

Giving season

Human needs linger past charitable holidays

It's better to give than to receive. Cliche, I know, but there's reason; it's true.

And with the passing of Halloween, the giving season has officially begun.

Ask any organization that uses volunteers and they'll tell you that, with the holiday season, comes the well-meaning bell ringers, package wrappers, can collectors, clothing donors and money givers.

And it's wonderful this outpouring occurs. It makes the holiday season brighter and warmer for many families.

Children who may not have had anything to look forward to on Christmas morning are surprised with the toy or two "Santa" left. Or they may acquire a warm coat that fits.

People will feel better about themselves and their communities during these next couple of months. Turkey Day is a blend of family, food and can drives. Winter holidays are for friends, family and the Salvation Army. New Year's is ... well ... a time for friends.

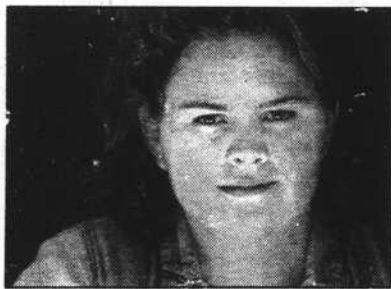
After the holidays, ask those organizations that have benefited from the generous spirit of the community, how many of those volunteers stick around past January 31st?

It seems that, as soon as the Christmas tree or the Menorah goes away, so does the volunteer spirit.

Funny the coincidence: it's real easy to give time, money or gifts to strangers when you're doing the same thing, on a grander scale, for your loved ones.

And when we stop giving to those we know, the giving almost always comes to an abrupt end for those we don't.

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Jessica Kennedy

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About a month ago, the Daily Nebraskan ran a front page story about the shortage of male volunteers in programs such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters and the Nebraska Human Resources Institute.

I'll wager a month's income that in the following two months, there is a dramatic increase in the number of inquiries Big Brothers/Big Sisters receives regarding volunteer opportunities.

I'll also bet that, at most, half will follow all the way through orientation.

And of those, only a few brave souls will actually take on the responsibility of a "little."

I, myself, only made it through the orientation process. School started, I got busy and my priorities changed. I didn't feel that I had the time to consistently give to a young

child in need.

But, unlike the other 80 percent who drop out of the program, I'm still going to volunteer. When the BB/BS office called to set up an interview, I told them that I had changed my mind about being a "big."

I heard the dismay in the caseworker's voice — before he heard my "but..."

"But," I said, "I'd still like to help out whenever I can. I'll do office work or help plan events for the children on the waiting lists. I'll do anything."

And so now I'm going to be helping out with their publicity and recruitment.

Volunteering doesn't have to take a lot of time.

It can be as simple as "rounding up" when you go to the supermarket. If ten people do that, one family may be able to have a turkey for Christmas dinner.

Or giving up a couple hours a month to work in a shelter.

Or donating leftovers from a party to a soup kitchen.

Or participating in a publicity campaign — it may take a few hours of your week.

But volunteering is good for your mental health. It makes you feel good about yourself and the people around you.

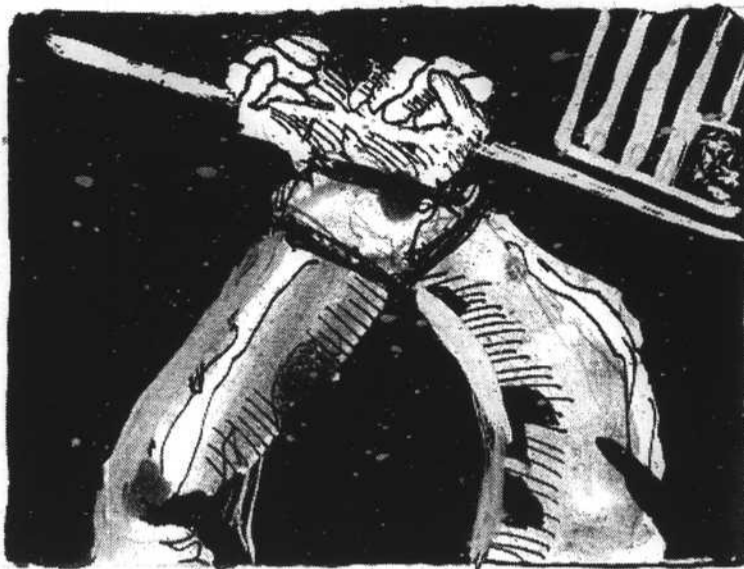
Sure, occasionally you may have to put off something you need to do. But haven't you done that a few times before, for something less noble?

If nothing else will persuade you to do something for your community, how 'bout this: if you were in dire straits, wouldn't you appreciate it if someone did something for you?

Kennedy is a broadcasting, advertising, and integrated studies/public relations major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

...doomed to repeat it

Nov. 4, 1979



Bret Gottschall/DN

Blackmail should not have been so easy

But the integrity of the United States as a just, humane nation cannot be sacrificed — for the whining of another country or even for the lives of the 60 American hostages.

Nov. 4, 1979: A militant Iranian government — which, for some reason, was continuously referred to as "students" in the press (irrepressible kids!) — took the U.S. embassy in Tehran and held 60 people captive for what seemed like forever to those of us who remember it.

The Daily Nebraskan didn't cover any national news in those days, but four days later it released this gem of an unsigned editorial. Can't you just hear the acne in this young journalist's expression of opinion?

Ayatollah Ruholla Khomeini's decision Wednesday not to receive two envoys, seeking the release of American Hostages at the U.S. embassy in Tehran, has placed the United States in a difficult position.

Failure, now, to move quickly and firmly to secure the release of the Americans will be criticized by many as weakness.

Acting with unnecessary force, on the other hand, could cause the untimely deaths of those whose lives might be saved through some other course of action.

Hopes now seem to rest on a delegation of the Palestine Liberation Organization which, at the time of this writing, apparently was on its way to Iran.

The PLO has had good relations with the Islamic government and an earlier siege of the embassy this year ended after the PLO spoke on American behalf.

Whatever the outcome of these negotiations may be, however, the United States cannot submit to blackmail.

On this point Americans must remain firm.

Demands that the ousted Shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, hospitalized in New York for cancer treatment, be returned to Iran for trial are outrageous.

The earlier decision by the Shah to live in Mexico upon exile had been greeted with relief by the American Government.

At a time when our government was seeking to establish friendly relations with Iran, the decision was politically prudent.

But it would have been an act of inhumanity to deny the Shah medical treatment. And it would be morally wrong to turn the Shah over to those who seek militant vengeance.

The traditions and customs of this country would not allow us to bend to the demands of a country whose judicial system and political ideals conflict so radically with our own.

When the Shah was exiled, the United States was criticized for what the Iranians called immoral U.S. intervention into their country's laws, customs and lifestyle.

Now, however, because of Iranian intervention, they ask us to violate the laws of Western civilization.

But the integrity of the United States as a just, humane nation cannot be sacrificed — for the whining of another country or even for the lives of the 60 American hostages.

Survey says

Louisiana, not Mississippi, most unhealthy

I'm not sure if you know this or not, but Nebraska has recently been selected as one of the most healthy states in America.

According to a recent poll conducted by Relia Star State Health Rankings, Nebraska was rated the 10th most healthy of the 51 states*

(* As of 1992, Relia Star has insisted that Oprah Winfrey is large enough to be considered a state and therefore, is included in this poll.)

Being a healthy state nowadays is no small feat. With the enormous amounts of pressure from other states trying to get you to smoke cigarettes and accept nuclear waste, it's amazing Nebraska didn't buckle.

It's almost impossible to remain a healthy state in today's society, but somehow, Nebraska held true to its morals and did just that.

Unfortunately, my homestate of Mississippi didn't fare as well in the poll as Nebraska did; it was listed as the most unhealthy state in America.

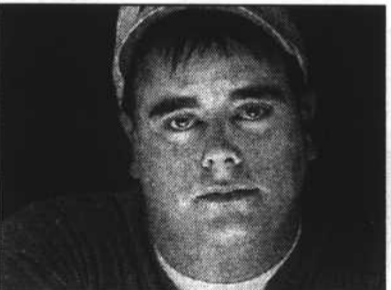
Mississippi has its problems but let me tell you, being unhealthy isn't one of them. Illiteracy, unemployment, and pooping to the beat of "WE WILL, WE WILL, ROCK YOU" — these are the problems facing Mississippi today.

I have more than just a little problem with the credibility of a company whose sole purpose in life is to determine the "health" of a state.

What kind of schmuck works for a company like this?

"How was your day honey?" (Loosening his tie) "Awful. We found out today that Montana has been eating fried foods again. Damn, he used to be so healthy!"

I guess I'm a little confused as to how a healthy state is determined. Do they ask that the state in question turn its head and cough?



Steve Willey

"New Orleans itself is extremely unhealthy. It's perhaps the only city in the world where one can repeatedly use the phrase 'Quit urinating on me.'"

How does one conduct a poll on the health of a state? Do they just randomly call people, attempting to find out what kind of health they're in?

"Er — sorry to bother you ma'am, but are you — uh — eating mayonnaise right now?"

(Shocked) "Well, YES I am. Who are you?"

"Oh, uh..... nevermind, say, how many times a day does your husband soil himself?"

(Disgusted) "That's none of your damn business. Are you that healthy state poll?"

-click-
I'll be honest, I was a little upset when I saw the results. I can easily see where Nebraska deserves 10th, but to rate Mississippi 51st was improper.

The logical choice for the most unhealthy state would be Louisiana. Ninety-three percent of the state

is a mosquito-infested swamp. The other 7 percent is comprised of mosquito-infested panhandlers located in New Orleans.

New Orleans itself is extremely unhealthy. It's perhaps the only city in the world where one can repeatedly use the phrase "Quit urinating on me."

If you've ever been to New Orleans, you know what I mean. And what's more, you can't go anywhere without stepping in alligator poo.

Mississippi, on the contrary, has always been healthy — especially its citizens.

My father is a prime example. If it wasn't for the gallon of whiskey he drinks daily, he would be a remarkable spokesman for good health.

He always tried to instill good health habits in me.

When I was four, for some odd reason, I used to enjoy riding on top of my dog completely nude.

This is a very unhealthy thing to do by the way, and something that, if done in Australia, may get you the death penalty.

My father, sensing the unhealthy act in progress, would stop it the best way he knew how.

"Son," he'd bellow. "Riding animals while you're naked will make you go blind!"

"Dad," I stuttered while waving my arms behind him. "I'm over here, who are you looking at?"

It's hard to say with any degree of accuracy which states are really the healthiest.

As long as there are state health polls and people being paid to discuss them, I'm sure it'll be a concern for many.

As for me, I couldn't care less about them — Mississippi just better not be last anymore.

Willey is a junior ag-journalism major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

BE OUR GUEST

The Daily Nebraskan will present a guest columnist each Monday. Writers from the university and community are welcome.

Must have strong writing skills and something to say. Contact Mark Baldrige c/o the Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, NE 68588. Or by phone at (402)-472-1782.