

Steve  
WILLEY

## Dear Steve ...

### Responses to a semester's worth of letters, e-mail



Throughout the semester, I have been privileged to receive letters and e-mail from people seeking my opinion about various subjects.

Ordinarily, I would respond privately to these questions, but because some of them are currently relevant, I thought the rest of UNL might be interested in the answers.

Let me say, however, I am by no means a qualified individual to provide "rational" advice and opinions. One need only to look at my valedictorian speech to realize that fact. (St. Mary's Catholic Church, 1992)

ME: "Parents, faculty and graduates: As evening descends on these, our formidable years, so begins the dawn of a new era for you, the Cathedral graduates of 1992. Many of you, as you know, will be shipped to Vietnam, and many of you will not return. But I believe it was Mark Twain who muttered the timeless phrase, 'Ask not what you can do for a turnip, but what a turnip can do for you.'"

(At this point, Father O'Kelly told me I had a phone call in the rectory. Upon arriving there, I was gagged and beaten by a group of nuns and was forced to spend two weeks in the catacombs below the

church.)

So while reading these questions, please accept that these responses, while heartfelt, should be taken with a barrel of salt.

Steve, I have always enjoyed your columns but often wondered why you never take a stance on serious issues. Is it because you're fat? Anyway, with all the recent talk about same-sex marriages in Nebraska, I was curious about what you think. — Danny Grotzo

Dear Danny: You're right. I purposely avoid confrontational subjects because, in today's society, you never know whom you might piss off. Getting attacked by homosexuals or Christian Coalitioners is not something that appeals to me. Besides, both look equally terrible on a resumé.

But just this once, I suppose I can make an exception. Personally, I'm a little uncomfortable with homosexuality, but I defend homosexuals' right to marry. This is America, damn it, and life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness is guaranteed. As far as I'm concerned, if your happiness means marrying a gerbil, I'm all for it.

(By the way, a male human marrying a female gerbil would be OK by the Christian Coalition's definition of marriage, because the "holy union between man and woman" doesn't specify marriage between any particular species.)

Steve, Recently I found a small marble-sized lump on my testicle. I called my accountant, but he said

the only thing he could do was file its taxes. Any suggestions?  
— Dave Winterbulb.

Dear Dave: I think I've had this problem before. After visiting a doctor, I was told that the puny lump was my testicle. I wouldn't worry about it if I were you. After all, I turned out OK.

Mr. Willey, I am a freshman currently enrolled in Chemistry 109. I have heard rumors that you failed this course three times. Is this true? I can't believe anyone could be so stupid! I haven't received anything lower than a 98 in the class. — Sarah Bomhauser.

Dear Sarah: Some students simply aren't capable of doing well in chemistry, though they may excel at other areas of life — such as dismembering over-confident chemistry students. While it's true that I did indeed fail chemistry three times, I should point out that I have very valid excuses.

The first semester, I was, like many freshmen, undergoing an identity crisis; I believed I was a midget from Guam named "Woozel." The second semester, I had contracted nose herpes — a condition usually only found on Himalayan sheep. The third semester, my alarm never went off and I was only able to make the final exam.

Steve, What do you think about the DN's decision to print former ASUN President Eric Marintzer's DWI charge? Also, do you think



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your being so fat had anything to do with his ticket? — Anonymous

Dear UNL Regent: Firstly, regardless of whether the decision to print the charge was right or wrong, let's get one thing straight: Marintzer is no Menendez. Yes, he did make a mistake, but like he said, we all do.

Shoot, you should look at my police record. I've got over 15 arrests in four states. I'd make Marintzer look like the love child of Mother Teresa and the Dali Lama.

What can I say. I've made mistakes. This by no means justifies my arrests. I'm not trying to justify them. In no way is justification what I'm after. It's not justified. It wouldn't be just.

But give the guy a break; he's

human and I don't think any less of him for what happened. You, however, should be pelted with Milk Duds for insinuating my fatness had something to do with his arrest.

So there you have just a few random letters I've received during the semester. And while I'm truly flattered that people think of me when they have questions, I'm equally appalled that they would really be interested in my answers.

But keep 'em coming if you want, though I think from now on I'll refrain from responding in public. It'll save us all a lot of embarrassment.

Willey is a senior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

### Guest VIEW

## In the area

### Unique perspective from Malone neighborhood

Once again a near north Lincoln neighborhood has made the news — as the site of several violent incidents involving post high school youth with time on their hands and few constructive options for putting it to use.

I have urged community involvement upon these youths and extension of a guiding influence by church and community organizations. But constructive action cannot exist in a vacuum.

The inner city offers few jobs beyond clerical work in the government bureaucracy and ticket takers and waiters in the entertainment district. Nor do these positions "work up to" anything significantly more skilled or higher paying in their respective industries.

Actually Lincoln, as a whole, is skilled-jobs poor. A skilled job created anywhere in the city, including the core, is a valuable asset to every citizen.

But economic development based on skilled work is systematically excluded from the inner city. At the same time the inner city is disproportionately "packed" with people excluded elsewhere. While the crime rate of Malone is actually low by comparison with other neighborhoods, both nationally and in Lincoln, we serve as a case in point:

■ When two city blocks of mostly vacant land adjacent to UNL in Malone was assembled for private development of a "City Campus Research Park" it was taken by government for a heavily subsidized "low-to-moderate" government housing project.

■ When the privately owned and operated Malone Community Center began showing a healthy financial return from its child care operation, the government responded by dumping a glut of these services on the market in the downtown and UNL areas without regard to its financial impact on a private center.

Not understanding the complexities of retail, much less technological development and distribution, the government wiped out almost all retail in downtown Lincoln before giving up on its suburban style shopping mall concept.

■ When HUD and the local Urban Development Department began financing and long-term subsidy of the new entertainment-district concept of downtown redevelopment, the transient services portion of the existing City Mission were forced out of the area.

The logical and responsible thing to have done at this point would have been to relocate them in another carefully buffered non-retail,

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industrial zoned area. Instead surrounding neighborhoods batted transient services around until finally forcing them into the residential and campus area between Malone and UNL.

■ When the board of the Lincoln Housing Authority realized that it needed more "scattered site housing" to avoid censure from the national level, it reversed the usual understanding of that concept. Despite the tight market and high cost of acquiring single family homes in the high-density zoned areas around UNL it instructed the former Housing Authority director to acquire a minimum of 50 more single-family homes in Malone.

■ When private operators of government-funded shelters of wards of the state seek sites for further expansion, they locate in Malone despite the fact that land here costs from two to three times what it would in a cornfield on the

edge of town. This again gets back to suburban political influence in the licensing process.

■ When the local archdiocese sought four-plex zoning permits for low-cost housing on land that it owned along Superior Street the populace there was up in arms. When asked by a reporter where this might more reasonably be located, one of the protesters cited the corner of 23rd and Y streets where the Housing Authority has already overcrowded the area with subsidized housing.

■ Kids and their adult handlers are using drugs as a fallback and substitute for development of a career or trade. Simply throwing them in jail, while this serves the immediate purpose of putting a dent and only a dent in the drug trafficking, does not address the individuals' lifelong problems arising out of not having developed a career trade or respected position in an ongoing

basis.

The proposition that upscale businesses and housing cannot be laid out appropriately for security and economic viability in the inner city is not in fact true. Rather the case is that people in the suburbs push and some inner city residents pull for an increased level of government subsidy that will stabilize the expanding jobs' poor status quo.

But these subsidy demands on taxpayers' wallets grow exponentially over time. Furthermore, dollars already extracted from their wallets and sunk in UNL, the County-City Building and so on, are being put at risk by this studied abuse of the core. Finally, it was and still is the core that finances the extension of city services into the ever-receding suburbs.

Not until today's suburbanites reach retirement will they have begun to pay off the full cost of extension of these services. At that point, as recent experience has shown, we begin to ask "why are my property taxes so high, and when is enough, enough — of surprises pushed in on me by the people beyond?"

Mike Morosin is president of the Malone Neighborhood Association and a UNL Teacher's College graduate in sociology.