

# OPINION PAGE

## Our VIEW

### World Debts

*History's moments must be preserved*

Italy.

A beautiful land filled with a glorious history; days romantically and masterfully recorded upon walls of sprawling cathedrals and enshrined in sacrosanct museums; a foundation of government.

Italy, the land of the Renaissance; the home of western culture's rebirth.

This magical and special country suffered a cruel loss Friday as a pair of violent earthquakes ravished the Italian countryside near Assisi. Four people died as the weakened walls of the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi collapsed, bringing down the vaulted ceiling.

In the rubble are pieces of fresco from the walls of the Basilica, an especially devastating loss. Frescoes are created by painting pictures in the wet plaster walls of building. Sculptures can often be repaired and paintings can be restored, but frescoes depend on the structure on which they're painted. With the Basilica's frescoes in a heap, the loss exceeds any price tag.

The world watched as Italian workers scrambled to pick up the pieces this past weekend.

Saving and repairing these cultural riches is the world's responsibility. Each and every one of us can trace a plethora of modern conveniences back to Italy's fertile plains.

This is not just Italian history, but world history.

Monday, the Italian Public Works Ministry estimated damages at more than \$435 million. That is an enormous burden for one government to shoulder by itself.

It shouldn't have to. Because of the quake, thousands of Italians are homeless, and with temperatures dropping below freezing at night, the Italian government has plenty on which to focus.

So, as Italy struggles to house and feed its people, world governments must come together to aid in saving the masterpieces that so deftly trace western culture's progression from the middle ages in the 'enlightened' Renaissance and eventually, the modern era.

This responsibility extends beyond Italy, to any country with icons of cultural significance. Many of the world's poorest countries house some of the world's most significant historical sites, architecture or art. They may not be able to sacrifice their citizens' welfare for cultural preservation.

Remember what history has given us, and be willing to save those opportunities for generations to come.

## Haney's VIEW



## DN LETTERS

### Strapped in

It was good to see Tuesday's editorial encouraging people to buckle up when they get in their cars. I used to be a news photographer for KOLN-TV, and I literally covered hundreds of traffic accidents. Of the few dozen that involved fatalities, only one person died while wearing a seat belt. That woman's car was crushed by a train.

It amazes me that people still need to be convinced to save their own lives, especially after Princess Diana's highly publicized accident in which the sole survivor was the only person wearing a seat belt. Now I cringe every time I see a deadly accident that could have been prevented by the simple click of a buckle.

Please do the smart thing and buckle up. Front or back seat, whether you're driving across town or across the state, wear your seat belt every time you get in a car. And don't rely solely on an airbag for protection. They can help reduce injuries, but you must buckle up first.

Sorry to be so preachy, but nobody wants to go to your funeral.

**Curtis Bright**  
1990 UNL alumnus

### Represented wrongly

I just want to let you know that last week's cartoon (Sept. 24, 1997) depicting a dark skinned man holding a little "white" girl's hand in front of a police officer has not gone by unnoticed. Mr. Haney's "cartoon" totally distorts the truth about what was really going on in the case of the Iraqi men and the two young teens. What Mr. Haney did was to make these men out to be pedophiles and not men acting out their culture on foreign soil. Yes, it is true that they were sexually involved with two underage girls and that these girls had not consented to either marriage or sex with them. All of this was a part of the cultural dynamics that involves arranged marriages in Iraq. However, what is not true, as far as I see it is that these men are not pedophiles. A pedophile is by definition, "an adult who is sexually attracted to a child or children." Haney's "cartoon" depicts such an adult, but that was not the issue of the case against the men. Also, he goes out of his way to make the little girl, a white little girl. And that was done for a reason, I have no doubt in my mind about that. Haney's view went just a little bit too far.

What happened to these two young

teen-age girls is unthinkable to many of us here in America. And I do not condone and would not condone it in any form or fashion. Moreover, I will not sit back as Mr. Haney depicts these men in a manner that is inaccurate and makes what happened to be some kind of perversion, not an issue of Iraqi culture vs. American law.

I trust that Mr. Haney will see the error of his ways and try to be more responsible with his satire. News, even editorial cartoons, have to reflect the truth in an objective way. Haney overstepped the bonds of objectivity and sought to make a statement about men of color that will not be tolerated. Not now, not ever.

**John L. Harris,**  
special assistant  
Office of the Vice Chancellor for  
Student Affairs

### Appealing pink

When I read Todd Brauch's column this morning, I almost keeled over laughing. Pink cigarettes with names like Bunny Tails and Chickies?! It was a very amusing proposition.

I agree that sadly, the battle against the tobacco companies will be costly and at the tax-payers' expense, but there is a flaw in Brauch's logic. While pink cigarettes with cute and fuzzy names would almost certainly turn off the entire male smoking population, did it ever occur to him women smokers would be undaunted? As a collector and enthusiast of stuffed bunnies and all things inanimate and cuddly, a pink cig with a cute name would NOT deter me in smoking. A lot of women wouldn't care if they were pink. After all, we've been flooded with pink objects and stuffed animals since the day we were born.

Perhaps if cigarettes were flavored with something tasting like brussels sprouts or asparagus, people would be more inclined to shun smokes, saving taxpayers money and lives.

**Ann Kontor**  
sophomore  
French/international affairs

### Eat my letters

I am writing in response to Chad McGuire's letter, "Greek-less" on Tuesday. Sorry about the stress and please pass along the apology on to the entire horticulture department. I can understand how toilet paper in trees must have sent you through such personal anguish. Next time we'll just

cut them down to ensure that it doesn't happen again. As for the "negative activities" of the greek system all I can say is get out of your apartment and open your eyes. The greek system has been on this campus for more than 122 years and is not leaving any time soon. Sure, negative things happen to everybody, but it is ignorant people such as yourself who try to push many of the campus problems on to the greek system, when in fact the greek system often helps more than it hurts. Most of the fraternities have a GPA above the all-men's average, and the sororities are above the all-women's average. The greek system also donates countless hours and dollars to philanthropies. There are also many greeks who actively participate in most campus activities from ASUN to being the leaders of the academic societies, such as Golden Key. It is also ignorant to crucify the greek system because the houses throw parties and expect that we are the only part of the student body that does so. So, Mr. McGuire, sit back, drink a beer, hug a tree and educate yourself. I just might be worth it.

**Joseph K. Mitchell**  
junior  
architecture and business

### Sculpted out

Wouldn't you know it! Just when you turn around, another sculpture goes up on campus. Who do these jocks think they are? This school is just too artsy fartsy. Next thing you know the greeks will be raising money for Richards Hall.

**Alison Hays**  
senior  
fine arts

### Subtraction lesson

In response to Chad McGuire's letter. I have only one question for you. How do you see UNL as a more diversified campus without the greek system? Sure, all organizations have drawbacks, but aren't we being just a little too critical? The ignorance shown in your letter makes it obvious that you don't belong to any organization whatsoever, and all you do is play D&D in your dorm for fun. I'm a believer in the theory of addition by subtraction. So, do all the students of UNL a favor and add to the diversity of UNL by subtracting yourself from it.

**Andrew Smith**  
senior  
secondary education

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