

# OPINION PACKAGES

## Our VIEW

### Forgotten but not gone *Religious hate crimes continue in Midwest*

Is religious tolerance not a priority anymore?

While many high-profile hate crimes command top political and media attention, anti-Semitism continues to breed almost unnoticed in this state and nation.

As a daily newspaper, we often get propaganda in the form of letters, e-mail and advertisements espousing hatred toward Jews.

The offensive material sees our trash cans, not our printed pages.

We fear, because hateful material from anti-Semitic groups is not printed for public discussion, some non-Jewish people could believe such groups no longer exist or that they no longer conduct orchestrated anti-Semitic campaigns.

It could seem that other acts of discrimination are far more pertinent and, therefore, warrant more action and attention.

Such acts include the Sigma Chi Fraternity cross burning in January 1997 and the discovery of improperly handled American Indian remains, both of which focused attention on racial and cultural diversity issues.

They include charges of sexual harassment on campus, which focused attention on gender discrimination, and the recent murder of Matthew Shepard, which has drawn an intense national reaction to hate crimes against gays.

In each case, victims' representatives used a high-profile case as a political stump on which to stand and actively demand the public notice a widespread, often overlooked problem.

Though no recent, high-profile case of anti-Semitism has surfaced, anti-Semitic groups demand no less of our attention. They continue to attack Jewish communities and to send anonymous anti-Semitic letters, including one eight-page monstrosity we received this week.

The letters often deny the Holocaust occurred and include white supremacist language.

But the most recent one blamed Jews for communism and the feminist movement.

It even proposed that Jewish people are breeding to take over the world.

It couldn't sound more ridiculous, yet some Midwesterners must believe it. The evidence of this insane belief lies in two separate hate crimes that occurred in July.

In Council Bluffs, Iowa, a synagogue was desecrated by vandals who wrote "burn Jew burn" inside, stole religious articles and scratched a swastika into woodwork.

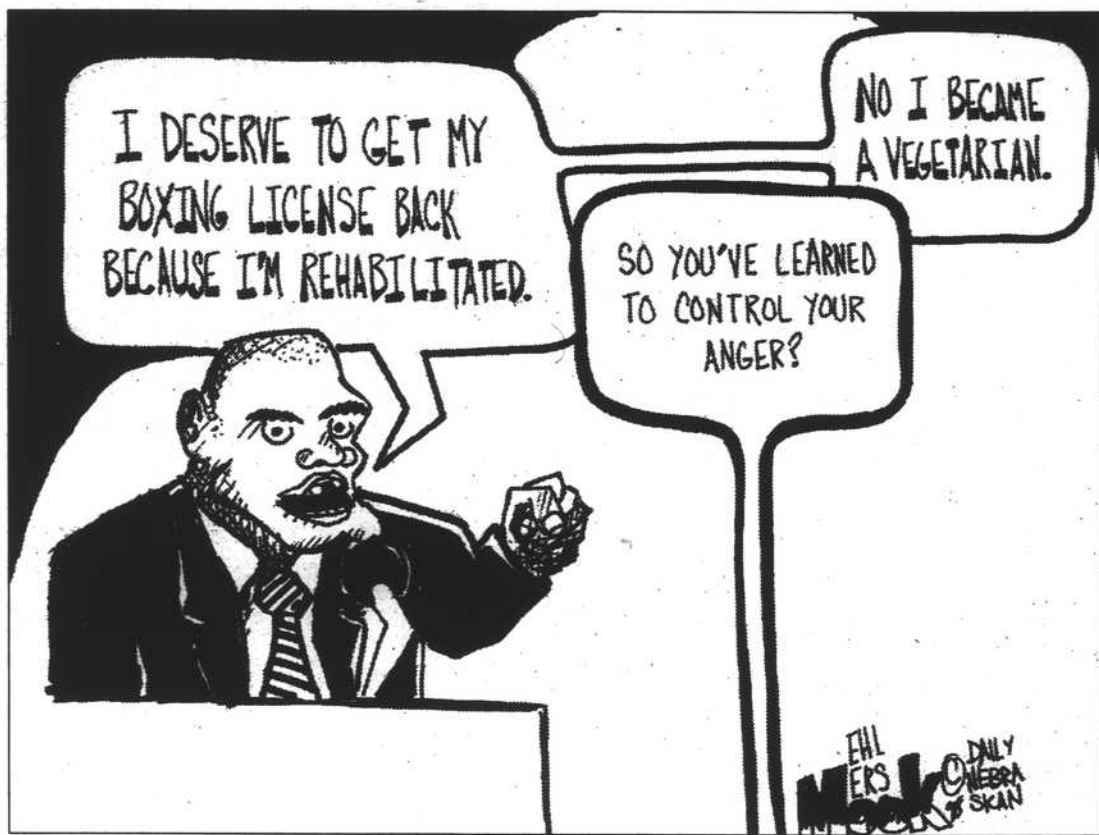
In Papillion, vandals painted the words "Jew die" and swastikas onto the sides of buildings.

It's disgusting. All of it – the synagogue desecration, the hateful graffiti, the letters and the e-mails.

And such acts are certainly deserving of a public outcry, just like the Sigma Chi cross burning or the mishandling of American Indian remains. But an outcry is lacking.

When we advocate tolerance, civility and diversity, we must include everyone.

## Mook's VIEW



## DN LETTERS

### No room for hate

The nation has been shocked by the terrible torture and murder of a gay student at the University of Wyoming, apparently because of his sexual orientation. All Americans should rise to condemn such acts and the hate that lies behind them.

On our own campus, we too have seen incidents reflecting intolerance and hate, and this is a time to reaffirm our commitment to a community that values the dignity of all people, regardless of gender, age, disability, race, color, religion, marital status, veteran status, national or ethnic origin or sexual orientation. We recognize the need to help educate others during National Gay and Lesbian History Month.

Perhaps activities such as the Gay and Lesbian Film Festival beginning Oct. 22 at the Mary Riepma Ross Film Theater can help in the education process. The premiere of "The Brandon Teena Story" – a documentary about a Nebraska woman who was murdered because of her sexual identity and orientation – shows us that intolerance, lack of respect, and raw hatred is a fatal problem in our own state.

This is a time for all of us who are committed to these values to speak up. Respect can, indeed, be stronger than

hate, but only if people who refuse to hate come forward to express their commitment to higher values.

Chancellor James Moeser  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

### Remembrance

I was glad to see Matthew Eickman's column on the atrocity that happened in Wyoming. As he said, it took the death of an innocent person to bring to our attention to an issue forced into the shadows. Yet sadly, that magnitude of event is usually what we require before we take action. We've become complacent and reactionary.

Discussing sex is never an easy task, and discussing sexual orientation is even more of a social taboo. But we have a moral obligation to honor all the Matthew Shepards who have left us far too soon because of the summary judgment of myopic and ignorant people. It is time to begin paying the price for redemption and embrace our differences, so Matthew's death was not in vain.

He is honored with green and yellow ribbons, but let's honor him too by eliminating the ignorance surrounding sexual preference through open and constructive dialogues. It's time to stop talking about what WE know and think, and really listen to the other opinions and ideas. That shared under-

standing, is the best way to remember Matthew Shepard.

Scott Brauer  
senior  
biological sciences/pre-medicine

### Time to take a stand

I am a 40-year-old married father of two young children. I am an Internet Web master and content provider and would like to make some suggestions to those UNL students who feel they want to take a stand against such hatred.

I wrote an e-mail to the upstream Internet service provider of www.god-hatesfags.com, a Web site owned by the Rev. Fred Phelps of Topeka, Kan., and expressed my views and concerns.

I am a Christian man with a very different view of the Higher Power than Mr. Fred Phelps. His direct ISP 1STAMENDMENT.NET did not want to do anything. I voiced my concerns to this ISP's upstream provider, and they have blocked traffic to that site.

These are the type of stands we need to take. Action against hate requires research. There are ways to put an end to the proliferation of Internet hate groups. If we don't, who will?

Rex Mueller  
Omaha



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