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EDITORIAL

Game over

Spanier should follow IFC recommendation

Members of the Interfraternity Council recommended Wednesday night that the Phi Gamma Delta fraternity be suspended for five semesters because of an accident resulting in serious injury to pledge Jeff Knoll.

James Griesen, vice chancellor for student affairs, confirmed days after Knoll fell from a third-story window that hazing was a factor in the accident. Knoll's family plans to move him to a Colorado rehabilitation center that specializes in memory loss.

The council's action is only a recommendation. UNL Chancellor Graham Spanier will now have to make the final decision on whether the fraternity will be suspended. Spanier should treat this grave issue seriously and follow the recommendation.

Knoll's accident proves that hazing is a dangerous, life-threatening game. It supposedly is done to promote brotherhood, but in this case and probably others, it could easily have been fatal.

Many members and leaders of the greek system at UNL have expressed regret about this incident. Some have also implied it is an isolated event. They insist hazing does not happen at all fraternities, but rumors and stories abound on this campus and others about hazing.

The only isolated thing about the hazing Knoll underwent is that the Fiji house got caught. Hazing happens more often than the greek system will admit, and this accident should serve as a grim reminder of what can happen when fraternities haze.

To prevent more hazing accidents at UNL and at universities across the country, the greek system needs a change of attitude. It needs to enforce policies forbidding hazing and drinking, especially at a school like UNL, which is supposed to be a dry campus. Without a change in enforcement of hazing policies, Knoll will not be the only student injured during hazing.

Direct pressure

Clinton's influence could help in Geneva

More than 200,000 people have been killed, and 2 million have been made homeless by the war in the former Yugoslavia. The end apparently is not in sight.

Peace talks on Bosnia-Herzegovina in Geneva, Switzerland, were deadlocked Wednesday. Rival leaders refused to compromise on the division of the country among its three ethnic groups.

Bosnia's Muslim president, Alija Izetbegovic, and Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic met for a second day of negotiations, but were unable to reach an agreement.

The United States has been mostly silent throughout the war. While the Clinton administration made a wise decision to avoid committing troops to Bosnia-Herzegovina, it should step forward now and take an active role in promoting the peace.

Clinton's options are limited, even more so because the United States has stayed out of the war until now. But that does not mean the United States should do nothing. Clinton could direct as much attention to Bosnia-Herzegovina as he has to Somalia and Haiti.

John Mills, a spokesman for mediators Thorvald Stoltenberg and Lord Owen, said the negotiations were not likely to end soon. "The impression of the co-chairmen is that these negotiations will take time," Mills said.

The United States can help end the killing by pressuring both sides to come to an agreement. President Clinton's ability to influence the negotiations is limited, but he can make a difference.

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.

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MATT ZIMMERMAN

Kevorkian hype clouds issues

I love being part of "the liberal media." Often, on these cold winter evenings, I am warmed by the thought that I, too, am playing a small part in the grand, sweeping plan to manipulate the minds and spirits of the American people.

Before I began writing my columns this semester, I had no idea how successfully subversive this organization was. After I became immersed in this operation, though, I quickly became aware of the power of the ever-so-subtle and ever-so-successful controlling forces that hammer out predetermined media slants beforehand.

Or something like that. When it comes right down to it, the only way in which the media, if we have to persist in the belief that such an entity actually exists, tends to consciously "improve" upon the events that it reports on in its annoying tendency toward sensationalism. Part of it is inherent to the nature of the work, I suppose. The whole point is to bring the news to you and make sure you know what's happening.

In the pursuit of this goal, however, news folk tend to belittle important issues or water them down for general consumption to the point of absurdity. Case in point: Dr. Jack Kevorkian, a.k.a. The Suicide Doctor.

The Suicide Doctor. Dr. Death. Sound like pro wrestlers or titles of Perry Mason murder mysteries to me. Leave it to reporters to massively lose the forest for the trees on this one. No one really thinks about the real issues involved here. Instead, they think about his defiance of court orders, his being dragged off, literally, to jail, his countless assisted suicides. He's a nut, one side will argue. He's an angel of mercy, replies the other. In actuality, Dr. Kevorkian has very little to do with what is going on.

What's at stake in this right-to-die debate? To be blunt, the right to choose your own destiny. What's hanging in the balance of this oftentimes heart-wrenching controversy is the right to determine for yourself what you want



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your life to be. Superficially, we all try to aspire to that ideal. When it comes down to crunch time, though, a lot of people jump ship.

It seems odd to me that most of the people who appear to be the most adamantly opposed to the idea of a right to die are the same people who support the traditionally conservative idea of a limited role of government in financial and various other personal areas. The notion of wanting to minimize governmental interference in places such as health care and education is a very legitimate point of view to work from.

How then can these same people, who mold their lives around the idea of self-actualization and personal responsibility, oppose the notion of keeping the government out of the most personal decision imaginable?

Overall, we tend to be a compassionate people at heart, and we like alleviating pain and suffering wherever we can. We rush to send aid to homeless families along a flooded Mississippi River. We graciously take in orphans from an economically dilapidated Romania. We stumble over each other trying to help save a baby who falls down an abandoned well in Texas. We're good at these kinds of things, the clear-cut, easy-answer kinds of problems.

The same compassionate ideology is at work behind the movement to eliminate the kinds of activities that Dr. Kevorkian takes part in. The problem is that it isn't so cut-and-dry in this case. As a result, then, we screw up and make things worse. "Suicide is

never the answer!" opponents balk at the completion of an assisted suicide of a victim of Lou Gehrig's disease. "It's just taking the easy way out!" they shout after the death of an elderly cancer patient. No one really notices that these protesters are often the same people who can't stand the fact that they will have to pay higher taxes to pay for skyrocketing catastrophic health care costs.

Mercy killings and assisted suicides are serious issues, and I don't think Dr. Kevorkian has necessarily helped his cause with his activities. The impression he has left, with his seemingly endless line of clients who are eager to end it all, is that the harmful potential of his activities has come true. Simply depressed or confused or despondent people have come to look on suicide as a way to take care of all of their problems.

It may be true that some innocent people might be harmed because of this. But Dr. Kevorkian, or the portrayal of him that has come through, shouldn't cloud the issue.

When it comes down to it, an individual must have fundamental control of his or her own life, and it shouldn't be left to the government or the moral majority to decide when and where it is appropriate for a person to die. In any case, there isn't necessarily anything wrong with the "easy" way out, when you compare it to the alternatives.

Zimmerman is a junior English major and Daily Nebraskan columnist.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Social issues

Apparently several students at the College of Law, not all, feel the setting of a higher education should preclude the discussion and exploration of social issues, or, dare I say, selected viewpoints on certain issues (DN, Dec. 1). Incredible!

The institution of higher education is supposed to include a facilitation of vigorous discussion of social issues. It is through the university that we become prepared for the rest of life. If we are insulated from the challenges that face our fellow students, especially in dealing with controversial

issues, we will certainly fail. An education that does not include a thorough exploration and evaluation of social values would be "valueless."

The university is designed to incorporate multitudinous viewpoints from varying social settings, ethnic backgrounds and political and religious perspectives. The very point of such a diverse setting is to improve our understanding of one another.

Last point—if someone like Rush Limbaugh thinks poorly of the University of Nebraska, then we must be doing something right. The following behind his close-minded assaults, especially attacking attempts to remedy

the plagues of discrimination and hate, provide a solid reason why political and business leaders should not be allowed to have too much influence over what is taught at UNL.

When should students and faculty stop focusing on social issues? Not while people continue to verbally and physically assault other men and women because of their sexual preference, the color of their skin or their belief system. Not while society struggles with the resolution of these problems. In other words, not in this lifetime.

James Vihstadt
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