

Daily **Nebraskan**

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University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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Racism marches on Honor dream all year, not just today

On Feb. 4, 1968, Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. gave a sermon at Ebenezer Baptist Church. In that sermon, he talked about death -- everyone's common denominator.

Two months later, that sermon was replayed at his funeral.

Today, as Americans celebrate the 61st anniversary of his birth, we should not forget the common denominators King stressed during his life.

But more than common denominators, Americans must recognize the inequities that plague our nation.

The Civil Rights Movement did much to unite the nation, but King's dreams are far from reality in America. Yes, there are laws protecting the rights of all people, laws that say everyone is equal and deserving of the same opportunities.

But not everyone is equal in America. In political and economic terms, America's black lower class is not much better off than it was during King's time. Two years after King's death, 33.5 percent of blacks were below the poverty level. By 1987, that figure had dropped only .4 of a percent to 33.1 percent. Comparatively, only 10.5 percent of whites were below the poverty level. At the end of the second quarter of 1989, 11.2 percent of all blacks were unemployed compared to 4.5 percent of all whites.

Until we recognize those problems, the laws that exalt equality will not end the inequalities in everyday life. Laws do not create equality, people do. And while racism seemed more subtle after King's death, the cruelty and ignorance born of racism still thrived in our communities. At the end of the 80s, that tension exploded into violence across the country.

One day a year, we honor a man who lived and died for a dream of equality among all people. One day a year, we think of that dream and the hopes that it brought for our country's future.

But equality is not simply a calendar event. King's dream should be honored all year, not only in laws and policies. It should be taught along with the history of the Civil Rights Movement as an integral part of our education.

We cannot forget King's efforts in the Civil Rights Movement. Nor can we forget the accomplishments and successes of civil rights since his death.

But remembering those strides is not enough. Unless we move forward in civil rights, King's efforts will be no more than a chapter in a history book.

-- Amy Edwards and Bob Nelson
for the Daily Nebraskan

Racism must be recognized, dealt with in new decade

Many of us have already made and broken our individual New Year's resolutions. However, there is still time for redemption. We as individual students and as a school need to resolve to set aside this new decade as a time for cultural enrichment, education and most of all, acceptance.

The 1980s saw a rebirth of some ugly and often painful racial scenes. Events such as the Tawana Brawley case, Yusef Hawkins and the Central Park rape forced us to realize that acting as if racism doesn't exist is no way to deal with the problem.

In the '90s, many of us will graduate and begin families of our own. Do

we want our children growing up in the same racist society in which we now live? On this, Martin Luther King's birthday, let us re-examine our principles. The hopes and dreams of tomorrow are there for all of us to share equally. I do believe it is possible for us to learn to accept and eventually appreciate the differences that exist here on campus as well as the world that extends beyond. It can be done but it must start with you.

In the immortal words of Jesse Jackson, "Keep hope alive."

Tamika Simmons
President
The Afrikan People's Union

letter

The Daily Nebraskan welcomes brief letters to the editor from all readers and interested others.

Letters will be selected for publication on the basis of clarity, originality, timeliness and space available. The Daily Nebraskan retains the right to edit all material submitted.

Readers also are welcome to submit material as guest opinions.

Whether material should run as a letter or guest opinion, or not to run, is left to the editor's discretion.

Letters and guest opinions sent to the newspaper become the property of the Daily Nebraskan and cannot be returned.

Submit material to the Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448.



Out of the mouths of bikers

Two Harley riders prove education is not key to political savvy

I believe bikers on barstools make the best diplomats.

Some people go to college when they want to learn the ins and outs of foreign policy. Some read books or articles by Henry Kissinger, Richard Nixon, George Kennan and the like. Others glance at the headlines of finely crafted columns in the Daily Nebraskan. I just go down to that bar where all the Harley riders hang out.

It was on one such occasion I learned the gist of what is really going on in Eastern Europe, Panama and Greater Earth. My mentors that night were Jake, a cabbie, and Rex, a trucker. Both, of course, were part-time bikers. I have given them false names to protect myself.

Said the cabbie to the trucker: "So what do you think?"

This is a question that I have been asked many times throughout my life, mostly by my philosophy-crazed father; and my answer, even when I have been sober, has usually been the seemingly obvious, "About what?" Rex, however, would give no such mundane response and instead rubbed his beard, grimaced and said: "I think the decline of communism is pretty cool and everything, but I'd just hate to see Burger King and McDonald's over there. It just ain't right for them, you know?"

I, somewhat taken aback, put down my beer and tried to decide whether the commies could stomach Big Macs; and, if they could, whether it indeed would corrupt their society.

But Jake needed no time to think.

"I hear you, man. What they need is help in getting some hard industry built up before we start shoving consumerism down their throats. Otherwise they'll end up borrowing money from us forever just so they can buy things without ever making enough money to pay us back."

This cemented my opinion about Big Macs in Bucharest.

Rex said he thought that George Bush was missing opportunities to really swing things our way in Europe and that his meager aid plan would be sufficient only to tease the Poles, Czechs, Magyars, etc., and build their hopes up before an inevitable crash.

I nodded.

Jake guzzled, belched and said something that absolutely astounded me but gained approval from Rex.

"I just hate to see all of Joseph Stalin's work go for nothing. He may have been a mean bastard, but he tried so hard to make that system work."



Brandon Loomis

"Yeah," Rex said, "just think of all those poor folks who died in the Bolshevik Revolution fighting hunger and oppression. I guess they died for nothing."

I tried really hard to feel some sympathy but couldn't quite find it. I was more concerned with figuring how someone who maybe had a diploma from Lincoln Southeast and a trucker from Billings or Pocatello had managed to become the epitome of tolerance. Anyone with a kind word for Joe Stalin must truly believe in God.

An immediate transition into Panama and American imperialism again put me in a trance. This encounter was a few days before the invasion, but Rex and Jake were awfully worried that George had done too little in Eastern Europe and would do too

much in Latin America.

"What they need down there is some money, some industry, control over that canal and a nice pat on the back. The minute our boys start screwing around down there we'll have the whole Third World after us. What kind of position will that leave us in for improving global relations? There's a reason they pinned that Great Satan label on us, you know?"

I said that I did know, and there was a short digression into jetliners and all things Iranian, then back to Panama.

"It's really weird how we're starting to get along with all of our former enemies, but we can't do anything but piss off our neighbors," Jake said.

I said something that I thought was pretty funny about George finding some other way to satisfy his Big Stick, but both men winced and continued the discussion.

"And it's not just to our south," Rex said. "Think of Canada and the acid rain that Ohio dumps on it. Our own economic interests keep us from doing the right thing everytime."

At that, I ordered another beer and decided to stay until closing. Truckers talking environment always give me goosebumps. I decided that these men, uneducated as they were, could get some things accomplished if they ruled the world, provided they had a few good advisers. Rex might even be a better Republican candidate in 1992 than Yale-educated George.

Most of my political science professors have always told me that a college education is the doorway to tolerance and understanding. I'm not so sure about that. I think maybe a college education just goes to one's head, as it were.

Loomis is a senior news-editorial major and the Daily Nebraskan wire editor and columnist.

opinion READER

Cafeteria gruel unfit for students

On Dec. 6, 1989 you published a letter from Jim McNally about the slop being served in the dorm cafeterias. I couldn't agree with him more.

My daughter is a freshman and lives in one of the residence halls. Since the first day of school she has complained about the food. Complaints to those in charge by both her and myself are met with tremendous surprise. According to those people re-

sponsible, we are the only ones complaining, and everyone else thinks the food is great.

The food is so bad I doubt prisoners would be forced to eat that kind of gruel. I seriously doubt that there is enough nutrition in the meals to keep anyone alive very long. The students would probably be better off eating the grass on the lawn than the slop served in the cafeteria.

Letters of complaint to Douglas Rix, Assistant Director of Housing/Food Service and Martin Massengale go unanswered. It is a good thing these people work for the state because in the real world their jobs would not be protected, and they both would be looking for work.

Frank Gaines
parent