

OPINION PACES

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Blizzard Quotes OF THE WEEK

"The neighborhoods are just decimated. It looks like a war zone out there in some of our neighborhoods."
Mayor Mike Johanns on the damage after the Blizzard of 1997

"It looks pretty bad. So many people have contributed so much time to designing this. In one night, (the snow) just pulls it all down. It's very sad."
Jeffrey Culbertson, East Campus landscape manager, on the damage across campus

"It was frightening, yet awesome, seeing the power of nature."
Kevin Bergstrom, who could only watch the storm damage at 1804 F St.

"This is like a tornado or hurricane. I don't even know where to start with these limbs."
Darrell Dubry, whose chain saw was making firewood out of a giant tree branch that had fallen on his neighbor's Toyota Camry

"I really don't feel like studying by flashlight."
Paul Bryngelson, who lost power at his house at 1407 N. 21st St.

"This is not going to be a situation where we can solve things quickly and easily. There has just been too much damage."
Johanns, after touring Lincoln to see the damage done

"We are concerned some residents are staying at homes without heat. We are more than willing to get those people to shelter."
Lincoln Police Chief Tom Casady, a day after cleanup efforts began

"This is a perfect opportunity for the scam artists to descend upon our city. We ask people to be very vigilant."
Johanns, on the aftermath of the blizzard

"I'm a firm opponent of closing school. I said I would never close it, but I think it's the right thing to do. Campus isn't safe for people to walk around."
UNL Chancellor James Moeser, on closing school

"We decided to lock the house because we felt it wasn't safe to stay in the house. Even our house mother left and went to her home in Lincoln."
Becky Sawyer, a junior family and consumer science education major, on her Alpha Phi Sorority house losing power

"When I find out who this El Niño fellow is, I'm gonna kick his Mexican ass."
Daily Nebraskan Columnist Steve Willey, in today's opinion pages, about this week's blizzard

Haney's VIEW



Greed is not good

True happiness comes from family



AARON COOPER is a junior English major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

"... every now and then Mother Nature knows when we are too comfortable, and she turns our lives upside down to make us reevaluate what is truly important ..."

It was just a picture. It was just another one of those entrancing kind of pictures you see in National Geographic or Newsweek. But lately it has become much more than just a flat image on a piece of photo paper.

It has become a powerful legacy. About four years ago I was flipping through a magazine for a class project, and I came across a very vivid image. It was a photograph of two boys, who appeared to be brothers, living in a third-world country. Nothing out of the ordinary, except for one thing. The older boy (about 14 years old) was carrying the younger boy (about 8) and the younger boy was without a shirt - and without his arms or his legs.

The older boy had a puzzled look on his face, as though he was used to a hard life but he didn't understand why his world was the way it was. What stole my attention was the fact that the younger boy without a shirt or his major limbs was smiling.

He was smiling.

So I asked myself a very important question: What would it take for an 8-year-old boy without arms or legs living in a very poor community to smile?

As I thought more and more about this question during this week of chaos and environmental disaster, something fell into place for me.

It started when I began hearing complaints about who didn't have power, who didn't have TV, who lost the windshield to his car. Like many others, I tried to find ways to occupy myself without electricity by playing card games wherever there was light.

And some of these are valid concerns, but not to the point of relentless

whining and complaining about what someone doesn't have.

What about the things we *do* have and will still have after all the smoke has cleared?

As the week has progressed, people are still without power, heat and cable TV. I started hearing more complaints about the university having classes on Wednesday after two days off. And it wasn't unusual that someone couldn't get to class, but to some, two days off just wasn't good enough. What? - would three have been enough? Four? How about canceling classes until January?

You give some people a dollar and they ask for two. Is this really what we should be worrying about?

As the image of the boys transposed itself with the image of angry students complaining about lost cable and electricity, I started realizing how much we take for granted: Things like shelter, indoor plumbing, even our health until it's gone. Then we start talking again about what we *don't* have.

But what about the things we do have that those boys never will? What do you think the people in their village would give for a week of electricity or a day without hunger?

And here we are worrying about the scratches on our cars or losing radio for a little while. I think we need to change the way we view the important things in life and appreciate what we do have that some snow usually won't destroy: family, friends, shelter, food. If we lose heat for a week do we think about those who never have any heat? How can you lose something you never had in the first place?

Something needs to change.

So what would it take for an 8-year-old boy without arms or legs to smile in a land where toys are not commonplace but extravagant luxu-

ries? The answer is painfully simple. Not much.

I think that young boy understood something that many of us don't understand. I think he knew that his brother loved him and obviously took care of him, and maybe his family was closely knit, no matter how tough the times got. I think his village is probably a place where the population's entire gross annual product is less than what Michael Jordan or Bill Gates makes in a day. And I am impressed with those members of the community who pitched in to help others or those around them, but I am appalled at the outbreak of complaints because power isn't being restored fast enough.

Does anyone want to volunteer for the job of being that boy?

Something needs to change.

But these are not always poor people. Like the two boys in the picture, those who understand what it means to be a family and who don't take anything for granted have a chance at true happiness - not the empty kind, which we often try to fill with cable TV, clothes or fancy cars.

Finding that kind of meaning in life is not something money can buy. Maybe that's what we should be thinking about when we talk about what we don't have vs. all of the important things we do have.

The hope I took from this realization is that every now and then Mother Nature knows when we are too comfortable, and she turns our lives upside down to make us reevaluate what is truly important and necessary to us - or at least what should be.

This is the perfect time to seize that opportunity and to stop worrying about things that will eventually return to normal or things that can be replaced.

We can't afford not to.

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