

KATE PEISTRUP

Student fees eat grocery money

There was not a bowlful of food in the house. Maybe because the bowls had been eaten last week.



But my foe was too large. Even Sophia, with her hyperactive saliva glands, could not take on the entire administrative staff of UNL.

I looked at the ceiling woefully, then it hit me. I ran to the closet and threw open the trap door to the attic. Why hadn't I thought of it before? There was the fiberglass insulation, spread lavishly before me like a smorgasbord. The nights would be a little colder now, the air leaking in and chilling my bones like a Muzak version of "Smoke on the Water." At least my belly would be full. I flopped down and ripped up handfuls of it, stuffing my cheeks full. The shards of fiberglass dug into my tongue. The fluffy filler expanded in my mouth, propping it open and rendering my jaw immobile.

I smirked. The secret of Pizza Shuttle was a secret no more.

Alas, thought I, if only I hadn't spent my last \$174 on student fees. With that much green I could have a feast! Why I could double, maybe triple my size! But dreaming sucks.

Then I thought of Sophia Loren. I had seen several films in which she was starving. What did she do, and how could I look like her while doing it?

"A thousand curses on you, Service Counter 117A," I hissed. I beat my breast and turned, looking for an Italian man to spit on. But my foe was too large. Even Sophia, with her hyperactive saliva glands, could not take on the entire administrative staff of UNL.

I'd spent \$174 for what? I had yet to attend any interpretive dance derbies at the Lied Center or scamper around the track at Sappland Recreation. I hadn't even had one of those free Pap smears that that math major told me his department offers. They had bled me dry, all for naught.

How could I get the money back?

I pondered. Maybe I could go to the Administration Building and explain my situation, and fill out some sort of Refund of Student Fees Form in triplicate, requiring the signature of my department adviser, who has only actually appeared in his office in photographs in the Weekly World News. It would be almost as pleasant as driving an Oldsmobile hood ornament into my thoracic cavity while watching reruns of "Family Matters."

No, I thought, the semester is only half over. I will get my money's worth! Activities will be my food! I will be nourished by rich involvement, fed by crunchy school spirit!

The next day, I rose BEFORE noon and hurried to the Counseling Center. For 45 minutes I confidentially discussed anxiety concerns and organizational planning. I deliberated about my sexual identity, communication skills, anxiety planning and organizational concerns.

Next I scurried to the office of the Ombudsman. We tossed around the Ombudsbat, careful not to soil the Ombudscloth.

After Ombudsing, it was off to the Culture Center. There I talked to White Studies major Marvin Pratt. We spent hours listening to Kenny Rogers albums and reading the latest volume of poetry by Suzanne Somers.

I enjoyed a tour of Love Library.

Thus went my entire week. It was a joy ride of centers, clinics and special performances. I was emotionally

fat and happy. Then as I lay sleeping, a tiny thought began to germinate in my brain. Like a seed. A seed that would grow into a potato. Which could be made into a french fry. My stomach had stopped growling a couple of days ago. It was too weak to speak. Sophia, give me strength!

And she appeared to me. She told me about the Center for Microelectronic and Optical Materials Research. There they teach how to grind lenses. As soon as I have achieved international stardom, she told me, people will be thrilled to buy any product with my name on it. I wouldn't need an impeccable sense of style or anything, the vision impaired would pay my bills forever!

International stardom? Athletes are famous. But they have grace, strength and years of training. Sophia was an actress. But she is physically attractive and has a magnetic presence. Politicians are famous. But they are charismatic and come from high society. Bernard Goetz is famous. Why didn't he design his own optical line? Fate was cracking a window. All I have to do is cause a national incident to get my name in the papers and then financial security is mine. Would "Sherman Tank Kate Specs" fit on one of those skinny carpieces?

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RAINBOW ROWELL

Say no to bell-bottom renaissance

You did it, didn't you? You said you wouldn't, but you did. Yes, you scoffed when they told you that you would, but the cock crowed three times, and you went and did it anyway.

You wore bell-bottoms again. Or maybe you haven't reached that point yet. Maybe you're just wearing stove-pipes, straight-legs.



Go ahead, use some fancy-schmancy euphemism like "free-flowing slacks." A rose by any other name smells as sweet, and you still look like Danny Partridge.

It could be that you just today, for the first time since 1983, stopped folding your jeans at the ankle—the first step toward ringing the bells.

Go ahead, use some fancy-schmancy euphemism like "free-flowing slacks." A rose by any other name smells as sweet, and you still look like Danny Partridge.

Remember how much we used to hate the '70s? Remember how we cheered "WKRP's" Johnny Fever when he set off on a one-man crusade against disco?

Remember in junior high, when you ripped your second-grade class picture from the family album? Remember living in fear that your Izod-polo-shirt-wearin' friends would find evidence that you once wore a pair of bells that would make Quasimodo drool with envy?

I remember mine. They were light blue with even lighter blue stallions charging around my legs. "Faded Glory" was embroidered in gold across the back pockets.

And now, look at us. Like a dog returning to its own vomit, our generation picks up the garments it once cast away.

Bring on the platform shoes, we scream. One more helping of velvet leisure suits, ma'am, if you please. Thank you, sir, may I please have another?

Am I surprised? No, not really. For as long as I've been picking out my own clothes, the hippest, happening styles have been styles of another era.

This trend isn't unique to the world of fashion. Art, architecture, music—the gods that shape our culture have been spewing neo, retro this and that for a solid decade.

And we've swallowed it with our eyes closed—just gulped it down and begged for more.

Maybe there truly is nothing new under the sun. History will just repeat itself over and over.

But if this is true, then bell-bottoms must have popped up before the 1960s and '70s. They just didn't catch on with the same memorable fire. Just another fashion blip in the historical parade between bustles and beehives.

Maybe this "new" look is really a flashback to the 1770s. Instead of those silly knickers and pumps, could it be that all the big-whigs at the Continental Congress were really wearing bells?

Sure, they're not wearing them in those cheesy artist's depictions. But Ben Franklin probably threw a hissy and had all the original paintings destroyed.

"Come on guys, I don't want the French to know I wore bell-bottoms. They'll think I'm a jerk."

So they repainted them wearing cooler clothes—lacyshirts and tights.

I used to look to the future with unbridled excitement and anticipation. I thought that by the year 2000, we'd be closer to the Jetsons than the Bradys.

Like Jane and Judy, I thought we'd

just push a few buttons and then all of a sudden be wearing a smashing new green gown with Saturn rings for sleeves. That should be the future.

Or maybe we still hate bell-bottoms and the '70s just as much as we used to—we just hate ourselves more.

To punish ourselves for a decade of waste and shame that was the 1980s, we've chosen the most repulsive clothing imaginable to wear as our hair shirts.

Because really, let's be honest, as much as we preach that beauty is in the eye of the beholder, some things are just inherently ugly—toenail clippings, open sores, "Greenpoint."

And bell-bottoms. And butterfly collars and gold-plated astronomical pendants and, most especially, clogs.

Can't we move on? Can't we put the past behind us, once and for all? Let's do something no one has ever done before. Let's break new ground. Let's pioneer something, anything.

I feel like I'm stuck in a perpetual Mountain Dew hell—did it, done it, seen it, surfed it.

So go ahead—rehash the past over and over and over again. But as for me, I will be damned to an eternal disco inferno if I ever don a pair of bell-bottoms again.

Rowell is a junior news-editorial, advertising and English major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

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