

Daily Nebraskan
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EDITORIAL

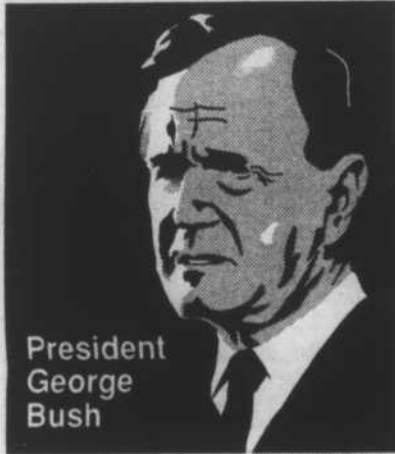
The right to fight UNL should protest, promote democracy

George Bush, the man attempting to be re-elected as the leader of this country, is attacking the very reason for which the United States was created — democracy.

Bush has criticized Bill Clinton for having helped organize demonstrations against the Vietnam War 23 years ago. At the time, Clinton was studying at Oxford University in England.

Bush's actions have been labeled as McCarthyism. He obviously is stirring up trouble where trouble is nowhere to be found. Bush tries to pass off spreading these tidbits of information as giving examples of Clinton's character flaws. But the damage runs deeper.

By criticizing Clinton's actions, Bush crushes the heart and soul of democracy — the right to protest. Americans' views need to be heard, no matter where in the world citizens are. Clinton wasn't afraid to speak up for his cause.



President George Bush

Brian Shellito/DN

But here on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the spirit of America seems to lie dormant.

Only a handful of students showed up Friday and Monday to protest the celebration of Columbus Day, a holiday that shouldn't be.

Jed Smock, a traveling evangelist, sparked more enthusiasm on campus when he entertained students with his sideshow of bible-banging, racist, sexist remarks. Smock attracted a large group of students outside Broyhill Fountain who did their best to vent their own views on the world.

But when real issues touch campus, UNL students keep their feelings bottled up and their picket signs in their closets.

Where are the protests for or against U.S. action in Yugoslavia? Somalia is starving to death and outsiders would think UNL students don't care.

Some students were actively involved in protests last year during the Persian Gulf war. But worldwide catastrophes shouldn't be the only time students speak up.

Why are no students holding signs outside Vamer Hall to call for a more diverse faculty staff? Fewer than 10 protesters held signs of opposition when former drug czar William Bennett spoke at the Lied Center for Performing Arts in September. Students this year haven't even been stirred to action by parking.

Gone are the good ol' days of tree huggers in Cooper Park who clung to branches in an effort to save the trees from the City of Lincoln's plans for an athletic field.

Protests are the essence of America. People voicing their opinions are actively seeking true democracy.

No matter where a protest takes place, no one can be blamed for taking a stand for their beliefs. And here on campus, students just plain need to get involved.

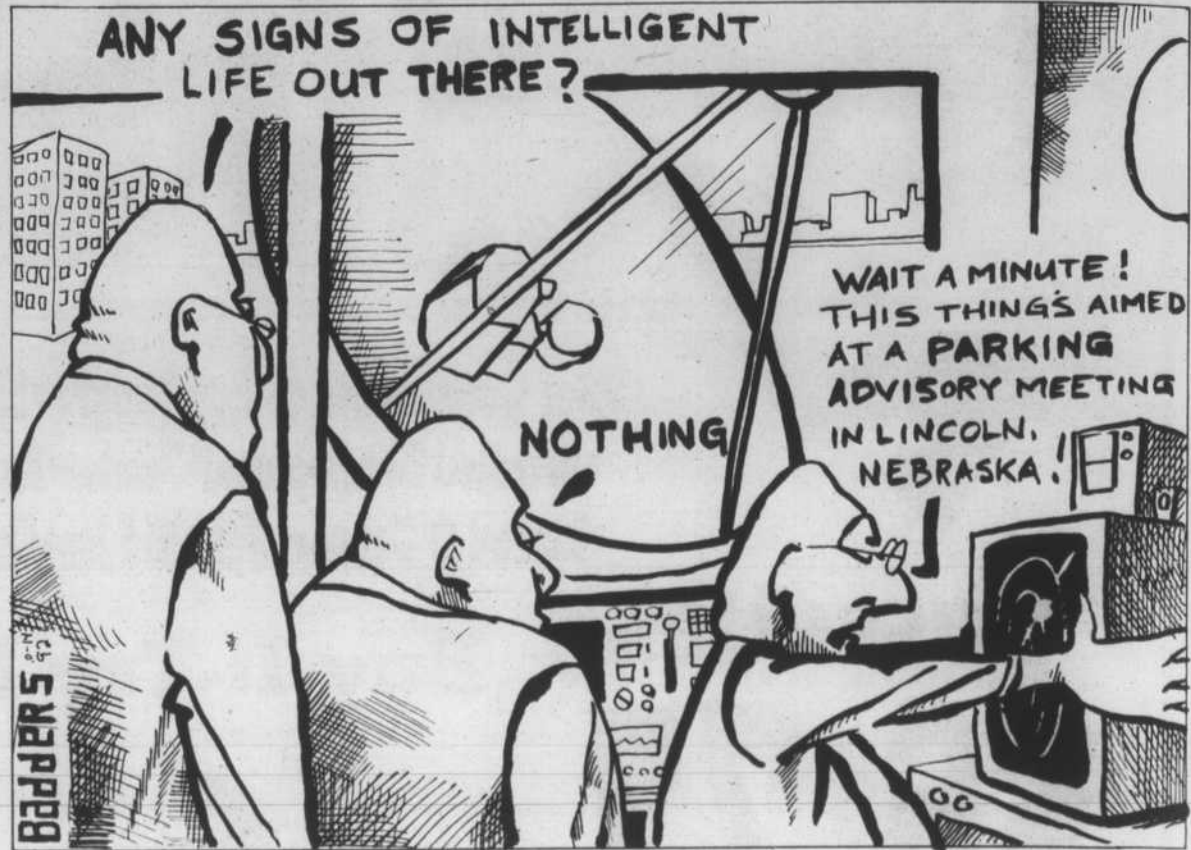
As Bob Marley would say: "Get up, stand up."

EDITORIAL POLICY

Staff editorials represent the official policy of the Fall 1992 Daily Nebraskan. Policy is set by the Daily Nebraskan Editorial Board. Editorials do not necessarily reflect the views of the university, its employees, the students or the NU Board of Regents. Editorial columns represent the opinion of the author. The regents publish the Daily Nebraskan. They establish the UNL Publications Board to supervise the daily production of the paper. According to policy set by the regents, responsibility for the editorial content of the newspaper lies solely in the hands of its students.

LETTER POLICY

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 or reject all material submitted. Readers also are welcome to submit material as guest opinions. The editor decides whether material should run as a guest opinion. Letters and guest opinions sent to the newspaper become the property of the Daily Nebraskan and cannot be returned. Anonymous submissions will not be published. Letters should include the author's name, year in school, major and group affiliation, if any. Requests to withhold names will not be granted. Submit material to the Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448.



GUEST OPINION

OutWeek awareness encouraged

On Oct. 11, 1987, several hundred thousand people participated in the "March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights." The march was organized to draw the nation's attention to the needs of the gay, lesbian and bisexual community.

To commemorate this historic event, the gay, lesbian and bisexual community has celebrated National Coming Out Day on October 11. The goal is to increase the visibility of the queer community.

On this campus the Gay & Lesbian Student Association is sponsoring OutWeek '92, from last Sunday to Saturday. Several events are scheduled throughout the week.

I encourage all students to take advantage of these events to learn about the largest minority group on this campus.

I also encourage all the gay, lesbian and bisexual members of this campus to celebrate this week by taking your next step in the coming-out process.

Coming out involves not a single event but a series of phases. Coming out begins with accepting yourself for who you are and overcoming the internal homophobia that society teaches all of us. It means acknowledging that you are gay, lesbian or bisexual and realizing that you still are a good person.

Coming out progresses through a private sharing of this acceptance and incorporating it into your life. This involves telling people about your orientation and becoming more a member of the queer community.

Success and acceptance with coming out privately may ultimately lead to a public phase where one is open and free to be exactly who she or he is. This may involve refusing to pass as heterosexual and taking a stand against the oppression in our society against the queer community.

To draw from my own experience, I am very public about being queer. Not only do I share freely this information with others, but I also have been quoted often in the press.

Nevertheless, each time I meet someone new, I come out privately with that person through sharing who I am.

Furthermore, each time I share myself with someone new I have a personal experience. I sometimes experience a moment of concern or apprehension about how a person might react. Other times, I may start to hold myself back and feel myself creating distance. No matter how public I am about my sexuality, I still continue to have personal reactions to sharing myself with others.

No matter what stage of the coming-out process, I urge you to "Take Your Next Step" to heart.

The message can be applied to those of you who are in the personal phase of ridding yourself of negative images that surround being gay or lesbian and becoming comfortable with yourself.

For the private phase, the message may mean telling someone for the first time, telling your parents or attending an event sponsored by a queer organization.

For those ready to come out in a public way, it may mean writing a letter to the editor of your school newspaper or bringing up the issue of queer culture in your multi-cultural education class.

Whatever phase or place you are in, I encourage you to take that next step.

For most people coming out is a very scary thing. It means being honest with ourselves and others about who we are and the people we love.

The rewards for being truthful are great, and the self-respect and self-esteem that follows cannot be explained until you experience it for yourself.

When gays, lesbians or bisexuals come out, it means they now can share more of themselves and their lives with others. It also means they will have more of an opportunity to validate their own life and lifestyle.

On the other hand, gay, lesbian or bisexual people fear coming out because it is possible that others may reject, disown, damn or discontinue love or friendship with them.

This concern is based on a lack of trust in people and in the genuineness of relationships. It also is based on a lack of trust in their ability to survive such rejection.

If you are afraid that someone important will withdraw their love from you when you tell them about your sexuality, I think it is important to ask yourself this question: Is their current love for you based



on who you really are or on their beliefs about who you are?

If this love is conditional, then I would question the value of that love.

If your fears were justified and a person you tell rejects you, you no longer have to work to maintain a relationship based on a lie, and you are free to establish closer relationships with others who will genuinely be there for you.

A lot of people consider their sexuality to be very personal and believe that there is no need to come out in a public way. But being gay, lesbian or bisexual is a public issue whether you like it or not.

Our sexuality is a public issue as long as we don't have full protection under the law and we can be openly discriminated against. It's a public issue as long as Oregon and Colorado, can have initiatives coming up in the next general election that would forbid legislators to outlaw anti-gay discrimination.

Homosexuals are not disliked because of who we are but because of the beliefs that people have about us. The best way to change these beliefs is for people to get to know us, and they can't get to know us if we remain in the closet.

According to some estimates, if every gay, lesbian and bisexual person were to come out to their families and friends, we would impact 70 percent of the population. I believe 70 percent is a conservative estimate.

Finally, I would like to add that coming out not only happens on National Coming Out Day or during OutWeek '92, but it needs to happen every day when the opportunity arises.

Treat yourself and other people who are gay, lesbian or bisexual with respect, and I hope in the process others will follow.

Paul A. Moore is a senior speech communication major and a Daily Nebraskan arts and entertainment reporter.