

OPINION PACES

Our VIEW

We've been here before *After a year of scandal, little has changed*

It's been an uncomfortable year to be in the media. It produced a fine crop of news events that enticed readers, but tough criticism for those behind the guns shooting rapid-fire news at readers.

We started the year running stories of uncertainty in the Gulf, worries in the White House and prospects of human cloning. Twelve months later, little has changed.

In January, a full year will have passed since Monica Lewinsky made her public debut as the world's most compliant intern. She enhanced public knowledge about President Bill Clinton, the Gap and the cigar industry when Linda Tripp decided to air her dirty laundry.

The Lewinsky-Tripp-Kenneth Starr trio then ushered in the greatest political soap opera in modern U.S. history, as well as a long period of public criticism of the media — which often covered the circus for ratings, not journalistic responsibility.

Closer to home, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln returned to its usual resting place in the third tier of four-year colleges and universities, as judged by U.S. News & World Report.

UNL received unwelcome attention on other fronts, too, thanks to former English professor David Hibler's e-mailed tirades laced with racial epithets. Hibler pushed the limits of so-called academic freedom by flouting words that many people found offensive and by staging rap sessions in administrators' offices — the kind that get a person fired somewhere down the line.

Faculty problems persisted when the university discovered a professor had spent years disposing of American Indian remains improperly, then it issued a tremendous apology that could never be good enough.

UNL's stalwart of academic rigor, the political science department, had its share of turmoil as well. A professor resigned and charged that the department tolerated sexual harassment and an Academic Senate committee agreed. So the big folks on campus called a second committee, which refuted the first. In the end, few fears of whether harassment was allowed were calmed.

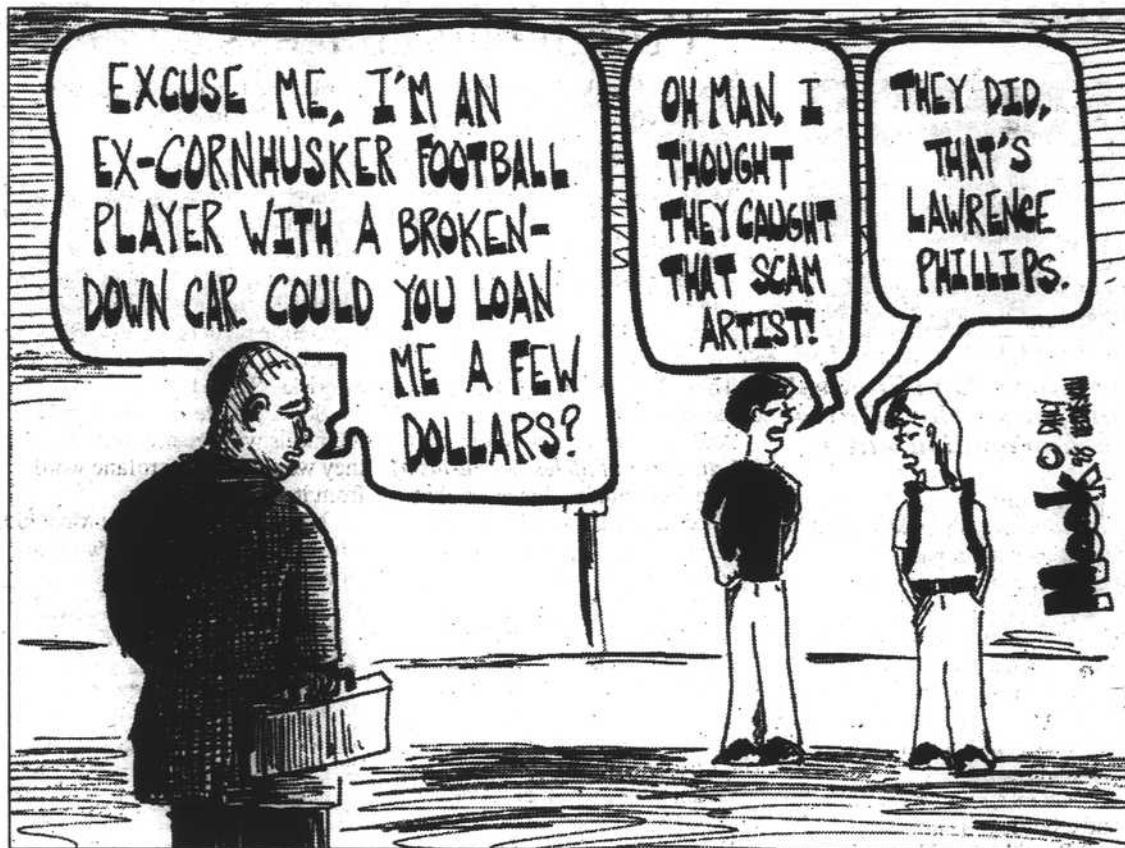
Controversy came to the sports world, too. Mike Tyson reappeared. The NBA players and owners all took their balls and went home. And don't forget Nebraskans, who bawled like babies because their almighty football team lost a whopping three games.

In the end, we must surmise: This year was uncomfortable for almost everyone.

Thank goodness for the economy. John Glenn and the baseball season, when Americans sat transfixed to TV screens as Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa assaulted Roger Maris' home run record. Viewers then witnessed the New York Yankees stake their claim as the best baseball team ever.

Those few stories felt just as good to report on as Mom and apple pie.

Mook's VIEW



DN LETTERS

A different perspective

I wish to attempt to answer some of the questions that Tim Sullivan poses in his column, "The right to choose ignorance" (Tuesday). First of all, I would like to say that I respect the way Mr. Sullivan uses logic and rational thought to arrive at his opinion. So much of society's attitudes these days lack this crucial element.

However, there are a few flaws in his logic. It is not ignorant for pro-life advocates to protest in front of the O Street location of Planned Parenthood even though they do not do abortions there. Women go there in the very preliminary stages of their situation, perhaps even before they've made a decision on what to do. By the time they go to the South Street location, they have made up their minds and it's all the more difficult to change them. It makes sense to have people on O Street who can make women see the situation from a different perspective — that in which life is chosen.

As for just going to get information on birth control, this, too, is very much a part of the pro-life movement as birth control is really just another form of an abortion. The statement, "So it strikes me that women who use the pill are acting responsibly," is a logic flaw. This is because we have to remember that sex is for reproduction, not pleasure. For those of us who "find ourselves" in positions in our lives that would make parenthood impractical or unwise, we should not be having sex in the first place.

The groups I have been associated with use the logic and rational thought shown here to help women with education and prayer. I do not, in any way, support violence as a means to further our cause. This is the most obvious absurdity of them all. I don't exactly support what they do at Westminster Church either, but I do know that intelligent, silent, prayerful protest can be very effective.

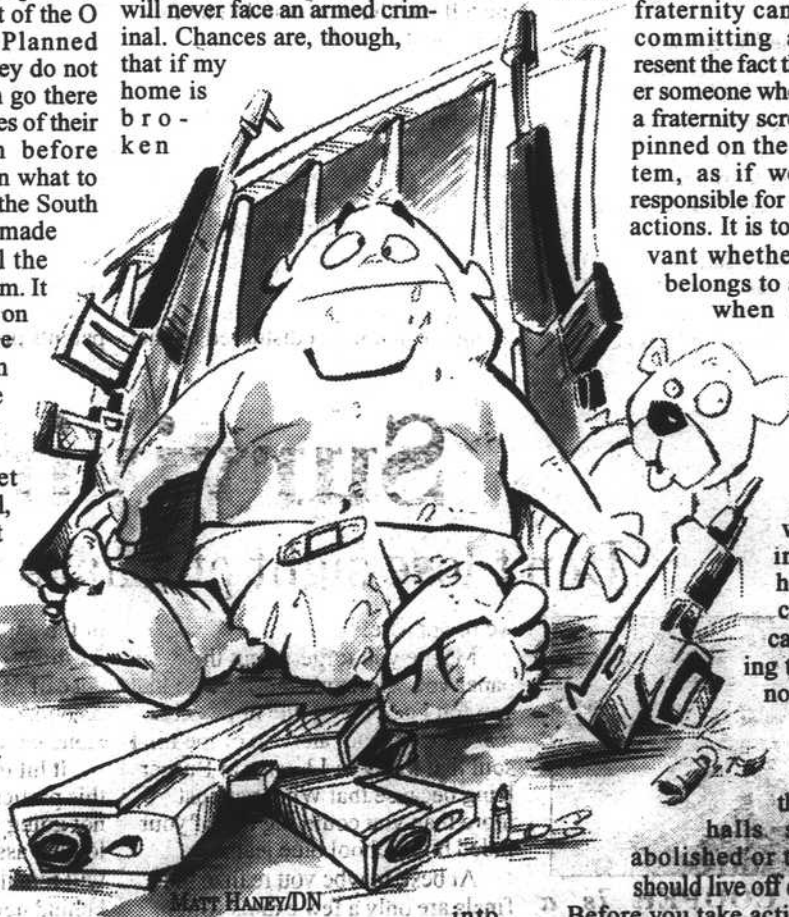
Dave Janda
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The right to shoot
Your Tuesday editorial, "Decision

Time," makes a valid point that the Second Amendment is in need of interpretation. And there is no question we have a national gun violence problem. However, I am troubled by your framing the gun control debate as "the right to bear arms vs. the right not to get shot." Many Americans believe that their constitutional right to legal gun ownership is what protects the goal, not right, of avoiding being shot. Thankfully most of us will never face an armed criminal. Chances are, though, that if my home is broken

don't see why you are giving the greek system a bad rap for the actions of two people.

You refer to fraternities getting caught cutting down a tree, breaking into sororities or getting caught with minors drinking on their properties. Let me correct you. You cannot catch a fraternity doing anything; it is a lifeless entity that cannot perform actions on its own. However, a member, or groups of members, of a fraternity can be caught committing a crime. I resent the fact that whenever someone who belongs to a fraternity screws up, it is pinned on the greek system, as if we were all responsible for each other's actions. It is totally irrelevant whether a person belongs to a fraternity when he or she commits a crime.



into, there will not be a police officer waiting in the living room. All that will protect me from violence is the gentle consideration of the invader, or one of my guns. Neither option is infallible, but I have more confidence in the latter.

Bill Hansen
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Not all the greeks

I was disappointed to read in the Wednesday DN ("Shame on you") that someone could be so ignorant as to scapegoat the entire UNL greek system for the university's problems because two members of a fraternity stole a Christmas tree. I do agree with you, Mr. Wolfe, that the action reflects poor character; however, I

Numerous students who reside in residence halls or off campus are caught breaking the law, and no one writes to the DN and says that the residence halls should be abolished or that no one should live off campus.

Before you take action to try to abolish the entire greek system, let me remind you of a few things. Both fraternities and sororities consistently maintain a higher GPA than the rest of the university. Members of the greek system are highly involved in student organizations, constantly striving to improve the university and its environment. Membership in a greek house builds lifelong friendships and helps people realize their full potential. So before you blame the greek system for all the problems here, take a look at its positive aspects, and remember it isn't the whole system's fault when a few people that belong to it do something wrong.

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