

WENDY MOTT

# Wanted: good home for puppy

**W**ith as many lawyers as we have in the United States, people have started making up uses for them.

For example, people now are having custody battles over household pets. They actually go to lawyers, draw up shared-custody settlements and pay doggie support.

I'm a dog lover and understand how attached people can get to a dog. And I understand that relationships between people don't always work out. But I can't quite understand paying thousands of bucks to ensure partial custody of a pooch.

I have a puppy of my own. I guess I have to call her a dog now, seeing as she weighs more than 50 pounds and is as big as a house.

She lives with my boyfriend and his family and has eaten them out of house and home — literally. At the last damage report, she had eaten their couch, their curtains and their carpet.

In some ways, our dog is the biggest commitment we have. It's almost like she's our child. I hope the other dogs don't make fun of her for being born out of wedlock.

If we ever broke up, I wouldn't be able to just let go of the puppy. But I can't see myself running to Jacoby and Meyers and acquiring legal representation.

But this custody issue shows people take their pets seriously. At least some people.

Just about everyone loves little puppies. How could you not?

It takes a hard heart to resist a tiny, furry, cuddly lump with the sweetest eyes and perkier disposition this side of Shirley Temple.

In a lot of ways I like dogs more than I like people. They make you laugh, they're completely honest and they have an innate ability to judge character that I admire and base my opinions on.



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If there were some kind of journalism-puppy job out there, my career would be assured. Maybe I could write press releases for the Humane Society, but I think that would be sort of depressing.

It makes me sick to see dogs whose fate rests on the generosity of a stranger with a yard. It would break my heart to go home at night and leave them behind.

Maybe we can think of this column as a sort of DN doggie newsletter: I just happen to know a little puppy who needs a home.

A woman at work brought down the puppy to try and find it a home. Within minutes the newsroom was filled with ooohs and aaahs and everyone crowded around trying to get a glimpse of it.

Before the hour was gone, the dog had a new owner. Let's call the owner Chris, because that's his name. For a

Sounded good to me. The dog was assured of a good home and I had a good shot at a puppy-sitting position. But things sort of fell apart.

The professor backed out. And Chris discovered that having a dog meant more than buying Purina and chew toys. It means 4 a.m. trips to the backyard, accidents under the couch and chewed-up shoes.

I had a feeling things were going awry when the look of adoration in Chris' eye changed to one of weary acceptance. The dog had become a burden.

After four days the dog still didn't have a name and I began to see that the puppy love had faded.

Now, just like a Disney movie, little No-Name is once again without a home.

I can just picture her tiny black-and-white body fighting the elements for survival. Probably some witch-like woman will kidnap her to make a coat out of her.

I'd open my home to her if I had a home. But I don't even have a fork I can call my own, let alone a plot of land. And I have a feeling my house-mother wouldn't approve of a four-legged resident.

Let's think of No-Name as the pet of the week. If you know someone who can offer No-Name a good home — one with loving, patient grown-ups who understand and appreciate canine personalities — call Chris.

If not, call anyway and try to guilt him into keeping poor little No-Name.

Mott is a senior news-editorial and English major, an associate news editor and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

GARY YOUNG

# Evangelicals take up academia

**I**n 1976, the arguably most important political force in the United States was an eclectic group of Christians — the self-named "evangelicals" — who crossed party lines to vote Jimmy Carter into the presidency. It was the days of "I found it" bumper stickers and brother Jimmy was the great born-again hope.

Of course, presidency in hand, Carter jettisoned the conservative cultural agenda the evangelicals had voted for. Four years later, the politically seasoned (read cynical) evangelicals had shifted back to the Republican Party with considerably less enthusiasm, despite having a candidate who would prove true to his moral agenda.

The evangelicals are gloating again — though this time it is in the academic world. Their current hope is an interpretation of history, that word on every sophomore's lips: "postmodernity." Nobody really knows what "postmodernity" is, but alas, it sounds sexy, like "dialectical" or "praxis."

The promise of postmodernity is apparently clear to evangelicals, however. Modern theology has ignored evangelicals since the mid-19th century, claiming that they did not meet modern academic standards. However, as liberals embrace the first rule of postmodernity — pluralism — presumably all theological views now have rights to stake their claim on truth about God.

If all truth is relative, so the argument goes, then evangelicals have just as much right to express their version of it as Paul Tillich or the Dalai Lama.

Pluralism, however, is not a knowledge system in and of itself. Rather, pluralism emerges when a culture's dominant theory of knowledge loses its force. The dominant theory of knowledge in the West until now has been classical foundationalism.



**It was the days of "I found it" bumper stickers and brother Jimmy was the great born-again hope.**

Classical foundationalism asserted that for one to be justified in holding a belief, the belief must be either of two types. First, a belief is legitimate if it is held as self-evident, incorrigible or evident to the senses. The classic example of this is the equation 1 plus 1 equals 2. This cannot be "proved" as such, but it strikes us as self-evident.

Beliefs that do not meet this first test can also be legitimate if they are logically and consistently derived from this first principle. Hence, 2 plus 2 equals 4 could also be held as true, building on the evidence that logically follows from the first self-evident equation.

However commanding this theory has been since its inception in the Enlightenment, it is perhaps Modernity's most costly casualty in the war of ideas. Notre Dame philosopher Alvin Plantinga provides a critique of foundationalism which is as simple as it is powerful: If these two conditions are the only legitimate basis for holding a belief, how are the conditions themselves legitimated? Where is foundationalism's foundation?

This clever argument explains at

least a part of the evangelical's new-found claim on academia. In it is a defense to Modernity's most common attack on theism, the evidentialist objection to belief in God. The objection was built on David Hume's first principle: "A wise man proportions his belief according to the evidence." Whenever an apologist would advocate God-belief, the skeptic would ask that presumably devastating question: "Where's your evidence?"

Thus, in his book, "Primary Philosophy," Michael Scriven could gush: "Atheism is obligatory in the absence of any evidence. The proper alternative, where there is no evidence is not mere suspension of belief, it is disbelief." But the rebuttal to this argument embarrasses the skeptics with the obvious retort: "So you assert that God does not exist. Where is your evidence?"

Evangelical academics can rest a little easier unharassed by the gadfly atheist objections that carried so much weight in the past. But a second theme suggests that the postmodern academics will remain hostile to God believers. Represented most prominently by Michel Foucault, postmoderns speculate that the violence and suffering of modern history is found in the very structure of human existence: Man is consumed by evil.

Evangelicals, of course, have known this all along; it is a prototype of Augustine's understanding of Original Sin. It is notable, however, that the postmodern version of Original Sin — the will to power — draws on Nietzsche, not on Augustine. None need be reminded of Nietzsche's contempt for the church. Now that Nietzsche's view of man has triumphed, one wonders how plural, how tolerant those with unleashed wills to power will be.

Young is a first year law student and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

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