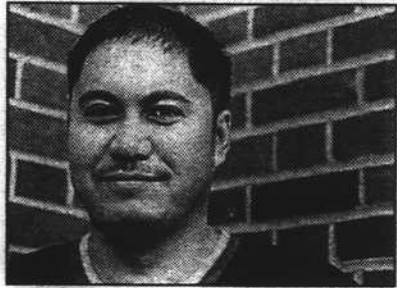


**Brent
POPE**

Campus carnival

Old NRoll was fun with Smurfs, orifice exams



“What the hell was the old system?” you may ask, unless you’re like me and remember seeing the original ‘Star Wars’ in a movie theater as a college freshman.”

“Welcome to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln NRoll System.” That familiar phrase is the current gateway to registering for classes at this fine institution. It’s a lot faster than the old way, but I sometimes wonder if NRoll is really the best way for registration to take place at UNL.

Sure, it’s fast. All you have to do is pick up a phone and push a couple of buttons (seven, if I remember correctly) and you’re in. And the voice on the other end of the line is quite soothing (for my insomnia, I actually have a tape of the NRoll voice reciting my class schedule on a continuous loop, which puts me to sleep faster than a Joe Pesci shovel to the head). But there are some legitimate reasons that the old

system was better.

“What the hell was the old system?” you may ask, unless you’re like me and remember seeing the original “Star Wars” in a movie theater as a college freshman. Here’s how it worked. If you wanted a particular class, you got up before sunrise and went to the administration building. Then you picked up a time card that told you what time you could go to the union and register for classes.

But you couldn’t just GO to the administration building. Rather, you had to wait in a huge line because the really serious students — usually freaks with brains so big they practically squirted out of their skulls — had camped outside all night and were lined up all the way

to Broyhill Fountain. The line went right through the fountain, and if you didn’t want to step through the water, tough crap!

Now this may not sound like a sweet experience with a tasty cream filling, but that’s because you’re not getting the whole picture. Let me tell you about some of the things you missed out on:

MINGLE-FEST
Registration was a great place to meet people. I got dates there (OK, not really, but better looking guys did), got my first fake ID (so I could vote) and even had my first psychic reading done. (How did she know that I wanted to be the first nude tap dancer on Broadway?)

HUMOROUS HOMONYMS
A couple of wise-asses always registered under fake names, leaving some poor registration lady calling out things like: “Seymour Bootie? Can anyone tell me where Seymour Bootie is?” OR “Lou Saynus? Is there a Lou Saynus in the room?”

I HAVE AN ADVISER?
In the pre-NRoll days you had to have your class schedule signed by your adviser. Therefore, you had to actually know who your adviser was and you also had to talk to that person at least once a semester. This may not sound like much fun, but you must know this — you simply have not lived until your adviser has told you about the olden days at UNL, when herds of wild buffalo

freely roamed the campus.

MASS CONSUMPTION
It was possible to buy almost anything at registration. There were vendors selling everything from hot chocolate to Smurf action figures, even the less popular ones — like Halitosis Smurf, Poopypants Smurf and the anatomically correct Horny Smurf.

Now before you start calling me anti-technology, anti-progress, anti-automation or some other word that I don’t fully understand, let me explain.

I know that in today’s society speed is a must, and with that in mind the NRoll System is pretty much a necessity. But wouldn’t it be nice to register for your classes, and at the same time pick up groceries and possibly meet your future proctologist? Think about it.

Pope is a senior broadcasting major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

**Anne
HJERSMAN**

Far from tragic

Politics gets too personal with teen pregnancy



“A pregnant teen is often viewed through the detached, sterile scope of political science. She is allowed only one dimension: pregnancy.”

My sister is not contributing to the downfall of society. She’s not a statistic. And I don’t want her to ever be a political pawn. My sister Joan is 17. She is also a mother.

In the past year, she found herself on center stage in the political arena being gawked and gaped at. She was burdened not only with the weight of a child growing within her, but with the weight of the world — the weight of all the social disorder that politicians like to pin on teen pregnancy.

She and other young, unwed mothers are commonly blamed for the breakdown of the American family.

Joan knows that — but she doesn’t understand it. And neither do I.

In the worst cases — the cases most often cited and decried in the public realm — the family breakdown started long before the conception. The line between cause and effect has been blurred.

“Yeah it’s early. Yeah it’s going to be hard. But there’s more to it than just that,” Joan says.

A pregnant teen is often viewed through the detached, sterile scope of political science. She is allowed only one dimension: pregnancy.

“That girl has a name, a family,” Joan says. “She has feelings and emotions. She’s not a cold-blooded baby-maker.”

Joan is going to be a good

mother. She already is.

Alexis Dawn Garrett was born on Nov. 27, 1996 — one-and-a-half months ahead of schedule, but healthy.

The fact that Joan is a mother in her teens is unfortunate, but it is not tragic. And neither she nor Alexis should be made to feel that it is.

“The lady called me ‘Joanie’ when she told me I was pregnant. She acted like it was the end of the world, like I was a big disgrace,” my sister said. “I was afraid that I had disappointed the world.”

But I feel no disappointment in my sister. I admire her strength and wisdom.

“I didn’t think it would happen to me,” she says. “I wasn’t a promiscuous person. I used to think of the girls who got pregnant as slutty. I thought that they deserved it — that they ruined their lives.”

“Now I regret feeling that way, because I don’t want people to think of me that way.”

This is not the end of Joan’s life. It’s the beginning of life for my new niece.

It’s the beginning of a new life for the whole family.

Our mother took the news of Joan’s pregnancy well — better than any of us would have expected. But she has struggled.

“You hear it, and in a matter of a few minutes, you watch your daughter’s whole life change,” our mother said. “You ask yourself, is

she going to be a mom alone? And how many of her dreams can be salvaged? And how many of your dreams for her can be salvaged?”

Though our mother worried about such things, she left all the decisions to my sister.

“You don’t have to create uncomfortable consequences for her behavior. They are all already there,” our mother said. “It’s going to be a hard road for her regardless of what you do, so it serves both of you to be as supportive and helpful and loving as you can be.”

I suppose that attitude is part of what separates Joan from the stereotypical teen mother. The other part is Joan’s whole-hearted determination to succeed.

“I’m most afraid of failing ... at everything,” Joan said early in her pregnancy. She still worries, but she is working hard to give Alexis the best life possible.

“That’s why I want Joan living at home with me, not jumping into a marriage she’s not ready for, with a baby she’s not ready for,” our mother said. “She can continue with her high school education and do some intensive how-to-be-a-mom training at home with me. It isn’t that I can educate her about it all in one year’s time. But I can help her through the scary new-mom ‘Can I do this’ time in her life.”

Joan is fortunate. She has a supportive family. But there’s only

so much we can do for her. Much of her struggle is within. She has a lot of tough decisions to make in a short time — decisions that are being made daily by girls who are not ready to be mothers, many of whom have no one they can rely on.

“Sometimes you feel alone ... even with all the support,” Joan says.

Struggling through the pregnancy wasn’t easy on any of us, but the moment we first held tiny Alexis in our arms, we knew we had been blessed.

“It’s all going to be OK. It just isn’t going to be like you imagined ... or dreamed ... or wanted,” our mother said before Alexis arrived. “Maybe the timing isn’t right, but new life is something to celebrate — whether this little person comes to us on our timetable or not.”

For now, Joan will stay at home. But she is going to marry Alexis’ father this summer, after she graduates from high school.

She planned on marrying James anyway, just not so early.

In the meantime, the two have arranged their schedules so that Alexis is always with one of her parents. James, who is 22, works nights and cares for his infant daughter while his future wife is at school. And Joan happily sacrifices some sleep for midnight feedings.

My sister still intends to earn a college degree.

She won’t get it the way I am getting mine. She will never live by herself, for herself. But she’ll get it. I have no doubts about that.

She’ll work hard. She doesn’t expect to have anything handed to her.

And I don’t think she is going to miss out on a single day of living.

“Every time I look at the things that have been taken away from me, I think of the one thing I am getting out of this: the baby,” she says. “I don’t care if I’m 17 or 25 or whatever, she’s still my baby.”

One of Joan’s biggest fears is that the political rhetoric will eventually reach Alexis — that she might be labeled “illegitimate” and made to feel ashamed of the fact that her birth date comes before her parents’ wedding date. But Alexis is very much wanted and loved, and that’s been true from the start.

Still, Joan worries about the example she has set for Alexis and the other children she hopes to have in the future.

“How do I tell my kids not to do what I did? I guess you’ve got to tell them the truth,” Joan says. “I just hope they learn to love themselves enough not to do that, not to put that kind of pressure on themselves so young.”

If those are the words of a failure, if my sister represents the downfall of society, then I can only hope to go down with the ship.

Alexis is one lucky little girl.

Hjersman is a senior news-editorial and English major and the night editor and a columnist for the Daily Nebraskan.