

PAUL KOESTER

Power of money seems eternal

Oh, for the love of money, that sweet-smelling, magnetically attractive piece of buying power around which this country revolves. The lengths we'll go, the policies we'll support and the sacrifices many will make to obtain that piece of prestige and power are amazing.



For some reason, Americans keep feeding into the system instead of trying to change it for the better.

Money is becoming an increasingly important component in each of our lives. Through television, radio, magazines and newspapers, the corporate world conditions us to materialism. They tell us we will find love, respect and self-fulfillment through physical possessions purchased with money.

Every day the corporate world finds another way to influence our thinking. There is no escape, because advertisers have permeated nearly every nook and cranny of available space. Tons upon tons of paper are consumed daily to assault our senses, and the garbage arrives in the mail constantly. Today, radio and TV seem to be one big sales pitch, and ugly billboards are everywhere. Even college football has been bought out. The Orange that was once in the center of the Orange Bowl has been replaced by a Federal Express advertisement this year. What a joke!

From the day we are born, advertisers push their values on us. Cigarettes and alcohol are falsely promoted as mature and sexy. Inhumane, unhealthy meat and dairy products are presented as healthy through advertisements and the public school system. Automobiles are pushed on us with no mention of the adverse environmental consequences. And fast-food joints promote their unhealthy, excessively packaged garbage that clogs our arteries.

The corporate world even has the nerve to tell women they need cosmetics to be attractive, and advertising still portrays females as housewives. I

often question their motives.

For some reason, Americans keep feeding into the system instead of trying to change it for the better. Suicide rates are high, and violence is rampant. Homelessness is increasing, and jobs are becoming more and more difficult to find. Family farmers and small businessmen are disappearing, and an increasing percentage of our purchases are from large corporate entities.

Yet, we continue to support a corrupt system instead of fighting for change. As long as the corporate world can assure that most of us will make enough money from their low wages to buy their drugs (alcohol, tobacco, television), the people will remain calm and apathetic.

In our society, white-collar criminals gain prestige and power, and blue-collar criminals are locked up and turned into hardened criminals. Landlords constantly steal tenants' deposits, knowing most tenants will not take them to court. Large money interests constantly abuse the environment, often with the aid of government subsidies. Manufacturers make nonrecyclable products designed to fall apart shortly after their purchase, and we go along with it, because we all know that we must keep consuming to keep this artificial economy afloat.

The environment we live in is really no surprise, for even our government is directly controlled by the cor-

porate money-oriented world. Through the lobbying system of government, the lives of politicians are guided by those with the campaign contribution money. Without huge sums of money, one cannot run for election.

All too often, money-hungry corporate interests with no regard for the environment or humanity are the ones possessing the campaign money. These interests include the cigarette and alcohol companies, the timber and mining industries, the auto and fossil fuel companies, and the meat and dairy industries, as well as the National Rifle Association and the weapon manufacturers.

Many money interests manage to drain large amounts of tax dollars to subsidize their products and keep their prices artificially low. This stimulates the economy, damages the environment and gets politicians re-elected. The environmental costs of our lifestyles are being passed on to future generations. One day at a time, right?

Are we really the United States, or are we divided over the quest for money? Are we really the land of the free, or are we slaves to corporate interests and the almighty dollar? Will our children enjoy freedom and security? Fellow Americans, let's not cash in our freedoms for gold.

Koester is a senior soil science major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

PAULA LAVIGNE

Dental terror complicates life

I was shot last weekend. An average-sized man in a white smock and greying hair loomed over me and shot me in the side — with Novocain.



So, call me a pansy. Pain is not my friend. I don't take pride in roughing out a trip to the dentist, doctor or anybody else with a needle. I'd be a terrible heroin addict.

Looking back, it wasn't that big of a deal. I didn't need to scream, drool and throw a fit while threatening to sue my doctor for malpractice if I didn't survive this painful violation of my skin. I like to think of myself as a fairly strong-willed person who can down 20 cups of coffee and still form multisyllabic words. However, needles, drills, sharp silver things and open-heart surgery bother me.

"Bother" is a little too diluted. Let's just say I have the pain tolerance of, oh, a penguin. I'm not fond of pain, and because of this, I fear it.

This all goes back to my childhood, when my mom dragged me to the dentist for the yearly checkup. She'd tell me we were going to Westroads or something, but I knew better. Just like a cat or dog knows when that "drive to the store" will result in a minor sex change at the local veterinarian, I knew we were going to the dentist.

My dentist came from a great dentist pool of older white males with really thick spectacles and Life Savers breath. After sticking everything from a mirror to what looked like a garden plow in my mouth, he ran in with my X-rays.

"Hm... Do you see this here?" he'd say, pointing to my photogenic molars.

"Wah is it?" I said with two cotton balls stuffed in my jaw and a plastic plate under my tongue.

"Looks like we have a few cavities here, Paula. And, we're going to have to pull a few teeth, have one excavated and oh gee, lookie here!"

This formerly friendly man in white, whom I had trusted with cleaning my teeth, had conned me with a free alligator toothbrush to let him

destroy my teeth. He explained my various dental mishaps like an archaeologist raving about his latest dig.

"And right under this tooth we have an abscess," he gleefully chirped. "Do you know what that means?"

"That you get another \$400?" "Wuh?" I said, sensing doom. He stared down at me with a hungry glint in his eye, suppressing a devilish smirk. "A ROOT CANAL!!! Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

Well, maybe not, but in the grip of fear and nitrous oxide, anything was possible. At any rate, I was prepared to bleed through my teeth. (Cheap pun, but well-intended.)

I was still lying in his puke-orange chair, clawing my way through the leather, as he pulled out this long silver needle. Before I let him put this thing in my mouth, we had to go over a few ground rules.

I asked him on a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being an ingrown toenail to 10 being motor vehicle homicide, how much was this going to hurt?

"Oh, it'll just be like a slight bee sting," he said matter-of-factly. Wait, are we talking about a little sweat bee or some Zimbabwe Jumbo Fry-Fritter Killing Bee? And how long will this "slight bee sting" hurt? Breath in, breath out. Breath in, breath out. I felt like I was going into labor. My eyes closed so tight they would need a scalpel to get them open again.

Here it comes. Ow ... ow ...

ooooooooooooo
OoooooYeaohceoeoeoeoeoeoeoeoe, ahhhh. Done. My blood pressure slowly crept back to a six-digit number.

Thinking everything would be all right, since my lip was taking a little trip to the moon, I relaxed. This psychotic villain, my dentist, started pulling out items I swore I saw the mechanic use on my muffler.

He thrust this little drill in my mouth. I bit him. Four hours and a few Band-Aids later, I had a filling.

Every doctor since then has had to pay for my low pain tolerance. I figure if I'm paying for another 18 holes on the golf course, they can tell me exactly how long and how bad this will hurt, and they can tell it to me 20 times.

So, call me a pansy. Pain is not my friend. I don't take pride in roughing out a trip to the dentist, doctor or anybody else with a needle. I'd be a terrible heroin addict.

This little four-letter word is again keeping me from the dentist's office. I was eating a gummy bear the other day when part of the bear's anatomy stuck in one of my back teeth and sent me screeching loud enough to wake up some peasant farmers in Venice.

In a few days, I'll be on the Jell-O plan as my tooth slowly rots out. No needle, no pain, no problem.

Lavigne is a freshman news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.



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