

Persian Gulf cease-fire doesn't end letter war at UNL

Comparison of Kuwaitis, Native Americans lacks accuracy, reason

You are right, Pat Dinslage (DN, Feb. 28). The United States' treatment of the Native American cultures is a shameful, crimson page in our history. That is where your correctness ends however. The American Indian was not an offensive military machine, dedicated to increasing territorial claims at every turn. Yes, we did destroy the Native Americans with superior equipment, numbers and training, the same way we defeated Iraq. However, we have no territorial designs upon Iraq, only the elimination of a dangerous army that has been the aggressor against two sovereign nations in the last decade. In doing so, we also restored freedom to the Kuwaiti people (Yes, they live in a monarchy, but a very benevolent monarchy at worst).

As for what was done to the Native American people, it was shameful aggression committed in a less civilized time. The United States could never hope to repay them for all it has done to them. And even the Iraqi people deserve some pity. The vicious dictator that has ruled Iraq with an iron fist has served his people poorly, damning their future for his own political ends. But one cannot simply dismiss them as poor innocents, they did support Saddam Hussein in this war, and if their culture suffers for it, well, maybe they will be less warlike the next time around.

Robert T. Kutz
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Leaders must be forced to stop exploiting fears, start proving ideas

The letters of last Friday (DN, March 1) were so ridiculous on average that I hardly know where to start. First, I am sick and tired of name-calling. If you are right, name-calling is not what makes you right, and if you are wrong, name-calling only points to the weakness of your argument. What does being a "peacenik protester" imply that is such a threat, anyway?

We have become so lazy that we prefer to step in a booth every few years, choose between PR packages rather than statesmen and women, and let them tell us what to believe. We let them take our money, make secret, illegal deals with brutal regimes of all political bents and force on us such a poor set of national policies that we become slaves to oil and fear of people we've never met or even begun to understand.

Worse yet, when our own government's lies catch up with them, our patriotic soldiers are told to give their lives for a set of goals that are inconsistent, immoral and perpetuate our slavery to oil and fear. My friends in the gulf believe in their country, but I'm not sure that they or we understand that the government is not the same thing as the country and that our elected officials rarely represent the common good anymore. If our government were truly of, by and for the people, why must grassroots groups fight constantly to keep our water clean, wilderness wild and food pure for those who have time only to put it on their table?

Furthermore, if everyone is so tired of "no blood for oil" and "Would we have done this if Kuwait grew oranges?," why not just answer the question? Give us an answer that is real and truly moral, not just a rehash of an "us or them" paranoia.

My point is this. Until we can honestly explain why our returning brutality for brutality is moral, we should not passively rely on our leaders' grandstanding assurances, especially given their record of lies to us. It is not only our right, but our duty to ourselves, our country and all people to make our leaders stop exploiting our fears and start proving their words. Then we won't need to have people shouting "no blood for oil."

Eric Moss
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Rodeos cause variety of injuries to animals, ignorance among fans

It is very good that Toby Brown has responded to the joint statement by the Humane Society of the United States and the American Humane Association. In my recent letter (DN, Feb. 12), I was representing the concurrence of the organization, the Greater Nebraska Animal Welfare Society, to this statement. I will, however, be more than happy to respond to Brown's comments more specifically.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Cruelty is inherent in rodeo; some of it is hidden from the public view, and some of it is blatant.

Our organization witnessed and videotaped a calf that was injured and carried away on a stretcher at the Ak-Sar-Ben rodeo last fall. Calves roped when running up to 27 miles an hour have their necks snapped back by the lasso. There is no denying this occurs. It is quite obvious. This often results in neck and back injuries, bruises, broken bones and internal hemorrhages.

This is the blatant and obvious part. But what about that which is hidden from the public?

Electric prods, sharp sticks, caustic ointments and other devices are used to irritate and enrage animals used in rodeos. The flank or "bucking" strap used to make horses and bulls buck is tightly cinched around their abdomens, where there is no rib cage protection. Tightened near the large and small intestines and other vital organs, the belt pinches the groin and genitals. The pain causes the animals to buck, which is what the rodeo promoters want the animal to do in order to put on a good show.

I don't believe Toby Brown when he claims to "know the animals involved" or that the rodeo community are "humanitarians caring for our animals as if they were family." These are not their animals. The animals used in rodeo are not fresh from the range, they are captive performers owned by stock contractors who make a living from supplying them to rodeos. The animals undergo stress of constant travel, often in poorly ventilated vehicles. Though there are state laws requiring that the animals be unloaded, fed and watered at specified intervals, enforcement is spotty at best.

Brown takes a different tack than most rodeo promoters that I've spoken with. Most of them try to tell me that rodeo portrays ranching skills, to which I would reply that nothing could be further from the truth. But Brown contends that "rodeo is not ranching. It is a sport..." I think this is an even more ludicrous description. To my notion, a sport is a competition or event that includes willing participants. Animals do not fit that description. Rodeo cowboys voluntarily risk injury by participating in the events, but the animals they use have no such choice.

Brown also calls for a show of statistics on the abuse of animals at rodeo. I can submit hundreds of documented accounts, but in the interest of being succinct, here are a few comments made by veterinarians, words that speak volumes:

Dr. C.G. Haver, a veterinarian who spent 30 years as a federal meat inspector, worked in slaughterhouses and saw many animals discarded from rodeos and sold for slaughter. He described the animals as being "so extensively bruised that the only areas in which the skin was attached was the head, neck, leg and belly. I have seen animals with six to eight ribs broken from the spine and, at times, puncturing the lungs. I have seen as much as two to three gallons of free blood accumulated under the detached skin."

Dr. E.J. Finocchio: "As a large animal veterinarian for 20 years I have witnessed firsthand the instant death of calves after their spinal cords were severed from the abrupt stop at the end of a rope when traveling up to 30 mph. I have also witnessed and tended to calves that became paralyzed and whose tracheas were totally or partially severed. Slamming to the ground has caused rupture of several internal organs leading to a slow, agonizing death."

I'd like to add a comment to the student who inquired whether I care about other animal issues such as lab animal testing: The answer is yes, I'm concerned about all areas of animal exploitation and abuse, and I will continue to address those issues as well.

Marcia Andersen
secretary
Greater Nebraska Animal Welfare Society

DN's cult coverage exposes overlooked aspect of society

In response to Wendy Navratil's writing on cult activity (DN, Feb. 19).

It is very important for young and old people alike to be aware of the dangers of so-called Christian cult activities in the Lincoln area. Often folks are misled by the term Christian — one would assume if you're a Christian, you can't be a cultist.

This, though, is a false assumption. Many who are brought to Christian cults, and other cults, are searching and have often had a recent loss of a loved one or spouse, or other tragedy. These groups tend to fill a void brought by such a loss, often injuring families further. Great reporting, Wendy, on an often overlooked

subject.

James Johnson
Lincoln

Military requirements should not obstruct right to higher education

I would like to respond to the attitude expressed by the university officials in "Military means some drop classes" (DN, Feb. 14).

On the second day of this semester, I attended the first session of Criminal Justice 101 with Professor Chris Eskridge. His syllabus said that the midterm was on March 14. He explained, in the course of laying out his policies, that he only gave makeup exams to students who were "in the hospital or in jail." He said anyone who couldn't live with that should drop immediately.

After class I explained that I was in the Air Guard and that I was scheduled for participation in an active duty exercise called "Red Flag" from March 2 to March 16.

In the interest of graduating this spring with my GPA intact, I dropped the course.

Subsequently, I found out that within university policy and legal principle he is clearly within his rights to refuse me a makeup on these grounds.

It seems that military members make plenty of sacrifice as it is. When you add the fact that the only reason some of us can afford to attend the university is because of the educational benefits that the service offers, the attitude of the university is intolerable.

If the good professor had told anyone else that he or she couldn't be in his course because

he was black or homosexual or of a certain faith, the university and the DN would have been all over him like a bad smell.

At times like this in particular, it wouldn't hurt the university to be a little more understanding to the unique situations created by some of its students discharging their national duties. The right to an education should be a benefit of, not a sacrifice to, the wish to perform military service.

Scott Farber
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Sexism not just words, but subtle ingredient in modern U.S. culture

So, Ms. Julie Naughton chose her own continuation heading (DN, Feb. 25)? And because she is a woman the heading, "He Said," is therefore considered appropriate. Is that what you are trying to say? Among other things, what we need to question is why she thought that title was OK and why "She Said" was not chosen. Is it simply because "He Said" was the first half of the title? This would be a nice explanation but one that doesn't hold much water, I'm afraid. After all, who is to say that the first half is always the best half? The argument could go on forever, each side giving seemingly legitimate refutations. But that is not what I wanted or want. Instead, I wanted only for you (meaning the entire DN staff) to be more aware of the subtle sexism that is embedded within us all, female and male and just as importantly, to be more careful.

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