

## Good, but not good enough *Smith & Wesson deal holds promise, but more is needed*

On Friday, the Clinton administration entered an unprecedented deal with Smith & Wesson, the largest of America's eight major gun manufacturers.

In what Clinton and others herald as a historic advance in the fight against gun violence, Smith & Wesson agreed to continue many of the safety initiatives it was already working on.

The details of this agreement are not as important as the fact that an agreement was reached at all. It is encouraging to see a major player in the gun industry volunteer to improve its guns.

In exchange, federal, state and local governments have agreed to drop pending lawsuits against the manufacturer.

In their lawsuits, cities and other governments assert that gun manufacturers, among other things, have been negligent in marketing and distribution and failed to properly warn consumers.

Up until Friday's announcement, major gun manufacturers had held together in negotiations with the government. By breaking ranks with the industry and negotiating its own deal, Smith & Wesson has taken an important step ahead.

The government has pledged to press the litigation against the other gun manufacturers. However, it is likely that other gun companies will now seek similar deals.

Many of the terms of the Smith & Wesson agreement require it to continue some safety practices that are already common in the industry.

Smith & Wesson must include gun locks with every gun - something it has been doing since 1997.

The company was also mandated to develop "smart guns" that can only be fired by an authorized user. Nearly every major manufacturer is already working on these designs.

Smith & Wesson also agreed to sell only to distributors who adhere to a code of conduct that includes gun show background checks among other things.

Already Smith & Wesson has been rewarded for this deal by several cities that announced they would give the gun-maker preference when supplying their police forces.

Headline-grabbing gun violence has seemed ever-present in recent

years, and many people have struggled to find its cause.

Any effort to curb this violence is welcome, but it is important to remember that violence involves more than guns. Reformers should also look at the people involved in and circumstances surrounding the violence.

### Editorial Board

Josh Funk (editor) • J.J. Harder • Cliff Hicks • Samuel McKewon • Dane Stickney • Kimberly Sweet • Lindsay Young

### Letter Policy

The Daily Nebraskan welcomes brief letters to the editor and guest columns, but does not guarantee their publication. The Daily Nebraskan retains the right to edit or reject any submissions. Submitted material becomes property of the Daily Nebraskan and cannot be returned. Anonymous material will not be published. Those who submit letters must identify themselves by name, year in school, major and/or group affiliation, if any. Submit material to: Daily Nebraskan, 20 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448 or e-mail to: letters@unl.edu

### Editorial Policy

Unsigned editorials are the opinions of the spring 2000 Daily Nebraskan. They do not necessarily reflect the views of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, its employees, its student body or the University of Nebraska Board of Regents. A column is solely the opinion of its author. The Board of Regents acts as publisher of the Daily Nebraskan; policy is set by the Daily Nebraskan Editorial Board. The UNL Publications Board, established by the regents, supervises the publication of the paper. According to policy set by the regents, responsibility for the editorial content of the newspaper lies solely in the hands of its student employees. The Daily Nebraskan strives to print fair and accurate coverage; any corrections or clarifications will be printed on page three.

### Obermeyer's VIEW



### Letters to the EDITOR

#### Banning ballet

In the arguments over the city's ban on sexual touching in businesses, ballet has been brought up as a legitimate art form which may fall under this new city ordinance.

I am a male who has studied ballet for several decades. In that time, I have been fortunate to partner many talented, intelligent and lovely women. Among them are: a practicing attorney, an employee of the state who is responsible for keeping the sex offender registry, several women of deep religious convictions and a novelist who believes in vampires. Furthermore, my teacher/choreographer hails from a tough New York neighborhood.

Had I ever touched any of these people inappropriately, by now I would have been sued into poverty, branded nationally as a deviant, consigned to one of the lower rings of the netherworld, had my blood veins sucked dry and been told in colorful language tinged with an Eastern accent where to go and how long to stay there (not to mention what my dear wife would have done to me).

Seriously, partnering in dance demands trust and respect between the dancers, and that is obviously not achieved by crude behavior. What you see on stage is an illusion with an artistic end. If the dancers seem intimate, it is the intimacy that arises out of years of working together toward a common goal.

I really don't see what any of this has to do with what goes on at a "gen-

tleman's" club.

Clifford Bettis  
professor  
physics and astronomy

#### Sometimes on wheels

NU on Wheels is out for the protection of UNL students, right? So why is it that the one time in college students' lives when we drink the most - spring break - our lovely cab service is not in service?

It's ridiculous that this free service that we are going to pay for is not available to us when we need it most. Because of this, many UNL students drove home drunk this weekend and endangered the lives of hundreds of Lincoln residents.

What's the point of having the service if it's not servicing students when they need it most? NU on Wheels really needs to rethink the whole idea of existing if it is not going to provide the service that it has been so persistent in promising us everyday.

Thanks for saving so many lives this weekend.

Vickie Zulkoski  
senior  
elementary education

#### Rethinking transfer

I am a college student who has been considering transferring to UNL next fall; however, after the events this weekend, I am seriously recon-

sidering.

I came to town to visit a friend of mine who attends UNL. We decided to spend Saturday night out on the town, thinking that many students would be back from their spring break vacations. We figured we would probably drink more than we should if we were going to drive, so we had a friend drop us off on O Street and planned to call the NU on Wheels program for a ride home.

We saw many UNL students out enjoying their last bit of freedom before the return to the normal school time routine. When we were ready to go home, we called to have the NU on Wheels people come pick us up. However, they said they were not available due to spring break.

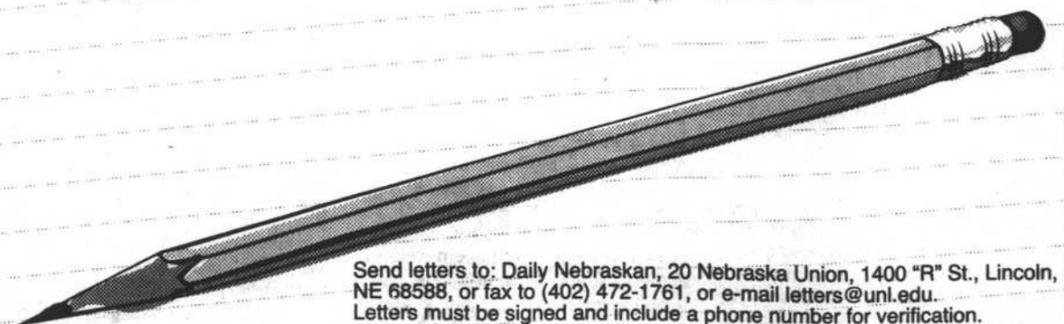
In my view, spring break is the biggest party time of the year for college students. Therefore, the program should have been extended to be available for the entire week rather than not having it at all. By not having the program running during this weekend, they put many unsafe drivers on the streets of Lincoln for no good reason.

It is not a good idea to drink and drive, and the NU on Wheels program is a good idea - but only if it is available when the students need it.

If you are going to promise a service, please provide it.

Stacey J. Weaver  
McCook

## P.S. Write Back



Send letters to: Daily Nebraskan, 20 Nebraska Union, 1400 "R" St., Lincoln, NE 68588, or fax to (402) 472-1761, or e-mail letters@unl.edu. Letters must be signed and include a phone number for verification.