

# OPINION PACKETS

## Our VIEW

### Time to say goodbye

*Peru State is a waste of taxpayers' dollars*

The Legislature should close Peru State College's doors for good.

A debate that has raged for more than a year must now be brought to a close with the release of a report on whether to remodel or move the college.

The Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education heard from consultants Thursday who estimated it would cost more than \$100 million to move the college to Nebraska City, which some special interest groups have proposed.

Another presentation informed commissioners that it would cost about \$27 million to renovate the current dilapidated campus in Peru, which is in desperate need of modernization.

Nebraska taxpayers cannot be asked to pay such exorbitant amounts for a school that is worth increasingly less.

Though the costs would be spread out over time, to illustrate how ridiculous it would be to ask taxpayers to foot the bill, consider these figures based on this year's enrollment figure of about 1,800: To move the school, the state would be paying roughly \$56,000 per student. To renovate the existing campus, the state would be paying about \$15,000 per student.

All this for a campus that is failing to meet the needs of its region. Figures from a Coordinating Commission report show that more students from the six-county area the state college serves attend Southeast Community College and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln than attend Peru State.

Statistics show the school is failing academically as well. Compared to its peer institutions that graduate one-third of their students in five years, Peru graduates only one-fifth. About half of Peru's freshmen drop out before their sophomore years.

The town of Peru - lacking in even the most basic services - offers little to students.

Nebraska City, on the other hand, says it would be a good new home for Nebraska's oldest college.

But supporters of the move must realize a college cannot be looked at through the eyes of a financial planner - it is not an economic boon nor a diploma mill - it is an institution of higher education for the good of all Nebraskans.

Students looking for a small-school atmosphere can find it in the other state colleges or community colleges near Peru.

Though alumni, students and faculty members will no doubt mourn the closing of their college, they must realize that taxpayers cannot continue to throw money at a failing school.

Having honorably served Nebraska since 1867, Peru State has simply become redundant and must close.

## Mook's VIEW



## DN LETTERS

### Religious reprimands

Over the last five years, I have read numerous letters in the DN dealing with homosexuality and the Christian. In these five years, I have been frustrated at the misunderstandings many people have of the Christian faith, both in regards to this issue, and in general.

There are many conflicting opinions of what a Christian is, so I feel I need to start by explaining briefly what I mean by Christian. To make it clearer, I will use the term "follower of Christ" instead of "Christian."

Followers of Christ are people who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, believe the Bible to be the word of God and therefore strive to understand and follow it. What is crucial to understand is that followers of Christ do not make their own rules. We believe that God has spoken the truth in his Word (the Bible). To ask followers of Christ to believe something that is contrary to the Bible is asking them to deny what they believe is the truth of God. This is a key to understanding our position on many issues.

One of the issues addressed in the Bible is homosexuality. I won't bore you by quoting verses, but the Bible does condemn the homosexual act. So, whether or not we followers of Christ like it, we believe that engaging in homosexual activity is wrong. The same is true of many other issues - stealing, cheating, getting drunk, adultery or pre-marital sex. I want to stress that with all of these, it is to a large extent the act that is wrong, not the tendency or the urge.

It's not as if God has singled out a small group of people and said "I think I'll pick on the gays." In fact, He hasn't singled out anyone - we have all engaged in wrong activity. I have lied, cheated, used and belittled others and done many other wrong things. In God's eyes, I am no better or no worse than someone who gets drunk, commits adultery or engages in homosexuality. We have all done wrong in God's eyes.

But this is not the end of the story. God does not hate gays. In the same way, He does not hate drunkards, adulterers, liars, cheaters, thieves or anyone. We have all acted contrary to God's Word, but He doesn't hate us for

it - He hates what we have done. God is a God of love. He loves all humans and wants us all to know and follow Him, because He knows what is best for us.

This is where the idea of salvation and accepting Christ as Lord and Savior comes into play. We who have become followers of Christ have admitted that we have acted contrary to God's Word, decided that we will, with God's strength, follow His ways, not ours, even when it means we have to stop doing things that we really want to do. We have decided it is worth having a relationship with God. We don't always understand why we can't do certain things, or must do others, much like the relationship with a child and parent.

Because followers of Christ recognize that we have acted contrary to God's Word as much as anyone else, and because we recognize that God loves us anyway, we do not (should not) hate anyone, including gays. Unfortunately, there are many who "in the name of Christ" condemn and commit hateful acts toward gays. They are acting contrary to God's Word - they do not understand God's love. God's love is available to anybody who seeks to know Him and follow His truth.

In summary, we followers of Christ do not hate gays, but we also cannot accept the behavior as appropriate. I don't expect everyone who reads this to agree with my viewpoint, but my hope is that you will understand it.

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graduate student  
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### Hate's home

I, too, saw "The Brandon Teena Story," and at first was a little concerned that broad, generalizing criticism of Nebraskans might detract from the power of the story - that Teena Brandon was brutally murdered because of ignorance and fear, qualities which are not inherently "Nebraskan."

It was that shot near the beginning, with the car's hazard lights flashing on the "Nebraska...The Good Life" road sign.

But my fears proved to be unfound-

ed, and as the story unraveled, I became so focused on the compelling voices of the people involved that I wasn't stuck thinking of them as "Nebraskans." I thought that many voices were given a lot of play - of course the most notably absent voice (aside from some writings and the recorded interrogation) was that of Teena Brandon.

To assume that because this vicious, hateful turn of events (the beating, rape and murders) happened in Nebraska, all Nebraskans are vicious and hateful is not a "natural" response to this film; that would be similar to assuming that because Teena Brandon wrote bad checks, all transgendered people are criminals.

Of course, all Nebraskans aren't homophobic murderers. But this crime did happen here, and that should make us uncomfortable as residents of this state and citizens of this planet. And frankly, the purpose of the film was not to give a "balanced" view of Nebraskans; it was to tell one very specific story.

I thought that one of the most compelling parts of the film was when people talked about how they just wanted Teena Brandon to leave town, to go away, to disappear, basically. Later in the film, people spoke of John Lotter in similar terms, wondering why he kept coming back to Falls City, wondering why he didn't just stay away. Moments like that made this story particularly disturbing.

In all this talk of Nebraskans, shouldn't we remember that Teena Brandon was a Nebraskan, too?

If the film makes us uncomfortable, we need to feel that discomfort, to make it productive, not just try to shove it back inside, to make it disappear. When the discomfort fades, we can forget about what happened, forget that we might be complacent not strictly as Nebraskans, but as people who live in the world together. When the discomfort disappears, we can forget that what happened to Teena Brandon was inhuman. When the discomfort disappears, we can forget Teena Brandon.

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