

Convoy of eight-wheelers stuns hapless mother

I am looking at my daughter's feet. This is not as easy as it sounds.

In order to look at these feet in their natural state—perpetual motion—you have to film them and then freeze one frame on the wall. I am therefore looking at my daughter's feet . . . in passing.

ellen goodman

I don't see any toes, of course. I haven't seen any toes for weeks. What I see are wheels, eight of them to be precise. These days they come attached to every kid I meet, sort of like braces.

There is in my neighborhood an epidemic of wheels. Spring doesn't spring anymore. It skates. Children don't walk anymore, they roll like a caisson or a stone.

Roller skates have sprouted around here in the last few weeks like crocuses.

What I see on the feet of my daughter and her friends are not just, God forbid, skates. I mean skates with keys, skates that come on and off your shoes. These have been un-invented.

My daughter is wearing a medium-priced pair of sneaker skates, which cost more than the first two automobile tires I ever bought (although my car didn't out-

grow its tires every six months). They cost this much because they were created SCIENTIFICALLY!

Here is how they were made. First they took a running shoe, which was designed by a marathon champion engineer, to distribute the impact of the pavement from Hopkinton to Boston perfectly along the length of the foot. Then they screw on a set of wheels so the shoe would never again touch the ground.

It is not entirely clear why skates were made like this, although I haven't yet asked James Fixx. But it is entirely clear why children want them. (If you don't know, you are probably the sort of grown-up who used to polish white bucks.)

These skates have a stopper on the front. This is not to be used to actually stop. (Trust me.) It is to be used to walk up and down the stairs INSIDE the house. The stopper also is useful for walking across carpeting and for sneaking across linoleum quietly when your mother has finally forbidden you to skate inside the house.

("But they are indoor and outdoor skates, mom!" "This is not a skating rink!")

This stopper is crucial because it makes it entirely unnecessary for children to remove their skates for any activity except hair-washing. And this is the point.

The 1980s belong to the eight-wheelers the way the 1950s belonged to the motorcycle gang. "The Mild Ones" are more urban and benign, of course. If they spend their lives tooling through the streets, they only terrify squirrels and pigeons.

But it is possible to search through my community at any time of day and never see a young foot fixed to the ground. It is possible to encounter children who have totally forgotten the wonderful feel of concrete beneath their feet. Some of them only make pit-stops long enough to fill up at the refrigerator.

I know 11-year-olds who barely loosen their laces at bedtime and 12-year-olds competing for the Guinness Book of Records in "longest continuous roller-skate wearing." The Board of Health may have to start cutting their souls free.

Parents are supposed to raise their children to "stand up on their own two feet." And Lord knows we are trying, but it isn't easy.

In a mobile country like ours, childhood goes from baby buggies to gas guzzlers. We raise our children from one set of wheels to another, as if they were stages.

Still, no one warned us that adolescence would turn into a roller derby. Nobody told us that our kids would be out wheeling for eight hours a day without a license.

The bumper sticker on the corner asks me every morning with smug, nosy insistence, "Have you hugged your kid today?"

It is none of the bumper sticker's business. What I want to know is this: How do you hug an eight-wheeled vehicle?

(c) 1980, The Boston Globe Newspaper Company/
Washington Post Writers Group

letters to the editor

Continued from Page 4

In the early 1970's, the NCLU successfully litigated a precedent-setting case involving an individual's rights to distribute political pamphlets on public property in Nebraska. And just last year we assisted a UNL student who was facing disciplinary proceedings for the content of a radio show he produced on his own dormitory station.

Protecting our sometimes all too fragile Bill of Rights is a truly laudatory endeavor. Too often our client, the Bill of Rights, needs all the help it can get.

Dick Kurtenback
Executive Director

Lip service caught

I would like to thank Lloyd Ware and Chick Roach for their contributing effort to improve the education atmosphere at UNL. Once again the university has tried to pay bureaucratic lip service to a real area of need, but this time they have been called on it. The "Toward Excellence II" goals and guidelines look and sound praiseworthy and encouraging on paper, but in actuality are no more than a placating place that insures federal funding for the University in the area of minority recruitment.

Regent Schwartzkopf's reaction to the changes made by Mr. Ware are typical of the attitudes of most of the universities administration. Most of the approximately 55 Native American students on this campus come from reservation backgrounds, and orientation, and shuffling

them off to centennial college, Mr. Schwartzkopf, is not going to solve the problems. Financial, moral, and academic support programs are needed to insure the eventual graduation of these Native American students. And as there have been less than a dozen Native Americans graduating from UNL since 1869, these support programs are an immediate and imperative need.

The "Toward Excellence II" goal and guideline are only one set among many that have gone unfulfilled or largely ignored by the administration and the Board of Regents. These alleged "programs for improvement" serve as a backdrop of support that the Regents can point to when students need to insist that these programs be implemented and that the guidelines be fulfilled. Mr. Ware has set a valuable precedent that should be applauded and supported by all university students, not just minorities, if this on-paper paradise the Regents keep waving at us is ever to be realized.

Jan Salliger
Sophomore, Political Science

International students

I was surprised and shocked to see an utter lack of understanding of Mr. Everett's article shown by Mr. Prentiss in his letter published on April 7.

Mr. Prentiss tries to sell us his own perspective of why international students choose to study at UNL. To sup-

port his argument he cites the case of one of his former roommates who was a Vietnamese student.

Let me remind Mr. Prentiss that in all moral and philosophical aspects, he cannot classify a Vietnamese student as an international student. Vietnamese people are refugees who were forced to seek an asylum in the United States.

These people require the skills and education necessary to survive in the contemporary society and as such they have an essential right to higher education. If UNL accepted Mr. Prentiss' former roommate despite the low English scores, even then praise goes to UNL for the compassion shown.

To all my knowledge, UNL requires a good command of English by the prospective foreign students. Besides having high scores on the standardized exam, "Test of English as a Foreign Language," every new international student has to take an English placement exam given by UNL. Even if very slight deficiencies are found the students are required to take special English courses.

All in all, the absurd and insulting perspective Mr. Prentiss tries to advocate is quite irrelevant to the question: Why do international students choose to study at UNL?

Jehangir Methani
Sophomore, Business

HOUSE of FLOWERS

Welcome them back from spring break with a special on fresh Daisies.

Only 98 cents a bunch.

call 476-2775 226 S. 11th.

EAST OF THE BRANDEIS PARKING LOT



The Weekend at Jesse's

Spencer Ward Quintet
Wed. & Thur.

Valerie Sack & Rick Redunzo
Fri. & Sat.

Cocktail hour
Friday at 4:00

Open at
1 p.m.



UNIVERSITY

P
L
A
S
M
A
C
E
N
T
E
R

Receive \$10.00 for each donation.
This means you can earn up to \$20.00 weekly
or \$80.00 monthly in your spare time!
Plus your initial donation includes a free physical.

Each visit takes only about 90 minutes
and is virtually painless.

Bring your books and catch up on your
reading while you're earning money!

SPECIAL BONUS WITH THIS AD
New Donors Receive an Additional \$2!

You must be eighteen or over to donate.

Federally Licensed
& Regulated

Open 8:30-4:30
Monday-Friday

Saturday morning
8:30-12:30

1442 O St.
475-8645

It Pays To Help!

