

JAY CRUSE

Speech suffering to end soon

My stomach growls. My face is turning beet red. Beads of sweat collect on my forehead. My leg starts to shake. My words and thought processes become a jumbled mess. I just want this experience to be over.

No, I'm not getting a speeding ticket. I'm giving yet another class presentation.

I'm rather certain I'm not the only person on the planet who feels this way. In survey after survey, when people are asked what they are most afraid of, the answer is always the same: speaking in public.

I don't know if I actually fear speaking to a room full of people with whom I have had no previous contact or discussions, especially when it is in the context of a class. Everyone must suffer the same experience. After all, my interpretations of media issues, race relations or whatever the topic du jour may be can't be all that different from the other opinions offered.

What I am afraid of is boring my audience, seeing eyes staring off into the distance, knowing that the topic I have been assigned to discuss is not only boring to me but to several hundred ears around me. And to know that these ears are trapped within the requirements of attendance sheets and class participation points.

If this column is boring, you can fill in the O's, draw in horns and a moustache, and blacken the teeth on my picture, or, heaven forbid, turn to the comics and crossword. (Where have I heard this before?)

If my presentation is boring, too bad. You're stuck. Your options are to tune out and sleep or daydream while inserting the appropriate smiles and approving head nods. You can't leave. You can't turn on the television. You can't blacken my teeth without suffer-



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ing the immediate physical and long-term legal consequences. You can only sit and wait for that beloved class bell, a noise as beautiful as any symphony.

The adrenaline always starts flowing when I view the blank faces, and what little sanity remains prevents me from breaking free of my assigned topic and bursting into a chorus of "The sun'll come out tomorrow, bet your bottom dollar that tomorrow, there'll be sun" and dancing a little jig, anything to entertain.

The pain of personally presenting is offset by Schadenfreude, the German word for the joy of watching others suffer. I'm jealous of those few people who aren't the least bit uncomfortable making speeches. For the rest, I love to watch them squirm, because I can relate.

This aversion to speaking became a permanent scar in seventh grade when I ran for student council. In order to appear on the ballot, all candidates had to speak at a forum listing their goals for the upcoming year.

Dressed in my argyle sweater, Ocean Pacific shorts and boat shoes, I was the epitome of Michael J. Fox, early-'80s yuppie-dom. I had my glowing speech memorized, but my body didn't cooperate when it became crunch time. I fumbled over the words, and the combination of several sodas and pubescent hormones made me unable to stand still.

The disastrous speech came to an

end, and I needed a grand finale. Something to show the rebellious teenager inside the conformist clothing.

So I closed my eyes and stuck my tongue out.

The audience laughed and laughed. This was not a laughing-with-you laugh; this was definitely a laughing-at-you laugh. For the next couple of days, a constant stream of catcalls was my greeting in the impressionable halls of junior high.

As it turned out, the voters scorned me. No secret student council pizza parties for me. The rest of my teen years became an introverted blur.

To this day, when giving a speech, I can still see those hundreds of acned faces and hair spray-teased bangs and a chorus laughing in unison. And my face still turns redder than Memorial Stadium on a September Saturday.

College life, especially this semester, has been a series of in-class presentations. I'm giving my last one ever today. Needless to say, I would rather write a 10-page research paper any time. If this were put up to a class vote at the beginning of the semester, I have a feeling that the majority would concur.

Tomorrow, tomorrow, I love you, tomorrow. You're only a speech away.

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

JUSTIN FIRESTONE

Save Mother Earth; don't flush

Yippee! Hooray! Hee-haw! It's Earth Day!

Every year, the ecology-minded bug sneaks up from behind me and bites me right on the head. After biting me on the head, the bug reminds me that I need to take care of my environment, or else one day — POOF! — it might disappear, à la Jimmy Hoffa.

The theme for me this year is: "Give back to our environment." I take and take and take from my planet, but I seldom give back. This year, I promise that that's all going to change. Today, I'm turning over a new leaf. A new green leaf, that is.

How exactly does a person go about doing this? Well, I could be boring and do everything that environmentalists tell me to do, like recycle newspapers and conserve fossil fuels by riding a bicycle more often. The problem with this is that I like to hoard a healthy stack of every Friday's edition of the paper, and I hate riding bicycles.

So I thought for an incredibly long time and came up with some of my own tips for you to try when saving our current planet. I say current planet, because we may have to leave this one if we don't save it.

Let's start with newspapers. For those of you who are too lazy to recycle the paper, yet love a good fire, why not gather all of them up and have yourself a nice bonfire? You'll be giving back to the planet by replenishing the carbon dioxide supply for plants, and the ashes will be loaded with carbon, the building block of life.

Let's say you want to conserve fossil fuels, but you have to commute every day in a car. What can you possibly do then? For starters, you can drive faster than the speed limit. The faster you get to campus, the less time your car will be running, and the less gas you'll be using. Another great way to save gas is to not use your



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brakes that often. More gas is wasted by stopping than by any other cause.

A lot of you who are concerned for our planet are really concerned about fresh drinking water. One of the biggest wastes of water is flushing the toilet. I suggest only flushing when company is over. This will save clean water for more necessary tasks, like making Kool-Aid.

A side note: You can save yourself a lot of cleanup work by making Kool-Aid (preferably cherry) really thick. If you should spill (and you should) onto your floor, let it sit for about an hour until it dries. Then, simply peel it off, and — POOF! — no more stain.

Here's a hot tip for you hairstylists and barbers: Save those hair clippings from your customers. They make great compost heaps. Of course, you don't have to be a hairstylist or barber to save hair clippings; you can cut your own hair and save it, along with your toenail clippings, to make a nice compost heap for your backyard garden.

A backyard garden is the perfect thing to help cut down on those excess product wrappers and sacks that the grocery store likes to send home with you. A good thing to grow that doesn't need much water is a cactus. The problem with a cactus, however, is that it doesn't easily feed too many people. Hence, my next tip.

Call a group meeting of your residence hall, greek organization, apartment building or whatever, and propose that a patch of land in your back

yard be used to tend chickens. These chickens will provide you with many eggs, which are the source of a good, high-fat diet necessary for every busy college student.

If you get really hungry, you can always eat one of the chickens; better yet, herd cattle in your back yard. Forget vegetarianism, I say. We eat animals, if for no other reason, because they're so darn tasty.

My final tip deals with the small and overlooked creatures called insects. They deserve to live just as much as any human, as long as they're not in my house.

As I attempted to crush an ant the other day, someone stopped me and suggested that the ant was harmless and shouldn't be killed. Well, what was I supposed to do? I didn't want it near me, and I couldn't kill it without appearing to be Stalin, so I picked it up and threw it into the recycling bin for newspapers. I figured that it was a compromise in the truest sense of the word. Plus, I gave back to the planet by recycling the ant.

If you're bored by the mundane (and who isn't?) tips about recycling paper and conserving fossil fuels, try some of my tips. Each one is guaranteed by me to make you feel better about yourself, because instead of taking, you'll be giving back to the environment.

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

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