

OPINION PAGES

OUR VIEW

In the spirit Joy and merriment not just for holidays

The holidays are upon us. Time to dust off the generosity and enliven the child within.

Time to give freely and love openly.

Time to breathe deeply and laugh heartily.

Time to slow down the clock and savor every taste, touch, sight, smell and sound of the season.

Though every day is not a holiday, there is always something to celebrate. This season, try to live life as you've never lived it before.

Resurrect a family tradition that has been lost over the years.

Catch snowflakes on your tongue.

Build a fort out of laundry, chairs, snow, whatever.

Break down the walls you have built inside yourself.

“
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Call a friend who hasn't heard from you in awhile.

Invite a stranger to lunch.
Bake cookies.

Feed your mind. Read a book.
Offer your coat to someone who is cold.

Trust in someone ... anyone ... everyone.
Give a friend a bear hug.

Offer more than you can afford to charity.

Ride a tricycle — in the snow.

Say “I love you” to a person who has never heard those words from you but should have.

Leave a snow angel in a friend's front yard.

Don't wait for the mistletoe. Kiss on impulse.

Light a candle.
Listen.
Sing without inhibition.

Write cards and letters to your loved ones — and actually mail them.

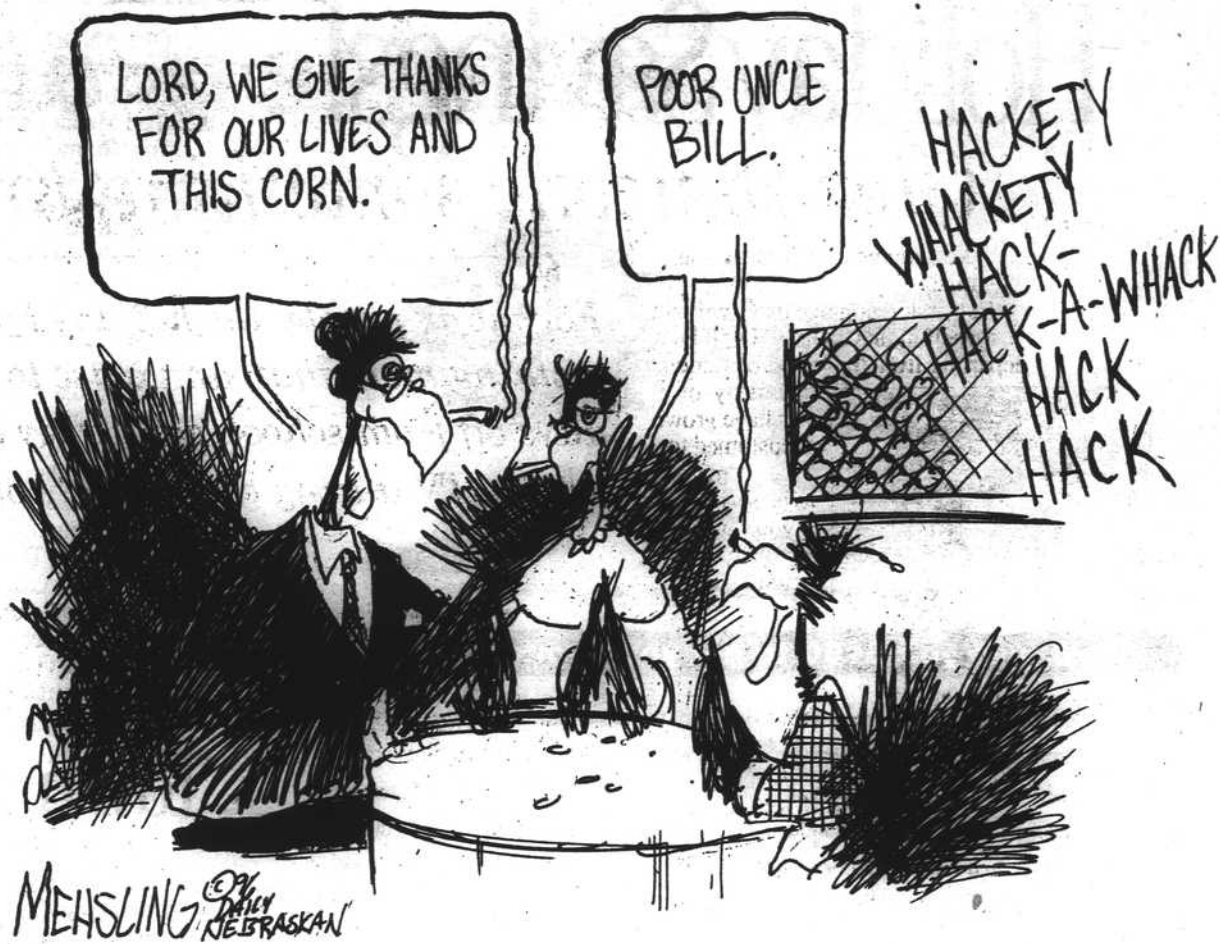
Drink hot chocolate with lots of marshmallows.

Roast chestnuts over an open fire.
Dash through the snow.
Go sledding.

Live life unabashed — if even for a moment.

Give thanks. Be merry. And resolve to spread the spirit of the holidays over every day of each new year.

MEHSLING'S VIEW



GUEST VIEW

Tenure: Don't let history repeat itself

Editor's note: This guest column was submitted by David Moshman, professor and chair of educational psychology at UNL. Moshman describes it as “a bit of UNL history relevant to the current discussions of tenure.”

UNL faculty hear from many sources that the tenure system must be reconsidered. We need to be more accountable, it is argued, to the people of Nebraska — who do, after all, pay our salaries.

Anyone who wonders what faculty life would be like without tenure need look no further than the history of our own university. Prior to the institution of tenure, faculty could be — and often were — fired by the administration of the Board of Regents because of their political views, their educational philosophies, or their stance on campus issues.

Perhaps the most egregious violation of academic freedom in Nebraska history was the extraordinary public hearing of 1918. Of the many people affected by this event, Harry K. Wolfe is probably the best known. Many UNL faculty are aware of Wolfe's critical early role in philosophy, psychology and education at UNL. The tragic end of his career, however, is a less-told tale.

After receiving his undergraduate degree from the University of Nebraska in 1880, Harry Kirke Wolfe earned a doctorate at the University of Leipzig (Germany) under the direction of the renowned Wilhelm Wundt. Returning to the University of Nebraska as a professor of philosophy, Wolfe was a pioneer in the application of psychology to education long before the university had either a department of psychology or a college of education. In 1895, he was instrumental in attracting George Washington

Andrew Luckey to come to Nebraska to found the new department of pedagogy, the predecessor of what is now the teachers college.

An early proponent of active learning, critical analysis and lifelong inquiry, Wolfe encouraged students to form and justify their own ideas and highlighted the relevance of the new science of psychology to issues of human welfare. Over the course of his career, he founded one of the first psychological laboratories in the United States, actively encouraged student research, and inspired a number of undergraduate women who went on to earn doctorates and make major contributions to psychology and education.

In 1917, after the United States declared war on Germany, popular and political pressure was brought to bear on the University of Nebraska, as on universities across the country, to ensure that its faculty were adequately patriotic and its curriculum consistent with the war effort. In the spring semester of 1918, the Board of Regents arranged a public hearing in the law building to consider charges of “hesitating, halting and negative support of the government” against more than a dozen faculty, including Wolfe and Luckey, whose loyalty was suspect or whose courses were not sufficiently anti-German in ideology.

The hearings lasted two weeks and generated intense publicity. One by one, before a panel of Regents and a large crowd of Nebraska citizens, the professors faced hostile questions about their patriotism and their teaching.

Support was not forthcoming. Newspapers across the state called for the university to “clean its house.” The governor concurred. The American Association of University Professors, then in its infancy,

concluded that academic freedom did not protect the teaching of ideas that might undermine the war effort. The ACLU, established in 1920 as a direct result of the civil liberties violations of this era, did not yet exist. Chancellor Samuel Avery testified that there were indeed problems with Professor Luckey's “attitude.”

At the conclusion of the hearings, the Regents decided which of the accused faculty should be asked to resign. Luckey was among those whose resignations were demanded. He received notice of the decision from a secretary — who handed him a note during one of his classes — and resigned four days later.

Wolfe did not lose his job but was thereafter publicly known as a teacher whose classes undermined the patriotic values of Nebraska youth. Disgraced and humiliated, he died unexpectedly, apparently of a heart attack, six weeks after the verdicts.

In his last published article, which appeared the month of his death, Wolfe addressed the relation of education and individuality. “Society,” he wrote, “should now be strong enough to do justice to the individual and not seek to crucify or to dwarf him.... There is no institution in society worth preserving that cannot withstand all attacks of individual iconoclasts.”

“Too much obedience,” Wolfe warned, “may ruin character, may dwarf the intellect, may paralyze the will of children and of adults.”

In an age that takes tenure for granted, one assumes something like this couldn't happen here. As calls for accountability proliferate, however, we need to remember that it did happen here, and could happen again.

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