

## Quotes of THE WEEK

**"Say you paid \$2 a day ... That's \$320 a semester. That's a liver."**

Tom Silik, a sophomore math major, on the effects of the city's increase in parking-meter rates.

**"The only thing they don't say is that I should stay out of the classroom."**

Anthropology professor Karl Reinhard, referring to the faculty committee's recommendations for his future.

**"We didn't ban any expression ... What's being regulated is the means of expression."**

Valerie Sprenkle, assistant city solicitor for Erie, Pa., after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that local governments can ban nude dancing.

**"The court said the officers had no choice but to shoot him."**

Thomas Mumgaard, Omaha city attorney, referring to the State Supreme Court ruling on the case Scott Baldwin brought against Omaha police.

**"It's an attempt to get higher standards of journalism at our school."**

Scott Thomas, speaker of the UNO student senate, explaining the reasoning behind proposed cuts to the student newspaper's funding.

**"Ninety-nine out of 100 students don't pee in public places or dance in front of MTV cameras with a string bikini on."**

Kirk Riley, president of hotspringbreaks.com, on the reality of spring break.

**"It's like if Black Sabbath, the Beach Boys and the Beatles had a child."**

Jimi Haha, lead singer of Jimmie's Chicken Shack, describing the group's sound.

**"They should fear the whole offensive line."**

NU lineman Russ Hochstein, giving advice to future Husker opponents. The line returns six lettermen from last year's team.

**"We're encouraged by where we are right now in the program."**

Baylor football Coach Kevin Steele, after last year's 1-10 season.

**"This gives us all a chance to catch our breath and talk about this."**

Regent Robert Allen, after the bill to ban the use of aborted fetal tissue in research was pulled from consideration by the State Legislature.

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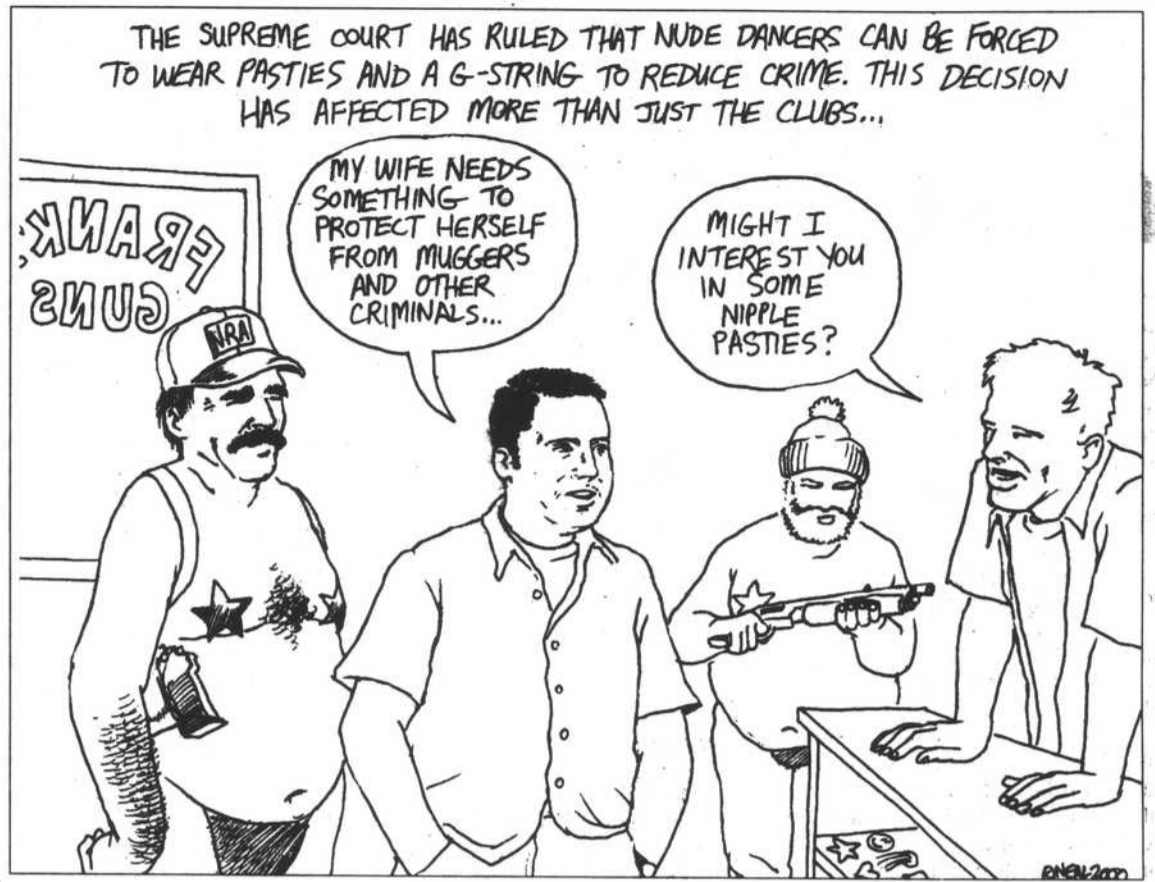
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### Editorial Policy

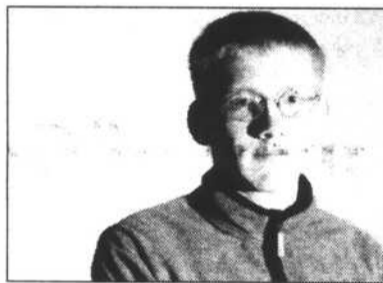
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## Obermeyer's VIEW



## Oil, sand and Twinkies

Gas prices elicit childish reactions from a Twinkie-fied public



Okay, so gas is expensive right now.

Well, expensive, sort of. While prices in Nebraska hover around \$1.50 per gallon, in Europe and other countries they hover much higher. Really, \$1.50 per gallon only seems high here because it was very low last summer.

What is the cause of this price hike? Most directly, the price hike is connected to the fact that the price for a barrel of oil these days is around \$28 - down from a peak in March at \$34. When gas was cheap last summer, the going rate was around \$11. A good part of the reason that the price is as high as it is now has to do with the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries' tighter control on oil production.

Congress is trying to persuade OPEC to release more oil - by threatening an end to economic aid and cutting off trade. After all, the United States deserves the cheaper prices after having bailed out Kuwait in the Gulf War. Some people reason that we'd be buying oil from Saddam Hussein if it weren't for our military intervention (even though we buy from him anyway). The OPEC membership of Venezuela, Algeria, Libya, and Indonesia is neglected (no, OPEC is not just in the Middle East).

OPEC's reluctance to release more oil - at least in the cases of Iran and Libya - is understandable. During our wonderful gas-guzzling summer, OPEC lost \$65 billion in revenue. So those countries don't want to put too much oil into the markets, for fear that the prices will drop again. Meanwhile, other countries such as Saudi Arabia are more willing to release more oil - though not as much as the United States would like.

And it is Saudi Arabia, the most powerful OPEC nation, that is behind

the recent push to increase production. Iran, one of the most vocal opponents to increasing production, has accused Saudi Arabia of submitting to U.S. political pressure. Given that the United States not only has been threatening OPEC, but also lobbying it heavily, this would not be surprising.

U.S. behavior in this whole situation is a bit immature. Once economic trends cause us to begin to suffer a little, the common citizen goes nuts and demands some sort of action. Gas prices are high, so what? Demanding that OPEC increase production for the sake of the working mom who commutes to soccer games every other evening is just absurd. Accusing the greedy OPEC nations of exploiting the American consumer is so stupid it's funny.

Exploited? Soccer moms? Oh, the horror! Especially after we have gotten where we have on cheap foreign labor, oppressed classes and Third World countries. It's called the economy: You pay for what you want, and if expensive gas means no pizza on Friday night, tough!

Instead of using this as an opportunity to orate how wonderful the United States is and all that we've done to save the world from itself, maybe we could examine those very social trends that have firmly clamped our gonads in the hands of oil-producing countries. We've set ourselves up for this through a car-centered culture and urban sprawl.

This childish reaction isn't restricted to just the price of a nearly universally needed commodity. Heard of Twinkies?

When the Teamsters recently went on strike against the Interstate Bakeries Corporation, people throughout New England were cut off from their Twinkie fix. Given anecdotal reports from packaged bakery merchants, it would seem that Twinkies, too, constituted an essential commodity in the New England states.

Customers were angry, outraged even, that their favorite pre-packaged baked goods were no longer available. It seemed as though they couldn't understand the basic principle of item location: If it isn't here, you

can't buy it here, and to get it here, you've got to ship it here. In other words, customers exhibited that same childish inability to understand why the world around them changes.

The citizens of this country have become so complacent about the luxuries we enjoy that a legitimate danger is forming. We have become so used to an unending supply of reasonably affordable gasoline that when that supply is endangered, we respond not by changing our behavior, but by complaining and coercing a return to the status quo.

The oil supply will be exhausted. Eventually, the earth will have no more to offer us, and while that point may be in the near or distant future, inevitably, it will come. When it does come, we will be forced to deal with the very problems we are already setting up now - with huge, expansive cities and city planning built around the assumption that cars will be the most common form of transportation.

I'm not worried that these problems are insurmountable. The economy, based on a free market ideology, will fill the gaps that our culture right now is leaving. However, the complacency that is now being bred in our society by lush living is resulting in an intellectual sloth that will inhibit any attempt to change society when it becomes necessary to do so.

This OPEC fiasco is a warning light on the dashboard of our social development. It shows that we are beginning to deal with a changing world not by adapting to it, but by using what power we have to force it to stay the same. Instead of finding new or innovative solutions first, we try to make things "right" again.

But this won't always work. Further, we portray ourselves as a bunch of spoiled brats who must get our way - and antagonizing the rest of the countries of the world, while within our means, is certainly not the wise thing to do.

So, if gas prices rise this summer to the \$2-per-gallon level, as some have predicted, don't write an angry letter to your senator.

Get out your bike. Go on fewer joy rides. Carpool. Walk. Do whatever.

Just stop complaining.

Jacob Glazeski is a senior music and math major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.