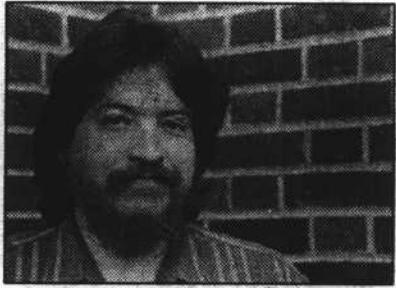


Old U.

Experiences ease transition back to school



PATRICK MACDONALD is a freshman electrical engineering major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

One of the things that amuses me most about returning to college is the way people respond to older students. It has been my experience that there are both advantages and disadvantages to returning to school later in life.

Some of the advantages to getting a higher education when you are older include having a more disciplined approach to studying (primarily because we older folks no longer have a life after turning 21), life experience tends to make difficult concepts easier to understand and we are more motivated to get out of school and return to the work force — especially if we have a family to support.

The disadvantages include, but are not limited to, having to relearn skills we haven't used for more than 18 years, trying to stay involved in family functions and finding time to study sacrificing income to improve earning potential later on.

Another disadvantage is the "generation gap" between students my age and the majority of full-time students at the university. Imagine wandering around campus and having students calling you "professor." This has happened to me. I am older than some of the professors and TAs. I wonder if there is a law against impersonating a professor?

To better understand the demographics of age in relation to post-secondary education, I perused the Department of Education's database.

Of the 14.3 million students estimated to have been enrolled in the fall of 1994, 3 million were over the age of 35. That's 21 percent of the entire college population. The majority of students fell in the 18-to-24-year-old age group, comprising 54 percent of all students.

While these numbers may not astound or amaze you, since 1990 the largest growing population on college campuses has been the over-35 age group, growing 6 percent per year. Compare this with the 1.5-percent growth rate for the 18-to-24-year-old group, and you can see why I was amazed.

Some of the reasons for the growth of the older-student population is corporate downsizing, tuition reimbursements and employers encouraging higher education to enhance productivity. I returned to school because my skills were too specialized in one field, and I was no longer marketable as an employee.

Women dominate the number of students on campus by a small

margin. There are 1.3 women to every man on campus. (I know some of you will be alarmed that there is one-third of a woman wandering about campus somewhere. Don't be. This is just one of those clever math concepts reporters use to simplify large numbers and make statistics seem even more important.)

The numbers show something else that is enlightening. Of the students who are returning to school after 35, most of these are part-time students or students attending night school. The majority of full-time students continues to fall in the 18-to-24-year-old age group.

So, how do old folks like me identify with the majority of younger students who attend classes with us? When addressed as professor, we politely smile and say, "Yes, young man/woman. How can I help you?" We try to blend in as much as gray hair and wrinkles will allow. When asked about our age, we say, "I am old enough to be your father." We try to refrain from calling our classmates "youngster." Most importantly, we try to remember what it was like to be 18 to 24 years old.

Aging is one thing everyone has in common. I believe that age is truly a relative thing. If you believe that you are young and behave in such a manner as to fulfill this belief then you will never really grow old. Your muscles may ache more and your bones may creak when you move, but in the end, the only thing that really matters is how you lived. I choose to be forever young.

In the N-A-V-Y!

Memorable time of 'full speed ahead'



BRENT POPE is a senior broadcasting major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

It's a period of my life that I don't enjoy discussing. I'd just as soon whack myself in the funnybone with a sledgehammer.

But my therapist, Dr. Kevorkian, says I should talk about it, you know, just to get it out in the open. (He also recommends this machine he has, but I think I'll hold off on that for now.) Anyway, here goes: For two years, I was part of a group I call "Crazy Drunk People in a Watery Hell." You might know it as the Navy.

You may be asking yourself "How did you end up in the Navy?" Well, I'll tell you, I don't really know. I do know that I was at my apartment with some friends talking about how "Cop Rock" was going to be a big hit (and we might have been drinking a little).

Anyhow, the next thing I remember (other than my head hitting the carpet like a hollow cantaloupe) is a garbage can crashing to a cement floor and someone yelling "OK ladies, rise and shine! And no scratching your butts; they now belong to the U.S. Navy! You will only scratch your rear ends when instructed to!"

As you can imagine, not being able to scratch my butt is something I would classify as "a big deal." On the Charles Dickens scale of

importance, it would be at the level of "the worst of times." But I guess that's what happens when you get a little too blitzed and wake up at boot camp.

The three months of boot camp were kind of a blur, but I do remember a couple things.

They cut off all of my hair, and when I looked in the mirror, I saw what looked like a skinny, bald frog (as opposed to the skinny, hairy frog I was used to seeing). And yes, I did say "skinny"; I wasn't always larger than a truckload of bread boxes.

One time I was standing watch on the quarterdeck of the barracks. It was really just the front door to the barracks, but they like to make it seem like you're on a ship, so they call it a quarterdeck.

WARNING — the following statement is a paranoid digression: I also believe they used large hydraulic jacks to make the whole building move up and down, like a ship at sea. Or it could just be that I naturally rock back and forth a lot without any help at all, but I don't think so.

Anyway, I was standing watch and I let this officer into the building without checking his ID. That was considered to be "a bad thing." The next thing you know, the company commander is in my face. The conversation went a little something like this:

HIM: Pope! You let someone in the building without checking his ID! Drop! (You know, to do push-ups.)

ME: How many, sir?
HIM: How the hell should I know? I'm dead! Your shipmates are dead! We're all dead! And you got us killed! Why don't you just do push-ups until we're not dead anymore!

As you can imagine, that was a lot of push-ups.

Enough about boot camp; let's speak of later times when I was stationed on the USS Ponce, whose home port is Norfolk, Va.

We went on a couple of Mediterranean cruises, which simply means that I had the opportunity to drink (and sometimes regurgitate) in some of the finest bars and dance clubs in Europe; although it wasn't always that glamorous.

I recall one particularly bad night in Palma, Spain, when I apparently consumed so many frosty beverages that I lost all use of my legs. My buddies were kind enough to leave me in a dark, remote park by myself to sober up while they went to see some art film, at least they told me it was an art film, called "Barnyard Follies." Sure I was alone and inebriated in a foreign country, but at least my friends took my wallet. That way the muggers wouldn't get my money, and I would get just a few kidney punches.

When my ship finally got back to the good old U.S. of A., I hung out a lot at a place called The Helm Club. For a solid year I was known as the Karaoke King of that particular establishment, a title I was both proud of and unwilling to give up without a fight. I was finally dethroned one night when some guy farted a very stirring rendition of "New York, New York." I was old news before the smell left the room.

Finally, after two years, my enlistment was up and I got to go home. To tell you the truth, I was so reluctant to leave the Navy that I took four Vivarin tablets and drove 22 hours straight back to Nebraska, stopping only to refuel and take more Vivarin (I hope you caught the sarcasm).

Wow, Dr. Kevorkian was right. I feel much better with all of that stuff off my chest. Now, let us never speak of it again.

Guest VIEW

The Great Debate

Boxers vs. briefs: all bunched up

ANN ARBOR, Mich. (U-WIRE) — There is something that affects your life on a daily basis without you giving it a second thought.

But, me, oh, it keeps me up at night. How your ethnicity mediates your relations with others in this society? No. The plight of the royal house pets now that Charles and Di have split for good? Closer, but still no stogie. My mind is on your underwear. So, let us delve into our pants for further investigation and put this egregious neglect to an end.

I would like to begin our discussion today with a review of men's underpants fashion, as it pertains to boxers vs. briefs — the great debate.

I have done extensive research, interviewing many men, and have come to the conclusion that their preference is split fairly evenly down the middle: Some go for the support offered by briefs, some the freedom of boxers.

But as for the women, the war cry is virtually unanimous: Give us boxers, or give us death! Unless you encounter a chick who had some traumatic experience being flashed by the aged principal of her junior high school, who happened to be wearing jockeys at the time, she is probably going to vote in favor of the shorts because, in general, they are just so much more appealing.

I cannot quite put my finger on it as to why, but something about tighty-whities just curdles the stomach, perhaps in that they frequently get mentally associated with men of undesirable ages and statures, i.e. little boys or dad.

Unfortunately, I have met, or rather should I say dated, far too many guys who are resistant to the obvious superiority of boxers. Like this one, we will call him Dork, who thought he would put a spicy spin on the normal briefs action and wear these special tiny, tight, colored Speedo-esque jockies.

To this day, I still have nightmares of this pair of aqua ones with the special mesh front for added visual enjoyment. Men learn from my sad experience and do not buy that leopard-print bikini pack that is calling your name at Hudson's (you are not Joe Montana); and if you do, and this is a promise, you will never get any again.

Boxers should provide you with ample creative outlets, considering their myriad of witty patterns, vibrant colors and soft fabrics, not to mention that silk pair for which you will undoubtedly spring for those Barry White nights.

And, if you feel you must have more support, then I highly recommend you go for that new sort of boxer/brief hybrid I have

been seeing in the J. Crew catalogues and whatnot. A friend of mine has them and I have heard nothing but wonderful things about such a perfect balance of snugness and freedom that they just make his whole day. And frankly, they are quite sexy, to boot.

And now on to the ladies. In selecting their delicacies, I think that most girls have in mind a mix of functionality and appearance. Do they match my bra? Do they show through my pants? Do they look like something my grandma would wear?

But me, I have an added problem: I am possessed of the unwavering conviction that at birth, before even leaving the delivery room, the doctors performed a special operation on me to install a small, yet staggeringly powerful vacuum up my ass, as it seems that it is merely a matter of seconds before any pair of underpants I choose to put on finds its way indelibly up there.

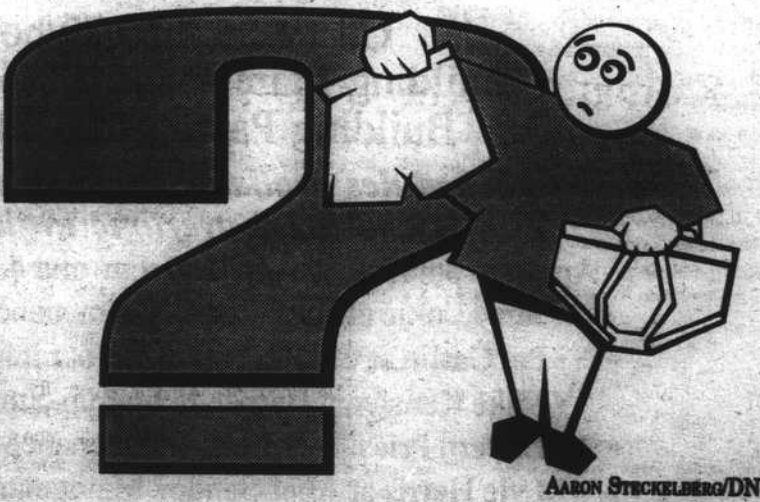
Yes, I know everyone is prone to a melvin or two in his time, but my friends will back me up when I tell you that I am specially plagued in this department and thus have spent years of my life dedicated to finding the perfect pair of underwear, which will not spend quality hours sucked up my butt.

Sadly, my butt has won. I have given over and waved the white bikinis in surrender, and all underwear to me now is not measured on a matter of cuteness or color, but rather wedge-proneness. Oh, this hot little number is great, but if I wear it with those jeans, I will not even be able to reach them to pull them out.

In a fit of despair, I was discussing this matter with my best friend Andy, who, being the typical guy that he is, suggested that I try a thong, insisting that he has heard nothing but rave reviews from girlfriends — these thongs, they say, change their lives: "A's on all their papers, job offers when they have not even sent out resumes and it does not hurt that guys dig them hardcore, either."

So I give it a shot, and you know what? They suck. I spent the whole day with the overwhelming urge to grab my ass and pull out something that had nowhere else to go. There was no getting used to them — they hurt and I felt like a sex-maniac freak who was wearing porn-star panties to Angell Hall. So that is that. I am currently taking any suggestions you have to offer: Just look for the girl on the street with her hand in her pants.

— Heather Gordon
The Michigan Daily



AARON STECKELBERG/DN