

Activism adjusts to 1979-80 materialism

Editor's Note: As the 1980s draw to a close, members of the Daily Nebraskan staff would like to take this opportunity to let readers take a stroll with them down memory lane.

By Gretchen Boehr
Senior Reporter

The 1979-80 school year at the



University of Nebraska-Lincoln was at the end of the radical individual freedom movement of the '60s and

'70s. Even though the UNL campus wasn't as wrought with political upheaval as the Berkeley campus during the Vietnam War, students were still questioning the government and all authority.

Hippies became prominent in the '60s and earned their place in Webster's Dictionary as: "a young person who rejects established mores, advocates non-violence, and often uses psychedelic drugs or marijuana; a long-haired, unconventionally dressed young person."

But in the late '70s and early '80s drugs were no longer considered the open door to mind expansion, but the basic values of those involved in the hippie movement were still alive as people searched for more conservative means to achieve their goals.

The emphasis in the '70s was more about what the individual could get

from government.

And in 1980 students and faculty at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln were trying to fit these ideals of the '70s into more conservative means.

In October 1979 smoking in class began to decline, according to professors at UNL.

Smoking in class had been seen as a means of rebelling against authority, and as the '80s approached this decline in rebelliousness signaled a mellowing of the student body.

Marijuana smoke-ins also were less popular as 1980 wore on.

Also, UNL students demanded the NU Board of Regents to reverse a policy that prohibited using student fees to pay for political speakers. The original policy came about after the Young Americans for Freedom complained that they should not pay for speakers who disagreed with their

political beliefs.

In December 1979, the regents honored the students' request and the policy was reversed as the regents realized that students were open to a wide range of speakers and opinions.

Another indication of political activism on campus was the protest of a gift of South African gold coins given to the NU Foundation Feb. 11, 1980.

The Afrikan Peoples Union in particular fought to force the foundation to give up the coins without success.

As students sought to change university policies, voter turnout for the March 1980 ASUN elections was the highest in nine years.

But freedom of individual expression was not dead at the UNL campus. For example, a student-owned radio station was set up in Abel Residence Hall.

Even roller disco found its place in Nebraska and this craze struck with full force at UNL.

In 1980 students seemed very aware of what was going on around them and dared to peacefully challenge authority.

For example, the regents were faced with protests by ASUN against a tuition increase for the 1980-81 school year.

Money was a dilemma as students of the early '80s had to deal with high inflation rates. And according to an Oct. 4 DN article, inflation in October 1979 was discouraging students from opening savings accounts.

As the '70s drew to a close and the '80s began, the radical questioning of authority was replaced with more conservative action. Materialism and the transformation of hippie to yuppie became a sign of the time, a symbol of the '80s.

1980-81 marked the change of an entertainment era for UNL students

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By Stacey McKenzie
Staff Reviewer

It was one of those years people reflect on and ask "Where were you



when ... died?"

It was Dec. 8, 1980 and John Lennon had been shot.

The murder of John Lennon shook

Lincoln and the world. Students stood outside the University of Nebraska-Lincoln City Union with posters saying "We love John Lennon," paying tribute to a legend they couldn't believe was dead. Papers were sold out the next day and KFMQ received more than 300 calls an hour. One employee said that "people were calling ... numb."

The death of Lennon, his musical era and the onslaught of a new punk form spurred national change in the entertainment scene. Coinciding with these national changes were local changes in entertainment.

During the early '80s, UNL students were into music, music and more music. Groups like Fleetwood Mac and Van Halen were only a few of the bands to pack the Omaha Civic Auditorium. Performing at Rosenblatt were The Doobie Brothers,

Pat Benatar and Sammy Hagar. Country music stars Kenny Rogers and Dottie West dominated the Nebraska State Fair, selling nearly 20,000 tickets for their shows.

Waves of a new culture, called punk, were storming across the continent but were slow to trickle into the Midwest. However, some punk influences did begin to show in people's musical tastes. Punk groups like The Rebates, The Polka Dots and Richard Nixon were performing in Omaha's Old Market. The new hard, fast, high-energy music influenced some hard-line rockers to listen to the Cars, and other quasi-new wave bands.

The Cars played to a sellout audience of 11,300 on Oct. 5, 1980. Their current release, "Panorama," was popular for its quirky songs, Devo-

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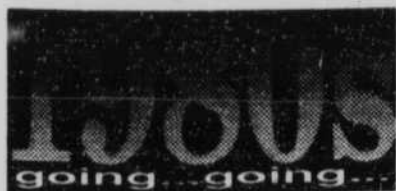
Face triggers memories

Junior high bully arrested

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By John Payne
Staff Reviewer

All sorts of insane thoughts race through your brain when you are awakened by the police at 5 a.m. You start putting together every possible scenario that would bring the Lincoln Police Department to your front door in the early morning hours, and you start to worry about what you may have done the previous evening.



There was no logical reason for a cop to be knocking at my door at 5 a.m., but there he was, and when I asked him again "who?" He repeated, "Lincoln Police Department."

I was having the strangest dream that I was marooned on a distant planet with all these really fine-looking women and an unlimited supply of Bud Light, so it took awhile to adjust back to reality. I opened the door and asked him politely what the trouble was. (One should always be a little extra-polite when dealing with the police, trust me.) It seemed some fleabag had tried

to steal my golf clubs out of my car and this fine officer had caught the would-be thief in the act. And so now I was required to go outside and identify my clubs before the perpetrator could be taken down to the station, booked and all that.

How rude. I remember mumbling to myself, as I stepped into my furry bunny slippers, "this world has really turned to crap when some yahoo tries to steal another man's Tommy Armours," and stomped out into the cold morning air. And when I walked up to the squad car to have a look in back and see just what kind of a man would do this to another man in the middle-of-the-night, I saw a face that I knew like my own, a face that immediately took me back to 1981 -- junior high.

Steve. I didn't even have to think about it. I remembered him, and had thought about him often over the past seven years.

To say that Steve was a bully in junior high would be a bit like saying that that Charles Manson fellow needed to mind his manners. No, he was not a bully, he was a terrorist, and his favorite pastime was finding new ways to terrorize yours truly.

Steve had friends, or maybe accomplices is a better word. They were all older than me, by a year, and almost everything they liked to do involved spitting. They would spit on younger kids -- on their jackets, on their sneakers and in their hair.

Bus rides could be a traumatic experience if you were unlucky enough to be sitting close to these guys because they liked to spit on the ceiling of the bus, and watch it drip down onto other passengers.

When they ran out of spit they would spit sunflower seeds, and if there was nobody else around to spit on, they would spit on each other, but nobody ever spit on Steve.

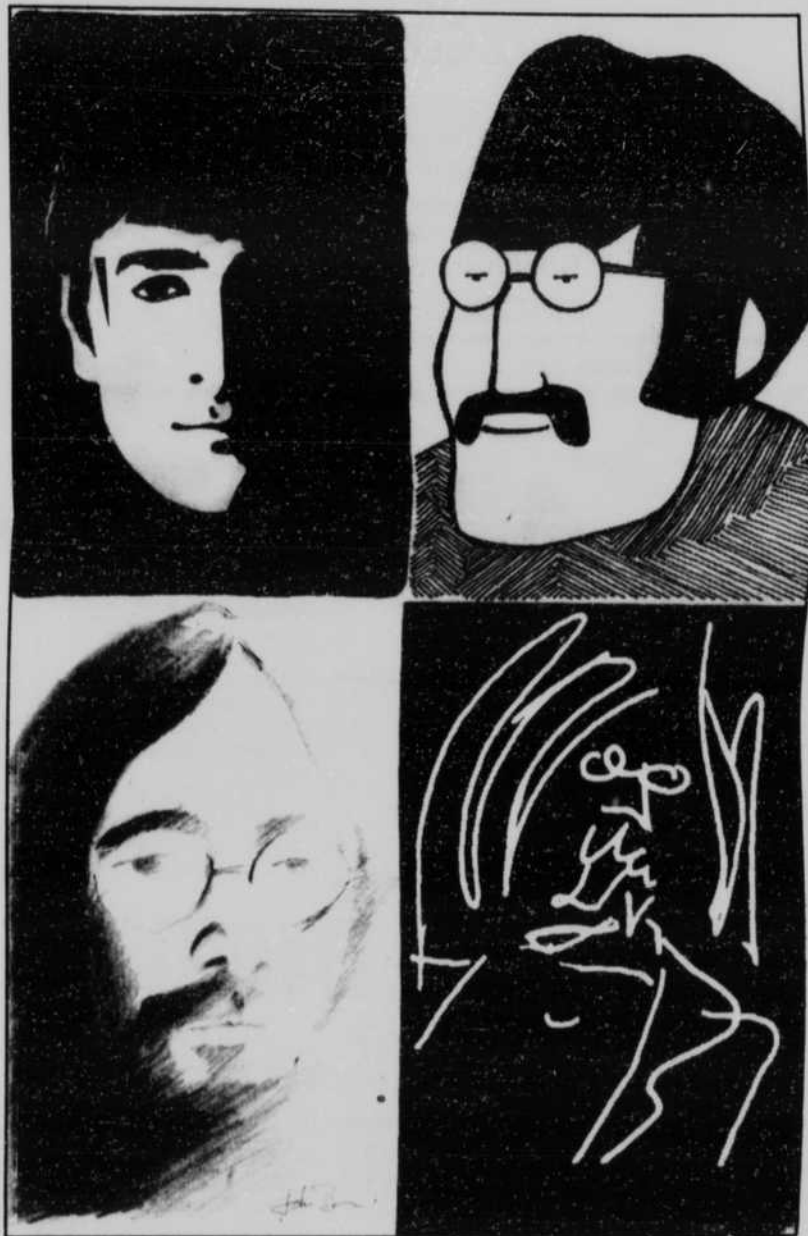
My most vivid memory of these guys was morning gym class. After everyone else had put on his jock and headed out to the gym, Steve and his friends would stick around to perform a little ritual on somebody's combination lock.

First, one of them would very delicately wrap the lock in a couple layers of toilet paper. After the paper had been secured, the four of them would summon up all of their collective mucus and bombard the lock until the paper was sufficiently soaked.

Every day they would do this, and every day some unsuspecting geek would come back to the locker room, all sweaty, and find his Master Lock engulfed in a glump of phlegm. And he would have to find a way to deal with it, get dressed, and get to his next class on time. Occasionally they would do this to each other, but no one ever did it to Steve.

There were other dangers, such as playing basketball with Steve over the lunch-hour. "21" was the popular game during recess, wherein the object is to score a total of 21 points, and the first one to do so wins. Steve liked to play it a little different, though. After getting a rebound, he would dribble to the outside, and get behind someone. Just when you would turn to face the hoop, thinking that he was going to put up the shot, Steve would bounce the ball off the back of your head as hard as he could, then shoot.

For the longest time my skull was



John Bruce/Daily Nebraskan

his favorite target, and I still worry about permanent brain damage. This little trick caught on and soon other kids were bouncing basketballs off each other's heads and giving each other brain damage, but no one ever did it to Steve.

I once asked Steve's best friend Dino why Steve had it in for me so much. He said it had something to do with my face.

I used to always regret not standing up to Steve, and he had me hating myself because of it. But you see, there are lovers and there are fighters, and while I wasn't much of either, I definitely wasn't a fighter.

I remember once hearing about how Steve was going to get in a fight with this kid who was a lot bigger than I was, and I thought "this is going to be great." I didn't see the fight, but this guy wasn't in school for a couple of weeks and when he came back his jaw had been wired shut and he had undergone major dental surgery.

But now that I'm older I realize that I am a better person because of

Steve. I mean, any two-bit brute can think of new ways to terrorize little kids, but it takes a clever individual to learn how to avoid him. I did my homework every night, and every day I came to school prepared. I knew what exits I would take, what routes to the parking lot were best, and all the doorways in which a scrawny kid could duck. Living in fear turned me into a crafty young man, and for that I guess I should be thankful to Steve.

As I caught that first glance of him in the back of the squad car I was struck by the weirdest feeling -- I kind of miss those days. I kind of miss living on the edge like that.

Watching the expression on Steve's face when he recognized me was all the redemption I needed. He had that look on his face that you get when you step in dog crap and slowly begin to realize it. It's that "uh-oh" look. And then, standing there in my bunny slippers, I stuck my face up to the window, looked him dead in the eye and I said, "If you ever touch my golf clubs or my car again, I'm going to kick your ... " No one had ever said that to Steve.