

Campus hides undiscovered worlds

Boredom in the eyes of the beholder

By Bryan Peterson
Staff Columnist

Editor's Note: This is the third in a week-long series on senses. Each day, members of the Arts and Entertainment Staff will take their readers on a trip of sight, sound, taste, touch and smell. Ask any mermaid you happen to see...

"I see London, I see France, I see some-one's underpants."

-childhood rhyme

I am tired of hearing about what a boring campus we have. "There's nothing going on, there's nothing to do" and similar phrases ring in my ears.

If there is a problem with boredom at UNL, it is not with the campus itself but with boring, unseeing students.

There are entire undiscovered worlds and unsolved mysteries on campus that most of us are too busy to see. Sometimes a person just needs to slow down and look about. And up and down, and all around.

Amazing people and events surround us. Struggles for existence go on before our unseeing eyes. Arts launch enormous crusades under our feet as mile-long chains of birds migrate south over our heads. And all we do is plod back and forth between classes.

But if we just paid a little more attention to the world around us, just opened our eyes a little wider, we would see all manners of wondrous and mysterious things.

For example, there are hundreds of unused parking stalls in the parking lot under Broyhill Fountain. No one has seen the

entrance for years because we are all too busy looking for more "convenient" parking.

Also, most UNL students are unaware of the so-called "hidden" floor in Love Library. It is really sort of a half-floor, stuck in between two other floors in an unlit corner of Love North, housing a number of special collections. All a person needs to do to find this floor is look carefully.

On the "hidden" floor are roomfuls of dusty, crumbling books that have not been read, or even unshelved, in years. Many Love Library employees have forgotten the presence of the "hidden" floor because no one ever checks out books from there.

The watchful eye also might find 30-some spindly marijuana plants lurking in the shadows of burgeoning shrubs in the gardens south of Love Library.



Indeed, the entire campus is filled with interesting or curious sites. Everyone has seen the portion of a lunar rocket in front of Morrill Hall, but how many have seen the "Glacial Boulder Showing Petroglyphs" nearby?

The boulder is supposed to show ancient

human foot and turkey track petroglyphs. I don't see much but a creviced rock taking up potential parking space.

Night is a great time to roam and observe -- everything is given a new perspective in the dark. After sunset, rabbits and squirrels outnumber students on campus. I did not think much of this until I saw a university employee feeding furry carcasses to the killer goldfish in the fountain in Manter Hall.

It was at night that I first noticed that the lights are left on every night on the tenth floor of Oldfather Hall, the home of the philosophy department and ever more intrigue.

I went up to the tenth floor one night to discover why the lights were left on all night. I heard a hushed uproar concerning the validity of Humean metaphysics and a shuffling of feet, but saw no one.

There are other mysteries of the seen and unseen on campus. Does anyone ever enter the little door on Mueller Tower? Why does the main entrance to Memorial Stadium look like a cathedral ceiling?

Lately I have been seeing the phrase "Trust Jesus" spray-painted around campus. At one location, someone crossed out the name "Jesus" and mistakenly added "Satin." But why is the phrase always in blue graffiti?

Answers to questions also can be found, if one's eyes are kept open. How many people walk past Memorial Stadium without looking up at the engraved quotes?

"Not the victory but the action; not the goal but the game; in the deed the glory," reads one. This may explain why there are

thousands of athletes but less than forty philosophy majors at UNL.

I am quite surprised no one has noticed that the city and East campuses are drifting together, gaining a few meters every semester. Soon they will merge into UNMC: the University of Nebraska Mega-Campus.

The proof? Just observe the eastward drift of city campus with new parking lots and softball fields and the usurpation of Whittier Junior High. Or view the westward drift of East campus through unmarked greenhouses and agricultural research stations.

Another location of interest is the sculpture garden outside Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, the perfect place to take a visual excursion to distant, ephemeral lands of the imagination or to simply sit and stare at passersby.

How many such observers have noticed the overtly sexual implications of most of the displays?

And as for unseen marvels, I wonder if anyone has seen beyond the ticket office in the Lied Center, or if a cavernous maw has settled back unnoticed in a contemptuous smugness?

I have been around all these things nearly four years but only recently noticed them. With even more attention, there is no limit to the things I might see here on campus.

As students, we get locked into routines and patterns which blind us to the vibrance and wonder of our campus. Yet we cannot blame the campus itself for being boring.

Our failure to find excitement on this campus is our own failure to see what goes on around us.

R.E.M., Stipe in 'full form'

By Robert Richardson
Staff Reporter

R.E.M. brought 3,500 fans to their feet Tuesday night at Pershing Auditorium as the band opened its fourth Lincoln appearance to "Stand" from its latest album "Green."

Michael Stipe sported a baseball cap, sunglasses, suit, and an attitude.

concert

The audience welcomed his entrance after the 30-minute opener by NRBO (New Rhythm-Blues Quartet).

It didn't take long for people to begin to dance in the aisles and in the back of the auditorium.

R.E.M. should practice what it preaches

By Miek Dyer
Staff Reporter

The band R.E.M. was disappointed to play in Lincoln again.

Some longtime R.E.M. fans were disappointed by the band's performance Tuesday night at Pershing Municipal Auditorium.

It all boils down to an attitude.

The photo in today's paper is from the Spring 1989 show in Omaha. The Daily Nebraskan ran this photo because the band didn't want any photographs taken this year.

That's fine. It is R.E.M.'s artistic freedom to choose who takes and who doesn't take the band's photo.

The band was in town for two days, but refused to speak to the local media.

That's fine too. It is R.E.M.'s prerogative to speak or not to speak to whomever it wants. Besides, being aloof creates an air of mystery about the band making the R.E.M. experience seem that much more attractive. It's an attention-getting technique the band has used and abused more and more over the years.

But the band's indifference toward its audience has also alienated a large segment of listeners -- especially fans that followed the band before the album "Green" came out.

Something just seemed fishy about the band's constant blanket references to political issues during

They loved the music and they should have -- the sound was good and the audience was fairly well-behaved. Stipe's voice was in full form as he belted out four songs before a break.

Stipe also offered the audience something usual but always special, an acapella.

That wasn't all.

Apparently a feature for the "Green" tour (since the effects were used at the Omaha concert last Spring), short movie clips were shown on a giant screen hanging as a backdrop.

They rock 'n' rolled the audience for two hours and gave them a wide variety of their music, "Murmur" to "Green."

the concert. And R.E.M. covered all the bases -- the Exxon oil spill, the democracy demonstrations in China and the role of the armed forces.

It just seems kind of ironic that after the group recently began speaking out on political, social and environmental issues, they would clam up so much. You would think they would have more to say, especially to college students.

And after watching the words "talk" and "listen" flash on the screen behind the band during "Pop Song '89" the band's detachment from the audience seems down right hypocritical.

It just seems insincere. Do they really mean what they say about getting involved with action groups?

Maybe the band believes the music should stand for itself. Maybe the band doesn't really care enough about the issues they advocate to take the time to speak to the media about them.

Who knows?

It's just frightening to think that many young people believe listening to R.E.M. constitutes being politically active.

R.E.M. has lost me because of their attitude. And if the low number of people at the concert (3,500 in an auditorium that holds about 7,000) indicates anything, it's that the band's popularity with others also is waning.



Al Schaeffer/Daily Nebraskan

Mike Mills of R.E.M. performing at the concert last spring in Omaha.