



MICHELLE PAULMAN

Laughing in the face of a crisis

I'm facing a crisis. To be or not to be funny. That is the crisis.

Thus far, hordes of people have come up to me . . . well, maybe not hordes, but a lot . . . well, maybe not a lot, but I've lost track, so it must be more than two.

Anyway, these people have come up to me saying how much they like my columns . . . well, maybe like is too strong a word. They say my stuff is . . . different.

To be or not to be different. That's the crisis. I fear that my columns are merely entertainment for those bored souls who flip to the editorial page to escape their professor's incessant drone.

I'm scared that while I try to be funny, the message that I'm trying to get across to those bored souls will be lost in the farce.

I'm also afraid that when I get up in the morning, my bike tires will have gone flat, I'll have a bad hair day, and my VCR won't have recorded "Beverly Hills 90210."

Just when I think my life is going down the tubes, I turn the boob tube to the lives of eight California teens who face several real-life crises every week.

Every week, the show deals with alcoholism or AIDS or suicide or drugs or something other hot topic o' the decade.

Along with the week's hot topic, other regular fillers include Brandon trying to write something for the school paper while Andrea dogs him about it or Luke and Brenda staring steamily into each others eyes. Get real.

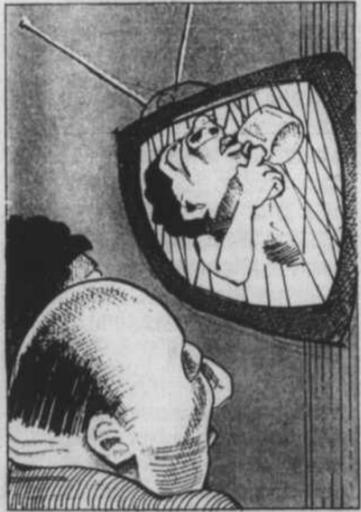
Like I can believe a hokey story line that revolves around snotty, well-to-do Rodeo Drive shoppers who probably have never eaten Ramen noodles or have had to drive a late 1970s model-compact car that runs on a prayer.

Just once, I would like to see the 90210 kids try to pay rent with only \$5 in checking or be forced to give blood

so they can buy some deodorant. But let's face it, "90210" is one of the hottest shows on television, at least where the younger generation is concerned.

And as if one ridiculous show about attractive young people wasn't enough, the networks are bombarding viewers with more of the same formula. According to Rolling Stone's fall TV roundup, 23 of 34 new shows this fall feature teens or "twentysomethings."

"The Round Table" is a show about



some attractive young people in Washington, D.C. "Melrose Place" is a show about some attractive young people in Los Angeles. "The Heights" is a show about some attractive young people in a rock band. And "Covington Cross" is a show about some attractive young people in the Middle Ages. Enough already.

I am tired of programs about attractive young people who live in attractive homes with attractive swimming pools, attractive spice racks, even attractive roaches.

To be or not to be realistic. That's their crisis.

I want to see art that imitates life. I want to see shows I can believe. I want to be a TV star.

Welcome to "Michelle Place," or "MP" for short (which also fits nicely on a T-shirt).

My show wouldn't deal with controversial topics, like safe sex or animal rights or the presidential race.

My show would be about my life as it really is:

Here's the story of a lovely coed who was bringing up two very lovely plants.

One of them had leaves of green, like the crabgrass. The other one was dead.

The TV Guide listing might read something like this: Michelle arrives at campus 20 minutes late for her first class, gets some coffee and hangs out at the Union. Later, she skips her second class to take a nap, but her wacky neighbor keeps coming over in his bathrobe and asking for "a cup of something, whatever you got on tap." So she gives him some Mace. Meanwhile, Michelle's roommate comes home and wonders why her boyfriend next door is screaming.

Yep, no burning social issues here. Just life, jazzed up a little so I can do well in the ratings.

My life reads more like a sitcom than "90210." It is upbeat, fulfilling and just a little wacky. It may not be filled with attractive people, places or things, but it's a lot of fun most of the time.

But there are times when it's not so fun — like when I'm forced to deal with issues such as depression or alcoholism or cancer or AIDS or politics or racism or relationships. These are things that shows like "90210" use to draw viewers to the tube.

They are things I would like to address while I have the time and weekly newspaper space to do so. They are things that keep me awake some nights, worrying and wondering if there is any hope.

Of course there's hope — Bob Hope. There's also Laurel and Hardy. Seinfeld. Murphy Brown. In Living Color.

Although we're not all attractive people who can resolve our problems in an hour (52 minutes if you exclude commercials), laughter in the face of our fear makes life much more bearable.

Crisis averted. Hope you're smiling.

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Open up

Education offers glimpse of other cultures

Going to college is supposed to be an experience that opens students' eyes to a variety of areas. Students should learn as much as they can to be able to understand a diverse and changing world.

ASUN sees things differently.

The Association of Students of the University of Nebraska voted Wednesday to withhold support for the tightened admissions standards proposed by the UNL Admissions Policy Advisory Committee.

The proposal calls for incoming students to have two more years of both a foreign language and math. It would require students to have one more year each of natural science and social science in high school. Foreign language classes are not required for admission to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Ryan Swanson, senator for the College of Architecture, said some students would not have time in their schedules to satisfy the additional foreign language requirement.

But students need to make time for broadening their horizons in ways that no other classes could help them. Students should not be allowed to hide from a broad-based education because their degree is demanding.

In a society that is becoming more ethnically diverse every day, students need to be able to relate to cultures other than their own. Just one year of a foreign language can open up students' eyes to another world, even if it offers them just a glimpse.

OTHERS' VIEWS

MARS

Men trying to change attitudes about rape

About a dozen men at Iowa State have joined together with a mission to change society's thinking about violence against women.

By initiating a step toward changing what some call our "rape society," Men Against Rape and Sexism is proving that not all individuals are mute to the problems within America today.

While it may be surprising that the group is made up only of men and that their presentations are primarily aimed at males, this effort ties in to the fact that, according to Federal Bureau of Investigation reports, one of three women will be affected by sexual violence in her lifetime.

Although crisis centers have been set up for victims, their male counterparts who must often deal with the effects of violence haven't had an outlet for their feelings. Until now.

MARS volunteers serve as a listening-board for men who are affected by rape. The group also addresses the "female" issue — how women are seen in the American society today — and tries to change attitudes.

MARS volunteers find that attitudes in today's society often force the blame for the crime on the victim. Not only does this affect women's standing as individuals but also in the court systems.

Women can be involved in the process of changing attitudes as they want, but it may not be until men talk to men that attitudes will be reversed. At Iowa State, MARS is a very positive step forward to advancing our society's thinking.

— Iowa State Daily

EDITORIAL POLICY

Staff editorials represent the official policy of the Fall 1992 Daily Nebraskan. Policy is set by the Daily Nebraskan Editorial Board. Editorials do not necessarily reflect the views of the university, its employees, the students or the NU Board of Regents. Editorial columns represent the opinion of the author. The regents publish the Daily Nebraskan. They establish the UNL Publications Board to supervise the daily production of the paper. According to policy set by the regents, responsibility for the editorial content of the newspaper lies solely in the hands of its students.

LETTER POLICY

The Daily Nebraskan welcomes brief letters to the editor from all readers and interested others. Letters will be selected for publication on the basis of clarity, originality, timeliness and space available. The Daily Nebraskan retains the right to edit or reject all material submitted. Readers also are welcome to submit material as guest opinions. The editor decides whether material should run as a guest opinion. Letters and guest opinions sent to the newspaper become the property of the Daily Nebraskan and cannot be returned. Anonymous submissions will not be published. Letters should include the author's name, year in school, major and group affiliation, if any. Requests to withhold names will not be granted. Submit material to the Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448.

P.S. Write Back

The Daily Nebraskan wants to hear from you. If you want to voice your opinion about an article that appears in the newspaper, let us know. Just write a brief letter to the editor, sign it, (don't forget your student I.D. number) and mail it to The Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R Street, Lincoln, NE 68588-0448. Or stop by the office in the basement of the Nebraska Union and visit with us. We're all ears.