

Keep it at 16

Driver's license debate low on fuel

Sen. Doug Kristensen of Minden is attempting to steer some new requirements for driver's licenses through the Legislature.

LB336 would prohibit 16-year-olds from obtaining driver's licenses until they complete a driver's education course or turn 17. The bill won first-round approval on Tuesday.

Such a bill would mean that students lucky enough to attend a high school that picks up the tab for driver's ed classes would be able to drive off with their licenses without a problem. Other students, however, would be forced to pay the \$75 to \$125 cost of such a course.

Perhaps teenagers with some extra cash wouldn't mind, but many students would be stuck in park.

The small town of Chambers in northern Nebraska offers a driver's ed course. Students born in that lovely village have little to worry about. Thirty-five miles away in the similarly sized town of Stuart live the unlucky students who don't have access to such a course. It is pretty hard to drive over to Chambers for driver's ed if you can't drive.

Kristensen said that he didn't think driver's ed course access is a problem. Most school districts offer a program, he said, along with many community colleges.

"Most" and "many" still leave out "some." And that's assuming the "most" and "many" have "enough" money to take the course, which usually is expensive at high schools that do offer it.

Anyone who could pass a driver's test can get a "C" or better in any driver's ed course. Arguments making state driver's license tests tougher are more coherent than arguments for bills like LB336.

Teenage drivers are a problem on the highways and byways of Nebraska. They are unexperienced, and some are at times brash or reckless. But driving kids without money or who live in certain areas off the road is nothing less than discrimination.

—A.J.P.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Time to move on . . .

Photograph shouldn't be focus

From the amount of letters concerning the Baldwin photo that has been printed in the opinion section in the past few days, I think the Daily Nebraskan is experiencing the dramatic effect of photojournalism for the first time in my 2 1/2 years here. This is an experience welcomed by me. "A picture is worth a thousand words," goes the old saying. The response to Monday's photo proves that point beyond a shadow of a doubt.

There really is little question of printing a photo like that. Why? It tells the story more effectively than any article could. Perhaps it was "sensational." Most gripping news stories are. That picture was a grabber better than any headline. How many people even remember what the headline was?

Without this kind of "sensationalistic" photographic documentation of the news we wouldn't have known what was going on in Vietnam (remember the girl running naked from the soldiers?), or in the LAPD (remember the Rodney King beating?), or in NASA (remember the Challenger explosion?). Pictures have a way of showing what happened that mere words cannot. They show the truth. It is a lot harder to bias a photo-

graph than an article.

There aren't many things that happen in Lincoln that the Daily Nebraskan gets a chance to portray so visually and dramatically. That picture shows more effectively one tragic consequence of the extreme pressures we put on our football players. It shows a hero reduced to a man. It shows what happened. It shows the truth. If that picture hadn't have been run, few people would still be talking about the incident. Some would not have even known it happened.

In conclusion, I would like to point out that it is now time to stop talking about the picture and start talking about the story behind the picture. We need to look at why it happened, what are its consequences, and how it will affect those involved, not why the picture should or should not have been run. The important thing is not to let the impact of the picture overshadow the event. We could bicker about the picture for months. I've seen other issues trivialized by incessant point-counterpoint letters to the editor. Let's not have it happen with this one.

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broadcasting

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PAUL SOUNDERS

Bigger, by and large, is better

Where does a 400-pound gorilla sleep? Anywhere he wants to.

OK, so it sounds like the kind of joke Dad would tell at a family reunion, but it points to a pretty important issue (at least it's important to a 5-foot-6 runt like myself), which is, Really Big Guys (RBG's for short) can pretty much do anything they want.

Next time you're trudging from Readings in Hyposmotic Interactions (Biochemistry 879) to the Coffee House for a cup of lait, notice what happens when someone steps in front of you and you'll see what I mean.

If someone about your size rounds a corner ahead of you, you step to the right to walk around him/her, at the exact same time he/she steps in exactly the same direction for exactly the same reason. Each of you is operating under the same politeness principle: Get out of the way.

You repeat the whole futile exercise a few times, until one of you finally figures out that the way to beat the sticky scenario is just to stand still. You squeeze past each other, maybe muttering something clever like "thanks for the dance."

Or suppose some smallish person, a forgotten UNL bureaucrat on his/her quick way somewhere tremendously important, like maybe Dunkin Donuts, dodges out in front of you. The law of pragmatism dictates that someone that small in such a purposeful hurry will shoot to your left with a curt "scuseme."

But you know what happens if some Visigoth with one eye in the middle of his forehead gets in your way. No way is Bluto going to step aside for a 90-pound fluff of milque-toast like you. He'll steamroll you and not regret it.

He'll even look up your address just so he can come over and punch you in your silly face for even presuming to get in his way when he's obviously in such a big hurry to Children's Literature for Neanderthals (English 213Q).

I can hear the members of the Politically Correct Thought Patrol now as they read this column. The National Association of Really Large Guys With Big Hearts will team up with The American Union of Vegetarian Australopithecines to publicly



Ours is definitely a "bigger is better" sort of culture — bigger guns, bigger missiles, bigger porterhouse steaks.

denounce me and my size-biased article.

"Who does this Sounders pipsquack think he is?" they'd say. "Just because we're big doesn't mean we're stupid or violent. We have problems, too. Just you try to find size 24 1/2 shoes."

Don't get me wrong. Some of my best friends are RBG's, and I like being short (any shirt will fit after enough washings), but at times I envy the advantage really gargantuan people have in life.

Like standing in a long line, for instance. Someone my size must fall back on guile to worm through the crowd, like clutching the chest and panting, "Excuse me, tuberculosis victim . . . (Cough) . . . Nasty strep throat and lice, coming through."

But Hercules can just flex his pectorals and shove his way into the throng, and if he's really polite he'll grunt, "Move it or lose it," as he bursts his way forward, knuckles trailing along the ground.

The size itself, then, doesn't annoy us average-size mortals. It's the whole "I'm big and you're not" mentality. The kind of edge that RBG's have in pulling Del Monte Diced Pineapple off the top shelf at Hinky Dinky, in and of itself, isn't a particularly bothersome issue. The fact that some of them will use your vertebrate column for a stepladder is.

A person can blame society for the inflated prowess of RBG's. Ours is

definitely a "bigger is better" sort of culture — bigger guns, bigger missiles, bigger porterhouse steaks. This is something that is probably traceable back to European pioneer origins.

When the first Dutch settler hopped off the boat in New Amsterdam, having spent his whole life until this point in a country the size of a shopping mall parking lot, he was duly impressed with the enormity of the "wild" land. "That," he said, "is BIG."

Or Lewis and Clark, in their historic expedition, stepped off the canoe to gaze across a prairie black with bison. Going back home to the crowded East must've been a real disappointment for these guys. "You call that a cow?" they said, "let me tell you about COWS. Out west, they've got these bison things . . . now those are COWS."

Or take prairie settlers, trapped in a country with more sky than ground, where you can see a zillion miles and there's not a tree or farm in sight (if you've ever driven I-80 west past Grand Island, you know what I mean). These poor sods would write to the folks back in Pittsburgh, "I'm going nuts, Ma. Out here it's just so . . . big."

Nowadays, this rugged pioneer spirit has become almost a religion of size worship. We are obsessed with really big cars, really big dogs, really big houses, Really Big Guys. Look at the money some schools (you know which ones) pump into a sport whose primary goal seems to be finding the largest RBG's you can, lining them up, then throwing them at each other for four quarters.

Others will blame natural selection, the law of the jungle. The ability to pound the snot out of one's opponents was, and in some occasions still is, infinitely more useful than the ability to play really good chess. In humanity's early days, the RBG's could fend off sabertooth tigers and fell woolly mammoths, and they always got the girls, just like in Schwarzenegger movies.

Bigger really is better in a lot of evolutionary situations, like deserts, rain forests and college campuses, and don't you forget it, puny little girly man.

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LETTER POLICY

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