

DEB McADAMS

# Biking eases life's problems

My first one was blue.

It had a yellow banana seat, a sissy bar and ape-hanger handle bars with pink grips. I scoffed at training wheels and powder-pink, girly bikes with streamers. I was born to bike.

I had to share the spray-painted Schwinn with my numbskull of a brother, who had started to fulfill by father's dream of having a gearhead for a son. Together, they dissected the poor Schwinn and mutated it into a Stingray hog. When they entered their motorcycle phase, they forgot about the bicycle, and me.

I could never compete with my brother for our dad's attention. Jim became a champion motocross rider. He and my dad went to races all over the state. Every year, we had to hunt down the latest racing bikes that were winning on the international circuit. The only mechanic in the county who could fix the Hodaka "Super Rat" was an old hippie biker who ran a combination boot-shoe-motorcycle repair shop.

Naturally, I wanted to race, too, but my dad wouldn't hear of it. I was a girl, after all, and I should be kept engaged in girl activities. I looked at my mother's life and saw that girl activities meant cooking, cleaning, doing laundry and picking up the slack for a spouse in his second adolescence.

I was pretty sure I preferred racing motorcycles.

My resentment for my family's gender expectations grew, and so did my parents' disappointment with my rebellion. The only thing that didn't grow was our understanding of one another. My dad was preoccupied, my mother was tired, my brother was high and I was alone.

Then I discovered the 10-speed.

Balloon tires and fat frames were gone. They were replaced by curlicue handle bars and tires the



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size of garden hose. I had a new reason to live.

I began a campaign of whining. I could never just come out and ask my dad for something. He scared the hell out of me. I would just sort of grovel and then take cover when he went into his "you-kids-act-like-I'm-made-of-money" tirade.

I was not to be deterred. I pulled out the big guns one day when he was telling me he couldn't afford a bicycle. I asked him how, then, could he manage to buy new motorcycles, and recently, a rash of '57 Chevies.

The next week, he took me to the local Coast to Coast and bought me the 10-speed of my choice. It was a white, 20-inch Huffy with toe-clips on the pedals. I had to tip it over to touch the ground ... when I managed to get my feet out of the toe-clips.

Suddenly, I was free. I could get away from that farm, my drugged-out brother, my tyrannical father and my angry mother. I'd spend hours riding just to stay away from home.

Then I got a driver's license, a night job and a taste for sloe gin. I became a hood. At least I tried to be a hood. I was on the student government, and I still got good grades, which made me more of a quasi-hood.

Quasi-hoodom wasn't quite enough to get my father's attention, but going to jail brought him around. It also got my license taken away. I ended up back at

the Coast to Coast and left with a green, standard, 1-speed bike with pedal-backward brakes.

Ten years later, I rode the tires off a Schwinn World Tourist while I reconciled my divorce. A black Mt. Shasta Capella was necessary to exercise my anger toward my family. My father's implication that I must be a lesbian since I divorced a perfectly good man called for several hundred miles.

I had almost forgiven him when the Capella disappeared from my front porch. I was sick.

I told my mom what happened during one of our Sunday phone conversations. The next week, my dad got on the phone. We talked about the damn Republicans and the corn crop. He asked about my bike, and then he said he'd buy me a new one.

He hadn't bought a bicycle for nearly 25 years, when I got the white Huffy. I knew he didn't realize what he was saying, but it didn't matter. My father was extending an olive branch.

He'd probably never figure out why I don't eat meat, watch Billy Graham or beg my ex-husband to take me back, but he did seem to understand I was born to bike. That was enough. I didn't really expect him to come through, once he saw the price tags, but I didn't mind.

It's a gold Schwinn Criss Cross.

McAdams is a junior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

SHANE TUCKER

# God's been ousted long enough

The secularists are on the march again, seeking to crucify Speaker-in-waiting Newt Gingrich over a long-awaited Constitutional amendment to protect school prayer.

The amendment, introduced by Rep. Ernest Istook, Jr., R-Okla., has picked up 44 co-sponsors, and Gingrich has promised to bring it up to a vote by July 4.

It would seem such an amendment would be unnecessary. The First Amendment clearly states that government cannot interfere with an individual's right to worship. However, modern lingo dictates that secular must be anti-religious, consequently placing Christian public school children on the chopping block.

Allow me to give a few examples cited by Paul Greenburg of the Los Angeles Times Syndicate:

- Ten-year-old Raymond Raines bowed his head to say a silent prayer over lunch in his St. Louis public school cafeteria. For his subversive activity, little Raymond was placed in detention for a week and told that if he wished to pray over his meal, he must eat in a room by himself.

- Thirty Texas high school students came face to face with secular America as they gathered to pray at the flagpole before school one morning. The principle dispersed the group and told them if they wanted to pray, they would have to do so in private.

- A high school principle in Illinois used the police to dismiss a similar gathering. Two students were arrested.

Contrary to popular opinion, these were not the intentions of our founding fathers who sought to construct a "wall of separation" between the state and religion.



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They sought to restrict federal and not state authority on religious matters. To protect religious freedom, not provide for its senseless persecution.

In fact, Jefferson and Madison introduced a bill for the punishment of Sabbath breakers that became Virginia law in 1786.

As President, Jefferson built churches and established missions with federal money for the purpose of bringing the Gospel to Native Americans.

Clearly our founding fathers, even a deist like Jefferson, sought to preserve the religious traditions of our great country rather than see them sacrificed to the almighty altar of "pluralism" and "diversity."

So if the Constitution protects it, and the framers of our Constitution wanted it, why is religion increasingly under attack?

Much of the blame lies on the Supreme Court, and in particular, the Warren Court. As New Deal aficionados, the Court time and time again has disregarded the Constitutional restrictions placed upon it: "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people."

Consequently, the Warren Court has removed prayer from

public life, and the enforcers of public policy have revived the inquisition, with humanist intentions this time around.

On the flip-side, however, if the states take up the torch of religious responsibility, granted to them by our Constitution, what will become of the secularists, the agnostics, the atheists, the humanists?

Doctrinal differences between various God-fearing religions, another possible obstacle to the amendment, can also easily be hashed out.

For example, in 1962, clergy of various religions in New York City formulated the following school prayer: "Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence upon Thee and we beg Thy blessings upon us, our parents, our teachers and our country."

It would be prudent, then, for Congress to bring this protection of school prayer to a vote and for the states to quickly ratify the amendment. Anything less would be an affront to the Constitution, the ideals of its framers, and the heart and soul of American tradition.

Religion was American long before baseball, and God doesn't go on strike.

Tucker is a senior biology major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.



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