

# OPINION PACES

## Our VIEW

### Save Bambi

#### Wilderness Park needs to be spared of mall

Today Lincoln's City Council has a chance to prove they really do care about the opinions of some of their citizens.

More than 2,000 petition signatures, hundreds of flyers around town and calls from concerned Lincolniters have prompted the Lincoln City Council to reopen public hearings regarding the proposed re-zoning of 140 acres of land east of Wilderness Park to make it fit for industrial development.

That's right, a strip mall could be Wilderness Park's new neighbor.

Originally created as a flood plain to divert flood waters from key areas, including the Haymarket District, Wilderness Park has grown to be a magical place in the eyes of many.

Whether one bikes, hikes or rides horseback through the park, it offers a unique experience. Just a 10-minute drive or 20-minute bike ride from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln City Campus, Wilderness Park's thousands of densely wooded acres provide a chance to quite literally get lost in the beauty of nature.

Along the trail that runs through the park, it's quite easy to encounter many different kinds of wildlife, including the occasional deer.

And Bambi could suffer from the proposed development.

Last spring, the City Council voted to study how development around Wilderness Park would affect the ecology, traffic and floodwater runoff.

While this study is helpful, it could take up to two years to complete. And for the potential developers, two years is too long of a wait.

Jumping into a project of this magnitude without fully studying the consequences could be environmental suicide. Once a part of nature is destroyed and the animals are chased from the park, they cannot be replaced.

And today is the last chance to make the developers wait.

Rich Rodenburg, owner of Bike Pedalers and the legislative co-chairman of the Great Plains Trails Network, has done his share of work on behalf of Wilderness Park and is confident the City Council will make the right choice.

"I think our current City Council has a good grip on what the people want, and I'm comfortable that they will make a wise decision."

If you care about the future of Wilderness Park, attend the public hearing at 1:30 p.m. at the County City Building located at 555 S. 10th Street. The City Council will be there entertaining any concerns about the park.

And it is your concerns that could very well save the park from being harmed by a strip mall.

## Haney's VIEW



### Shot down

#### Killing concealed weapon bill right move



**BRETT SCHULTE is a senior English major and a Daily Nebraskan arts and entertainment assignment reporter.**

**"Encouraging the arming of the American populace is a fatal move to an increasingly tyrannous society — not a step toward freedom."**

As we approach the eve of a new millennium — an era defined by the fall of a communism, the proliferation of democracy and the advent of inter-global communications — you might believe that the citizens of the world, and Americans especially, are ushering in a period of enlightenment and advanced thinking.

And what better way to protect this peace than with a concealed weapon?

But, wait a minute, someone else might have a gun, too. Better wear a bulletproof vest. Of course there are still shots to the head (never pretty). Get a helmet.

But don't stop there. Every time you leave the house you run the risk of getting killed. Stay at home. But don't most murders occur in the home? Better put bars on the windows ...

It doesn't take much to turn a society based on freedom to one paralyzed by paranoia.

Last week, a bill that would have introduced the legal possession of concealed weapons to the state of Nebraska was defeated when lawmakers voted to cease debate on LB465.

It is a victory for law-abiding citizens of our state, despite the rhetoric of conservative state lawmakers bent on the increasing militarization of our country.

The second amendment is a weak argument for the armament of our citizenry. As most people who have taken a political science class understand, the Constitution of the United States of America is a living document and is subject to interpretation, revision and amendment.

It is true that the Second Amendment declares we have the right to bear arms — but it never tells us when to stop. So the question is: Should we ever start? Absolutely not, despite what it says.

The idea that it is a perfect document that should be followed verbatim is as dangerous as believing the same about the Bible.

And the idea that God hates gays is about as absurd as the idea of arming citizens to guarantee a safer society.

How can we teach children the ideals of peace while teachers and parents pack revolvers under their clothes?

How can we continue to teach the world the benefits of freedom and democracy when we have to arm our citizens to protect them?

We can't.

Force did not save Vietnam from the specter of communism. Instead, it tore apart two nations, and it cost lives in both. Force was not the solution to the latest crisis with Iraq — patience was. As a result, many lives, both Iraqi and American, were saved.

While the federal government is slowly learning from its experiences with violence, more and more local governments are digressing into militia states.

With the recent conservative backlash washing across the country, we also are experiencing the re-emergence of the American gun culture.

The militias in many Northern states and hate groups across the country are the most radical manifestations of this movement, but it is affecting everyone.

Two weeks ago, a couple of Arkansas boys blew away four girls and a teacher in front of their school.

They understood how to kill long before they understood death.

Their access to weapons, and their

training in their use led to one of the greatest tragedies in our decade. It is only one of many involving guns.

Advocates of concealed weapons say that by placing legal guns in the hands of responsible citizens we will ensure the safety of everyone. The two young boys who killed those four girls and a teacher carried legally licensed guns.

Guns don't create safety, they only create victims. Police, who are well-versed on the consequences of firearms, are unilaterally opposed to the passage of a concealed weapons bill, and rightfully so.

They have seen what happens when guns are involved in passionate situations. They have seen reasonable people go suddenly crazy and violent and, most importantly, they have seen police officers killed because of it.

Encouraging the arming of the American populace is a fatal move to an increasingly tyrannous society — not a step towards freedom.

It is ironic that conservatives, who notoriously push for the freedom of individuals, are doing so much to control them by fear. And while they criticize liberals for throwing money at a problem, I believe it is a far better idea than spraying bullets at it.

Concealed weapons will obviously not help our society become safer or instill values in our young people. That kind of thing needs to be done by example.

It needs to be taught by teaching young people respect and values. It needs to include a return to the family and a reason for young people to invest in our society — one where they are not afraid of strangers or the weapons they are hiding.

It needs to be done with patience and education.

Of course, who wouldn't listen to a person with a gun?

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