

Editorial

Narrow-mindedness leads to ignorance

A friend of mine got his ear pierced recently. Big deal. Another friend had gotten his pierced a few months earlier. My art teacher has his pierced. My brother used to, until an accident forced him to grow it closed again.

Anyway, back to my original friend. It's amazing how that little gold stud grew to enrage me and help me realize why we humans have to much trouble getting along sometimes.

You see, my friend works with a campus organization through which he comes in contact with entering freshmen and other students in helping them feel more comfortable as they begin college. He's perfectly qualified for the position, with or without the earring.

Those who hired him, however, took a different view when they "asked" him to take it out. Suddenly he wasn't quite so qualified to work with these students who might be "frightened" or too intimidated or uncomfortable around someone with an earring to approach him with their

questions.

That's ridiculous - and insulting. That's like saying if he had gotten the earring the day he applied for the job, he wouldn't have been hired.

But he's the same person. The addition of a gold stud in his left ear shouldn't warrant his being treated any differently.

The protests of his superiors is further insulting to those they feel will be adversely affected by the dreaded earring - those "naive, sheltered Western Nebraska kids" who've probably never seen a man with an earring before.

Let's give these "kids" a little credit. In the first place, they've probably been exposed to more supposed "oddities" than our ancient stereotypes will allow us to believe.

And secondly, if meeting my friend with his earring is a new experience for these folks - great. Isn't that what learning is all about - exposure to different ways of thinking and living, which hopefully leads to an understanding and acceptance of

these different styles and opinions?

You see, this really isn't just a story about a man and his earring. It's about how damaging and potentially destructive our narrow-mindedness can be.

This little "earring controversy" at UNL is only one minor example of the mammoth problems caused by our tendencies to judge before we know, to form an opinion based solely on appearances, an opinion which most often has no chance of being changed because we pursue no opportunity to do so. Such narrow-mindedness breeds this prejudice, and prejudice breeds ignorance.

Ignorance, in turn, breeds a world in which we judge our fellow humans by their haircuts, their hair color, their skin color, their size, their wardrobe . . . and on and on and on.

Admittedly, it is inherent in human nature that we attain some information from appearances, whether they're appearances we can or cannot change. The way

we groom ourselves speaks in part for our attitudes and personality traits.

But when our inquiries and discoveries about each other stop there and progress no further, when our focus narrows to the point where we no longer seek any additional insight into something that appears a little different, it's a shame and a waste and, often, a missed opportunity for a greater dose of understanding.

As long as narrow-mindedness continues to fester, we'll continue to inhabit a world in which my friend will be called a fag because he has an earring, others will be called slobs because they don't wear shoes or tuck in their shirts, others will be called radical because their hair sticks up and others will be called inferior because they were born a different color.

And we'll continue to fight each other because such judgments will not allow us to accept each other as different and unique human beings.

Patty Pryor

'Communique' tells it like it is in Iowa

All this semester, we've been entertained by Bob Glissmann's insightful columns about Australia, or what Bob wittily refers to as "The Down Under." While I know Bob's column is useful and informative, I'm afraid it gives the incorrect impression that Bob is the only one on the Daily Nebraskan staff that goes everywhere interesting.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Most of the staff members have done time in ports of call as diverse



Mike Frost

as Leavenworth, Kan., Folsom, Calif., and Huntsville, Ala. Even I have been to several interesting locales this semester.

So, then, in the spirit of Bob Glissmann's "Letter From Down Under," welcome to the first installment of "Communique from Over Here."

IOWA CITY, Iowa - Boy, it sure is neat here. Yesterday, I arrived in Iowa City International Airport. Unfortunately, much to my dismay, they gave me a window seat. I got sick. Freak me out.

Anyway, I should tell you what happened today. After I got all settled, we decided to cruise on down to the local Burger King. I thought, neat, they have Burger Kings here just like Lincoln.

So, I strode up to the counter and asked for a cup of coffee. (Actually, I said java first, but they didn't understand me. I have to remember I'm not at home anymore.) Anyway, the attendant said "Yes sir, that will be a dime please." I thought to myself, neat! In Lincoln, they would have said, "Ten cents please," but here in Iowa City they ask for a dime. Different cultures sure are groovy.

Actually, they have all kinds of different words here. I always figured they'd talk the same as they do in Lincoln, but I guess I was wrong. That's what makes the English language so keen.

For example, instead of saying pop they say soda. Instead of saying bandage they said Band-aid. Instead of saying "Go Big Red," they say "Go Hawks." Also, they pronounce words real weird here. For example, they say "corn" so it rhymes with "barn," rather than "born." Isn't that far out?

Well, I've got to be going. It's time for what they call supper over here. We always called it dinner at my house. Oh well, guess I'll just learn to adjust.

I'll write again soon,

Mike Frost

P.S. I couldn't help but notice that this first "Communique from Over Here" is also my last column of the year.

Quickly, I'd like to thank all the people who have given encouragement, ideas and patience over the past year. So to Shelley, M5, Mike, Eric, Glenn, Mary Louise, Patty, Joni, Diane, Katie, Joseph, Tom, Marty, Bill, Tish, Teri, Chuck, Chuck and Ben, thanks.

Also, to the fine staff at Harper-Schramm-Smith Food Service, where I really did wear a hair net, contrary to popular belief: Shirley, Nancy, Grace, ARC, Mike, Kal, Brian, Chris, Lori, Chuck, Darla, Karen, Glen, Jean, Rich, Jerrol, Ann, Mary and Anna.

Finally, to the DN people who I finally got to know a little better this semester: Bill, Chrisses 2, Patty, Ward, Randy, Mona, Jann, Bob, Larry, Craig, Dave, Jeff, Pat and Margie.

Sorry I had to do it this way, but I ran out of personals.

Finally, to my readers: You both have been supportive all year long. I'd like to leave you with a thought that John F. Kennedy expressed which has always been important to me:

"There are three things that are real: God, human folly and laughter. The first two are beyond our comprehension, so we must do what we can with the third." See you next semester.

Look at lessons learned, persons met, things done

The Shakespeare paper is done - the last paper of the semester. Actually, it's the last paper of an undergraduate career in English for this graduating senior. Geez, I think I have paper on the brain. How many papers have I written in the last two weeks? 11? No, 12 - a full dozen. And now, this column - the last of the semester, the last in a short journalism career. What does one write about in a last column?

OK. Try reminiscing, Becky. Four years ago, what were your expectations as a freshman? Who remembers what they dreamed about four years ago? Four years ago, I realistically envisioned four years of 4.0. A dream



Becky Stingley

shot to hell the first semester of freshman year. Damn that chemistry professor. Nobody needs to know valence charges that well. OK, what other goals did I set then? I wanted to get into medical school. Mission accomplished. I wanted my father to live forever. He died the next summer. I wanted to write. So now I'm writing, realizing that nobody pays diddly for writing these days. I wanted to grow up back then. Now, I realize that people treat you like an adult, but nobody really grows up.

I worked as a waitress then and I remember Joe Price of the legendary Kings, Inc., telling me that I would be a better person because the hag I was waiting on kept switching her order from cole slaw to cottage cheese. He said the situation was teaching me the virtue of

patience. I said it was making me annoyed. I'm still pretty impatient these days. Maybe a little less impatient than I was before. OK, so I learned something about humility. Actually, I guess I learned a lot during those restaurant days.

Back to hopes and goals. In 1980, I hoped George Bush would get the Republican nomination. He didn't. Now, budget cuts have become an everyday item. I'm not saying they wouldn't have if Bush had won the nomination. I'm just pointing out that they are a reality now. If Reagan bows out in '84, I guess I can be hopeful about Bush once again.

Back during sophomore year, I dreamed of becoming intimate friends with the works of the three great American poets - Whitman, Emerson and Dickinson. I've spent hours with them, but intimacy is still light years away. I struggled through organic chemistry that year and was moderately successful. Ralph Nader's advice (yes, I really did have dinner with Ralph Nader at Pontillo's restaurant - ask Ben Knoll) that organic chemistry was just like crossword puzzles proved to be true. Do it every day and get as many answers as you can. Pretty soon, it's like clockwork. Not a bad philosophy. It's applicable to just about any subject or situation.

Speaking of famous personalities, I got to have dinner with John Anderson a year ago. (This time at P.O. Pears - you can ask Paul Ecouffey.) It was interesting, to say the least. What remains in my mind is that the ex-Congressman from Illinois could not remember where his daughter was going to college at the time. Funny, how the most obvious facts slip from one's mind at times.

Then there was my association with ASUN. Yes,

Mike Frost, I too was a victim of the dreaded disease. I'll never forget Renee Wessels being called a wench by the Board of Regents in one of Dave Luebke's cartoons. Yes, Renee was a true student advocate. Luebke is a fine cartoonist also. He's going to Yale next year, you know.

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