

Daily Nebraskan

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University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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EDITORIAL

Artistic debate

Notion of state-funded sculptures unfounded

Some students seem to be a bit confused about the recent art acquisitions by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campuses.

The latest arrival, "Greenpoint," by Richard Serra, has sparked interest from a few concerned members of the UNL community, such as one reader of the Daily Nebraskan.

"I am so glad to see the University of Nebraska-Lincoln put its money to good use," a writer said in a letter to the editor.

That attitude is noticeable in comments, complaints and letters reflecting that students must think the university paid out of its own pocket to decorate the campus with sculptures from internationally known artists.

Why, that would be just plain foolish in a financially-straining year when even more budget cuts are being contemplated.

Nebraska taxes didn't pay for the sculptures.

"Greenpoint" — the \$300,000 sculpture between Burnett and Andrews halls — was paid for with funds generated by the Sheldon Art Gallery.

The sculpture has two curvilinear walls that are 16 feet high and 20 feet long with two 47-inch openings. "Greenpoint" weighs 80,000 pounds and is made from a self-sealing weather steel.

Michael Heizer's "Prismatic Flake," east of Love library, was financed entirely by private funds and donations last fall.

Heizer's sculpture is constructed of concrete and makes reference to a scraper-like instrument used by the Native Americans of the Midwest. It is 36 feet long and about 5 feet tall.

The 1985 Charles Ginniver sculpture, "Shift," on the corner of 12th and Q streets was a gift from Gerald Kohs and his wife, both of Atherton, Calif.

"Shift" is composed of two steel parallelograms that connect in the center by sharing one side.

No matter what form, art is open to interpretation. Students should feel free to intelligently criticize those sculptures that have been referred to as the rusty metal slabs, the surfboard and that other thing.

But don't knock the sculptures because the university paid for them. It didn't.

And don't knock them because they look weird or clutter the landscape. Why bother worrying about clutter? It isn't as though the university's architecture adheres to a theme.

It's nice to know people from the outside notice UNL and care enough to donate money to make the campus, in their opinion, a little better.

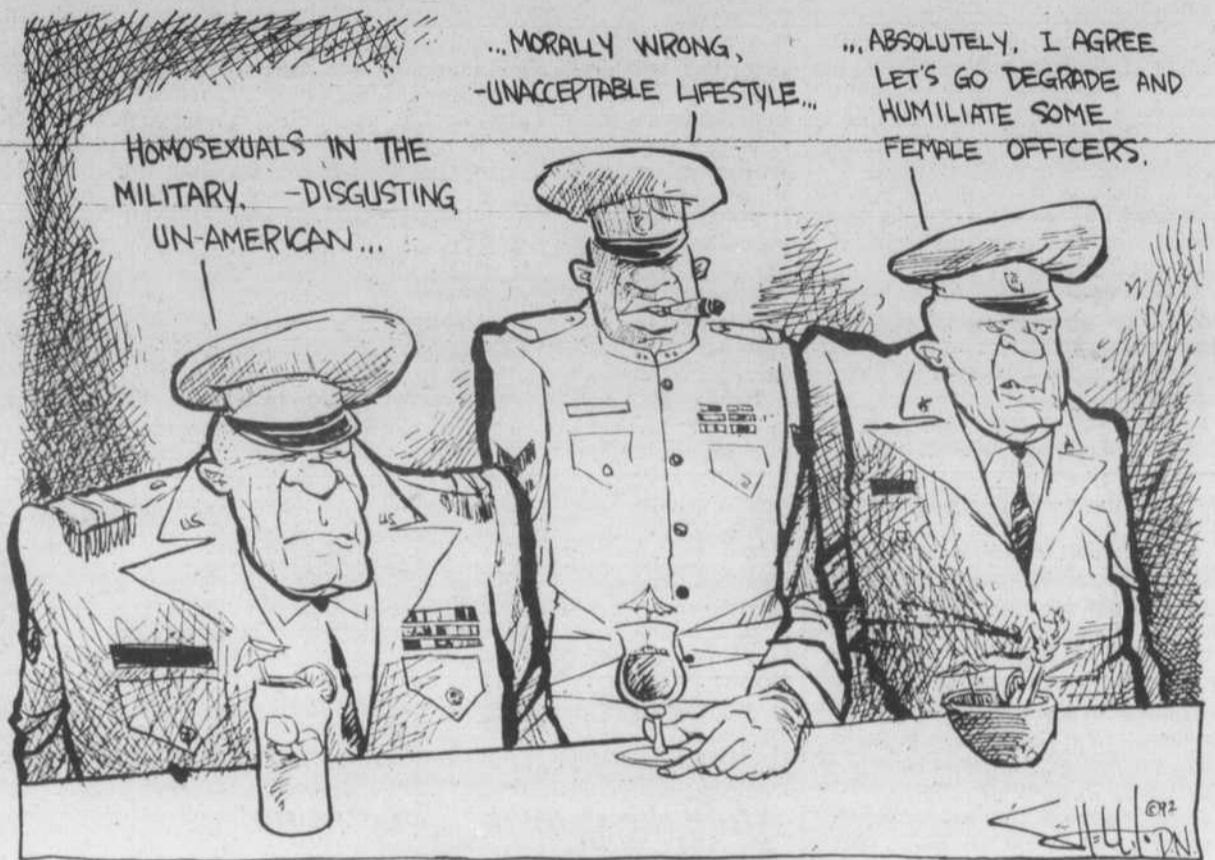
And it's their prerogative to donate money for sculptures instead of scholarships or books.

EDITORIAL POLICY

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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.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Awareness

I would like to commend several individuals and university organizations for their focus and concern on rape education and awareness. The first Rape/Sexual Assault Awareness Week is in progress on our campus and it is important that these issues are addressed and not neglected.

I would like to congratulate Andrew Sigerson, ASUN president, and Leslie Strong, ASUN senator, for developing and enacting Awareness Week. Greek organizations should also be recognized for their Rape Education on Campus Training program that addresses rape awareness issues faced by college students.

The University Health Center should also receive part of the credit because of their "To Their Health" publication. An article on alcohol and date/acquaintance rape proved to be very informative. It included helpful hints for both males and females on how to prevent offensive sexual situations.

I congratulate these groups and individuals on a very successful program. Involving both our campus and our community in this educating process will prove to be beneficial to many in the future. Bravo, and a job well done!

Shannon Schneider
freshman
accounting

Modern art

I'd like to turn your attention to those two big slabs of metal someone dropped between Andrews and Burnett. I've heard much speculation and criticism from people walking by our new sculpture.

People please wake up! It takes more than just a Top 10 football team to make our university competitive and known on a national level. If you want to criticize art, fine, but do it with some intellect. The talk I've heard is akin to an eight-year old telling a heart surgeon not to cut someone's chest open. If you don't understand it then please say that. Don't write it off as stupid when it is only your lack of knowledge in the field of art.

George Neubert has done an excellent job building our collection of 20th century American art into one of the best anywhere. This only strengthens and diversifies the educational opportunities available at your university. And as far as the amount spent on the piece, you need not lose sleep, the less than half-million dollars came mostly from private donations to Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery.

If you know and care about modern art you're sitting on the gold pile

Liberal lawyers

of Sheldon's collection. If you don't care, then please take advantage of other opportunities offered by the university that you are interested in.

There is no way for a person to assume that every student here will appreciate or even understand all the elements of the university. So when you walk by Richard Serra's Greenpoint, laugh if you'd like. I'll just smile, anticipating the possible coming of Claus Oldenberg.

Malcolm Miles
senior
English

Affirmative action

In contrast to Sam Kepfield's headline ("Liberals infiltrate bar association," DN, Nov. 9), I submit this one: "Sam jumps ABA ship with rest of fleeing conservatives."

Kepfield writes in his article that he canceled his American Bar Association membership because of some recent ABA resolutions and because of hypocrisy and arrogance in the profession.

Resignation is not a logical reaction. You need to submit your membership form and pay your dues so you can vote and argue your opinions with your fellow lawyers for what you perceive is morally right.

With regard to Kepfield's opinions of law students, I offer anyone to visit the law college and talk with students, faculty and library staff members about Kepfield's columns. You'll find the conversations stimulating, enlightening and diverse. Anything but myopic. Kepfield's generalizations about law students are his own fabrications.

Brian Striman
associate professor UNL Law
Library

Racism

Well, Jon Bruning, you have succeeded in getting a reply ("Conservatives, come out of closet," DN, Nov. 13). Conservatives are not off licking their wounds from the election; they just have jobs and responsibilities that prevent them from answering your inane arguments.

Considering my limited time, I will hold my reply to your diatribe to the subject of affirmative action.

You state in your column that, "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."

Given this, why didn't you give up your place in the 1991 entering class? Don't you realize that by selfishly holding onto that slot that you are depriving the law school of the much needed perspective that an additional woman or person of color could have

provided? Shame on you, that's not very progressive. Maybe you are a closet conservative.

All kidding aside, the subject of racial preferences is a serious issue. Even if one accepts the notion that it is permissible to remedy past racial discrimination by endorsing a racial preference, affirmative action is still flawed.

The major premise of affirmative action is that because of racial, ethnic and economic discrimination minority members of our society do not have the same opportunities as do other members of society. This in turn justifies using lower criteria in graduate and professional school admissions in their consideration.

If grades and exam scores such as those on the LSAT and GRE are to be used as a proxy for privilege in our society, then the wrong group of white students are being excluded from our graduate and professional schools.

White students with mid-range LSAT's have just as much prima facie evidence that they have been disadvantaged as do similar situated minority students. If we are to create a truly diverse learning atmosphere in law school, these students must be included. It is the high scoring, privileged, pampered, white aristocrats who must be denied admission.

Ron Schmidt
law, psychology

Affirmative action

The recent questioning and photographing of five black UNL men in the Candice Harms investigation is blatantly racist.

Mitchell Strong, one of the students questioned, said he was offended by police actions and the fact that James Griesen backed up the police, but doesn't blame Griesen because he was just "looking out for the interests of everyone."

Do you really think that if Griesen was your friend and cared about you like you believe, he would allow UNL records on race to be available to police so they could question you and unjustifiably treat you as a suspect by photographing you?

I'm glad Sen. Ernie Chambers is standing up to these people. Whether he is being unprofessional or overstepping his bounds is insignificant when compared to the activities of the police and Griesen. If Chambers has to be extreme to stop this, so be it.

If everybody rolled with the flow by not opening their eyes to blatant injustice and prejudice, minorities, to this day, would still be prohibited from voting, sitting on the front of the buses, etc. It's a good thing that some people have their eyes open.

Paul Koester
senior
agronomy