

Cartoon celebrity Ralph moving up in real world

By Barbara Lutz

Ralph is alive and well and moving to St. Louis.

Ralph, the cartoon character who was elected UNL homecoming king in 1975, is the brainchild of Ron Wheeler, a 1976 UNL graduate.

For three semesters on the *Daily Nebraskan* editorial page, Ralph, along with his little brother Herbie, his girlfriend Mary Beth and other campus celebrities, expressed the feelings of supposedly typical mid-American college students.

Wheeler, who majored in business administration, is taking Ralph with him to the Ralston Purina Co. in St. Louis, Mo., Jan. 3.

Wheeler is the third person in the last year to be hired for the corporate training program at Purina, he said.

His job will include "creative work" in the advertising, art or public relations departments.

Although he is moving to St. Louis, Ralph may soon be seen in campus newspapers across the country, he said.

Wheeler and UNL student Bruce

McMorris are creating a campaign to sell the Ralph comic strip to 200 campus newspapers. McMorris is the *Daily Nebraskan* assistant advertising manager.

The strip can be adapted for editorial use or advertising with a sponsor, Wheeler said.

The strip would be sold in three packages, he said, for biweekly, weekly or four-time a week papers for a 13-week period.

"It sounds good on paper," Wheeler said, but it isn't a career.

While at UNL, Ralph was seen on T-shirts and in advertisements as well as comic strips.

Last summer, Wheeler did freelance work but channeled most of his efforts into looking for a job. The job search made "good food for the comic strip," he said.

He is not concerned with dollars and cents, but with the quality of his artwork and "some fun on the side," he added.

Ralph has a lawyer but has never been syndicated by a national firm. However, Wheeler said he has more control without syndication.

A syndicate is very money-oriented, he said, and less concerned with development.



Photo by Kevin Higley

Former *Daily Nebraskan* cartoonist and recent UNL graduate Ron Wheeler, right, is pictured with a mock-up of Ralph, a cartoon character that made Wheeler known to many students.

Duve says UNL is leader in solving parking problems

By Mike Patten

Persons in the parking coordinator business are few and far between, according to John Duve, UNL Campus Police parking coordinator.

Because of the few people in the business, Duve said they need to have workshops to provide new ideas to solve parking problems.

He recently attended one such workshop in Bloomington, Minn.

"It doesn't help me much to go out and talk to somebody on the street about parking problems," he said.

Duve said UNL's parking program is "very advanced," but he did get some ideas from the workshop.

UNL has ideas

"Most of the institutions that are at these conferences are gaining ideas from us," he said.

Duve said there are a number of things about the UNL parking situation that make it better than most schools.

He said UNL handles its football game parking better than most schools, and even better than professional football teams.

The collection method for parking fines at UNL isn't used in many other places, he said. Most schools use academic holds to get their parking fines paid.

"I think many universities realize that there may be some legal limitations in holding a student's grades when they have indeed paid for the academic services," he said.

\$50,000 saved

In eliminating the academic hold, Duve said UNL has saved about \$50,000. He said this is because UNL no longer has to pay several offices to make the system work.

UNL also is ahead of other universities in the way fines are paid, Duve said. At UNL fines must be paid in 30 days.

Duve said this prevents students from discovering at the end of the semester that they have accumulated large amounts of fines.

"We've had people taking out substantial loans just so they can pay the fines and attend the next semester of school," he said.

UNL also excels in its free-flow parking system, Duve said. In a free-flow parking system, permits are issued to certain area lots, but not to specific parking places.

Parking choices

Duve said this prevents one lot from filling up while a lot next to it remains empty. He said UNL has 6,500 parking places, and more than 10,000 permits issued.

"In most cases we are able to accommodate that many vehicles," he said.

The free-flow system allows an individual choice as to which lot he wants to park in, Duve said.

Another area where UNL excels in its appeals process, he said. At UNL, all appeals are treated alike. He said some universities had one process for faculty, another for students and something else for staff.

UNL's rhino boot policy is different than that of most schools, he said. Other schools have it, but don't use it like UNL does, he added.

Duve said the rhino boots are paid for by the persons who find them on their car. A \$5 fine is charged to have the boots removed. Duve said other schools simply add a surcharge to the price of a parking permit to pay for the boots.

At UNL, the initial parking fine is half of what it is elsewhere. If this fine isn't paid within 5 days it doubles, Duve said.

"Those individuals that are willing to come in and pay their tickets at the \$5 rate (\$10 after five days) and save us the additional cost of processing reminders and tracing those vehicles down, should be given a discount," he said.

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