

# OPINION PACES

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*Our*  
**VIEW**

## Relay race

*Only cooperation can defeat racism*

This Sunday, more than 100 community leaders gathered at the First United Methodist Church to discuss perhaps the most uncomfortable topic of 1997.

It wasn't murder. It wasn't assault. And it wasn't the death penalty.

But it is equally harmful to millions in the United States.

The community leaders of every race, culture, religion and age gathered at the church for a conference held to discuss racism in Lincoln.

They found, through three hours of discussion, that racism continues to thrive on our campus and in our community.

And many people at the conference found they had been its perpetrators.

White people in Nebraska have been subject to certain sweeping advantages, participants realized — unfair advantages, like institutional racism, that judge those of the "wrong" color before a word leaves their mouths. Before their ideas are heard. Before they are hired. Before they are promoted.

But the conference wasn't designed by people of color to curse or blame white people.

Leaders of all colors helped organize the conference, including ASUN President Curt Ruwe, Chancellor James Moeser and Associate Dean of Graduate Studies Ricardo Garcia.

Those leaders designed the conference to bring certain truths about racism into open discussion.

And, at the end of the day, participants presented concrete plans to combat racism — plans that, if followed by everyone, would eliminate racism before the next cross could be burned or the next racial slur could leave a person's lips.

Plans such as:  
■ Support affirmative action, which allows all races to share an equal opportunity for success.

■ Speak when a friend or an acquaintance throws a racial epithet into a conversation or tells a racist joke.

■ Invite other cultures to participate in the activities of your family, group or faith.

■ Bring churches of predominantly different races together for community service projects or events.

The plans are simple. Most take no time or extra effort, only a desire to respect fellow humans.

The willingness of conference leaders to represent the whole community, not just the community of those threatened by racism, was heartening.

White leaders finally realized and admitted racism wasn't a black problem. It wasn't a red problem or a brown problem.

Racism is everyone's problem. And it will take the sweat of all races to end it.

*Haney's*  
**VIEW**



## Hissy fit

*Cats in apartment no worse than kids*



**CLIFF HICKS** is a junior news-editorial and English major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

"There's no difference between a baby and a cat!" the long-haired young man says to his landlady.

"There is too."

"OK, the cat doesn't color on the walls."

"You're not going to get us to budge."

"It says right here on the lease," he says to her. "You may not have a pet in the apartment unless you get the management's permission."

"Which we're not going to grant to you."

"And you still can't tell me why."

"I most certainly can," says the woman who manages his apartment. "Cats leave bad odors."

"Have you ever smelled a baby?"

"Well, cats piss on the carpet."

"Can you say that babies don't do that?"

"Rarely."

"I see. Cats are quieter than children are."

"Not cats in heat."

"So stipulate that the cat be spayed or neutered. Children scream and howl at all hours of the night."

"But they're supposed to do that."

"And that justifies anything? They also run up and down the stairs early in the morning. I tell you that the neighbor kids wake me up incredibly early and I can't say one word about it, can I?"

quiet."

"Oh, a lot of good that'll do. The parents will yell at us then."

"So ask them politely."

"I did. They won't listen."

"Well the point is that cats make a bigger mess than children do."

"I can tell that you haven't been around kids."

"Look, you can have a pet in the apartment only if you have it in a cage."

"Does the same apply to children?"

"That's inhumane," she says to him.

"It's easier to scold a cat than it would be to scold a kid."

"How so?"

"Do you honestly think I could get away with swatting a kid on the nose with a rolled up newspaper?"

"Cats claw up furniture."

"So? It's my furniture!"

"But pieces of it get into our carpet."

"Look, you have a deposit from me that includes car-

pet cleaning."

"Sir, I'm sorry but it really isn't an option."

"Why can't you just charge a bit more for our deposit so we can have one?"

"There's no guarantee, if we did that it could cover the damages your cat could inflict."

"Again, the same goes for kids."

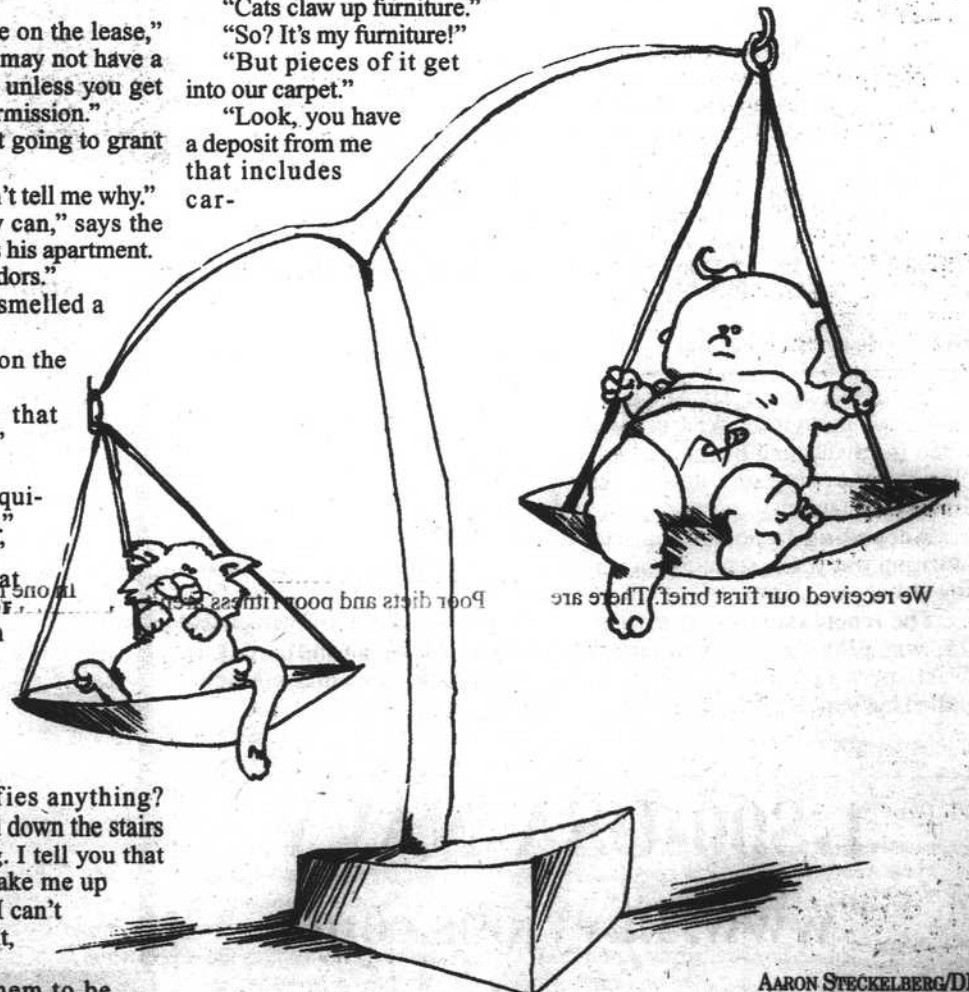
"Ah, but there is no real way we could justify evicting someone on the basis of them having a child, could we?"

"So instead you have to avail yourself to attacking my cat."

"It says we have the right to do so in the contract."

"Remind me to see how many apartments smell of kids."

"Not as many as smell of cats."



AARON STECKELBERG/DN

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