

Daily
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Quibbles 'n' bits

Don't let your fingers do the walking

Tired of walking into an exam late because you couldn't find a parking stall?

Maybe you should transfer to Governors State University in suburban Chicago. Students in psychology and management courses there are able to take quizzes without leaving home. Instead of plugging their meters, they punch buttons on their telephones.

Management students took a 10-question multiple-choice quiz by pressing No. 1 through 4, connecting their phones with the school computer.

The telephone tests may be convenient, but they can't provide an accurate means of testing students' knowledge. The purpose of testing students in one location at the same time is to keep them from cheating.

When students' fingers already are doing the walking to register answers on the phone, what's going to stop them from walking farther -- into the notes and textbooks where the answers are stored?

Oil tax could spur car pools, bicycles

At last, a tax we can all live with.

Calif. Gov. George Deukmejian has signed a bill that taxes oil 25 cents a barrel, creates a cleanup "czar" and regulates tankers in California waters.

With the situation in the Persian Gulf, this may not be the most popular time to tax oil, but Californians and the rest of the country may find out it's worth it.

The bill, the first of its kind in the United States, might make consumers unhappy, but it will indirectly benefit them. The tax money will be used in a positive way. And as the cost of gas rises, it will force special conservation measures such as car pooling and bicycle riding.

Facts needed before appointment

Hee's baaack.

Much to the chagrin of some NU Board of Regents members, former University of Nebraska President Ronald Roskens has been appointed to the NU Foundation Board of Trustees.

Rosemary Skrupa of Omaha said she was "shocked" by the appointment and thought that he should fulfill his job in Washington before accepting such an appointment here.

While his appointment to the 400-member board is little more than symbolic and Skrupa may have assumed too much, she has a point.

Roskens was fired after 12 years in the presidential seat, and the reasons behind his dismissal have yet to be disclosed. Now he and his wife have been quietly appointed to the foundation's trustees.

Maybe The Good Life isn't so bad after all.

-- Lisa Donovan
and Eric Pfanner
for the Daily Nebraskan



Tradition needs revival at UNL

Students, faculty must return to teary-eyed events of yesterday

Call me a traditionalist.

It was not until recently that I became aware of this. Since the age of 14, when I received my first paycheck with taxes taken out, I have known that I was a conservative. But recognizing that I'm a traditionalist is a new thing.

My newfound awareness came a few months ago when I was engaged in an exciting intellectual debate over who was the best nighttime talk show host.

"Boy, there's nothing better than watching David Letterman. He's funny," my friend Chris said.

But Kermit said, "Arsenio Hall is the show for our generation."

"Pat Sajak was so good they had to fire him because his fans were calling in and tying up the switchboards," Alan said.

When it was my turn, my instincts kicked in. Without giving the topic much thought or analysis, I instinctively answered, "Johnny Carson is the best there ever was. My father watches him. His father watched him. So I watch him."

Why did I say that?

I am and have always been a traditionalist. My values and beliefs are a reflection of those of a generation or two ago. Often, I long for the good ol' days when men wore fedoras, dressed in a suit and tie for baseball games and stood when a woman entered a room. I believe that this was a better country when children read more than they watched television and when families actually sat down together to enjoy a meal. Even today I will only vote for a politician who kisses babies.

And why?

Because that's the way it has always been and is supposed to be.

Certainly each of us can remember a tradition that is near and dear to our hearts. Opening Christmas presents on Christmas Eve. Giving a red rose to a loved one on that special day. Taking the family summer vacation. The neighborhood parade on the Fourth of July. Suffering through your father's corned beef and cabbage on St. Patrick's Day.

Traditions are what bind a nation. They make us what we are. They are what we are all about. And yet we don't cherish them as we should.

A nation that emasculates its tradi-

tions becomes a culture without identity. Everyday we discard the traditions of our predecessors as if they were meaningless and unimportant in the search for what is "modern" and "improved." "New" doesn't necessarily mean "better."

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln has traditions that have been lost or have diminished in the search for modern life. Every spring, students



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on this campus used to gather to acknowledge the academic achievements of their fellow students. It was called Ivy Day. While it is still recognized, it is revered by few. What was once a grand tradition at the University of Nebraska is now but a mere program. Is this merely the passing of another tradition or have scholastics slipped this far out of the collegiate value system?

I could go on and on about important traditions that are no longer observed at UNL. Remember the card section at the football games? How about groups such as Corncocks and Tassels that used to gather on the field as the football team ran out onto the field? What ever happened to the harmless rivalries that prevailed on this campus? And all-university forums?

On Oct. 13, UNL will attempt to celebrate another tradition that has become attenuated. Years ago, it used to be the celebration of the year. It honored the past, present and future. It involved several weeks of hard work by students, faculty and community leaders, and every year it was a success.

Homecoming. In all reality, UNL's Homecoming is nonexistent. It consists of the annual football game, an ill-attended dance, a small parade, and a few poorly constructed yard displays erected at the last minute by fraternity and sorority members.

Would you want to come home to this?

If you have ever visited another large university during its Homecom-

ing, you understand my point.

A few years ago, I was on the campus of Oklahoma State University during its Homecoming celebration. Extravagant parades. Magnificent floats. Yard displays that took weeks to construct (and looked like it). Campus activities that students and alumni actually attended. Special celebrations sponsored by local businesses. The entire campus was decorated in a festive atmosphere. It was truly an event. Nebraska used to have something like this.

Blame must be placed where blame is due. I don't want point fingers at the University Program Council, the administration or the Homecoming Committee. The blame lies in one place.

Ourselves.

It appears as if the traditions of this institution have little significance anymore. Homecoming is nothing more than another football game. When it comes to this tradition, apathy runs rampant among students and faculty. While this may be the general attitude, it is we who are losing out.

Years ago, Homecoming was a display of pride. It was an opportunity to show off the campus and facilities to alumni and visitors. It made the statement, "We go to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and are proud of it!"

We all reaped the benefits. Alumni got all teary-eyed while reminiscing about the good old days at their alma mater -- so teary-eyed that they often whipped out their checkbooks to "keep a good thing going."

Youths witnessed the display of pride and announced to their parents, "I want to go to the University of Nebraska someday."

It was good for them. It was good for us.

October 13 is still several weeks away. Perhaps we should challenge ourselves in attempting to revive and restore a tradition that is of such great importance. Attend a Homecoming event. Build a quality yard display. Decorate your car. Dress like Husker Bob for the football game. Learn the words to a Nebraska song. Hug an alumnus.

After all, it's a tradition.

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Movie similar to reality

Don't be misled by the title, "The Handmaid's Tale." This film is not about the life of a titting, mindless domestic servant.

Ads claim the filmmaker made a "good movie out of a good book." I prefer to state it this way: The filmmaker made an acceptable movie out of a superb book.

"The Handmaid's Tale" has superfluous "T and A" and scummy sex scenes, but this is in keeping with the novel.

The story is a prescient prediction of what might happen if America doesn't clean up its act -- now. It is about a society desperate to survive a situation that it created with its own pollution; toxic waste dumps, radiation and disease (don't forget to factor Factory Farming into that) have rendered 99 percent of women sterile.

However, this society has not learned its lesson. It still attempts to gain its objectives through force and cruelty (stepping on whoever is convenient in order to get what it wants) without regard to morality or fair play.

I read the book in 1986 and have since watched many of the book's early predictions being fulfilled: the

monetary credit system (discussed in the book, but not the film, unfortunately) has come into use in California, leaking toxic (including radioactive) waste dump exist, and cancer and AIDS are well known.

(Think man isn't responsible for that? The damage to the ozone layer has resulted in a weakening of human resistance to disease, hasn't it? A specific point concerning sterility: it has been proven, in animals subjected to microwaves, that the reproductive organs are the first to go. Gamma rays are not so much shorter than microwaves, and isn't it funny that the majority of human cancers occur in the reproductive organs?)

I believe that there's really something to Margaret Atwood's "The Handmaid's Tale" and that if you think about it you'll agree. We're set up for the possibility. All the components of the situation are moving into place, and the mechanisms already exist for such an enslavement of the American people; they only have to be put into motion.

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