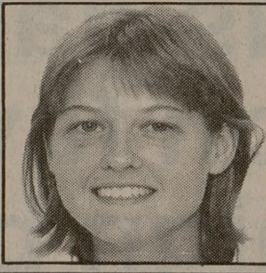


Opinion

Learning from others is a valuable experience

About a year ago, I had to take a course called the Sociology of Minority Groups. It was a fairly easy course, but the final project had me scared, and it was worth about 30 percent of my grade so I couldn't get out of it. I had to interview a Black or Hispanic person over the age of 50 whose income was near the poverty line. I was to ask him or her how racism had affected his or her life and to describe specific instances of racism he or she had encountered. The professor told us a good place to start looking would be on campus after five p.m. He said that minorities come out when the other people have gone home. It's like they are hidden away during the day.



Jill Webb

by strangers. I could just see myself. I'd see someone pushing a broom or something and I'd say, "Hey, I couldn't help noticing that you are black, old and look poor — mind if I ask you some questions?" I was sure that whomever I asked would be insulted. I had 100 reasons why I shouldn't have to do the project. But I knew I had to find someone or take the course over.

Then my roommate introduced me to Lucy, a black, older woman who works here on campus. When I told Lucy what I wanted to do, her face lit up, and she gave me a big hug. Lucy was actually flattered when I said I wanted to interview her. Evidently, no one had ever thought that Lucy had any information.

Lucy's story was remarkable. She spoke somehow without bitterness or anger about events that would harden almost anyone. I struggled to understand her kindness after she had been treated so badly. When she was small

she lived around white children. Whenever something was missing it was always Lucy who was blamed. Because she was black, she was assumed to be a thief. Lucy had rude bus drivers order her to sit in the back when she was old enough to be their mother. Lucy had felt what Martin Luther King Jr. described as the "stinging darts of segregation" sink into her.

The part of the interview that stuck in my mind the most though was when she said she wanted to be a teacher, but she had not finished school. I thought, Lucy, you are a teacher. There are 50 years of history in Lucy, including an amazing account of the civil rights movement. And there are thousands and thousands of Lucys out there. They have so much wisdom to share. But no one ever asks.

The greatest source of teachers that we have are older people. As Ann Landers says, everytime an old person dies it's like a library burned down. And if a

person is a minority, a special perspective is brought in, showing a terrible, tragic, ugly side of this country and humanity. And this same perspective also shows the courage, hope and determination of people.

Part of the reason I did not want to do the interview was because I was scared. Initially, I only talked to Lucy because I had to. I had no idea it would be so serendipitous. I had never known anyone well who was black, much less someone black, older and not middle class. I said I wasn't prejudiced. I would not tolerate racial slurs, and I could argue a good case for affirmative action. I truly believed that Blacks are equal to whites and that they are short-changed on opportunities. But after talking with Lucy I realized that I never thought I could learn anything special from black people. I thought they were just too different from me, especially the ones I was supposed to interview. I had built a wall in my mind made out of those perceived differences. Lucy taught me that

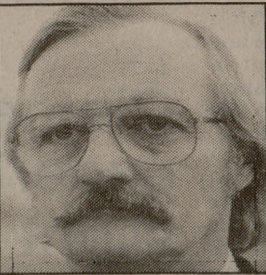
everyone has a story to tell, and we all learn from each other. There is a common human bond that can be learned from books but is transmitted through people — all people.

Lucy is a teacher for those who are willing to give some time and attention to her. And she is eager and grateful for that time and attention. Our society needs to stop hiding minorities and people. We spend a lot of time wondering what to do with them when we ought to be learning from them. We ought to be paying attention and listening to each other. External differences such as age or race can be a barrier if we let them. If we only listened, we could for once quit seeing ourselves as the standard other people must be judged by. If we could appreciate people for what they are, we would discover an infinite amount of experience, strength, hope and wisdom that we have to offer.

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Bentson is bad news for every proud liberal

It could have been worse. Dukakis could have asked Richard Nixon to be his running mate. Lloyd Bentsen isn't that bad, really; I'm told he once took the anti-slavery side in a debate.



Donald Kaul

What am I saying? Of course, Bentsen is that bad.

He has voted for contra aid, the MX missile, the B-1 bomber, school prayer and first elected to the Senate in 1970 by supporting the war in Vietnam. As a young congressman in 1950, he suggested that President Truman end the war in Korea by threatening to use the atomic bomb. He has been against gun control, federal financing of abortion for the poor and taxing the rich. He's never met a loophole he didn't like.

He beat George Bush in that 1970 Senate campaign in Texas by running the right of Mr. Bush. I'm a liberal; I hate him.

He could be a great choice. Alan Baron, the political oracle from Iowa, now of Washington, has a theory that the best choices for vice president are the ones that cause the presidential candidate's strongest supporters the most discomfort. His reasoning is that your strong supporters are going to stay with you no matter whom you pick, it's the people who don't like you much to whom you have to reach out. He points to Jack Kennedy's choice of Lyndon Johnson and Ronald Reagan's of Bush as examples of the art.

If that theory is correct, then the Bentsen pick is a lulu. Of all the Democratic vice-presidential possibilities paraded before the media in the past few weeks — Jesse Jackson, Bill Bradley, Sam Nunn, Lee Hamilton, Dick Gephardt, Tom Foley, Bill Clinton, Bob Graham — Bentsen is the least winsome to the liberal mind.

When push comes to shove, however, Sen. Bentsen's worth as a vice-presidential candidate comes down to his being able to help Dukakis wrest Texas from the Republicans in the fall. You can, as an intellectual exercise, construct a scenario that has Dukakis winning the election without carrying Texas. But, in the real world, no Democrat has done so in this century.

Choosing Bentsen as his running mate doesn't guarantee that Dukakis will carry Texas but it does give him a leg up. Bentsen has the most powerful, smoothest running political machine in the state, which will now be put at the service of the national ticket.

In addition, due to a quirk in the Texas election law contrived to accommodate Lyndon Johnson in 1960, Bentsen can simultaneously run for vice president and for the Senate. That ensures that every Democratic politician of note in the state will work his handshake to the bone to see that Bentsen is elevated to the vice presidency so that his Senate seat goes up for grabs — theirs.

If Bentsen brings in Texas, he was a great choice. If he doesn't, he was an irrelevant one, by yet another failed Democratic nominee.

All of this assumes, of course, that the ransacking of the Bentsen closet that will go on in the next few weeks will produce no hideous skeleton that will cause sensitive voters to recoil in fear and loathing.

As it now stands, the worst thing we know about him is that he soon as he became chairman of the powerful Senate Finance Committee, he tried to shake down favor-seeking lobbyists for \$10,000 campaign contributions to have breakfast with him once a month. He at least had the good grace to be embarrassed when word of the deal got out and he was forced to cancel it.

There are good things about him, from a liberal point of view. After beating Mr. Bush for the Senate he did move to the left a little, coming to oppose the war in Vietnam. He has been a supporter of the Equal Rights Amendment, of such social programs as catastrophic illness protection, bilingual education and day care and he opposed a constitutional amendment to ban abortions. He plays tennis, a more liberal sport than golf.

You see what piteous creatures we liberals have become?

Where once we walked the earth with the stride of giants, challenging our enemies with slogans of the New Deal, the New Frontier and the Great Society, we are now reduced to slinking around the banquet tables of the powerful, begging for crumbs.

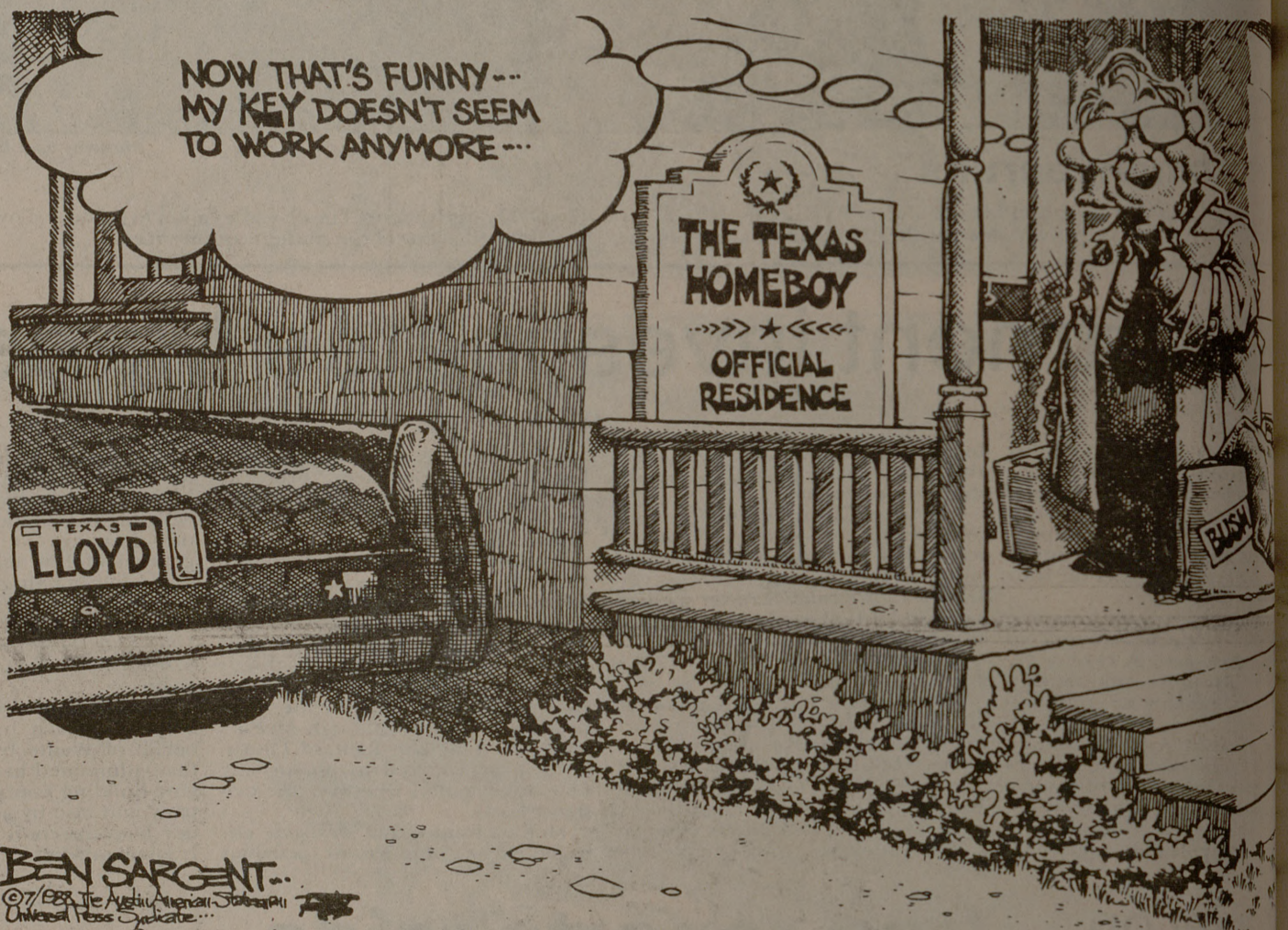
We hope that Dukakis is a closet liberal but we understand that he can't admit it in public, for fear that opponents will accuse him being — horror of horrors! — a McGovern Democrat.

We want him to campaign as a mealy-mouthed moderate, then act like Harry Hopkins when he's president, in the manner of a pirate ship that sails into an encounter under a false flag before running up the Jolly Roger.

And some of us are happy when he picks a man who is essentially a moderate Republican conservative as a running mate.

I liked it better when we ruled the Earth, or thought we did.

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BEN SARGENT
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Mail Call

Thumbs down

EDITOR:

Universal Studios has recently finished a film entitled "The Last Temptation of Christ" which is intended for imminent release. It is due to this that I address the many Christians on campus.

From all the information I have seen, the film is patently blasphemous. Mary declares her son to be "crazy" and Christ is depicted as "struggling over his sins," lust driven, and bedeviled by "nightmares and hallucinations."

The focus of the film is a fictitious, long-standing erotic relationship between Jesus and Mary Magdalene. This includes both a dream sequence in which He engages in sex with Mary while inviting an angel to watch and His declaration that "Woman is God's greatest work. And I worship you. God sleeps between your legs."

Universal Pictures appears to be operating upon the assumption that the controversy over the sacrilegious nature of the film will transform it into a box office bonanza. In no action be taken, they will probably be correct.

It is for this reason that it is incumbent upon Christians to oppose this abomination.

Each of you should request the managers of Plitt Theaters, the local distributors of Universal films, not to show the film. This should be done with kindness but firmly. Make it clear to them that if they show the film, then your patronage will cease for all future films they may ever show. More importantly, mean this. Concurrently, write or call the executives at Universal Studios. Their names and addresses are on file at KAGC radio station in Manor East Mall.

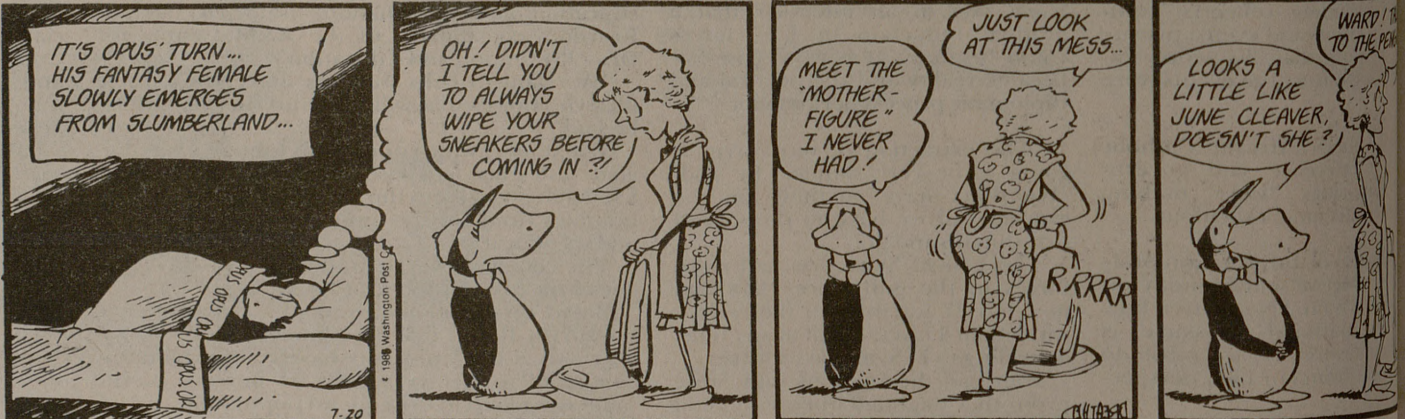
Only a large show opposition, with an explicit link to economic loss for the future, will dissuade Universal Studios from releasing the film.

If Christians are unwilling to make this minimal effort to oppose evil now, how can they hope to oppose it in the future when the effort demanded may be much higher?

Ian Dick '87

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must be signed and must include the classification, address and telephone number of the writer.

BLOOM COUNTY



by Berke Breathed

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(USPS 045 360)

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