

BRIAN ALLEN

Tabloids untapped news source

As a newspaper columnist, I'm expected to keep myself relatively informed on current events. This means reading a great deal, not only enjoyable material like my monthly issues of *Guns & Ammo* and *Mad Magazine*, but actual hard-core, long and sometimes boring daily newspaper stories.

I even read the articles in my Playboy. Honest.

I read publications cover to cover — every story, every caption, every advertisement. I read books by the stack, magazines by the dozen, newspapers by the ton, forms, brochures, pamphlets and leaflets. I read about things I find fascinating, and I read about things I really don't much care about, such as articles on Hillary Clinton's scope of control over her husband and reports on Bush's thyroid problems.

In short, I considered myself to be one of the most well-informed people on campus, a veritable plethora of pertinent information, a regular cornucopia of impressive knowledge.

That is I "considered" — past tense. I recently discovered how little I actually know, how backward and out of touch with the world I actually am.

Unbeknownst to me, there was a world of information and facts that I was totally missing out on, two exclusive publications that, when taken together, carry the really big and important stories — stories the little newspapers such as *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* are afraid to take on.

I'm talking about the *Sun* and the *Weekly World News*. I bought copies of these papers recently and was amazed at the incredible news they contained.

While *The Omaha World-Herald* and *The Lincoln Star* were running stories on semi-important issues such as the presidential campaign and the economy, these papers were warning the public about potential devastating dangers — such as giant 8-foot killer bees — and boons to mankind — such as the space alien who is going to teach us how to live to be 500 years old.

So in an effort to keep my fellow students, who have not yet discovered these incredible news sources, informed on the really important issues of the world, I'm taking a break from my normal subject matter to fill everyone in on the big stories:

Captured Alien — According to a



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highly placed CIA source, fighter planes from the aircraft carrier U.S.S. *Nimitz* intercepted a 150-foot saucer-shaped craft and escorted it onto the deck of the carrier. The alien from the planet Elnar in the Andromeda system was captured and, despite looking like a 3- or 4-year-old child, is actually 500 years old.

The alien has an I.Q. of 400 and speaks every language and dialect on Earth. Despite being kept prisoner, it is being quite cooperative and is talking freely with CIA agents and President George Bush, who expect the alien to provide mankind with the technology to make our own interstellar flight. The alien also is expected to help us find the keys to perfect health and the secrets of living to the age of 500 and beyond.

It is rumored that the alien's ship has been transferred to Cape Canaveral for further study.

Eight-Foot Killer Bees — A swarm of giant honeybees is heading north from somewhere near the Mexican border. The bees came from the Russian countryside near the site of the Chernobyl nuclear reactor and were imported onto this continent by a group of wealthy Americans looking for something more exciting than pheasants and ducks to hunt.

Unfortunately, the bees escaped before the hunters were ready and are now terrorizing the countryside.

Some experts believe the bees are sterile and soon will perish on their own, but the government is taking no chances and has hired a small army of crack shots and bounty hunters to track down and kill the mutated

monsters.

Experts are trying to track down the hive to use an airdrop of high-power insecticide to take care of the bees but have so far been unsuccessful.

Satan Escapes From Hell — Satan recently escaped from Hell after a team of high-tech oil well drillers went just a little too deep. The drillers could hear the Devil coming up the well but were unable to cap off the shaft before the Evil One escaped in an impressive explosion of burning oil.

No one seems to know exactly why Satan chose this particular time and route to come up from Hell or why he had to use a well shaft instead of just passing through the rock or coming up through a volcano.

Saddam's Birthday Gift — An Iraqi computer virus set to go off on April 19, Saddam Hussein's birthday, will leave America bankrupt and defenseless if it cannot be stopped in time, government computer specialists say.

The virus was created by a group of Iraqis trained and led by a Russian defector and will shut down the computer systems used by the IRS, Social Security Administration and the Department of Defense — effectively ruining our economy and armed forces. Experts still haven't found the virus. Our only hope may be that the Iraqis screwed up and did not use the virus correctly.

Castro Swipes Saddam's Gay Lover — A former Fidel Castro confidant reports that Castro is beside himself with pride after successfully wooing away Saddam Hussein's lover.

Fidel is reported to be bragging to friends about how he stole his new lover from fellow dictator Hussein. Fidel is even said to be talking of marriage to his new friend, but sources close to the Cuban say they are not sure if he is really in love or just liked the idea of beating out the Iraqi ruler.

And these stories are just a small taste of the many important and interesting items found in these papers. I thought I was informed before, but I found out I was missing out. No more *World-Herald* or *Newsweek* for me. From now on I'm not going to waste my time on the unimportant stuff.

For me, it's straight to the check-out line of the supermarket where the real news sources are.

Allen is a senior mechanical engineering major and a *Daily Nebraskan* columnist.

Students make presence felt

I would like to thank all of the members of the university community who helped design, promote and testify on behalf of the safety and parking proposal put forth by ASUN and the Faculty Senate. It was their hard work and determination that made our ideas successful.

I would also like to thank Chancellor Spanier for his quick action to involve the entire university in the process to improve safety on this campus. Dr. Spanier realizes that in order for this campus to be successful, we must work together to solve our problems. It is nice to see our top administrators provide fast and positive leadership on such an important issue.

Finally, I want to say to the students on this campus that stu-

dent government can be effective if we work together. This safety and parking issue is a prime example. We have such a powerful voice, but unfortunately, we rarely use it. I challenge the student body to stand up and make their presence felt. Do not stand by passively by while other people make decisions about your life and your future. Our country was built on this principle, and it is our generation that will make this campus, and this world, a better place. Student government (ASUN) is one place where you can make a difference.

Andrew Sigerson
junior
economics and political science
ASUN president

Animal, smoker rights don't mix

In response to Fran Thompson's letter ("Clean air act picks on minority," DN, April 13), I would like to point out some particularly compelling reasons to Fran why smokers should clean up or pay up. The obvious reason is that smoking is damaging to the environment, which we people share with animals. Not only is the smoke in itself damaging, but carelessly tossed butts have caused countless forest and grass fires, resulting in the loss of wildlife populations and habitat.

That isn't the worst. You, Fran, may not want to argue the results of studies of second-hand smoke and the health dangers of cigarettes in general, but I suggest you consider where and on what these studies are performed. Yes, ma'am, cigarette companies do animal testing. An awful lot of those little critters die that you may maintain your right to smoke.

Fran, you have written many letters to the DN regarding animal rights, and although sometimes I thought your arguments were ill-considered, I admired you for the courage of your convictions. However, it is now apparent that your convictions aren't very carefully thought out and not only have you undermined your own credibility but you also damage the causes you fight for by coming off as an ignorant crackpot. I fail to understand your reasoning that you would blast one minority for killing animals (hunters) and in the next breath attempt to defend the right of another minority to kill animals (smokers). You have revealed yourself for the frustrated misanthrope you really are. Please keep your moral imperatives to yourself and kindly shut up.

Lauri Morris
senior
art

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Clean environment act deserves support

I am writing to encourage all students, faculty and administrators in the in the University of Nebraska system to attend the ASUN meeting this coming Wednesday. At this week's meeting a bill will be debated and voted on which would encourage the University Board of Regents not to support the Clean Environment Committee's petition drive to place the Nebraska Clean Environment Act on the November general election ballot.

The Nebraska Clean Environment Act was truly designed to benefit the University of Nebraska and its students, as well as the environment. Through a tax of 25 cents placed on cigarette packs, the Nebraska Clean Environment Act would devote \$33 million to tree-planting programs, recycling programs, stop-smoking programs and cancer research at the University of Nebraska. If passed, the university could receive up to \$6.6 million for cancer research programs.

The fact that this proposal will help to clean our environment, recycle, reuse and reduce our waste and decrease the number of teenagers smoking should be reason enough for ASUN and the Board of Regents to support this measure. But on top of all that, the Nebraska Clean Environment Act could pump another \$6.6 million into the university system. This \$6.6 million would be used for programs designed to prevent and cure cancer — indeed a worthy ven-

ture.

Why are ASUN President Sigerson and others concerned about this proposal? They fear that an increase in the cigarette tax will decrease the amount of money for future construction projects at the university. Let's examine the facts: The concern is that future projects may be harmed, not present ones. The Nebraska Clean Environment Act is "sunsetting" and will end in the year 2000 at which time the tax is discontinued. So, there will be room for more taxes for construction projects in the year 2000.

Secondly, as was mentioned in the article in Friday's *Daily Nebraskan*, demand for cigarettes tends to be inelastic, which means that even if the tax goes up, consumption will remain fairly consistent. Thirdly, the percentage of tax on a package of cigarettes was over 50 percent in 1955 and has decreased to under 30 percent in 1992 — so there is room for more tax.

Finally, it should be noted that this does not prevent the university from starting new projects even if there is less revenue. Because university construction projects are done on a cost-per-project basis, it may just take a little longer to fully finance and complete new projects. This seems to be a minor inconvenience in order to protect our environment, recycle our waste and find cures for cancer.

When the facts are examined, it becomes evident that the fear that the

university would lose money is a slight one at best. Plus, it will be getting benefits through \$6.6 million for cancer research and a healthier and cleaner environment for its students to live in. This is a proposal that is good for the university and is definitely good for its present and future generations of students.

In conclusion, I feel it is important to mention that a number of groups and individuals who are concerned about the future of education in Nebraska are a part of our coalition. The Nebraska State Teachers Association, which represents 22,000 teachers statewide, has endorsed this proposal and is helping us circulate petitions. Prominent politicians in the state who also are concerned about the future of education in Nebraska have signed on to this effort including Lt. Gov. Maxine Moul, Lincoln Mayor Mike Johanns, Sen. Dave Landis (who represents the district in which the university is located) and Dr. Jerry Schenken, who is a board member of the American Medical Association.

I hope that all who are interested in this project will attend the ASUN meeting on Wednesday night. Democracy truly works best when individuals get involved. And that is what our petition drive is designed to do.

Brian Mikkelsen
statewide coordinator
Clean Environment Committee

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