

OPINION PACES

Our VIEW

Learning safety

Take precaution to provide security

The traditional social season: beautiful debutantes in gorgeous white dresses, floating through grandly decorated ballrooms hanging on the arms of gallant young men.

The social season at University of Nebraska-Lincoln: basements full of highly-intoxicated women, hanging on any man – or for that matter, anything – that will hold them up, rushing through the room trying to reach the bathroom in time.

Welcome to the beginning of school.

A new school year, the release from parental supervision or a wake for summer's passing – each and all an excuse to celebrate, to party with wild abandon. For most UNL students, the reason isn't really important; getting drunk and silly is.

Enjoy yourselves, but be careful.

UNL's campus is cozy and seemingly safe, and for the most part it is. But bad things do happen. You don't need us to tell you that, but a little advice can't hurt.

The key to staying safe while having fun is learning how to balance caution with paranoia. And, basically, taking caution will negate paranoia. Makes sense now, but it's not now that you need the information. You'll need to understand that concept when you go drinking with your pledge class or the gang from the floor.

Freshman women: You must understand that the chances of date rape rise dramatically when people drink. When out partying, stick with the people you arrived with. Being alone in unfamiliar surroundings with people you don't know very well is stupid and dangerous.

Walking through campus or the parking lots after a night on the town puts you foolishly at risk, leaving you vulnerable to attacks and preventable accidents.

Also, considering the campus rapes at University of Nebraska at Omaha and Union College last year that happened inside buildings, take precautions if you're in a campus building by yourself, such as locking the door or having a friend accompany you. And call Campus Escort at 472-1167 or a friend when you're ready to leave if you're alone.

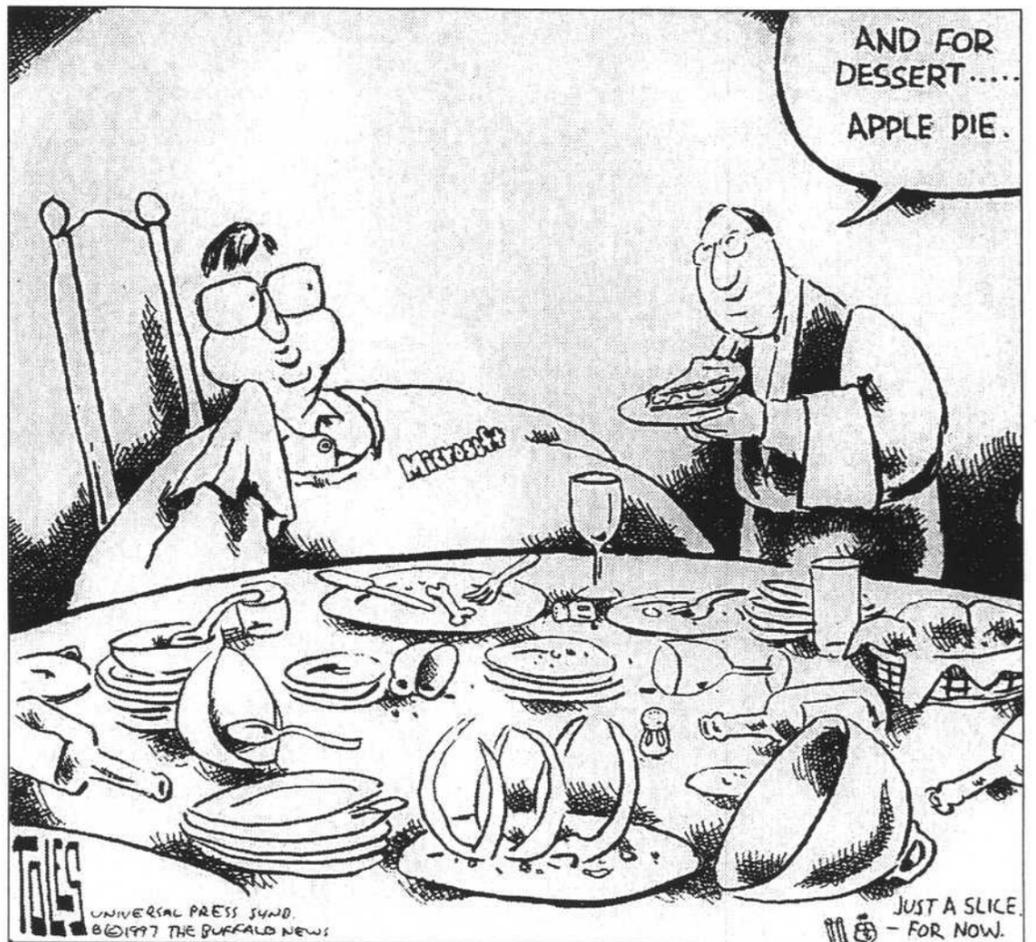
While taking precautions for yourself, you also can keep in mind that you share this campus with more than 24,000 others. When you're out walking, take note of any areas that need better lighting or create good hiding places for perpetrators.

If you're the president or chairperson of an organization, arrange to have a University Police Department spokesperson talk to your members about campus safety.

Be safe, be careful and be smart.

The most dangerous thing you can do is to be too comfortable or too sure of yourself.

Haney's VIEW



Patriotism and beyond

Making country work better first step



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Sigh ... it's almost September. For those of you out there who aren't stark-raving mad Big Red Football fans (which is probably just me), September means little more than the beginning of school – which, by process of elimination, means the end of summer. Summer has always been my favorite season. I know lots of people say that – usually because there isn't any school – but I liked the summer because it's hot and the pools were open and I could play all day in the sun and water. Of course, the fact that my birthday is in July doesn't hurt.

I never made it to the pool during the summer of '97, but it was pretty good all the same. My favorite summer day in the summer (with the exception of my birthday) is Independence Day. My friends and I had planned to go down to Kansas City to see the renowned light show, but we ended up at Holmes Lake with almost everyone else. The display wasn't as big as I had hoped, but it was still enjoyable.

That night, I offhandedly mentioned to one of my friends that the Fourth had always been my favorite holiday. He gave me one of the most disbelieving looks I have ever seen. It occurred to me then how easily people can be misunderstood.

To be honest, I very rarely say good things about this country. In fact, in a letter to the editor last year published in this very newspaper, I called this country "The Divided

“Being patriotic is more than just waving a flag and celebrating our independence.”

States of America,” a practice that I continue to this day. For those of you who do not know of me or have not read my writings, I am a black man, born and raised in this country, who genuinely believes that the Divided States of America has numerous transgressions and atrocities which it must atone for, now, if it wishes to survive. It is because of this belief that I call myself a SuperPatriot.

Why does ranting and raving about everything wrong with the Divided States of America make me a SuperPatriot?

Well, my parents always pointed out when I was wrong because they loved me. (Obviously, they must have loved me a whole lot.) They only wanted me to fix my flaws, to become a better person, much like I would like this country to become a better country. That's why I say what I say and why I'm writing these columns in the first place.

Being patriotic is more than just waving a flag and celebrating our independence. Sometimes it's reminding ourselves that we haven't lived up to what that flag is supposed to stand for. Sometimes it's realizing that not all of us got our independence on July Fourth.

Sometimes, being patriotic is saying the ugly things that need to be said.

However, it seems that some people have forgotten that the most valuable freedom, and perhaps the most underutilized, is protest. Some people apparently think being patriotic is being silent and looking the other way.

The first letter to the editor that I ever wrote to a major newspaper was

in response to a column by Mike Lupica of the New York Daily News. That column was about Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf and how he refused to sing the national anthem. Remember that? Abdul-Rauf protested the racism in the Divided States of America and the hypocrisy inherent in the flag and anthem. Lupica thought that Abdul-Rauf was being disrespectful and anti-American and that anyone who had been given as much in his life as Abdul-Rauf had should be more grateful. And what did I think of Abdul-Rauf?

I thought he was a SuperPatriot. But since Lupica saw and heard Abdul-Rauf bad-mouthing the flag and the country, he saw things differently. Just like how my friend stared at me incredulously when I told him of my love of Independence Day. Just like how several angry authors wrote letters to the editor following my published remarks last year.

I'll bet they don't consider me – or Mahmoud – a SuperPatriot.

Mike Lupica could be considered a SuperPatriot too. I suppose we're just two sides of the same coin. No doubt he loves the Divided States of America just as much as I do. We just express it differently. Perhaps, reverence versus fervency? Positive reinforcement versus tough love? I'll leave that for you to decide.

Either way, I know that this time, I won't be feeling the post-summer blues like I usually do, because this year, back in January (on Black Independence Day), I made a resolution: to celebrate my love of the Fourth of July all year long.

Nice to meet you. Let the fireworks begin.

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