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Nebraskan

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EDITORIAL

Enough press

Media attention too high for Bjorklund

Last week's decision to bring in a jury outside of Lincoln for the Roger Bjorklund trial could have and should have been avoided.

Judge Donald Endacott ruled that due to circumstances surrounding the Bjorklund case, a jury from Sidney would be chosen to decide on the innocence or guilt of Bjorklund for the murder of University of Nebraska-Lincoln Candice Harms last year.

But what was the main reasoning for having to send 344 miles away for Bjorklund to get a "fair" trial?

The majority of the blame can be placed on the media's shoulders, as more often than not, freedom of the press has been used too generously in the seven months since Bjorklund's arrest.

It was the court's belief that Bjorklund could not receive an impartial trial from a Lancaster County jury, thus the residents of a small town in western Nebraska now have to be bused to Lincoln for Bjorklund's trial.

But had the local media not feasted on every little move that Bjorklund made, maybe he could have had a trial by his peers, as the U.S. Constitution states, which is supposed to mean by those in the community that the crime occurred.

So did being bombarded with information on a daily basis about him defending himself need as much attention as it did?

Or when he changed his mind and decided he wanted appointed counsel to help him in his case — did he deserve this maneuver to receive the media hype that transpired?

The best way to show how the press has gone overboard in deciding what is vital for the citizens of Lincoln to know, was when Bjorklund decided to go on a brief hunger strike, and again he had the media in the palm of his hand over an issue that did not deserve a place in the classified ads.

It has almost gone to the point where defendant Bjorklund has a media caravan following his every move.

Being given the right to a fair trial is a right in the Constitution that needs to be upheld, so Endacott's decision was just, but it is too bad that the media had to play such an influence upon the judicial system.

EDITORIAL POLICY

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SAM KEPFIELD

Racial disparity lingers in U.S.

On its last day for the 1992-1993 term, the U.S. Supreme Court held the 12th Congressional district in North Carolina was gerrymandered in such a way as to be possibly violative of white voters' rights. The district, 160 miles long, snakes through the state, at times no wider than an interstate highway.

The thinking was that if you put blacks in a majority, they will elect a black to Congress. If you're Lani Guinier, this Congressman will be a "true" black leader, unsullied by selling his soul to the white man to achieve power. Such is the state of the civil rights movement today.

Now, under the leadership of Benjamin Chavis, the NAACP wants to redefine its focus and intensify fundraising. How to revive the moribund body? Chavis coined the term "environmental racism" to describe putting toxic waste in minority communities, combining two politically correct hot buttons. He also signed an agreement with the parent company of Denny's for \$1 billion in job opportunities over the next seven years.

At the same time, paradoxically, the Ku Klux Klan is trying to reestablish itself in my home state of Kansas. Thrown out of Kansas in the 1920s, the Klan is aiming for a January rally at the capitol building to protest the Martin Luther King holiday. As if Kansas didn't have enough problems with image, it's now going to be put in the same light with Arizona.

The Klan leadership today is a concoction of vicious Nazi kooks, hell-bent on exterminating blacks, Catholics, and Jews from the face of the Earth. And yet, the KKK leadership is emboldened enough to resurrect itself in the Sunflower State. A former Klansman can run for Governor of Louisiana, and attract a respectable percentage of the vote. How does this fringe element attract thousands of new members, and uncounted silent sympathizers?

When David Duke ran for Senate,



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then for Governor, then for President, he was often criticized as the inevitable result of — yes, you guessed it — "12 years of Reagan-Bush." It was now OK for people to be racist, to be bigoted, to be just plain uncaring about the plight of the less fortunate in our society. That's the easy, feel-good explanation.

The truth is that David Duke struck a note with the American people. It was not one of racism, but one of protest against good intentions run amok.

The civil rights movement, in its early days, strove for political equality under the law, but it also fought for economic equality. The early leaders knew that economic freedom was the source of all liberty, that without it life is meaningless. Black leaders from Booker T. Washington to Martin Luther King and even Malcom X preached economic self-sufficiency as a key to freedom. They voted Re-

publican up until 1960.

After the great battles were won, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, after King and Malcom X were dead, the focus somehow shifted. Equality of opportunity gradually became equality of result. It wasn't enough that blacks were given a level playing field, because the centuries of white oppression made fair play impossible. Affirmative action and quotas were needed to make it "fair."

All this time, the Great Society began shackling more people than ever to poverty; \$1.7 trillion dollars later, the ghettos are worse than ever before. The solution from the NAACP? More money.

The result is predictable. The fireman in Philly, the construction worker in Chicago, saw people getting ahead just because they were black, not because of talent. The blue-collar guy believed he had to work and sweat to get ahead, while blacks got into college or jobs because of their skin color, or lived on welfare and had the nerve to say that the federal government wasn't throwing enough of its tax dollars at them, or that the American people didn't care because they were racists.

By focusing on special rights, by ignoring economic equality and by becoming slavish adherents to the liberal plantation mentality of the Democratic Party, the NAACP has de-legitimized itself in the public eye, creating a backlash. Exclusively harping on past injustice obscures a future controlled by economic freedom.

The old spirit of self-reliance is gone, replaced by the federal dollar. With this comes the sad fact that Martin Luther King is a holiday that the Kansas KKK will protest, and Malcom X is nothing more than a slick marketing ploy to sell ball caps and jerseys.

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