

Daily
Nebraskan
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OTHERS' VIEW

Nearly half the nation's adults lack the reading, writing and arithmetic skills necessary to hold a decent job, fulfill civic responsibilities or adequately handle routine daily tasks. The bleak picture of an increasingly innumerable and illiterate work force painted by a recent study has been the focus of business and education leaders for years. As we haggle over the details of national economic agreements such as NAFTA, the basic skills of the nation's people decline.

One of the political barriers to the passage of NAFTA is the fear of exporting jobs to Mexico, where industrial workers make \$4.20 per day. Proponents say that the higher productivity of the U.S. work force will offset the lower wages paid in Maquiladoras. However, U.S. businesses estimate losses of \$25 billion to \$30 billion each year from errors and accidents due to poor literacy, which gives one pause to wonder whether productivity rates can remain competitive in an increasingly global economy.

The state of Iowa did relatively well on the National Adult Literary Survey in comparison with national statistics. Sadly, the jobs available in this state have not made use of these skills, and the best educated young people are leaving the state after graduation. Of those who remain, too many have low-skill levels and cause tax expenditures, rather than support the tax base.

How will we protect our jobs? Education.

— The Daily Iowan
University of Iowa

QUOTES OF THE WEEK

"People are watching you to see if you do good, and some watch to see if you do bad. Once you make a mistake, people won't forget."

— Nebraska I-back Calvin Jones on press coverage of student athletes

"We know she's with God. In some ways we're envious of her because we know that she's there, and we've got a long way to go. A very long way, unfortunately."

— Stan Harms, father of slain UNL student Candice Harms

"Let us pledge tonight: Before this Congress adjourns next year, you will pass and I will sign a new law to create health security for every American."

— President Bill Clinton, urging members of Congress to pass health care reform

"I want someone to take the lithium tablet, put it in his mouth and watch him swallow it every day for at least six months."

— Lancaster County Attorney Gary Lacey, arguing against transferring former UNL football player Scott Baldwin to New Jersey

"(Mace) doesn't always work on mental patients, on drunks. It doesn't always work immediately and certainly doesn't work if it's in your backpack."

— Cpl. Larry Kalkowski, head of UNL Police Crime Prevention

EDITORIAL POLICY

Staff editorials represent the official policy of the Fall 1993 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.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Gun control

In response to Richard Wright's column (DN, Sept. 20), I'd like to offer what I hope will turn out to be some constructive criticism. When I turned to the editorial page and focused on that headline, I quickly began reading with a vengeance. I happen to be a collector of firearms. Usually I prepare myself to do mental battle with any columnist who writes in favor of gun control. As I read their opinions, I frustrate myself that they often write as authorities on legal and ethical issues that they know little about. Most don't know what technical nuances actually make a rifle an assault rifle, yet they use the term to describe any big, scary-looking super-weapon they remember seeing Schwarzenegger kill 70 people with the night before on TV.

What I found most encouraging about Wright's discussion of our nation's problem is that he didn't try too hard to tell us what massive gun ban needs to be in place to "stop the killing in the streets," as Sarah Brady so emotionally put it. He does, however, make an argument for doing something though: Our children are dying. The question to be asked is, will further restricting or banning a particular type of gun actually accomplish anything? And if it does, is it worth the consequences?

These aren't social dilemmas that can be answered easily. I think Wright realizes that, and instead of telling us what to go do with ourselves on this issue, he eloquently described his own feelings and perspectives without getting in my face with it. I applaud that.

You're right, Mr. Wright, our children are our most valuable natural resource, and I think they are worth protecting. In addition to that, I think my children have the right to protect themselves as well. When my daughter grows into a woman, I'd like to be able to tell her that she will have access to tools capable of stopping potential rapists and killers that will be twice her size and three times her strength. Hopefully by then, technology will have provided her with a dependable Star Trek phaser with a stun setting so that lethal force will no longer be a consequence of self-defense. Until then, I'd like her to be able to have a gun. Not a hunting gun or one for target shooting, but a gun built specifically to stop men, because there are a lot of bad men out there that neither you nor I will be able to protect her from.

Mike Peterson
sophomore
criminal justice

Change

Exactly what planet is Dustin Ruge living on (DN, Sept. 23)? To compare today's society to that of 1778 is

crazy. If all laws adopted back then would work today, then there wouldn't be any need for constitutional amendments, and in case you haven't noticed, Dustin, there have been quite a few. One only has to look out his or her window to notice that this isn't the same America that was around in the 1770s.

Also, to suggest that liberals are unwilling to tackle the "real issues" is outrageous. Perhaps if George Bush and the rest of the conservative right had been willing to deal with these issues, they'd still be in the White House.

Wake up, Dustin. I think the world just passed you by.

Brad Hatcher
junior
social science

ed, it becomes, if I can get free meals, clothing and shelter—and soon health care—why should I get a job and pay for them myself?

"Generation X," it is laughable that the DN would display a "slacker" as the flagman of our generation when, in fact, he represents a growing minority that despises success because it has neither the ambition nor courage to attempt being successful. Tisdale exemplifies what can happen to a person who believes all the gloom he hears on CNN and reads in the newspaper.

John Hifferman
senior
history

Liberty

To answer the question posed by Mr. Wright in his column (DN, Sept. 20), no, this Second Amendment advocate has never seen firsthand the effects of gunfire on human beings. I do, however, have a question for Wright: Has he ever seen the tyranny to which his proposed trade-off of liberty for his children's welfare inevitably leads?

I spent 39 months with the U.S. Army in Germany in a unit that patrolled our side of the Iron Curtain facing Czechoslovakia and what was then East Germany. As moving as Wright's encounters with violence's victims have doubtlessly been, the sight of a prison wall stretching from horizon to horizon has equal impact. Every year I was there, men, women and children were brutally murdered trying to cross that wall. In their nations, no one but the police was allowed to own guns. Were those children safe?

As for the efficacy of gun control such as Wright believes secures the safety of British children, one need speak but two words: Northern Ireland. In Northern Ireland, the government bans the private possession of handguns and enforces these controls with military patrols, yet the killing continues with smuggled arms, bombs and knives. Are the children of Belfast safe?

Curiously, Wright has the answer but refuses to see it. In ensuring that his own firearms are safely stored and educating his children in their care and handling, he is doing far more to discourage their misuse than any degree of unconstitutional legislation. It is not legislation but parenting that can stop these senseless deaths. The killer of children in our cities is not the availability of firearms but the destruction of the family by the welfare state. The exchange of liberty for security proposed by Wright is a chimerical one; to paraphrase the founders, those who have made it in the past soon found themselves with neither.

P.G. Szczepanski
third-year law student



Generation X

If an unsuspecting citizen of Lincoln was to read the recent articles on "Generation X," they might get the impression that people between 18 and 20—something are a group of slothful vagabonds. After all, the DN represents students who fall into that category, does it not? Being a 23-year-old student, I would answer, hell no!

The thesis behind "Generation X" is that we have no general identifying mark. We haven't the dope of the '60s nor the disco of the '70s. Because we have no rallying point, we wear funny clothes, hang out in coffee houses, drop out of school and willingly become unemployed. The Sept. 22 "Generation X" article featured Paul Tisdale, the "slacker."

Tisdale said, "If I am doing what makes me happy, why struggle for what people call success?" Translat-