

Bleacher bums

Students should take their rightful place above the crowd on stadium seats



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There is an evil ploy brewing within the most hallowed halls of Huskerdom.

This dark scheme may be more scandalous than artificial turf, more devious than HuskerVision.

The student purists cannot stand it, or, perhaps more fittingly, can't stand upon it.

They want us to stand down.

On the revered old bleachers of Memorial Stadium, the point has been made time and time again — you can't stand on those splendid old slabs of wood.

So tomorrow, when you're wearing your blue to MU, remember to continue the vigil against the demise of the bleacher bum.

You've seen it before — for the past four home games, the orange-vested stadium attendant futilely pleading with students to stand on the concrete instead of the bleachers.

The orange-clad foreman goes on and on until, finally, the Lancaster Sheriff's Deputy gets in on his share of the action. He's getting paid to watch a football game — might as well make life difficult for students too and double his pleasure.

At last week's game against Kansas, one of the power-tripping deputies in the student section came up with a new catch-phrase and he used it for the whole game.

As students continued to stand on the bleachers, he repeatedly yelled down at them, in perfect cop fashion, "You don't want to follow the rules? We can take a walk if you want to."

Needless to say, no walks were taken. Satisfied with his handling of the situation and his newfound wit, the deputy retired to his corner of South Stadium, only to return after every re-emergence to pander his cheap banality.

Other columnists say the phenomenon surrounding such events

was perpetuated by The Man.

But The Man will fail in this endeavor. It's not at all feasible.

It's the interminable cycle. The attendants tell everyone to sit down, starting in the back row and working forward, finding that by the time they return, everyone in the back is standing up again.

Then comes the deputy and he threatens to kick everyone out. Considering most people are raucous and drunk, there's a lull for the moment. Five minutes later, everyone's back on the bleachers.

But you must admire the stadium attendant. These folks are the epitome of what public service knows as organization men.

Regardless of success, the attendants serve nobly in their capacity, selflessly giving their time to a hollow cause not likely to be accomplished, short of tearing the bleachers out of the student section.

However, his store will remain the same — he's bound for defeat.

Plain and simply, there's not a student alive that goes to Nebraska games and thinks about Grandpa Honus who has the unfortunate load of having to sit behind the student section in South Stadium.

Why should we?

We pay \$17.50 for our tickets and we actually have some connection with the here and now of the game.

Honus graduated in '48, saw the Huskers go 2-8 that year and comes to the game to talk to the folks around him and complain about the degeneration of the college youth.

He's not going to cheer, yell or criticize anything going on in the game. Honus is a typical member of the "Sea of Red."

For the people of this state, college football is a passion. At Memorial Stadium, it's like sitting in a church every Saturday as Rev. Solich leads the choir in song after unending song.

The average nonstudent fan watches the game as though it were a church service — not exactly a rip-roaring good time, just another day in the pew.

Conversely, for the students at this university, college football is a social event. It's the thing to do on Saturday to interrupt the usual weekend party cycle. It's that three hours of violence we need when we can't watch television.

We get drunk, we get wild, we get

noisy and we stand on the bleachers because everyone else does and because it's the thing to do and the place to be. The Man's not going to stop us.

After all, we've got to at least see the damn game.

Yeah, we're self-centered, arrogant and boisterous — welcome to the dysfunctional game of football.

The Man will never end the reign

of the Husker bleacher bum.

Whoever He is, He's not powerful enough to keep watch over all of the students, at all of the games, at all times.

But He claims he can change our seating. Go right ahead. It's not as if moving us back further will be that big of a difference — the students don't have the most stellar seats in the house, anyway.

Besides, that puts Grandpa Honus in front of us and we can stand on the bleachers. Everyone's happy and the stadium attendant and the deputy sheriff can relax.

Until that day, don't let the Man get you down. Don't make Him stand you down.

Be proud of what you are — the last, straggling few of a dying breed: the Husker Bleacher Bum.



ROBB BLUM/DN

Golden Gates

Microsoft's founder is being punished for pursuing the American dream



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Bill Gates isn't all that bad.

I know, having that opinion is tantamount to saying that Charles Manson is misunderstood or Dick Nixon was framed.

But I have my reasons, you see.

Because Bill Gates really isn't all that bad.

For the past few months, Gates has been lambasted by pretty much everyone who has mentioned his name.

He's a crook, they say, an evil man who has used the unwieldy power he's amassed in the technology business to crush his opponents.

He's tried to run everyone else out of his field, they say.

He's just been one hell of a good capitalist, I say.

We can run him through the muck in our newspapers, our coffee shops and our justice system, but Bill Gates is simply another player in the money-hungry system upon which our country was built.

He just happens to be the best player.

He's not a saint, by any means. His quest for more, more and still more, is decidedly not ... well, nice. But when we look at Gates, we shouldn't see a Godzilla who is crushing everyone in his path with his ill-gotten power of monopoly.

When we look at Gates, we should see a loser. A geek. A scrawny kid who undoubtedly endured a host of taunts and bloody noses throughout his adolescence.

He's not Godzilla.

He's the lowly kid who excelled in the classroom but got pummeled during recess.

And now he's got the upper hand.

In the movies, everybody likes to hoot and holler for the nerdy underdog. We clap when he gets back at the bullies. We cheer when he gets the head cheerleader to fall madly in love with him.

Bill Gates is not Godzilla. He's more like Lucas. Maybe Simon Birch.

But this isn't the movies. This is real life. And for some reason, most of America, the Justice Department included, wants to make sure that Lucas doesn't get too big for his britches.

Well, America, that's just too bad. Gates is a capitalist. And until we embrace the ideology of Karl Marx as a nation, we shouldn't be pointing fingers.

When we think of Bill Gates, we don't like to think of a young man in a rumpled shirt with taped glasses, starting his own company and moving from ramshackle offices into big, shiny tech parks.

We like to think of Bill Gates as the slick multimillionaire, the man who has forsaken humanity and kindness for unlimited power.

But Bill Gates is both.

He hasn't risen to unprecedented heights in the realm of technology by inheriting daddy's fortune. He has toiled wholeheartedly for every cent he's gathered. He's earned his money.

And in doing that, he should receive our praise, not our scorn.

Like it or not, this is America.

This country pushed itself from one ocean to the next by embracing nothing less than ruthless imperialism.

And America not only practiced capitalism — America perfected it.

America killed off this continent's native population because it preferred nature and honor over railroads and industry. America enslaved an entire race to further its own financial prosperity.

Now America is pointing its finger at a man who hasn't killed, diseased or enslaved anyone. He's just had the ingenuity and guts to package some software.

This isn't justice. This isn't maintaining a fair market. This is outright hypocrisy.

The gist of the government's case against Gates and Microsoft is that they abused their position as the leading producer of operating systems to move into the world of Internet software.

They pushed Netscape Communications Corp., a company that held a 90 percent share of the Internet browser market, into a more reasonable market share of 50 percent.

They didn't do so by buying out Netscape or forcing it out of the

business. They simply packaged their own Internet browser with Windows, their operating system.

And Netscape, the company that used to hold its own monopoly on Internet browsers, subsequently began crying for justice.

If that's what America would like to label its attack on Microsoft, then so be it.

But that's not what it is. It's a case of old-fashioned American hypocrisy.

We become jealous when somebody gets more than we can get. That's natural.

But we preach about the American dream, and then we try to knock down the few people who achieve it, knowing all along that we would love to be in the achiever's shoes.

Gates is one of the (un)lucky few who managed to live the dream.

Because if life is like a game of Monopoly, then Bill Gates owns hotels on Park Place, Boardwalk and all of those expensive green spaces. And chances are, he didn't get the race car piece he wanted to play with. He got the top hat.

Let's all be good sports and let him build up his bank.