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## time the kids get out of their school. During the summer, I take a couple of classes and still have free

time to run the kids to swimming lessons or the park and even fit in camping trip or two. Hey, it ain't as easy or fun as it sounds - every student knows

that. Unlike a regular job where empleyees can go home at 5 o'clock, students are tied constantly to school by the umbilical cord of

homework and research. But it's all right, because the pros outweigh the cons, as far as I'm

And sometimes they get hauled to the Daily Nebraskan or the base-ment of Nelle Cochrane Woods.

computer or closed door, they'll entertain themselves drawing or professors with their antics.

only one major flaw, the main "con" in this back-to-school game: the lack of administrative empathy for student-parents.

stay home with a chicken-poxed

One more absence and my grade

grade because a child is sick makes no more sense than a \$20 parking ticket. Staying at home with a sick duty

That's one of the times my child

student-parent who wants to bend or change the rule of being allowed

UNL's holidays coincide with public schools' closures

There is one thing I will ask — no, insist on. When the time comes for me to walk across that stage to receive my long-awaited diploma, Claire and Cameron will walk with

Without their support, the fulfill-ment of this dream wouldn't be possible.

contributor



Merry Noel Douglas spends some time helping her 12-year-old da will be graduating in May — one from college, the other from eler

## Young mother manage School, fiance, child each dem

## By Virginia Newton Staff Reporte

Being a student is a burden itself, but to be a student and responsible for a child adds extra strains on your time and ability to perform to the best of your abil-

Merry Noel Douglas, a 31-year-old elementary education major, has school to attend to, a 12-year-old daughter to care for, and a new fiance with whom to balance all of this.

Douglas, a native of West Virginia, was raised in Heidelberg, Germany where she spent most of her life.

"My father worked for the army in Heidelberg — I tend to feel that I'm from Germany because I spent most of my time there," Douglas said.

Douglas married at an early age to a military soldier and soon had a child.

"I got married when I was 17 - between the 10th and 11th grades," she said. "He was in the military; in fact, he worked un-der my father."

Merry's daughter Jennifer was

born nine days after Merry's birth-day — on New Year's Eve. Douglas said peer pressure made her get married so young. "It was stupid, I admit it was

dumb getting married at that age," she said.

"I got married in the Heidel-berg Castle. It's everybody's fan-tasy — their childhood dream," she said.

Douglas said she was mes-merized by her daughter's father. "This big old GI comes up and

wants to sweep you off your feet and marry you in a castle — of course you're going to say yes," she said.

"I guess I was young and in love," she said. Unlike a lot of pregnant teen-agers, Douglas did not drop out of high school. She finished a

or high school, she thished a semester early. "It was awkward going to school and being pregnant," she said. "I had to get special permis-sion from the military to get married while still attending school and then to continue to school and then to continue to go to school while pregnant."

Douglas' parents were not happy with her marriage and did not share her happiness for her child.

"My parents didn't really like the marriage because they didn't like the guy I chose to marry," she said. "My mother didn't like the

pregnancy because she felt that she was too young to be a grand-mother, (and) she wasn't ready,"



While I spend an hour behind a

Other than the stress of midterm ortfolios and finals, I've found

Before I became studentized, I worked for UNL. As an employee, I was entitled to use my sick time to child.

Now, if one of the kids is ill, I panic if Grandma can't baby-sit. "I can't stay home with you!" I

shriek, knowing I have no choice. "I've already missed three classes.

will be dropped!" It's true, but to be docked a child is a parental privilege and

needs me the most, and I shouldn't have to worry about how it's going to affect my grade point average. Oh, well — I'm not the only

only three absences per semester. If UNL parents would band to-gether, maybe we could also make

Guessthat'd be asking too much, huh?

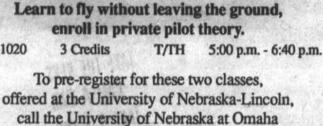
Jill O'Brien is an art major, Arts and Entertainment reporter and a Diversions



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