

OPINION PAGES

GUEST VIEW

De rigueur Story on literature not a closed book

From the Sacramento Bee, Sacramento, Calif.

Any day now, some savvy trend watcher will announce the death of the book. The signs are everywhere. Television and the public prints are dizzy with excitement over the Internet and CD-ROMs. Politicians climb over one another to propose funding and support to get schools wired and online; only a fusty few talk about buying books for the school library. Can the obituary for the book be far away?

But book lovers should not despair.

The Wall Street Journal recently reported that in the homes of the well-to-do, books and libraries have lately become *de rigueur* — a sign of prestige and cultivation.

To be sure, the boom in book buying by the rich is more about decoration than literature. They are fueling a growing business of selling old books by the yard. A book-binder in Brooklyn is thriving on sales of well-crafted fake books whose spines carry the names of famous authors. Some status-conscious buyers are purchasing rare first editions and having them rebound in leather, to get that oh-so-19th-century feel that goes with the furniture.

Real readers may be appalled. But do not lose heart. At least the book still has prestige value. In a society where books are still prized as status items over porcelain pigs and antique Jack Daniels bottles, hope remains alive.

BRIEFLY

Driving out kindness

From The St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

You have to hand it to those police in Cincinnati — they don't let hardened criminals get away with anything. Take the way they swooped down and put a stop to the activities of that notorious scofflaw Sylvia Stayton, the 62-year-old former Sunday school teacher who had the nerve to put money into expired parking meters near her home.

Sure, such a random act of kindness is against the law in Cincinnati, even if it's a meter where your own car is parked. But even if authorities insist on enforcing such a silly law, did Officer Edward Johnson have to bend Stayton's arm behind her and slap on the cuffs when she objected?

After three hours in jail, Stayton was released on \$1,900 bail. The whole episode should spur Cincinnati officials to prove that common sense has not expired and to repeal the law that prompted the embarrassing episode. The meter is running.

EDITORIAL POLICY

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MEHSLING'S VIEW



LETTERS

GRADE A RESPONSE

In response to the article headlined, "Bookstores at odds over copyright laws" in the Daily Nebraskan on Nov. 8, I would like to clarify a few points. First, the Daily Nebraskan never contacted nor talked to any management of the Nebraska Bookstore. Grade A Notes is an Ohio-based corporation which privately operates the copy center through a lease arrangement with the Nebraska Bookstore. Martha Hoppe and Jason Young are employees of The Grade A Notes Copy Center.

Secondly, when a Daily Nebraskan reporter contacted our staff, it was never stated that the University Bookstore gained business by skirting the copyright law for faster turnaround, as reported. In fact, Ms. Hoppe, the Grade A Notes manager, stated that as a former employee of The University Bookstore, she was certain of their strict policy of obtaining permissions and would strongly doubt they would produce a packet without permission. Further, she stressed to the reporter that she should verify such allegations before writing a story, which the reporter supposedly did.

What Ms. Hoppe did tell the Daily Nebraskan was that she could only comment on the policies of the Grade A Notes Copy Center, which are to strictly respect the copyrights of publishers and only reprint material with permission.

Thirdly, I believe the headline of the article was misleading. Ms. Hoppe did not convey at any point in the conversation that the copyright issue created any unfair competition between the bookstores or that there was any disagreement between the copy centers on the interpretation of the copyright laws. Furthermore, she emphasized that copyright processes had little to do with the number of packets produced by Grade A Notes. It is certainly every professor's right to choose where their class materials are produced and sold, and we have thousands of satisfied customers to



JASON GILDOW/DN

prove they do.

As one of the top 10 producers of course packets in the nation, we openly welcome fair competition, as it is the life-blood of free enterprise. Grade A Notes has enjoyed tremendous success as a full-service copy center and professional lecture-note service. Our friendly service, fair pricing and quick turnaround on course packets has been and will continue to be the backbone of the Grade A Notes operation. Hopefully this letter will clarify Grade A Notes' stance on this topic.

Kathy G. Eshelman
president
Grade A Notes, Inc.
Grade A Franchising, Inc.

CLEARLY AFFIRMATIVE

Since no one seems to understand the purpose of affirmative action, let's see if we can calmly clarify the issue. I agree with "the angry white guy" Joel J. Agena that there is no excuse for bigotry and racism. While I understand Reynaldo Anderson's anger, it clearly misrepresented the objective of affirmative action, which is not to discriminate against the white male as implied by both Nick Wiltgen and J.J. Harder.

First of all, let us agree that minorities still have problems getting an equal opportunity in regards to education, housing and jobs — especially in the urban areas of this country. (I won't even touch those small towns down South where KKK murders still occur and the Confederate flag continues to wave proudly. It would be too easy.)

According to Harder, certain groups get "special advantages" and "preferential treatment" by government programs like affirmative action. This is completely absurd. It is not an advantage to be given a chance in a country where an urban education and community college degrees could never compete with those from Harvard or Yale. These people come from poor families whose parents cannot afford the cost of higher education needed to improve their "qualifications." If not given a chance, these kids will eventually get mediocre jobs as their parents did, and their children will face the same obstacles, thus repeating the cycle. These people were forced into this cycle of poverty by your ancestors. Harder said that we have no obligation to help these minorities after 400 years of slavery and suppression. Hmm... If we don't have to be held accountable for your ancestors' actions or "mistakes" (some mistake!), then why do these minorities — the victims — have to pay for them?

There is little hope for any change in these never-ending cycles without policies like affirmative action. With affirmative action, hopefully these cycles can be broken, and someday when our children's children are competing for jobs, it will be "based on qualifications through equal opportunity." As of right now, that equal opportunity does not exist whether people like Wiltgen or Harder want to admit it or not. Affirmative action provides that equal opportunity by protecting the individual's right to be given a fair chance, regardless of their background.

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P.S. Write Back

Send letters to Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 "R" St., Lincoln, NE 68588, or fax to (402) 472-1761, or e-mail <letters@unlinfo.unl.edu>. Letters must be signed and include a phone number for verification.