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EDITORIAL

Top colleges

Survey shows UNL education a bargain

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln is finally on top. Well, at least in the top 101 when it comes to ranking the best values of U.S. universities.

UNL was included in the book, "101 Best Values in America's Colleges and Universities," which was published by the Center for College Enrollment and Tuition Issues in Bridgewater, Mass.

The center, which also publishes a newsletter for high school guidance counselors nationwide, compiles the book annually.

This is the first time UNL has been included in the report.

UNL's name in positive ink will definitely help the campus's image when high school seniors thumb through the book in search of a college that will suit their needs.

But it wasn't all that long ago when UNL didn't fare as well in another national survey.

In September, UNL was included in a U.S. News & World Report entitled "America's Best Colleges." In that report, UNL was placed in the third quartile, somewhere between 103 and 153 out of the country's 204 "national universities."

UNL had been ranked in that quartile for the past few years.

There seems to be some discrepancy between the two sets of results. Together they seem to say that an education at UNL is good enough for as cheap as it is. What a bargain.

But high school students and others looking for a university to call home should not take results of such surveys at face value.

Look into the criteria that were used in judging the schools. Check into the number of universities polled. Study the credibility of the survey.

Then let the numbers be a guide in decision-making.

Nuclear threat

President's 'football' should be shelved

For years, the president has carried some sort of immediate connection to the controls of the U.S. nuclear arsenal.

Since the Eisenhower administration, the bag that contains the controls has been known as the "football." In 1977, it was a black leather attache case with a telephone and two pull-up antennae.

It's time for the football to be put in the trophy case. The president no longer needs to have his finger on the button at all times.

Brook Blair, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institute and a former launch officer in a Minuteman II missile command silo, agrees.

Blair is writing a book on the problems of nuclear war planning and also traces the past of the football, a history even Blair says should end.

"With the end of the Cold War," Blair said in a Newsday story, "a case could be made for reducing the alert status of nuclear weapons and, thus, the need for the president to have constant access to them."

Some people fear that such a move would be the first step toward isolationism, an international stance that hurt the United States in the past.

But their worries are unnecessary. The Cold War is over. The threat of nuclear attack is almost nonexistent.

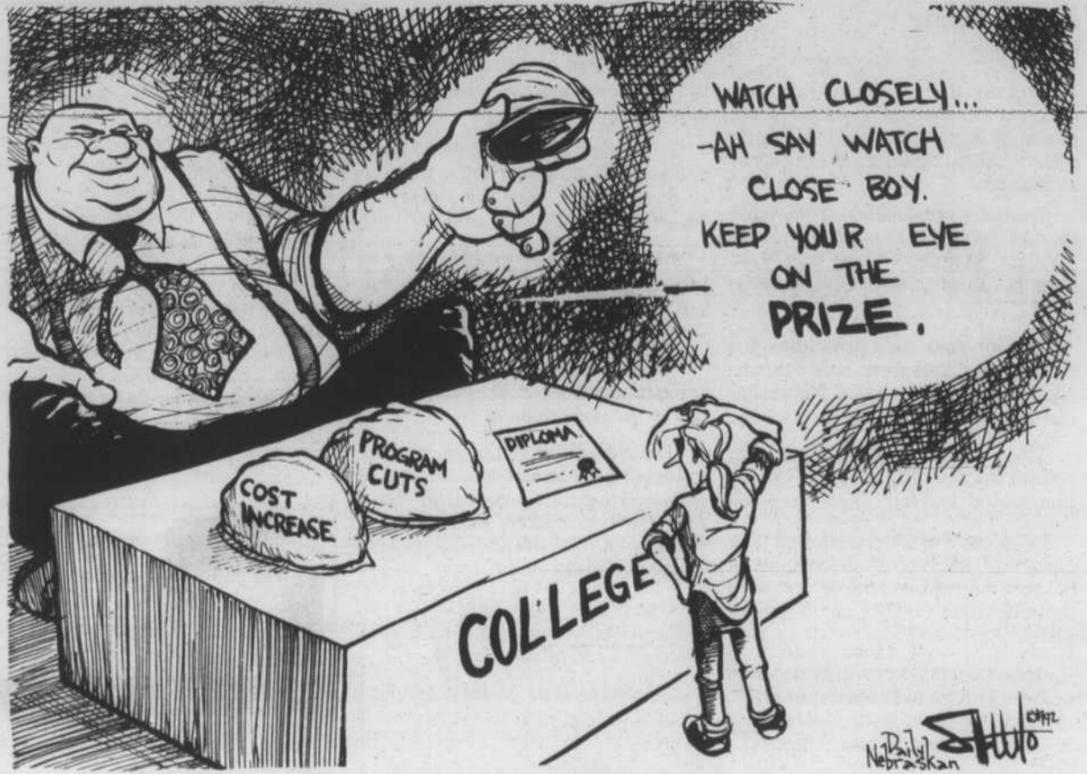
Dropping the ball and reducing the alert status of nuclear weapons now would display a commitment to completely ending the nuclear threat. It would not put the United States at risk.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Staff editorials represent the official policy of the Fall 1992 Daily Nebraskan. Policy is set by the Daily Nebraskan Editorial Board. Editorials do not necessarily reflect the views of the university, its employees, the students or the NU Board of Regents. Editorial columns represent the opinion of the author. The regents publish the Daily Nebraskan. They establish the UNL Publications Board to supervise the daily production of the paper. According to policy set by the regents, responsibility for the editorial content of the newspaper lies solely in the hands of its students.

LETTER POLICY

The Daily Nebraskan welcomes brief letters to the editor from all readers and interested others. Letters will be selected for publication on the basis of clarity, originality, timeliness and space available. The Daily Nebraskan retains the right to edit or reject all material submitted. Readers also are welcome to submit material as guest opinions. The editor decides whether material should run as a guest opinion. Letters and guest opinions sent to the newspaper become the property of the Daily Nebraskan and cannot be returned. Anonymous submissions will not be published. 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.



KIRBY MOSS

Malcolm's X more than a logo

A friend and I were rappin' the other day about X. Specifically, the wearing of X on hats and T-shirts and the like.

At issue was whether people should wear the X and not be aware of for who or what Malcolm X represented.

My friend's response was this, "It doesn't matter what people do or don't know about Malcolm."

Interesting how we refer to him by his first name only, as though somehow we all know him personally. It's not hip to say Malcolm X, simply Malcolm.

"We have the right to wear the X," my friend said. "White people don't because the X stands against them and the things they believe."

This is where our circular debate began.

To wear the X, I said, and not know who the man was or more importantly what he stood for was an affront and sent an empty message.

After all, why do people wear an X or "Save the Planet" shirts? Because, ideally, they want to show others and themselves where they stand; that they are connected with the message behind the slogan or symbol.

But my friend said the dynamics behind the symbol didn't matter.

"The X is a sign of our blackness, our heritage. It's a positive symbol that represents a positive black man who spoke out against an unjust society. And when people wear it, they are carrying on that positive message."

Again, I disagreed. The broad theme behind Malcolm's message was self-respect and Black pride.

So, I find it ironic when I see a brotha wearing an X hat in a rap video and throughout his ode to Malcolm are metaphors of raping black women or casually referring to them as "bitches and hos."

Or another irony shows a brotha beating another brotha down because he disrespected him by looking at him wrong.

And what about when the X stands prominently on the back of a young brotha who glares down at another brotha who he just eliminated, shot down as easily as he would a pop can on a tree stump.

Are these realities of self-respect

and Black pride?

So what, my friend says. "They still have the right to wear the X."

As an indifferent piece of clothing, yeah. Anyone can wear it.

But it's not the hat or the shirt or the X that carries significance and expression. It's the spirit of the action embodied in the X. The pride and courage behind what Malcolm spoke out about.

Therefore, I concluded to my friend that a person who wears the X and has no idea what it means is as inanimate as the hat on his or her head.

That pisses him off because he thinks I'm selling out black folks. I tell him that black folks who wear the X blindly or as a fad are selling out themselves.

Throughout our conversation, I realized that it was almost impossible for my friend to admit that some of the fault that lies at the root of the state of black people in this country rests within ourselves.

Needless to say, neither one of us convinced the other. But at least we rapped about our different opinions.

A day or so after our conversation, I happened upon a conversation some brothas were into. One of the dudes who had on an X hat, shirt and Malcolm button, assuredly said it was inevi-

table that Malcolm was killed because he was too powerful.

"Malcolm was deep. Anytime white folks see a black man getting too powerful they find a way to kill him," implying that a white man shot Malcolm.

I looked at his hat and walked away, wanting to say something, but reticent. Maybe I was wrong. But for him to wear that garb and not know the shameful twist of fate that ended Malcolm's life is...

Suddenly, it seems, Malcolm is a folk hero to an angry, empathetic generation; a resurrected leader, assassinated in New York City 27 years ago, with a radical-for-the-times message that was nearly lost to history until 1990, the 25th anniversary of his death.

Angry and frustrated black folk reached into history for a reference of empowerment, seeking a leader who espoused all that they were feeling at the moment.

I am not intending to write a movie review about Spike Lee's new movie. I haven't seen it yet.

Rather, this is a commentary on the message and merchandising surrounding the legacy of Malcolm.

Lee's movie and all the EXTRAordinary hype transforms Malcolm into a EXTRAordinary being, robbing us of the capacity to speak out critically like he did about racial injustice, apathy and the tender subject of black self-respect.

Malcolm, by his own standards, was just a man fed up with a society that dismissed him simply because his skin was black.

He was angry, not radical. He was courageous, not all-powerful. He respected himself and his blackness and vehemently sought that same respect from society for all black folk.

The rediscovery of Malcolm, whatever the form, is wonderful because it forces a lot of black people to revise their way of thinking and question their lot in America.

But, if you're not down with Malcolm's knowledge, then an X on your hat is fake. Wear him in your mind. Wear him in your heart.

X by itself is meaningless. It's nothing but the 24th letter in the alphabet. The "real X" stood for and meant much, much more than that.



David Badders/DN

Moss is a graduate student in anthropology and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.