

OPINION

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EDITORIAL

Go public

Anonymous message solves nothing

It seems there is a faction forming on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus. You probably haven't seen it, and you probably haven't heard it.

But if you listen very, very closely you might hear them whispering. But don't tell anyone, apparently it's supposed to be a secret.

Childish actions are back in full swing at UNL so soon after the end of winter break. Bantering, whirling, whimpering and denying are all part of the game being played by Regent Robert Allen of Hastings and a so-called anonymous committee.

At the Academic Senate meeting Tuesday, Allen distributed copies of "A message from the UN-L Committee of Concerned Professors." This unsigned document highlights Chancellor Graham Spanier's shortcomings.

"Among some of our colleagues, there is great concern that the current UN-L Chancellor, Graham Spanier, is leading UN-L in a way that is not in the best long-term interest of the students, faculty or people, of the State of Nebraska," the memo said.

The Daily Nebraskan questions the message.

An unsigned hate letter serves no purpose. If professors did indeed author the letter and hope to have their allegations looked into or resolved, they must make specific charges and make themselves known.

It is far too easy to spout off about someone or something without signing a document.

If Graham Spanier is the evil administrator he is made out to be in the message, these individuals need to come forward publicly. If they feel they can't, they need to tell their complaints to someone — anyone.

Tell a state senator. Tell central administration. For heaven's sake, tell the media.

But speaking about these issues without showing your faces accomplishes absolutely nothing.

GOP in action

Initial job in Congress encouraging

In the first days of 1995, newspaper headlines and space have been dominated overwhelmingly by one topic: the new Republican Congress.

The GOP celebrated as it took power when the 104th Congress convened on Jan. 5.

Last week, the new Republican majority passed many measures that, among other things, reduced the size of congressional staffs, imposed federal laws that apply to the rest of the country on Congress and established a "supermajority" three-fifths majority to pass future income tax rate increases.

Such steps are encouraging. It is good to see politicians living up to their promises for a change.

It seems that a new majority party could change the bureaucracy and stalemate that has been a part of our government for so long. Since the new session began, both Republicans and Democrats have said they were looking forward to cooperating with each other.

Of course, the line between such statements and political double-talk is very fine.

Hopefully, both sides will live up to the rhetoric. The country can only benefit from that.

EDITORIAL POLICY

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Lincoln image suffers in media

I like Lincoln. Maybe I'm strange, but I can't think of many other places I would rather live.

For me, Lincoln has just about the right amount of everything — just enough people, just enough culture, just enough traffic, just enough snow.

The people here are nice. When we pass each other on the street, we smile or say hi. When someone gets hurt, we stop to help. And when the Huskers play in the big game, we rally behind them and celebrate in the streets when they win.

At least that's the way I see Lincoln, and that's what I try to tell people who aren't from here. But lately, I am starting to worry that others don't see these qualities.

Not counting stories about the national championship, in the last several months I have seen four reports from Lincoln in the national media. Sadly, none of them was especially flattering.

In September, the state executed Harold LaMont Otey, and the event garnered wide-spread media attention throughout Nebraska and beyond. But many states have executions. In and of themselves, those do not necessarily reflect poorly upon the state's people.

But when thousands of people show up outside the prison to celebrate, that does.

During a recent Otey story on an episode of CBS' "48 Hours," panned shots of the crowd showed chanting, cheering people holding signs and banners with racist slogans and swastikas.

Only in passing did the story show the somber candlelight vigils and the quiet, nearly empty streets. So to the rest of the country watching on television, that crowd represented the city as a whole.



Doug Kouma

In October, charges of racism were made against several local police officers after Francisco Renteria, a Hispanic man who was simply in the wrong place at the wrong time, died after a scuffle with police.

Investigations were held, and indictments were handed down, but many in the Hispanic community felt the officers involved got away with little more than a slap on the wrist.

The story was picked up by many national media outlets, some of whom compared the incident to Los Angeles' Rodney King beating.

So now, not only were Lincoln residents seemingly eager to go back to the days of public lynchings, the police were apparently happy to help.

If that is the perceived atmosphere of the city, Lincoln could end up an appealing place for groups that thrive on that. As it turns out, at least one is already here.

Not long after the Otey story aired on "48 Hours," I came across a TV news report about a prominent American Nazi who maintains an address in Lincoln. Therefore, the propaganda he sends out is delivered with a Lincoln postmark, and presumably a Lincoln return address.

Such propaganda is illegal in Germany — where much of it ultimately is sent. According to German officials interviewed for that report, Lincoln is becoming fairly well-known as its point of origin.

All of this would be enough to make anyone question the true Nebraskan spirit.

Yet there's more.

While I was home in Wyoming over Christmas break, a story by The Associated Press appeared in the newspaper about the Roman Catholic Church's recent decision to allow females to serve at Mass.

The article made it a point to mention, however, that of all the dioceses in the United States, only two — one in Virginia and the Diocese of Lincoln — opted to continue allowing only males to serve at Mass.

While the Lincoln Diocese was certainly within its rights to make this decision, Lincoln was yet again the subject of more negative attention.

I don't believe that any of these incidents were reflective of the people of Lincoln as a whole, and I hope that the majority of people in this town are still good at heart.

But it doesn't matter what I or any other person in Lincoln believes. We live here. We know the truth.

What matters is that we work to give the best possible image of Lincoln to the rest of the world. Because right now, we're not doing that.

And if we don't start soon, we may be too late to do anything about it.

Kouma is a junior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan associate news editor.

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