

MICHELLE PAULMAN

Pondering haircuts and prejudices

Sing along if you know the tune:

Almost cut my hair. Happened just the other day.

It's getting kinda long. I could have said it was in my way.

But I didn't, and I wonder why. I decided to let my freak flag fly. I feel like I owe it.

Actually, I did trim it myself in the sink with a pair of paper scissors because the back was starting to wing out. But I've been torn lately between trimming it all or letting it grow.

Despite what Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young say, my longest hairs are probably only six inches, max, and that's the longest they've been since I first had them whacked. Far from freaky.

You see, I left for Chicago in mid-May with permed hair past my shoulders. After three weeks of pony tails, hats and heat, I paid \$80 to have someone practically shave my head.

My friends and relatives were amazed. The last time I had short hair, I mean really short hair, was when I was born.

I felt freer, lighter, happier, in control.

Then someone called me a dyke.

Out of the blue, as I was walking down a Chicago street, I heard the word behind my back. I looked, but the dyke-caller was gone.

I felt unnerved and a little violated by the sudden attack, apparently initiated by the shortness of my coiffure.

For those of you not hip in your lingo, "dyke" is a term used to describe a lesbian, or someone of the female persuasion who is sexually attracted to another someone of the female persuasion.

I'm not.

Granted, I was clad in a T-shirt and jeans, men's shoes and no earrings. But I'd dressed like that when I sported longer hair, and no one called me a

dyke.

As a matter of fact, most lesbians I know have much longer "do's" than I do.

So where did that dyke-caller get off anyway, calling me a dyke, just because my hair bears somewhat of a passing resemblance to k.d. lang's?

Maybe the dyke-caller was still holding on to the age-old commandment that men shall not have hair past their chins, nor shall women cut their hair shorter than their ears, or they shall be cast into a pit of Satan's hairdressers.

As Ross Perot once said, y'all know this is bunk.

As a friend of mine once said: "It used to be that you could tell the really cool guys 'cause they had long hair, but now the gross guys have long hair too, so the cool guys are cutting their hair short, except for European guys, who are cool just 'cause they're European."

Fact is, nowadays you can take a lot of hairstyles and slap them on either a male or female head and no one would know the difference.

Having short hair is great in some ways, like shorter blow-drying time, using less shampoo and not having to run around the house trying to find one of those little pony-tail holders.

But it's also a pain. When I wake up, I have cowlicks in the back of my head. If I don't have time to shower, I have to wear a hat. When I wear a baseball cap, I look rather butch. At times I feel like the polar opposite of Lyle, the effeminate male heterosexual. I'm Michelle, the butch female heterosexual.

Many people automatically associate such un-femininity with dykes, which is abthurd, as Lyle once said. Herein lies the whole root of prejudice.

Being human beings, we can't help but make automatic judgments based on our first impressions of the people we see before we meet them.

For instance, if you saw me walking across campus after I had over-

slept and thrown a baseball cap on my head, you might think I was a dyke. If you bumped into me and I then pushed you to the ground and hissed, "You bastard!" you might think I was a really bitchy dyke.

Perceptions are sometimes fun, like when you laugh at some dyke's cowlicks, but they're also untrue or unfair.

Think how you would feel, you snivelling twit, if someone judged you on how you look and how you act.

Then from these prejudices we make generalizations, another evil in our wanna-be-P.C. society.

To say "All UNL students are cement-brained twits" would be incorrect, because I am not a twit; I'm a trollop, thank you.

To say "Andy, a UNL student, is a cement-brained twit," for example, would be OK if Andy, who may be a twit, does indeed have cement for brains.

However, people must be clumped together for convenience, for government, laws and surveys. We are lumped into cohorts upon cohorts upon cohorts until we form huddled masses yearning to breathe free.

I don't like being clumped into whatever cohort I belong to: single, white, female, kinda freaky, bitchy, dyke-looking college student.

Some days I just want to scream from the top of Oldfather Hall, "I'm not a cohort, I'm ME! Michelle, the butch heterosexual! I'm the one with short hair that's growing out! I sit in the back of your lecture class and do the crossword puzzle!"

Knowing my luck, everyone else would be up there, screaming at the tops of their lungs that they're all individuals, too. Different dreams, same decibel level.

Generalizations suck.

Oops.

Paulman is a senior news-editorial major and a columnist and photographer for the Daily Nebraskan.

JON BRUNING

Conservatives, come out of closet

Conservatives have had their plight bemoaned throughout the year. They've whined about elections, homosexuals and presidents' wives. But I suppose you could call me the idiot who is foolish

enough to show compassion for people who weren't born into the same financial situation I was.

Liberals and conservatives can probably agree on one thing, however. A substantive debate is always an education, especially when the person you're arguing with is bright and well read enough to make valid points.

With that spirit in mind, I'd like to briefly tell you my views on various issues. I hope the conservative student body will take the time to respond. I'm disappointed in the conservative population so far, which seems scared to speak out.

Where are the conservatives who disagree with the liberal views? Surely at least one of Doug Bereuter's supporters could have objected to Gerry Finnegan's campaign. How about Hillary Clinton? I said last week she was an amazing woman. Evidently everyone agrees because I haven't heard differently. I know you're out there because Bush won Nebraska overwhelmingly. Either you're scared to stand up for what you believe in or too lazy to write a five-minute letter to the editor.

Let me give you some cannon fodder. I think a woman should have a right to choose. I'm not saying I personally believe in abortion, but I think

a woman has a right to decide what to do with her own body. Personally, I think life begins in the tenth week of gestation upon the inception of brain waves in the fetus. Regardless, I don't want the government making this decision for women. How can conservatives say they are against the government meddling in everything, yet many want the very same government to declare abortion illegal?

I believe in gun control. I think the National Rifle Association is wrong in supporting hollow-pointed bullets and every other device created purely for killing humans that has ever been invented. Their premise that a ban on any type of gun or ammunition will eventually limit those of us who want to hunt wild game is ridiculous. I love to hunt and I plan to do so throughout my lifetime. There is no need, however, for a porcelain handgun or armor-piercing bullet when I'm trying to bring down a pheasant or a goose. If the government wanted to ban shotguns, I'd be the first one in line to protest. Many types of handguns and ammunition, however, need to be regulated.

I believe in helping those who are less fortunate than I am. While conservatives may believe that the poor must be born poor because they want to be, otherwise they'd be rich, I think we need to help out our fellow citizens. If a person who is born into poverty can become a more useful contributor to society through a government-sponsored education program, I'm thrilled to see my tax dollars spent in such a manner. If a single mother needs assistance to raise her child, I think the government should

help her get on her feet. If elderly people need health care, the government ought to make sure they're getting it.

I believe homosexuals should have the same rights as everyone else. They ought to be able to be Boy Scout leaders, soldiers and anything else they want to be. Just because a person is gay doesn't mean they're a pedophile or a bad soldier. While I've only known two people in my life who were admittedly gay, I'd be happy to fight side-by-side with either of them if the United States went to war.

I believe in affirmative action. If a woman or a black person takes the place of a white male in a law school entering class, we're all better off. Women and people of color have perspectives that white men could never have, and the learning environment is better if the class is diverse. If law schools consisted solely of white males they'd look like the Republican Party.

Conservatives say they are fed up with the liberal slant of the Daily Nebraskan. You're out there. Well, I'd like to change your minds. I would love to persuade you that trickle-down economics was a farce or that Ronald Reagan was incapable of understanding complex policy arguments.

I'd like to invite all conservatives at this university to engage in some substantive debate. Come out of the closet. In the eloquent words of the conservative President Bush, "Let's get it on."

Bruning is a second-year law student and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

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