

# OPINION

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## Our VIEW

### In the zone Students need place to speak freely

For weeks now, students, staff and even we have been complaining about the amount of "fun" people have taken from defacing our campus. But now, things have gotten out of hand.

It went from toilet paper, to hate speech to paint, and there are no signs of things getting any better. The vandals are here, and until action is taken - far beyond declarations and press statements - things aren't going to get better.

And it's all vandalism. Chalking. Toilet papering. Now painting. No matter how you package it, it's still ugly.

And whoever decided that chalk was not good enough to mark on things, but paint was - that was cheap. In just a short time, you defaced the alumni association, committed a federal crime by defacing a mailbox, and you made an already bad situation worse.

You should be proud of yourself. Really. Call your mom. Tell her all about it.

But, grudgingly, we admit that the sidewalk chalk - a child's toy in collegiate hands that washes off as easily as it scratches on - is a form of expression.

Thanks to the First Amendment, a state institution such as ours has no right to tell you what to say. But, thanks to the Supreme Court, it can tell you where and when you can say it. Time and place restrictions are perfectly constitutional.

And it's about time the university did some of that.

Before the days of Nebraska Union construction, the plaza was the free speech place, where chalkers and preachers could have their fun.

But with heavy construction, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's free speech place is gone, and with it has come what seems to be chaos.

Student groups used to be able to ask the Nebraska Union if they could chalk the plaza, and it was no problem. Union staff washed it away as soon as the event they were chalking about was over.

But now the chalkers and painters have declared open season on our campus.

It's time we got our free speech place back.

A place needs to be designated, a clear and simple process of obtaining permission to chalk needs to be established, and punishments for those who color outside the lines needs to be made quite clear.

Why not make the nice, long, high-traffic strip of sidewalk that runs from the union to Andrews Hall the new free speech place? Student groups could get their permits and chalk the daylight out of it. Everyone - yes, everyone, regardless of content - could get his or her message out there.

Sorority sneaks, gay and lesbian events, speakers, Homecoming, the campus chapter of the KKK - everyone could chalk until their fingers went numb.

And the rest of the campus could be spared.

The university needs to step into the void and give us our free speech place back.

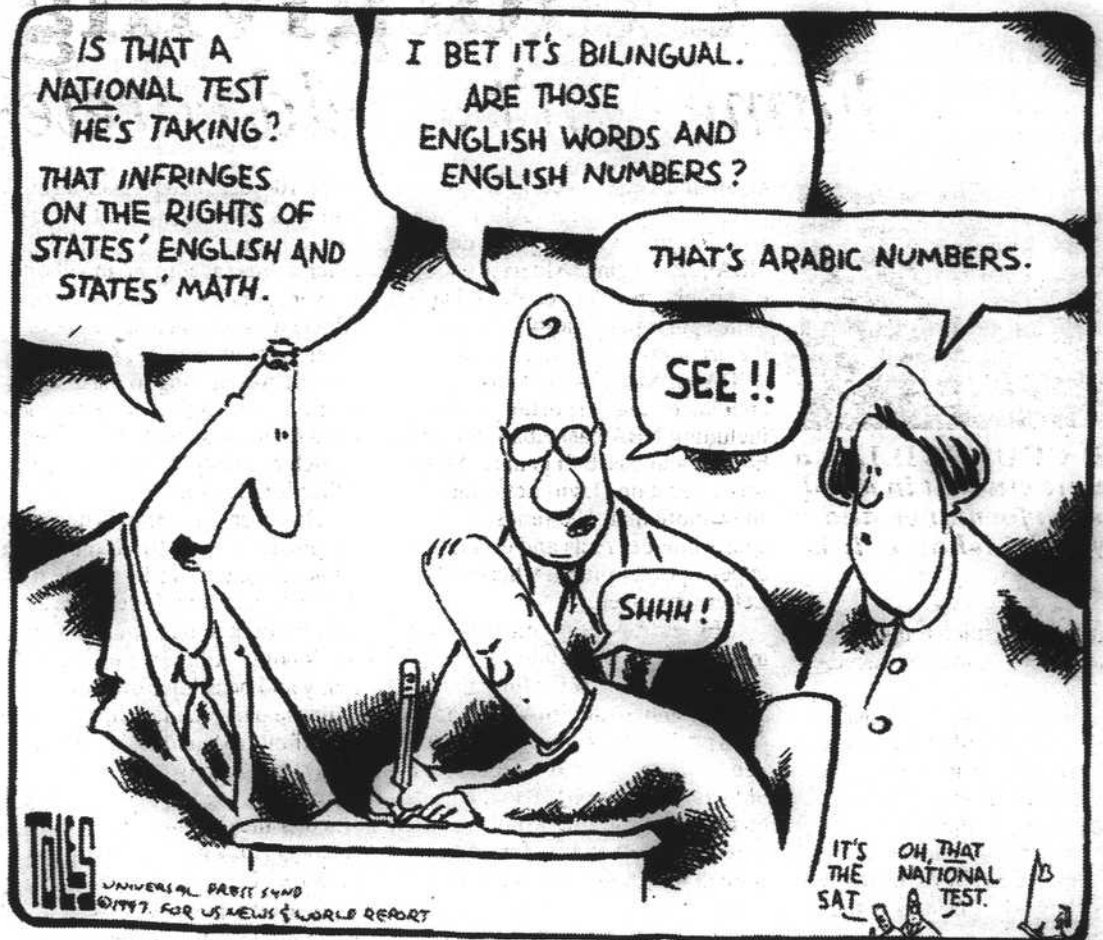
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## Cartoonist's VIEW



## DN LETTERS

### Reactionary reaction

One of the chronic problems with liberalism is its tendency to overdo, and therefore ironically undermine, the means employed to achieve its ends. In art, we call this the "dialectical conversion," which means pushing a tendency to its extreme - eventually resulting in its opposite effect. Nowhere better can this be seen but here on campus, scrawled all over the sidewalks - aphorisms, written with good intentions, desperately falling prey to the "dialectical conversion."

"Queers are here!" "Queers are Everywhere!" The problem here is not with the struggle for equality, the liberalist's end, but again, the means. The necessity of awareness, in this case, is in itself retrogressive. What does telling everyone that I prefer men, sexually, to women, or that my sister prefers women to men, do?

Gay-bashing is reactionary. It is a response by people who believe that "queers" are like locusts, a sign of the apocalypse! They are here! They are everywhere! And we know that these people are irrational, and so we move on.

Is it not, then, important to question whether letting irrational people know who you prefer sexually is only fodder, or an impetus, for discrimination, dangerous or violent behavior? This does not mean that homosexuals should stay in the closet. Yet the inability to reconcile sexual preference is due to the dichotomy between "gay" and "straight" sustained and perpetuated by gay activists who claim discrimination.

Forceful, cynical or hostile activism, like (that of the) night-chalkers on UNL campus, is not productive. In fact, it is such "activism" that creates further hostility and division, and forces Christian activists, Mothers Against Anything Remotely Decadent, or Not entirely Earthy activists, Nebraska Hicks for Hicks Equality, or UNL League for a Better Understanding of Our Hickness activists, "SAQ" or Sportsters Against Queers activists to come out of their closets; and, on some odd sort of religiously justified grounds, kick the crap out of homosexuals.

The willingness to stay in the closet about your sexuality is not a denial of who you are, but contrarily a silent recognition, if not affirmation, that you are comfortable enough with who you are that you do

not require public validation.

Someone wrote on the sidewalk just outside Andrews Hall "Shakespeare was gay!" Putting the unsubstantiated factual nature of the comment aside, one could argue hypothetically, that Shakespeare's reaction to that comment would have been "If I am gay, it is none of your damn business!" Sometimes it is silence that makes the wo/man.

**Benjamin Carson**  
graduate student  
English

### Why?

If it's so normal to be gay, why do you have to come out? Why don't we have a National "I'm Heterosexual and Damn Proud of It Day"?

I have absolutely no problems with anyone who chooses to be a homosexual, lesbian or bisexual. But my problem is this: I don't need to know how OK it is to be gay. Great, you've made your choice, but do you have to announce it? I don't care, and I know tons of other students who care more about whether or not they should eat Ramen noodles or pot pies than what someone else's sexual preference is.

I don't like walking to class and seeing "Shakespeare was Gay," and "I'm Bob and I love Tom, and that's OK, 'cause it's OK to be gay." All this writing is worthless. I think it gives our school a bad image. All this was just an incentive to have homophobes write words of their own (which we all should have known was coming). Not only does this make news, but it makes gays and lesbians look like these poor people who have done nothing to deserve this hideous treatment and we should all bear tears of pity for this poor, prejudiced part of our society.

Why don't we concentrate on the news that actually makes a difference to the world, and our student lives. Let's focus on technology, world economic affairs and world politics, not on how great it is to be gay.

**Chad De Moss**  
sophomore  
computer science

### Chancellor: Community should work to educate all

For the last year and a half, I've been talking with the university community about the need for increased respect and appreciation of the differences we find in a diverse learning environment. But earlier this week, we experienced yet another disruption of the civility one should expect from such an environment.

Hateful messages such as those chalked on our sidewalks a few days ago are extremely harmful, whether they are aimed at a group with a certain sexual orientation, a group with a certain ethnicity or a group whose politics are in the minority. These messages are antithetical to an atmosphere of learning and create a climate of fear and hostility. They will not be tolerated at the University of Nebraska.

We must work harder to educate every individual about the need to respect one another. I believe we are going in the right direction, but I challenge every member of our community to redouble his or her efforts. Take some time to consider the Student Code of Ethics that was approved unanimously by ASUN last March. In part, it says "I will be respectful toward all others, their thoughts and aspirations, and will look upon them with equality and fairness."

I am extremely proud of our students for sending this strong message, and I am equally proud of ASUN's actions last week in unanimously condemning this most recent example of intolerance. I urge the entire campus community to follow the lead of these students.

**James Moeser**  
UNL chancellor