

ANNE STEYER

College Republicans: Grow up

It amazes me that the very people who wrap themselves in the American flag are the same ones who deny the rights that flag symbolizes to people different from themselves.

Latest example: the UNL College Republicans' most recent attention-grabbing stunt.

I really, really dislike being another cog in their publicity wheel. It seems every time the College Republicans or The Ideal want to blather, KOLN/KGIN-TV and the Lincoln Journal-Star are wasting time and space on it.

But I can't help myself, especially in this instance.

Tuesday, Shane Tucker, UNL College Republicans' chairman, issued a press release in response to the pink triangle stickers distributed by the UNL Affirmative Action Office the week of Oct. 11.

The AAO gave the stickers to faculty and staff members during National Coming Out Week. Students also received stickers from a booth in the Nebraska Union. Those individuals who chose to post or wear the stickers did so to show homosexual students support and offer a safe environment for discussing gay issues.

The College Republicans obviously were not happy about this overt act of tolerance at UNL. To respond to the pink triangle distribution, the CRs decided to issue some stickers of their own.

Accompanying their press release was a letter and a photocopied sheet of their stickers. Twenty stickers were shown, complete with commentary.

I won't go into the nature of the stickers. Suffice it to say the College Republicans seemed to be shooting from the hip, having put little to no thought into them. Perhaps they were feeble attempts at humor — I say attempts because humorous they were not. Instead, I found them offensive for the most part, stupid on the whole.

The only point the stickers con-



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veyed to me was that the College Republicans lack any sense of taste or maturity.

The press release said the project was "meant to point out the university's wasteful spending habits, to make light of the notion that diversity can be instilled by a costly sticker campaign, and to question the university's involvement in political crusades."

"The notion that stickers will create an atmosphere of loving tenderness is misguided at best," Tucker said. "It's unfortunate that the university will waste state dollars to fight a political battle for any group."

I'll take those points one at a time. Wasteful spending habits and state dollars?

My, my, my. Tucker and his merry band of "We're Young! We're Conservative!! We're College Republicans!!!" are certainly taking a solid stand on swampland.

The aforementioned pink triangle stickers were funded completely through donations. So that deflates their argument about "wasteful spending habits" and the involvement of state dollars in a "costly" campaign.

UNL's involvement in a political crusade?

I question the phrasing. I wonder when providing an atmosphere receptive to students became a political battle. I wonder why treating all students — all human beings for that matter — with a little dignity and a little respect is now a political issue. Why is it not simply an issue of being tolerant?

A university is supposed to be an

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educational institution of the highest level. Why then would one of its student groups stoop to a level so childish and ignorant as the stance the College Republicans have taken?

I respect the expression of free speech.

However, I wish the College Republicans could express themselves in a tasteful, mature manner.

Come on, folks, we're in college here.

I'm almost 26 years old. I left junior high a long, long time ago, and I have no intention of returning.

My greatest hope regarding this fiasco is that the College Republicans will graduate from adolescence soon, as close to immediately as possible.

Especially considering the fact that many of these students see themselves as the future leaders of our state and our country.

All the American flag waving and patriotic shouting College Republicans do won't get them anywhere — except, perhaps, a guest spot on the Rush Limbaugh show — unless they support the beliefs that flag and America espouse.

To be taken seriously in the real world, they'll have to quit shooting from the hip and do a little growing up.

Because, after all, shooting from the hip is something only children and fools do.

Steyer is a senior English and history major, a Daily Nebraskan arts and entertainment senior reporter and a columnist.

Senate has no right to diary

I watch way too much TV. I actually found myself watching the Packwood Diaries Debate on Tuesday night. Yes, I actually found myself caring whether or not the Senate forced Mr. Packwood to release more than 8,000 pages of his risqué personal diary. We probably won't find out what's actually in them for a long, long time, but just the notion that a senator keeps track of his colleagues' sex lives makes the imagination run wild. Admittedly, these examples are pure speculation, but as the old Keystone saying goes, wouldn't it be great if we found out:

- That the past marital "trouble" candidate Clinton was referring to during last year's presidential campaign was actually his secret, torrid affair with talk-show mogul Oprah Winfrey.

- That in a bizarre twist of fate, Packwood reportedly witnessed Luther Campbell and arch-conservative Phyllis Schlafly carrying on backstage at a 2-Live Crew concert.

- That in the margins of the diary, Packwood jotted down notes about seven secret, late-night meetings between a "J. Reno" and an "H. Stern."

- That the Quayles happen to be big fans of leather paraphernalia.

But alas, we could never be so lucky.

Health care couldn't do it. NAFTA couldn't do it. Somalia and Haiti couldn't even do it. Nope, the one issue that finally was able to bring the Senate to complete, unwavering attention was, what else, sex. The investigation of dirt-bag extraordinaire Sen. Bob "No, I think you DO want to go out with me" Packwood recently brought the Senate to a screeching halt.

The investigation has been going on for more than a year now, but this past week, a few interesting twists occurred. Trying to deflect heat, Packwood made a few not-so-subtle threats to fellow members of Congress that he had dirt on their sex lives. If, in the most unfortunate of



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events, he was forced to turn over his diary to the Ethics Committee, some incriminating evidence — that he, as an elected official, was safely keeping under lock and key — might somehow, accidentally, against his most valiant efforts, slip out. They didn't take too well to threats, though, and now, because they think that his diaries contain evidence of criminal activity, members of the Senate are debating whether or not to go to court to force Packwood to release the diaries.

As amusing as the thought of letting Packwood hang himself with his own testimony is, forcing him to release the diaries at minimum violates the spirit of his constitutional right to privacy. No matter how much the Senate wants to come across as being intolerant of unethical behavior, it cannot force Packwood to release private, personal writings.

The diaries are not part of the public record, and up to this point, he hasn't been formally charged with any crime. Even if he is eventually charged, though, it makes no difference. When the Ethics Committee states that it wants to look at the diaries because they might contain evidence of unethical or illegal activities — might — then it has definitely overstepped its bounds. Even if the Senate somehow manages to skirt that legal entanglement, Packwood's Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination will more likely than not protect his position if tested in court.

legal or unethical activities by illegal or unethical means. This isn't a case of allowing the Ethics Committee to do its rightful and legal duty. This also isn't the right opportunity to exorcise the ghosts of the Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas hearings. Washington Sen. Patty Murray said that if the Senate backs down, then it "sends a message: If you are harassed, be quiet, say nothing." The ends don't justify the means here, though, and as unpalatable as it may seem, you can't trample on Packwood's rights because we all "know" he's guilty.

Needless to say, I have no admiration for Sen. Packwood. His self-portrayal as an innocent victim of the almighty institution won't get much sympathy from me. It was his own repulsive and pathetic actions toward female staff members that got us into this mess in the first place.

However, as hard as it is to swallow, you have to follow the rules if you want to get him. And unfortunately, following the rules while going after the diaries probably won't get you anywhere.

Don't worry, though. In time, he's going to go down, and he'll go down hard. There's no way he can avoid his past. But now isn't the time. If the diaries issue is followed to its inevitable legal conclusion, Packwood may succeed in portraying himself as the victim, and the real victims in this case may lose out.

Zimmerman is a junior English major and Daily Nebraskan columnist.

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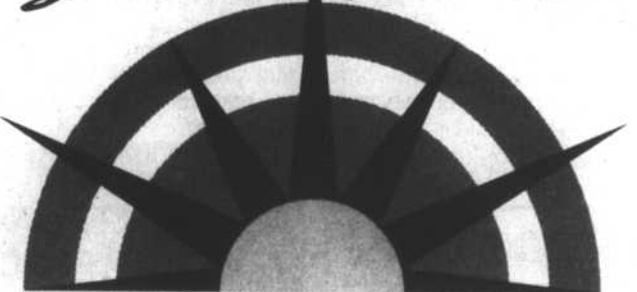
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