

DEB McADAMS

# Just can't cure the winter blahs

It's February and I'm dysfunctional. It happens every February. Before there was dysfunction, I was depressed. Before depression, I was crabby. Back on the farm, I had something stuck in my craw. Call it what you will, I'm just sick of winter.

Things that normally don't bother me will drive me nuts in February. I use my fingers in traffic a lot more often. I become oversensitive to criticism. I told one particularly animated professor that he was nothing but one of a bunch of cigar-smoking, high blood-pressure, pasty-faced, overweight, sour-mash-looking men. I'm looking forward to that grade.

By February I have an arrested sense of time and place. The snow will never go away. There will never be leaves on the trees again. No flowers will bloom and no songbirds will return. My feet will never again be warm. The world will forever alternate between frozen polar ice cap and melting feedlot.

I would be fine if society would let me behave according to my own peculiar circadian rhythms. I would spend February in bed, drinking wine and blaming my father for my inability to make huge amounts of money by partially exposing my breasts.

Instead, I'll continue to try and follow the advice of the health community in an effort to cope with something they're calling Seasonal Affective Disorder. The big recommendations have remained the same since the Greeks first wrote them down. They are diet, sleep, exercise, fresh air and frame of mind.

I will eat a carefully balanced diet, except for those 16-hour days with 10-minute breaks. Then I'll probably forget to eat until my body starts



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digesting itself, at which point I will seek the type of superior quality food form that one can obtain at a drive-through window with meter change. Then I'll consume it in the company of various other diners on Holdrege Street who are also trying to reach C.Y. Thompson Library before it closes. The rest of the time I'll manage to get something from the four major food groups: rice, fruit, popcorn and chocolate.

I will maintain regular sleeping patterns, as long as that means four hours on Sunday night, 15 minutes in the ladies' lounge on Monday afternoon, a half-hour in Spanish class and so on until the big sleep on Saturday afternoon.

Anything less erratic doesn't account for an army of bored professors

gathered in some teacher laboratory-lounge, wringing their hands and laughing maniacally about scheduling all their exams during the same week. They do it for us feeble-minded students who can't seem to memorize 5,000 pages of text in 10 minutes. Tell them that you're having difficulty keeping up with the reading and they say, "Other people are doing it!" I find this very helpful.

Exercise is not a problem. I'll just start for campus a week before my first class and park in the Yukon. Then I'll add 50 pounds of books, tapes and gear to the 30 pounds of clothes I'm wearing to keep from freezing to death, and hike the 1,700 miles to campus.

I'll get plenty of fresh air on those hikes until I get to the classroom where it's hot enough to incubate the tuberculosis it sounds like everyone has contracted.

I'll keep my stress level under control, even though the man I love is 500 miles away and I haven't seen him since the birth of Christ. IT DOESN'T BOTHER ME!!! I'm not going to claw the eyeballs from the next person who tells me to relax.

I won't worry. I won't think about the accumulated interest on my non-deferred school loans or the paperwork faux pas that could mean that I have to start paying them this week. I'll just keep pretending that I'm going to get adequate financial aid and that I won't have to move into an appliance box over a steam vent.

This, too, shall pass. February will be over soon, and I probably won't remember any of it. I'll be in a big, brick building with many windows where a nice lady in a white dress is trying to get me to swallow my Prozac.

McAdams is a sophomore news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

SAM KEPFIELD

# State officials need reality check

An open letter to the governor, the chairman of the Legislative Appropriations Committee and the NU Board of Regents.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Years ago, when I first came to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, I was amazed at how little serious commitment there was to higher education in the state of Nebraska, as compared to my native Kansas. I got the impression that UNL's sole reason for existence was to field a football team, for the sole pleasure of getting thrashed in a bowl game every January.

Little has occurred in the seven years since to alter my opinion. In fact, I believe that if the Cornhuskers didn't make a losing bowl appearance every year, UNL would no longer exist.

Your actions in the last year have only aggravated the whole problem. Gov. Ben Nelson talks of cutting 5 percent of the university budget, or nearly \$14 million. It is identical to cuts asked of other agencies, such as welfare, job training or corrections. However, since Nebraska has the ninth-largest state government in the nation, surely this bloated bureaucracy should be downsized, rather than the university.

The mission of a university is different from those of other agencies. The mission is to educate people, to keep them from becoming wards of the state or locked up in prison, to become productive citizens that pay to support the university and all other state services.

State Sen. Scott Moore displays a typically cavalier attitude toward the cuts when he says that a man can afford to "lose an appendix." This ridiculous statement might be merely irritating, were it not for the fact that this is the man who controls the purse strings in the Legislature.

I would ask you, Sen. Moore, to



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take another look at Richards Hall. Attend classes in Burnett Hall and flirt with asbestosis, as I do. View the administrative nightmare at registration or financial aid time. Try to get on a computer when NU lags behind the national average in terminals per student. Remember that the classics program and the speech communications program were barely saved from elimination last year.

Do all that, and then tell me that we can afford to lose an appendix. What other departments have to be eliminated or gutted below any effective operating level to save your ignorance?

The mission of this university is, I repeat, to educate Nebraskans young and old. I contend that the NU system is on its way to a grand failure of that mission. When tuition is so expensive that many can't afford it, and when the services received in return are of such poor quality that it amounts to a waste of money, then we might as

well shut NU down and tell students to go out of state.

Or we could do something about it, right now. Like resolve to get serious about higher education in this state, and make a long-term — 10 years, for example — commitment to fully fund NU.

How, you ask? We have to tighten our belts all around, you say? True, but Nebraska is considering a state lottery. Why not do what our neighbor to the south did and buy into Lotto America and earmark half the funds for higher education?

And I would add this word to the NU Board of Regents — GROW UP! Your antics of the past few months have brought nothing but disgrace to this university, at a time when it can ill-afford it.

Stop leaking letters, firing our president and forcing us to thereby throw away another \$70,000 to look for a new one. Maybe you haven't thought of it, but the ungracious manner in which our last two presidents have been unseated is going to give anyone looking at this job serious pause, and he or she would be entirely justified in not taking it.

Cease with your juvenile behavior and focus on preserving the university budget. It's one of the things for which you are elected. If you aren't up to the job, then maybe the governor and the legislature and the people need to look at another way of choosing you. Or, better yet, admit your failure and quit.

When you finally decide to take higher education seriously, the students, faculty and taxpayers of this state will be grateful. Until then, we're just a second-rate cow college with a second-rate football team that couldn't win a bowl game to save its life.

Kepfield is a graduate student in history, an alumnus of the UNL College of Law and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

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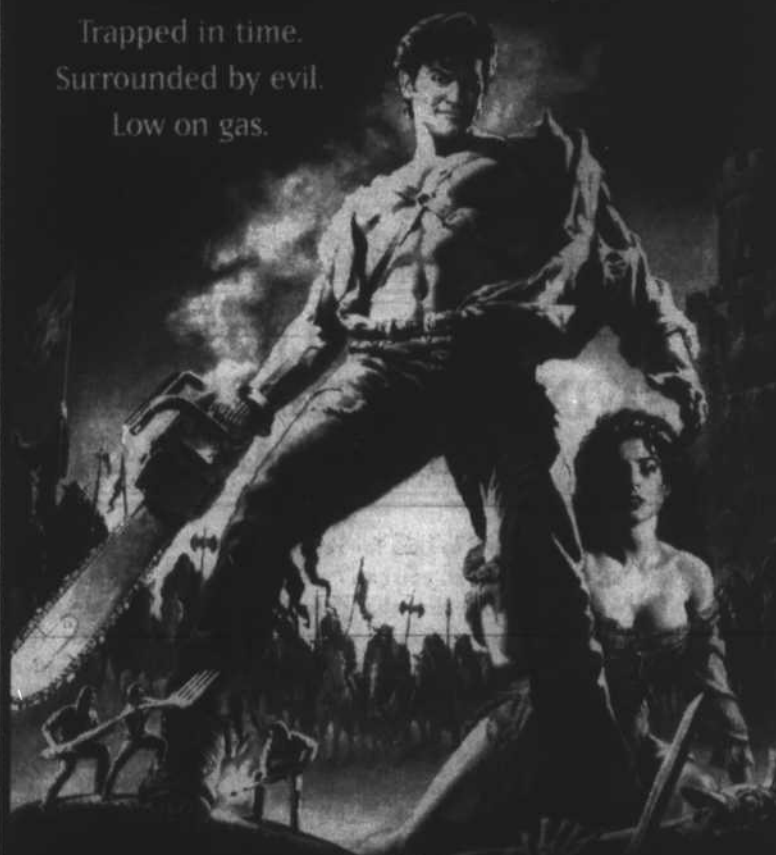
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