

Town meetings offer outlet for student expression

In an effort to encourage speaking in freshman English courses, then Chancellor Martin Massengale assembled a task force committee to find ways to achieve this goal.

Committee members included people from the agricultural speech communication, English and business English departments, said Gerry Brookes, vice chairman of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's English Department, and co-director of the Nebraska Writing Project and of the Nebraska Literacy Project. Brookes also sat in on the committee.

Brookes said Nebraska students weren't used to stating their point

of views publicly. In an effort to give students the opportunity to say what was on their minds without being attacked and increase speaking skills, Brookes thought town meetings were the answer.

Brookes, who has written an essay on town meetings in a journal called "College Composition and Communication," said through town meetings students would be able to talk about whatever was on their minds. And through organized responses, face to face encounters could be prevented.

Joy Ritchie, assistant professor in English, incorporated town meetings in her English composition 354



Robin Trimarchi/DN

English professors Gerry Brookes and Joy Ritchie have both implemented town meetings in their classrooms.

course last semester, and her English Rhetoric 376 course this semester.

As a student in both courses, I was very happy to be able to stand up in front of a class, with all eyes and attention on me, and talk about what I felt to be important. Town meetings enable students to find out more about one another and may answer questions that many students have.

In Ritchie's class, students volunteered to write responses on the

topic that another student talked about in his or her town meeting, and the response was presented at our next class meeting.

We were given a time limit to respond to a student's town meeting, and although the town meetings sometimes became heated, I don't think students felt like they were being attacked.

Maybe all English courses should have town meetings. Actually, the town meetings do not necessarily have to be confined to English

courses.

Through the town meetings, we students are able to practice our speaking, writing and listening skills — our communication skills. We are even able to see how well we could persuade each other to sides of a view.

I had never taken part in a 'town meeting' before. But I am glad that I had the opportunity to.

Kimberly Spurlock is a junior broadcasting, news-editorial and English major, a Daily Nebraskan copy editor and Diversions editor.

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Tundra comic books worth reading

A few years ago Kevin Eastman, co-creator of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, gave something back to the field that had made him a millionaire. That something is Tundra publishing, a company dedicated to publishing innovative and cutting-edge comic books that otherwise would never have seen the light of day. All of Tundra's books are worth reading—considering you can find them—but two of the more recent books really stand out. One is "Skin" and the other is "White Trash".

"Skin" is a one-shot graphic album written by Peter Milligan with full-color art by Brendan McCarthy and Carol Swain. A whirlwind of controversy has surrounded "Skin" ever since it was conceived some years ago for publication in Fleetway Publications' "Crisis". After Fleetway's printer refused to print the story, Fleetway's lawyers advised them to drop the book. Which they did.

Why all the controversy? Simple. "Skin" deals with the story of Martin Atchitson, a skin-head in '70s England. He is also a Thalidomide victim. Thalidomide was a drug used as a sedative, which was supposedly completely safe for preg-

nant women. It wasn't. As a side-effect of the drug, babies were born without eyes, ears, a brain and limbs, or shortened arms and legs.

What makes "Skin" so gripping is that Martin, whose hands are attached directly to his shoulders, is one angry young man. He does not accept his condition and does not help make the world a better place. Instead, he embarks on a journey of destruction. The book ends with Martin chopping the arms off of the chairman of the chemical company that made Thalidomide, and then tying the arms to his body and leaping to his death. "Skin" does not whitewash the pain and suffering that Thalidomide caused hundreds of people. Instead, it grabs your head and slams it right into the brutal reality of the story. "Skin" is well worth the cover price and your time.

"White Trash" is a three-part series written by Gordon Rennie with fully-painted art by Martin Emond. "White Trash" chronicles the journey of The King, who looks an awful lot like a certain rock-and-roller who recently got his own stamp and Dean, who looks exactly like Axl Rose.

The King and Dean basically travel across the U.S. raping, pillaging and causing great amounts of destruction along the way. They are being pursued by the F.B.I., a couple of scumbags from somewhere down South. The big showdown between all parties in question will come in Las Vegas, where The King is scheduled to play a gig.

Violence, sexism, racism, homophobia, and every other -ism or -phobia is abundant in this book. But it all serves a point. The mayhem and carnage that grace every page of this book all seem to show just how far down the toilet America has gone. Basically it's a "Thelma and Louise" with a heavy-metal soundtrack.

Emond's artwork for this book is simply awesome. The detail he puts into every page is unbelievable, and the dialogue is hilarious. The first two issues of "White Trash" have already been released, and the third issue should be on sale in the near future. This series is well worth picking up, but don't take it too seriously. It only shows our problems, not the solutions to them.

William J. Harms is an Arts and Entertainment reporter for the Daily Nebraskan and a Diversions contributor.