

# Get back?

## Beatles reunion a weird, spooky undertaking

I like the Beatles more than most people.

And by that, I don't mean that I like the Beatles more than most people like the Beatles. I mean that I like the Beatles more than I like most people.

During my early teen years, I probably spent more time with the Beatles than I did with people. Until very recently, I considered it a major personality flaw if someone didn't like the Beatles.

I listened to their albums over and over again, read exploitive biographies and bought expensive posters.

So you would think I would be thrilled by the idea of a new Beatles song, that I would be counting the hours until I could finally hear it.

Well, I am counting the hours, and I am excited.

But I'm also kind of spooked.

I came to terms with the impossibility of a Beatles reunion very early on. I knew that I would never see the Beatles perform.

John Lennon was dead. (John Lennon IS dead.) And the rest of the Beatles said they wouldn't go on without him. End of story.

I was disappointed, but I was also sort of relieved. I watched all the other supergroups of the past come back new and improved to tour large stadiums, singing yesterday's hits and selling lots of T-shirts — basically embarrassing themselves trying to reclaim something that is forever stuck in the past.

"Thank heavens," I thought. "The Beatles won't ever do that. Their music and their memory will never be perverted that way."

And now "Free as a Bird."

I have to admit that the Beatles comeback — complete with unreleased music and a six-hour documentary on ABC — is a little



**Rainbow Rowell**

classier than the Creedence Clearwater Revival revival or even the Eagles tour.

Except for one thing. John Lennon is still dead. Very dead.

This should prevent a reunion for at least three reasons.

When John Lennon died, he, didn't seem to be all juiced about getting back with the Beatles. All the exploitive biographies I read made it sound like Lennon didn't like the other Beatles very much.

Maybe "Free as a Bird" meant "free from the Beatles."

Second, the decision to use John's dead voice was made by Yoko Ono, a woman whom — try as I might — I will never ever like. Other products to which she has leant Lennon's image or drawings include coffee mugs, backpacks and tacky greeting cards. And she wears those awful sunglasses.

The third and most important reason that Lennon's death should make a Beatles reunion impossible is this: Dead people don't reunite. They don't sing lead. Or backup. They shouldn't come out with new albums, shouldn't appear in commercials. Dead people should just stay dead.

When Natalie Cole teamed up with her dad, Nat "King" Cole, to

sing "Unforgettable," some people said it was beautiful.

They were wrong. It was scary. Downright morbid.

Maybe Nat King Cole never liked that song and never wanted to hear it again. Maybe he never liked Natalie.

But he didn't have a choice. No one could ask him because he's dead. And dead people can't answer questions.

Just like they can't play piano or say, "Ringo? I despise Ringo. He gives me hives."

Technology will continue to make it easier for us to bring back the dead. If there's a demand for new Beatles songs, engineers could reproduce Lennon's voice "Forrest Gump"-style. He could sing with the Beatles forever ... until Paul McCartney or one of the others dies.

Heck, they could all die. Who needs them anyway? They haven't been productive in years. We would probably hear more Beatles songs if all four kicked the bucket.

I will buy all the new Beatles compact discs.

And I might even like the new song. But I won't consider it the Beatles.

It's not.

It's Paul McCartney, George Harrison, Ringo Starr and a tape. Lennon wasn't there to argue over the lyrics or the chorus. He wasn't there to call Paul names, make nasty comments or sulk with Yoko in the corner.

He didn't even get to finish his song, and it was HIS song.

I just hope that hereafter, the voices of the dead are left in the hereafter.

*Rowell is a senior news-editorial, advertising and English major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.*

# Our special guest

## Todd Burger

# House of madness entangles patients

*"They must be silenced and corrected for the good of society. Yes, for society's sake. We will do it in the people's name."*

Why should they even have much of a voice as long as they have the wrong voice? "They must be silenced and corrected," the good administrator says, "for the good of society. Yes, for society's sake. We will do it in the people's name."

Thusly, there is the dynamic of right-thinking minds versus wrong-thinking minds. If you don't agree with the right-thinking minds then you must be so very wrong thinking that you will be contained and fixed — until such a time as you become a completely compliant and malleable right-thinking mind.

By then, of course, much of you may have vanished somewhere along the way. But at least you are a somewhat safe — yet now somewhat tainted and suspect — right-thinking mind.

And if you revolt — and it must be a silent revolt for a loud revolt brings too many consequences — if you revolt, if you withdraw into yourself trying to keep your very self from escaping, the right-thinking minds will continue to work on you, convinced that you are about to break, about to lose your essential self.

All that you can do is hide and wait and hope that the right-thinking minds retreat and go away. Perhaps, if you think you are smart, you can try to act like you have changed, even as you try to hide what you may have left of yourself under the surface.

You may think this will work, but the right-thinking minds have seen all the tricks and all the plays; they have the advantage in that they have seen more, read more, know more. Above all, they are right-thinking minds.

You remain a wrong-thinking mind who has to be fixed or at least silenced into submission. You hide yourself, or have you lost yourself?

And how do wrong-thinking minds think of people with right-thinking minds? I had to wonder at what I was thinking when I was going in and out of the administration doors leading inside to the second-story museum. There on the porch were these casually dressed people lounging outside in this hothouse day — workers? patients? — staring at me directly without any reserve whatsoever.

Did they think me about to join them in some capacity? Or, worse, did they loathe me, perceiving me as a brazenly curious tourist doing the madness kick?

If they had only known I was not a mere interloper. But maybe they had known, for their unwavering stares bespeaked such an uncanny recognition.

*Burger is a senior English major.*

# Write on

## Going 'pro' a scary but rewarding venture

I write for my living, such as it is.

And when I first wandered down to the offices of the Daily Nebraskan waaaay back in 1991, I thought that nothing could be finer than to write and be paid for it.

I'd already written and not been paid — writing had become something of a solitary vice, for me.

I thought I'd go blind, scribbling in spiral bound notebooks all hours of the night. And here I was, ready to go pro.

I didn't realize how much I still had to learn.

Writing for an audience is not like writing for yourself; it's a whole lot worse.

And the editors, ugh! I was convinced I had stumbled into some enclave of primitive humanity. How could they butcher my words like that?

It was like they'd never heard of the past perfect.

I quickly discovered that the pay stank, the paper was a rag, the people who worked here were dim bulbs.

But my writing improved.

I learned to meet a deadline, to write even when I felt like I had nothing to say — like there WAS nothing to say, and I had to say it in 67 lines.

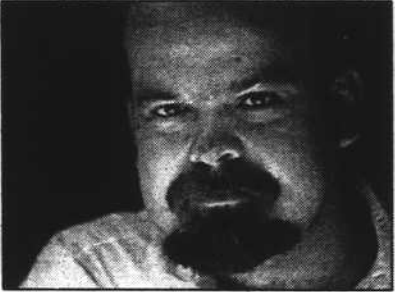
I learned to take editing — even bad editing — and to grudgingly admit that some of it was not bad. That sometimes it was my writing that was bad. Or worse, it was my ideas that were bad.

My first job was as "Staff Humorist" — a position no longer available, I'm afraid — for the Arts and Entertainment section.

So from the very beginning, I had a column.

Now a column is a tricky beast. It's only fun until you run out of ideas and have no means of manufacturing new ones.

Most people run out around the third week.



**Mark Baldrige**

*"What they all have in common, all the columnists, anyway, is that they are prepared to write badly until they can write well."*

And when the first few columns in which you are obviously gasping for ideas see print ... well, it's mortifying.

And it goes on being mortifying until you learn the secret of ideas: that there are an infinite number of them floating around.

You learn to watch the passage of your own thought like a spectator — just a piece of your awareness always watching your thoughts. And when you see one that interests you, you abstract it from the flow of ideas and put it aside — for the column.

You become a gardener, of sorts, cultivating and weeding your own thought as you would a garden.

What you become, after all, is a writer.

A writer is a thinker on paper; it's as simple as that. And writing is a way of thinking out loud.

It sharpens your mind, offers you formulas for approaching new ideas, gives you something to do with the gray stuff between

your ears.

And it teaches you how wrong you can be.

Seeing your own words in print the next day has an alarmingly sobering effect on the mind. It can make a more timid character swear off print forever. And no one — no one in the world — is immune. Writers, particularly newspaper columnists, know their limits.

And they are always offered opportunities to surpass them.

And it is this peculiar nature of the weekly column that has proved the most important, to me and to many: It offers you a chance to expand yourself.

Not every day, not every week, but over time.

Which brings us to the real point of today's column: the possibilities.

A lot of people seem to think the DN is this big homogenous machine that, somehow, authors all these columns with different people's names on them.

It isn't so. Most of these kids down here can't stand each other.

What they all have in common, all the columnists, anyway, is that they are prepared to write badly until they can write well.

And you can join them. The DN is now seeking columnists for next semester.

Those among the student body who feel underrepresented on these pages today will have no one to blame but themselves if they go unrepresented tomorrow as well.

Come down, apply to write. Those who are serious about writing will stay and write record reviews or news stories or sports interviews until they get the column they know in their hearts they deserve.

This is your newspaper. You want it back?

*Baldrige is a senior English major and a Daily Nebraskan Columnist.*