

Kasey  
KERBER

# Judging judgment

*Do the right thing, you still might go wrong*

This week we're talking "wrong." You see, wrong is a really interesting word when it comes to society.

I bet some of you are saying — "this is leading up to a serious moral column on something wrong, right?" Wrong. For those of you who still aren't confused, I'll go on with the column.



You see, I'm going to take a look at three points-of-view: what's wrong is right, what's right is wrong and what's wrong is, well, wrong.

We'll start with what's right is wrong.

Often, people's intentions are perfectly right, but their efforts end up resulting in a wrong.

Take for example an incident that occurred in 1897, when Washington D.C. actually had a professional baseball team. The team's owners promoted a special "Ladies Night."

It was the "right" idea, but no one in charge of the promotion reminded umpire Bill Carpenter that most ladies had come to see heart-throb pitcher George "Winnie" Mercer.

Carpenter tossed Winnie out of the game in the fifth inning and the "ladies" went ballistic.

They administered a post-game beating to Carpenter, in tearing his clothes in the process. When he was later "smuggled" out of the stadium, they went ballistic again and ripped out stadium seats.

Another right-gone-wrong scenario occurred a few years earlier.

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Hiram Maxim, a masterful American inventor, was becoming too much to handle for a handful of American companies.

He was apparently becoming a threat to the companies' innovators, so they paid him \$200,000 to stop inventing things.

Seems like the right idea, right?

No, not right. Maxim took the money and sailed for England, where he had no such agreements with companies there.

The end result was Maxim's perfecting of the machine gun, a weapon that would later be the most lethal of all military weapons.

Many experts have since said that the machine gun was responsible for more lives being lost in World War I and World War II than any other weapon existing at the time.

So what started out as \$200,000 for a capitalistic "right" cause, ended up becoming a perfected weapon that killed millions upon millions of human beings.

Moving on, we encounter some things that are wrong, yet somehow end up becoming right.

A recent example of this occurred in Russia, where two climbers illegally searched the site of a crashed Russian airliner.

The right occurred when they managed to locate what no other authorities had — the cockpit voice recorder.

To make matters even more confusing, another wrong occurred when the men were handcuffed (it was shortly corrected by a right, when they were unshackled).

A few small examples of wrongs gone right might shed light on how a bad idea can become a really good one.

One example is taken from Seventeen Magazine. On a page talking about "pick-up" lines, a woman tells how she fell in love with her fiancé for the first time.

The guy in question approached her and out of fear stood frozen and said nothing. She recalled the event, saying: "He walked up to me and just stood there, smiling. It worked though — I thought he was a cute idiot."

Gee, if only that lame (and wrong) pick-up approach worked for all of us guys.

Anyway, the final example of a wrong gone right is occurring right now. It's simply a web page you can access anytime.

The Dysfunctional Family Circus, <<http://www.thoughtport.com/spinnwebe-cgi-bin/dfc.cgi>>, is a web

site that features the "Family Circus" comics with one twist — empty dialogue bubbles. You fill them in, creating something that is in all likelihood, wrong.

Yet your creation is also funnier than the original comic, so technically, the end result is right.

Finally, we'll finish off with two stories of things that can only be classified as just plain wrong.

Ironically, both deal with a certain fruit/vegetable that you might have thrown at you if you do something wrong.

The tomato.

For our first "wrong", we go to an ice-cream store in Merida, Venezuela. The store boasts 608 flavors, including "cream of tomato."

The last "wrong" leaves us with President Bill Clinton.

No, I'm not saying that the wrong was the 1992 election of Bill Clinton. His wife maybe, but I won't go into it out of a fear of tomatoes being tossed at me.

No, good ol' Bill had an incident in his past where, as governor of Arkansas, he ate 9 pounds of tomatoes during a tomato-eating contest at the state Pink Tomato Festival.

Wrong. It can be only classified as wrong.

Then again, it would be entertaining to see Bob Dole eat 9 pounds of tomatoes.

I change my mind. The consumption of 9 pounds of tomatoes was right.

Now eat up, Bob.

Kerber is a sophomore news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

Nick  
WILTGEN

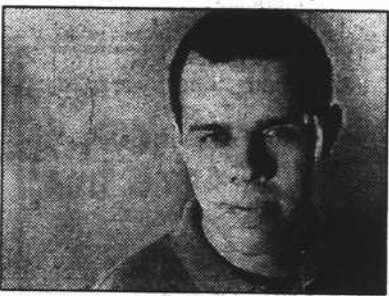
# My hometown SUX

*Geography questions leave one in strange state*

"Sioux City ... isn't that, like, the armpit of Iowa?"

Many people have asked me this question and questions similar to it. Mostly people from eastern Iowa, but Nebraskans are guilty too.

It's a symptom of a problem I, along with the dozens of other UNL students, face every day. The problem: nobody takes our



hometown seriously!

It seems like every time I tell someone I grew up near Sioux City, they laugh or snicker or chortle.

I've come up with several shot-in-the-dark theories as to why this is the case.

Maybe it's because we humans have a natural tendency to laugh at words that start with "s" and end with "x."

For example, the word "SUX." OK, it's not a word, but it's the abbreviation for the airport in Sioux City. Wonderful. The thing is, people who have lived in Sioux City their whole lives don't realize it.

And so one of them named a radio station after the airport and called it "KSUX" (officially pronounced "K-Sue"). After the station went on the air, one of the head honchos was quoted in the newspaper as saying something like, "Well, we didn't

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even realize that connotation until it was too late." (All righty then.)

Another possibility for the jokes is Sioux City's reputation for, uh, "fragrance."

Anyone who's ever driven through Sioux City on Interstate 29 has smelled it. It's a meat-packin' town. It's not like Omaha where you can take I-680, or like Lincoln where the interstate somehow managed to miss the city by a half million miles.

When you drive through Sioux City from the south you are greeted first by SUX, and then the sewage treatment center, and then the meat-packing plants whose smokestacks are about 8 inches from the highway shoulder.

By the time your lungs become reaccustomed to oxygen, you've long since passed one of the most visible signs of Siouxland sophistication — the world headquarters of the Gateway 2000 computer company in

North Sioux City.

Which brings me to another point: People act like they know Sioux City geography. But if I bought an atlas for everyone who's pegged me in another state, I'd be working 150 hours a week to get out of debt.

I am actually from South Sioux City, which is in Nebraska, right across the river from Sioux City, which is in Iowa. But a typical person I meet says: "South Sioux City ... that's in South Dakota, right?"

And before I can correct them they say, "No! It's in Iowa. I forgot."

South Sioux City is in Nebraska. North Sioux City is in South Dakota (I know it's confusing). Sioux City is the one in Iowa.

It's amazing what people from Nebraska don't know about their state's third-largest metropolitan area. That's right, Grand Island's got nothing on us. According to the

Census Bureau, the Sioux City metropolitan area (which includes Dakota County, Nebraska) has 120,033 people. Grand Island isn't even considered a metropolitan area.

Of course, even though I am from Nebraska, living in South Sioux City tends to give a person a split identity. The local daily newspaper is published in Iowa. The local TV stations are in Iowa. The local radio stations are in Iowa. The hospitals are in Iowa. Good grief, you even have to go to Iowa just to see a movie or go to the mall.

So as you can understand, I have splintered allegiances. I'm kind of half-Nebraskan, half-Iowan.

But what are borders? Sioux City has a lot of cool things that Lincoln will never have. OK, one cool thing. The Missouri River. You can go boating on the river, you can watch fireworks displays over the river, you can go to art festivals by the river, you can celebrate the annual River-Cade and go to a concert by the river.

Plus, being from two states is very convenient. You can just be from whichever one you want to, depending on which is the more fashionable one to be from.

And our airport spells "sucks," uh huh huh huh. That's pretty cool, Beavis.

Wiltgen is a junior broadcasting and meteorology major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.