

OPINIONPACKETS

Our VIEW

Educational injustice

Deserving black leaders are overlooked

Another February has arrived, and another Black History Month has begun.

Books will be read, lectures will be given and filmstrips will be shown. The impenetrable sea of dead white males will be parted briefly to tell the other side of the story.

In some of America's more enlightened school districts, names such as W.E.B. DuBois, Marcus Garvey and Eldridge Cleaver may be mentioned.

But the names of these men will, in all likelihood, be mentioned only in passing, left as historical footnotes — even during the one month they have a chance to take center stage.

Despite changing curricula, Black History Month is used by most public schools as a chance to recount only the familiar tales of Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks and George Washington Carver.

And although these figures have established their places in American history and folklore, countless other black Americans remain marginalized in the classroom.

Whether these educational omissions are the result of tradition, ignorance or deliberate removal, the result is the same: America's children are hearing only a sliver of the story.

Even in Nebraska, the birthplace of Malcolm X, agonizingly brief lip service is paid to civil rights movements that weren't linked to King's leadership.

In the last few years, expanded multicultural curricula was implemented throughout America's schools. The intent was not only to inform children about historical events, but also to increase tolerance and bring an end to ignorance-fueled racism.

But how can white children be expected to fully appreciate the historical struggles of their black classmates when black history as they know it starts with slavery, jumps to Martin Luther King Jr. and ends as abruptly as it started?

How can black children be expected to develop a sense of themselves when they hear more of the same?

King undoubtedly deserves a place in history lessons, but saying that attention should not be paid to African history and American figures such as Malcolm X, Garvey, Dubois, Huey Newton and Booker T. Washington is, at best, an unjust omission. At worst, it's outright ignorance.

If Black History Month is to be recognized in our public schools, names and events such as these should be a part of the curriculum.

Until they are, America's education system will be shortchanging its children, its ideals and, ultimately, itself.

And that kind of mistake lasts all year long.

Haney's VIEW



DN LETTERS

'Damn the man!'

I am writing in response to Sen. Bruning's letter ("The truth hurts") in the Friday op/ed page. We should all be very pleased with the fact that we have elected officials who tell us how we should feel about legislation; what's more, a representative who takes criticism so well. I hope senators who oppose Sen. Bruning on the floor don't return to their offices to find a note attacking their talent and intelligence.

Last time I checked, senator, the op/ed page was for opinions, and I think that the right to express such an opinion is one of the most basic and fundamental rights we have, even if nobody agrees with it, but I'm not sure — I didn't get into KU, either. I also feel that LB1176 is bad legislation. Let's create real opportunities for all Nebraskans. How about money for trade schools for the employees needed at the Caterpillar plant you just gave another tax break to?

Let's give all Nebraskans a chance at the good life, not just those fortunate enough to attend the university. I am also glad to see how much you have matured since leaving the university. The recent attack on the DN editorial staff was unprofessional and unfounded. In my opinion, with this attack, senator, you have lowered the threshold for honest debate.

Rick Carter
junior
criminal justice

Keeping the faith

There are a couple of comments that I would like to make about Anthony Colman's column, "A cross to bear" (Wednesday). First, slavery was one of the key issues in the Civil War. He is using white plantation owners in the South as a representation of all Christians, so should we judge all doctors by Jack Kevorkian? If you get specific enough, you can always find negative incidents or people in a large enough group.

Using the passage of Ephesians 5:22-24 as a set of guidelines for women is a common occurrence. Most people seem to neglect verses 25-33, which lay down a set of guidelines for men to live by. Men are commanded to love their wives like they love their bodies, and women are commanded to respect their husbands.

Christianity is a relationship, not a religion. When Christians enter into a love relationship with the almighty God of the universe, they aren't transformed instantly into a person who cannot sin. Accepting Christ into a person's life gives him or her the ability to resist sin, but it doesn't remove the possibility for Christians to sin.

Finally, if Colman doesn't want Christianity around, then I would ask him to consider the former Soviet Union, where religion was outlawed under the communist party. The countries that made up the former Soviet Union have a longer history than we have. It

took less than a century to bring them to the brink of economic ruin. Our country is a little over 200 years old. How long do you think it would take us to collapse without God?

Matthew Menke
senior
agricultural engineering

Say you won't be there

I am writing in response to Malcolm Kass's article on Friday, "The beautiful people."

I think the greatest thing the Spice Girls (the name you obviously come up with when "British Escort Service Rejects" has already been used) can add to pop culture is their limited edition of adult video tapes when the high-flying retro-disco scene goes down harder than Monica Lewinsky at a presidential library grand opening, and Baby, Posh, Scary, Sporty and Slutty run out of the free-flowing money they desperately need to support their hidden methamphetamine addictions.

Until then, what I, what, what I really, really, really want is to quit reading them in the paper when there are so many other more relevant issues going on in the world.

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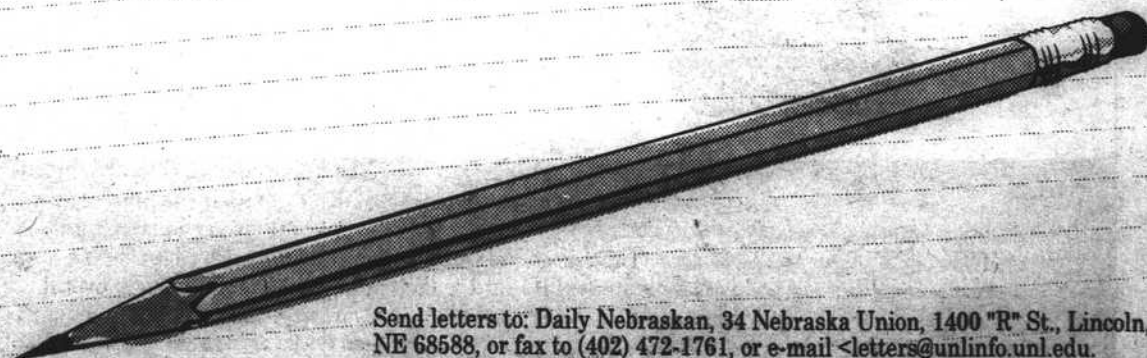
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