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EDITORIAL

## Guts not glamorous

*Obsessive culture reinforces violence*

"God, guns and guts — they all made America and let's keep 'em all."

So the saying goes. And keeps going. And going.

Violence has taken baseball's place as America's favorite pastime.

Face it, we can't get enough of it. It's everywhere in American culture. We watch it, read about it, talk about it, glamorize it.



Brett Gottschall/DN

on a random Monday night.

It never ends.

Violence sinks further into our culture. Children's video games involve stomping, shooting, smashing or blasting. Issues we as a society become passionate about are dubbed "war on drugs," "war on poverty," and even "war on crime."

It sinks in, until we are almost immune to "guts" unless they're our own.

To what extent our glamorization of violence perpetuates it is a question we need to ask. Surely we know it is not the cause of our societal problems. The roots of crime and violence reach much deeper.

Yet we cannot tell to what extent our obsession with violence reinforces it.

Convicted killer Roger Bjorklund, who was sentenced to death Tuesday (the violence never ends), confessed he quoted lines from the movie "Cape Fear" while he raped and murdered Candice Harms two years ago.

Bjorklund also has been petitioning the court to change his name to that of a gangster character from the book "Wiseguy."

And former UNL student Gerald Schlondorf, who was charged in the shooting of a UNL police officer, told Lincoln police he recently had seen the movie "Natural Born Killers" and was thinking about the movie during his chase with police.

We as a culture are obsessed with violence, from the make-believe silver screen to America's now deadly city streets.

It is time we reinforced the fact that nothing is glamorous about guts.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Staff editorials represent the official policy of the Fall 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.

NO BILL,  
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YOUR OWN  
WITH HEALTH  
CARE.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Qué lástima

As reliable as the buzzards return to Hinkley and the annual tuition hike, comes the "sudden" realization that arts and sciences majors have a foreign language requirement (editorial cartoon, DN, Sept. 19, 1994). This requirement has been around since before I was an arts and sciences major (Class of 1983, life science).

As for having nothing to do with your major, it may seem that way now. I have noticed that things I thought would never use (i.e. calculus, foreign languages...) have a way of becoming useful later.

If you see the prospect of 16 credit hours of foreign language as the sleeping ogre, then why didn't you take it in junior high or high school and avoid this "bete noire"? What? They didn't offer it at your high school?

Qué lástima!  
Well, they should.

From a more practical view, if you have foreign language skill, you are more marketable (that means a job and subsequently more income). The job market is global and, believe it or not, not everyone speaks English.

Because she had studied another language, my sister was able to speak with a Russian person by speaking Spanish. It's a funny old world, huh? If learning a foreign language is putting a cramp in your scholastic style, change majors or try studying harder. Quit yer bitchin' and "bon chance!"  
Qué será, será!

Anita M. Jackson  
Lincoln

### Population debate

Shane Tucker's column on the United Nations' population conference in Cairo, and his reflections on the population problem in general, contain an important truth: A variety of factors have complex effects on the rise and fall of human numbers. He rightly interrelates poverty, food production, women's roles in reproduction, education, and development (he terms these "feminist gibberish"), economic growth, industrialization, the Earth's resource base and technological innovation.

Yet, Mr. Tucker's column fails to examine the matter with care, nor does it hint at the historically extended debate over the relation-



James Mehsling/DN

ships of the factors listed above. Mr. Tucker offers us the easy solution that free markets can easily handle a doubling population in the next 40 years. But the collision of environment, growing population, vast human poverty and losses to plants and animals is neither so easily analyzed nor so easily resolved.

Although it has proved extremely difficult to estimate the earth's carrying capacity for humans and their products, there is growing consensus that humanity is now at, near, or past the limits to growth.

Although we recognize that there is much legitimate controversy over the environmental situation, we are convinced that there is little reason for optimism unless major changes are made in world governance and economics. It will not be easy for the Third World to halt its present rapid population growth, and this effort will prove futile unless the first world also learns to limit its consumption.

The Earth's ecosystem is already in a clear, observable, empirically verifiable process of deterioration — a direct result of human activities. It may be that the Earth could sustain present numbers, and perhaps even twice the present global human population. But only if everyone in the first world undergoes a profound transformation in lifestyle: eating low on the food chain (locally grown, of course), walking or cycling wherever we go, limiting most industrial activities, hastening the development of resource-intensive technologies, and redistributing the vast

resources and wealth controlled by consumerist societies.

Yet, estimating the overall quantity of food that can be produced still overestimates what is actually available to feed everyone. Food must be transported, distributed, and paid for, and land to produce it must be maintained and re-fertilized over decades.

Food insecurity arises from maldistribution, irresponsible and corrupt government, civil war, local environmental degradation, Western control of developing nations' most fertile land, the production of luxury crops such as coffee and cocoa in place of local subsistence farming, and the failure of market systems to serve the poor.

The causal interrelationships of wealth and population also have received extensive scrutiny by economists, but with little definitive result. Surely markets and technological development are necessary tools if humanity is not to meet total disaster, but they can hardly be the sole solution. Many hope that economic development, of the right kind, will prove to be a key element in limiting population growth. Indeed, the Cairo conference supported economic development and education for women as a means to limiting population. We are surprised that a free marketer like Mr. Tucker is so unsupportive of this result.

As a philosopher and a theologian, we are troubled by Mr. Tucker's readiness to use name-calling in his characterization of those with whom he believes himself to disagree. He speaks of "gibberish," "group think," "fools" and bad "philosophy." As philosophers who have read widely, we are impressed by the persistent difficulty and uncertainty of arguments on policy, and by the need to study any issue of importance in depth.

We would suggest that interested readers go beyond Mr. Tucker's sources of U.S. News and World Report and Forbes Magazine, and peruse Love Library's many books and articles dealing seriously with the profound ecological crisis facing humanity today.

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