

OPINION PACKAGES

EDITOR
Paula Lavigne

OPINION EDITOR
Joshua Gillin

EDITORIAL BOARD
Brad Davis
Erin Gibson
Shannon Heffelfinger
Chad Lorenz
Jeff Randall

Our VIEW

Smoke this

Banning cigarettes not a viable solution

This could mean the loss of more than \$31,000 for the Nebraska unions and \$17,000 for the residence halls, to be made up by the people this ban supposedly protects – the students.

In the same vein, if the unions were to retain their moralistic ideals, the university should close Amigo's and Burger King because their greasy food may cause heart problems.

Or maybe some people could lobby for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to ban candy bars because of their high fat content, while others could advance the opinion that the caffeine in soda pop is too much for college students to bear.

Perhaps most controversial would be a plan to ban football ticket sales because studies might show that watching the Cornhuskers in a tight game can cause a student to experience dangerous stress levels.

Never mind all of these things are perfectly legal for people over 18; what matters here is the university's mission to improve the morals and health of today's youth.

Although most of these suggestions will never take effect, the banning of cigarettes is very real – the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska's Committee for Fees Allocation will be voting on the ban today.

CFA needs to listen to the students it represents – they want cigarette sales on campus.

This ban is not going to stop people from smoking. People who will pay \$2.55 for a pack of cigs on campus will certainly go elsewhere to find their smokes.

That means money lost to the university amid cries of rising university costs. Perhaps Daryl Swanson and CFA need to weigh the importance of raking in student dollars for cigarettes over legislating morals.

Besides, CFA needs to realize students who don't smoke will end up with increased student fees because of the ban.

Money is tight at UNL, especially this year with the added student fees for the Nebraska Union renovation, and students should not foot the bill for this misdirected moral crusade.

Haney's VIEW



Money talks *Society unfair to disadvantaged*



SHAWN MEYSENBURG is a sophomore news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

Kill the poor. Or, at least, exploit the hell out of them.

These acts have been heavily practiced since the dawn of recorded history (and before, I'm sure).

Indeed, exploitation and mistreatment of the poor takes place in America every day. Yes, even in the city of Lincoln, the practice of crapping on the poor takes place with alarming regularity.

How do the poor suffer here? What misdeeds are the businesses (and people) of Lincoln guilty of? Let me name just a few.

First of all, people of meager financial means can't get decent housing in this town. The old house I share with three roommates is a prime example of this fact. Its overall condition can only be called poor.

The interior, once grand, I'm sure, is in desperate need of renovation. Our living room carpet, for instance, looks like it once resided on the floor of a machine shop.

Furthermore, our stairs are rickety and beat-up. The house is poorly insulated, so our heating bills are always high and the temperature in the house is always a bit on the chilly side.

For the distinct pleasure of living in this dwelling, we pay \$800 a month. That may not be too much, but keep in mind that a more satisfactory house in a better part of town could easily cost more than \$1,000 a month.

So, we'll be staying in the "thunderdome" (our nickname for the

house) for quite some time. Housing that is both affordable and high-quality does not exist in Lincoln. This fact ensures that Lincoln's poor folk reside in a couple of slummy parts of town, out of sight (and out of mind) of the more prosperous citizens of this fine city.

One of the most blatant exploiters of Lincoln's poor are those rent-to-own places. These businesses make millions bugging poor people. They offer various appliances and pieces of furniture for "rent" at a cost of a few dollars a week. After making these payments for about a decade, the customer owns the product.

This may not sound all that bad, since the payments aren't all that high, but they add up. Have you ever considered paying \$600 for a cheap VCR or washing machine? If you ever decide to rent-to-own, you will.

These places entice those who may very well need the products being sold, but have no other way to pay for them. These wicked businesses exploit poor people's tight financial circumstances to make huge profits.

The only thing more disgusting than these places themselves is the way they are tolerated by the inhabitants of Lincoln. There's a couple of them located on our main street, for example. This should not be; we should be ashamed.

Is genocide going on in Lincoln? Of course. We all know excessive alcohol and tobacco consumption can cause many health problems and, eventually, premature death. With this thought in mind, ask yourself: Where are most of the vendors of cheap alcohol and tobacco located? That's right, in the poor parts of town.

This should come as no surprise. Whether or not the poor suffer the ill effects of substance abuse is of no consequence to these merchants of death. They're only out to make money, and they couldn't care less about whom they have to hurt to do it.

What about the rest of us? Are

we guilty of cruelty to the poor? Are those of us who are poor ourselves guilty of mistreating our own kind? You bet.

Ask yourself the following questions:

Do I ever look down upon those who can't afford the "right" clothes?

When I see a beat-up car on the road, what's the first thing I think about its driver?

When I see people in the supermarket purchasing their food with food stamps, what do I think of them?

I'm willing to bet that you've looked down upon these types of people; I know I have. You may have, at one time, even openly made fun of those who couldn't afford the things you could. You see, we're all guilty of poor-bashing.

Why do we have such contempt for the poor? Why are they such a target for hatred and exploitation? In the world, a person's success is judged by how much money he or she makes. Poor people are seen as pathetic failures.

We need to remember that being successful might not have anything to do with a person's income. Can a poor person really be considered a success? I think so.

Take Mother Teresa, for example. She dedicated her life to helping people in conditions more horrible than we can probably imagine. She was poor. Few people, though, doubt her success.

There's some obvious ways to help the less fortunate, but I won't discuss them here. The greatest gift we can give to any poor person is respect.

They deserve to be treated like everyone else. The worst part of being poor is being looked down upon or pitied. Be blind to a person's financial status – don't let it affect the way you treat him or her.

The world will always be full of poor people. Indeed, most of us will probably experience tight financial circumstances if we haven't already. Let's give the less fortunate the respect they deserve.

Editorial Policy

Unsigned editorials are the opinions of the Spring 1998 Daily Nebraskan. They do not necessarily reflect the views of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, its employees, its student body or the University of Nebraska Board of Regents. A column is solely the opinion of its author. The Board of Regents serves as publisher of the Daily Nebraskan; policy is set by the Daily Nebraskan Editorial Board. The UNL Publications Board, established by the regents, supervises the production of the paper. According to policy set by the regents, responsibility for the editorial content of the newspaper lies solely in the hands of its student employees.

Letter Policy

The Daily Nebraskan welcomes brief letters to the editor and guest columns, but does not guarantee their publication. The Daily Nebraskan retains the right to edit or reject any material submitted. Submitted material becomes property of the Daily Nebraskan and cannot be returned. Anonymous submissions will not be published. Those who submit letters must identify themselves by name, year in school, major and/or group affiliation, if any. Submit material to: Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St. Lincoln, NE. 68588-0448. E-mail: letters@unlinfo.unl.edu.

P.S. Write Back

Send letters to: Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 "R" St., Lincoln, NE 68588, or fax to (402) 472-1761, or e-mail <letters@unlinfo.unl.edu>. Letters must be signed and include a phone number for verification.