

A sane decision

Hostility lavished upon gay men and women by an ostensibly "straight" society is unlikely to end with psychiatrists' claim that homosexuality, after all these years, is not a "mental illness." But an announcement by the American Psychiatric Assoc. (APA) is the best indication to date that the gay community is on its way to achieving an equitable status with those of a heterosexual preference.

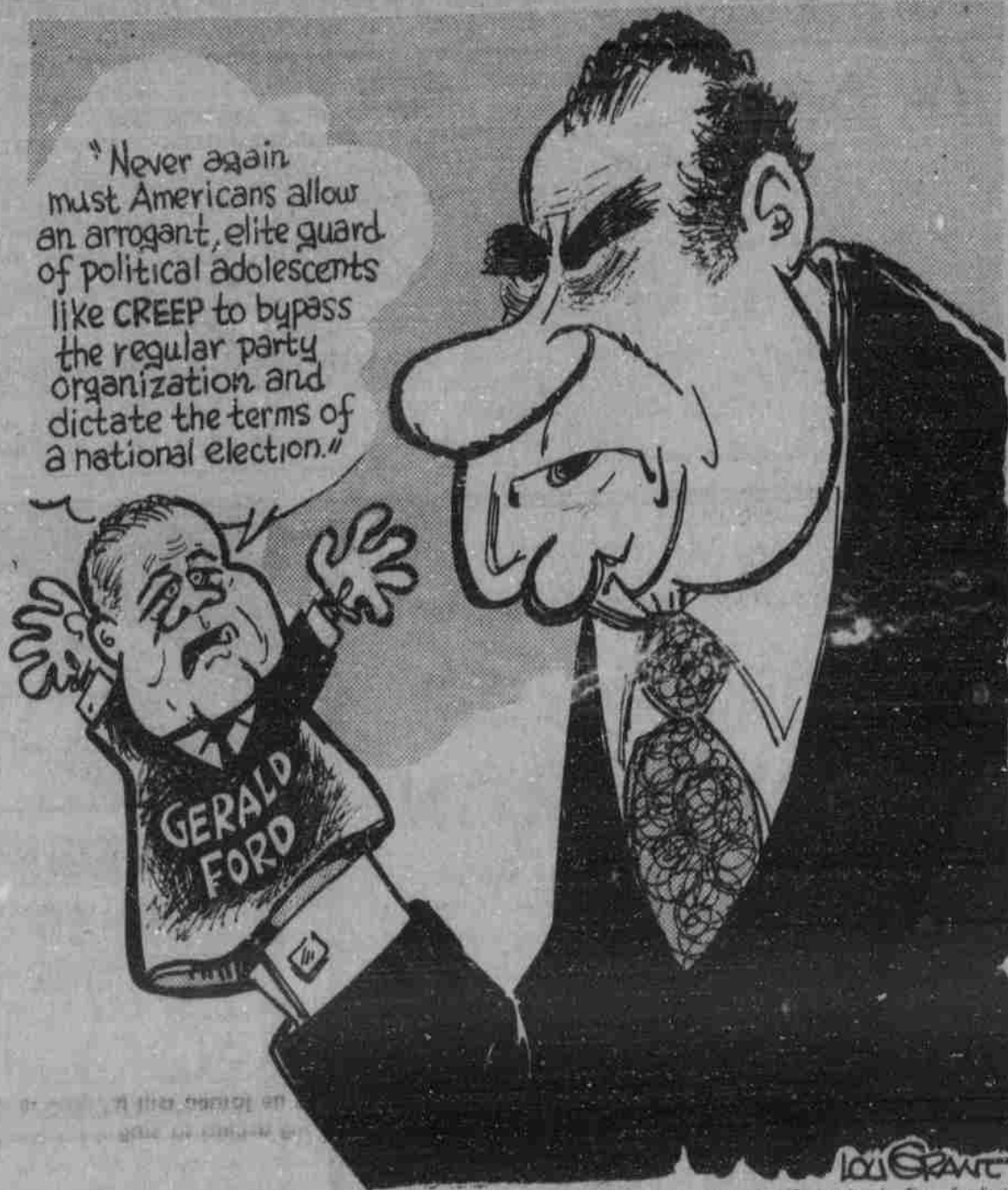
In December, APA trustees ruled that homosexuality no longer should be listed as a mental disorder and urged that gay persons be afforded the same civil rights guaranteed other citizens. A group of about 200 psychiatrists disgruntled by the same decision thereupon petitioned the board to reconsider. Instead, the board put the issue before APA members, who in a referendum voted 5,854 to 3,810 to back the trustees.

In most American societies, a disclosure that a person is gay often results in a virtual kiss of death. Almost immediately, the person becomes a pariah, looked upon as a sufferer of a disease that has no enduring cure. If the banner of homosexuality was known to fly over their heads, gay persons often were fired from jobs or denied employment, housing or public accommodations—in short, denied their civil rights.

At least for the psychiatrists, the holding that homosex is sick has been refuted. Whether a belligerent, unsympathetic society now can be persuaded that gayness is a way of life rather than a perversion remains to be seen.

In any case, the decision promises to have a sharp impact on the lives of the nation's gay community, estimated to number between 11 and 20 million. It's now up to the citizen to alter his or her prejudices toward gays. But it won't be easy. Prejudice is a loose idea tightly held.

Mary Voboril



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Is it 'let's make a deal,' or 'newlywed game'?

The world last week eagerly awaited the outcome of the secret negotiating sessions held behind closed doors at the Acapulco honeymoon cottage of Henry Kissinger and the new Mrs. Kissinger.

Hopes for a productive meeting were raised when observers reported seeing the two exchanging "friendly smiles" while stretching their legs in the compound between the grueling sessions inside the cottage.

But they were dashed when a waiter serving refreshments disclosed Kissinger appeared to him to be "wan and tired."

Fortunately, a tape recording of an unidentified couple, obviously negotiating, has been found washed up on a nearby beach. For whatever its worth, a transcript is reprinted herewith.

He: Well, well, I can't wait to unpack my overnight bag and two briefcases. This is a wonderful honeymoon cottage and so perfectly furnished—a red phone, a black phone, a white, a pink phone, two Telex machines, a decoder.

She: Yes, isn't the pink phone romantic? But don't forget, Henry, you promised. No telephone calls. You really need to forget all your problems for 10 whole days.

He: Don't worry, dear. I spoke to Sadat, Golda, King Feisal, the President and all the others. I have their word nothing whatsoever will happen anywhere

until a week from Tuesday. So I'll just relax and curl up with the paper...

She: I cancelled the paper, dear. I don't want you thinking about your worries.

He: No paper? (a long pause) Now what'll we do?

She: Let's just sit by the pool and relax.

arthur hoppe innocent bystander

He: Good idea. Follow me. OK now that we've sat by the pool and relaxed, what'll we do?

She: Look at that moon, Henry. What does it make you think about?

He: Whether our upcoming joint space effort with the Russians will offend the Chinese, thus endangering the delicate global balance of powers we have achieved.

She: I love it when your voice gets all husky like that. Henry? Do you think we could have a little home of our own in the country some day?

He: Of course. I've always wanted a home in a little country of my own some day.

She: And a son who could grow up to be

President?

He: Or even secretary of state. Now what'll we do?

She: Well, we could play cards.

He: How about dominoes? I have a theory about dominoes. Or what about television. Maybe my favorite program's on.

She: I'm tired of watching "Let's Make a Deal."

He: Well, then, perhaps I'll just have one little telephone call to the White House before dinner. One little telephone call never hurt anybody.

She: (alarmed): Henry, you promised! You know how you are, dear. One call leads to another and first thing you know, you'll be off on another global talking binge.

He: (indignantly): I can take it or leave it along.

She: That's good, dear. So you just sit there and relax. And stop biting your fingernails.

He: OK, I've sat and relaxed. Now what'll we do?

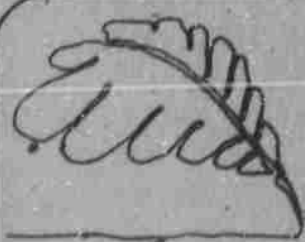
She: Well, we could—you know—go to bed.

He: Bed? I never go to bed before 2 a.m. local standard time. Wait a minute. I want to make a few phone calls and you want to go to bed. Oh, we're going to have a perfect honeymoon!

She: You mean you'll call while I go to bed?

He: No, I mean we're going to have great fun together. Are you ready? (happily) OK, let's negotiate.

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to the editor

Dear editor,

As our mainstream media zoom in on the Academy Awards, streaking, sex, *The Great Gatsby*, *The Godfather* and *The Exorcist*, the starving of literally millions of fellow human beings goes unheeded in Western and sub-Saharan Africa.

True, the Africans are not as pretty as Mia Farrow.

True, they do not have the glamour of the Academy Awards.

True, they are not as cool as Marlon Brando and certainly have little nostalgia value.

It seems the world, especially the United States, would have these Africans die in silence. This is tragic.

A country so immeasurably blessed in God's

bounty, as even the most pessimistic East Campus student must admit, owes a greater and more charitable look to those people stewing in Africa.

One afflicted people, the Tuareg, are a farming people. They are in their seventh year of drought. Too proud to cry loudly for world recognition, they humbly and quietly starve to death, 15,000 a day.

Unlike most causes, in this one there is something the individual can do. Starve for a day yourself. Yes, fast on either April 30, proclaimed National Day of Fasting, Prayers and Humiliation by Congress, or on May 1, the day on which thousands of college students across the country also will fast. This fast is sponsored by Project Relief, a nonprofit organization based in Rhode Island and dedicated to helping drought victims. Send the money you would have normally spent for food on your fast day to Ron Clingenpeel, ASUN president, and he will forward it to Project Relief.

You, as part of humanity, are the beneficiary.

Larry Pahl

Dear editor,

One thing I would like to comment on is the general sort of anti-intellectual atmosphere one is

confronted with at UNL. Along with the ordinary student apathy that is found everywhere, another kind of indifference and avoidance of real intellectual pursuits seems to be in evidence.

Of course, one has to be educated to value education for its own sake. But isn't it a shame that this important axiom often is forgotten or ignored in the commonplace brown nosing, grubby race for good grades. What is more important—whether a student receives a B in Psychology 170 or whether he or she 10 years from now will be able to apply the principles he or she hopefully (but doubtfully) has mastered.

I suppose that if the learning process is dry, tedious and boring, it is because someone has made it so. The professors' fault? I hardly think so. They only have to live up to the expectations of the students, who for the most part apparently don't care what they are taught or how, so long as they can "ace" the course.

Sometimes I wonder if UNL kids read, discuss and think.

It's fine to sit and think and just sit at other times. But to just sit and sit all the time and move to action only to rah, rah at a football game can be a real drag.

P.M. Keller