

OPINION PAGES

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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.

Our
VIEW

Cultural culpability

Everyone responsible for capital punishment

It would have been one day until someone — one man or woman — would have been physically responsible for the death of Randy Reeves.

Only one anonymous correctional worker would have flipped the switch that would have sent the electricity through Reeves' body to execute him for the murders he committed.

The anonymity of administering the death penalty is fitting, really. No one — and everyone — would be responsible for the death of Reeves.

In simplest terms, the Daily Nebraskan does not support the death penalty. We don't support the use of the electric chair, which has in the past inflicted torture upon its victim. But there is more to the death penalty than just the execution itself.

There are few who will take culpability in Nebraska — from Gov. Mike Johanns to the common household — for the death of Reeves. It sometimes seems as if Reeves were flipping the switch himself.

Finally, someone listened. The Nebraska Supreme Court. It will at least hear arguments concerning a motion that contends the death penalty is culturally biased. But there is still a problem with the lack of responsibility taken in the execution of a human being.

Look at the system. At every turn, there are safeguards against claiming responsibility in a state that supports the death penalty.

Governors often pass the final decision of pardon to the two other members of the board or the state's Supreme Court. The other board members pass the responsibility back to the governor. It plays out as a morbid, unfortunate game of hot potato.

What about the state senators who turn down bills to stop the death penalty each year? Their common response: They are simply the voice of the people they represent. Common citizens, on the other hand, say the decision is one better left to elected officials.

But at no level does anyone claim true responsibility for ending a prisoner's life. We all play a role, but no one wants to admit as much. Even if there were such a thing as vigilante justice, which appeals to some of us, it has a person or a motive behind it.

The result is an unfortunate end to a problem we think could be solved with life in prison. It's cheaper, it's punishing the criminal just for the rest of his or her life, and it doesn't attach the moral responsibility of a death.

The death penalty may never be overturned in Nebraska, but all of us need to take responsibility. Reeves' life was deemed unworthy of living long before he would have been executed. He has been granted a stay. For now. But it's time recognize ourselves as the judge and jury, rather than just recognizing the executioner.

Lupo's
VIEW



Resolute action

Simple quiz shows where resolution loyalties lie



KASEY KERBER is a senior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

We all make them — a series of promises at the beginning of a new year that we might even make more "possible" because we write them down:

New Year's resolutions. And while we make them, it doesn't mean we keep them. Many New Year's resolutions are doomed to fail unless you have the strength, dedication or sheer insanity to keep up with them.

So in that spirit, I'm proud to offer what I believe (and a five-minute Internet search concludes) to be the first "New Year's Resolution Dedication Test."

Now you too can find out whether you've got what it takes to make those promises stick. Simply check the answer for each question that best fits your scenario.

1. EATING

- ___ a. I have resolved to watch what I eat.
- ___ b. I've had a few candy bars, but only ones with nuts (I think they're more nutritious).
- ___ c. I consider four Big Macs to be an excellent appetizer for "All-You-Can-Eat" night at Bubba's Big Barn of Ribs and Ricecakes.

2. ACADEMICS

- ___ a. I have resolved to put more time into my studies.
- ___ b. I nodded off in a few classes already.
- ___ c. I've already missed four classes and made the mistake of telling one of my professors that he/she was pretty hot.

3. SLEEPING HABITS

- ___ a. I have resolved to get eight hours of sleep each night.
- ___ b. I tried to get more sleep, but there was an N-SYNC video on televi-

sion.
___ c. I had to pick between sleep and a three-hour Bowflex infomercial. Sleep lost.

4. FRIENDSHIPS

- ___ a. I have resolved to get along better with my friends.
- ___ b. My best friend and I have had a few spats so far, but we'll survive.
- ___ c. He/she slept with my significant other and a "Blow-Up Betty" doll on New Year's Day. We're scheduled to appear on "Jerry Springer" in early February.

5. WEIGHT

- ___ a. I have resolved to lose at least five pounds.
- ___ b. I think I've made a little progress — my jeans no longer prevent me from breathing.
- ___ c. I drink 13 of these dang Slim Fast shakes a day, and all I get is fatter. What gives?

6. FAMILY

- ___ a. I have resolved to get along

better with my family.
___ b. Aside from a fight about who was the messiest baby, we're doing all right.

___ c. I'm 22 years old, but somehow I've been grounded eight times since New Year's.

7. TIME MANAGEMENT

- ___ a. I have resolved to waste less time and get more done
- ___ b. Instead of watching "Judge Judy," I read a book (even if it had a lot of pictures).
- ___ c. I invented a new game yesterday that involves plastic bowling pins, a Frisbee and a life-sized cardboard cutout of Princess Leia.

8. PARTY HABITS

- ___ a. I have resolved to act a little more responsible at social gatherings.
- ___ b. I only danced on the table a little.
- ___ c. In one weekend I was banned from every Lincoln business serving anything "wet," which I suspect had something to do with my drunken mud-wrestling match with a midget (he won by pure luck).

9. SMOKING

- ___ a. I have resolved to stop smoking.
- ___ b. I'm on the patch.
- ___ c. It's the Marlboro Man's fault! He tempted me! Evil cowboy! Evil cowboy!

10. SUCCESS

- ___ a. I have resolved to be more of a success this year.
- ___ b. That tattoo thing was a bit of a setback, but I can still be a success.
- ___ c. After a horrendous first date with a body piercer, I'd be surprised if this year amounts to as much as a Pop Tart.

SCORING SCALE:

- Majority of A's — You will do well, grasshopper. Always follow high expectations, and be sure to stock up on stress-relief herbs.
- Majority of B's — Average. Nothing more, nothing less.
- Majority of C's — If you don't have a straitjacket, I highly advise buying one. Contrary to most crazy people's beliefs, they don't come in just white anymore. Choose any color your unstable mind deems fit.



MELANIE FALK/DN