

# Fountain an artistic institution

For as long as I've been at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, I've enjoyed Broyhill Fountain. Longer, even.

When I was a kid (and I was, once), Broyhill Fountain was synonymous with the UNL campus. Other than Memorial Stadium, it was the one landmark that stood out in my mind.

Once I got to school, back in the Pleistocene Epoch, when the glaciers had just begun to recede, Broyhill became more than just a landmark. It became a meeting place, a place to relax between classes and an observatory from which to watch the rest of the university community come and go.

Like it had for thousands of students before me, Broyhill Fountain became a part of the UNL experience; a part of tradition.

On many a quiet evening, I came to the fountain just to sit and collect my thoughts. The soothing vision of Burger King refuse floating placidly in the somewhat blue water was a pleasant constant in the often tumultuous college experience.

Occasionally, the bubbly froth of laundry detergent or the spirited tint of red dye added to the aura of the fountain.

And it was good.

But every year, on a cold, windy November day, the dancing waters of Broyhill Fountain would disappear, signaling the onset of another Nebraska winter. As disheartening as the dormancy of the fountain was, there was always the knowledge that the centerpiece of campus would leap back to life in the spring, just in time for fraternity pledge classes to dunk any pledge educators or rush chairmen who had escaped the water's clutches in the fall.

And anticipation tempered disappointment.

That anticipation, that knowledge of the Broyhill Fountain's certain rejuvenation, is no longer.

The stately memorial to Lynn Broyhill is slated for demolition, perhaps as early as next October, to



**Doug Peters**

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make way for an expansion of the Nebraska Union and the construction of a new plaza. We have been assured by the higher-ups that it will be replaced, but with what, no one seems to be able to say.

There's been some talk of replacing the fountain with a "water sculpture." What exactly that is, I'm not sure. I've been told by some reliable sources that it is not, as I, being a former liberal arts student, had thought, a sculpture made out of water.

Apparently, the logistics of that type of project are beyond what even the brightest scientific minds are capable of.

Nor, I'm told, is a water sculpture an ice sculpture in a state of molecular excitement. These same sources told me that such a sculpture, no matter how enticing it

sounds, is more commonly known as a "puddle."

And we certainly couldn't have that.

A water sculpture is simply a sculpture in which water is incorporated. Sometimes, I understand, you can't even see the water, just hear it.

That sounds like a great addition to Sheldon Art Gallery's sculpture garden. It would even be neat to have something like that inside the new and improved Nebraska Union. But as a replacement for venerable Broyhill Fountain?

I say no thanks.

And I'm backed up by student government, albeit in a strangely unassuring way.

ASUN President Shawntell Hurtgen said last week that a fountain, not a water sculpture, should replace Broyhill.

"I want to keep (UNL) from becoming this artsy, sculpture-infested campus," Hurtgen said.

Right decision, wrong reason.

Art plays an important role on this, or any other university campus. The sculptures that presently adorn our campus make UNL a better place. If nothing else, they distract from eyesores like Hamilton Hall.

And to me, Broyhill Fountain is art. It's beautiful, functional and traditional. Its visual impact on a breezy, fall evening, illuminated red, green or blue against the darkening sky, is as strong as the impact of a sculpture that the university could possibly put in its place.

Broyhill Fountain is as much of a UNL tradition as Cliff's Notes, cheap beer or low ASUN election turnouts.

It has fulfilled, and even transcended its role as a memorial; it has become an institution.

To fail to replace it with a comparable structure would be to deny not only a tribute to Lynn Broyhill, but also a tribute to the grand old fountain itself.

*Peters is a graduate student of Journalism and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.*

# A letter... from the FROSH

## We're driving, hairy, TV-watching lab rats



**Adria Chilcote**

Humans are so weird. I think that if I weren't a human, I would be fascinated with their strange behavior. Even though I am a human, I still don't quite understand them.

So much of human behavior is completely strange. Take cars.

Cars are one of the weirdest things around, but no one realizes it. They're these big metal boxes that we depend on for almost everything.

It seems so strange to me how people climb into these metal boxes to transport themselves to their destinations. Inside a car is a whole other environment, totally isolated from the rest of the world.

Most people have very bored and angry expressions on their faces when they're in their cars. Even though it looks like no one's very happy when they're driving, they still spend enormous amounts of money on them, and are even very attached to their cars. Can you imagine what people would do if all of the cars disappeared?

There are other things that fascinate me about human behavior, such as hair. Hair is very weird. It's kind of disgusting if you think about it.

It's this substance that is constantly, slowly oozing out of our heads. Hundreds of strands of it are seeping out of tiny little holes in our scalps. And we like it there.

We spend lots of money trying to make it look a certain way. We even have a certain amount of emotional attachment to this oozing substance.

There are hundreds of people employed as hair stylists, whose job it is to fulfill all of our hair needs. Some of us even suffer emotional trauma if this oozing substance doesn't look the right way.

Another thing that I've always thought to be strange is high school. The thing that's strange about it is the way it's organized.

It felt like we were all programmed laboratory rats. We were programmed to file into different rooms in time for the sound of a bell, and to file out when the bell sounded again. So all of the little rats wouldn't run wild until the next bell, they gave us our own little metal boxes with locks on them called lockers.

Most of us were programmed very well. We trotted off to our metal box between each class and latched on until the time came for the next bell to ring. The whole thing was really quite demented.

Then there's that whole ritual people do when they see each

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other. It seems that almost every conversation starts with, hello, how are you? I'm fine, how are you? I'm fine, thanks.

Even when we don't know the person, we feel the need to repeat this exchange. Not many people actually care how the other person is doing; they just ask to be polite. The other person usually knows that they don't care, but he or she is forced into this ritual of politeness.

Some conversations consist entirely of this fake politeness. I've had conversations like this, and I can't help but laugh when it happens.

Of course, how can you ignore the strangeness of the whole phenomenon of television? Millions of otherwise sane people gather around their electronic boxes every day in a trance.

People cease to think on their own when they watch television. They fall into an absent-minded semi-coma. It's comforting to have a break from thinking.

A television is a box that tells you what to think about for a few hours. It tells you when to laugh and what to buy.

Something else that seems strange to me is the way we can transfer intangible thoughts in our heads into all sorts of combinations of sounds to form words. Then we can transfer the sounds into various combinations of symbols to form written language.

And we can preform the whole process backwards too. It all happens so fast, it's amazing.

I think that one of the weirdest things about humans is that they don't recognize all of the weird things that they engage in every day of their lives.

If someone does recognize these weird things and tries to stop engaging in them, that person is deemed insane. And it's just because they realize how insane the rest of the population is. Insanity is completely relative, but the majority of the population doesn't realize they are insane.

If everyone all of a sudden realized how weird and insane we all are, society would break down and chaos would run rampant. It's a good thing no one knows it.

*Chilcote is a freshman women's studies major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.*

# Womanhood more than a name

I suppose I am a woman now. Not that I ever had any doubts about my gender — well, except that time, when I thought I was the only female on earth who had hairy legs and therefore, masculine. This column is not on doubts about my femininity, but my eventual acceptance of ... adulthood. Yuck!

I found it ridiculous, when a while ago, a friend referred to me as a woman. A woman! Who me? Not Me! I was just not ready to be considered a woman. A woman is somebody — older, more "mature," more worldly, more responsible ... a woman is an "adult." A woman is someone ... other than me. So my reaction to being called a woman was not very favorable.

My friend was both amused and intrigued at once. "So, how should I refer to you?" he asked. "A young lady?" he prompted.

Nah! Being referred to as a "young lady" was OK. Sort of. But it has a definite paternal ring to it. I was a "young lady" to my dad, ever since I ran around in pigtails and kicked up temper tantrums.

I still throw temper tantrums, ever so rare, around people I love, but I don't run around in pigtails anymore. Nor am I a stubborn little brat of four.

I have come a long way from then (at least I would like to think so!) One can not call me a "young lady" anymore. Especially if you are not my father!

How about a "lady" then? Bah humbug. First of all, it is too formal, and further, I should be comfortable with being called a woman before I am referred to as a lady! So, I would not be addressed as lady, except of course, if you want to dedicate the song "Lady" to me. Be my guest. Feed my vanity.

"Vain! That's what you are — a vain girl," my friend exclaimed. "You haven't grown out of your teens!"

A "girl?" Preposterous!  
It has a distinct high school



**Vennila Ramalingam**

*"I had never thought of myself as a woman. And it has been a long time since I thought of myself as a girl."*

cafeteria air to it. And I might actually take offense to it — if you referred to me as a girl — depending, of course, on who you are.

That's ruled out. It is at odds with how the world sees me, and it's at odds with who I see myself as. So, he caught on, "Who do you see yourself as?" he said.

I had not thought about it seriously until then. I had never thought of myself as a woman. And it has been a long time since I thought of myself as a girl.

During my undergraduate years, I was a college student. That's how I saw myself. A female college student, if you insisted on gender as a definitive factor in one's description and perception of self and person.

But being a college student was only a part of me. The fact that I attended college does not define me fully. So who am I? More importantly, who did I think I was?

I think leaving aside labels such as engineer, female, graduate student, columnist, instructor, etc., I preferred to see myself as a young

person.

A member of the world's youth-population. A youth, that's who I am. I told my friend, then.

There was only one problem with that — I was told by my friend — a youth was officially a person, who was neither a teenager, nor an adult — and since I was 22 at the time of the conversation, I was not to be a youth in the eyes of the world!

Too bad, then. My perception of who I was, was simply at odds with what the world thought I was. I can live with that, I remember thinking.

This is not exactly an identity crisis, really! As an international woman going to graduate school in the United States, there are several times when one questions one's identity. Now wait a minute, did I say, Woman?

Exactly what brought the change of heart, you might be tempted to ask — it didn't change while I wrote this column. In fact, I have been quite comfortable with the fact that I am now a woman — a lot has happened between the time I had that unwittingly insightful conversation with my friend and now!

I have reached the ripe-old age of 23, but age is not the factor that brought the change, I am sure. Exactly what, I am not sure, but I know I am comfortable being referred to as a woman, comfortable to think of myself as a woman.

And that's all that matters. With this smug feeling, I reached over to fetch the New York Times, at the Mill (my favorite source of the NY Times, coffee and ideas). And this kind old gentleman, who sat next to the papers, remarked how refreshing it was to see young girls reading newspapers!

And here I was thinking that I was finally in tune with society's perception of me!

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### BE OUR GUEST

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