



Photo by Ted Kirk

# We're not better Just older— Not elderly wise

"... can you imagine us years from today  
sharing a park bench quietly?  
How terribly strange to be 70. ...."

"Bookends" —Paul Simon.

It was during the hot summer of 1965 that Roger Daltry of the Who stuttered out one of the strongest anthems of the decade. The song was "My Generation" and the Who layed it out bluntly: "I hope I do before I get old . . ."

The message mellowed over the years and was recognized for what it was—a quiet fear of aging. Popular music has always mirrored its generation. The Paul Simon trilogy on *The Bookends* LP turned many heads when its quiet reflection—John Prine's simple but effective portrait of old age—isolation and loneliness.

The pop poetics aside—old age is as real and inevitable as death. How we as a generation will react to that reality—we will be in the majority by that time—will be a sad and interesting thing. We who have worshiped youth are going to have to deal with old age.

I have no doubts that few people are crying in their beer at the moment—old age is far enough away that it doesn't really matter much. Sure, it'll be hard watching our parents and relatives age, it's something we adapt to. Sometimes by sending them away to "nursing homes", sometimes just forgetting them.

The economics of old age—many elderly are dirt poor because of a forced retirement—are pathetic. The elderly are made to feel useless. All too many times they don't eat well. Worst of all they are ignored.

Mabel Lee, age 91, who was interviewed for this issue of *Section B* was honestly mystified why people have kept coming to her for interviews. She suggested at one point that people are so amazed at finding an active 91-year-old that they have to do a story on them. For our purposes, her amazing life—hardly her age—was the drawing card.

In retrospect, her comment was very perceptive. Compare the Mabel Lee story with the one next to it. The elderly in Lancaster County. The first question to come to mind is how many more brilliant people—like Mabel Lee—are there? How many have we prematurely shut away?

The problems facing Americans as they get older has always been a quiet controversy. It's bound to explode when the woodstock generation arrives en masse at old age. We had better take care of the elderly's problems now, so tomorrow nobody has to take care of ours.

Michael F. Zangari  
Special Editor

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Philip Zimbardo, a psychologist from Stanford University has just published his research on shyness. Considering his findings that as many as 80 percent of us tend to be shy at one time in our lives, it just might be the most prevalent disease in America. Ray Walden takes a look at the book, and draws some conclusions of his own.

Miss Linda and Romper Room . . . . . Page 4-5

Mary Jo Pitzl tackles the Do-Bees and finds that television pre-school is not all fun and games. Boa constrictors, expletives and animals with potty problems add to the excitement. *Daily Nebraskan* photographer Ted Kirk is allowed to stretch out a bit and comes up with a goodly amount of choice photographs.

Miss Lee . . . . . Page 6

Ellen (A.K.A.—E.K.) Casaccio asks the eternal question, "What can you say about a 91-year-old woman who is independent, honored to the max, and shows no signs of slowing down?" and comes up with the answer, "Not enough."

Lancaster County's Elderly: . . . . . Page 7

There are approximately 43,000 people over 60 years of age in Lancaster County. Jan Lliteras takes a look at some of the problems and what's being done about them. Jim Zietlow, administrator with the Lincoln-Lancaster Commission on Aging comments.

**section b**  
Section B is a magazine supplement to the Daily Nebraskan. Lay-Out Editor is Liz Beard.