

MICHELLE PAULMAN

# Silly ado replacing real news

Watch out, world. The First Daughter is a teen-ager. Chelsea Clinton turned 13 on Saturday, and the Associated Press was there to cover the gory details.



According to the story, the presidential pubescent and some friends wanted to see the new Christian Slater movie. Also, "a big bunch of helium balloons and several brightly wrapped presents were spotted arriving at the White House," the report said.

Because the Clintons would like to keep their daughter out of the lime-light, no other details of the birthday were available, leaving many readers burning to know more.

This reader has just one question: Who gives a horse's patootie?

How much do we really need to know about the president's average, all-American daughter? Or his cat?

Perhaps you recall the hoop-dee-do over the First Cat. A horde of photographers descended on the unsuspecting Socks when it wandered outside the front gates of the Clintons' Little Rock home. Pictures of the cat surrounded by cameras went nationwide, causing amusement and outrage throughout the land.

And again I wondered: Who gives a horse's patootie?

Someone must. The media wouldn't waste valuable time and energy just so everyone can say, "Who gives a horse's patootie?"

Being a journalist, I'm an avid follower of media antics. I've seen a lot of stories, some better than others.

At the top of the heap is "hard news," those fast-breaking stories where people die, things crash, buildings fall over, or the earth is knocked out of orbit by Lex Luther's giant ray gun.

Below that are "dumb stories," also known as "human interest." These mushy pieces tell how people die and will never again see the Yankees play; things crash because someone told the driver to "take this bus to Havana" and he valiantly tried to wrestle the gun away from the hijacker; buildings fall over on pensioned senior citizens; or the earth is knocked out of orbit,

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Lois is in the way, and Clark's zipper is stuck.

Then there are items that make me ask myself, the stuttering KRNU DJ or dead-looking Dan Rather: "Who gives a horse's patootie?" This is news so irrelevant and stupid, you wonder how you lived without it.

The Associated Press is the grand high poobah of patootie. Just look at what I've found:

Researchers have found that females who carry more pounds at the hips — pear-shaped — than at the waist — apple-shaped — have a higher probability of conception. I can sleep much better now that I know I, a woman of pear-like outline, can bear babies easier than my apple-figured sisters.

While we're talking family, a story out of Boston revealed findings that the risks of inbreeding aren't serious enough to justify laws against cousins marrying each other. If that isn't good

news, I don't know what is. In other news, 500 people from many nations met in New York. Not for some economic or environmental conference, but to play pinball.

The winner said he practiced two hours a day at home and bought a second machine so his girlfriend could play.

Now really, besides the pinball wizard and his girlfriend, who gives a horse's patootie?

With all this patootie flying around, it's no wonder that some have lost faith in the news as a serious and accurate informer of the nation.

So I watched not-dead-looking Connie Chung tell me that discrimination is no better than it was 15 years ago and felt very much like a horse's patootie.

An update of the Kerner report, originally published during the civil rights battles in the late '60s, said things are the same, if not worse. Of inner-city blacks, 33 percent live in poverty. One-fourth of these black males are behind bars.

A white girl raised in a primarily white state, I was taken aback. After all, the signs have come off the drinking fountains, bus seats and schools are desegregated, and the Constitution itself guarantees that no one shall be discriminated against on the basis of race.

Because of these external signs of equality, we might hear the report and say it's as much patootie as the pinball wizard.

If we discredit the facts of the Kerner report, we're only fooling ourselves. This nation is ripe for an explosion; the Los Angeles riots proved that.

Maybe the media, myself included, should spend less energy on Chelsea and her cat and the superficial changes of the past, before the whole mess just falls apart.

Who will give a horse's patootie then, hmm?

*Paulman is a senior news-editorial and history major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist and photographer.*

JEREMY FITZPATRICK

# Baseball makes everything OK

February has never been my favorite month. There is school and cold, more school and cold. Then it's cold for a while longer.

But now March is here, and we can smile again. March brings sun, spring and, of course, baseball.

I love baseball.

Runs, hits, errors, box scores and line-ups, give them to me in big doses. You can even give me George Steinbrenner if it means I can have baseball, too.

Life may be complicated, but baseball is not. You can't count on much anymore, but you can count on baseball to return every spring like clock-work.

Some of my friends think baseball is a silly game. "It's so boring," they tell me.

I don't know what they mean. I think there is nothing more exciting than a game with your team down by three in the bottom of the ninth with the bases loaded, two out and two strikes on the batter. Better yet, make Don Mattingly the batter in that situation.

If anyone ever needed a reason to like baseball, Don Mattingly is it. "Donny Baseball," as he has been called, is the first baseman for my favorite team, the New York Yankees.

The New York Yankees, as everyone knows, are the most successful team in any sport, ever. They haven't been doing so well recently, as everyone also knows and takes every opportunity to point out to me.

That's baseball. It will break your heart in some cases and brighten your life in others.

Watching Don Mattingly play baseball is watching a great artist at work. He plays so gracefully that it doesn't even look like he is trying. Watching him is observing genius.

The quality that Mattingly pos-



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sesses — a grace and artistry that is hard to define — is what makes baseball so incredible.

I think baseball is a great sport because it is a game of heroes — at least on the field. Every day and night baseball can produce a hero. Every game provides the opportunity for someone to hit a homerun or make a game-saving play.

Like Don Mattingly. When Mattingly was in his prime — before his back injuries — he was a hero for me often. When Don was up late in the game and the Yankees needed runs, there was no doubt. He was going to smash one out of the park. "Back, back, back, GONE!"

And when heroics happen for your team, the world is all right for just that moment. Life will go back to being the sticky mess it so often is soon. But for that moment you have the game and the feeling.

For that moment you have baseball.

I suppose it sounds silly to describe, but that doesn't make it any less real. In a world so lacking in heroes, we still have baseball.

Of course, even baseball heroes aren't perfect. "Show me a hero and I'll show you a tragedy," F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote. Too many baseball players have shown him to be correct.

But at least we can still watch their heroics on the field and marvel at their seemingly effortless ability to defy gravity and the laws of nature that constrain normal human beings.

Baseball is a lot like America in many ways, which is probably why it has been known as our national pastime.

The game is slow moving, but when it comes down to crunch time it is capable of greatness. Heroes always seem to come to the forefront when they are needed most. It provides hope and fires the imagination.

Most of all, baseball gives you the chance to start over. No matter how bad your team was last year, each spring is a fresh new chance. Each year you have an equal chance to come charging back to past glory.

Each year you can win it all.

It has been a long winter. But the sun will be back soon, and baseball always comes along with it.

Before too long we will be able to bask in both and forget the harsh cold.

*Fitzpatrick is a junior political science major and the Daily Nebraskan opinion page editor.*

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