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EDITORIAL

Lost horizons

Everyone's best interest is subjective

The earthly powers-that-be come in all shapes and sizes, but it's generally true that they live in relative comfort. Some of them live in relative comfort beyond imagination, and they often make decisions that affect those who may not live so comfortably. Such decisions are frequently rationalized as everyone's best interest, even if few things actually cover that spectrum.

When the City of Lincoln decided to run a highway through the old Malone neighborhood, it was probably to bring more business into the downtown area. More business would mean more jobs and more money — everyone's best interest.

The city began buying and condemning "substandard" properties in the old neighborhood. Families who had known one another for generations were scattered. When the city abandoned plans to build the road, the properties weren't offered back to people in the neighborhood, but to the university.

The diversity-conscious university erected yet another monument to mediocre architecture and laid some sod to appease the remaining neighbors. A research center would mean more jobs and more money — everyone's best interest.

Shiny, new tract houses and apartment buildings have replaced some of the run-down properties that were destroyed. Obviously, anyone would rather have a new house than a beat up old place where the screen door hangs from one hinge and the floors are uneven. Anyone would prefer sitting inside under central air rather than sitting on the front porch with fan in one hand. That is, anyone who thinks like the powers-that-be.

There is a chance that our understanding of everyone's best interest only goes as far as our own experience, and to constantly impose our own experience on others is to be ignorant.

We may never understand the real cost of dismantling Lincoln's only, true minority neighborhood, where people recognized each other and helped raise each other's children. The true tragedy is for the children who will never experience the support and security of living in such a neighborhood.

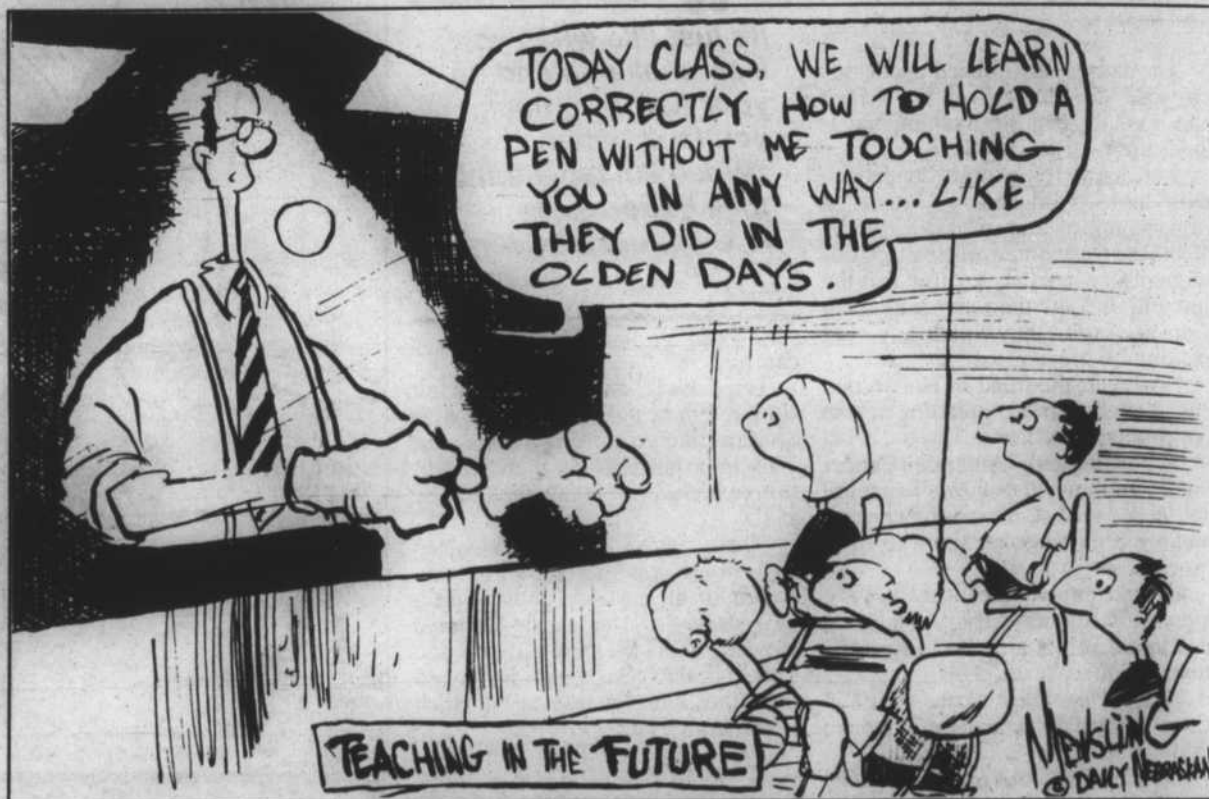
Officials of all kinds have institutionalized desegregation and espoused multi-cultural education. They've created quotas and agencies to guarantee fair treatment for people in minority groups. What they have failed to do is understand that there are people who prefer living in their old houses among their old neighbors to having a subsidized split-level with powder-blue shag carpet.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Staff editorials represent the official policy of the Summer 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.



MUHAMMAD MOHUIDIN

Student finds U.S. confusing

United States is a place where millions of students come to from all over the world every year. They stay here for periods ranging from few to many years, depending upon their prospective educational goals.

One of the biggest achievements of a foreign student, especially one from a third world country, is to get admitted to an American university.

The day he gets the visa he is a changed man. He starts considering himself a superhuman. Back in his own country he starts hating everything around and brags of anything associated with him. He feels he is too good for his own country, and any day that passes there is a sheer waste of time.

Even among his very best friends he is very formal and speaks English more than his own native language and sneers at those who do otherwise. Walking down the street, if he finds vehicles emanating thick clouds of smoke—a scenario that used to go unnoticed earlier—he curses the driver most and talks of this as a major crime because he knows in America the environmental laws are very stringent and they hate such transgressors more than they hate murderers, and so does he.

Like every other foreign student, his image of an American school when he is back home is a very utopian one. He thinks of it as a place full of the most talented people of the world, and also the most beautiful ones. Every other day he dreams of being in the United States among his beautiful girlfriends. He also dreams of every passerby giving him a great smile full of love and respect.

At last his dreams come true and with such emotions, dreams and attitudes he reaches America.

Back in his country English (British) is taught but not spoken. Anyhow, he gets a good TOEFL (Test Of En-



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glish as a Foreign language — an English proficiency test for students coming from countries where English is not spoken) score and is exempted from any English remedial courses.

He is very confident of his English proficiency, yet as the Persian proverb goes:

They know that they know but they don't know.

The events that follow explain the proverb.

He goes to a bookstore to buy an eraser, but doesn't find one, so he asks a girl standing next to him,

"Where can I find a good quality rubber?"

The girl stares at the gentleman and retorts,

"Better go to a drug store," and turns away from him.

Shocked by such an unexpected reply, he never finds the courage to ask the girl why the hell the rubbers are in the drugstore and not in the bookstore.

A few days later while roaming in his friend's car, he sees a girl alongside a lonely street, impatiently waiting for a bus. He quickly pulls the car near her and rolling down window glass asks her most chivalrously, "Do you want lift?"

The girl bursts with rage and threatens to sue him for sexual harassment. Quite bewildered by this onslaught, he flees the scene.

Back in his country shaking hands or even kissing a cute, beautiful child

is generally considered a gesture of love and appreciation.

In a supermarket, quite disgusted with his recent encounters with pretty girls, he is looking for a counter with a male attendant. Meanwhile a very cute preschooler with vermilion, fluffy cheeks passes by him singing a kindergarten tune.

Touched by the innocent child he shakes the youngster's hands and as soon as he stoops to kiss the child, the mother appears on the scene. Seeing this she goes amok and once again he is threatened to be sued, but this time for child abuse, a situation far beyond his comprehension.

This all is happening to a person who started to hate his own country just because of his obsession for the American culture. Now he starts to feel so acutely nostalgic that he wishes he could take the next available flight back home. A place where he can buy a rubber from a bookstore, can give a lift (ride) to a person looking for the same and can also intimately appreciate the cuteness and innocence of a child.

After remaining depressed for a couple of weeks he happens to read an article on culture shock and comes to know, to his great relief, that he is not the only sufferer.

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