

JAY CRUSE

Valentine inspired persistence

Valentine's Day is just around the corner. The lady who cuts my hair said I'd better do something special for my sweetheart this year. Well, here goes.

Valentine's Day has always been our day, me and Millie. When I was but a youngster, the second week of February was always filled with anticipation. Sure, the exchange of nickel valentines and candy hearts at school was nice, but it was obligatory. When the school bus made its last stop, I'd run to the mailbox in anticipation of the package.

Once warmed up inside, I'd wipe the snow off the present that was too large to fit in the mailbox. Inside, I'd find a toy or a book, candy and a card. Over the years this package has evolved into shipments of the best chocolate chip cookies on Earth.

I guess I have a confession to make. Millie's not just my valentine.

About a year ago, a group of friends and I were discussing who our heroes were. One said John Elway; another said Dan Quayle. (Seriously.) I said Millie Cruse.

Millie's work for the state of Nebraska has earned her several awards. Ol' Bob Kerrey even made her an admiral in the Nebraska State Navy.

Millie's husband is crazy about her, and I can see why. George likes to talk, and I've heard all his good stories numerous times. Even though I'm sure Millie has heard them one hundred more times than I have, she still laughs and makes George think he's the greatest guy of all time.

That laugh. Nothing compares to that most beautiful of laughs. In the van on the way to the Orange Bowl, my friends and I played "True Colors." When the question was asked who in the game had the funniest laugh, I won by a landslide. I guess I



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got that laugh from Millie.

Millie was the tour guide on the great adventures of my youth. Every summer in those lazy days of August before school started again, Millie, along with George the chauffeur, would pile me and a few of my relatives in a van and drive us around the world—or at least around the Midwest. Because of these trips, I've seen a few places while becoming friends with my cousins.

On these trips, I always looked forward to that eventual moment when one of us obnoxious kids would mouth off or punch someone. This never failed to push George over the edge and make him shout:

"That's it! We're not taking you kids on another trip!"

To this, Millie always told him to be quiet and overrode his outrage.

Millie never sits still. She's always doing something, be it learning a new program on her computer or making pillows for Christmas presents. Even on holidays when everyone plays cards, Millie seldom sits down, constantly feeding someone or cleaning up after someone else. She refuses any offers of help, and she probably doesn't get thanked as much as she should. Because of this hard work, everyone always has a good time at her house.

Maybe the most important thing Millie has ever done for me was the pep talk she gave me in my sophomore

year of college. I was fighting with my friends, flunking Keller Plan psychology and generally daydreaming in all my other classes. Part of me was thinking about taking a little time off from the university.

Millie could tell I was unhappy. She told me everything would work out and how proud she was of me.

When she was young, Millie told me, she dreamed of being a nurse. But the family had no money to send her away to pursue this dream and, as she put it, in those days college wasn't exactly considered the place for Bohemian farm girls from Milligan, Nebraska.

Instead, Millie worked to build a life for her two children, one of whom has worked hard to build a life for me.

That story has been my inspiration for the last three years. When going to class seems unimportant, I remember the opportunity I've been given.

In three short months, I'll be crossing the stage to get my diploma from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Afterward, I'll search for Millie in the crowd. Part of that piece of paper belongs to her.

Until that day, Happy Valentine's Day, Grandma. Love always, Jaybird.

Cruse is a senior advertising major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

JUSTIN FIRESTONE

New toys baffle aging columnist

A strange thing happened to me just last week. I woke up before 8 a.m. Don't ask me how or why, because I don't know. What I do know is that it gave me a chance to watch one of my all-time favorite television shows, "The Bozo Show."

The last time I watched "The Bozo Show" was maybe five years ago. After watching it again, I made a shocking discovery. Not only is Bozo getting old, but society's problems all stem from the new toys and games that children play with.

Yes, after an hour of research, several glasses of apple juice and a viewing of the "Sally Jesse Raphael Show," I have come to the inescapable conclusion that the toys and games of today are ruining our future generations. Let me give you some examples:

I remember fondly playing with old Matchbox cars. My favorite, of course, was the General Lee from "The Dukes of Hazzard." I could entertain myself by just rolling the General Lee across the floor, pretending to escape Boss Hog. For extra excitement, I built a wall of dominoes for the Duke Boys to demolish. That was simple and cheap entertainment.

Today, the toys are so complicated that just pronouncing their names becomes difficult. Say Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers quickly five times. Now look at the people sitting next to you. They think you're an idiot. How about Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles? It's toys like these that are ruining the future generations with their complicated names.

A commercial during "The Bozo Show" advertised the new line of Conan the Adventurer action figures. You pull the string on Conan's horse, and it does all the fighting for you. What's the fun in that? No normal kid grew up without physically killing Darth Vader with Luke Skywalker during an intense "Star Wars" figurine battle.

Even the simplest of toys, like the



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dump truck, are perverting future generations. I was in a store and noticed a dump truck called the Mighty Dump. I ask, who in their right mind would name a toy after something you experience after a big meal? What's next? A train called the Huge Toot?

The names of new video games are also much too complicated today. I remember playing Pong. You know, two big, monochrome blocks keep one smaller monochrome block on the screen for as long as possible. Today, games have titles like Street Fighter II: Championship Edition. Instead of an old Pong controller with a dial and no buttons, you now have to master a directional pad and six buttons.

The board games kids play involve no skill or strategy. I remember hours of fun could be spent playing checkers, Life, or even Yahtzee. There were no mechanical parts to put together, no batteries, no winding up of anything was necessary to play. You just set up the game and played. Some intelligence became necessary as your friends developed skills and became good at cheating.

Today, many board games require a mechanical centerpiece and no thought at all. In Dizzy, Dizzy Dinosaur, you have to constantly wind up the dinosaur and watch him demolish your stack of playing pieces. There's no skill involved here. Just hope and pray that Dizzy, Dizzy Dinosaur doesn't, doesn't destroy, destroy your stack, stack.

There's another game called Snardvark where you're an ant on the

tongue of a mechanical aardvark. Needless to say, the tongue keeps drawing your ant closer and closer to the aardvark's mouth. Again, no skill is involved because you wait for the eyes of the aardvark to turn the color of your ant, and then you move your ant further away from his mouth. Exciting, isn't it?

Even if you don't agree with me that the games and toys of today ruining future generations, look at the candy these kids are eating. Everything used to be plain-old cherry, grape or whatever. Now it's "super-sour cherry" or "nuclear-charged grape."

Even Kool-Aid has become complicated, replacing tame orange and tropical punch with flavors like Purplesaurus Rex and The Great Bluedini. You can't fool me; I know Purplesaurus Rex is merely grape mixed with lemonade.

All of these new names and complicated toys make me feel like I'm getting old. You always hear your parents say, "I never had that when I was your age." Now I say things like that. Pretty scary, isn't it?

I may have never had a Mighty Morphin' Power Ranger or Dizzy, Dizzy Dinosaur, but I don't care. I had the simplest of toys and games to play and look at me now. I'm a columnist for my favorite newspaper, the Daily Nebraskan.

Firestone is a sophomore economics major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

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Fast-paced, Sophisticated state-of-the-art entertainment... This is an act you will want to see!
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3, 5, 7 and 9 pm
Mary Riepma Ross Film Theater
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Tickets available at the door.

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CRAIG 'N COMPANY

March 5, 1994
2:30 P.M.
Centennial Room
Nebraska Union

Tickets on sale February 7
Tickets available at all Ticketmaster locations.

Craig first started recording for children in the early '80s, when he made a special visit to his wife's nursery school class. Since that time, Craig has earned a CINE Golden Eagle Award for video excellence for his original songs and lyrics in *Songs For Us*. Craig presently hosts a children show on the Disney Channel called Craig 'n Company.

For more information call 472-8146 or call the UPC Events Hotline at 472-8150.