

Letters to the Editor

Elkins: 'cross to bear'

Dear Sir:

In regard to the publication of the story of Bob Elkins, it is almost so elementary as to be overlooked that The Cavalier Daily could not have printed the article had the University administration first not singled him out for a special and perhaps unprecedented investigation. Newspapers don't make martyrs; governments and societies do. If Bob Elkins has been subject to unfair embarrassment and harassment and has suffered tremendously for doing no wrong, it is only because he is a minority in a society and a University with a bad history of tolerating minorities. It is indeed tragic that individual blacks, women, Jews, Catholics and now, homosexuals, must carry the burden of their entire groups on their backs when they simply try to live normal human lives. But it is not the fault of a free and active press.

If a newspaper sheds light upon a cross erected by a society, it is unfortunate that the light must also illuminate the features of the individual pinned to it. But if we are ever to knock these crosses down, we must be able to see them, and the polite coverage of tea (or Lawn) parties just won't do it. It is true that a story about a homosexual resident advisor is what is called a "sexy" story in the journalism trade, but more important it is a story of an oppressed minority. And removing a community's discrimination, I hold, is in the community's "best interest."

Debbie Galant
Coll. IV

Committee reacts

(The following is the text of a letter originally sent to University President Frank L. Hereford Jr. and Vice President for Student Affairs Ernest H. Ern-Ed.)

As a group involved in the University community over the past five years, we would like to voice our concern about Robert Elkins, a member of our organization and resident advisor in Hancock dormitory.

Mr. Elkins has been an effective, reliable member of our committee and has consistently demonstrated unbiased and responsible attitudes in dealing with sensitive issues. In his work with the Counselors Committee on Human Sexuality, Mr. Elkins has proven his ability to foster open and rational dialogue concerning human sexuality.

The Counselor Committee on Human Sexuality has since its inception attempted to provide the University community with a forum for the rational discussion and analysis of issues in the area of human sexuality. We have sought to aid students in developing objective attitudes toward sexuality by providing clinical, educational and counseling services. In its educational efforts, the Counselors Committee has not found it necessary to refer to or impose upon others our individual philosophies or behavior.

Consistent with this perspective, the Counselors Committee on Human Sexuality believes that an individual's personal philosophy does not impede his or her ability to openly participate in a broad range of University activities. We assert that Mr. Elkins' serious and mature attitude toward the University is a vital asset to the Resident Staff program. We therefore submit that there is no justifiable cause to exclude Robert Elkins from any position of responsibility within the University community.

The Counselors Committee
on Human Sexuality

No cultural 'gap'

Dear Sir:

Mr. Sabato must have donned hood and ear plugs as he traversed "that realm, that England." His singular lack of insightfulness is offensive even to those least acquainted with the English. Mr. Sabato must have taken his ear plugs out at the wrong time while watching Young Frankenstein with our cousins across the sea.



The compatibility of American and British humor is unquestionable. One need only note the success of Monty Python on television and film as well as the comedy team Peter Cook and Dudley Moore to see there is no "gap" between us former colonists and our imperialist masters. The fact that American films and television shows literally dominate the entertainment market indicates they must be laughing, crying or throwing up at roughly the same time we Americans do.

During my visit to the Isles, I spent most of my time in London. I found the man in the street to be as avid a sport fan, as prolific a drinker and as crude, friendly, or obnoxious as the guy who lives next door.

My conclusion is that Mr. Sabato's deficiency in cultural analysis is due to his fall down the stairs of the Tower of Pisa. In which case, he might get a good malpractice case against his doctor.

Terence Dunn
Coll. IV

False libertarianism

Dear Sir:

American Civil Liberties Union Legal Director Wolff is quoted in the September 24 edition of The Cavalier Daily as saying that "Thomas Jefferson, a real libertarian, would turn over in his grave" if he knew of the Elkins affair. Indeed he would, but not for Mr. Wolff's reasons. Mr. Jefferson would turn over in his grave to learn that people at the University were seriously regarding homosexuality as an acceptable lifestyle.

He was a member of a commission to revise the laws of Virginia immediately after independence, and one of the commission's proposals was that sodomy be punished by castration.

It is interesting to note that Mr. Jefferson did not believe that bestiality should be punished as a crime because "Bestiality can never make any progress; it cannot therefore be injurious to society in any great degree, which the true measure of criminality in *foro civili*, and will ever be properly and severely punished by universal derision. It may therefore be omitted" from the criminal code.

Mr. Jefferson would see the success of a Gay Student Union as proof that homosexuality, unlike bestiality, can indeed progress and become injurious to society, and that it should therefore be prohibited by law.

Mr. Wolff has become the latest victim of the false syllogism (very common in these parts): "My opinion is enlightened and correct. Mr. Jefferson's opinion (on any subject) is enlightened and correct.

Therefore, Mr. Jefferson agrees with me."

James Guinivan
Grad. A&SII

Hereford criticized

Dear Sir:

The office of President of the University of Virginia is hardly a ceremonial one; it requires of the

man or woman holding it the highest qualities of leadership. University President should be a mature human being, capable of making decisions that promote the best interests of the University rather than his own. He should be a minion of the alumni, not an administrative arm of the Board of Visitors; above all, he should personify Jefferson's intellectual and ethical spirit of liberty and honor.

Some points to consider: did Frank Hereford have a "bestial engagement" preventing him from staying through last spring's School commencement, an event that had been planned for at least a year? Why did Mr. Hereford prefer a dinner engagement at the performance of "Three Men in a Boat" to his invitation to the Student Council's Minority Affairs Open Forum (The Cavalier Daily, Oct. 8, 1975)? Why did Hereford use the name of the University, notorious in the national press for clinging to his membership in a club that maintains racist policies?

The succession of events in the administration seems ever to lead to greater embarrassment. The issue of Bob Elkins' position as Mr. Hereford is handling a certain to hurt the University. Conservatives will be outraged at the fact that Elkins is a resident advisor; liberals will be outraged at the fact of homosexual discrimination. Students wonder who is next. Possibly an administrator or two will be outraged at having to serve in the sort of leader who does not stand behind them. Frank Hereford has dragged this issue into full public light and appointed a committee to keep it there.

I wonder if I am the only one among the many who care deeply for the University who question Frank Hereford's fitness for the office of University President.

Russell Williams
Coll. IV

The Cavalier Daily welcomes Letters to the Editor from any member of the University community. Letters must be typed and double spaced with the author's signature and phone number attached to be considered for publication. Because of space limitations, no letter or portion of a letter longer than 350 words will appear in print. The editors of The Cavalier Daily reserve the right to edit any letters submitted for publication. No letters can be returned.

Monday, September 27, 1976