

SEAN GREEN

Olympics coverage needs help

I was supposed to be in Albertville, France, this week, covering the Winter Olympics for the Daily Nebraskan.

But numerous conflicts arose over the exact amount of my expense account, harsh words were exchanged and the project had to be scrapped.

There's no point in denying my disappointment.

I had big plans for Albertville, and although I can't go into detail, I will say they included Katarina Witt, a few bottles of wine and a ski lift.

Speaking of Witt (pronounced VIT), an evil combination of capitalism and New World Order has landed her a job as a color commentator for CBS.

I'm sure she's a very articulate, intelligent individual while speaking German, but her English leaves ein bischen to be desired.

Granted, figure skating has many intricacies that the common herd probably doesn't understand.

But during one segment, Witt said, "All of dat hard verk and tvaining would make me go vananas (bananas)."

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I doubt even CNN could have covered the Olympics any better. They might have been able to add to the drama of the events, though.

Peter Arnett would be hiding under a ski jump, claiming that SCUD missiles were passing overhead every few seconds and that Albertville was under attack.

Bernard Shaw would be in Olympic headquarters reporting rumors that the Swedish bobsled team had just bombed Israel.

And General Norman Schwarzkopf would make an appearance in the press room to show footage shot by a ski-mounted camera crashing into a snow fence.

While the Olympics may not have as much flashy technology and raw carnage as the Gulf War did, advertisers are doing their part to provide plenty of flag-waving hype.

Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union are now what advertisers call fair game, and the floodgates to capitalism are wide open.

One Coke commercial shows a Lithuanian athlete riding a train to the



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Olympics, or somewhere — Siberia, maybe — and saying in halting English how strange all this freedom is.

The message the advertisers give us from this kindly man is that although this poor athlete's world has crumbled and a civil war is looming in the former Soviet Union in the post-Olympic haze, there will always be a Coca-Cola for hard-working Americans at the end of the day.

Well, maybe that's not the commercial's point, exactly. I'm not sure. Advertisers are always trying to sell us what we don't need or want, so maybe Coke's trying to sell us former Soviet Olympians.

I feel a certain sympathy for the ex-Soviet athletes. If they win a gold medal, they must stand on the podium and listen to the Olympic theme, since Hail Russia (or whatever it was called), is no longer on the charts, so to speak.

Imagine the insult of having to listen to the Olympic theme and be reminded, in front of millions of giddy Westerners, that your country fell apart at the dogma.

CBS would have us believe that the world is made up of peace-loving athletes, and I'm all for peace and loving athletes.

But I also have seen the faces of the Unified Team athletes when they get their medals and listen to that

stupid Olympic anthem.

They seem to be enduring it, as if to say, "Just wait 'til we get our act together, you Western dogs, and come back in the summer with a national anthem that'll blow your loudspeakers off the stands and send your women and children running into the hills."

Then again, maybe they're just thinking about how glad they are to have won medals and to be a part of President Bush's New World Order in a harmonic and peaceful Olympics.

If the Russians are getting tired of listening to the Olympic anthem, the Americans certainly aren't getting tired of hearing their fight song.

True, winning isn't everything, but if you melted down all the medals the United States has won so far, you wouldn't be able to make a paper clip.

The hockey team is doing well, bringing back memories of the great upset of Team U.S.S.R. in 1980.

Just watching clips of that event and hearing the accompanying commentary can cause goosebumps. That hockey game was much more exciting than the Gulf War and only cost about half as much money to arrange.

When American athletes don't win the big game or take the gold medal, it's kind of disappointing, especially when they blame their loss on the weather.

Even more disappointing is when the commentators point out that an athlete has dedicated his or her whole life to a two-minute event, and moments later that athlete falls on his or her butt and limps off the playing field in ruin.

But that element of danger at the expense of the athlete is what makes the Olympics so exciting, and after wading through all the hype that CBS shovels, a few moments are worth seeing.

When it's all over in Albertville, everyone will look to Barcelona, Spain, where the Summer Olympics are scheduled to take place.

But rather than hope the Daily Nebraskan will send me to Barcelona, I'm taking a different approach this time.

I'm going to brush up on my Russian accent, learn how to throw a javelin and invest in Coca-Cola.

Green is a senior news-editorial major, a Daily Nebraskan senior reporter and a columnist.

Foreign language studies indispensable

What do you call someone who can speak three languages? Trilingual. What do you call someone who can speak two languages? Bilingual. What do you call someone who can speak only one language? An American. In response to R. Bruce Kitchen's letter ("Language study needs changes," DN, Feb. 12), it would seem that he wants to perpetuate that stereotype. Contrary to R.B.'s ignorant insight, the world is not adopting English as a second language. True, English is widely spoken in much of Europe, but that is attributed more to their excellent teaching systems. Although many children in foreign countries are taught English in school, it doesn't necessarily follow the argument that the country has "adopted" anything.

R.B.'s argument that science majors should be able to waive the language requirement is about the same argument any non-science major could use for any science classes I have been required to take. I really see no need for myself to take calculus, physics, astronomy or geology other than to make myself a formidable opponent when going for the green wedgie in Trivial Pursuit. I haven't knowingly used any chemistry or biology in either of my majors or in normal life. (But I do know that the periodic chart symbol for the element potassium is K and not P and I do know where the sex organs are located on an earthworm.)

We can draw out R.B.'s argument

even further: Since it is pointless to distract all of us from our major areas of study, why should we even have the option of "taking a slew of humanities?" Why should we take anything beyond that which we need to perform the very basics of some ultra-specialized profession? Perhaps philosophy should be left to the philosophers, literature to the future novelists and minority studies left to the minorities. I certainly don't need a "Big Brother" telling a WASP like me that I need to be educated in minority and race relations. Haven't I been educated enough about minorities just by living in Lincoln (you can actually smell the sarcasm)? Hopefully, we become "educated" and more tolerant when our studies have included a broad range of subjects. Ignorance arises when our need for learning has stopped.

The idea behind language studies isn't only to learn a language. Learning a language also means learning about the cultures that developed and use it. For instance, in order to gain a grasp of German, one needs to know how Germans interact, how their society and culture is structured; essentially, their "mindset." One can never escape studying a culture without also studying its language and vice versa. If someone is armed with this understanding of both the language and culture, he/she will be an integral part of any group's, company's or institution's interest in that country. Yes, even American astro-

physicists collaborate with colleagues in other countries.

The progressive push of communication technology has made the world smaller in comparison with a decade ago. The need for language abilities in public, private and government sectors has never been greater. The hiring rate of students with strong language backgrounds will increase substantially over those without — even with those with much stronger credentials in non-language areas. The point of the matter is that companies can train an employee to perform most jobs in a relatively short and inexpensive time frame, but to train someone in a foreign language is simply too laborious. (You can forget trying to learn on your own from the Berlitz jiffy phrasebook, too. The Defense Language Institute — utilizing some of the most advanced training methods — takes approximately one year of 10- to 12-hour days to reach a respectable level of proficiency.)

Frankly, by requiring students to take a foreign language, I think universities are doing them a favor. As for language requirements making "a travesty to grade point averages," I suggest you stop wasting time whining and writing letters and get your butt in the library.

Luke Schollmeyer
senior
Russian and German

LETTER POLICY

Anonymous submissions will not be considered for publication. Letters should include the author's name, year in school, major and group affiliation, if any. Requests to withhold names will not be granted.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

African history not sinful

I am writing in response to Greg Parizek's disgusting piece ("Souljah, KKK similar in racist attitudes," DN, Feb. 12) in which he suggestively questioned, "Would Sister Souljah have us believe that the history of Africa is without sin?"

I am led to believe that Greg Parizek's mind-set portrays others' history as sinful but blinds him in seeing his own history that apparently is without sin.

I was sickened by his suggestive reference of African history as

sinful. One can only hope that Greg Parizek was just recovering from a spell of mid-week drunkenness when he made such a suggestive reference to a history that is otherwise full of richness.

I would hope that Greg Parizek would put his brain in proper gear the next time he dares make such an arrogant remark.

Mazi Chukwuma Uche
graduate student
chemistry

Languages erode prejudice

In response to the letter, "Language study needs changes," DN, Feb. 12, I disagree with Kitchen's statement that Americans should not have to learn a foreign language. This ignorance is one of the main reasons that Europe and Japan are quickly surpassing us in our educational system. In Europe alone, a graduating senior from high school is fluent in English and at least one other language.

Kitchen admitted that he has no use for learning a foreign language; obviously you have never set foot outside of Nebraska. Try spending a week in Miami where a large proportion of the city speaks primarily Spanish. Actually, you could even spend some time in as near a city as South Omaha to find this

same situation. Kitchen also expressed that studying a language is all "strange conjugates and verbs." Learning and speaking a foreign language fluently involves studying the entire culture, and if more Americans did we would eliminate the prejudices we have for those different from us. I feel a solution to the problem is not to have foreign language an option, but a requirement starting when we are in grade school.

In closing, I'd like to know one thing: If Kitchen hates foreign languages that much, why did he not take one in high school so he could test out of it in college?

Heidi Mahloch
junior
German and English

NATIONAL CONDOM WEEK

FEBRUARY 14-21, 1992

Sponsored by the University Health Center Student Advisory Board

*** INTERACTIVE PRESENTATIONS ***

Tuesday, February 18

7:00-8:00 p.m. "Intimate Activity Risk and Protection"
Nebraska Student Union Nancy Farrell, CTRPN
(Room will be posted) Nebraska State Health Department

Ms. Ferrall will discuss protection against sexually transmitted diseases beginning with abstinence and intimate activities that carry no risk of infection. Discussion will progress through activities that carry increasing risk with emphasis on protection. Discussion will include audience participation.

8:00-9:00 p.m. "STDs Among Us: Skills for Communication and Condom Use"
Nebraska Student Union Lisa Dye and Ann Schlichting
(Room will be posted) UNL Peer Sexuality Educators

Ms. Dye and Ms. Schlichting, trained and experienced peer educators, will present facts about STDs in the campus environment. Skills of using condom properly and communicating with a partner about condom use will be presented.

UNL is a non-discriminatory institution

DIRT CHEAP PRESENTS



POSTER SALE

FEATURING:

Miles Davis, Amy Grant, Janes Addiction, Bob Marley, U2, Depeche Mode, Iron Maiden, La's, Chili Peppers, Malcom X, Misfits, Randy Travis, Coltraine, Pixies, Costello, Hendrix, Zeppelin, Doors, Ice Cube, KD Lang, Billie Holliday, Prince, Einstein, Metallica, Janet Jackson, Bowie, Madonna, Bauhaus, NWA, Cure, Pink Floyd, Sinead O'Connor, Alabama, REM, Robert Johnson, Jesus Jones, Nirvana, 9-inch Nails, AND MANY MORE!

Monday-Friday February 17-21 Main Lounge
9am-5pm of the Union