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NebraskanEditorial Board
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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EDITORIAL

Sober up

Omaha deaths expose drinking, driving

It is impossible to live in America today without being bombarded by messages warning against the dangers of drinking and driving. On Tuesday, Nebraskans were given the most persuasive argument possible.

Three high school students killed in a car accident Friday were buried in Omaha. Police suspect the accident was alcohol-related. Zima bottles were found at the scene.

The driver of the car survived, but Matthew Guilfoyle, 16, Jason Lombardi, 16 and Janelle Papillon, 17, are gone forever.

The Rev. David Korth, who presided over the funerals, said mourners should try to make something positive come out of the tragedy by heeding the lessons of drunken driving.

Those lessons are particularly relevant at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where drinking is a large part of peoples' social lives. The reality of life at UNL is that people drink. Not infrequently, they drive afterward.

It is easy to ignore the warnings of impersonal advertisements and slogans. But it is impossible to ignore the fact that three people who should have bright lives ahead of them don't, because of an accident involving alcohol.

Nothing will bring Matthew, Jason and Janelle back. But other deaths can be avoided if people take more responsibility to stop drinking and driving.

Talk is cheap

United Nations must back up 'safe area'

Almost a year ago, the United Nations declared Gorazde, a city in the former Yugoslavia, a "safe area."

With 49 killed and 218 wounded in the city as of Tuesday, its inhabitants don't feel safe. As Bosnian Serbs broke through government defenses in three places, civilians fled into the center of the city.

Yet Western nations have made it clear there will be no organized military effort to protect Gorazde. When Sarajevo, about 30 miles northwest of Gorazde, was threatened by Bosnian Serbs, NATO's threats of an airstrike prevented shelling.

Gen. John Shalikashvili said similar tactics would not work to protect Gorazde, because most of the damage was being done by small weapons, which could not be reached by airstrikes.

Still, the United Nations should stand behind its earlier declaration. Each time it fails to do so weakens its position. If the fighting groups believe the United Nations is 'all talk,' they will not respect it.

Bosnian officials have said the rest of the world has not taken the latest Bosnian Serb attack seriously.

Sarajevo was given much attention in the Western media. The American people were bombarded with often graphic photographs and articles about the hardships faced by the city that once played host to the Winter Olympics. On the other hand, few foreign reporters have been able to reach Gorazde.

Although Gorazde has not received the media attention that Sarajevo did, it should not be forgotten. The United Nations surely had good reason to declare this city a safe area. Although Western nations should not use unwise methods, they should stand behind the U.N. declaration.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Staff editorials represent the official policy of the Spring 1994 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.



KIMBERLY SPURLOCK

Abusive parent fathers sadness

After more than 20 years of marriage — many spent in a physically and mentally abusive relationship — a family friend, "Karen," has finally decided to leave her husband.

The accounts that led to Karen leaving her husband, with her two youngest children (her two oldest children had already moved out), were upsetting to me.

I had seen Karen's husband in a rage many times before, and his last outburst solidified my anger for him and my sadness for Karen and her children, my friends.

Any kindness that Karen's husband had in the past years became minute each time I saw the evil side of him. I know he had a kind side to him at some point, and I have seen that side of him in the past months and years — mostly when he was not drinking.

But even with those kind gestures and jokes, I almost detested him, because I knew that even though Karen and my friends may have been laughing and having fun at that moment, those smiles were only temporary.

I also knew that whenever Karen's husband did this, it was only temporary for me (he never hit me), because I knew I would be going home. At home, I could do anything wrong and my father would never, and has never, called me profane names, fought me or blatantly put down my mother.

I grew up feeling frightened for my friends, especially their two young sisters, who were between the ages of 4 and 6 when I realized their father was this way. Karen, a kind, giving and loving person, tried to protect her children, but she couldn't do a lot while living in a place where her husband ruled the home and where her words meant nothing.

Karen and her children are a beautiful family. No one could look at them



Karen and her children are a beautiful family. No one could look at them and think their life was living hell. But it was living hell — until recently.

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Karen decided to leave her husband after her two youngest children threatened to run away because of their father's abuse. Karen's husband found out about her plans from talking with his father, whom Karen had confided in.

Her husband came home upset, yelling at the two youngest children, now between 13 and 16 years old, telling them what he was going to do to their mother when she came home from work.

One could not possibly imagine what goes on in an abusive home by reading this column. Can you imagine being hit numerous times by your father because your little sister allegedly broke a water sprinkler? Can you imagine being forced to bad-mouth your mother in front of friends? Can you imagine being called bitches and whatever else by your father because you don't have dinner ready, or you're not cooking what he wants?

Some people can imagine it — those who have been through it or have witnessed it.

I often asked them to call the child abuse hot line, but they wouldn't. "Lisa," the second to the oldest, always toughed it out. She was the one in her family who literally defended her siblings and mother whenever her father yelled at them, hit them or called them names.

Granted, many times she said some things I would never say to my father. But like I used to tell her father, look who she got her ways from.

Karen finally moved out of her home because she felt her and her children's safety was threatened. Now Karen's husband is saddened by this. He promises he'll change. He talks of all the pressure he's been through. He says he'll get help. He pleads for Karen to come home.

My friends love their father, I know. They've protected him many times when I or someone else has tried to criticize him. But sometimes a mother must do what is in the best interest of her children.

Karen finally left after years of pain and sorrow. She tells her husband that her leaving is only temporary, and she'll be back once he cleans up his act. I can only hang my head with sadness.

If Karen's husband does get help and changes, good for him. But she can do well by herself, with her children and family by her side. I hang my head with sadness because I've seen Karen's husband change ways like the weather. And I hope if she ever goes back to him, she will be able to hold her head up with happiness and pride in herself, for her sake — for her children's sake.

Spurlock is a senior broadcasting, news-editorial and English major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

English department

Jim Rose seems to have a very twisted view of the English department at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. In response to Rose's letter (DN, April 1, 1994) regarding "no-brainer" English courses, I would like to ask Rose to be more specific than "composition and creative writing" courses, i.e., course number, title and instructor.

It is my impression that Rose may not have taken any English courses other than 150 and 151, which most freshman are required to take upon entering the arts and sciences college, and he may be unjustly categorizing the English department based on his perceptions of these classes.

The skills and methods taught in the English department are valuable tools, providing you have an open mind to what you are learning.

I find it interesting that Rose singles out the composition courses,

makes no mention of literature or linguistic courses offered at UNL and still categorizes the entire English department as a "major player in the university's hypocritical attempt to re-energize classroom teaching."

If UNL is nothing more than a "brain-dead party school where you go to screw around, where instructors pretend to teach, and the brightest students know exactly that" and therefore "try to go to college out of state," why is Rose attending UNL? Didn't he try hard enough to attend school out of state? By making these comments, he is putting himself into the category of students who, by his own words, are not bright, or are brain-dead.

With such feelings of self-depreciation, it is no surprise that he cannot see the usefulness of the courses offered by the English department.

Mark L. Kovarik
senior
English

Beau knows yuks

I would like to disagree with David Spinar's letter (DN, April 4, 1994) degrading Beau Finley's column on Brad Bernthal (DN, March 31, 1994). I consider myself a representative of Finley's vast readership. Finley's columns add spice and flavor to the DN. I find his writing entertaining and do not think Bernthal was offended by the column.

In fact, I'm sure Bernthal was glad to get the coverage and had a sense of humor about the whole thing. Finley's columns aren't meant to patronize. Rather, they are meant to expose a serious side to the far too serious world of sports.

The only complaint I have is the infrequency of his columns. Two words: every day!

Curtis Stalnaker
sophomore
engineering