

# Editorial

## FarmAid money could put farmers in greener fields

**F**armAid has made history by raising about \$10 million to help the nation's struggling farmers. The 14-hour concert, which drew a crowd of 78,000, helped publicize the plight of American farmers, but musicians cannot change the country's attitude toward the agriculture crisis or the basic facts.

- The average debt load for about 70 percent of Nebraska's farmers is more than \$200,000.
- The nation's agriculture exports have declined by 30 percent since 1981.
- By the end of the decade, the number of farms in Nebraska could decline by 25 to 30 percent.
- The number of farms in Nebraska has decreased by about 50 percent since 1950, from 107,000 to 58,000 today.

Until grain and feed production is cut back at least 20 percent, it is unlikely that farmers will get higher prices, said Bruce Johnson, agricultural economics professor at UNL.

And with the technological advances in farming, even small farmers could get higher yields, year after year.

The solution for the farm crisis then is to cut the number of farms. Only decreased production will raise prices farmers are getting for their products.

Federal price supports have priced American grain out of the world market.

The money from FarmAid should be used to re-educate farmers and train them for other occupations.

FarmAid money also should be used to find alternatives to price supports, such as unionizing of farmers.

Although farmers usually refuse to give up their independence, the possibility of a farm program that promises higher prices could change their attitudes.

Until such a program is developed, farmers whose debts are overtaking their assets should look to other professions.

FarmAid revenue could help farmers locate jobs and prepare for them. The FarmAid money also could be used to support families and help pay off debts while farmers retrained themselves and sought new jobs.

Country singer Willie Nelson pledged some of FarmAid's revenue would go toward the education of farmers to enable them to pursue other professions.

If fans accept Nelson's challenge, they would show their versatility and determination rather than be perceived as helpless victims of the economy and technology.



I HEAR THESE ARE TOUGH TIMES FOR THE SMALL FAMILY FARM.

## We keep coming back for more

**T**wo years ago, I couldn't even spell "non-traditional student." Now I am one. Upon my arrival at good ol' UNL as a graduate student at the ripe old age of 29, I was happy to discover that, not only are older students recognized here, but there is an entire infrastructure designed to deal with the special needs and problems encountered by them.

There have been a couple of articles recently in this Readable and Adept Gazette (catch the acronym) concerning non-traditional students. I appreciate the efforts and the information contained therein was factual, as far as I know. But I thought I'd give a buzzard's-eye view of what the life of a student outside the magical 18 to 24 age bracket is really like.

Being a non-traditional student means sitting side by side with students who weren't born when you started (or finished) school. It means having to explain to students, faculty, staff and any joker who wanders onto campus that you don't teach in *any* department. It means learning from professors your age or younger. It means reorienting yourself to a world where everything is new, everything is possible, and nothing is too distant or too complicated for you to conquer. To re-enter the educational game late in life is to seek to recapture a viewpoint long

ago repressed — the idea that knowledge is there for the taking. You can teach an old dog new tricks, and you are just the old dog to prove it.



James Sennett

Perhaps the most frustrating aspects of this special status is the balance of life on campus with life off campus (yes, Virginia, there is a world south of R street). Being a non-traditional student means that the world does not stop just because you have a paper due tomorrow. Grass does not check your test dates to see how fast it should grow. Bosses and elementary school teachers do not consult your class schedule before posting work hours of planning spring plays. Going back to school involves a radical rethinking and reshaping of values and priorities.

But here is one of the great assets of the non-traditional status. No current structure of emphasis in life deserves canonization. It behooves us all to undergo periodical exercises that force us to examine carefully the priorities to which we have dedicated ourselves. Nothing will do this for you like jump-

starting your educational experience.

Of course, there are those who would say I am not a true representative of the non-traditional class. I did not return to school after a long hiatus. Except for a three-year breather after completing my master's, I have been in school since the fall of 1961 (Kennedy was president, no one had heard of the Beatles, and only Hollywood stars had hot tubs). I am of a more sinister breed — they call us "perennial students."

We are the ones who keep coming back for more. They shove degree after degree at us, and we still discover an area in which we are deficient. No dark corner of ignorance can go unlighted. No cobweb of unchallenged psyche can go unswept. We major in "undeclared" — "I don't care what it is; just teach me anything!"

To the 18-year-old freshman struggling with four different "Intro to ..." classes at the same time, such a scenario sounds disgusting. But let me warn you — to the open mind, learning is addictive. Once you catch the fever, you will search everywhere for the streams of information to cool your burning brow. So, tread carefully within the garden of knowledge; you could be there a long, long time.

Sennett is a UNL graduate student in philosophy and campus minister of the College-Career Christian Fellowship.

## Royko 'apologizes' to judge for 'errors'

**O**h, boy, I really did it, and am I embarrassed. I've been criticized by the chief justice of the Nebraska Supreme Court for being inaccurate and loose with the facts when I criticized that court for its decision on a murder case.

He says it's obvious that I had not even read the court's decision before I ridiculed its decision to reverse the death penalty for a creep who murdered a woman to fulfill a sex fantasy. And to heighten my embarrassment, Chief Justice Norman Krivosha said all this in a speech to journalism students at the University of Nebraska. My, what must these aspiring journalists now think of me?

So I have no choice but to admit my guilt and apologize to the chief justice for my errors.

He's right. I did not read the court's opinion on the case. I based my column on lengthy news accounts in the Nebraska press.

Based on the news accounts, I thought the decision by the Supreme Court to spare the life of Robert Hunt Jr. was pretty dumb, and I said so.

According to the news accounts, Hunt had randomly picked a young woman's wedding announcement picture out of the newspapers. It inspired a fantasy. He went to her home, entered

at gunpoint, she pleaded for her life, he stuffed panties down her throat, strangled her, had a sexual experience, and, believing she was still alive, shoved her under water in a bathtub.

He confessed, was found guilty and sentenced to die. But in a 4-2 decision, the Supreme Court said that he should not be executed because the state law requires that the death penalty can only be imposed when a murder is "especially heinous, atrocious, cruel, or manifested exceptional depravity by ordinary standards of morality and intelligence."



Mike Royko

The court decided that while the murder was heinous, it was not "especially heinous," etc.

After the judge's speech, I read the full decision. In fact, I have read the decision twice. And I see why the chief justice was upset by the errors in my column.

For one thing, the chief justice pointed out that I had written that the

killer "stalked" his victim, when the killer did no such thing.

The chief justice is right. All the killer did was go to her home and watch it for a while. Walk around it a few times. Look in the windows.

That was after he bought a pellet gun with which to frighten her, the panties to stuff down her throat, the nylon stocking for strangling her, and a porn magazine to inspire him.

So, he didn't stalk her. All he did was watch and wait. Wait and watch. Watch and wait. Then kill.

The judge also criticized me for saying that the killer raped the woman, when the killer did no such thing.

I admit that I was wrong on that, too. What the killer did, after he stuffed the panties into her throat and choked her into unconsciousness, was perform a sexual act that I find so revolting I am not going to try to describe it.

The judge also says that I was wrong for saying that the killer shoved the woman into a bathtub and drowned her.

Well, he might be right. But maybe not. The experts aren't sure.

You see, when he finished his sexual activities, the killer noticed that the woman was twitching. And he thought

Please see ROYKO on 5

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