

*Heather*  
**LAMPE**

## Collective craziness

*Obsession about bags of beans bodes ill-will*



Forget Waco. Forget the Heaven's Gate cult. There's a new bunch of wackos in town, and they're as close as your nearest McDonalds. People have gone completely nuts over a piece of cloth stuffed with plastic beans.

They're called Beanie Babies, and they're causing mass hysteria across the country. I've yet to understand or appreciate how a piece of felt stuffed with beans could become a collector's item, but I missed the New Kids on the Block bandwagon, too.

On a recent trip to McDonalds, I was nearly killed as I waited in line for a hamburger. Two women in front of me got into a brawl over the last set of Beanie Babies. I had no idea that a Happy Meal toy could cause such hysteria until I saw a grown woman beat another woman with a napkin dispenser. It was a scene I'd never care to see again.

Some McDonalds were just selling the toy without the purchase of a Happy Meal. McDonalds sold a two-month supply in 13 days. The scary thing is that it's not the children that seem to be going insane over

them, it's the adults. If they think they can resell them and make a buck, then who cares about the little girl who doesn't get a toy in her Happy Meal?

"Get your hands off that you little shrimp. It's mine, all mine!"

"But Mommy!!"

Several days after the Happy Meal incident, I again found myself caught in a Beanie Baby frenzy at the Nebraska Bookstore. I went in to buy a birthday gift and was caught in the middle of a new shipment. After seeing one woman body slam a little boy for the last Spike the Rhinoceros, I decided it was time to leave.

People were filling two and three of those red shopping baskets to the brim. At \$9.95 a pop, three baskets full can add up. The lady in front of me bought \$300 worth of the stupid things. What kind of person buys hundreds of dollars worth of stuffed animals?

"I'm sorry I won't be able to donate to your charity this year. I spent all my extra money on some brightly colored bags of beans. I wish I could help feed those Guatemalan orphans, but I had to have them. They'll be worth a lot of money someday you know."

It's not like they're covered in gold. They aren't antiques and they aren't rare. The corporation that makes them is making fools of all these people. Right now they're hard to find, so people are grabbing up every one they can find. But give it two months, and the company will distribute more. What kind

of company would stop making an item that they're making millions from? Remember Tickle Me Elmo? At Christmas they were no where to be found, now the shelves are stocked.

Maybe I don't understand the frenzy because I've never been a collector. I've never found anything worth collecting. I had a friend who was completely obsessed with collecting stamps. Every time the post office released a new stamp, she was the first in line to get it.

"Oh my God, they've released the limited edition Gary Coleman collection. It features highlights from his many years on "Diff'rent Strokes." I must have it."

Collecting things requires too much patience for me. One has to wait years for items to be worth anything. Those crazy women at the bookstore will be dead by the time those bean bags are worth anything.

I have one of the first Cabbage Patch Kids ever made, still in the box. No one is knocking down my door. I have a box of National Geographic magazines from the early 1920s, but I've yet to see any dividends. I have mint condition vintage baseball cards from the 1950s, but they've yet to make me a millionaire.

You can own every Beanie Baby and every "Star Wars" figure ever made, and I won't be impressed. When you have Van Gogh's ear or one of Elvis' sideburns, give me a call.

**Lampe is a senior news-editorial and English major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.**

*Guest*  
**VIEW**

## R.I.P.

*Fox divorcing  
'Married with  
Children'*

NORMAN, Okla. (U-WIRE) — It has been said that nobody ever went broke underestimating the intelligence of the American public.

This postulate is proven with every wretched episode of the TV show "Married with Children."

Mercifully, the Fox network recently decided to cancel "Married," the longest-running sitcom currently on television.

I find this last statement unbelievable. "Married with Children" is a dinosaur, a creature of a cruder age of television. It is a place where inflatable-woman jokes are considered so funny that they are included in every episode.

It is a show that punishes viewers for any trace of independent thought.

Granted, this does not separate the show from the mass of TV programs. It's just that "Married With Children" seems aggressively ignorant; it seems to flaunt its stupidity.

I do not purport to be the arbiter of all things funny. Yet "Married with Children" is surely funny only to the obnoxious laugh track blaring through every episode. This show asks the viewer to suspend disbelief, good taste and a desire for original humor.

I, for one, reject the notion that bathroom jokes represent the culmination of human sensibility.

The saddest thing about the last decade is that "Married with Children" has lost its shock value. It is no longer able to revolt its audience. This is the result of our own decadence more than a sudden loss of creativity on the part of the show's writers.

We have become a culture that is no longer ashamed that impotence jokes are on our public airwaves.

Instead, we slap a meaningless rating on such a vile piece of filth and think nothing more about it.

That's not enough. The day we have lost the ability to be disgusted at stupid, guttural tripe like "Married with Children" is the day we have renounced our decency. It is a very sad day indeed.

I remember when "Married with Children" first came on the air, a group of suburban housewives called for a national boycott of the show on the grounds that it stereotyped women.

Ironically, their protests had the effect of publicizing the show, of lending credence to its brainless humor.

These housewives were undoubtedly material for jokes on later shows, what with their out-of-touch notion that women are anything more than bonbon-eating slugs or bleach-blond tramps.

Herein lies the greatest problem with "Married with Children": Every group with any sense of morality is fodder for its juvenile humor. Somewhere between Al's complaining, Peg's whining, Kelly's whoring and Bud's masturbation cracks, everyone who isn't dysfunctional is ridiculed.

It is a great personal relief that "Married with Children" will no longer curse Monday nights on network television. It is a great concern of mine that there was any market for the show in the first place.

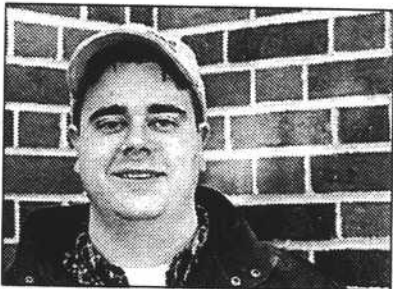
— **Stephen Galoob**  
*The Oklahoma Daily*

"—  
*The day we  
have lost  
the ability  
to be  
disgusted  
at stupid,  
guttural  
tripe like  
'Married  
with  
Children'  
is the day  
we have  
renounced  
our  
decency.*"

*Steve*  
**WILLEY**

## O'Willey

*Poet laureate-elect rhymes into history*



Two weeks ago today, I received a letter in the mail with no return address. It was yellowed with age, and a faint odor of tobacco smoke tweaked my nose as I punctured the seal with a pencil.

The single page was dated Oct. 17, 1967. Scanning the page, I saw that it was signed Allen Ginsberg — a famous poet and social observer of the time.

Recognizing Ginsberg's name and recalling that he had recently passed away, I collapsed into my chair in disbelief. Carefully, I began to read:

"Dearest poet: If you are reading this, then it is truly a disheartening day, for I must have embraced eternity. Damn! And I had so much more to do! Oh God, I hope someone turned off my coffee pot. Anyway, I am writing to you because you have been chosen to continue my legacy of poetry.

"Your poetry — which divine guidance has thrust to my attention — shall change the world. It will make the blind see, the deaf hear and President Clinton ethical. And you must publish your work, for writing poetry without allowing people to inhale its meaning denies humanity its inherent right to live free. The galaxy demands that you not shirk this responsibility."

At first I believed the letter was a hoax — perhaps from my father, as he often sends out letters like this. Just last week, he sent my cousin a letter pretending to be the ghost of Abraham Lincoln. In that letter, my cousin was instructed by "Lincoln" to rid the world of ceiling fans as "they keep knocking off my ghost hat."

But Dad always makes the same revealing mistake of writing letters on his own personalized stationery. So, the letter I received was

indeed authentic. Accepting its validity, I hastily ran to my room and fumbled through my box of high school assignments. I was searching for the last poem I had ever written.

A manilla envelope from Pat Stansbury's English class my senior year revealed the poem entitled "The Tulip." A red "F" was circled in the top left-hand corner, and the teacher had scrawled the word "Disgusting!" underneath it. Slowly, I re-read it:

"There I lie, face down, naked, in a brook. With a tulip sprouting from a place only enemas dare to look."

Clearly, I had no business writing poetry back then, but had I changed? Why would Mr. Ginsberg choose me now? Indeed, I ask myself that question even as I write this. But there are things in this world that innate logic does not permit me to understand. So indulge me as I recite a few poems I have been laboring on.

Now Ginsberg was perhaps most famous for confronting pertinent, timely societal issues with his poetry. In his honor, I will try to do the same.

The first poem is entitled *PIZZA HUT OR DOMINOES* —

*Pizza Hut or Dominoes, which will it be?  
Thirty minutes or less, and the latter is free.  
Unless of course driver wraps car around  
tree. In which it's Pizza Hut delivered to me.*

*Deep dish, regular, crunchy or thin.  
Pepperoni, sausage or the triple-cheese sin.  
I can eat a large Dominoes all by myself. To  
order the Hut would require more wealth. So  
many choices, all so hard for me. Pizza Hut  
or Dominoes, which will it be?*

(You are now supposed to stand up and yell, "Brilliant! It's pure genius!" Though one shouldn't do this if one is sitting on the toilet, or others might think one's getting excited over something one shouldn't probably get excited about.)

This next poem describes one man's painful struggle to get a date: *TOUCH ME* —  
*I would shower every week if I thought it  
would help. And never again would I do my  
"spontaneous yelp." They frighten girls, I*

*know. But how else do I show, "I'm happy  
with you."*

*Sometimes I think I'd be better off dead.  
'Cause a cramp in my leg's all I get in bed. I  
call up the girl, but she's fled to the border.  
And if I persist? Restraining order.*

*I'll comb my hair and clean the house. I'll  
do whatever it takes. Like my third ear  
removed? A new car? I'll buy any model or  
make. I just want to be loved, a docile hand  
on my face. And not have to pay money to  
get touched below the waist.*

(For this poem you are supposed to glance at the person sitting next to you, quickly shuffle to the sports section as if you weren't reading that poem and silently think: "You know, I'd bet that poem was about Steve.")

And finally, a poem for you graduating seniors. *SO YOU'VE GRADUATED MAGNA CUM LOUSY* —

*You've labored for years to earn your  
degree. You'll hear "Pomp and Circum-  
stance," such a sweet melody. But have you  
given much thought to how it would be? If  
you couldn't find a job, that paid more than  
\$2.33.*

*There is much competition, in this world  
of ours. And experience, not degrees, is what  
gets you far. So there goes the down payment  
on that house and new car. You'll lose all  
your friends and call home "Harry's Bar."*

*So move back with the folks, they won't  
mind at all! Or join the military, just give  
them a call.*

*You thought life was just starting, you  
were filling the void.*

*But we'll still be students, while you're  
just unemployed.*

(After reading this poem, if you're not graduating, you're supposed to sigh and exclaim, "Man, I'm glad I ain't graduatin'." However, if you are graduating this semester, there is a "Steve Lynch Mob" meeting in the union today. The room will be posted.)

Mr. Ginsberg, I hope you're proud.

**Willey is a senior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.**