

Daily Nebraskan University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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Quibbles & bits

No smoking sign may be placed over UNL

According to the current proposal of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln smoking policy, it's possible that all campus buildings and rooms could prohibit smoking.

The policies and suggestions of the currently controversial policy are not explicit enough, nor are they fair in that deans and department and chairpersons will determine the smoking policy in their building according to their preferences.

The right to smoke will be determined by individual department chairpersons. Violators will be held under the jurisdiction of that department, which is also required to enforce the smoking regulations.

Enforcement under this particular clause seems ludicrous. In the least, it is unrealistic in that enforcement would be difficult to implement without smoking patrols or some sort of tattling system.

Single-occupant offices, auditoriums, dining rooms and "other indoor assembly areas" would be included in the policy, said John Goebel, vice chancellor for business and finance. The policy also requires signs that say "smoking allowed" and "no smoking" in rooms with both areas. It also allows the prohibition of smoking in areas with no signs. Those specifications could

include just about any area on campus. It's conceivable that smokers' rights could be eliminated from the entire campus.

Administrators and faculty members developed the policy after some UNL faculty members and students asked about UNL's smoking policy. The new policy would give UNL a set of guidelines that are consistent with the Nebraska Clean Indoor Air Act passed by the Legislature in 1935.

UNL's smoking policy does need to be defined and readjusted according to the times. But it also must be clear and fair with regard to individual smokers' and non-smokers' rights.

Currently the Associated Students of the University of Nebraska has made available a survey that will help weigh student opinion on the issue. ASUN's position will be determined after the surveys have been studied.

It's vital that both smokers and non-smokers pay attention to the surveys to avoid complaint on down the road.

Goebel also has sent a memo to deans, directors, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and ASUN. If response is against the policy, it may be revised, Goebel said.

It's a good thing. As the policy currently stands, confusion and vagueness reign.

All's fair in love and religion

Wars of faith waged around the world in the name of God

I had some friends once who got into an argument about something in the Bible. What it was specifically I don't remember, but the argument quickly turned into something as simple as black and white.

"Yes," said the fundamentalist.

"No," said the atheist.

"Yes," came the rebuttal from the fundamentalist.

"No," replied the atheist.

"Yes."

"No."

And so it continued. Nothing was solved. Both went back to their corners as certain of their beliefs or disbeliefs as before. I'm just glad they were friends.

That's not always the case when people argue religion. Too often they pick up arms and force their beliefs and the lifestyles that go with them on others.

And it's all in the name of their God.

I'm not necessarily complaining. Being the son of a United Methodist minister, I grew up in various houses sitting right next to those impressive white, high-steeped pinnacles of morality. When I was little, our house was even connected to the church. We had no choice but to be holy then.

It seemed that wherever we lived, the whole community expected my brothers and me to go to church every week and then youth group that night, be pious and never swear and everything else that goes along with being a preacher's kid. It didn't help when my friends and I would sneak out of the balcony just as the sermon was starting. We could just hear the thundering whispers coming from the pews.

But despite my reluctance to get excited about the whole idea of church, I eventually learned to respect what it was trying to teach. It was long and somewhat painful, fighting off bouts of skepticism and doubt in the process, but I finally got to the point where I could honestly call myself a Christian.

I don't know how long my beliefs will last. I don't go to church often anymore, and I can't quote many verses from the Bible, but that still doesn't shake my own personal faith.

That's not really important to me. But there are certain things which are, such as you shouldn't kill, and you should do unto others as you would have them do unto you. These and many other tenets have shaped my beliefs and my life. These are things I take in earnest.

That doesn't mean my beliefs should be stretched to disbelief.



Televangelist Jimmy Swaggart tearfully confessed recently to seeing a prostitute, but this was only after christening Jim Bakker a "cancer" for his tryst with Jessica Hahn. While Swaggart can honestly go to the Bible to condemn Bakker's behavior, the latter just as honestly and easily rebutted by saying, "Those without sin should throw the first stone." These are men who have made God their life's work. While I don't question their faith, I do question their means and their motives. They are taking their religion far too seriously. They have now entered a region of hate and intolerance.

In Northern Ireland the Christians are fighting among themselves. Jews are fighting the Arabs in the Near East. There have been countless other confrontations in the past, such as the Crusades, the English Civil War of the 17th century and the 30 Years' War in Germany.

Religion doesn't always lead to acts of war, but can cause many problems. The Ku Klux Klan has been

known to persecute both Catholics and Jews. It may not be a war, but cross burnings aren't exactly peaceful. This is what Karl Marx warned against when he said religion is the opiate of the people. Actually, Marx borrowed that line from philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach, but it is Marx and his communism which are constantly blamed for the belief. It is not communism I am talking about at all, but rather the alienating frame of mind spurred by religion.

These people have all been intoxicated by the opiate.

They are all people fighting for their religion and the right to worship the way they want. But to take up arms for it is pure hypocrisy.

They have given too much weight to the egocentricities of their own beliefs and have too much hate and intolerance for those whose beliefs are different. Whether they are fighting over beliefs or land or anything else, or just exchanging harsh words, they are overstepping the bounds of religion.

It seems as if the dictum "all's fair in love and war," holds true for religion also. Religion should not be taken so dead seriously. For ages, though, it has been an unfortunate fact of life.

Just think how many people have died throughout the ages in the name of their God. Just think how many were intoxicated by the opiate. I would not want to die drunk.

I cannot argue with people's personal beliefs or with the dictates of their faith. They are too ingrained within their own lives, like my own. So religion does not have to be an opiate.

But when people start fighting, with their religion as a justification, then maybe Feuerbach and Marx were right, and they have swallowed too much of the sweet wines of their faith and are now drunk with it.

Fry is a graduate news-editorial student, editor of The Sower, the Daily Nebraskan's depth supplement and night news editor.

Letters

Wilhite sorry letter's satire misunderstood

Racism and sexism may be alive and well, but satire is dead. At least here in Nebraska, where you have to spell it out. So now I'm responding "like a man," as some reader so sexistly put it.

I'm very sorry if I offended anyone with my letter in response to Jon Dewsbury (Letters, Feb. 16). But I thought that I made the satirical nature of the letter painfully clear with my blatant juxtaposition of ideas and self-contradicting statements. For example, "I love America because it's the land of the free, and I won't tolerate..."

And why would anyone make such horrible statements about minority groups unless I was really trying to make you angry? That was the whole point. Dewsbury's attitude sickens me. I hate it. His intolerance should not be tolerated.

However, since people only care when something affects them directly, I felt that I had to make my point as offensively as I could and attack several groups with the same logic that Dewsbury used.

Intolerance is a societal disease not limited to one group. It just starts with some group thought to be more helpless than the others.

"When they came for the homosexuals I did not speak up because I am not a homosexual. When they came for the Jews I did not complain because I am not Jewish. When they came for the Catholics I did not protest because I am not Catholic. When they came for me there was no one left to stop them."

That's the "it can't happen here" psychology of cowards or misled people. Well, it can and does happen here. Anyone who says we've beaten intolerance is a liar or a fool. I don't think we can afford to let people like Dewsbury eat away at the roots of freedom.

I will not stand by and let some misanthropes attack my brothers and sisters without putting up one hell of a fight. We are all in this together, because if one of us can be singled out for persecution, then none of us are safe. This is America, and I love it because it's the land of the free, and I won't tolerate intolerance — sexist, racist, heterosexist or otherwise. This is one "good man" who will not be silenced.

Scott Wilhite junior English

Candidate's attitude explains student apathy

I am writing in response to a comment made by one of the ASUN executive candidates at the debate in the East Campus Union, Thursday, March 3. Nate Geisert, first vice presidential candidate for the ACTION party, stated in his closing remarks that "ASUN will never change" because "you can't buck the system." I was shocked to hear that from someone aspiring to an executive office of ASUN. It's no wonder

that students are apathetic about student government when those who are currently involved and hope to be executives see no chance for improvement. How can the ACTION candidates expect me to place my faith and my vote with them when they themselves have no faith in ASUN?

Jodi E. Johnson sophomore psychology

Homosexuals defeat the purpose; real reason of sex: reproduction

Judi Unger opened her letter (Daily Nebraskan, Feb. 22) with the following quote, which I found very interesting: "Contempt prior to further investigation is a sure sign of ignorance."

However, Unger, this matter of homosexuality isn't one that can really be investigated. If a person indulges with someone of the same sex, that person is gay. If that person indulges with someone of the opposite sex, that person is straight. It's a situation that either is or isn't.

Guest Opinion

I don't think Jon Dewsbury (Letters, Feb. 16) was trying to "be God." As far as the prejudice aspect — homosexuals can't be put on the same level as blacks, Mexicans or foreigners. I haven't got an iota of prejudice against any nationality, but I am still strongly opposed to homosexuality. Hey, I'm all for the American way of life — to be what you want to be, to turn yourself into the person you want to be and all the rest of those things that go along with each American's rights as a part of living in this country. I agree with what Unger said about racial prejudice, sexism and discrimination. They all stink. As far as the "racial discrimination" goes, it

isn't a race of your own unique origin, as are blacks, Swedes, Germans, Mexicans and others.

Homosexuals are different, just as people of different nationalities and races are. So, you ask, "why is it whenever someone is different, we feel the need to damn them?" We are all different on a different level. The real reason or purpose of sex is to show the ultimate of sincere love and affection for someone of the opposite sex and for reproduction to keep a race alive. The purpose, though, is reproduction. Homosexuals defeat that purpose. Also, the straights think it's utterly disgusting to actually "be in love with" someone of the same sex. I believe that those are the two reasons why Dewsbury wrote that homosexuality was "disgusting and immoral." The natural thing to do is to be attracted to someone of the opposite sex. I'm sorry, Unger, but that last statement can't be argued.

The one thing Unger said in her letter that really caught my attention was that "sexuality of any type is a God-given instinct." Oh boy, where have you been? Let me guess, you don't go to church, right? Obviously not. The instinct, Unger, is to find someone of the opposite sex who, you hope, treats you with consideration, sincerity, trust, loyalty, tender

loving care, affection and everything else that goes with loving, and being in love with, someone. Again I say, that is the natural thing that is supposed to happen. After two people have met and have determined they want each other, sexual intercourse creates more people, and the race survives. I'm not saying that I don't think the world is overpopulated, or that I'm pro-intercourse whenever the chance presents itself. Sex keeps a race alive, and homosexuality defeats it. Back to the God-given instinct, though we were created as men and women to each attract someone of the opposite sex. You can't argue that. OK, a person who is homosexual will, of course, think that it's natural to be attracted to someone of the same sex. That makes sense, right? Of course it does, because that person is homosexual.

I don't despise homosexuality, believe it or not. I am only strongly opposed to it. If a person wants to live as a homosexual, that's fine. But as with a few of my friends who have been homosexual, it's a world and a lifestyle I desire to have no part of at all, because it's not normal.

Kirby Dehnel junior computer science

Editorial Policy

Unsigned editorials represent official policy of the spring 1988 Daily Nebraskan. Policy is set by the Daily Nebraskan Editorial Board. Its members are Mike Reilly, editor; Diana

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Joel Carlson, columnist. The Daily Nebraskan's publishers are the regents, who established the UNL Publications Board to supervise the daily production of the paper.