

Homophobia, prejudice, social variances discussed

Writer defends himself, opinion

In the past few days I have been termed a homophobic, bigot, war-monger and a crybaby. All by people who have never even met me, let alone know me well enough to make such malicious comments about what type of person that I am. I realized that when I addressed the issue of homosexuals in the military that I would be the subject of sharply worded criticisms. However, I did not believe others would be quite so judgmental and launch such ruthless attacks upon my character. So be it. To quote a fellow paratrooper, "Sometimes, you just have to stand in the door."

I could fill up a entire page of the DN refuting the unfounded accusations of Joyce C. Melvin, Lawrence Jones and James A. Zank, but have neither the time nor the desire.

What counts is that not one person who knows me has expressed his or her disagreement with the letter, nor has anyone that knows me accused me of being a bigot. None of these three related any personal experiences in the military or did an adequate job of supporting their assertion that my letter was simply homophobic tripe. That is why I know that I am right and have "stood in the door" for the right reasons.

Douglas J. Shonka
senior
political science

View is narrow, reader says

Joseph Ryan, in response to your letter (DN, April 30) I can only say that, as a white male with North European lineage, I'm really sorry that you feel the way you do. Being in my early 20s and being born in the South, (gee, I'm a Republican too) I was taken by surprise by your extremely derogatory comments about myself and others with my ancestry. It is obvious that you feel that as a group, Americans of European descent are doing everything possible to suppress all minorities in the U.S.

I agree with you that, being a part of the majority in the U.S., it is difficult to put myself in your position as a member of a minority group. But when it comes to me, I try to use empathy as much as possible when dealing with not only someone who

happens to be a different skin pigment than myself, but all people I come into contact with.

I found your point troubling that I, as a white male, should feel responsible for the actions of my forebearers (who took part in the cruel system of slavery and setting up a system of government that in your opinion is based on suppressing minorities).

My question for you, Mr. Ryan, is exactly how far do you go when you say that I should stop being ashamed of looking back at the past, and should see what really happened? Does this statement simply pertain to Americans with European descent? Should Americans with North African roots feel badly about how their ancestors during the crusades forced Christian soldiers into lives of slavery which were as harsh as the ones Africans had to deal with? Should all German-Americans feel a responsibility to Israel because of the atrocities that their ancestry committed against them during World War II? If what you say is true, shouldn't certain African-Americans be bitter toward other African-Americans because their ancestors captured and sold Africans into slavery (which is how the majority of Africans became slaves)?

My answer to these questions is NO. Since it is obvious that you support minority rights in any case, if apartheid did come to an end in South Africa, would you support the white minority who, I'm sure, would become very oppressed for their rights (or would they be getting what they deserved, Mr. Ryan)?

Unfortunately, Mr. Ryan, all cultures have certain things that we, as their descendants, cannot take pride in. I personally am appalled by the action my white European ancestors committed in the past. But the simple truth is that I can do nothing to change them. So, instead of dwelling on the past, I, as an American citizen, can only do everything in my power to see that people, no matter what social group they belong to, have an equal chance to live in a society where they are not judged by the color of their skin, but by what is inside them.

Jack Miles
senior
history

Whites also have faced prejudice

This letter is in response to Joseph Ryan's letter (DN, April 30).

I see quite a few problems with

your letter. How many situations exactly are you familiar with?

To distract any possible criticisms that I may be close-minded, I want to tell you that I live in International House and have shared many cultures with other people.

I come from South Dakota and have seen the reservations. I am not happy about what I have seen at all.

OK, let the Native Americans use peyote in their ceremonies. Where does it stop after that? Would you see it fit for me to use cocaine in my Lutheran service? If so, why are drugs (narcotics) illegal in the United States? I feel that I deserve a say in everything because that is my right. If what the Native Americans are doing affects my rights as an American, I better have a say.

What would happen if we tried to reverse things today and gave back the Black Hills back to the Native Americans? Would they take care of it better than the reservations they live on?

I am tired of people consistently bringing up the past in trying to get point across. My first ancestors immigrated from Germany in the late 1800s. How dare you say I have had an impact on the minorities of the United States because I am white! I do not see having to pay for the sins of my forefathers. It's practically absurd, in fact, that they had anything to do with slavery in the United States when they came here after it was abolished. Why should reverse discrimination be imposed on me because of what has happened in the past? Discrimination should not be allowed on any basis!

The minorities have their faults also. They tend to stereotype all whites as one background. Wrong. We all have come from different areas of the world with different views. Every white has not had a part in the subjugation of the minorities. Do blacks actually want more integration with whites? No, many blacks associate with mainly blacks. How long would a black family remain in a predominantly white neighborhood? Chances are, not very long because they come from different backgrounds. Nothing ever has been handed to me because I am white. I have worked since I was a sophomore in high school. I have earned my student status completely. I had to borrow almost \$5,000 to be able to go to college this year because I am a middle-class white. Believe me, prejudice exists on both sides of the stick.

The past should not be forgotten, however. We must take a look and then carry on. To dwell on the past does not one any good. To live in

harmony, all people must change their attitudes, not their heritage or past. We change for the better if we look at both sides, and that means also looking at our own mistakes and correcting them.

Whites need not be punished for what has happened. De-humanizations of people occurs globally. It is always easy to focus on a group's faults. It is difficult to look at their accomplishments, though.

To achieve a good relationship between all people, we must live a global life, and that means recognizing everyone's lifestyle. We can change things, if we all work together.

Brian Oltmanns
freshman
international business

Equal coverage irritates alumnus

As an alumnus, I am more than fed up with the time, space and attention which you and your colleagues from coast to coast have been giving towards fulfilling the desires and augmenting the publicity campaign through which some homosexuals continue to attempt to legitimize their deviant behavior and hoodwink the public in support of that objective.

In fairness, it must be admitted that they do have some rights as members of a minority group. In particular, they should be allowed the same rights as members of minority groups such as kleptomaniacs, pyromaniacs, homicidal maniacs and those who practice bestiality.

A bit of research will also reveal several other facts about homosexuals: (1) that the latest statistical reports continue to show that they lead all other groups in zealously contributing to the spread of AIDS; and (2) that in over half of the United States, sodomy is still a form of criminal activity as well as the most effective means of spreading AIDS.

George P. Dooley
Lincoln
class of 1940

Appreciate social, cultural variances

There have not been any incidents on campus lately in reference to any physical violence towards homoscu-

als, but that does not mean that the problem has vanished. In fact, the absence of any mention of the subject scares me. The lack of acknowledgement that the problem is still around demonstrates that, once again, the public prefers the unpleasant things in life to be swept under the carpet where guests cannot see it.

We, as a society, overlook racial slurs, unkind homosexual comments, and many other slams on those who are different than us. Why must we condone these vile activities by ignoring their existence or saying that it is just a little bit of harmless fun? Do we really believe that harassing others is an OK thing to do? If we do, then I am ashamed of the place I call home.

Minorities, whether they are ethnic or social minorities, are not frightening creatures that should be poked fun at. What needs to be done involves education--education of those who are frightened of the cultural differences that do exist. Although a person may act or do "weird" things, he or she is still a person with feeling and dreams.

Do the world a favor and take the time to learn about the other people in the world.

Sonja Kapoun
freshman
athletic training

letter

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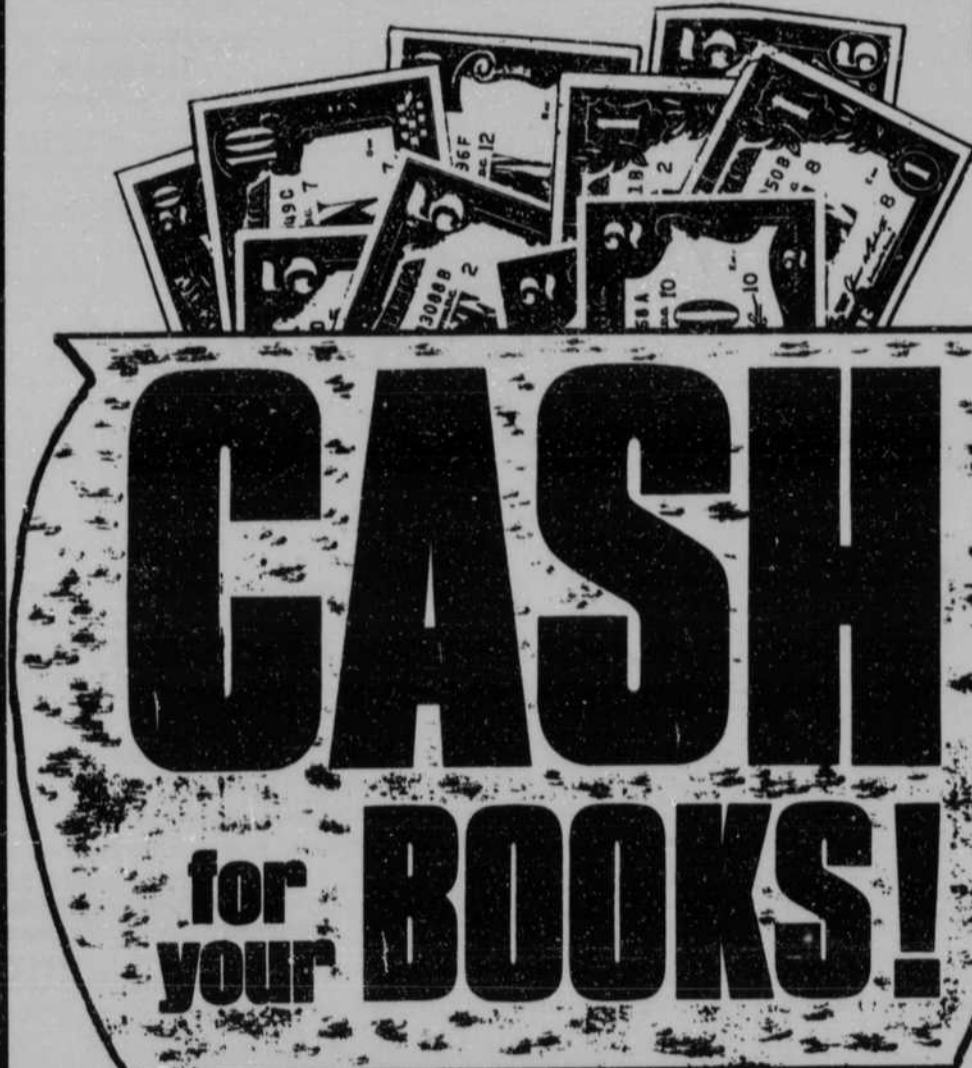
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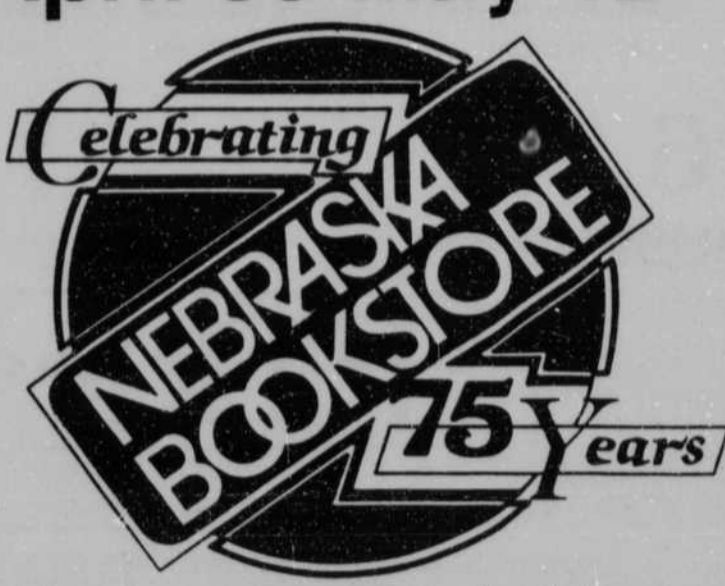


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