

**SAM KEPFIELD**

# Graham, greenspace gotta go

**A**t a recent meeting in New Orleans, I was talking with a doctoral candidate about her job interview at the University of Nebraska. Seeing as I had experience — three years of law school, a year of graduate study), she asked me whether she ought to accept an offer were it made. I told her to go somewhere else. It's something I plan to do myself after my master's is completed this spring.



**Here's an idea. If we simply must have green space, then I suggest selling the Apollo 009 capsule to the Kansas Cosmosphere and earmarking the funds for green space.**

This goes beyond my annoyance with Herbie Husker and the people who have to rely on vicarious achievement such as an 11-0 record for their self-image. Coming from Kansas State, I've gotten a little perspective. An 8-2-1 season is fine, and so is a bowl bid. Going 2-8, as they did when I was there in the mid-'80s, is disappointing but not the end of the world. And they don't blame the officials, either.

No, the problem with NU is that there seems to be a lack of common sense at the highest levels of administration. In the last four years, in between public spat with each other and racking up frequent-flyer miles for relatives on state-chartered planes, the regents have managed to:

- Fire a university president without discussing the reasons.
- Hire a replacement that wasn't even on the list.
- Only keep that replacement for three years.

It's a wonder they found anyone to apply here again. God help Dennis Smith, our new president, because the regents won't.

They haven't fired the one person they should, UNL Chancellor Graham Spanier, now in the third year of his politically correct reign. After gaining a reputation for destroying entire programs while in Oregon, he tried to work some of that old budget-cutting magic here at UNL. First the classics department had to go. Then, last year, it was roughly 5 percent of the university budget after a series of cuts over several years had already

trimmed programs bare.

Students rallied, marched on the capitol and managed to forestall most of the cuts. And now, we find out that we preserved the budget, but for what?

Green space, that's what. &%\$#=#+@# GREEN SPACE!! We're going to take a parking lot used at night to prevent long walks to outlying lots and turn it into a damned park for \$200,000. This, after spending \$100,000 to install new lights and emergency phones. How does this man's thought processes work?

Richards Hall is a run-down hell hole? Doesn't matter. Burnett Hall is loaded with asbestos? So what? Sidewalks icing up in winter? Big deal. Students don't have enough green space to sit and commune with nature, or to gaze at bad abstract art? My God! Something must be done immediately!!

Here's an idea. If we simply must have green space, then I suggest selling the Apollo 009 capsule to the Kansas Cosmosphere and earmarking the funds for green space. If we can get the NU Board of Regents to give up their pride in having such an historic artifact rotting away in a metal shed, that is.

Other examples of idiocy abound. The regents have also discovered the need for an engineering college at UNO. Seems having an engineering department 50 miles away isn't enough. In March, we were talking about saving programs; now we're spending money we supposedly don't have to create them?

Now the regents are considering lengthening the residency period be-

cause everyone else has a one-year requirement. This, on top of a tuition hike this year, shows that whatever else they have, business sense isn't one of them.

NU's problem is too many students going out of state, because of cost, and the perceived low rate of return on those dollars. The solution to keeping more students in state, and attracting them from other states, is not raising sky-high costs even higher, but lowering them.

The administration could take a lead from the residence halls and lock in a guaranteed tuition rate for a student's stay at UNL. I also would suggest that the entire system get together and eliminate redundant programs, like a UNO engineering college, and then cut tuition by 5 percent or even 10 percent. Ease residency requirements or eliminate them altogether — it's the same theory behind NAFTA. Lower barriers, and they will come.

The mission of a university is to educate its students, and the continuation of that mission depends on doing so at an affordable price. If NU retains its present focus on pink triangles, green space and "diversity," if the only thing we can take pride in is the annual thrashing in a bowl game, if the administration is inept at managing the business end of the university, then NU roundly deserves to fade into irrelevance.

*Kepfield is a graduate student in history and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.*

**MARK BALDRIDGE**

# Humans have been unleashed

**A**ll cultures of all ages have told stories of gods who fly through the air, perceive at great distances and possess a knowledge larger than the limited human sphere.



**We want to draw a line around our times that includes a tomorrow and a day after. But the only line we have the right to draw is a dotted one.**

Today, we are those gods. And like those gods we possess frightening powers over nature. We cause the extinction of species at the rate of one per day. We can evaporate cities in less time.

Technology has changed everything. There is something new under the sun; we can no longer pretend otherwise.

We are living in the future our grandparents dreamed of.

Within a single lifetime the human species has accomplished more than in hundreds of years previously.

The first human landing on the moon, the eradication of smallpox from the planet, the dawning of the silicon age and the advent of chaos theory, these are my contemporaries — the current events of my brief life.

And there is always the temptation to project, to imagine the future will be like today, only different.

We want to draw a line around our times that includes a tomorrow and a day after. But the only line we have the right to draw is a dotted one.

If I imagine that I can tell you something of the future — flesh out that line and connect the dots — I have to accept the limits of my gaze. I can only see what's possible.

But I'm fortunate to live in an age of possibilities; almost anything I predict will come true, somewhere.

Because we are an unchained species, or can become so.

Not long ago I would have grown up doing pretty much what my father did. My sisters would have emulated my mother.

The modern era is an era of options, if it's anything at all.

The dissemination and proliferation of technologies has made this

possible. Today anyone can cut an album, publish a novel, correspond with VIPs from around the globe and spy on the neighbors using technologies that were completely unavailable 15 years ago.

Electronic media, digital data storage, fiber optics, commercial satellite transmission and laser technologies have opened up a world of possibilities. Think of that next time you stop by a copy center or fax your parents.

Think of it every time you look at a photograph taken this morning in Bosnia or watch a show on cable TV.

The near future will experience an explosion of options as high-end technologies move down the scale toward accessibility.

Lifestyle options, aided by technological networks, will continue to proliferate.

Even now one can buy a glossy magazine on literally any topic, from roller-blading to midgets. And special interest groups, using new technologies like VCRs and E-mail, are exchanging information at an exponential growth rate.

I regularly watch Japanese animation and television shows downloaded direct from the satellite. Lots of people do.

The result of this kind of proliferation is irreversible. We can never go back.

Talk about traditional family values and old-time religion just doesn't make sense anymore.

Sure, a lot of people will continue

to believe as their grandparents did, but they will never again constitute the overwhelming majority those same grandparents always counted on.

As the number of people in "alternative lifestyles" grows, talk of "alternative" will stop making sense.

We will one day view alternatives of belief or life choice with eyes that have grown used to difference. We will no longer see difference as threatening.

People who speak different languages and live in countries on opposite sides of the globe will be in constant contact with one another through electronic networks.

The danger is that oppressive forces will react as they feel their throttle grip failing. They will create new "Red Scares" to keep a frightened populace out of touch and under control.

But in the long run — and here I engage long-range sensors — they will fail.

Governments and multinational corporations are slow-moving and dimwitted, like our old model of the dinosaurs. They will have to run, like the rest of us, just to keep up.

These are exciting times. If I could live at any time in history I would choose now — today, right this minute — to do my living in.

*Baldrige is a senior English major, a Daily Nebraskan arts and entertainment senior reporter and a columnist.*

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