

## Society, not youth, is to blame

It is ridiculous to pretend that the young people of today have just suddenly become who they are without any sort of help. We made them. Their keenly developed angst and negative attitudes were nurtured. Unfortunately for them, they were socialized by people who once didn't know for sure whether or not we'd all be living underground by now.

Today's young are the products of that constant threat of death and uncertainty. Yet we blame them for their attitudes about death and destruction. We could learn from those we once feared would destroy us, the people in the former Soviet Union. They don't blame their young.

They always put the blame where it belonged. Each new leader blamed the previous leader and administration. Stalin blamed Lenin, Khrushchev blamed Stalin, Brezhnev blamed Khrushchev, Chernenko and Andropov blamed Brezhnev and so on. Gorbachev, bless his heart, blamed all those rascals and eventually accepted blame himself, which enabled his country to move on. In the United States, it seems like the young get blamed.

Last week while waiting for Rosa Lopez to quit crying in Judge Lance Ito's chamber, I switched from CNN to a talk show about destructive types of dancing, including a particular style called "moshing," which used to be called thrashing.

Guests on the show included concerned parents, young dance-club-goers and members of a band called Marilyn Manson, who will soon appear in Omaha. The focal point of the show was the apparent attitude toward destructiveness of today's youth, a destructiveness testified to by both kids who mosh and the parents of a young man whose recent death was attributed to moshing injuries.

The talk-show host appeared naive and completely puzzled about



**E. Hughes Shanks**

the apparent recklessness and destructive attitudes that the participants of this lifestyle portrayed. He seemed completely aloof that moshing, stage-diving and a band with the name Marilyn Manson could become so popular.

The leader of the band said the name was a combination of the names of Marilyn Monroe and Charles Manson. He stated it was chosen intentionally to bring attention to society's attitudes about death and destruction.

How appropriate, I thought. The band chose their name by borrowing from the names of two of the most prophetic icons of the Cold War era. Two names from the time in our history when we feared death and global destruction on a daily basis.

The host completely missed the point, and proceeded to ask whether the problem with the young people of today was that they seemed to be "so close to total destruction."

"What a bunch of malarkey," I thought. It's a myth that today's young are any more destructive than previous generations. It isn't true that, in them, we are seeing less regard for life. If anything, we are seeing more honesty and less denial about just how destructive society can be.

Besides, the human race today may be just as close to total destruction as it was 20 years ago. We are still living in an age when, at any time, nuclear weapons could wipe out tens of millions of people in a day.

The world spent the last 40 years within a whisker of global destruc-

tion and remains at risk. Some fool could still start a nuclear war. There is no doubt that Cold War attitudes still exist. Nor is there any doubt that many of the same scary people who would launch missiles at Moscow or New York are still around. That's what scares me. Some of them want to be the next president. That scares me even more.

Every generation displays its own brand of counterculturalism. Perhaps Marilyn Monroe and Charles Manson represented an earlier example of it. If young people today seem reckless and discompassionate, think about the examples that have been set for them. How much more reckless is the three-decades-long fascination with people like Monroe and Manson? More importantly, how is it that people like that become so big in the first place? Long before any 20-year-old was born, Marilyn was dead and Manson was in prison. And since then, they have become even bigger stars.

Since when is idolizing Marilyn Monroe and Charles Manson so outrageous anyway? For the last 25 years, not a week has gone by without my hearing some mention of one or both of them, or at least seeing one or both of their pictures. That must amount for something.

It would be nice to see young people accepted for who they are instead of being described by adults as evil and incipient manifestations. If I'm not mistaken, counterculturalism used to be an admired trait.

The day that society claims total responsibility for itself is the day when the young or the old will no longer be scapegoated for what went wrong and when the true culprits (the middle-aged) will apologize. Then we too can move on.

Shanks is a graduate student and Daily Nebraskan columnist.

## 'Net buffs threaten high-tech reprisals

Several computer buffs contacted me recently to pass along some ominous information.

As one of them explained it: "Those people you wrote about, the ones on the Internet who hate Barney the Dinosaur, you got them very, very mad."

"They didn't like your calling them sick. And what was it you said, that they are overgrown bed-wetters? They didn't like being called bed-wetters, either."

Well, too bad about that. But as a philosopher once said: "If the diaper fits, wear it."

The computer buff went on: "I just wanted you to know about these people. They take themselves very seriously. They really hate Barney. They think he is a pedophile and that he corrupts the minds of children with all of his talk about loving families. So they sincerely believe that Barney should die."

"By insulting and ridiculing them, you have opened yourself up as a target for reprisal. And believe me, these people can be vindictive. They have already posted messages on the Internet saying they want to faq you."

That's terrible? Faq? Are you serious?

"Yes. And they are not to be taken lightly. If they say they will faq you, they'll do it. They are spreading the word about what you said."

Well, I appreciate the warning. This is the first time I've ever been under a faq threat. And I'll surely take whatever precautions are necessary. But there's one thing I don't understand. What is faq?

"Actually it means 'frequently asked questions.' When someone is new to the Internet — a 'newbie' — they ask a lot of basic questions and are referred to a list of FAQs for the answers."

So they are threatening to ask me a lot of questions?

"No, what I believe they mean is that they will spam you."

But I like fried Spam, although my doctor advises against it. Too much salt. Doctors are killjoys.

"No, this is a different spam. It means they post messages all over the Internet, turning people against you."

"Then these people flame you. Flaming is sending insulting e-mail. And they letter-bomb you. That means they send so much e-mail that your e-mail box fills up and overflows and starts devouring itself. This makes it impossible for you to keep up with your legitimate e-mail. It can be a very bad experience."

I'll say so. The thought of my e-mail cannibalizing itself is blood-curdling.

After thanking that computer



**Mike Royko**

buff, and the others who called with essentially the same warning, I contacted the one person who could help me with this problem: Dr. I.M. Kookie, the world-famous expert on lots of stuff.

The first thing Dr. Kookie asked was, "What is your e-mail address?"

And I answered that I didn't have one.

"Then you don't go on the Internet?"

I did once, quite a while ago. And it sort of sounded like a giant group therapy at a booby hatch. So I got out before I caught some deranged virus, and I have never gone back.

"Then there is nothing to worry about. If you don't have an e-mail address, you can't be sent e-mail. You don't have anything to worry about."

See? Further evidence that the over-hyped Internet is populated by a bunch of high-tech ninnies. All those insulting beeps and blips that they will send to me will just bounce back at them, causing their eyes to twirl like pinwheels and making them even crazier.

"Yes, that is true," said Dr. Kookie. "They are not only over-age bed-wetters, they are hairy-faced thumb-suckers."

"Even the legendary criminals, the hackers who break into computers and create mischief, are a modern version of the lowest of all law-breakers — the Peeping Tom."

Lower than even The Flasher?

"Yes, say what you will about a Flasher — at least he gives of himself. But all the Peeping Tom does is peep. This brave new world of the Internet, if you believe all that blather, is nothing more than a vast array of electronic keyholes and window slits for thousands of peeping eyes."

This is probably a good thing, since it keeps them off the streets and we don't have to worry about pulling down the bathroom shades."

Well, I am relieved. But I still don't understand why they hate Barney the Dinosaur so much.

"Because they envy his upper-body strength."

But he's just a big, soft doll.

"So how would you feel?"

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## Gearing up for that first ride

The current temperature is 26 degrees, but with the north wind it feels like it's in the single-digit range. It's cold out there, kiddies, but we're in the home stretch, and before you know it we'll be complaining about how hot it is.

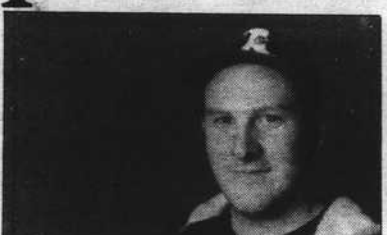
Warm weather marks the beginning of spring, of course, but more importantly it opens the door to riding season.

That's right, folks. I'm counting the days, hours and minutes until I can release the beast. I've been holding my breath for nearly four months, waiting for the sun to come around, for the roads to be cleansed of their salt and sand, for a ride back to Grand Island where I have her stored.

My Honda Hawk waits to be awakened from her slumber, and I can't wait to saddle up. I feel like a kid in line for a roller-coaster ride, anxiously bouncing off the walls. Let's GO already!

For many people like myself, riding is not only a form of personal expression and individuality, but an effective way to relieve stress, tension and irritation. Nothing compares to blasting off on a bike, chewing up miles on deserted roads with no one to talk to but yourself (which I am very good at), and having no distractions like a radio or traffic. Just the sound of the engine and the wind (I sound like a Honda commercial; I had better slow down on those motorcycle magazines).

For many others, riding is something that is intriguing and interesting, but since it is foreign it is also scary. I recall my first thoughts about riding, and I was worried about the typical things: will I fall off, will my parents shoot me first and ask questions later, will



**Michael Justice**

I kill myself?

Well, let me assist those of you positioned in this state of uncertainty to overcome your natural survival instinct and begin your journey into the realm of motorcycling. If you follow a few simple steps, you can enjoy yourself as much as I do and avoid becoming a "I had a bad experience" person.

The first thing to do is go for a ride with someone who presently has a bike (and a license). No need for any stunt rides, just the feeling of being on a moving vehicle that has no doors or roof. Granted, riding on the back of a bike is entirely different than operating it yourself, but it will give you some foundation of the riding experience.

If you're not petrified after a few rides, then it's time to get signed up with the Motorcycle Safety Foundation. It offers training courses that last anywhere from two days to two weeks, and they are worth the small fee (\$35, I believe) and then some. These sessions teach you things that would take years to learn (probably the hard way) on your own.

In some states (such as Illinois, where I took mine) the fee is even refundable, and the course lasts a lifetime, not to mention the fact that it may save your life at some point in your riding career. The number is available at your local dealer or in

any magazine.

Now the time comes to get a ride of your own. My first bike was a '76 CB500T, an old Honda twin. It cost me about \$500 and only had about 4,000 miles on it. With some basic maintenance and elbow grease, I was riding. The bike was remarkably unremarkable, but it was cheap and an effective way to learn how to ride. You'll find there are several bikes similar in age, condition and cost that would be excellent beginner rides.

I highly recommend starting on something with a displacement of 600 or less. (The size of an engine is measured by cubic centimeters, or cc for short.) Nothing too big to overpower you right away.

Many people think they can handle a big bike starting off, but don't be fooled. It takes time to fully realize the incredible rate at which a motorcycle accelerates, easily two or three times faster than a typical car.

Once you've gained enough time on the street, you'll probably want to get something with more power and better handling capabilities. There are so many great motorcycles out there that you would be hard-pressed to find a bad one built since the mid-'80s. The choices are nearly endless, and cover every riding preference and style. From cruisers to race-replicas to dirt bikes, you'll find what you're looking for.

Then you can get on the road and find what you're really looking for. A great ride.

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