

No surprises

Bush's address full of pre-election hype

It's not hard to see that this is an election year. With his poll ratings slipping, President Bush mounted the State of the Union podium Tuesday night and told the taxpayers what they wanted to hear.

In a rather lively atmosphere full of hollering from the cheap seats, Bush spoke of cuts, breaks, budget slashing, reform here, reform there.

"We're going to lift this nation out of hard times," he said, and later vowed that the recession "will not stand."

Bush did have a few specifics ready — \$50 billion from the bloated Pentagon budget, an extra \$500-per-child tax break for middle-class parents and a plan to withhold less money from worker's paychecks, although it would lead to smaller refunds, were among the biggest applause-getters.

Vague, however, would be a good word to describe his ideas on health care system reform, the welfare system, the federal budget deficit, crime and the drug problem.

At least the speech didn't lack patriotism. Bush lauded the American taxpayers' resolve in fighting the Cold War, eloquently saying they deserved a "hunk" of the victory glory.

Bush warned, however, that America cannot let its guard down, and the military cuts outlined in this speech would be his last. Only the dead, Bush said, have seen an end to conflict.

America's responsibility is to lead the world, he said, because, among other red, white and blue reasons, "We are the United States of America."

Bush claimed the American people recognize gimmicks when they see them, although his State of the Union was patently political. But then, such is to be expected.

After all, in November, well under half of this country's voting-age population will go to the polls, where they are expected to re-elect the same leaders, both in the executive and legislative branches, who have valiantly led us into this mess.

Students careless crossers

It has been my misfortune to have to enter the area of 14th and Vine streets at about 9 each morning.

Many students are heading to class at this time and it clearly is car against student. Today my car almost won one of these meetings.

On each of the four corners of this intersection are "Walk" and "Don't Walk" signs. It amazes me that there are those students who either don't know how to read or are intent on thinking that they will win a battle with a car that in most cases outweighs them by many pounds.

Might I suggest that some of those

chancellors, whom I personally think are overpaid, take over as crossing guards during the busy hours in this intersection. First, they would be able to really get close to the students they say they care about, and secondly, they might be able to help those who have reached the college level and cannot read.

Closing this intersection is not the answer. Teaching these youths how to use a crosswalk is. Fix this problem, UNL.

Bil Roby
Lincoln

DN staff racist, unprofessional

Editors, reporters, writers and Editorial Board of the Daily Nebraskan, utilize the calendars on your desks and walls to ascertain that this is 1992 — not the 17th century with its institution of slavery. We, as a people, will no longer accept, nor be influenced by, self-serving, Eurocentric definitions of what is offensive or important to us. As a group, we are defining our needs, dislikes, problems and solutions. Your role is to listen and to take heed to what we are stating to you and to the world.

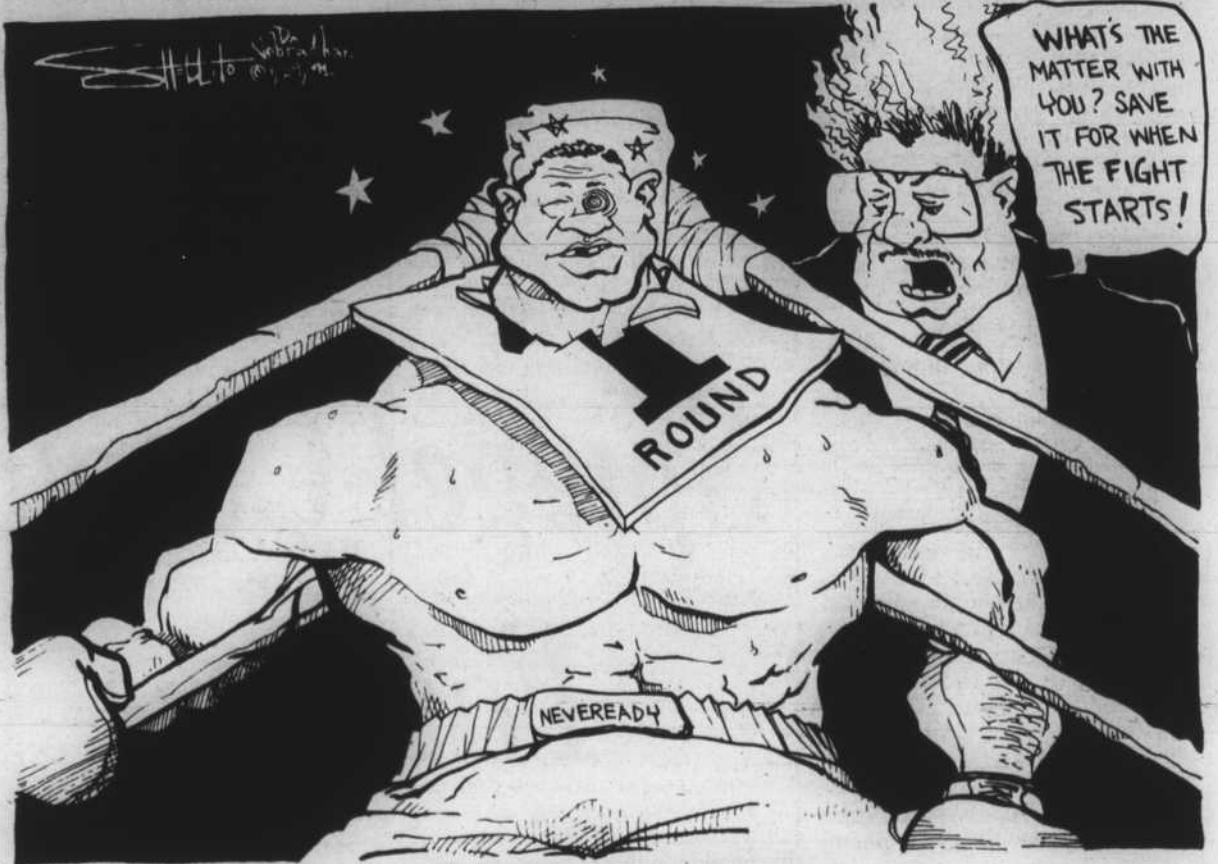
To begin, you have insulted our collective intelligence by attempting to drape yourself in the cloak of the First Amendment in order to escape responsibility for your racist, insensitive and irresponsible journalistic practices. There is no issue of censorship here! Sadly, you, as well as a majority of the public, are unable to grasp this concept. The issue is your refusal to acknowledge your current transgression against the African-American community. You exhibited a patent lack of sensitivity and an irresponsible nature by not first considering the consequences of your actions. Any semblance of professionalism you have possessed has been irreparably compromised. You have admitted publicly that you decided to print the Scott Baldwin photo without even attempting to ferret out any substantive information regarding the

incident you were ostensibly "reporting." This behavior is unconscionable. Your right to invoke any of the privileges accorded to legitimate journalists has been forfeited.

Further, you have demonstrated an obscene arrogance by taking the position that you do not owe an apology to the African-American and university communities and that you would follow the same course of action if you were faced with the same decision. You take this position notwithstanding the fact that it is our student fees that fund the operation of the Daily Nebraskan and, even more gravely, you take such a stand in the face of the growing tension and obvious concern that your handling of this matter has generated.

Your lack of remorse and the alarming indications that you have learned nothing from your actions as they relate to this incident mandates that the African-American community demand that you immediately withdraw from the decision-making process of the Daily Nebraskan, cease from referring to yourselves as journalists and to solicit from this community its input in order that meaningful changes can be instituted in your policies that impact our community.

Sherman Robertson
undeclared



KIRK ROSENBAUM

Newness missing in New West

Boone Helm was an outlaw who terrorized the Old West during the 1870s. Although a footnote in frontier history, Helm was remarkably savage and colorful. Reportedly he murdered his best friend in a dispute over a woman and wasn't above eating the flesh of his companions when the weather turned snowy and grim.

Eventually a vigilance committee caught up with Helm in Montana and sentenced him to hang. (Remember, this is before society got civilized and began injecting its criminals with poison instead.) A large crowd gathered to watch Helm "get his neck stretched" and listen to his last words. He gave them several, including "See you in hell," and "Let 'er rip!"

Probably, Helm wasn't one of President Grant's Thousand Points of Light. His kind was fairly common in the Old West, where thousands of shiftless desperados gravitated after the Civil War. They crawled across the mountains and through mining camps with an eye on profit and violence.

In the New West of the 1990s, not much has changed. It still teems with greedy profiteers pulling land swindles and cheap schemes. Gold camps have become tourist attractions in a sad attempt to recreate the past. If you're riding west these days, you no longer need a fast horse and a good rifle. You need a Gold Card and a minivan.

Nowhere is this more evident than in the Black Hills of South Dakota, which has become little more than a billboard forest. You can take home all the authentic frontier souvenirs you need, providing you don't mind them being manufactured in the Pacific Rim by people who make 15 cents an hour. Or buy some T-shirts. There are more crummy T-shirt shops in the Black Hills than in every Spring Break destination on the continent.

The jewel of the Black Hills is Deadwood. According to the Chamber of Commerce, it is now being restored to its frontier authenticity. Maybe they're right — all the streets have been ripped up and everything has been covered with a layer of grit. Every building in town that isn't a T-shirt shop has been converted into some type of low-rent casino. There



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is no escape.

A few hours in the Black Hills breeds a unique mentality. During a break from playing blackjack in a former International House of Pancakes, now called Diamond Jim's, I found myself staring out the window, nursing a complimentary watered-down bourbon.

To my horror, I watched a small child get struck down by the extra wide side mirrors of a passing station wagon, which was hauling a pop-up camper. The driver braked momentarily, then spotted a parking space and accelerated. The poor lad was nearly trampled by an indifferent mob of sun-maddened tourists.

They call this the New Gold Rush, but it bears little resemblance to its predecessor. The original gold rush attracted the seedy element of society — gamblers, prostitutes, bored veterans and thrill-seeking bankrupt farmers. This new gold rush attracts mostly dysfunctional families with two weeks to kill. There are still gamblers and prostitutes, but they're being played by Drama 101 students from the community college.

I know I shouldn't really expect the real Old West — bloody gunfights, drunken sheriffs, ugly mobs with Bibles and ropes. But this hollow commercialism is an embarrassment. Places with names like Black

Bart's Pizza by the Slice and Calamity Jane's Yogurt Barn just don't evoke historic images.

The bars try a bit harder, like the Red Garter Saloon. They display signs on the door that read "No Guns or Knives Allowed," but it's obvious their biggest worry is running out of sarsaparilla and pickle cards to sell the tourists.

Obviously, the New West is primarily a commercial experiment, in which swindlers abound. I met one while having dinner in Jackson, Wyo., last summer. He was sitting at a nearby table, trying to convince a large group of senior citizens to bankroll his latest venture. He looked exactly as Jim Morrison would look if alive today — fat and loud with an ill-fitting hairpiece.

"When I first came to Jackson Hole it was nothing," he yelled. "Now we turn the tourists away, and our media budget is huge. I made this town what it is now."

A remarkable feat, considering "what it is now" is a neon-covered strip mall full of Benetton stores.

Then he outlined the deal he was about to close with a group of Japanese mobsters over a half ton of antlers he had acquired. The Japanese, he said, ground the antlers up and used them as an aphrodisiac. They were flying in that evening to work out the details.

"The big thing is to close the deal," he explained. "I know a lodge up in the Tetons where I can take them to hammer out the terms but to do that I need some seed money." He laughed. "Hell, you'll quadruple your investment."

After a few minutes, he managed to gather about 70 bucks from various people in the room, along with their phone numbers. Then he stumbled out the door, stealing a handful of cigars off the counter. He got in an old Camaro and sped off down the highway, one headlight working.

He was no Boone Helm, but he was the closest thing the New West can offer. At least until the Japanese buy it all up.

Rosenbaum is a senior history major and Daily Nebraskan columnist.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Staff editorials represent the official policy of the Spring 1992 Daily Nebraskan. Policy is set by the Daily Nebraskan Editorial Board. Its members are: Jana Pedersen, editor; Alan Phelps, opinion page editor; Kara Wells, managing editor; Roger Price,

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