

Spring Fashion at Thingsville



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Centrum Gateway

Beyond Barbados' beaches

Columnists track handwipers through Nebraska rest areas

By Charles Liéurance
Vacation Wanderer

Off to Club Med, off to Barbados, off to Hedonism II. Off to racquetball, off to swimming along the reef, scuba diving, boating, drinks with umbrellas and little pastel colored swords impaling maraschino cherries.

Sure, fine, just go. See if I care. I've got places to go, don't think I don't. And I'll be able to drink the water and I'll know what my currency is worth.

Day I. Summer Vacation, 1987. 11 a.m. daylight savings time. Capricorn vivisectioning Aries. Nice day for a white wedding.

I haven't really thought of anywhere to go yet. I bought a whole bunch of travel books from the Nebraska Bookstore: Botswana, Tierra del Fuego (cheap dimestore prom crown of Fuego in English), Borneo, ancient Abyssinia (rates are down this season) . . .

Day II. Summer Vacation, 1987. 11 a.m. daylight savings time. Taurus gores Virgo and the moon orders out for Chinese food. Day of our lives.

Did you know that if you don't subscribe to the movie channels that those hideous, but very colorful, lines that obscure great flicks like "The Money Pit," "Turk 182" and "Hamburger: The Movie," disappear when the credits to the movie come on?

Still thinking about the word "vacation."

I mean, since this is summer vacation from the university I'm technically on vacation whether I go anyplace or not. A person can sit right at home, eating celery, watching "Big Valley," and still be on vacation.

Vacation? Ha! This is the life. Nothing to do, no one to answer to. Thirty-six channels of pure joy.

Day III. Summer Vacation, 1987. 11 a.m. daylight savings time. The moon's in Virgo and her dad's mad as hell.

The realization that I might be snapping drives me to the kitchen to make something summery. A glass of lemonade maybe.



Brian Barber/Daily Nebraskan

I don't know when it first came to me to tour the rest areas of I-80, to follow that elusive nomadic tribe of interstate Bedouins whose sole mission in life is to go into every rest area in the United States and carve "4. Wipe hands on pants" on the automatic blow dryers.

I was on their trail until around North Platte where they surprised me and hit a Conoco station in town. Someday there will be great things to write about these people on their ways. Margaret Mead be damned.

The oddest part about them is that no one has ever seen one of them carve their trademark onto the machines. There are also rumors that anyone who is not in the tribe who is caught carving on one of the machines disappears or is immediately put to work making I-80 sculptures.

Day IV. Summer Vacation, 1987. 11 a.m. daylight savings time. Mars is in the mouth of Leo. Looks like rain.

Now that I've got the traveling fever, I think I'll take on another adventure, the search for the origins of the jackalope. Oh, sure plenty of places claim to be home to this critter. But where does the truth lie?

Aimelee Burton of Stagolee tells the story of how she and Willa Cather spotted one back in 1908 jumping through the sandhills.

"The things were everywhere," Burton said. "If you catch them during rutting season, they're vicious, butting antlers, kicking with those powerful hind legs of theirs."

Burton says at least four farmers reported injuries suffered when they unwittingly approached mating jackalopes.

The Scrub Bar in Corinna claims to be the home of the first jackalope and to prove it, they shot it, stuffed it, mounted it and set it in the bar.

Duquesne Studios in Grand Island, is responsible for what is probably the most controversial and staggering piece of jackalope memorabilia. It's a photograph of a cowboy riding one of the creatures.

It appears on thousands of postcards. The jackalope jockey looks to be about six feet tall, and the critter itself stands a good five and a half.

Hiram Duquesne, who took the photograph, recalls:

"We'd waited, oh, I'd say a good 48 hours on a little plateau out south of Hastings. It was a hot day, hundred, and hundred and ten degrees, no shade. We just had a feeling we'd catch the beast there. Just a feeling. Finally, right around sixish, here it come. An' it weren't hippity hoppity-in', it was thundering."

"Roger, our cowboy, just rushed right out there and rode it. We shot rolls of film. The one that's on the postcard, that's the only one that ain't blurred so you can't see nothin'."

Day V. Summer Vacation, 1987. The moon is in the seventh house but checkout time is noon.

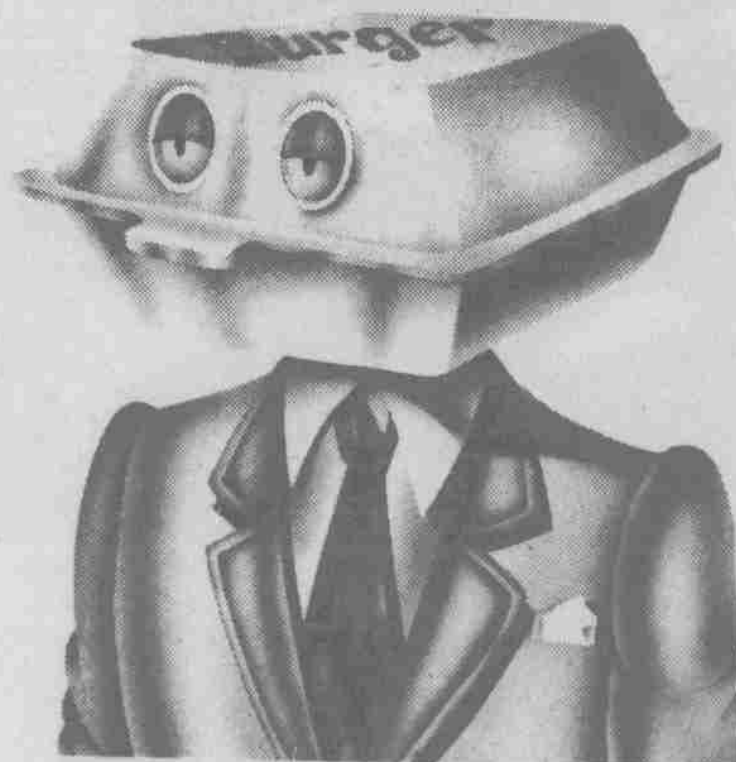


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