

OPINION PAGES

Our VIEW

Weed whacker Public view of AD rooted in misconception

Beverly Ledbetter, a private consultant hired to examine the climate for women athletes at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, presented her report Tuesday afternoon.

Surprise! It was good. It was very, very good.

She found, during a six-month study, women student-athletes at the university liked the Athletic Department. They liked the way athletes support each other. They liked the coaches and supporting staff.

However, Ledbetter said, the athletes she interviewed did not feel comfortable with the public's perception of the NU Athletic Department and its programs.

Athletes said a few bad seeds had ruined the grand and successful garden that is the NU Athletic Department, and have given the nation the impression that the garden is overgrown with weeds.

Although women student athletes have said the perception is wrong, that statement goes only a small distance toward changing the public's attitude.

Ledbetter suggested a series of reforms the department could make to help change the public's negative opinion of NU athletics.

To start, the department could hire more women in senior staff positions, provide clearly marked channels for complaints of harassment to be reported and make some physical changes in facilities, she said.

Instead, perhaps the most effective means of altering public perceptions would be to hoe the garden — to get rid of the weeds before they have a chance to take over the better plants.

Athletes should meet stringent requirements of both academic and moral character to set foot in an athletic competition, whether it be on the football field, the basketball court or the wrestling mat.

The quality of NU athletics means the university can recruit the nation's best athletes each year.

NU does not need the weeds to fill in its garden.

An athlete who will disgrace the university and the state is an unnecessary addition to a team and an unaffordable risk.

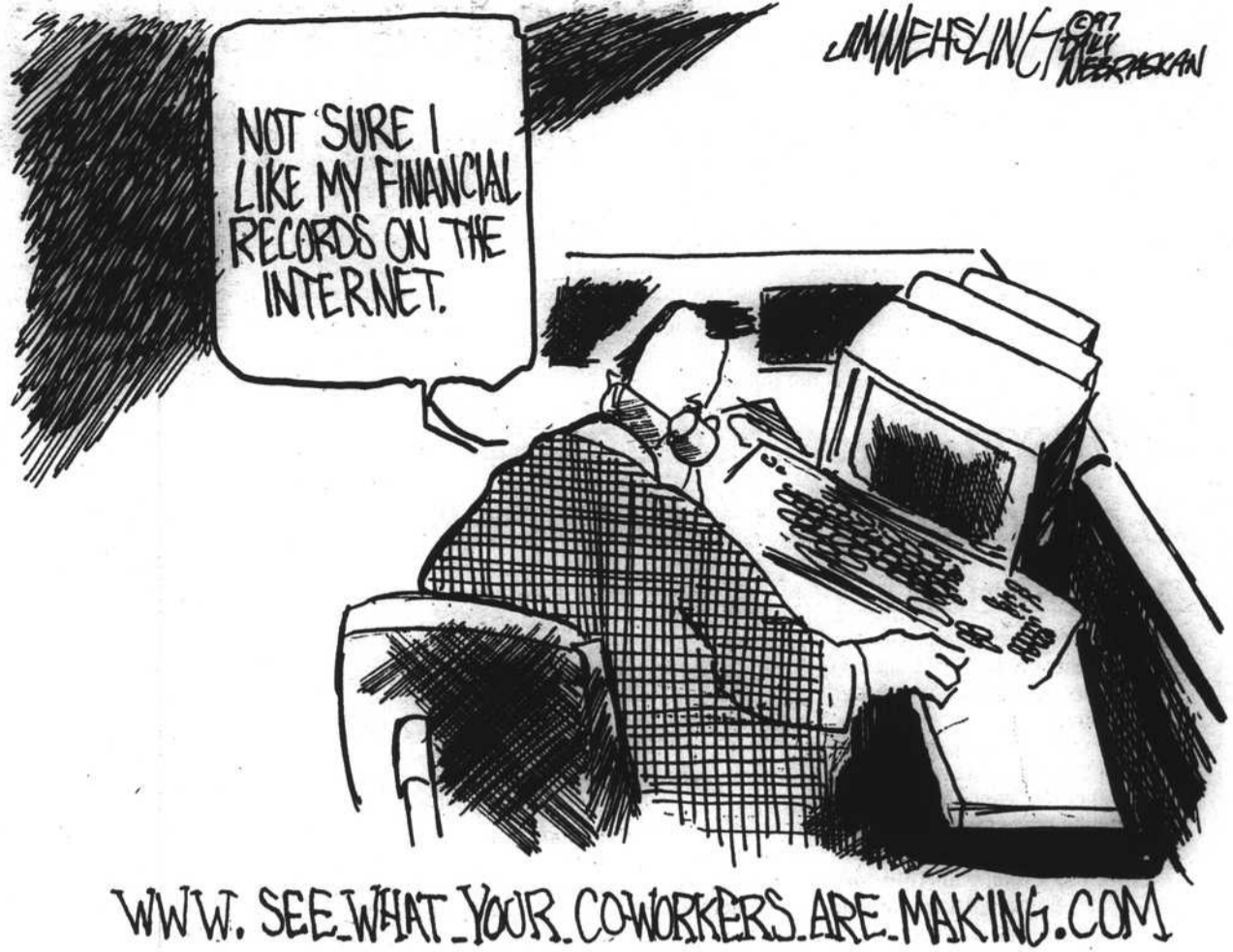
Granted, the university cannot know ahead of time whether an exemplary freshman will become an assailant or drunken driver by his senior year.

But coaches, who know players and their talents well, must know who problem athletes are. They must know to keep close watch over those athletes and discipline them fully for the first rule infraction, no matter how small.

But until UNL learns the elusive secret to keeping all athletes felony-free, the university must accept the fact that media watch only the best athletes in the best programs.

NU will take the bad press for as long as we keep the top athletic programs. Let us hope that's a long, long time.

Mehsling's VIEW



DN LETTERS

Who's Next?

I cannot believe the DN would allow this statement to be printed in a newspaper that is paid for with my fees:

"Homosexuality is not something that should be protected and not discriminated against such as race or gender, but is a plague that affects many lost people." (J.J. Harder's column, "A broken bond", DN, Friday).

I am personally offended. In light of the recent tensions on campus in regards to race (e.g. cross burning), how can you people justify printing an article that calls for discrimination against homosexuals? The right to free press you say Mr. Harder?

How about a person's civil rights to attend a public institution without facing discrimination? Or live their lives any way they want to as long as they don't harm anyone? With each new article you write Mr. Harder, you show your immaturity and ignorance.

It is truly remarkable. Adolf Hitler decided that brown-eyed people were inferior to blue-eyed people and should be put to death. You had better hope no one proposes this now or you and I will be in trouble, subjected to cruel experiments without anesthetic to change our "wrong" eye color to the "acceptable" eye color.

Anthony Nguyen shows a great deal of common sense in his article when he uses the analogy of interracial marriages not being accepted (or legal) in the past. Mr. Harder, you can discriminate all you want in the privacy of your own home but don't subject the students of this university to your propaganda.

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Editor's note: In regards to the writer's comments on student fees, 95 cents of the \$194 students paid this semester helps defray the Daily Nebraskan's printing and circulation costs. These refundable Fund A fees constitute approximately 4 percent of the paper's total operating budget. The remaining 96 percent is self-generated, mostly through advertising.

It's the Principle

I must commend J.J. Harder on his column "A broken bond" — it takes balls to write something so conservative in a college newspaper.

You clearly have a very warped idea of who this God that you love so much is. Every word in your column is the spawn of fear and hatred. The God I believe in is the exact antithesis of these things.

Our country was founded on the FREEDOM of religion, yet the religious right hinders the rights of those who choose not to be Christians. If there are people who disagree with your personal set of morals, does that make any of them less of a person?

Attribute the lack of "family values" to the prejudice you encourage, rather than to an American citizen's right to be free. If you think God loves a person any less if they are gay or lesbian, you are mistaken.

Wouldn't God be happier if you spent your time loving your fellow man, rather than wasting your time hating him? Perhaps Matthew 5:43-48 will shed some light on the subject for you.

As for your argument that marriage is for procreation, you are wrong. Marriage is, first and foremost, about a spiritual love reflecting God's love. Any other thing, such as procreation, is secondary. Also, if people don't want to have children, they are still allowed to marry.

Whether they have children or not, whether they are different sexes, religions, races or the same, is inconsequential, as long as they reflect God's divine principle of love.

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Not my God

As I walked into Andrews Hall on Tuesday I was suddenly taken aback by a noxious odor. Further investigation proved that it was the foul stench of hypocrisy — emanating from the Daily Nebraskan. On Page 7 I learned that hate crimes have steadily risen at the University of Missouri where graphic and

graffiti was cataloged in vast amounts into their "hate log."

Incidentally, 70 percent of the epithets were aimed at homosexuals. I thought to myself, "How nice it is that I do not attend a university where homophobia is documented at such a phenomenal rate of occurrence."

I was chagrined to remember that I do. I remembered the words of poor, misguided and religiously brainwashed J.J. Harder in "A Broken Bond" in Friday's DN. I turned to the DN opinion page to see if anyone had rightly written in to attempt to curtail young J.J. before he had the chance to convince others that homosexuals deserve no rights.

The only response was from freshman Josh Dieckmann, another grossly misinformed person whose head is so full of religious dogma that there is no room for anything else. I'm sorry Josh, no matter how you may justify it in your head, you do have something against gays, quite a lot against gays.

How frightening it is to me that I go to a university where Bible-thumping, self-righteous fanatics will actually try to convince me that the God I believe in would condemn to hell someone, because of his or her choice in life. I would like to point out, if I may, that I did not use the word "lifestyle," it's a life, not a lifestyle.

J.J. and Josh, I don't believe in the God you do, one who, if we follow your verbatim interpretation of scripture, hates homosexuals, blacks, Jews and other minorities. Pay attention you two, and all others out there who tow their narrow-minded line, people have a right to their own lives. Stay out of them.

Practice your conservative platform of less government and stop trying to legislate morality. So homosexuals want to get married, let them. I seriously doubt any of them would want to marry you. I doubt any girls would want to marry you, except maybe the vacuous ninnies with vacant stares who are as equally mentally and morally challenged as you. In short J.J. and Josh, grow up, take some sociology classes, open your mind and stay out of people's personal lives.

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EDITORIAL POLICY

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