

PAUL KOESTER

Don't talk dirty to me, it's soil!

The saga continues ...
Now that the university has decided to ignore financial limitations, parking problems and the concerns of women on campus by tearing out one of the most centrally located parking lots, the new debate is which "dirt" to haul in for the new "green space."



The term "dirt" implies worthlessness. There is a reason the Soil Conservation Service was not named the Dirt Conservation Service.

The university has requested that Kennebec "dirt" be used. It is higher quality, less available and therefore more expensive. Gary Varley of Land Construction claimed that this "Mercedes of black dirt" was not necessary, because cheaper construction company black "dirt" would serve the purpose.

I don't care to debate whether Kennebec "dirt" is a Volkswagen or a Mercedes, or whether this rich topsoil is a wise investment. I'm writing to express my concern about the use of that filthy four-letter word, "dirt," in my favorite newspaper.

You see, I'm a soils major, and it pains me to hear folk calling soil "dirt."

There is a difference.

"Dirt" is what you clean off your clothing or scrape off your shoes when you enter a house. Soil is what serves as a medium to grow most of the world's food supply. "Dirt" is that stuff you sweep off the floor and throw into the garbage, but soil is a major storehouse of nutrients and is a home for an incomprehensible number of organisms.

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I found the two articles about the "dirt" debate in the March 15 edition of the Daily Nebraskan very painful to read. I cringed each of the 26 times I read that dirty four-letter word that I shall not repeat.

In a country where nourishment comes from a grocery store and 2 percent of the population grows the entire food supply, it is no surprise that many have little appreciation or understanding of the importance and complexity of soils.

Some day, we shall all get the opportunity to form an intimacy with the soil. Whether our ashes are cast across the land, or our bodies are decomposed by worms, fungus and bacteria, we shall all return to the dust from which we came.

The good news is that we don't have to die to be in touch with the land. Although there is much left to learn, scientists have uncovered many of the secrets of that thin, diverse layer which covers a portion of the earth's surface.

Soils are like snowflakes; no two are alike.

Some soils are dark, others light, and the variations of colors are amazing. Many break up into blocky structures; others break up into columnar, platy or granular ones. Some are sticky, others slippery. Soils vary in texture, from clayey to sandy or silty, with an infinite combination of these components. Soils also vary in the amounts of organic matter and microorganisms they support.

Different soils are more suitable for different purposes, such as agriculture or construction. For instance, Kennebec soil — a fertile, bottom land soil with good aeration, water-

holding and structural properties — would undeniably be a good soil for the "green space."

There are many areas of interest because of the diversity and importance of soils. Soil microbiology, morphology, physics, fertility, chemistry and genesis are important to agriculturists, engineers, geologists and environmentalists.

Soils are interesting from a geological perspective. But they are more interesting to me because they support the plants that feed the life on this planet and purify the water on which we depend.

About 10 percent of the earth's surface is covered by a thin layer of soil with the right climate to grow food. And most of this is not as highly productive as the central plains.

Soils form through weathering processes that take hundreds to thousands of years, and soils are easily carried away by erosional forces. Soils may be dirty, but like forests, they are a limited resource we must appreciate or lose.

So next time you hear somebody calling soil "dirt," remind them where they came from, where they are going and where their next meal will come from.

Koester is a senior soil science major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

PAULA LAVIGNE

Another fan falls for 'The Wall'

It's just a tiny piece of paper really. If I set fire to it, I think it would disappear within seconds — along with my will to live.

I have in my hand one of the most prized possessions in the universe. No, it's not a piece of Richard Nixon's chest hair. It's a ticket, and right in the middle of it are the words "Pink Floyd at Arrowhead Stadium." Whether rain, sleet, snow, blazing sun, tornado or nuclear holocaust, I'm going.



If I were the Pope, going to a Pink Floyd concert would be like meeting God.

The members of Pink Floyd are old enough to be my parents. They've gone through several changes in the past 26 years, and I never thought they'd take the stage again.

If I were the pope, going to a Pink Floyd concert would be like meeting God.

Being the proud owner of the boxed set, the video "The Wall," shirts, posters, postcards and a slew of other compact discs, I am a walking cesspool of Pink Floyd information. The name of Syd Barrett's cat was Roger (Syd's real name), Pink and Floyd were the last names of two jazz players, and "Dark Side of the Moon" remained on the charts longer than any album in history.

"Dark Side of the Moon" came out in 1973, two years before I was even on this planet. Many years later, my friend Lynn and I invaded her brother's room in search of some new Garfield books and other neat things older brothers always had.

Like any eager sixth graders, we dug up some of his old tapes which had some "really weird stuff on it." We popped one tape into Lynn's Barbie-esque "boom box" and listened to what sounded like a man running and breathing heavily. At first we thought it was Lynn's brother, but we picked up on the synthesized space music and the tape cover.

"It's called 'On the Run' by a band called Pink Flamingos or something," she said. "Oh," I said.

I, as all adolescent Velcro-shoe wearing girls did, went through the Tiffany phase, the New Kids on the

Block phase and the Bell Biv DeVoe phase. As soon as I came to my musical senses and blowtorched my NKOTB collection along with a few "Dirty Dancing" posters, Pink Floyd became "my band," and then it became an obsession.

All right, I admit it may seem childish to be obsessed by something so petty as four guys with instruments. Obsession is for people who have pictures of Elvis hanging above their toilets and swear they saw The King in Aisle 9 at Super Saver. Obsession is thousands of polyester-sweater-clad teen-age girls oogling after the best looking Beatle (John) and buying Pepsi because Michael Jackson swore it made his skin white or something.

Under normal circumstances, I'm a calm and collected human being — I don't care what my mother says. But when you mention Pink Floyd I regress to a babbling bowl of Floydian ooze. Too bad.

Why can't people understand how someone can be absolutely addicted to a band? They look at the Grateful Dead — a band with one of the largest cult followings in the world — and dismiss deadheads as lost, misdirected youth raised on Skippy peanut butter, Orange Crush and acid. They chalk up Woodstock to a bunch of pot-smoking hippies looking for something to do while awaiting a UFO abduction.

People who assume this don't realize that from Mozart to Mudhoney, music is something more than notes and words.

It's not just a place on your radio

dial. It's this big intangible art form that touches emotions and nerves deeper than the reach of any dentist's drill. Music is the greatest universal language — whether it be rock, classical, country, rap, reggae, New Age, alternative or whatever.

Musicians become messengers. We look at them and come to an understanding. We respect them more than we do our own president. If Eddie Vedder ran against Bill Clinton in the next election, Tipper Gore would have a heart attack, Stone Gossard would be secretary of state, and the Oval Office would be D.C.'s biggest nightclub.

Music explains things people can't. It defines a generation. When I listen to "The Wall," I don't get "really messed up," as most people put it. I feel this great sense of independence and power.

It talks to me. It does not, however, talk to me like the Beatles "talked" to Charles Manson. For music to affect people that way, they must have existing psychological problems. Music is not harmful. It's a solution, not a problem.

I don't know what I'm going to do when Pink Floyd comes on stage. Spontaneous combustion, perhaps? I'll finally realize they're real men and not just living legends.

Whatever happens, it's worth it. See you on the dark side of the moon.

Lavigne is a freshman news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan senior reporter.

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Applications are available in Suite 220 City Union and the Office for Student Involvement in the East Union.

IMPORTANT DATES TO CONSIDER:

- April 1 Application deadline for priority consideration (5:00 p.m.)
- April 5 Meeting, Nebraska Union Board, City Union, 5:00 p.m. (Organizations invited to present concerns to Board)
- April 12 Union Board Operations Committee presents its recommendations to the Board, City Union 5:00 p.m. (Organizations invited to attend)
- April 26 Final vote by Union Board concerning space allocations. City Union, 5:00 p.m.

Applications must be returned to Suite 220, City Union, by 5:00 Friday, April 1, 1994. Address any questions or concerns to Frank Kuhn, Assistant Director of Nebraska Unions, Room 220 Nebraska Union (472-2181). Applications for East Union may be turned in at the Office for Student Involvement, East Union, by the same deadline, 5:00 p.m. Friday, April 1, 1994.

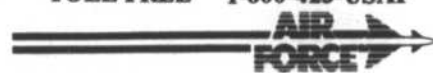


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