

SAM KEPFIELD

Veterans Day deserves honor

Thursday is Veterans Day, in case you'd forgotten. For many, it's merely another paid holiday from work, an inconvenience with the banks closed, or nothing special at all. And that's a tragedy, because Veterans Day commemorates the sacrifices made by American military men and women for the past 200 years.

The American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars posts here in town will individually sponsor events to mark the occasion. The city of Lincoln and the state of Nebraska, as far as can be detected, have no such plans. It's a real shame, too.

I grew up in a small town in western Kansas, which I still like to think of as "real America." Smack in the middle of the Great Wheat Belt of the High Plains, Larned, Kan., was a place stuck in time, created by the brush of Norman Rockwell.

Like any American small town, it was a very patriotic place, where schoolchildren still recited the Pledge of Allegiance before class and the Lord's Prayer. The American Civil Liberties Union never got to Larned.

Every Nov. 11, school let out, business suspended, and the citizenry gathered on Broadway Avenue for the annual Veterans Day parade. For me, being in the school band, it meant marching with a sousaphone. And, being western Kansas in November, it meant freezing cold, valves icing up, lips in danger of sticking to the mouthpiece, and a sore shoulder.

But, when the procession stopped and the tornado sirens blew at 11 a.m. sharp, I knew what I was really there for. It was the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. The end of the War to End All Wars. My dad always watched, stood at attention when the sirens blew. I always wondered what he saw or what he was thinking at those moments.

I grew up in a family that was, on my father's side, thoroughly steeped



But, when the procession stopped and the tornado sirens blew at 11 a.m. sharp, I knew what I was really there for. It was the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. The end of the War to End All Wars.

in American military tradition. My ancestors came here from Ireland during the Civil War to fight for the Union Army. Their sons went to Cuba in 1898. Their grandsons went to France in 1917.

And when the time came, my father went to the Pacific in 1943. He was only 17, but with the resolve of young men eager to join a great crusade, he enlisted in the Marine Corps. His father had to sign the enlistment papers, as my dad was underage. Grandad Kepfield could have said "No," but he remembered all too well the fire he'd felt doing the same thing in 1918.

Dad served for three years, seeing action in places like Saipan, Tinian and Iwo Jima and got sent to China for a brief stint after the war. Later, as a reservist, he did drill instructor duty at the local unit. A physical ailment kept him from going to Korea; just as well, since that unit took heavy casualties at the Chosin Reservoir.

And, of course, I heard all the stories from him about being stuck in mudholes on some godforsaken Pacific island, listening to Japanese soldiers march a few feet away in pitch dark. I heard the stories from his friends, too. One was a belly gunner on a B-25 over Europe; another went into the Navy as an anti-aircraft gunner in the Pacific. It was an intense, nerve-wracking hell they went through. But it was also probably the best time of their then-young lives.

They were young, in their prime, on the side of good fighting an indescribable evil that would have destroyed all that we take for granted today.

They are the men we honor tomorrow.

I also remember my dad talking about how, in his boyhood, Veterans Day featured aging Civil War vets, Union and Confederate. In their 80s and 90s many still wore their uniforms every year — riding in separate cars, of course — still fiercely proud of the great deed they had done three-quarters of a century before.

We are seeing the same thing now. The 18-year-olds who went to fight the Japanese are now in their 70s. They will soon be gone, taking a crucial part of American history and character with them. They gave everything, risked death, so their unborn children would grow up in freedom, never knowing the shackles of tyranny.

If you've never really thought about how precious your liberty and freedom are, if you've never pondered about how it came to be and how it was preserved for two centuries, you might take a few moments tomorrow to thank those who went to foreign countries. Remember those who didn't come back. I will, as I do every Nov. 11.

Semper Fi, pop.

Kepfield is a graduate student in history and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

MARK BALDRIDGE

Too many remain blind to sides

Last week I wrote about being a white man — this isn't going to be a column about writing a column, so don't worry.

At least one reader, the editor of the paper as a matter of fact, commented that it was conservative's day on the opinion page because my column, which he considered conservative last week, regularly appears along with Sam Kepfield's: arch-conservative columnist for the Daily Nebraskan.

This reminded me of all the times I have been accosted on the streets and sidewalks and in the bars of this city by people who demand to know why I go on working for such a reactionary, right-wing paper.

Curiously, the number of times this has happened is roughly equal to the number of times I've been similarly accosted by those who would like to know why I still work in such a hive of political correctness — as a tool of the liberals on campus.

Mostly these individuals are drunk, highly politicized or both.

But the interesting fact remains that, to many people, all subjects of discussion can be approached through only two mutually exclusive avenues.

It's the old on/off binary model of reality that our culture inherited from misinterpretations of Aristotle, which are themselves unspeakably ancient. "He who is not for me, is against me," as Jesus said so long ago.

Of course the same guy also said the reverse: That whoever was not against him was for him.

At least he saw the ambiguity of the situation.

It all reminds me of a routine Garrison Keillor did the first time I ever heard him.

Someone had returned from a trip to the then-Soviet Union, at least that's how I remember it.



But the interesting fact remains that, to many people, all subjects of discussion can be approached through only two mutually exclusive avenues.

His friends asked him about his trip; he said it had been a "positive experience."

"Doesn't that limit you to just two kinds?" Keillor wanted to know.

In a way I feel sorry for those who are trapped in the two-way street that is modern American politics, particularly as the right and left begin more and more to resemble one another.

Their choices are so limited and limiting: Anyone who fails to see at least six sides of any two-sided problem can't find much interest in the world, or so it seems to me.

The binary switch in people's heads is not wired in, no matter how much it may seem so at times.

And I'll admit it may be harder for some to learn to see outside the received categories. But it's harder for some people to learn to add and subtract; that doesn't mean we should limit their education so they never have to learn.

In politics in America, jingoism is the order of the day. Debate never escapes the damning labyrinth of party doctrine.

"Which of these two proposed solutions is the best for the problem of drugs? Inner city violence? Poverty? Health care?"

The very question is stupid, limiting debate from the outset.

The problem is that it's hard to think for one's self.

It's so much easier to accept or

reject an offer.

Asking a politician if he or she is "for" or "against" NAFTA, for instance, belies the question entirely.

NAFTA was conceived for a purpose. The real question is how does that purpose serve us and is NAFTA the best instrument of that purpose.

But that kind of inquiry requires understanding, patience and the ability to follow an argument longer than a sound bite.

There were signers of the Constitution who were "for" the inclusion of blacks under the rights of citizens.

There were others who were "against" the inclusion of a Bill of Rights, for fear that these rights would be considered all-inclusive — as if we're ever going to get even those few paltry rights guaranteed in our Bill of Rights.

They came to a regrettable compromise as the best they could hope for then and there.

In an on/off proposition, the best possible result is compromise: the third option that emerges with the conflict of opposites.

If we could learn to seek these kind of third options — or fourth or fifth — we'd be that much closer to real solutions to our social and political problems.

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

SEE THE STAFF AT THE UNIVERSITY MEDICAL ASSOCIATES EYE CLINIC!

To celebrate the holiday season, EyeSpecialties is pleased to offer all UNL, UNO and UNMC faculty, students, employees and their immediate families, the following specials during November and December 1993 and January 1994:

Routine Eye Exam.....\$35.00 Contact Lens Package.....\$85.00
Includes eye exam, contact lens fit, 1 pair of disposable lenses and 1 follow-up visit.
(Other types of contact lenses are available.)

Discount on all NEW eyeglasses prescriptions ordered at Benson Optical.....\$35.00 off
(Must include new lenses and frames. No other discounts apply.)

Call 559-4063 and make your appointment today. UNMC Campus, 3925 Dewey Avenue, Omaha, NE. Please have your payment ready at time of service.

University Medical Associates



University of Nebraska Medical Center

Looking For A Good Time?

Join The Grand Re-Opening Celebration at

W.C.'s
Downtown



Featuring...

Lie Awake

Wednesday, Nov. 10, & Friday, Nov. 12
(9pm-1am)

Penny Pitchers Wed., F.A.C. Specials
No Cover Wednesday

1228 'P' Street

477-4006

With good behavior, you'll be out in just 5 months.

With a 4 year college degree, you can begin your career in law as a **paralegal** in just 5 months.

- Approved by the American Bar Association
- Free lifetime national placement assistance
- Financial aid available for eligible students
- Includes a 100 hour internship

Call today for a free video
"Your Career In Law"

1-800-848-0550



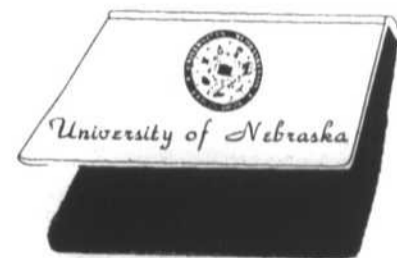
DENVER PARALEGAL INSTITUTE

1401 19th Street Denver, CO 80202

Representative at University of Nebraska-Lincoln Career Fair - September 23, 1993

GRADUATION ANNOUNCEMENT ORDERS!

for **DECEMBER GRADUATION** will be taken:



Thursday and Friday, November 11 and 12
10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
University Bookstore
Lower Level Nebraska Union

DECEMBER GRADUATION ANNOUNCEMENT ORDERS