

Graduates debate merits of gowns

By Emily Rosenbaum
Senior Reporter

Graduates planning to walk down the aisle at the Bob Devaney Sports Center have a choice of what to wear.

Disposable or rental is the wardrobe decision graduates will have to make.

Bill Cummins, manager of the Big Red department at the Nebraska Bookstore, said the store sells disposable caps and gowns year-round. Students can keep the caps, tassels and gowns after the ceremonies, he said.

That way, a graduate can wear the gown home for pictures with family and friends and always have the gown as a remembrance, he said.

The gown's cost is \$12.95.

Although the gowns aren't able to withstand several washings or a hot iron, they are "good enough to keep," he said.

The gowns are made of a nylon-like, acetate material which melts under high temperatures such as an iron, he said.

The gowns look about the same as the rented ones, he said, but have a "shinier" look to them.

Disposable gowns are convenient for the student who waits until the last minute and isn't able to order a rented gown, Cummins said. He said students can come in anytime to buy the gowns -- including the day of commencement.

Graduates also do not have to make several trips to the store to be measured and then to pick up the gown, he said.

Students are sized and given their gown the same day, he said.

A few people even bought the caps and gowns for Halloween last year, Cummins said.

The caps, tassels and gowns are all black and sized by height, he said.

Cummins said the disposable gown sales are a service to students, and the store makes only \$1 on each sale.

Dick Lewis, manager of the University Bookstore, said he expects about 98 percent of the May graduates at UNL to rent their gowns.

A bachelor's degree gown rental is \$7.25, and students keep the caps and tassels, he said.

The gown is turned in following commencement at Sports Center.

A master's degree gown rental, which includes a hood with the cap and tassel, costs \$17.25. The cap and tassel, in a different color for each field of study, also can be kept, he said.

The doctorate cap, tassel, gown and hood rents for \$19.25.

Students can mail in an order form and their payment to the bookstore, or they can come in to the store and be measured, he said. The bookstore will measure students and take orders today, Lewis said, and students can pick up their rented gowns May 10 and 11.

Graduates also can pick up their gowns the morning of graduation ceremonies at Sports Center, he said.

If a graduate is not able to pick up the gown May 10 or 11, someone else can come to the store and collect it, Lewis said.

Because the store always orders extras, he said, it is easy to exchange a gown or cap if it does not fit.

He said this year the store probably will order about 100 extra gowns.

Students also can buy an extra tassel for \$2 at the store.

Graduation separates friends despite everyone's good intentions

Getting measured for that lovely recyclable gown, sitting through a sleep-inducing speech, and -- most of all -- wearing that funny little hat -- is something that I have dreamed of for a long, long time.

Now that it finally is going to happen, I am not so sure I want it to.

In fact, these last few weeks, I have been pretty agitated about graduating.

Although I've spent these last seven years griping about college classes, college teachers and college bureaucracy, there's one aspect of college I already am missing:

My college friends.

I know, I know. Friends always will be friends -- no matter what. We can always meet for lunch. Meet for a beer. Or reach out over the phone and touch someone, right?

Wrong.

The reality is, we probably won't. We will be too busy with our jobs, with our families, with the business of making a name for ourselves. No matter what our good intentions are at the start, we will not follow through on them.

Sure. Some of you are out there right now saying, "No way. Not me. That's not how I'll treat my friends. I'll never blow 'em off. We'll always be close."

Bull.

It's more likely that our friendships will slowly melt away -- like a bar of mushy soap -- bit by bit, day by day, until some day as we reach for it, it slips between our fingers and gurgles down the drain, mixing with all the hair we've lost . . . gluck!

We probably will think, "Huh. You know, we used to be pretty good friends. Too bad we aren't anymore. I wonder what happened?"

What happened was human nature.

People do not choose to ignore and neglect those they have grown close

to -- it just sort of happens -- because friends who have nothing in common anymore eventually grow apart.

We see it happening to married couples. We see it happening to parents and their kids. Most of all, we see it happening to ourselves.

We even know when it is happening. We do not like to accept it, be-



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cause accepting it means we have to deal with it. Those graduating this May know what I'm talking about.

We have been talking about getting together for that one last bash -- before everyone moves on to their new jobs and their new lives.

It is exciting to think of getting together, yet it also is depressing, because in our hearts we know that this probably will be the last. The last time we walk the hallways together. The last time we study together. The last time we party together.

Because it will not be convenient anymore.

That means if we really want to keep our friendships, we will have to make the time for them.

And we all know how that usually goes.

Before we can say "diploma," many of us will be on our way to other things: new jobs, new goals, new friends . . . a new life.

Moving on is a fact of graduation and a fact of life, which is why some of you will stay here and go on to graduate school.

I was afraid of it.

From January to April, I secretly was fantasizing that maybe it was not

time for me to graduate.

"Maybe I should wait another semester," I thought. Meanwhile, the Office of Registration & Records was taking its time with my degree application.

By the middle of March, I was beginning to sweat it out, wishfully thinking, "What if I need one more credit hour? It would be too late now to add another class!"

And believe me, I had heard plenty of horror stories and lots of paranoid talk about how the university tries to hold you back as long as possible -- so they can soak you for more tuition.

But three weeks ago, I finally got my OK to graduate, with one condition attached, of course: I had to pass all my current courses.

I am trying not to flunk, but I did come close with one class.

After taking an Algebra 100 comprehensive final, my instructor graciously graded the results right away. I remember staring at the wall, thinking, "God, please, let me pass this stupid test."

I got a D+.

Of course, I was relieved, yet a part of me still wishes I wasn't going to graduate -- still wishes I didn't have to move on and leave my friends behind.

But there's this other voice inside of me that's saying, "Hey, you fool! You're almost done. No more homework, no more teachers, no more school."

So I have decided I am ready to say goodbye -- finally ready to tuck that bachelor's diploma underneath my armpit and race around the Bob Devaney sports track. After all, it would only seem fitting.

It just doesn't seem fitting to leave my friends.

Schepers is a senior news-editorial major and Daily Nebraskan columnist.

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