

Being hip isn't always dope

Recently while skimming the classifieds of our esteemed Daily Nebraskan to look for deals on 20-year old, beer-stained sofas, I came upon a most amusing ad.

Even more amusing than the normal perverse personals, this advertisement solicited calls for tips on what's hot in California.

"Know what Californians know now. Never be six months behind again," the advertisement read. "All the popular movies before you see them, music before you hear it, fads, fashion, food, slang, fun facts and more." And guess what, folks? Only two dollars per minute.

Yes, slap me upside the head and take away my calling card — I called, but only long enough to gather information for the public. It was a little civic duty for my fellow man.

And I feel the call is well worth the money. Being on the opposite side of hipness could leave one in hysterics. Imagine looking into the mirror and having no idea of the latest, hippest, West-Coast way to style your hair. Imagine running to your closet just to find that you're a fashion misfit who belongs on the pages of a Kmart sales flier. Imagine being at the breakfast table and having no idea of the proper slang with which to address your friends.

"Gee, Kelly, you're looking freshly dope today."

"No, Heather, either say 'fresh' or say 'dope,'" she'd reply.

"Oh, I'm sorry. Forgive me, you look like a fly in honey."

"No, Heather. You say 'Honey, you look fly.' You really need to call that fabulous California hot line. Really Heather, you're so behind."

Am I behind? Are we all behind? Is this really what the rest of the country thinks of the Midwest? Are we really a bunch of followers who wait anxiously to be



Heather Lampe

told what to wear, what to eat and what to say? Apparently some money-hungry telemarketer thinks we are.

I don't know about the rest of you, but I don't go to the store looking for clothes that the "more hip, more fashionable" people on the coast are wearing. Like most women, I shop for clothing that won't make my butt look huge. And men, if you're anything like my boyfriend, you'll wear whatever your girlfriend likes or whatever passes the dirty-laundry smell test.

I wear what flatters my body, and if it happens to be in fashion, then fine. But I have this sinking feeling that the fashionably hip people of California are playing some sick joke on us. Can't you just hear them scheming against us?

"Think hard, guys," they're saying. "What can we do to them this year? Last year, we had them walking around in bell-bottoms and platforms. This year, let's tell them that it's hip to wear your underwear on the outside of your clothes. Those stupid hicks will never know."

I am positive that it's a conspiracy. I went to California two years ago when '70s clothing and bell-bottoms were supposedly the hot clothes to be wearing.

And did I see one native Californian with polyester hip-huggers on? No!

The conspiracy is probably larger than I first may have believed. California is probably

fighting with New York over who gets control over the Midwest this year. While we sit hypnotized by Cornhusker football and our illustrious national championship, New York and California plot our fashionable demise:

"Listen, New York, you had Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas and the Dakotas last year. This year they're ours. We'll give you the southern states and, as an extra bonus, we'll throw in Oklahoma."

"Okay, California, but since you failed at making them eat sushi a couple of years ago, you have to promise to make those cowpokes believe that chocolate-covered bird droppings have become a delicacy."

"You've got yourself a deal." Wake up, fellow Midwesterners! We must put a stop to this evil plot as soon as possible.

Why do we need to know the latest surf lingo when we live hundreds of miles from the ocean? Do we really want to take advice from people who continue to rebuild their homes on cliffs during mudslide season? Should we actually listen to people who are stupid enough to live on a moving fault line? If you ask me, their noggins have been shaken a few too many times for their own good.

It doesn't take six months for "what's hot" to get here. The states around here may be flat and covered with corn and the occasional cow, but for God's sake, we do have cable television. Hey, some of us even own radios, attend movies, read newspapers and use telephones. You probably won't believe it, but just last year I sold my horse and covered wagon and bought me one of 'dem 'der new-fangled automobiles.

AREN'T I DOPEY? I mean, dope.

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

Mendislike Hillary's ideas, not strength

The "strong women frighten men and so that's why some people don't like Hillary Rodham Clinton" crowd is at it again.

New York Times columnist Frank Rich has found proof of this in a survey by CinemaScore of audiences at the showing of the film "Little Women." Men aren't showing up, says the survey, and Rich thinks this reveals why so many men don't like Mrs. Clinton. "Little Women" shows how strong women can be, and that threatens a male's masculinity and self-esteem, he concludes.

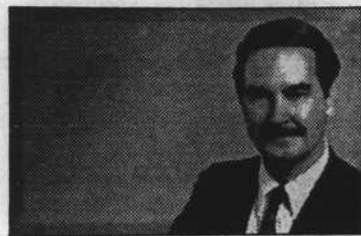
But Mrs. Clinton's problems are not about "strength." A lot of men admire Margaret Thatcher (whose husband remained in the background during her tenure as British prime minister, not because he was weak but because he hadn't been elected).

During the 1992 campaign and until the health care debacle, Mrs. Clinton was regularly characterized by her fans as "intelligent." House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Dan Rostenkowski gushed that in the future people would speak of the president as her husband.

I've met Mrs. Clinton twice; both were social occasions. Yes, she is intelligent and very pleasant. I'm sure she was the perfect hostess last week for Newt Gingrich and his mother. But intelligence can be overrated, and strength is often misdefined. It is wisdom we should look for — and if you doubt that, consider some definitions.

Among other definitions of intelligence is "the ability to apply knowledge to manipulate one's environment ... shrewdness." Now that doesn't sound very pleasant. A more positive definition includes "revealing or reflecting good judgment or sound thought." By her own admission, Mrs. Clinton did not reflect good judgment in promoting nationalized health care. She badly stumbled on personnel selections, putting race, gender and cronyism ahead of competence and experience.

Had Mrs. Clinton pursued wisdom, she would have acquired an "ability to discern inner qualities and relationships;



Cal Thomas

insight; good sense; a wise attitude or course of action."

Mrs. Clinton's problem has nothing to do with external packaging. It has everything to do with a way of thinking that has failed. Like many of her classmates at Wellesley College in the '60s, she sees government as redeemer and the state as a substitute for initiative, sacrifice, motivation and persistence.

The latest effort to repack the first lady has begun. It is said she will write more articles, make more speeches and focus less on policy-making. She is interested in appearing on as many radio talk shows as possible, "shows where people are willing to talk instead of yell." That's not yelling, Mrs. C. Those are the heartfelt views of average, hard-working citizens on the receiving end of government that costs too much and doesn't produce the advertised results.

The assertion that males fear female strength will come as a surprise to the new crop of Republican women in the House of Representatives. They had to demonstrate considerable strength in getting where they are — not the muscular variety but a potency of ideas and an ability to reflect the views of voters.

Men don't fear Mrs. Clinton. They dislike her ideas. I would be happy to see "Little Women" with her, but it wouldn't change my view of her failed and unworkable policy objectives. I would probably enjoy the film more if I saw it with Margaret Thatcher or Mother Teresa — a woman with no political or social power but who is stronger than most of us.

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Stickers can be troublesome

I have quite a few bumper stickers. But they're not on the tail end of my Toyota — I have them on my refrigerator instead. Don't ask me why, I guess my social conscience is in the closet, or the deep freeze, as the case may be.

After all, a bumper sticker proclaiming something as radical as "Support Organic Farmers" could get me pelted with some pesticide-laden tomatoes at a stoplight. (You know, there are a lot of crazy herbicide fans out there.)

And driving around town with a Clinton-Gore sticker next to the exhaust pipe might cause a fender-bender or two. I'm sure I'd be safer with "Don't Blame Me — I Didn't Vote For Her" on my bumper. After all, aren't we all "Rushing to the Right?"

I don't go in for those "I Heart My Doghead" bumper stickers, or cutesy stuff like "I Brake For Shopping Malls."

My daughter, Anna, has become quite concerned about a few of the more far-out sentiments that some of my bumper stickers herald. (Of course, to a 10-year-old, anything not sanctioned by the public school system or advertised on a major television network is suspect.)

Initially she simply appeared concerned with the resale value of a major appliance that had a dozen impossible-to-remove-adhesive-backed slogans on it.

"Who would buy this refrigerator with all these bumper stickers on it?" she asked.

But soon she honed in on content.

"What if we go to war with someplace like China, and Dad gets a job making guns?" she said,



Cindy Lange-Kubick

pointing to the "Visualize World Peace" sticker above the door handle. (As if the gun police, I mean the Republicans, were going to break into the house and confiscate the fridge and all its moldy contents.)

"We'll just cover it with an National Rifle Association decal, honey," I murmured. Failing to add that if for some odd reason the United States went to war with someone its own size, like China, the last thing I'd be fretting about would be my liberal-leaning refrigerator.

"Well, what if you decide to start eating meat?" she continued doggedly, staring accusingly at the large green, "Go Vegetarian!" banner on the freezer. "Then what?"

"I guess we could paste a 'Pork, The Other White Meat,' bumper sticker over it, or maybe just a piece of paper proclaiming, 'I Like My Arteries Clogged.'" I replied with a tinge of sarcasm.

I tell you, it's hard to have a social conscience, even in the confines of your own kitchen.

"And what if welfare reform passes?" she gloated, jabbing the faded "Every Mother Is A Working Mother" sticker with her index finger.

I was at a momentary loss. Maybe she had me there.

Finally I rebounded, "We could change it to read 'Every Middle-Class Mother Is A Working Mother,' or 'Every Middle-Class Mother Supported By A Husband Is A Working Mother. The Rest Are Lazy, Good-For-Nothing, Chocolate-Eating, Crack-Addicted Soap-Opera Addicts Who Only Have Kids In The First Place To Get An Easy \$200 A Month.'"

Then we debated the bumper sticker with the Native American slogan "The Earth Does Not Belong To Us, We Belong To The Earth." She decided it was a totally heathen and unchristian-like concept — children can be so conservative. So we agreed to cover it with some appropriate unecological scripture: "Be Fruitful And Multiply, And Fill The Earth And Subdue It And Have Dominion Over ... Every Living Thing."

After debating it for a while, we agreed to cover the "Protect Our Planet" sticker, the two Greenpeace logos and "Save The Dolphins" with the same Genesis mandate.

A mutual decision was made to leave the "Kids Need Hugs Not Drugs" alone. And I told her if she as much as touched the "No Woman Ever Shot A Man While He Was Doing The Dishes" sticker, she was in big-time trouble.

I did end up ripping one sticker off the Frigidaire totally of my own accord. What parent needs a "Question Authority?" bumper sticker, anyway?

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Ed Gamble

P.S. Write Back

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