

Daily Nebraskan

Since 1901

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Shame on us ACLU to continue fight against 416 in court

With its vague language, intolerance for diversity and support for discrimination, it wasn't hard to imagine Initiative 416 being taken to court.

It was just a matter of who would do it first.

Saturday morning, the American Civil Liberties Union Nebraska unanimously voted to lead the crusade to end the absurdity of Initiative 416.

Flat out, in the plainest of language, Initiative 416 is not fair, and it sickens Nebraskans wishing to live in a progressive state where tolerance is encouraged.

The initiative, if enacted, will deny gays and lesbians the same constitutional protection that heterosexual people have.

How can anyone think that this is OK?

Flat out, in the plainest of language, Initiative 416 is not fair, and it sickens Nebraskans wishing to live in a progressive state where tolerance is encouraged.

How did 70 percent of Nebraskans vote for this measure?

The answer is simple: People let ambiguous influences, values and tradition among others, cloud their minds.

Fifty to 60 years ago, most Nebraskans probably would have voted for an amendment depriving blacks of equal rights of whites.

Why? Because it was tradition. What other reason could there be?

A level-headed person would not deprive a certain sect of people rights just because of the color of their skin.

In the same way, people are clouded by a tradition of discriminating against gays and lesbians.

In half a century, hopefully less, the ancestors of those who voted for Initiative 416 will hang their heads in disappointment, just as we cringe at the thought of segregation.

Regardless of the reasons why 416 passed, it should never take effect in the state, and we commend the ACLU for fighting for the civil rights of all Nebraskans, regardless of any physical, mental or sexual attribute.

The use of the amendment's broad language, similar to that of the abortion amendment that was shot down by the Supreme Court last spring, will be the death of 416.

The term "domestic partnership" has been already used in-state statute relating to a father and son owning a farm together. It's that type of ambiguity that cannot be tolerated by a court.

Call us idealists, but we are confident justice will prevail in court, where judges won't be clouded by tradition.

But then again, we thought Nebraskans were smart, compassionate and supportive of justice and equality.

They proved us wrong.

We truly hope that the courts will produce a result based on equality and tolerance.

At any rate, the ACLU is showing that it is an organization that will stand up for all Nebraskans.

We should all support that.

Editorial Board

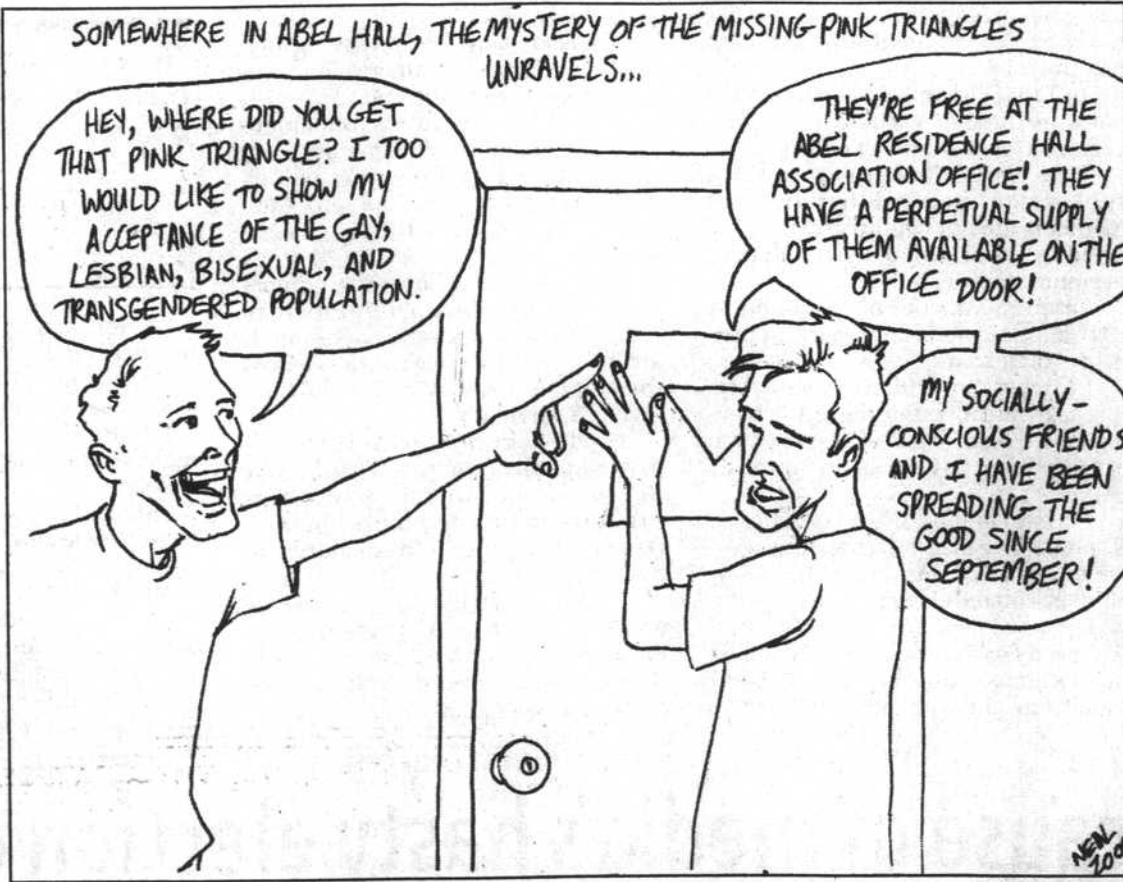
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Neal Obermeyer/DN

Letters to the editor

Worthwhile Web

The new design of the UNL Homepage is a big improvement over the plain old red wrapper. The university is attempting to be informative about the variety of activities happening from day to day on our campus.

While some people may have little patience for the few seconds extra the new format requires for loading, perhaps they need to be better educated to the many offerings which are available to them. In their rush to condemn, they are missing out on the true richness a university brings to the community.

Personally, I find the new page mature and helpful; anticipating it along with my NY Times e-headlines and a good start to my day. Robert Crisler has done a fine job and should be commended.

Mo Neal
associate professor
art & art history

No more finger-pointing

I was greatly disappointed to read that the head

of the Services for Students with Disabilities office seems to want to place some blame on the volunteers for the disappointment of those students her department is supposed to be assisting.

As a volunteer, I found that the staff was far less reliable in getting the needed materials ready for me to pick up than I was in getting the task completed and returned before the school term began.

I had a span of about five days to read five chapters of a text onto audio tape, but got it done so as not to hinder the student's ability to keep up in his course.

I urged the department to contact me if I could be of further assistance and did not hear another word from them. If Ms. Thompson and her staff won't take advantage of such offers, why will they place any blame on the volunteers?

People need to stop pointing fingers. It is Ms. Thompson's responsibility to operate things smoothly, and for the sake of those students that depend on the department's services, I hope things get resolved immediately.

Alisha Hardee
pre-radiology
senior

A conversation with God

"When a certain shameless fellow mockingly asked a pious old man what God had done before the creation of the world, the latter aptly countered that he had been building hell for the curious."
— Calvin, Institutes

Setting: The philosophy section of a library near closing time. A young scholar sits at a table thumbing through the pages of *Cosmopolitan*.

Scene 1: God enters stage left in a flash of blinding light.

GOD: Rejoice my child! I am the Lord thy God. The Day of Judgment nears! Repent, and heaven shall be thine.

JAY: Yeah. You know, I'm really not into that right now.

GOD: What impertinence! Blasphemy! I am thy Lord and Savior. I have come to absolve thee of thy sins; one must only profess thy faith and the Rapture shall begin.

JAY: I guess, whatever. I really don't think I believe in you anymore.

GOD: But thou art speaking to me!

JAY: True. But I could just as well be dreaming, having an acid flashback or suffering from an organic brain disorder. Besides, I don't think it's rational to believe in God.

GOD: Rational! My pious servant, St. Thomas Aquinas, once said "If the only way open to us for the knowledge of God was solely that of reason, the human race would remain in the blackest shadows of ignorance."

JAY: Yes, but Locke believed in you too, and he said, "I find that every sect, as far as reason will help them, make use of it gladly, and where it fails them, they cry out, 'It is a matter of faith, and above reason.'" And wasn't it Hume who said "A wise man, therefore, proportions his belief to the evidence?"

GOD: Hume! That darn atheist! Look what his little triumph got him: a special place in Hell.

JAY: You sound different.

GOD: What do you mean?

JAY: Well, you were talking all "Thee" and "Thou" and shit; now you sound like a normal guy.

GOD: Oh, right. That's mostly just to impress people; I get tired of being so formal all the time.

JAY: Anyway, the library's closing, and I really should be going.

GOD: Wait! There is still time to save your soul. All you have to do is believe. Have I not always been there for you? Remember that time in seventh grade when you wanted to ask Michelle Wolford to your first middle-school dance? You were so nervous! But you prayed that she'd say "yes," and I delivered.

JAY: Yeah, that was pretty cool. If all life were like seventh grade. ... But hey, where the hell were



Jeremy Patrick

you a few months later when she ditched me to go to Mark Anderson's birthday party? I was crushed! And ever since, I stopped praying, pretty much the same number of good and bad things have happened. I think it's really all based on chance.

GOD: My son, sincere prayer is a sign of love and obedience.

JAY: So it's really just to pump up your ego? That sounds silly. I think it was Kant who said that prayer "is nothing more than a wish directed to a Being who needs no such information regarding the inner disposition of the wisher; therefore nothing is accomplished by it."

GOD: Yes, but that good philosopher argued convincingly that my existence was necessary for the existence of morality.

JAY: Only for an almost ridiculously rigid morality which nobody ever follows. Besides, you have to admit that there's plenty of evil-acting theists and plenty of good-natured disbelievers.

GOD: Perhaps.

JAY: And his belief that the existence of morality was an inarguable fact was simply wishful thinking built upon metaphysical clap-trap. Or, as Nietzsche might have said, "There are no moral phenomena at all, only moral interpretations of phenomena."

GOD: You misunderstand Kant; he believed that the existence of morality was a necessary prerequisite to the existence of freedom. Besides, if you don't believe in God or immortality, what's the purpose of life?

JAY: I really don't know. I think before we try to figure out what the meaning of life is, we should find out whether there is a meaning to life.

GOD: That's nothing more than nihilist rhetoric. You're going to end up like your hero Nietzsche, insane and dead.

JAY: I'm really a fan of Sartre myself, but that's beside the point. Kant's belief in morality as necessary for freedom is a contradiction; for if eternal, universal morality exists, man is reduced to a mere automaton, always following the dictates of something he has no control over.

GOD: The same is true of your materialism, except it's the dictates of your much vaunted "laws of science." As Kierkegaard said, "The fatalist is in despair — he has lost God, and therefore himself as well; for if he has no God, neither has he a self."

JAY: I'm not sure what he means by "self." But I do know that if freedom really does exist, it means that I am free to define myself as I wish and decide upon my own reasons for being. If, that is, I decide I even need a reason for being.

GOD: I can see that there is no hope for you. With over 95 percent of your fellows believing in me, you're sure going to be lonely in Hell.

JAY: I don't think so. As Sartre said, "Hell is other people."

God departs stage right in another flash of light. The young scholar closes his *Cosmopolitan* and picks up the newest issue of *Harper's Bazaar*.

The song that simply derails you

"Bartender, line 'em up. Two tequila shots, right here," I slap my open palm on the bar.

Bartender looks at me, five-o'clock shadow framing his bewildered face.

He knows my sister — she introduced me to him about 10 minutes ago — already I've forgotten his name. It could be Matt.

I look for her now, but can't seem to find her. In the last hour, she has amazed me by showing me what she has been doing all of this time instead of going to her classes. At only 23, she is the monarch of all social butterflies and seems to know everyone everywhere.

At one point, one of my friends says, "I just want a cup of coffee." I laugh cynically, "HA! You're funny." But my sister says, "wait," and flies off. She returns mug of coffee in hand complete with cream and sugar.

Someone calls her name from the back of the bar, she flies off. This can't be happening. Bartender lines up my shots.

"You've been sipping your Amaretto Sour for the last half an hour, now you want these? What's up?" I point to the jukebox, "Someone freakin' went and played this song, that's why."

Only seconds ago, I had been sipping my drink and talking leisurely with my friend about how it is vital for every single person to have just one full course meal they can cook well. This is so that when you finally have your first date over for dinner, you can cook this and show 'em you've got style. Of course, if things don't work out then in the end, they never find out the truth. You can't cook.

And if pigs ever do fly and things go further, you can both go out to eat every weekend while you secretly take your cooking class at night, and at the end of the course, suddenly you can say, "Let me cook you another one of my great meals."

My friend wholeheartedly agrees with me on this one, only as we begin to compare the foods we can cook, I am once again saddened to find that in comparison to my measly three main course meals, he's got, like, 10. And as I am pondering why I never learned to cook in the first place, it happens.

One single note from an electric guitar sings out over the noise, cuts through massive clouds of smoke and torpedoes straight to my heart. That one note was like a switchblade snapping open. It was now going to pick at the edges of my barely scabbled over heart. Let the carving begin.

And I am as perplexed as the dead fly that got stuck on the tape hanging from the ceiling.

I've only heard this song once before, and it was many months ago.

And here is the really sick part of it all. When I heard it, I hated it. The only reason it matters is because the person who played it for me was someone I was falling in love with. Someone I fell in love with hard. Hence, two tequila's. "Downtown Train," by Tom Waits carries my dead heart with it as it winds around the bar and wraps me up in memories that can only suck.

I commence to curse Tom Waits' voice the entire time he sings. And when the song is over, I know that tomorrow I will break down and head for Best Buy to get this CD, and I will now love this song more than anything.

"Go to Hell Tom Waits," I yell.

My friend looks at me.

"You don't really care for this song do you?"

"I freakin' love it. Bartender, line 'em up."



Yasmin McEwen

And I am as perplexed as the dead fly that got stuck on the tape hanging from the ceiling. I've only heard this song once before and it was many months ago.

write back.

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