

Grad woes: Desperately seeking boozin'

So you're graduating. Have any big plans? Most people I've talked to said they either want to do some heavy duty partying or spend the night with their parents. Some said both, preferably being with their parents before partying their brains out.

I can relate with the graduation scene. I graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln a year ago with a degree in journalism. I've been through the whole routine: Pomp and circumstance. Mom, dad and grandma witnessing an event that's bigger to them than it is to you. The family get together. And then the big night of partying. Or so I thought. For me it turned out to be "Graduation in Hell."

Most of my college career I assumed that graduation night would be a special one. The last big night to party with some friends, the last night to ever see many of them. Before that, dinner with the family, as they give out graduation presents — some bucks, maybe a new watch; a trip to Europe . . .

The trip deal didn't pan out. I should have realized then my grandeur graduation dreams wouldn't become all that I had hoped.

Actually, my graduation plans were developed some time before graduation day. With a good month of school left, (the only time in your college career the last month of a semester can be considered "good"), four or five soon-to-be college grads happened into the Union's South Crib. After sizing up that no one had yet set up the grad party to end all parties, we decided to take it on ourselves.

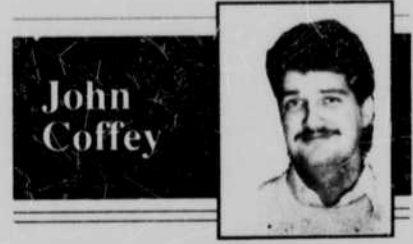
We secured Robber's Cave, the Southwest Lincoln underground cave straight out of the "Adventures of Tom Sawyer." The biggest band on campus at the time had agreed to play. Within a week, we had the gig bank-rolled, the gritty details, like food, alcohol and the rest of the lot, all tied down. Dreams of sugar plums and telling our grandkids of the party of '87 danced in our heads.

Then we got cocky. We went to the authorities. Not the police mind you. But we figured if we're going to have the party to end all parties, we should have an inkling of this venture's legal ramifications. I talked with the city attorney.

We wanted this to be above the board. Totally legit. Something that would not only provide grads with fond memories of their last night at good ol' UN-L, but would be a role model for graduation parties in the future.

And it was, Until I went to the city

attorney's office. I think it was Steinbeck who once said that the best laid plans of mice, men and college graduates, sometimes go awry. Unless we could afford to take out an insurance policy from Lloyd's of London, many of our post-college years would be used to pay-off liabilities instead of student loans, if something bad happened. Plus police officers have a nose for big parties. I'd like to add, however, the idea of shuttle buses was in the works to alleviate drunk drivers.



John Coffey

Needless to say, the party didn't go down. That's all right, we figured, some else would have it.

Graduation night came, Mom and Dad went. I linked up with some co-party planners ready to have the night of my life. We didn't know where we'd go, a couple of parties had been mentioned, but certainly folks at the bars would know.

We went to O'Rourke's: 25 people there. I checked my trusty calendar watch. Saturday, it said. Something was wrong. Next stop, Sandy's. 15 people — that's if you were so impaired you saw double. We had yet to see a fellow college grad. By this time

it was ten o'clock. All was not well.

Maybe the entire graduating class was partying together. Everyone except me and my cohorts. "Party at Branched Oak Lake," the cry, "shh!, but don't tell Coffey."

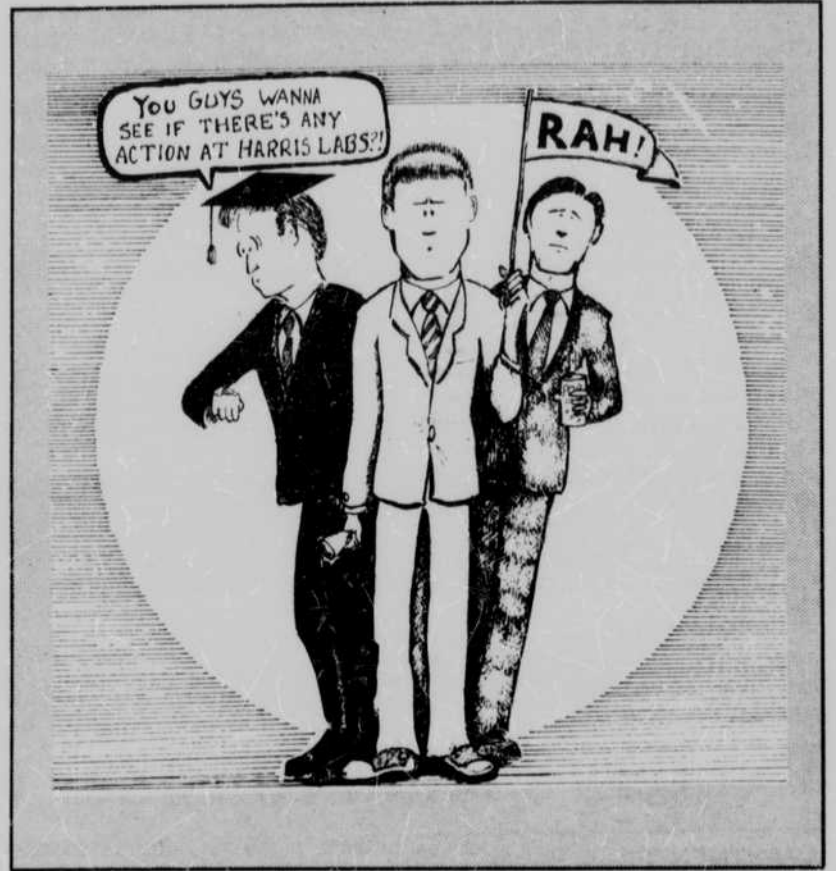
We drove by a couple of prospective parties. Maybe they were holding a wake. Certainly they weren't celebrating graduation. By this time the idea of attending a wake was beginning to sound more exciting than driving around finding a dead town.

Graduation night. It was starting to sink in why the commencement gowns were black.

It was all a tailspin from there. I was experiencing post-college vertigo. Maybe this is the way graduation night is supposed to be. Maybe this is supposed to be an indoctrination into the "real world." Maybe this is all a plot by the authors of "Is There Life After College," in an effort to boost sales. I don't know.

Psychologists say we don't remember certain incidents to block out the pain. I don't remember much after 10:30, except that I remained sober and I was in bed by 1 a.m. on my graduation night! My social-psyche will forever be wounded. So what do you plan to do on your graduation? I just talked to a friend who says he's spending his at Harris Labs selling his body to make money. I think he has the right idea.

Coffey is a senior political science major and a Daily Nebraskan arts and entertainment reporter.



John Bruce/Daily Nebraskan

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INVEST from Page 7 don't have anyone to protect, he said.

Cuca said graduates who want individual securities should go to a full-service brokerage.

Cuca said the market has become so institutionalized that the individual investor doesn't have a lot to say about it. He said the market will start to have much lighter swings but most graduates should stick with mutual funds because the market is still shaky from the October crash in 1987. People should look at stocks over a long time horizon because it goes up and down in cycles, he said.

Marlene Wagner, assistant vice president and investment officer for First Tier Bank in Lincoln, said she advises anyone who can get into a profit sharing plan at work should get into one. Profit sharing means that a certain amount is taken out of every paycheck and the employer adds interest to that.

Many investments don't allow for small investors, she said. Graduates should buy certificates of deposit first, then move one to government mutual fund, she said.

Government mutual funds fluctuate with the market, she said, and most have a 3.5 to 4 percent fee added to it. Mutual funds should be viewed as a longer term investment.

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