

Daily
Nebraskan
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Amy Edwards, Editor, 472-1766
Lee Rood, Editorial Page Editor
Jane Hirt, Managing Editor
Brandon Loomis, Associate News Editor
Brian Svoboda, Columnist
Bob Nelson, Columnist
Jeff Petersen, Columnist

End sexist contests

Greek sex-object games dehumanizing

About \$1,200 was contributed to the perpetuation of sexism this past week at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Last week, Sigma Chi Fraternity sponsored a penny drive, which allowed passers-by inside and outside the Nebraska Union to place change in jars. The jars were decorated with pictures of women who had been chosen by their sororities to represent their houses in the drive.

The penny drive was part of the fraternity's annual Sigma Chi Derby Daze and the women on the jars were contestants in the Derby Daze Queen Contest.

What does this mean?

Directly, the men of Sigma Chi were trying to raise money for the Cleo Wallace Center for Handicapped Children in Bloomfield, Colo., which is the organization's national philanthropy.

Indirectly, the Sigma Chi's were conveying to the rest of the university community that sexism is OK.

The penny drive was part of the process sorority pledge representatives went through for the Derby Daze Queen competition. The queen was selected on the basis of the number of pennies placed in the jars in combination with interviews the Sigma Chi's conducted.

The contest is shallow, degrading and not amusing. The worth of an individual should not be rated -- with a penny no less -- by their physical appearance.

But it's not just Sigma Chi's who perpetuate this stupid and blatant disregard for human beings.

Year after year Delta Gamma Sorority sponsors a "Prettiest Eyes" contest. Delta Delta Delta Sorority sponsors a 501 contest (similar to the penny-drive contest, only instead of smiling faces, passers-by are treated to snapshots of jean-clad fannies).

Other examples include Pi Beta Phi's BMOC (Big Men on Campus) raffle and, most recently, Sigma Phi Epsilon's answer to a dating service -- Miss Rush Week.

According to the guidelines of the Miss Rush Week competition, two to three representatives from the 14 UNL sororities are set up with Sig Ep pledges. After the date, the girls are treated to an interview by the Sig Eps.

The women then are invited to a party at the end of the week and a queen is crowned.

None of the 14 sororities had to participate. All of them did.

Come on men and women, it's time to drop the "all the other kids are doing it" philosophy. Not only are we adults, but supposedly we're among the educated.

Many fraternities and sororities claim they strive for high ideals. It's highly doubtful that being elected queen of all the female rushees or having an aesthetically pleasing rear end are ways of promoting higher ideals.

Not only does it perpetuate the belittling of the sexes to just that -- sex, it belittles the greek system. Sex-object contests only add fuel to the fire against the greek system.

Granted, many of these competitions and activities are philanthropic and it's great that students take time out of their busy schedules to raise money for special projects.

Unfortunately, the ends don't justify the means.

-- Lisa Donovan
for the Daily Nebraskan

Double standard appalls reader

Isn't it interesting that once again females are being exploited? Not only was the description in the Daily Nebraskan of how to use the condom for women (DN, Sept. 21) printed in appallingly graphic detail, but once again the responsibility for contraception and disease prevention continues to be that of the female population. Never have I read in your publication an equally graphic description of the use of a condom for men. And, why is it that society is constantly making concessions to men; allowing them to abdicate responsibility for their own sexual conduct.

You state in your article that "people often think condoms for males interrupt spontaneity." Perhaps this is a value of the condom for males. This "interruption" should give men a moment to think about their actions, take control of their hormones and accept responsibility for contraception and disease control. Or is this lack of control an inherent flaw in the male species? Perhaps so. How often have you read of a man being raped by a woman?

Carol Grell
concerned parent



Education perception changes

Some students do not seem to care about thinking, learning

I passed it the other day. The dusty land marker stood discreetly in front of Ferguson Hall. A once-proud tribute to the chartering of our university; now marred by the graffiti on its black metal surface.

Big deal you say? Yeah I suppose. But being the sentimentalist that I am, I stopped and read the charter. It made me think about a lot of things.

I tried to imagine the old days; the days of the university in its youth.

I recalled an incident which struck me last year. It was the day before Christmas break and a friend of mine asked me to go to the library with him to pick up a book to read over break. He has the rare hobby of reading classical literature, so we ventured to the basement of Love Library to see what we could find. He found his book, but what I found was disturbing to me.

Consider these names: Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Edgar Allan Poe. Now consider these dates: June 19, 1969, May 17, 1971, Dec. 20, 1968. While thumbing through the works of these famous writers I noticed these dates on the last pages. They are the last due dates recorded in those books. In other words, nobody's checked them out in 20 years.

I found it peculiar that the dates were all close in proximity. I wonder why? Did something happen to change education at this time? Perhaps this is when students became subject to the disgusting practice of being forced to purchase greatly overpriced books from the monopolistic book stores. Oh well... that's another story.

Today, the semester is more than one quarter gone. During the last four weeks I've heard a lot of comments from students. Most of them were things like: "I can't wait to graduate. I have a test tomorrow and I haven't cracked a book yet. This class is too hard, I'm dropping it."

I have heard a few positive remarks, but not many.

It seems that a lot has changed since 20 collegiate students took the first classes at our university in 1871. Obviously there have been positive changes and the university has grown a great deal, but I don't think everything is better today.

Take, for instance, the attitude of many students. Time and time again I've heard students express desires to take the easiest classes from the easiest professors and get by with the least amount of effort. It seems some

students today don't care about learning -- they simply want to get through college so they can hit the world, get a good job and make lots of money.

Some students don't seem to care about thinking either. It never fails that on the first day of classes, the questions professors are asked revolve more around "what do I have to memorize to get a good grade" than "what can I learn from this course."



Jeff Petersen

There are those who still come to the university to learn all they can. But there also seems to be a distressing number of students who do not value the true purpose of education. Instead, it has become a means to an end. Many students are here simply because society tells us that we must go through college to be successful. The goal becomes getting through, not learning.

But students are not necessarily to blame. After all, society has told the youth of America that we go to college to "be somebody." Consequently, there are a lot of people here who don't really want to go, but think they do in order to succeed in this world.

Universities across the country also are to blame for students not receiving complete, well-rounded educations.

The University of Nebraska no longer can say that a student who attains a degree from this institution is a well-rounded, well-educated individual. In fact, it's quite possible for a student to go through four years of college here on a very narrow track without learning much about the world in which he or she lives.

Consider the College of Engineering and Technology. An engineering student told me that it's possible for a student to graduate from college without having taken a single history course. He also said that with the exception of an elementary-level course, English composition courses will not count toward an engineering student's degree. And in four years of

college engineering students only take six courses (18 hours) in the social sciences and humanities.

No wonder our world is such a mess -- our universities are graduating people who have never learned to live in it.

Don't think I'm discounting the value of engineering and similar fields; I know they are extremely important. But the point I'm making is students are not receiving complete educations.

NU has gone from being a fine university accomplishing things such as the establishment of the first program of graduate instruction west of the Mississippi in 1886, to a sausage factory, pumping out thousands of graduates. And these sausages have no real substantive meat.

Society and universities -- the University of Nebraska in particular -- need to take definitive steps to ensure that students receiving degrees also are receiving complete educations. I know Chancellor Martin Massengale has established a committee to look into general education at this university, let's hope they can find it.

Perhaps we need to get society to change its view of what the requirements are to be successful. Or maybe, people like me will have to change our perceptions of what education is and what universities are for. After all, as the university landmark says, the University of Nebraska "continues now as a prime source of further Nebraska progress." Progress?

The situation could get better if students would decide to make the most of the opportunity they've been given. Much of it lies in the hearts and minds of the individual. Now is the time when we establish attitudes and patterns which will govern the rest of our lives. Getting into the habit of sliding by or taking the easy road will stick with us.

I've known many students who live under the illusion that they can get a blow-off in college and then get serious about things after they graduate. But an illusion is all it is.

That decision comes down to character, do we want the most out of life or just the easiest. Even if the university and society don't change, we as individuals can. Every day we make choices which decide the path we will take. It's little decisions that build big character. It's all a matter of choices and the choice is ours.

Jeff Petersen is senior broadcasting major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.