

OPINION PAGE

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Quotes OF THE WEEK

"I like to see people learn that their way isn't always right."
- Adventure Ropes Challenge facilitator Jay Mahler on the course

"If you have a wanna-be gang member break into a gun shop and steal guns and go out with their wanna-be gang-member friends and shoot someone, you have a wanna-be homicide."
- Ken Trump, consultant on youth crime and gang issues, at a regional police conference in Lincoln last week

"A lot of people were calling for his head last week. He didn't pay any attention to that and showed them that he was the best quarterback on the team. He is our leader."
- NU rush end Grant Wistrom defending Scott Frost

"I think some people are going to have to eat their words about our offense. Especially some of our fans who booed them last week at home. ... They came out and put it to them and just stuffed it down their throats all day."
- NU rush end Grant Wistrom on the Husker offense

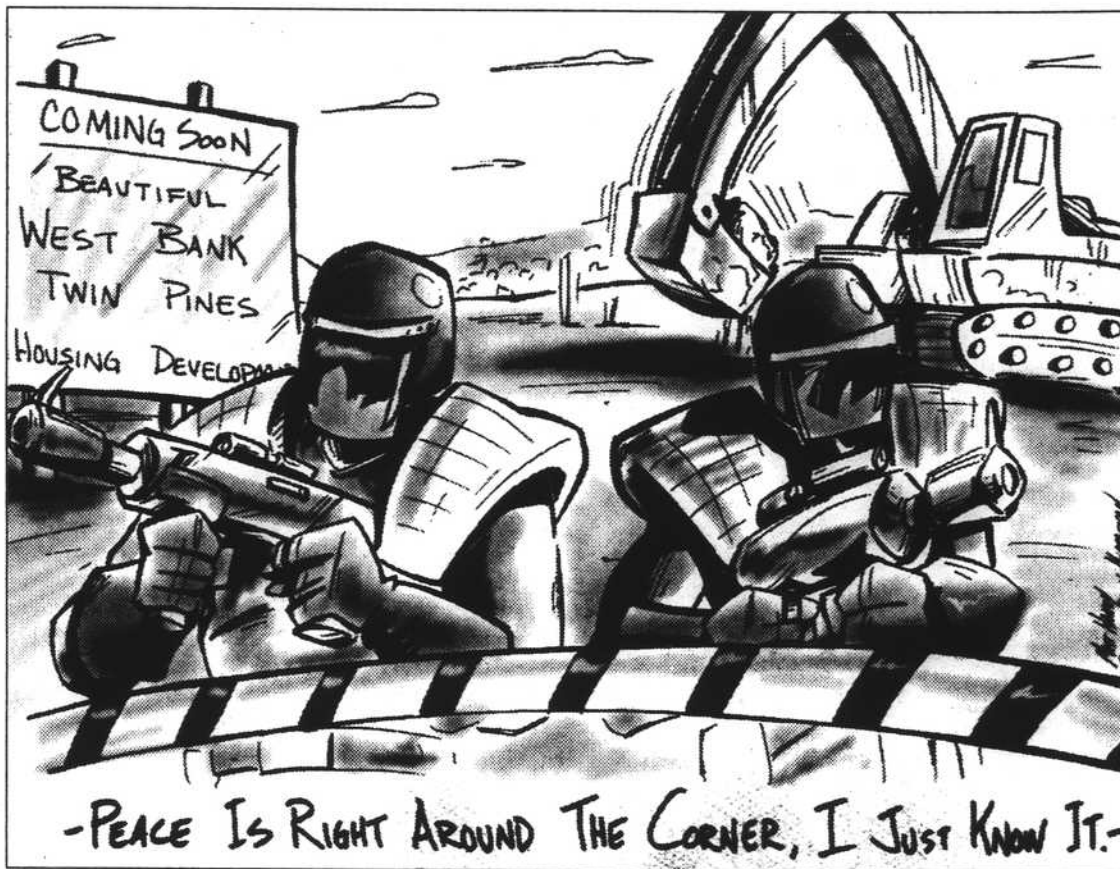
"She's a very musical player, and she has a lot of ideas within herself that she brings out with her playing. When you listen to any musician, you don't want to come out saying, 'What a great clarinet player!' You want them coming out thinking, 'Oh, what a great musician!'"
- Diane Cawein, UNL professor of clarinet, on Denise Schmidt, a guest artist at Kimball Recital Hall

"This time, we'll treat the victory as an obligation to carry out the policies that the nation asked us to."
- Lech Walesa, former president of Poland, on last week's Polish elections

"They ought to be doing columns saying positive things about the people in other states."
- Gov. Ben Nelson on sports columnists slamming Nebraska

"Everyone in Nebraska knows the football team is great. Everyone knows the volleyball team is great. What I want people to realize is that the women's basketball team can be great too."
- NU women's basketball coach Paul Sanderford

Haney's VIEW



Tainted gold

Choice of Athens ignores Olympic Spirit



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Two major tragedies were played over and over again on the television recently. However, a third, lesser tragedy was all but overlooked. This sound byte lasted only five seconds, and it consisted of hundreds of Greek citizens applauding and cavorting as their city was given yet another gift.

Three weeks ago, the International Olympic Committee awarded the 2004 Summer Games to Athens, marking the third time that city has hosted the modern version of the alleged World Games. Athens, host of the 1896 Games (and nonsanctioned 1906 Games), beat out four finalists: Rome, Stockholm, Cape Town and Buenos Aires. According to the IOC voting procedure, the city receiving the lowest number of votes is eliminated, and voting repeats until only one city remains. On the first vote, Buenos Aires and Cape Town tied for last, and Buenos Aires lost in a runoff. Stockholm was the next to be eliminated, then Cape Town, and lastly, Rome.

Why is this tragic? Because these alleged World Games have once again failed to demonstrate that they truly belong to the world. Of those five finalists, three (Athens, Rome and Stockholm) have hosted the Games at least once before. The cities of Cape Town and Buenos Aires have never hosted the Summer Games.

In fact, no African or South American city has ever hosted any Games.

Ever. South African cities have applied in the past, but they were denied because of their apartheid policies, which were contradictory to the Olympic Spirit. In case anyone forgot, those apartheid policies are no longer in place.

This single, solitary piece of information doesn't seem like much at first, until one considers what lengths the IOC had to go to just to keep the

Olympics out of Africa and South America. Lengths that extend over one hundred years.

That's right. The 2004 Games will be the 28th; the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Games will be the 19th.

Forty-seven times the governing body of the Olympics has decided where this ultimate sporting competition and symbol of worldwide unity will be held; 47 times they have passed by two whole continents.

Not cities, not areas, not enclaves. Continents.

According to reports, one factor that assisted in the selection of Athens was a "pro-Europe sentiment," because the Games haven't been in Western Eurasia since 1994 (Lillehammer, Norway.) Apparently, some IOC officials were concerned about taking the games outside of Western Eurasia for more than 10 years. Pro-Africa sentiment was noticeably lacking.

Especially in light of the fact that the 2004 Games will be Athens' third, and Western Eurasia's 28th.

Of course, the classic justification statement given by the IOC in regards to snubbing two entire continents again is something we've all heard before: The issue is more complicated than just playing favorites. The IOC members had to consider many factors, including facilities and security.

Well, there is no appreciable difference in facilities and security between any of the five finalists.

And even if there were, what about the factor of the Olympic Spirit? Doesn't that say that perhaps Cape Town or Buenos Aires should be given the chance to host the Games of the Olympiad? Doesn't that say that the latent message in 28 out of 47 is contradictory to the Olympic Goal of unity and equity? Even if there were major deficiencies in the Cape Town and Buenos Aires bids, shouldn't the IOC go out of its way to prove the Games truly belong to the world?

Apparently not. Consider the example of China. No Chinese city has ever hosted the Games. Beijing was a front-runner for the 2000 Games of the Millennium. Who was awarded those games? Sydney, Australia.

Take a look at the vital statistics. **Australia:** Population - about 25 million. Games hosted - two (Melbourne, Sydney).

China: Population - more than one billion. Games hosted - zero.

Still not convinced? Take a look at this medal count.

Gold: Western Eurasia; 28 Games hosted.

Silver: The Divided States of America; 11 Games hosted.

Bronze: Japan; three Games hosted.

Perhaps the issue can be clarified by examining the official Olympic Charter.

Chapter 1, Section 3, Clause 2: "Any form of discrimination with regard to a country or person on grounds of race, religion, politics, sex, or otherwise is incompatible with belonging to the Olympic Movement."

Preamble, Section 6: "The goal of the Olympic Movement is to contribute to building a peaceful and better world by educating youth through sport practiced without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic Spirit, which requires mutual understanding with a spirit of friendship, solidarity, and fair play."

They did pick Athens, right? Supporters of the IOC's decision argue that it is important to keep the Games of the Olympiad in a location that is easily accessible by the athletes of the world, hence the preponderance of host cities in the Divided States of America and Western Eurasia.

Well, having the games in Buenos Aires would make them easily accessible to many athletes. Just not many white athletes.

Another argument is that the IOC must consider the ability to generate revenue and integrate the games into the economic sector of the host city's community; in short, to make money for the citizens of the world.

Well, having the Games in Cape Town would make lots of money for the citizens of the world. Just not many white citizens.

Nonetheless, there is one argument that outweighs all others - perhaps the one reason that Athens was awarded any of the Olympic Games at all.

Athens, as the birthplace of both the ancient and modern Olympics, deserved these Games since they were not awarded the 1996 Centennial Games. Obviously, returning the Olympic Games to its birthplace has great historical significance and sentimental value.

Then again, so would bringing the Games to Africa or South America. For the first time.

Are you sure we're not playing favorites?

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