

KIM STOCK

UNL following crooked path

Thanksgiving is a weird holiday. When I was younger, I didn't care for Thanksgiving, because I knew this day meant a long drive in the car to Grandma's house for dinner. Sure, I liked eating turkey and pumpkin pie — who doesn't? But there was something depressing about getting the whole day off from school and having to spend it with relatives.

Despite elementary schoolteachers' efforts, I didn't care about the Pilgrims' dinner with American Indians. Halloween had passed, and nothing could compare with dressing up for free candy. The only redeemable quality about Thanksgiving was that it was approximately one month away from Christmas.

Now that I'm older and in college, I understand the true meaning of Thanksgiving. Most of us cherish the short time we are able to spend with family and friends in our hometowns. We realize the importance of chewing each bit of homemade turkey carefully. Good food is hard to come by for poor college students.

We have a lot to be thankful for. Before I start sounding like some trite cliché, let me stop while I'm ahead. Yes, we have a lot to be thankful for, but this isn't the issue I want to address. Leave the prayers and heartfelt smiles for the dinner table.

We have a lot to be unthankful for.

Of course we each have our reasons why this is true. But I'm sure you're not reading my column for my own sob story. We, as students on this campus, have more in common than being mutual tuition payers. Most of us share the same griefs about this university.

Parking Services should, for once, live up to its name and "serve" — that is, serve students. If it wasn't bad enough for Parking



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For example, my friend parked his car in front of my residence hall long enough to help carry in my laundry. He couldn't have left his car for longer than two minutes. When he returned, a ticket inviting him to pay \$25 to Parking Services had been placed on his car.

It's as if the parking police hide in the bushes waiting for innocent, unsuspecting students to illegally park their cars. Once the car is parked and the student is out of eyesight, officers from the parking police come out from the bushes, their eyes dark with evil and their lips wet with the lust of ticket-writing. Making students unhappy is their desire.

The police in Lincoln stop ticketing meters at about 6 or 7 p.m. Campus police, however, hunt until 7:30 p.m. This is just long enough to ticket students who park for night classes.

But there is a bright spot. With the extra money from raised ticket prices and stickers, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln will build a parking garage — but it's not necessarily intended for students.

This leads me to my next point. The green space is one of the university's prime experiments in stupidity. When I ask students what

they think the main problems on this campus are, they always say, "Parking."

Anyone who is aware of students' concerns knows parking is a problem. The chancellor of this university should be aware of our concerns and should try to solve this problem. However, one day Chancellor Graham Spanier looked out the window of the Nebraska Union and decided he didn't like looking at the parking lot. After many ignored student protests, the parking lot was torn out and replaced with grass.

This isn't even a pretty green space. For the money spent, some nice hills and trees could have been added to the landscape. What we see instead is a wired fence and a concrete path that leads nowhere. The path could at least be straight.

There are several crooked paths this university takes. Decisions always should be made for the best interest of the students.

We can go home and relax for a few days this Thanksgiving holiday. We can hug our family and thank God for our many blessings.

But with the first conspicuous parking ticket placed on our windshield, we will realize for whom UNL's administration is thankful.

Stock is a junior secondary education major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

E. HUGHES SHANKS

Humans not meant for water

Let's face it: Even though I'm a great lifeguard, I can't do the "eggbeater" kick. There, I said it. The eggbeater (or rotary) kick requires unusual movement of the legs. It makes them move in circles, with your knee as the pivot point.

This is not what God intended. It's roughly the same direction that Joe Theisman's knee went when his leg was almost torn off during his final football game. If you have ever seen that sports highlight footage — YEEEEOUCH!

The great magician Harry Houdini was killed in water, messing around with nature. He performed an insane but incredible escape while hanging by his feet upside down, completely submerged in water, shackled, chained and sealed in a locked tank.

Although he had successfully performed the feat several times, folklore has it that he was experimenting with what he called "metamorphosis." This concept might have involved osmosis or the transmutation of matter — namely his own body. What a whacko!

To say the very least, Houdini had no business near water. Were he alive today and swimming at my pool, I'd be blowing my whistle at him constantly. Just being in the water is unnatural enough, but this guy takes the cake!

Every three years, a lifeguard has to recertify with the Red Cross by taking both written and water tests. That means we have to prove our lifesaving abilities. For many guards, recertifying is just a formality. For others, there's just one hitch: the "brick."

A nemesis to some, the "brick" is a 10-pound monster — a solid black block that separates the women and men from the girls and boys. It is used once every three years to "simulate" the weight of a drowning victim. No doubt many guards truly dread this part of testing.

The standard is to hold the brick



A swimmer always has to do something that is completely against common sense. That's one of the reasons lifeguards are so important, because humans don't really belong in the water. Things happen.

out of the water with both hands for one minute while treading with your feet. It sounds simple enough, doesn't it?

It is, if you can do the eggbeater kick.

When learning swimming skills, one learns that what is natural doesn't apply. That type of kick requires something quite unnatural. Holding the brick up and out of the water can be done with other kicks for which the legs move in a more natural direction. You know, back and forth, like normal. Unfortunately, it makes it a tad bit harder to hold up the brick.

When learning to swim, children learn to let their bodies do things they ordinarily would not do. I enjoy telling anxious parents who are embarrassed about a child's poor performance: "Don't worry about it. Who in his right mind would willingly put his head under water so he couldn't breathe?"

My favorite thing to say when kids are learning to dive — instead of belly flop — is: "Don't worry, kid. Why would you want to jump head first into something anyway? It's much better to land flat on your stomach."

A swimmer always has to do something that is completely against common sense. That's one of the reasons lifeguards are so important, because humans don't really belong in the water. Things happen.

On land the brick weighs 10 pounds. In the water it equals the

weight of a limp body in open water. And believe me, handling the weight of a limp body in open water is an awesome feat.

I have a friend who tested on the "brick" yesterday. He happens to be one of those people who can swim, and like me, he cannot do the eggbeater kick. He had already made several attempts during the last two classes.

The brick is 1 percent physical and 99 percent mental, I thought. And even though I swim eight to 15 miles a week year-round, I failed on my first try!

During his previous attempts, my friend started out well, keeping himself well above the surface. He used a good strong "scissor" kick. With practice and concentration, that will work. But swimming is unique. There always is something extra required. Something almost supernatural.

I didn't know what to say to him between trials. What could I say? I told him how much trouble I had had three years ago.

"When I first became a guard, it took me five tries, and I swim up to three kilometers at a time in triathlons," I said.

I should have told him that in order to do it, he would need to find a new part of himself that he didn't know existed — perhaps something similar to what Houdini was looking for.

Shanks is a graduate student and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

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