

# OPINION

Thursday, November 17, 1994

Page 4

Daily  
**Nebraskan**  
Editorial Board  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Jeff Zeleny ..... Editor, 472-1766  
Kara Morrison ..... Opinion Page Editor  
Angie Brunkow ..... Managing Editor  
Jeffrey Robb ..... Associate News Editor  
Rainbow Rowell ..... Columnist/Associate News Editor  
Mike Lewis ..... Copy Desk Chief  
James Mehlsing ..... Cartoonist

EDITORIAL

## Spoil sports

### Athlete crimes warrant further study

Athletes are conditioned to be as tough as animals on the playing field. But off the field, society expects them to be role models.

When athletes don't act like role models — when they are arrested or convicted — the news media often takes note.

Are athletes really more prone to committing violent acts, or are their crimes simply made more public?

That question was partially addressed in a recent survey.

Two professors at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and a graduate student at Northeastern University concluded that athletes were in fact involved in more incidents of college sexual assaults than non-athletes.

During the 1991-1993 survey, which studied student judicial records, researchers found athletes made up only 3.3 percent of male students but comprised 19 percent of the convicted assaulters. However, a survey of campus police records showed no major difference in the criminal records of athletes and other students.

While data found in the study appears to be inconsistent, the issue of sexual assault and athletes does warrant additional study.

The study, "Male Student-Athletes Reported for Sexual Assault: A Survey of Campus Police Departments and Judicial Affairs Offices," gathered its statistics from 30 unnamed schools with highly rated NCAA Division I programs.

It is unknown if the University of Nebraska-Lincoln was one of the targeted colleges. But UNL does meet the survey's criteria of having a top 20 football or basketball team in the last three years.

The Daily Nebraskan also learned that ESPN was on campus last week attempting to compile a story about athletes who have committed sexual assault.

They were specifically interested in the case of Nebraska defensive tackle Christian Peter, who pleaded no contest to third-degree sexual assault charges last year. Athletic department officials declined comment to ESPN.

Past cases can't be changed. But the discussion must continue.

As one of the researchers, Jeffrey Benedict of Northeastern University, has said, the debate should shift to how the issue can be addressed instead of whether athletes commit sex crimes.

"There's a real make-it-while-you-can, sex-and-money attitude in sports, and it's not so different in music, acting, maybe some aspects of politics," Benedict told The New York Times.

"But there's a special factor here; some of our best athletes are trained in violence and deception, and they just can't turn it on and off when we want them to. And given the money involved, coaches and owners might not want to risk them losing their edge for the game."

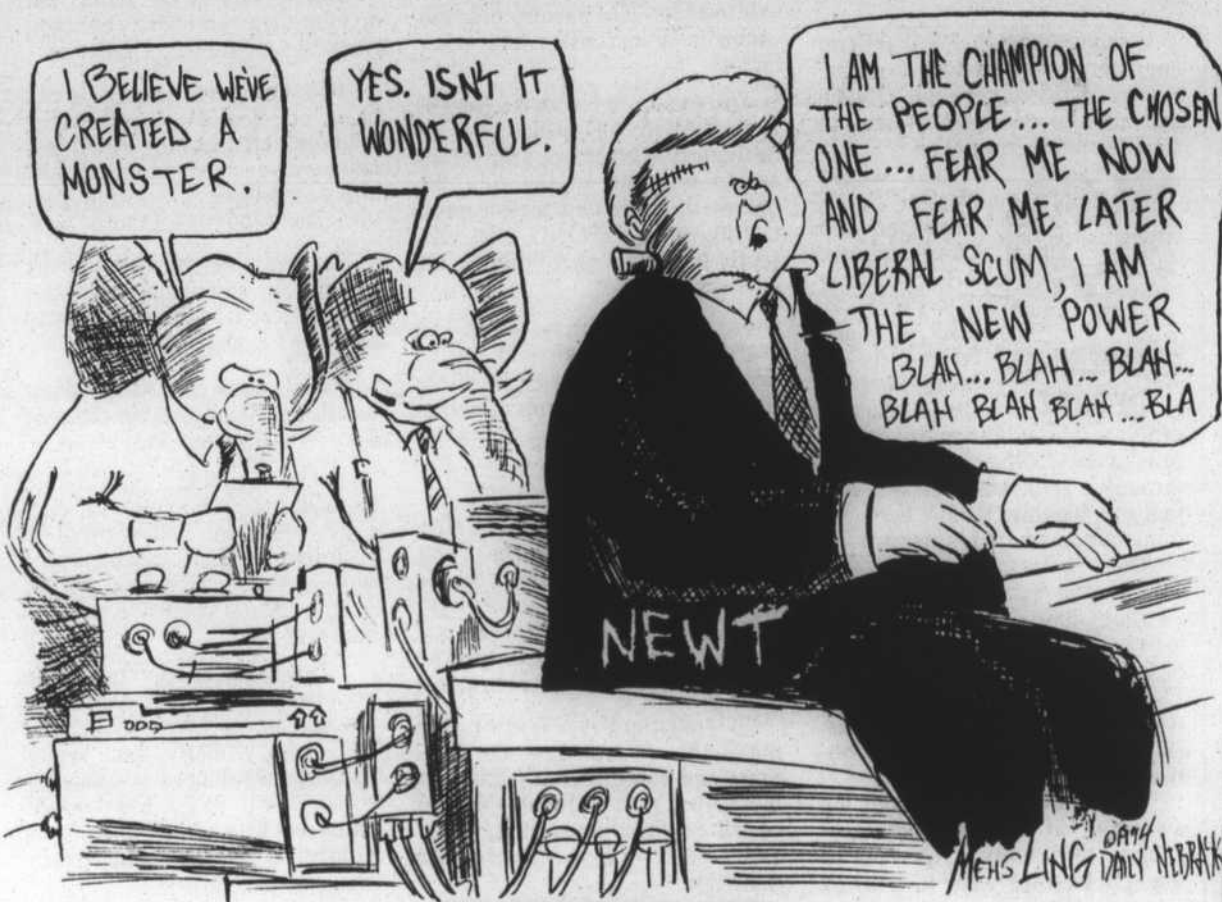
The question lingers: Can we expect athletes to shut off their violence and step onto our pedestal?

#### 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.



#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### 'Gay lifestyle'

As president of the Gay and Lesbian Student Association, I have been reluctant to respond to many of the homophobic, bigoted and definitely hateful statements in columns written by both Shane Tucker and Jamie Karl.

My first reaction was to allow the educated and well-thought people of this campus respond to this kind of blatant discrimination of "Queers." So far, the students, faculty and staff have been doing a great job of discrediting Karl's and Tucker's "proof" of the reasoning behind their hatred, but enough is enough.

Both Karl and Tucker have referred to this "Gay Lifestyle," and not once have they tried to explain what that is. The way they write — so matter-of-factly — they surely have to have some idea of what this gay lifestyle is. Please, boys, help me understand this term you use (or misuse) so readily.

I am a gay man, and I've been thinking what my lifestyle — which Karl and Tucker amazingly stretch and alter — is like and trying to put it into context. Because Webster doesn't define it for us, and neither Karl nor Tucker explain anything, let me as a gay man give it a "twirl."

Let me start with the word "lifestyle." Webster does define this word as: "the way in which an individual lives." Since I'm gay, let me describe the way I live, and maybe we'll get a picture of what this gay lifestyle is all about. My schedule is usually the same for most days: I get up in the morning, shower, brush my teeth and eat breakfast.

Then I'm off for a day of classes that range from English to history and maybe a math class. On certain days I may go to work or go home and study for a while. Oh yeah, I try to go to the rec center and work out several times a week. All week long, my schedule is pretty consistent to this. Is this the gay lifestyle?

Then comes the weekend, and I, like many college students, may go to a movie, dinner and then out to the bars downtown; or maybe I'll use the time to catch up on school-work. Does this classify me as living the gay lifestyle? Since I'm gay, no matter what I do, I'm living the "gay lifestyle." Yet if you look at my schedule, I think most people would fit into this "gay lifestyle" category.

So please do tell me what this

gay lifestyle is that you're trying to shield children from. The way I live? How much different is it from the way you live?

I'd like to end with part of a poem by Pat Parker from her book, "Movement In Black." It helps explain why enough is enough for me:

...the supreme court/says it is illegal/to scream fire/in a crowded theatre/to scream fire/in a crowded theatre/causes people to panic/to run to hurt each other/my mind remembers/& now i know/what my innards/say/illegal to cause/people/to panic/to run/to hurt/there is/no contradiction/what the Nazis say/will cause/people/to hurt/Me.

No matter how you try to masquerade the hate you write under your First Amendment right, Mr. Tucker and Mr. Karl, that hate will cause people to hurt ME and MILLIONS of other Queers out there.

Christopher Pavao  
GLSA president



Bret Gottshall/DN

### Hate

Prior to coming to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, I taught for 18 years at two prestigious Eastern prep schools. The image most Nebraskans conjure up of such institutions is that of an elitist, ivy-colored campus, populated by snotty, rich, lazy, crybaby WASPs — whose dads buy their way into Harvard and, hence, the family business. Of course, this is an unfortunate stereotype born of a lack of knowledge about first-rate prep schools and their students.

Similarly, there are those like Jamie Karl who unilaterally castigate homosexuals as sex-crazed pederasts, who are only too happy to lead a Boy Scout troop or sign on as counselors at overnight

youth camps. As with any sizeable segment of the population, there are subgroups within it who by no means embrace, what others outside the group mistakenly perceive as miraculously unanimous, a point of view.

Recently, we've seen fissures in the leadership of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. This, I'm sure, comes as a shock to those who perceive African Americans as having a universally agreed-upon agenda and who would prefer that they returned to their homeland. We've also seen power plays within the National Organization for Women. The Roman Catholic Church is having to wrestle with issues of leadership roles and women's rights — while every TV evangelist seems to have a direct line to heaven via his or her "inspired" interpretation of the Scriptures.

I'm mystified as to why men or women would want to dress in a manner unbecoming or uncomplimentary to their physical attributes. I can't fathom a physical attraction to a preteen. Indulging in sex acts that involve physical pain lies totally beyond my comprehension.

Yes, I obviously carry a big sack of prejudices around with me, but I don't stand in the way of those people expressing their various philosophical, sociological and sexual views until they infringe upon my legal rights. Some confuse tolerance with acquiescence.

Personally, I know I can't solve what I perceive as the world's problems; but I can do my small part and hope for the best. Moreover, I realize that one person's problems are another person's reasons for living.

The peace and light each of us seeks might be nice for a few years, but I think such homogenous life would become a little, well, boring. Why, I bet even Heaven has its fractious elements.

Jamie Karl, I hope you'll be careful where you aim that loose cannon of yours. I dare say, years from now, you'll probably meet a homosexual in Heaven who will only want to strike up an innocently intelligent conversation with you — period.

In the meantime, mind the message of one of my favorite bumper stickers: "Hate is not a family value."

James Hejduk  
associate professor of music