

PAUL KOESTER

Paul's potpourri of ponderings

My writing career at the Daily Nebraskan will soon end. There is so much to write about, it's difficult to decide on a topic.

I considered writing about that young man in Singapore who chose to spray-paint cars and is going to get the whippin' of his life, and how if he was smart he would have come over here and done it, for in the United States one can simply buy a "good" lawyer and get off scot-free. How embarrassing it is that an American citizen went into another country and vandalized its property, and more so that our nation has the nerve to request he receive special treatment. He chose to break their laws, knowing the consequences.

Good thing we Americans are so humane. We're so compassionate, we simply cage people up like animals.

I could write about that woman who was struck by a Domino's Pizza truck that ran a red light. She spent a few hours in the hospital for minimal injuries and sued the company for \$78 million. \$78 million! They should have given her a couple grand and given the rest to the sick and homeless or to the environmental movement, or they should have used the money to form a new support group for people who have been so deeply traumatized by minor accidents.

Speaking of justice, how about that Barney/Bjorklund trial? Typical case of the inconsistencies and injustice of the death penalty, I say. One man gets off because he turns in his accomplice first, while the other man acts as scapegoat. We're sure quick to hang in this country and slow to change the underlying causes of violence.

Another good topic would be Judge Endacott and his intimacy with the jury. I believe Bjorklund received a fair trial, but what's the judge doing praying with the jury? And why is he hugging them? And what's this about



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the jury giving him a chocolate pie after the trial? Sounds a little fishy, if not a little above and beyond the call of duty. Yum, yum, this talk about pizza and pie is making me hungry.

Speaking of food, I could write about the commercialization of our football team. This came to mind today when I heard the new Runza advertisement featuring that hero Trev Alberts. How about that huge salary Tom Osborne receives while his university falls apart? How about those poor seats students continue to pay too much for? If I were Association of Students of the University of Nebraska president, I'd call for a boycott and make a national scene — picketing, protesting, the works. They'd catch on. Don't worry, though; Loudon is gonna tell 'em to quit that, and with the vast authority the regents have given him, things will change. Sure, he gets no vote, but they've been so kind to let him represent 24,000 students by coming to their meetings. Those nice regents.

Where was the university band during the Orange Bowl? I guess Hollywood stars are more exciting, because our band received minuscule TV coverage at halftime. To further commercialize football, the university is going to install multimillion-dollar video screens to be paid for partially by advertisers. Now football games can be as good as TV, with commercials and all. Cool!

I could write about Clinton's health-care plan, and how it continues to

assure that billions of dollars will be channeled through the health-care leeches, the insurance companies. I say we bypass these parasites, remove the loopholes from the rich in the upper tax brackets and use that money to pay the doctors directly for health care. Also, there is no need to help the wealthy with their health care — only those in need. In Clinton's program, employers will be required to insure all employees. Layoffs will result from his plan, but not in the insurance company offices.

I could write about the new worldwide trade agreement, and how it will result in rampant environmental destruction worldwide, as powerful corporate interests go into Third World nations and freely exploit their resources more than they already are. The rich nations will prosper at the expense of the less developed. At last, the final frontier of the corporate world is here.

Another option was to write about the abuse of our national forests by elite logging, mining and ranching interests, and how the government is losing money subsidizing these unsustainable practices.

I even considered writing about those sophisticated fraternity party shirts. Can those guys party or what?

Then again, I could just write about a little of everything.

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

PAULA LAVIGNE

Lincoln's meat not just steaks

More than nine months ago, I arrived in the capital city with a zillion boxes, shampoo, enough computer equipment to launch a small jet and a prayer.

I also came with some skepticism that I wouldn't be able to find anything in Lincoln. It wasn't the jigsaw puzzle of one-way streets and construction barriers; it was my lack of hope for this pseudo-city. I wasn't a Lincolnite, I thought, and I'd never be one.

Like any peon freshman, I missed home. It was more than my best friend, my dog, my mom and my own shower. It was the big "O" fading off into the distance as I traveled down Interstate 80 to a foreign land.

Living on the outskirts of Omaha for more than 18 years, I grew fond of this metropolitan oasis on the prairie and came to realize we did more than "make meat."

There was more between Denver and Chicago than a few hundred rest areas and Stuckey's. There was Omaha. Lincoln was just another tourist attraction, like Chimney Rock or Carhenge.

I always thought of Lincoln as a large suburb, kind of a scale model of Omaha, full of senators, college students, grandparents and psychotically obsessed Husker fans.

In the big petri dish of Nebraska, Lincoln was a little germ, and Omaha was a full-blown virus.

Nine months later, the cold war is over, and my perception of Lincoln has warmed up. The people aren't a bunch of clones, and it's not the cultural black hole of the Midwest.

Omaha, of course, is a much larger city than Lincoln, and things, on the whole, are just built on a grander scale, with the exception of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and athletic egos.

Omaha has larger museums, movie theaters, parking lots and rats. The Haymarket is a Barbie-esque version of the Old Market, and the Folsom Children's Zoo is a fishbowl compared to the ocean of the Henry Doorly



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Zoo. Omaha has four large shopping malls that make Gateway look like a glorified 7-Eleven. Lincoln Municipal Airport is a fly strip compared to Eppley Airfield.

Omaha's corporate base is larger, and it is more densely and permanently populated with larger families. There's a good reason for this, however.

Lincoln's population takes a severe beating. It's the most nomadic area on the map. On a given fall Saturday, the population of Memorial Stadium becomes the third largest "city" in Nebraska. But, after a few beers and bad calls, everyone goes home. Throngs of college students come down in the fall, and senators mosey in when the Legislature is in session.

But this cozy small-town atmosphere is kind of good. Lincoln has less crime, I think, because people aren't here long enough to hate each other. Lincoln's streets, unlike Omaha's, aren't continually polluted with barricades, cones and road kill.

Lincoln, being farther south, is considerably warmer than Omaha at significant times of the year like, oh, let's say the middle of January. It's not like traveling from Siberia to Ecuador, but it's a significant improvement.

One of my biggest fears about leaving Omaha had to do with the culture clash. I thought the most exciting events in Lincoln would be a documentary film festival on prairie dirt (sorry, soil) and a John Denver lip-sync contest.

In the past nine months, I've met some of the biggest names in jazz,

rock and classical music. Famous ballet companies and artists have wandered through here. Prominent actors and actresses, instructors and other entertainers have all stopped in Lincoln. And, each one talked about how much they underestimated the cultural base of this city and how surprised they were when they came.

Touring artists aren't the only ones responsible. Local artists and entertainers — from bar bands to faculty photographers — have made Lincoln an internationally renowned place to perform, teach and learn to create.

Every individual and organization associated with UNL's College of Fine and Performing Arts, the Wagon Train Project, the Lincoln Association for Traditional Arts, the Home Concert Association, the Lincoln Symphony Orchestra, downtown bars and other Lincoln groups are responsible for fostering local talent and bringing in new talent to the capital city.

With all this praise, I don't mean to sell Omaha short by making it sound like some two-bit traveling flea circus. Omaha has a strong cultural base, and I've known that for a long time, but it does have competition down south.

Omaha and Lincoln have their strong and weak points, and together they generate a strong image for Nebraska. Maybe I'd even find some hidden notoriety in Scottsbluff or Ogallala if I looked beyond the cornstalks.

Although it's not New York, London or Paris, Lincoln does have a stake, not just steaks, of which it can be proud.

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

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