

editorial / opinion

staff opinion

Gambling revenue could benefit state

Wagering money at the race track is legal in Nebraska. Wagering money at the card table is illegal in Nebraska.

Why? Explain to me the harm resulting from playing poker—from any gambling form—that does not exist in betting on the horses.

I contend that any negative consequences are negligible compared to the positive ramifications of gambling.

Nebraska should seriously consider legalization of gambling. Our state is geographically ideal and sufficiently populated to support such legislation.

An experimental program should be established whereby the state would control gambling operations, receiving a percentage of the profit. Those not wishing to participate could abstain.

The state's race tracks offer the only major outlets for legal gambling in Nebraska. The large number of participants should be indicative of something.

Gambling flourishes illegally with side crap games, black jack and poker. One report estimated 15 million Americans bet illegally on sporting events each weekend.

Apparently many citizens indulge in games of chance, so why not let the state treasury capitalize financially?

Nebraska certainly isn't too proud to demand our earnings via taxes. Why should they object to additional monies as a result of gambling?

And of course, we need the money. Our university, for example, is victim of insufficient funds. Buildings approach condemnation, relatively low salary proposals hamper attraction of quality staff, faculty and administration, and tuition continues to rise.

All levels of government—city, county and state—would benefit from gambling revenues. Consequently, Nebraska citizens would benefit from legalization of gambling.

Those who consider gambling immoral or fear an ill-reputed community would have the right to forfeit engagement. But for those who enjoy poker, black jack and betting at the race track, it is also their right to participate with their money. It's a gamble, but our chances are good.

K. Alice Betts
Entertainment Staff Writer

Victimless crimes' last day envisioned

It wasn't planned this way, but most of today's editorial/opinion page deals with victimless crimes.

Staff writer K. Alice Betts's topic is gambling, columnist Marsha Jark addresses herself to laws proscribing homosexuality and "Ralph's" little brother is tasting his first Alice B. Toklas brownie. (San Francisco Chronicle columnist Arthur Hoppe and local cartoonists Dave Cabbage and Barry Lienemann take a slightly, er, different look into

a many-shelved closet.)

These "crimes" and others, such as prostitution, public drunkenness and disorderly conduct, are estimated conservatively to account for half of all nontraffic arrests in the United States.

We look forward to the day when, if only for economic expediency, these victimless behaviors will be decriminalized in all 50 states.

Rebecca Brite

long hard climb

Gays do no harm to society



By Marsha Jark

More than 100 years ago John Stuart Mill published a series of revolutionary essays on liberty: freedoms of thought, discussion and action. He suggested that people be allowed to act as they wished, at their own risk and peril.

Despite the discussion and agreement of his ideas, no society has allowed its individuals freedom of action when they could harm only themselves.

The attitude reflected in law (with some justification) is that people should not be allowed to hurt themselves because they also affect society's health.

Unfortunately, motorcycle helmet laws, prohibition of suicide and laws against homosexual acts are results of this concern. This is unfortunate, because it puts society in the position of telling people what to do when any benefit to society exists only in the minds of the lawmakers.

Ironically, judging from penalties for these nonharmful acts, homosexuality recently became equal to the anti-social act of rape. The maximum prison term in Nebraska for both sodomy and rape is 20 years.

Attitudes toward homosexuality have changed little because few understand the reasons for its existence—and because society has felt a need to explain it. No one questions why heterosexuality is the societal norm.

Many find homosexuality personally distasteful because it disturbs their orderly view of society. Seldom do people bother to find out all societies have had gay people or that

hundreds of psychiatric studies failed to find correlation between environment and the incidence of homosexuality. Nevertheless, homosexuality only recently has been taken off the American Psychiatric Association's list of mental illnesses.

Homosexual stereotypes tend to be reinforced by articles such as Time magazine's recent story. The front cover pictured Sergeant Leonard Matlovich proclaiming, "I am a homosexual," instead of "I am homosexual." His choice of lifestyle implicates his entire being, rather than one facet of his life.

Time stressed an inordinate preoccupation with male homosexuals, as if gay women do not exist, and differences between gay and straight societies, rather than similarities.

Looking at pictures of the transvestite and the men in the gay baths, it is hard to picture one's college instructor, doctor, lawyer or classmate as a "member of the gay community." Yet at least 10 per cent of our society is gay. They go to the same schools and work at the same jobs as everyone else.

It is not enough that laws prohibiting homosexuality are seldom enforced. The 1975 supplement to Nebraska Statutes stated that the punishment for sodomy did not constitute cruel and unusual punishment.

A change in attitude and law is needed if people are to enjoy the personal freedom implied in the U.S. Constitution.



Last privacy pervert still remains in closet

innocent bystander



By Arthur Hoppe

We're having a little trouble in our house. Uncle Henry adamantly refuses to come out of the closet.

Being liberated persons, the rest of us all came out of the closet long ago. In fact, as far as we know, Uncle Henry is the last person in America still left in the closet. It's embarrassing.

For months, we went upstairs every night to bang on the door and beg him to come out. "Look at me, Uncle Henry," said Cousin Jim persuasively. "I've been much

happier since I came out of there and told the whole world what I was."

"And I've been much happier in here," replied Uncle Henry, "since you took your evening gowns and cheap scent with you."

"If you're an alcoholic, dope addict or ex-convict, just come out and tell everybody, dear," pleaded Aunt Martha.

"Why?" said Uncle Henry.

"I've felt much better, Henry, since I came out of there and admitted I was a Republican," said Grandpa Ed.

"Come on, tell us, how are you going to vote?"

"By the secret ballot," said Uncle Henry.

"My life has been so much more rewarding," said Ed's wife, Ms. Susan, "since I came out, took off my apron and became a jackhammer operator."

"I doubt it," said Uncle Henry.

"Aren't you glad, dear" asked Aunt Martha hopefully, "that we live in an age when intimate medical problems can be discussed frankly?"

"No!" snapped Uncle Henry.

"You can't believe how readily people understood," said Sis, "when I finally came out and confessed I was a Trotskyist Weight Watcher who had three abortions."

"If I had one," said Uncle Henry, "they wouldn't."

"If you're a heterosexual, don't be ashamed to say so," said Cousin Jim. "There's nothing you can't do in public these days that..."

"...I wouldn't rather do in private," said Uncle Henry.

"Don't you realize, dear," summed up Aunt Martha, "that everybody else has come out of the closet and now freely, frankly and constantly discusses their most secret hang-ups with one and all?"

"And that is what makes the closet," said Uncle Henry firmly, "a better place in which to live."

It was Cousin George, the psychiatrist, who finally diagnosed Uncle Henry's problem. "He is obviously a privacy pervert," he said, shaking his head. "The very nature of his perversion prevents him from discussing it openly."

We were stunned. A privacy pervert in the family! For days we talked over this peculiar aberration and the different sort of life it forced him to live.

Oh, we still go up and bang on the door of the closet every night. But Uncle Henry's a stubborn old coot. He won't let us back in.

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