

Editorial

Seashells, balloons for a few

In this last editorial, I would like to extend thanks and kudos to some of the people who have contributed in a positive way to our lives.

The man who has stood out most prominently during the last few months is Omaha Sen. Ernie Chambers. His work in the Nebraska Legislature stands high above any other senator in this past session.

Chambers successfully pushed for the impeachment of Attorney General Paul Douglas. Most believed that the Legislature would not pass the impeachment resolution, that the Legislature was incapable of making that kind of crucial decision. Chambers, in great part, pushed the resolution through the unicameral.

Chambers authored a bill that was passed to prohibit investment of state funds in apartheid South Africa. Why should we support a nation that is openly discriminatory?

A bill to prevent colleges from pulling scholarships

from athletes injured on the playing field was passed. Athletes no longer need fear losing their educations because of injury in service to their schools. Another Chambers' gem.

Sarpy County District Judge Ronald Reagan imposed a stern sentence on the Rev. Everett Sileven. His sentence of eight months in jail for Sileven's tinued contempt of the Nebraska courts and law was very appropriate.

My only complaint is that the sentence will be commuted if the children are sent to an approved school. Sileven's unrepentant attitude and disregard for the law warrant no softening of the sentence.

Kudos to Omaha Sen. Vard Johnson. His clear, logical thinking was instrumental in several key pieces of legislation.

Johnson chaired the Special Commonwealth Committee and helped to pass the impeachment resolution against Douglas.

Johnson championed a bill or two that would have been great laws, but didn't get passed.

A bill to place a checkoff on state income tax forms to help fund senate elections would have eased pressure to go to political action committees and special interest groups for funding, hence making our senators more independent.

Lastly, congratulations to the 1984 graduates. The teachers, administrators and friends who helped them through the maze of classes, ill-fated romances, parties, soap operas and studying also deserve thanks.

Most will be glad to leave. As time goes on funding for the university seems to be dwindling. Classes are growing in size, and many professors may leave if salaries are not increased to at least average levels. Ah, well, that's another editorial. Have a peaceful and satisfying summer.

— Chris Welsch



Apathetic people won't end racism

At the command of a large black man with a large black voice, I put a paper cup on my head, knelt on the floor, and sang the Star Spangled Banner in front of some 35 people. I was intimidated, humiliated, ashamed.

"Every black in a white institution walks around with a cup on their head," the man said.



Christopher Burbach

While I knelt there, red-faced and stumbling for the words to the song, no one tried to help. No one directly aided my oppressor, but no one tried to stop him either. I considered them abettors.

"Whenever whites are silent, blacks assume they are agreeing with other whites."

The next time the man asked for volunteers, I raised my hand, joiner that I am. But I was leery. I expected more of the cup treatment.

"Blacks are not always right about what whites are doing to them, but blacks have been hurt so often that they perceive what whites are doing."

One person said that, although she was ashamed of the feeling, she felt good about seeing a white man humiliated by a black man.

"Oppression is wrong, no matter what the source. Retaliation is not the answer."

The man asked us white males what our identity was. I thought of my jobs, my ancestors, my nationality, my religion, my age, but I couldn't come up with an answer.

"You a white male."

"But what about..."

"You a white male! Whites, especially white males, have no concept of the reality of their identity... White males assume that no one else has an identity."

The man asked if I was prejudiced. My answer, like everyone else's, was yes. The next question was why. I didn't know — ignorance, maybe, socialization — I couldn't say. The black people in the room knew why they were prejudiced: because whites are prejudiced against blacks.

"Black prejudice is a reaction to white prejudice. White prejudice is a result of nothing."

For a four hour workshop Friday afternoon, the man was Charles King. He held all authority within the confines of the Regency Suite in the Nebraska Union. Whites in the room, for a change, were made conscious, even ashamed, of our color. I was intimidated, powerless, disenfranchised — a fool, I was told. I was in a system created by another, maintained by another, condoned at least tacitly by all others. King said that was similar to the situation "out there" in American society, only with the race roles reversed. "Whites created a system, they've maintained the system, and they're condoning it. And they don't know it."

I was forced to feel in some part what minorities in America feel. I couldn't rationalize racism; I couldn't think myself into believing it doesn't really exist, or that I'm not a part of it. King made me feel racism. And I didn't like it.

I'm not contending that all my prejudice is gone, that I am now enlightened or that I can understand what blacks and other minorities go through. I realize that what I felt at King's workshop was a weak comparison, being temporary, with the continual oppression black people live with. But I've felt at least that — there is a potential to understand — which is something I couldn't have said before the workshop.

The most important thing I learned from King was this: whites who do not work against racism are working for it, simply by allowing it to operate. Racism exists, it is wrong, it is not going away, and we who do nothing about it are just as guilty as those who actively promote it.



Letters

Torsos not degrading

I have a lot of studying to do this week, but an issue has drawn my attention which I can no longer ignore.

I was entering Woods Hall recently when I noticed a poster advertising a photographic seminar for students of art. The poster included a nice photograph of two female torsos on a beach. The torsos were fully clothed in decent swimsuits. However, someone had placed a fluorescent pink sticker over one of the torsos which denounced the photograph as being offensive and degrading to women.

Aren't we carrying this whole thing a lot too far? For centuries now, the female human body has been respected as a symbol of beauty representing — forgive me — mankind.

I think it's time we grow up now and worry about more important things like inter-personal relationships or finals.

David K. Lenser
senior
life sciences

Others need money

Concerning the article "Prison studies delayed," (Daily Nebraskan, April 24):

I am not at all upset that Gov. Bob Kerrey has decided to sever the funds allocated for inmates to obtain further education. As is agreed, I believe that all such institutions should hinge on rehabilitation. Yet when university professors find themselves underpaid, the students find government grants harder and harder to obtain, plus the recent surcharge initiated in 1983 by the university, who needs the money more?

I'm glad there are people who, despite being put in these institutions, want to gain further knowledge. But if I can't afford buying books or paying tuition can people still expect inmates to have access to college?

Andrew Jacobsen
junior
English

What does it take?

I'm glad there are people around like Krishna Madan who give us (in his columns) their perceptions of socialism and Nicaragua. He has given me insights about the workings of socialism. For example, "...in Nicaragua the individual participates in group activities with others in order to represent both his/her own concerns and to pursue the interests of the group." This implies that there is a large amount of community interactivity.

From all that I've read about Nicaragua, I believe they truly are trying to construct a humanitarian society. Yet, what is the United States trying to do but to destroy their government? What does it take to get Congress to completely stop CIA murder and infiltration in Nicaragua? It's like in the movie *Under Fire* when an American photojournalist is killed a Nicaraguan responds by saying that 50,000 died in our civil war, yet it takes only one American dead to make the American people angry. Will it take even one American soldier dead to evoke protest from us?

Terry Asher
senior
computer science