

CHRIS BANKS

Springtime no time for studying

As I was walking to Love Library on Sunday, I found myself wishing I were a dog and could cool off by wagging my tongue. Ah, the dog's life—no messy sweat and all the girls love you. Of course, I also realized it doesn't do a dog any good if beautiful human women like him. That's when I reached my other conclusion—school gets out too late.



We're just Generation X, and nobody cares about us, including ourselves. We're so apathetic; we let a bunch of journalists name us after Billy Idol's old band.

The semester should have ended several weeks ago, like in mid-March, when the weather still really sucked. I have so much to do before my finals, but what did I do last weekend? I barbecued and watched the Cubs lose again.

All this while I should have been hanging out in a computer lab with the keyboard-jockeys who always find my hunt-and-peck method so amusing. I have a 20-30 page paper on United States-Chinese-Japanese relations ... you know, the boring stuff I wrote about this year that nobody read. (Well, I guess you probably don't know then.)

While I'm on Japan, I just wanted to throw out a theory. Shonen Knife, the Japanese grunge-girls, are proof of the decay of Japanese society. I firmly believe Japan is going down into the cultural gutter right here with us.

Anyway, I've been like everyone else around here, wasting my time and putting off the inevitable: finals. Maybe the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska should do something about the situation. If they lobby hard enough, maybe they could get the second semester to finish sooner.

Yeah, right. Even after kissing up to the Athletic Department all year by passing resolutions condemning the evil AP voters, ASUN got slapped in the face when ticket prices skyrocketed to \$73. I want to formally endorse Matt Stefan's candidacy next year for ASUN president. He wants to disband the resume-padding, ego-inflating, whine-enough-to-trick-the-students-

into-believing-you're-worthwhile, bozo organization. I'm not criticizing the officers I've helped elect every year (Yes, I do vote), but I hope y'all don't really believe you're important.

Speaking of the Huskers, the end of the year does offer the annual Red-White game. If only the Orange Bowl were set up on the same premise: either way, the Huskers win! I predict right now: Nebraska over Notre Dame on January 1. Back to the point at hand, the Spring Game is yet another example of abounding distractions in April.

The best (or worst, if you're trying to study) part about the spring is grilling outside. Friday night, we had a veritable smorgasbord of burgers, hot dogs and baked beans. Even cooler were the black-bagged Jack Daniel's charcoal briquettes. Topping it all off, we watched the boxing match that night where the "bad guy" Michael Moorer won. After listening to hours of the "Holyfield rules/Holyfield sucks" debate, I was just glad to get rid of him.

On a sadder note, just as the fight was to begin, a moment of silence was observed to remember the passing away of Richard Nixon. As a Democrat writing his last column, I had to make mention of this event. I kind of liked Nixon. Though not a completely honest man and one with a bit too much ego (he would have been great in ASUN), Nixon did a good job as president and ex-president, especially with foreign relations. A lot better than Reagan and Ford, at least. Nixon

typifies our nation's dilemma: The only people who run for president are the ones that actually want the lousy job.

During that moment of silence, I had my next brilliant flash. Old Bill (President Clinton) claims to really feel for our generation, enough so that he even makes appearances on MTV. Perhaps as part of the national service bill, where kids pay for college by doing volunteer work, Bill could end the year a little sooner. Grades would go up, and there would be more time to pick up trash or whatever "service" means.

Again, I don't think my plan will work. We're just Generation X, and nobody cares about us, including ourselves. We're so apathetic; we let a bunch of journalists name us after Billy Idol's old band. That's why the nice weather distracts us so much—we don't care enough to make ourselves study. Instead, we'd rather lie around in the sun and give ourselves skin cancer.

Well, I guess I'd better admit to myself that the semester's not going to just magically end, and that finals will be held as planned. Maybe I just should have started everything earlier, when the weather was miserable. Of course, then I wouldn't have had time to watch TV or throw snowballs. I guess it's just always easy to blame things on the weather.

Banks is a junior political science major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

CINDY LANGE-KUBICK

Puberty emphasizes perfection

Remember the "fourth grade film?" That mysterious and slightly silly institutional introduction to puberty? I'd forgotten until last week when a notice came home inviting me to share in this important "event" with my child.



We can't hurl our bodies in front of every television set, movie screen and magazine ad that scream out to her to be thin! Be sexy! Be coy! Just don't be yourself.

I was not ready. But yet, I see my sweet Anna, rushing headlong into that fascinating, frightening world of adolescence. I want to hold her hand through it all—that same small, damp palm I reached for in a darkened room of giggling girls last Friday—and held as we watched an animated egg make its way into an animated uterus.

Unfortunately, mothers can't tag along after their daughters through the emotional abyss of growing up—a place where nothing is animated.

We're not invited to junior high parties where physically developed, but emotionally immature, children drink, smoke and sneak off to darkened rooms for unprotected sex.

We can't tag along through a world where 80 percent of 10-year-old girls are dieting—and 8 million develop life-threatening eating disorders.

We can't share the headphones as our daughters listen to the local radio station blaring, "Girl, I want to make you sweat," and "All that she wants is another baby."

And we can't hurl our bodies in front of every television set, movie screen and magazine ad that scream out to her to be thin! Be sexy! Be coy! Just don't be yourself.

Local author and psychologist Dr. Mary Pipher, in her book "Reviving Ophelia," said our daughters were surrounded by "junk values" in a "girl-poisoned culture" that transforms young girls, who until puberty were the subjects of their own lives, into "the objects of others' lives." She quotes feminist essayist and novelist Simone De Beauvoir, who said that at a certain age, "girls stop being and start seeming."

Our daughters are caught in a world that won't let them "be," so they emulate what they see, hoping that who

they "seem to be will afford them a place in our culture."

During these turbulent years, some parents try to lock their children into physical and emotional straitjackets. Others give up and close their eyes for the duration, hoping that somehow their child makes it through unscathed.

I lived through adolescence—just barely.

In elementary school, I left home in the morning with my skirt a demure 2 inches above the knee. By the time I sighted the flag pole, the waistband rested somewhere in the vicinity of my armpits, with just enough skirt in view to keep my skivvies out of sight.

In sixth grade, I singed off my eyelashes trying to light cigarette butts I'd found on the street.

In junior high, my parents "hired" my friends and I to serve drinks at their annual Big Red pre-game party; afterwards, we served ourselves.

By high school, I'd developed an eating disorder, becoming first anorexic and then bulimic.

Oh my no, I'm not worried about my daughter. A middle child, just like her mother. Long-legged, stubborn, sassy and smart, just like mom. Rebellious, yet conforming, individualistic but a people-pleaser—yep, that's me. My daughter, myself.

I can see us in five years sitting on the "Sally Jessy Raphael" set—me in polyester and pumps, Anna with punked hair and pierced body parts, wondering where we'd gone wrong.

Dr. Pipher would look at this uptight mother and loose-hanging daughter and place the blame on our

"lookist" individualist society.

Young girls are under enormous pressure from a pervasive media and mass culture to conform to a rigid ideal of beauty. Why aren't there public service announcements telling our daughters that only one of 29,000 women has the physical attributes it takes to become a fashion model? Why are so many of their role models thin, fair and busty?

Anna is still at that in-between place. She skips when she's happy. She reads and writes and draws pictures of flowers. She works hard on science projects and at perfecting her sports skills. She laughs with abandon and takes baths with her little brother. Her body is her own—strong and beautiful.

But she's growing up. Time once spent jumping rope has been replaced by too many telephone calls. "Raffi" has been ousted for "Salt and Pepa." The mirror seems to be both her best friend and her worst enemy. And sometimes, when she makes a mistake, she hits herself and says, "I'm stupid."

She's a young girl in a woman-hating world, full of strippers and slasher movies, waif models and swimsuit issues, violent pornography and domestic violence.

We can't stop biology. But maybe with a lot of effort, we can change our culture. For our daughters, for all of us.

Lange-Kubick is a senior news-editorial and sociology major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

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