

MICHELLE PAULMAN

# 'College of life' teaches a lot

There's nothing like the first day of classes, especially if it's a week after they've started.

Last week, I took Monday and Tuesday off from my job to reintroduce myself to the glorious University of Nebraska-Lincoln. I spent Monday filling out forms and getting signatures to ensure my hasty departure come December. Tuesday was consumed by a 17-hour-long reporting class that is not really a class but an exercise in masochism.

After two days of hell, I zipped back to Des Moines to finish my summer job. But all good things, like receiving paychecks, must end. So here I am — again.

Monday morning I walked across campus in a fog induced by lack of caffeine. Everything looked vaguely familiar, but I had this feeling of unease in my gut that wouldn't go away. I felt different somehow.

Then I realized something: I was naked beneath my clothes.

No, that's not it. I felt old.

I have only 24 years under my belt, but most of the people I passed on the quad were a few years younger than I. The exception was the graduate students, but they've already got their first degree, maybe even a second or a third. I'm still on sheepskin No. 1, and I'm getting crow's-feet.

I shouldn't complain; it's my own damn fault that I'm still here. But sitting in stuffy classrooms and letting cobwebs grow over my eyelids didn't sound appealing last year.

So I enrolled in the college of life.

I took pictures for a newspaper in eastern Pennsylvania. I knocked on doors in small towns in Nebraska for an environmental group. I butchered a foreign language in a small town in the Czech Republic. I drank too



*Lincoln seems like such small potatoes now. Around campus, I hear people pondering whether to skip a class, skip a semester, skip to my Lou or skip the cafeteria to go to Burger King.*

much in Belgium, smoked too much in Amsterdam and, thanks to the flu, spent too much money on bathrooms in Paris.

Lincoln seems like such small potatoes now. Around campus, I hear people pondering whether or not to skip a class, skip a semester, skip to my Lou or skip the cafeteria to go to Burger King.

That used to be me — naive, self-centered, concerned about what shoes went with my outfit and how much booze I could buy for a buck when my student loan came in.

Now I'm a woman of the world, wearing my sports sandals every day, with socks if it's cold, and I don't have a buck with which to buy any booze, because my Pell Grant hasn't come in yet.

That's right, Pell Grant. No more student loan crap for me. Heck, a year ago I couldn't even get a loan, let alone a grant, because I wasn't old enough.

You see, ol' Uncle Sam insisted when I was younger than 24 that my parents were devoting their every penny to my education. Never mind that I worked 50 hours a week. Never mind that I sold my plasma. Never mind that during the past six years I've eaten enough 25-cent boxed macaroni-and-cheese dinners to feed Rwanda.

But this year's financial aid form says being born after Jan. 1, 1970,

releases me from the bottom line on my folks' 1040A. I'm free. I'm mature. I'm naked under my clothes. I'm now a "nontraditional" student.

As opposed to a "traditional" student — whatever that is — an NTS has done other things — like working 20 years in a widget plant or raising three kids — before going to college.

The NTS is old enough to be your mother, dresses better than your professor and is smarter than than all the freshman on this campus combined but gets worse grades because she either has to put in a 40-hour week at the widget plant or take care of her kids or both. And to top it off, she's taking classes.

Whew. I'm tired just thinking about it.

I'm not anyone's mother, and I'm not working at the widget plant — yet. But I've been there, done that and gotten a lot more bang for my buck than if I had breezed through here in just four years. I'm proud to say that I'll graduate from UNL with an immense debt hanging over my head, some great photos of Europe and crow's-feet.

And I'll be naked under my robe, too.

Paulman is a senior news-editorial and history major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

JUSTIN FIRESTONE

# Bathroom refreshes minds

Enlightenment. Self actualization. Quality time spent in the bathroom.

Which one of these is not like the other? Well, that's a trick question, because they all go together.

How do I know this? I've spent about 16 years (depending upon when I first remember being in a bathroom) studying and researching the effects of prolonged stays in a bathroom. The result: the bathroom is the source of all great thinking.

Why is this? The main reason is because you are isolated from the outside world (hopefully — or at least from strangers, because they tend to disrupt the thinking process) when in the bathroom. Once inside, your brain is free to think.

No one is there to bother you with trivial questions, like: "Will you please come kill this spider?" (the exception being when the spider is in the bathroom), or "Did you tape Oprah?"

Is great thinking only specific to the bathroom? There is not enough data at this time to make a definitive answer, but certain niceties in the bathroom can be replicated.

For instance, you may be taking a bath or shower, and the running water makes a pleasant noise conducive to thinking. Another pleasant noise may be a running fan. Obviously, it's possible to have a fan and running water outside of the bathroom, but great thinking is not always done simply by listening to a running fan.

Is there something else about the bathroom that makes it special? Well, maybe not the bathroom itself, but possibly you are special in that you have less clothing on. "Freeing" the body from your clothes returns it to its natural state physically, and this helps us to think mentally, since we are naturally thinkers (i.e., homo sapiens).

So, if you have a fan running, and a nice waterfall, and you're naked,



*So, if you have a fan running, and a nice waterfall, and you're naked, will you be a great thinker? Probably not. Someone will usually come visit you and take you away for a while, and then you'll have lots of time to think.*

will you be a great thinker? Probably not. Someone will usually come visit you and take you away for a while, and then you'll have lots of time to think. Here's the key: the bathroom is a private place.

Yes, while taking a shower or bath, or doing other, more releasing activities, you can do anything you want to, because the bathroom is your place and no one else's. This is why those of you who live in an area where there is a "collective" bathroom on your floor are at a serious disadvantage.

Some of my best ideas come to me in a flash, and when they do, I'm in a perfect state of mind to criticize them. Why, one time I developed a sure-fire way to eliminate our national debt (which I plan to tell you about sometime in the future). I even developed the idea for a fantastic game show called: "You Bet Your Pants!"

The game show idea isn't very good (I had plenty of time to think about this while enjoying a bath) because no one would ever bet their pants. This demonstrates the system of checks and balances in bathroom thinking. A bad idea can be checked, and good ones are bound to survive.

An example of a good idea I developed was a kitchen appliance called the electric cheese slicer. My friends have told me that they've developed such great ideas as carbonated cheese beverages and bacon and egg-flavored ice cream.

You don't have to just think when

in the bathroom, though. Some of my quickest reading is done in the bathroom. I once read an entire book. (Hence the phrase: "What are you doing in there? Reading a book?") I even completed a research paper (the best I've ever written). I don't suggest actually researching in the bathroom, but if you've got your notecards with you, you can make one of the best outlines anyone has ever seen.

Bathroom thinking does have its pitfalls. Certain things can happen that can ruin your thinking process for weeks. Take forgetting a towel, or running out of toilet paper. After you first discover that these items are missing, there's a standard period of five to ten minutes where you just sit and hope that they will magically reappear.

After the standard five minutes are up, you get enough gumption to make a run for the towels or toilet paper, and usually, you're okay. But if someone catches you, your productive thinking is done for that day. If truly traumatic, maybe that entire week.

This ends my dissertation on bathroom thinking. I encourage you to spend as much time as possible in the bathroom. If the scientific vernacular used to explain this was difficult to understand, please write for the layman's version.

Firestone is a Latin and economics major and a Daily Nebraskan guest columnist.

# SUPER SAVER VIDEO

27th & Cornhusker  
466-7100

56th & Hwy 2  
423-7181

Bring this coupon to either  
**SUPER SAVER**  
listed above and receive one FREE  
video rental per membership.

Offer Expires 9-31-94

All regular releases  
**2 for the price of 1**  
**Monday-Wednesday**  
**ONLY \$.96+tax for 3 DAYS**

New Releases ONLY \$1.96+tax for 1 day

Get a Super Saver  
Video Membership  
with valid drivers  
license, student ID and  
proof of current  
address.

Get a Super Saver  
Video Membership  
with valid drivers  
license, student ID  
proof of cur  
add

We Rent:  
Nintendo  
Super Nintendo  
Sega and  
Typewriters

We Rent:  
Nintendo  
Super N  
Typ

# UNLIMITED ROUND-TRIP FLIGHTS FOR ONLY \$10.

**A ten-dollar bill buys you  
nonstop midway rides these days:**

Friday, August 26	6 p.m. - midnight
Sunday, August 28	noon - 5 p.m.
Monday, August 29	6 p.m. - midnight
Tuesday, August 30	6 p.m. - midnight
Wednesday, August 31	6 p.m. - midnight
Thursday, September 1	6 p.m. - midnight
Friday, September 2	6 p.m. - midnight
Monday, September 5	6 p.m. - midnight



August 26-September 5 • Lincoln