

ANNE STEYER

Men can be dangerous — period

Apparently I have a water retention problem.

I wasn't aware of it, but lucky for me, a man — who knows precious little about women, by the way — clued me in to my biological problem.

Of course, he attributes my aversion to hearing women likened to mongrels who should receive a little Alpo now and again, as a simple problem with water retention.

"Hope you get over your water retention problem," he called back over his shoulder as he skulked off, just moments after spending too much time babbling nonsense about the uses and abuses of women.

I certainly had no idea before his revelation to me that the menstrual cycle had anything to do with humanism or feminism. But then I would never call myself a feminist, which of course, he would.

His misogynist rantings don't mean much, though: I'm not retaining water right now anyway.

But I digress. After reading the latest issue of Time, I think perhaps my fierce protectiveness of my gender may be inherent in my female biological make-up.

I'm aghast, but perhaps his blatherings do have some basis in fact. But not even remotely in the way he means.

According to a health article in Time, the menstrual cycle could be a natural protection against the evils of men.

Dr. Margie Profet, an evolutionary biologist from the University of California Berkeley, has turned science on its head with her new theories about why menstruation actually occurs.

How many times a year do I wonder the same thing? How many times a year do most women wonder why we have to get our period? At least 12. Since she is an evolutionary biol-



I like the idea that the monthly bane of my existence has a greater purpose, that it provides me with an advantage that others — namely men — do not have.

gist, Profet's theory looks at why menstruation occurs from an evolutionary perspective, and why it occurs in one of the most evolved species on the planet.

I'd like to think she's talking specifically about women, not humans in general. Why? Because the aforementioned man is definitely not highly evolved.

The long-held traditional idea of why women menstruate says that the purpose is to shed unfertilized eggs and a plumped-up uterine lining.

But Profet says that the process is costly — women shed a good deal of blood and lining and lose important nutrients. It's too costly to be useless.

If it were both costly and useless, Profet says, "natural selection surely would have eliminated it long ago."

The fact that it was selected for survival indicates it must provide some advantage to women.

I like that. I like the idea that the monthly bane of my existence has a greater purpose, that it provides me with an advantage that others — namely men — do not have.

Profet's theory is that menstruation is a biological mechanism to protect fertility by stopping bacteria from possibly infecting the womb.

The source of said bacteria? Sperm.

Her research shows that potentially harmful bacteria can enter the womb and Fallopian tubes by attaching themselves to sperm — I like to call it

piggybacking.

Menstruation supposedly eliminates the menacing interlopers in two ways: The shed lining carries the microscopic bacteria away, and the blood, rich in immune cells, is prepared to destroy any alien invaders.

So, to recap: Bacteria-riddled sperm enter the uterus. To prevent infection, the body puts the squeeze on the arteries that feed the uterine lining. The lining, now with no blood or oxygen, dies. The lining sheds. The arteries dilate, allowing the blood — rich with immunity — to wash away the dead lining and bacteria. And voilà — monthly menstruation.

Profet's theory is just that, a theory. And her basis is almost solely evolutionary, not biological.

But it has started the scientific community thinking.

Now if only it could get others thinking as well. I am a woman, and my knowledge about my body's inner workings is limited. Surely this man who attributes my feminism to water retention knows a great deal less.

Maybe I do retain a little water now and then. But if Profet is right, I'm just warding off the evils men bring to me in this world.

And I'm not just talking about their sperm.

Steyer is a senior English and history major, a Daily Nebraskan arts and entertainment senior reporter and a columnist.

NAVI ZIMMERMAN

Ideals of book burning live on

Pull up a chair, kids, and toss your favorite Salinger on the fire, because it's time to commemorate National Banned Books Week. Sponsored by the Library of Congress, it was created to bring attention to the many, many books that have been banned, burned and otherwise abused over the years. As the week winds down, with surprisingly little media fanfare, I might add, it's important to sit back and reflect on the whole phenomenon of censorship and how we've come to look at it.

Being the trusting, open-minded Americans we are, we tend to look at the whole book-burning phenomenon as something removed from our lives, a popular activity from an ignorant age long gone. Oh, sure, we get ticked off about something like record labeling every once in a while, but more often than not, we're good at taking the high road. We're much more enlightened, we think. We let others speak their minds. We don't dance around bonfires, happily tossing copies of deviant books like "The Adventure of Huckleberry Finn" into the flames any more. Well, at least not as often.

The basis for bannings in the past was generally that a work violated the moral standard of the day. For the good of society, so it went, we, the self-proclaimed guardians of the human conscience, must protect ourselves and our families from this evil, corrupting influence. Naive, we now think, but how much different is that attitude from what we have today?

Remember the Dan Quayle/Doonesbury fiasco from a few years back? Gary Trudeau stepped on a few toes when he ran the episode about the drug dealer who supposedly sold pot to Dan Quayle when he was back in law school. Feeling that it must bear the heavy burden of being a member of the Enlightened Few, the Omaha World-Herald decided to yank the strip because no one else would be intelligent enough to decide for them-



Being the trusting, open-minded Americans we are, we tend to look at the whole book-burning phenomenon as something removed from our lives, a popular activity from an ignorant age long gone.

selves that Trudeau may or may not have taken a few liberties with the story.

Remember "The Last Temptation of Christ"? Hordes of protesters descended upon the unlucky theaters that dared run the evil, corrupting film. In one of the final scenes of the movie, Jesus, in his final hours upon the cross, contemplates what his life would have been like had he succumbed to the sinful nature of his humanity. Part of the fantasy happens to be a love scene with Mary Magdalene.

Countless numbers of people blasted it as being blasphemous and obscene, and they succeeded in removing it from screens all over the country. Never mind the fact, of course, that no one had actually seen the offensive segment — which was a minuscule part of the entire film — or that the movie was created by one of the most talented and visionary filmmakers of our time, Martin Scorsese.

How about last week, even? Local ABC affiliate KETV, along with a few dozen other stations nationwide, decided against running the new police drama "NYPD Blue," objecting to content it decided was inappropriate for its viewers. Despite the fact that two other Nebraska affiliates, along with most of the rest of the ABC affiliates in the country, thought it was suitable for television, KETV told viewers in eastern Nebraska that they were not capable of deciding on the television that they would watch.

The offensive content of "NYPD

Blue" in question was a few scenes with nudity and a few with vulgar language. I'd probably be hard-pressed to find too many people that would object to keeping vulgarity and nudity off network TV. God knows that most television is the intellectual equivalent of junk food. However, how is this "reasonable" censorship any different than banning Huck Finn for being loose with morality? How is it any different from banning "Fahrenheit 451" because it has "rough language?" All three involve value judgments that were derived from a cultural context.

Contrary to popular belief, we do not have free speech in this country. There are limits, however slight, to what we can say. There have always been limits, and there always will be, First Amendment notwithstanding. We, as a society, feel that we must protect TV watchers from vulgar language. We feel that we must protect people under age 18 from pornography. And maybe these are good ideas. However, they are evolved from the same mentality that led angry mobs to burn Harper Lee in effigy: There are just some things we don't allow.

When we talk about past censorship vs. censorship today, we are talking in terms of degrees, not quantum leaps. We are playing out the same roles today as people in the unenlightened book-burning days: We still restrict thought and speech according to the moral attitudes of our times.

Zimmerman is a junior English major and Daily Nebraskan columnist.

SALE

Summer Clearance
25% Off A Lot Of Stuff

Second Wind

Vintage Clothing and Collectables
720 "O" Street
(Under the Viaduct)

Summer III

FOR JUNIOR NURSING STUDENTS

**A NURSING EXPERIENCE AT
MAYO FOUNDATION HOSPITALS -
ROCHESTER, MN**

Here is your opportunity to work at Mayo Medical Center for the summer.

Summer III is a paid, supervised hospital work experience at Saint Marys Hospital and Rochester Methodist Hospital, both part of Mayo Medical Center in Rochester, Minnesota.

You are eligible for Summer III after your junior year of a four year baccalaureate nursing program. It includes experience on medical and surgical nursing units or in operating rooms.

Application Deadline: December 1, 1993.
For more information contact:

Mayo Medical Center
Nursing Recruitment
P.O. Box 6057
Rochester, Minnesota 55903
1-800-247-8590

Mayo Foundation is an affirmative action and equal opportunity educator and employer. A smoke-free institution.

Introducing NewVues Softcolors Soft Contact Lenses

**FREE TRIAL* OFFER
COUPON**

Try the first enhancing-tinted disposable contact lenses. Available in soft shades of Aqua, Royal Blue, and Evergreen. (Also available in Clear.)

Enjoy the true comfort and convenience of disposable contact lenses — try NewVues® Softcolors® lenses.

Wear NewVues Softcolors for up to one week of disposable wear (single use) or two weeks of flexible wear. Then replace them with a fresh, clean pair.

*Offer is good while supplies last. Offer is not valid where prohibited by law. Lens suitability for your eyes and lens trial period to be determined by the eye care practitioner. Cost of eye examination not included.

467-4100
6900 "O" Street • Lincoln, NE 68510

COMFORT AND CONVENIENCE IN COLOR™

Keeping Healthy Eyes Healthy