

# The Joke's on You

According to Joann Byrd, your ombudsman [March 28], it was both despicable and newsworthy when Fairfax County Republicans, at a roast, made remarks that belittled blacks and exploited stereotypes about gays. And earlier, your paper heeded the roasters, Oliver North and company, into its woodshed for an editorial flogging ["That GOP Roast," March 24].

Yet, before the ink was dry on these moral chastisements, reporter Roxanne Roberts [Style, March 29] wrote about how the Gridiron Club's Helen Thomas "received the night's most-repeated one-liner from Sen. Bob Dole: 'The lovely dress Helen is wearing tonight is from the new J. Edgar Hoover collection.'"

Is your paper applying a double standard? Dole's comment, implying Hoover was a homosexual, is based on lies and suppositions. There is no valid, truthful information from any source to prove Hoover was gay. By citing Dole's joke as a highlight of the evening, Roberts mangled your fake stance about placing great value on "respecting other human beings." What kind of "notoriety defense" do you have to justify repeating that sleazy charge?

In view of your paper's abhorrence of such behavior, there is only one way you can save face. The Gridiron Club hosted the roast but voiced no objections to the scurrilous attack on Hoover. Naturally, your paper will publicly announce that it has severed relations with the Gridiron Club and has forbidden its personnel to participate in the club's future activities.

—Ben Fullon

*The writer is chairman of the Society of Former Special Agents of the FBI Inc.*

Henry Allen in an article on J. Edgar Hoover [Style, March 23] characterizes the recent Anthony Summers book on Hoover as "scandalous." The Random House Dictionary defines "scandalous" as "detainatory or libelous in speech or writing." Having so characterized the source of his information, Allen then repeats the scandalous charges. Thus Allen and your paper meet the same dictionary's definition of a "scandalmonger," i.e., "one who spreads scandal." Whatever Hoover's faults or errors in



policy and judgments, and anyone in public service for more than 50 years has his share of those. Summers and those who echo him have no credible evidence for their allegations with regard to his personal life. It is ridiculous to believe that

Hoover would have so jeopardized his position of power and prestige by allowing himself to be vulnerable to the large number of people now alleged to have witnessed such illicit behavior.

—James E. Nolan Jr.