

# OPINION

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Page 4

## Daily Nebraskan

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### EDITORIAL

## Final sentence

*At last, Bjorklund will learn his fate*

Twenty-four months ago, a news story that captivated UNL and the state of Nebraska slowly began to develop.

Candice Harms, an 18-year-old University of Nebraska-Lincoln student, was reported missing. Speculation ran wild as new leads developed daily.

Initially, some speculated that Harms simply ran away on her own, but when her 1987 blue Chevy Corsica was found north of Lincoln, that hope was dispelled.

Soon, Harms' young face became known to much of Lincoln and southeast Nebraska. It appeared on the front page of newspapers, on television news and soon showed up on billboards throughout the city.

Twelve weeks later, her killers were arrested and have since become household names.

Today, Lancaster County District Judge Donald Endacott is scheduled to sentence Roger Bjorklund — one of Harms' killers.

After a lengthy trial in 1993, and a hundreds of rare legal maneuvers, it appears this case could finally be turning into its final chapter.

It is time for this case to move forward. Bjorklund has been granted due process to the full extent of the law.

We find it ironic that Bjorklund finally will learn if he will spend life in prison or be sentenced to death in the electric chair exactly two years after he and accomplice Scott Barney raped, tortured and murdered Harms.

## Peace. Right, Bill?

*Clinton should recall Vietnam protest*

In light of Jimmy Carter's blundered negotiations in North Korea earlier this year, Americans held their breath Sunday as the former president assisted last-minute negotiations with Haitian military leaders.

U.S. military operations to restore democratically elected president Jean-Bertrand Aristide to power already had begun Sunday evening when the White House was notified that an agreement had been reached.

The accord came after 61 planes with Army paratroopers were airborne to begin an invasion.

Raoul Cedras has agreed to leave power by Oct. 15, paving the way Aristide's return.

The invasion would not have been a walk in the park.

Lives undoubtedly would have been lost, including those of U.S. troops and innocent Haitian civilians.

This time, it seemed President Clinton's threat of military invasion worked. But at what cost if it had not?

It seems ironic that a president who publicly declared his disapproval of the Vietnam War would condemn U.S. troops and Haitian civilians to perhaps a similar fate for a similar cause, despite the American public's widespread disapproval of a Haitian invasion.

Although Americans would have supported its military men and women if they had gone through with the invasion, Clinton, in his hasty threats, should take note of the lesson:

We ought to negotiate full-force with words before we resort to weapons.

### EDITORIAL POLICY

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JAMES MEHLSING  
LINCOLN TIMES-UNION

DEB MCADAMS

## Canning reawakens memories

I put up 12 pints of tomatoes Saturday night. I probably should have been studying, or pursuing a social life, but putting up tomatoes was more important. It reminded me of a previous life.

I was a farm wife, living in a small, rented house in a pasture of sage and yucca. Spike and I had to have the biggest organic garden in Dundy County. We filled the basement with squash, potatoes and braids of onions.

Spike taught me to garden. I had learned the skill as a child, but by the time I met Spike, I had lost it. I had lost nearly everything before I met him, including my life.

Suicide is sometimes called an easy way out, but I could never get the hang of it. People who commit suicide must lose all instinct to survive. I was almost to that point, but not quite. The scars from most of my suicide gestures are on my liver and lungs.

I was spared more visible scars by a state patrolman who grabbed the hem of my coat as I lunged from his car. I remember watching the pavement flying by, a couple of inches from my nose. The stunt got me a ticket to Ward 34 at the Hastings Regional Center, where I spent two weeks under suicide watch. I was 19.

I knew how I got there. I'd had a lifetime of preparation.

All my life, I'd heard I was stupid, ugly and worthless. Today, we understand that for children words can be tantamount to violence, but that wasn't altogether clear in the '60s. My father didn't realize the power of his words. He also didn't realize that someone else was having sex with me about the time I was learning to read.

No one else in Cozad, Neb., knew it either, and even if they did, they looked the other way. Before I



*Working the earth healed my soul. I grew stronger with time, and a passion for life overpowered my desire to die. That passion was always there, but it had been obscured by trauma.*

graduated from high school, I was drinking hard and sleeping around. People thought I was reckless and irresponsible for the sheer fun of it. My classmates voted me "Best Sense of Humor" of the Class of '79.

I knew I desperately needed help. I found a psychiatrist when I was 17. I told him I drank Scotch and slept with strangers. He charged me 50 bucks and told me to meditate.

I soon meditated my way onto Ward 34, where I wrote a letter to Spike, whom I'd recently met. When he got the letter, he called to say he would get me out of there if it took all the lawyers alive.

He'd been waiting to save someone, and I'd been waiting for someone to save me. We spent the next nine years together, creating jungles in barren front yards. Working the earth healed my soul. I grew stronger with time, and a passion for life overpowered my desire to die. That passion was always there, but it had been obscured by trauma.

Trauma requires us to go inside of ourselves. I had to analyze my emotions one by one and take responsibility for them. It was very distracting. I only vaguely noticed the rest of the world.

When I emerged from those years of introspection, everything was new. I was driven by curiosity,

and my dream of going to college was reawakened.

That dream didn't sit well with Spike, although he tried to be supportive. I only took one class at a time, but it took more of my attention than he was comfortable sharing. We struggled hard before we said goodbye.

I left my canning jars, my food dehydrator and the bedspread and curtains I had made. I left the flowers I'd planted and the dogs I had loved. I left the man who helped me save my life. I would eventually leave the lives of my family and many of my friends in an effort to put a little girl's nightmares behind me.

I became a full-time student nearly two years ago. It was an ultimate act of faith in myself. I had to believe I could really change my life. It took every ounce of energy I possessed.

I was too terrified of failure to let my former life mingle with the one I was trying to build. I had to avoid all of my memories, not just the bad ones. I had given up everything to go to school. It was impossible for me to admit that some of the things in my former life were not so bad.

A sack of tomatoes changed that last Saturday night.

McAdams is a junior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

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