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Nebraskan  
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EDITORIAL

## Arms down

### Americans ready for stricter gun laws

Legislation to regulate the purchase of firearms is long overdue. And now that American public is lining up behind gun control legislation, it might become a reality.

A poll released by EDK Associates on Wednesday found 44 percent of adults would be less likely to re-elect their representatives in Congress if he or she voted against the Brady Bill.

The Brady Bill would impose a waiting period for handgun purchases so the buyer's background could be checked. President Clinton is pushing the Congress to pass it this year.

The EDK poll found 76 percent of the respondents thought controlling the sale of handguns would be effective. An even greater number said they thought inner-city job programs would help reduce violence.

"They've bought locks, they've bought guns. And now they're saying there's not a lot more I can do myself," said EDK president Ethel Klein, who conducted the poll independent of any interest group.

The EDK poll clearly shows the American public is ready for the regulation of handguns. In a country where murder is commonplace, the time has come for stricter gun control laws.

Now, Congress needs to take the people's lead and pass the Brady Bill and other measures aimed at getting guns out of the hands of criminals and those who will use them irresponsibly. Gun control is not the only answer. But it is a first step that should be taken.

## Safe at home?

### System penalizes sexual assault victims

The man whose wife cut off his penis was found innocent Wednesday of sexually assaulting her. Looking at the facts presented by the media about the case, it seems the jury did not come to a fair conclusion. It is very difficult to believe a woman would do this without being provoked.

The prosecution pointed out the fact that Lorena Bobbitt went to a court counselor five days before the infamous attack seeking protection from her husband, John Wayne Bobbitt, because of sexual and physical abuse. The counselor testified in court that he feared for her safety based on what she told him.

A problem in cases like this is that the man's version of the story is pitted against the woman's. It becomes a case of one person's word against another's. Also, victims of rape, sexual abuse and assault are sometimes reluctant to press charges because they are often subjected to intimidating, prying questions in court, as if they are the ones on trial.

By finding John Wayne Bobbitt innocent, the jury has added to victims' reluctance to press charges. In the future, women thinking about pressing assault, abuse or rape charges might look to this case and realize that there were hard facts showing Lorena Bobbitt was frightened of her spouse; she was scared enough that she sought court protection. This case was not simply a case of one person's word against another's. Yet Lorena Bobbitt did not win the case.

Lorena Bobbitt is going to trial at the end of the month on charges of malicious wounding. More than likely she will be convicted because what she did to her husband is physically obvious. The court system needs to look at the way it handles marital abuse and sexual assault cases and set a good precedent that is fair to victims. Obviously this ruling is not a good example.

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

### Capital Punishment

There seems to be some prevailing confusion over the purpose of the judicial system of the United States. Put simply, our judiciary is designed to exact equitable and appropriate justice on those individuals found guilty of committing crimes. This method of justice should serve a two-fold purpose: To impose punitive measures on the offender, and to compel society's lawful behavior through recognizable consequences. With that in mind, the subject of capital punishment should not be a matter of debate.

Ideologues who believe that life sentences are justice-enough for convicted killers are purposefully ignoring those states, Nebraska included, that do not have a life sentence without parole provision in their sentencing guidelines. Murderers, such as Charles Manson, need only exhibit "rehabilitation" to an overburdened and understaffed parole system to gain freedom to roam our streets in unrestricted freedom.

The current trial of Roger Bjorklund has sparked new debate on this matter. It is easy, given the unbelievable atrocities committed against Candice Harms, to fall prey to the "string 'em up" justice of old. Fortunately for Bjorklund, that's not the way our existing system works. If found guilty, he should receive justice that meets the criteria elucidated above. His punishment for Harms' torture, rape and murder should be sufficient to communicate our society's intolerance of, and repugnance for, that type of criminal behavior. Library privileges, cable television and three squares-a-day, even if confined for the rest of his life, is positively NOT appropriate or equitable justice for a crime of that magnitude.

Thomas K. Eads  
junior  
political science and English

### Christianity

I feel it necessary to respond to Robert J. Tobin's assertions (DN, Nov. 8).

Tobin unwittingly illustrated the major, tragic flaw in people's conceptions of what it means to be a Christian, especially living in a time when so many alternatives are challenging those things usually associated with Christianity.

He points out that Jesus used harsh words in dealing with the pharisees. True enough. But then he follows by saying, "This sounds like a judgmental, intolerant person, not a loving, accepting one." To love a person or a group of people does not mean that one must accept and love their actions. Never does Jesus say, "I hate you pharisees," but rather, he assaults

their deeds and conceptions — justifiably so, because no less than their eternal security was on the line.

It is my belief that Jesus spoke these words out of love, even though it was not the easy thing to do; it ultimately led to his crucifixion. They were words that needed to be said, and Jesus loved them enough that he was willing to die to get that message across.

Brian Schwarz  
junior  
English



Michele Tilley/DN

### Improvement?

Mr. Sink, I read with respect and interest your response (DN, Nov. 10) to my letter (DN, Nov. 8). I disagree.

What do we know about the messiah? Only that things will be better after he comes. Have things improved so much since your Jesus came? To the extent that they have, science has improved them — along with the collective political will of decent common people. To what extent has the church helped? To put it another way, what was the crime of Galileo? Pursuing science in opposition to the church, right? The messiah has not come; my reasoning tells me this.

Robert J. Tobin  
graduate student  
geology

### Cruelty

I recently learned the University of Nebraska's zoology and biology departments use organisms purchased from Carolina Biological Supply Company for use in laboratory testing and dissections. I understand that Carolina Biological Supply is the nation's largest distributor of organisms used for this purpose.

I am angered and appalled our university would purchase materials from a corporation that has cruelly and inhumanely prepared organisms for laboratory use. Documented reports have surfaced linking Carolina

Biological Supply to countless thefts of domesticated dogs and cats in the community surrounding their plants. Numerous other animal rights abuses have been documented by animal rights groups, including shocking footage of Carolina workers brutally killing a dog to be used for classroom dissection. Workers savagely beat the dog with a shovel and laughed and taunted the creature as it attempted to struggle to its feet.

Carolina workers also have been captured on film spitting and extinguishing cigarettes on frogs gasping for their last breaths after being injected with chloroform while still alive. It is also common policy at Carolina Biological Supply to starve dogs, cats and rabbits while placing them into overcrowded cages where they are often crushed under the weight of other animals awaiting a cruel and inhumane death. With all this knowledge of the wrongdoings of Carolina Biological Supply, can't we take our business elsewhere?

Nick Myers  
sophomore  
social sciences, speech

### 'Their job'

In response to William Ogden's letter to the editor (DN, Nov. 11), I agree with Ogden in one respect: the idea that Bjorklund's trial is important to many students here at UNL.

However, I disagree with his idea that the Daily Nebraskan's coverage is too graphic. Granted, what happened to Candice Harms in her last few hours of life is disturbing. It's tragic and awful to imagine, but it happened. It's a fact. People need to be aware of this. By making people aware, hopefully people will be more cautious and watch out for their safety because even here in Lincoln, not everyone is safe.

Whether or not we like what is or will be written is not the press' concern. The press has a right to keep the public informed. In fact, it's their job.

Lisa Palmer  
senior  
human development/child studies

### Denny trial

In response to Sam Kepfield (DN, Oct. 27) and Chad W. Pekron (DN, Oct. 28), great job! Both stated very nicely the problems of today. It's nice to see at least a couple of individuals with enough common sense to see through the whole farce of a trial of Henry Watson and Damian Williams. I also find it interesting how liberals and minorities are so quick to cry racism, then turn around and claim that Watson and Williams' beating of Denny was somehow justifiable because of the past. It just makes no sense to me.

Mark D. Mercer  
freshman  
general studies