

## Daily Nebraskan

Since 1901

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### Poor sports

#### Decision to cut swimming is right, but method is wrong

The men's swimming team has been eliminated. This much is clear.

With the emphasis of major college athletics on sports that make money, it's understandable.

Athletic departments have to sustain themselves, so the elimination of small programs that don't produce revenue—programs like the NU men's swimming team—is also understandable.

What isn't clear to us, or to the swimmers themselves, is exactly why Athletic Director Bill Byrne and the Nebraska Athletic Department handled the cut like they did.

The swimming team was given no prior indication that this would be their last year of competition—many found out from sources other than the Athletic Department that their program was being axed.

There's no good reason why Byrne waited until this late in the spring semester to notify the men's swimming team of the cut—what exactly does he know now that he didn't know two months ago? The answer, though Byrne will contest, is nothing, really.

The pattern is clear. While the Athletic Department does an excellent job of cultivating winners, it doesn't seem to know how to deal with the handling of less-positive news.

The department has already bungled the internal investigations of the wrestling and swimming programs for probable recruiting violations.

Monday, Byrne claimed the swimming team's violations were major. He, of course, knew of this fact as far back as last fall. Ignore the jargon regarding gag orders during internal investigations because it's obvious the internal investigation was over, for all intents and purposes, long ago.

He decided to share this information with the press now because... well, because that's what best suited him in the particular situation. If the men's swimming team isn't cut, if Byrne doesn't have to justify his actions, there's no release of information regarding the severity of the violations. This, you see, is business as usual.

Byrne also said Monday that he wouldn't, or couldn't, speculate on when he first began to consider cutting men's swimming. He would only admit to talking to Chancellor Harvey Perlman last Wednesday, leading us to believe that the decision has been a recent and rapid one.

Don't believe it. Byrne has been considering this for months, possibly since long-time Coach Cal Bentz and his assistants were suspended last fall in conjunction with the recruiting violations that will likely land the women's swimming team on probation.

And he probably should've started considering it—it's fairly clear that Bentz's program was built with hard work and blatant disregard for the rules.

Bentz deserves his fair share of blame for the elimination of the program.

But the fact remains that Byrne should've told Interim Coach Paul Nelsen what he was thinking. He should've let the men's swimmers know what he was thinking.

Now, the swimmers have less than a week to decide to transfer or stay at NU. They have no time to mount a counter-attack to show their sport deserves a second chance.

With an Athletic Department headed by a leader who worries about the bottom line and winning (which he should) but often forgets he's dealing with humans, not pawns, it's clear that there will occasionally be casualties in this pursuit of wins and dollars.

Monday, that casualty was the men's swimming program, which may have needed to be cut but should've been treated with infinitely more respect.

#### Editorial Board

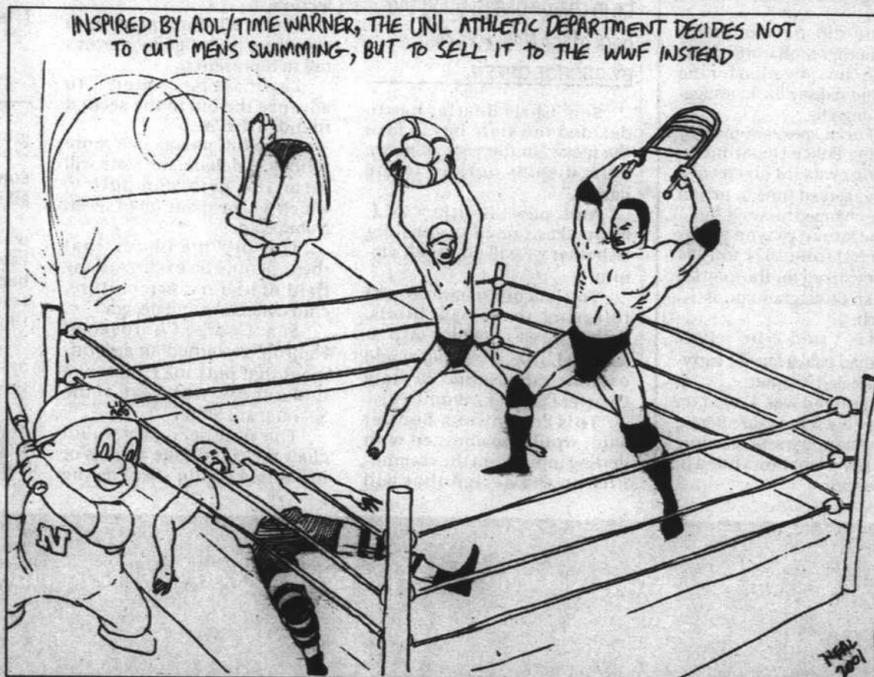
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Neal Obermeyer/DN

### Letters to the editor

#### Why swimming?

As a proud former Husker swimmer, I am deeply saddened by the decision to cut the men's program.

If it is primarily budgetary reasons that necessitated the action, then was it indeed the swim program that was over budget? Or were other programs over budget and cutting the men's swim program was the way to free up that money?

Second, if future budgetary concerns are the issue in terms of keeping the team competitive, there are problems with this point of view also. The article talks about the possibility of the men's team being top 10 nationally in the future. Many know we finished 10th in 1988 and 12th in 1989 and 1990.

We also have had Olympic and world record holders as well as NCAA top-eight finishers and NCAA champions (Peter Williams, Penny Heyns and Adam Pine come to mind—there are several others). As you can see, this team has been successful before.

I could go on and speak also of the strong tradition and the need for continuing opportunities for athletes in Olympic sports to train and compete in order to keep America strong in sports where our

international leadership is declining.

Or, I could go on about the wealth of international talent that has graced UNL's campus and the resulting international ties to our school.

Or perhaps I could discuss the behavior of the swimmers relative to that of athletes on many other Nebraska teams in past years (and the resulting press attention).

Instead, I echo the feelings of Cal Bentz. I am both disappointed and disgusted and even a little heartbroken. I am also suspect of Bill Byrne's motives and explanation. There have been rumors (and it should be noted that these are only rumors) that he has been looking for a reason to cut the swim programs from the Athletic Department for years.

Even if these rumors are false, it should be noted that the former athletic director, the late Bob Devaney, frequently was seen at major competitions hosted by Husker swimming and diving. In nearly five years of helping the coaching staff and supporting the team as a fan at most swim meets, I never saw Bill Byrne attend one competition.

Ryan Bell

Armed Forces Institute of Pathology

## Crap! Not more junk mail!

I've gotten the feeling lately that my mail is attempting to define who I am. It seems that my mail wants to compete with who I think I am by slyly showing me who it thinks I am (or, perhaps, who I should be). It's quite disheartening, and I feel I need to share my thoughts about mail right now!

Let me explain the sitch. About a year ago, I got a letter from the Southern Poverty Law Center whose main mission/slogan is "Teach for Tolerance." I had gotten a few solicitations asking for money in my lifetime (mostly from church to fill the offering plate when I was a kid—which was actually a great cover-up to get my parents to raise my allowance to \$3 a week), and my weakness is that I actually read junk mail and make sound decisions whether to keep it around and reply (insane) or to throw it out (sane).

So, after reading their spiel, I decided to donate \$25.

After all, kids are the answer.

Besides, the letter was personally typed and signed by Rosa Parks. It touched me to know that Rosa had written me, a nobody in Nebraska, a truly moving letter about the ever-present issues of racism, tolerance and justice.

During the past year, I have read about SPLC's amazing law battles with injustice (usually in the form of the Ku Klux Klan and the neo-Nazi Aryan Nation), and it makes me feel good to know I contributed to justice.

But there's just one little problem. After six months of glorious at-home-justice-fighting (I'm no Batman), I started to get, as well as the latest updates on the Ku, a sheet inquiring of more donations.

Not this week, Rosa. I just gave my last dime to pay off my "liposuction in a bottle" bill. (Don't ask. Spring Break was still less than perfect).

I wrote her extensive letters explaining where my money was allotted each month.

But it didn't seem to phase her.

In another week or two, there was always another letter highlighting good deeds—with a slip for donating money.

I started to get nervous because Rosa obviously depended heavily on me for support. Just what exactly did she do with my money? Twenty-five dollars should have been more than enough for her to live comfortably on for quite some time whilst still "teaching tolerance."

Maybe she bought a new car or maybe she took the children she teaches tolerance to on a trip to Tahiti to teach them tongue twisters.

Perhaps, me thinks, she may have a drinking problem. I wrote her in November with concerns



Karen Brown

of her suspected bottle blues.

I got no reply. Just another letter asking for money.

After I felt Rosa wasn't opening up on a personal level (and I realized some other guy started signing the letters), I took a moment to look over my file of every single Southern Poverty Law letter I had received in the past year—more than 20 including the newsletter. An ethereal light buzzed over my head; I had finally solved the puzzle.

I looked over my address labels, newsletters, donation applications, my letters of personal pain and defeat, and I added up the total paper carnage. I thought about the paper costs of all this and compared it with my donation.

It all made sense: My \$25 was spent for paper (envelopes, letters and such) to get me to give them more money!

This is where the guilt should have hit like a rock, and it did. "Why perpetuate the cycle?" you may ask. Well, I'm going to write Rosa a letter telling her not to waste paper on me; I will donate faithfully every year on the mark. I just want the newsletters so I know what I'm supporting.

As I continued to feel wretchedly guilty, I started to get letters from unknown sources. I never used to get junk mail in such massive quantities, but it started about three months ago. Me thinks somebody sold my name (it couldn't have been cute little Rosa, could it?) to a list of needy organizations and, whoa Nelly, you should see the paper carnage now from donor wannabes.

To name just a few hits we have: The 700 Club, Right to Life (the right side), Unicef, The Interfaith Council, Oxfam America, National Camps for Blind Children and Democratic Senatorial Campaign (I'm not even a Democrat).

Now, I must mention one that gives me nightmares. It was one from the Christopher Reeve Paralysis Foundation. Included was a letter from Chris with an insert from his wife, Dana. The letter from Dana has her name in maroon printed on the top—"Dana." Kinda weird, I thought.

Also, there was a neat picture of the Pyramid of Kukulcan in Mexico.

Why? I don't know. Kinda weird. But that's not all. The most eerie item in the history of fundraisers (this even beats the numerous membership cards I've received to places I'm not even a member) is a black and white photo of Christopher and Dana smiling at me.

I have seen the light, and I can see behind their evil smiles—they just want my money!

After all this, I no longer have a place to sleep as the paper carnage fills my home. I'm sad now. I thought they cared about the Karen inside, not the Karen who once opened her wallet to well wishes.

The moral of this story, though it took me some time to come to grips with, is really quite simple: If an old lady writes to you and asks you for money, call the cops on her.

## The evils and addictions of Solitaire

There is no force on this earth stronger than addiction. And I mean being truly addicted to something, not some sissy addiction like caffeine or nicotine.



Tony Bock

My addiction: Vegas draw three solitaire on the computer.

Before I do work of any sort, or go to bed, or take a shower, or before any number of mundane everyday chores, I play.

I play until I win, then I play one more just so I know I couldn't have won two in a row (this did happen, once). This is not easy, and I've gone into hundreds of thousands of dollars of fake debt on it just this past week. I sit in front of the computer like a damned zombie. If I haven't won in awhile, I blame the deck and change from the palm tree to either the robot or the haunted castle.

When I'm not playing, I'm playing in my head and eagerly anticipating the next game like a fiend waiting for a hit.

It can take me hours to win just one hand. Unfortunately, it's just one small symptom of my affliction, my disease.

"I'm sorry, son, what did you just say?" The doctor heard me right the first time; he just couldn't believe I said it. He reassured me that I was in fine medical condition but no doubt questioned my sanity.

I am sick. I need help. Medical help. This hasn't been as easy to come by as I had hoped.

"Results 1-15 of about 1,190 containing 'senioritis.'"

I thought maybe the Internet would be of help. I was hoping for groundbreaking medical research, maybe an article in the New England Journal of Medicine on the topic. Nothing.

Of the 1,000-plus items on the Web, not one was of help. Senioritis. I'd heard it brought up before, but it was always mentioned with a smirk. "I have senioritis, ha, ha, ha. I might get a 3.75 instead of a 4.0."

What I'm experiencing is nothing to joke about. I am convinced I have a disease, and it's no laughing matter. I just pray it doesn't kill me. You think I'm kidding? I pulled an all-nighter last week and didn't study. That's right. I had a test at 8 in the morning, stayed up all night and did nothing but play hand after hand of solitaire and watch my O-Town tape.

Sometimes I just put the open book on the floor, and I sit on the bed and stare off into space. That is the only level of procrastination below solitaire: doing absolutely nothing.

But it kills time.

That's suddenly become the most important thing to me as we march toward graduation day. There's more, though: I didn't change a class to pass/no pass because I might get a D in it, but I can still graduate with that. I only have 13 hours this semester, and all but three were completely my decision. I only took courses that sounded interesting to me. Now, I complain bitterly about having to go to golf class (which actually is less of a joke class than most here).\*\*\*

I had a very important test last Friday which started at 2:30, and I started studying at 2:05. And by "studying" I mean taking the book out of my bag and skimming the table of contents. I suspect I'm not the only one who's been hit this hard with the disease.

Believe me, it's much more time consuming to go out of your way not to study than to just sit down and study. The old me was apathetic; I just wouldn't study and would go on with it. Now I feel like I should study but I physically can't.

It wears me out constantly playing solitaire—or participating in my Oprah chat room when I should be writing a paper at four in the morning.\*\*\* Let's all just hope that if I put myself on autopilot that I'll be able to shake this creepy malaise and be given a diploma May 5.

\*—Stopped writing to play a game of Vegas draw three solitaire.

\*\*—Stopped writing to gawk at female bodies on MTV's Spring Break.

\*\*\*—Stopped writing to watch hilarious Mel Gibson movie, "What Women Want."

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