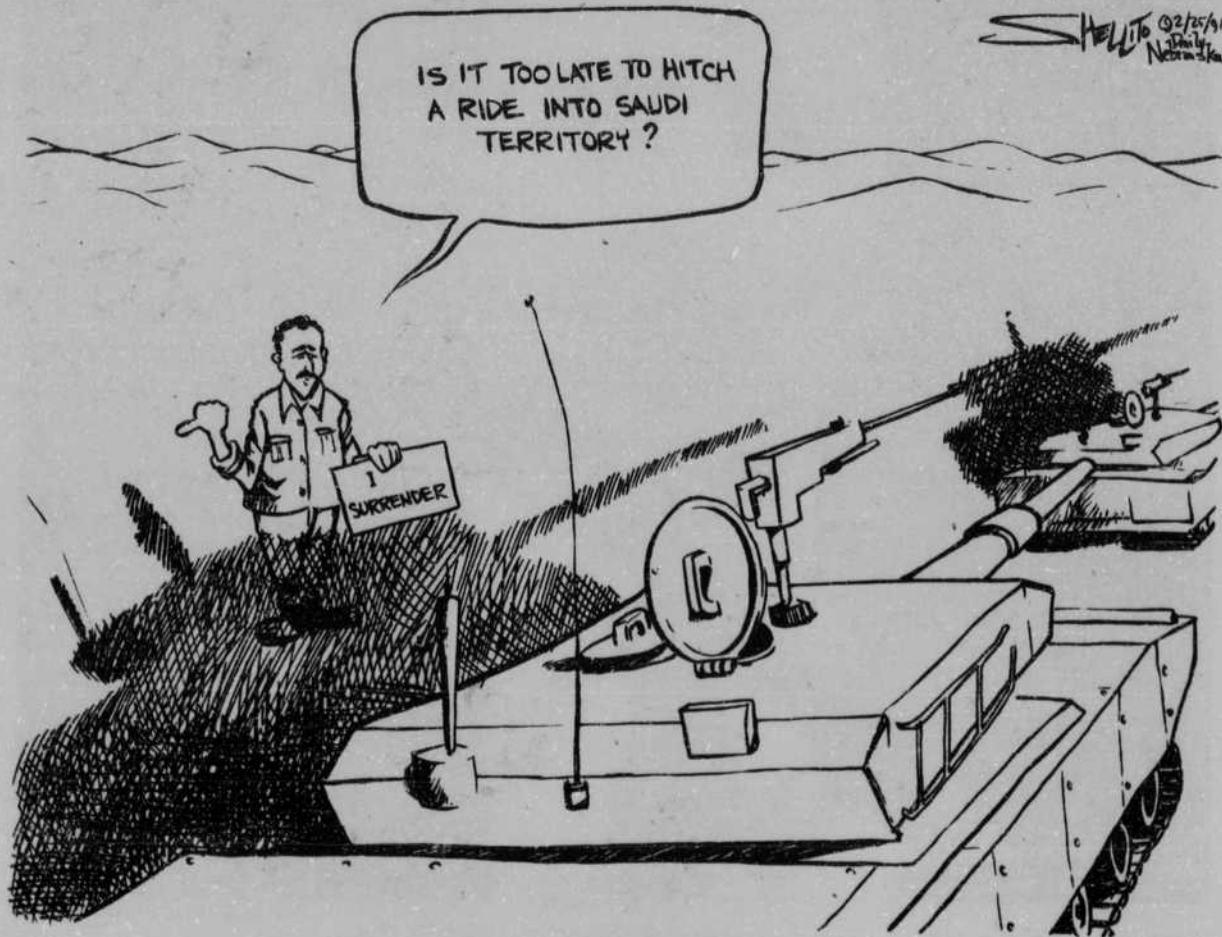
## LETTER POLICY

The Daily Nebraskan welcomes brief letters to the editor from all readers. Letters will be selected for publication on the basis of clarity, originality, timeliness and space availability. The Daily Nebraskan retains the right to edit letters.

Letters should be typewritten and less than 500 words.

Anonymous submissions will not be published. Letters should include the author's name, address, phone number, year in school and group affiliation, if any.

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



JANA PEDERSEN

## Games aside, a rose is a rose

William Shakespeare tried to define what's in a name centuries ago, but the debate still rages.

Now people argue about what to call other people and whether the names they call each other are products of ethnocentric, racist, sexist thinking. Sometimes the arguments are legitimate, but more often they're irrational.

The latest name game is being played in the Soviet Union, where residents of Leningrad want their old city name back — St. Petersburg, or Petrograd.

According to The New York Times Magazine, the biggest blockade to the name change is its cost, which will be millions of rubles to switch highway signs, maps and government letterheads.

But residents already are calling their city "Pete" because the name change will go into effect as soon as the city can afford it.

And while Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev is attempting to deal with various independence-minded Baltic states, another name change has been proposed, one that would give greater recognition to the individual republics.

Soon the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics may have to give up its Soviet or Socialist to save its Union.

Discussion in the Soviet legislature last month weighed the option of changing the country's name to "Union of Soviet Sovereign Republics" or "Union of Sovereign Socialist Republics" to appease the republics' calls for more individual recognition.

Some wanted to throw out the old acronym altogether and adopt the Americanish "Union of Sovereign Socialist States."

The Congress of People's Deputies voted the switch down last month, and rightly so.

Trying to change the name of the Soviet Union may have been a partial appeasement to the country's dissenters, but it would have been just a change for change's sake. The Soviet Union's internal strife still would have smelled not as sweet.

It doesn't even take international politics to make people excited about changing roses' names.



**The problem with euphemisms is that even though they may sound better to those offended by the original name, they don't change the offensive stuff they're supposed to represent.**

At the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, too, the name changing game is played. Students here live in "residence halls," not "dormitories."

Apparently there was too much bad baggage associated with the word "dorm." But that baggage — all the stuff about dorms that residents didn't like in the first place — eventually will transfer to the word "hall," sending the housing department back to find another euphemism.

At the Daily Nebraskan, editors debate what to call groups of people. Are people of African descent blacks or African Americans? Are the people who lived in this country long before Columbus "discovered" it American Indians or Native Americans? Our stylebook says one thing while our sources often tell us otherwise.

It would be simplest to just call people what they want to be called. But if an African American man wanted to call himself an Asian American, it could lead to confusion, especially if the label was necessary to assert the person's particular knowledge of an area.

If a Native American woman were speaking about her youth on a reservation, it would be important to point out her ethnicity. So labels sometimes are necessary, if not always purely accurate.

This week — Disability Awareness Week — renews the debate over calling people what they want to be called. Our stylebook says people with disabilities are "handicapped," and the title should be used only if relevant to a story.

But some people with handicaps prefer the label "physically challenged," which is itself a challenge to interpret. A person climbing the side of a mountain also is physically challenged, but may or may not have a handicap.

The problem with labels is that they often are devised without considering the point of view of the person, organization, country or whatever being labeled. In order to be more considerate, then, we develop euphemisms that may not have the connotations of more descriptive labels but aren't so offensive.

Thus, we come up with physically challenged for handicapped. Some feminists call for us to use womyn for women and hystory for history.

The problem with euphemisms is that even though they may sound better to those offended by the original name, they don't change the offensive stuff they're supposed to represent.

A hall is still a dorm and all the baggage that comes with it.

The dictionary cites "remains" as a euphemism for corpse, but both the words mean something is dead.

And the Vietnam conflict really was a war.

Putting both "Union" and "Sovereign" in the Soviet country's name would only create another useless euphemism and possibly confusion.

Union means united. Sovereign means independent. Putting them together makes a paradox, but that's what euphemism-making is all about.

And, more than likely, a Union of Sovereign Socialist Republics still would send its army to quell riots in Lithuania.

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## EDITORIAL POLICY

Initialed editorials represent official policy of the spring 1991 Daily Nebraskan. Policy is set by the editorial board.

The Daily Nebraskan's pub-

lishers are the NU Board of Regents, who established the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Publications Board to supervise daily production of the paper. According to

the regents' policy, responsibility for the editorial content lies solely in the hands of the newspaper's student editors.