

# OPINION PAGES

## Our VIEW

### Cola Wars

*Pour money from soda contract into technology*

As negotiations wind down for the beverage contract, hands will stretch out from every corner of the campus.

The contract means millions of dollars a year for 10 years, and its possibilities are seemingly endless.

Sure, the money is rumored to be earmarked for technology and scholarships, but it is technically still free for anyone to take.

ASUN has been strong in demanding that students have a say in where the money goes, and has already conveyed students' wishes for upgraded computer facilities, longer hours for labs and greater technical support.

The university must listen.

Money from the beverage contract — which will offer thousands of students only one bottler's line of soda — should go to helping students where they need it.

Because all students will be giving up their beverage choice, all students should benefit from the contract. Scholarships would benefit students, but not all students.

Beverage contract money would help all students by alleviating the student fees that seem to be constantly rising.

For example, the new technology fee will do much to improve students' access to technology on campus, both in the classroom and in campus labs. Improved access is necessary since the modem pool was eliminated, and a small fee increase now may be warranted.

But the fee seems destined to rise above the \$5 amount designated for 1999. Computers are not a lifetime investment and must be replaced. Inflation will send up the price of replacement and the price of new technology — higher than can be handled with a \$5-per-credit-hour fee.

The beverage contract millions could keep this fee low in the future and help students win the financial battle of attending school.

But beverage contract proceeds could go a lot further toward bringing all classrooms and computer labs up to pace with the much-esteemed facilities of the College of Business Administration.

How nice would it be for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, long plagued by a lack of sufficient computer services, to rise to the top of its peer group in the technology area?

There are many areas that could produce great things with an extra million dollars. But the university has an opportunity to use the contract dollars in an area that has peaked the interest of both students and the NU Board of Regents.

The "Virtual University" cannot advance if students do not have computers with high-speed access. The goals of having all students on the Internet cannot be achieved if students must wait in line for old computers, or if they are shut out of labs that are not open very early or very late.

Students at UNL consume most of the soda on campus and should be the beneficiaries of any beverage contract. The university must listen when students ask for technology and should gratefully grant their wish.

## Mehsling's VIEW



PROSPECTIVE IMPARTIAL JURORS IN THE TIMOTHY McVEIGH, OKLAHOMA CITY BOMBING CASE

## Guest VIEW

### Minority Jesus unpopular in faith

SAN MARCOS, Texas (U-WIRE) — A black Jesus? The very words caused uproar when a New Jersey theater decided to cast a black actor as Jesus for the first time in the 82-year history of its passion play.

Five tour groups canceled their reservations. Others wanted to reschedule for when a white actor would resume playing Jesus. After several death threats were phoned to the theater, two church schools canceled out of fear for the safety of their students.

It would seem that even for a man who's been dead for nearly 2,000 years, race matters. So of course the question begs to be asked, who was this Jesus character anyway?

Well, we do know that Jesus himself was not a Christian; he was a Hebrew. And what were the Hebrews? According to Webster's they were "Semitic." That doesn't help much because if "race" is an invalid concept, as I am frequently told, then Semite must be completely useless.

The word Semitic has varied connotations which, according to its user, can denote race, ethnic group, language, religion or a combination thereof. Even the Semitic term "Arab" runs into trouble when confronted with someone like the late Egyptian president Anwar Sadat.

According to Hebrew lore, Ham (the so-called cursed) was the father of Canaan, Cush and Mizraim (Egypt). That the Hebrews, whatever their original description, intermixed with these people is highly probable.

If the Exodus story has any validity whatsoever, 70 Hebrews traveled into Mizraim with Joseph, but 600,000 left with Moses. Either this population explosion resulted from intermixture, or nobody in the Hebrew camp was getting any sleep at all — if you know what I mean. Black Hebrews still exist today. That the Hebrews, ancient and modern, all fit the stereotypical "Semitic"



AARON STECKELBERG/DN

look is untruthful.

To simply state that Jesus was an "Arabian Jew," as I have heard commented, doesn't clarify much about the demographic makeup of that area of the world nearly 2,000 years ago. The Bible itself describes Jesus in Revelations as having hair like wool and feet like burnt brass.

Some say that Jesus wasn't any color at all and that different people around the world portray him depending on their culture European, Chinese, African, whatever. That may be politically correct, but let's be real. If he was a living, breathing human being, unless he was transparent, Jesus had to look like somebody.

Unless, of course, the Christian savior didn't exist at all.

In truth, Jesus' story isn't all that unique. The Hindu god Krishna was said to have been born of the virgin Devaki. What's more, his nativity was heralded by a star and he was born in a cave where he was visited by wise men who gave him gifts. Though also a warrior, throughout his life Krishna performed numerous miracles and suspended the laws of nature. In his own fashion he was crucified and achieved resurrection.

And Krishna's not the only one. Buddha of India, Tammuz of Syria, Iao of Nepal, Hesus of the Celtic Druids, Bel of Babylon and more share portions of this story. The oldest version comes from Egypt, where Osiris was the god-king who was killed, resurrected and became the way to salvation. His wife Isis, through an immaculate conception, gave birth to Horus, who shares a story very similar to Jesus, Krishna and the rest.

While this could all be one big coincidence, I'd call it a product of cultural diffusion rather than some shared "psychic connection" of humanity. And though each one has its own unique specifics, the general story remains the same.

The Hebrews themselves certainly weren't immune from cultural influence — ranging from the Babylonian-derived flood story to the Egyptian practice of circumcision and baptism. Given its mass appeal, its not surprising that a savior story eventually arose among them.

Now, I'm no Christian. I mean the savior story is really nice, but the jealous deity who strikes down people in their tracks and scares the sandals off everyone gathered at the foot of Mount Sinai doesn't really appeal to me.

Nothing personal, it's just not my gig. If Jesus did exist, I suspect that if he walked into a black church today and declared himself, there'd be no great shock. At a white church, pandemonium might ensue. The idea of a black man portraying the Christian savior shouldn't cause anyone great alarm. It certainly makes more sense than the blond-haired guy in "Jesus Christ Superstar."

Incidentally, though I did like the play, I couldn't help but notice that no one complained that a black man was playing the role of Judas.

— Dexter Gabriel  
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