

And two smoking barrels

Experiences with guns make more difference than actual gun laws



Guns and I have a long, storied history. We aren't friends per se, but we're not enemies. Mostly, our encounters have been a series of disappointments for each side.

I have shot a gun three times in my life. It didn't work out.

The moment came in Grand Island, a world of infinite possibilities, where we had neighbors that my ma best described as "neighborhood snoops."

"They spend all day over there just lookin' at us out their window," she said, "just peekin' through the curtain."

Of course, my parents do the same thing in our Omaha house now. In fact, they did back then, too — especially when the retired Green Beret across the street would sit on his front porch with his son under a pink blanket. (Another story, another time.)

Anyway, these snoops, whose names I don't remember (I'm not sure I ever knew), took my dad and me out to the shooting range one day.

My dad is a hunter. Apparently he's a good shot, but all the times I went hunting with him, he never hit anything.

The same applies to my oldest brother, who is also apparently a good shot. He prefers to stake out barren hunting lands in northern Nebraska and slog through thick weeds for three hours before giving up and settling down to the main attraction of the trip: breakfast at a truck stop.

At the range, I took three tries at shooting a gun, aiming with a rifle at a target far, far away.

First shot ...

"Nope," said Old Man Snoop.

Second shot ...

"Huh-uh," Snoop said again.

And my dad had to step in.

"What are you doing here? Lemme show you," he said.

My dad is one of those people who cannot watch anyone do anything for very long, even if he or she is doing it correctly. He perches like a hawk over me when I'm mowing the lawn, lest I screw up his fairway-quality grass.

Samuel McKewon is a junior political science major and the Daily Nebraskan sports editor.

It's not just true love

'The Vagina Monologues' give new meaning to Valentine's Day



There are times when we get lucky, and we stumble across an idea, an idea that seems obvious and long overdue, an idea sparking other ideas, lighting a fire for new thought. Eve Ensler had an idea about vaginas.

So she talked to women about their vaginas.

"I was worried about vaginas. I was worried about what we think about vaginas and even more worried that we don't think about them. So I decided to talk to women about their vaginas, to do vagina interviews, which became vagina monologues," wrote Eve Ensler,

author and activist, in the book version of her play.

The critically acclaimed play "The Vagina Monologues" transpired out of these talks. It's a series of individual monologues, all dealing with the vagina.

"The Vagina Monologues" uses the female organ as a front to voice a concern. It says what many women have been afraid to say, forcing the public to hear what it doesn't want to hear. The monologues are nothing if not taboo.

"It sounds like an infection, at best maybe a medical instrument, 'Hurry up bring me the vagina.' It never sounds like a word you want to say. Say you use it during sex trying to be politically correct. 'Darling, would you stroke my vagina?' No, you've killed it right there," one woman's story reads in "The Vagina Monologues."

By forcing the word vagina to the forefront, the play uses its lack of tact

to bring up any and every issue that deals with female sexuality. As the title list shows, the monologues cover genital mutilation, self-discovery and even vagina smell. Titles include:

"Vagina fact: genital mutilation."

"What does your vagina smell like?"

"I asked a six-year-old girl."

"The women who loved to make vaginas happy."

All that comes together to create a show described by New York Times reviewer Anita Gates as "alternately hilarious and deeply disturbing."

Beyond forcing the public to deal with the word "vagina," the show has become a hallmark for women's activists. Since its first run in 1997, it has sparked V-Day and the college initiative, which is a national movement that started in 1998.

V-Day, which initially stood for Valentine's Day is celebrated by the college initiative, a nationwide, pro-

women collegiate movements that celebrates in February. It promotes women's awareness of women's sexuality and consequently has a reading of "The Vagina Monologues."

In 1999, 65 colleges participated in this. Sadly, the University of Nebraska was not one of those.

This year, Nebraska has joined with more than 120 other campuses, which include Creighton, Kansas State, Harvard, Yale and Colorado State.

The Women's Studies Association is presenting the play at the Seventh Street Loft this Sunday at 2 p.m. and Monday at 7:30 p.m.

"The Vagina Monologues" cast will include faculty, students and also members of various businesses and political organizations.

Keri Wayne, who is in charge of the Nebraska branch of the college initiative, called the work "a masterpiece." She said the piece "is about society

coming to accept women's sexuality and the woman's vagina as part of the language."

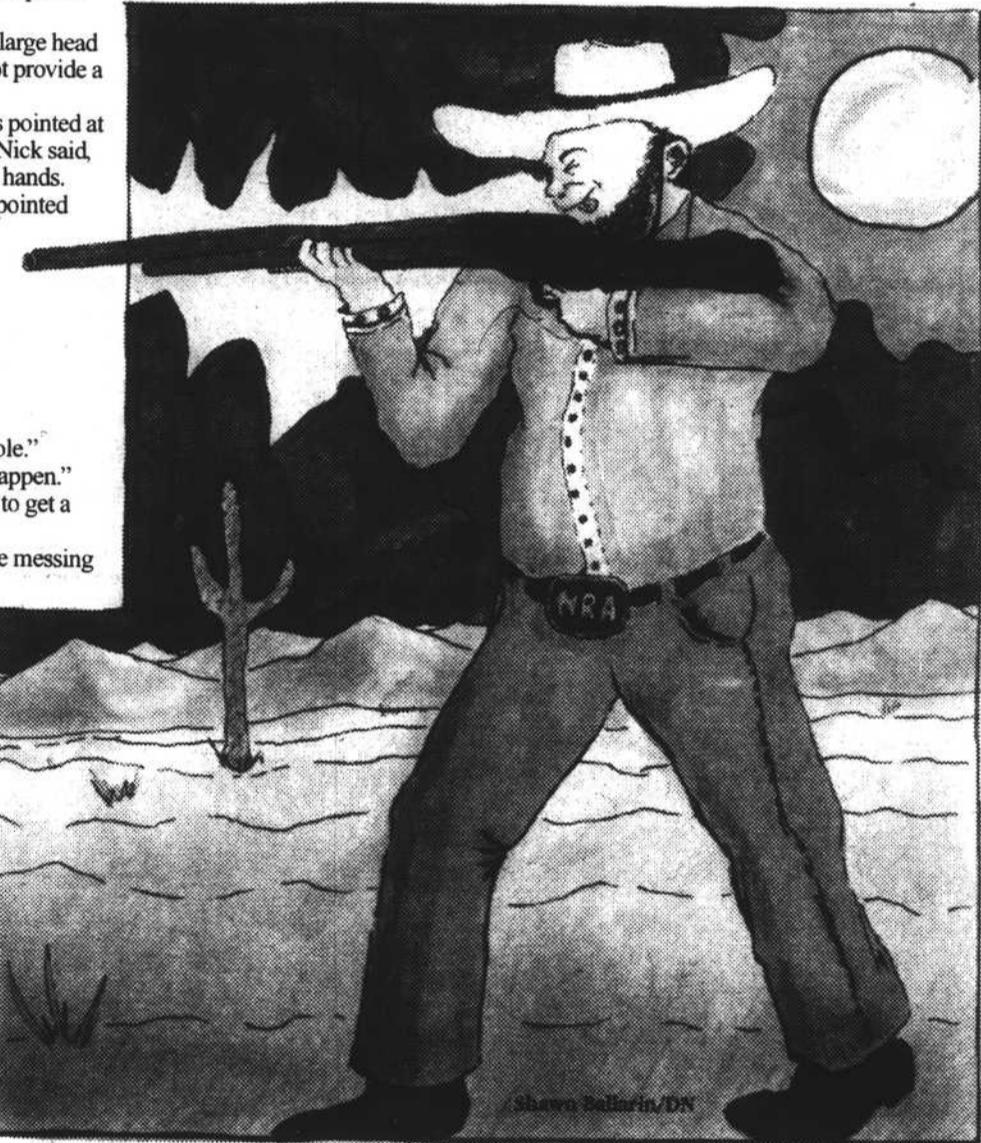
She also said, "Surprisingly, the show has been pretty well supported."

However, the show has done little advertising so far. At Colorado State and Brown universities, banners supporting the show have been torn down, because many detractors of this show think it is too vulgar.

But calling the show vulgar is arguing with real life because all of the dialogue comes from real women.

Eve Ensler had an idea to spread the word about women's sexuality, and consequently, about women's vaginas. While her message is brutally harsh, it is also endearingly funny and unquestionably true.

If you're looking for a new way to express love this Valentine's Day, then give love to all women, and maybe yourself as well. Go see "The Vagina Monologues."



Shawn Bellar/DN

Trevor Johnson is a junior secondary education and English major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.