

# Dear Mr. Byrne:

## Students just wanna have fun



**STEVE WILLEY is a senior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist**

An open letter to Bill Byrne, athletic director:

Dear Mr. Byrne:

I don't like you very much. In fact, if I had the choice of rescuing you or a discarded Christmas tree from the bottom of a lake, I'd choose you — but only after serious deliberation. I think you're very mean to me and every other student at this university. Sometimes I think about releasing a family of weasels into your home, but two things always keep me from doing it: 1) I don't know where you live, and 2) I've been unable to locate "weasel sales" in the yellow pages of the phone book.

I suppose you deserve to know why I'm so upset with you. Part of the reason is that I don't particularly care for your hairstyle, but mainly, I'm angry because of your ultimatum I found included with my football tickets this year.

You write that the Athletic Department has given students one year to prove they are worthy of keeping their student seating sections. If students insist on standing in their seats, you continue, the current section will be moved further back. You also recommend that students watch the game while lying on the cement. And, if students feel they have to use the bathroom during the game, they should belly crawl to the urinals so as not to disturb other people's views of the game. Once in the bathroom, you further state, students should "lean way back" or "leave doors open" so

as not to disturb the views of people who may wish to catch a peek.

OK, so maybe you didn't say all of that, but I bet you wanted to. Before I rant, rave and vent, let me tell you a little about myself. I grew up in Natchez, Miss., but you wouldn't have known that if you visited my room when I was a little boy. (*Editor's Note:* Steve, you weighed 83 pounds at birth. You were never little.)

My room was wallpapered with Nebraska football posters and pictures I had cut out from various magazines. I had the letter I wrote to Huskers Illustrated in a frame that hung above my bed. The letter, which I wrote when I was 9, was published in the magazine. I was so proud of it that I brought it to junior high school with me and would silently produce it whenever a teacher asked me a question. I was the biggest Husker fan in Mississippi.

I like to think there was a better reason than a great football team that caused me to choose Nebraska over LSU, but there really wasn't. I was in love with Nebraska football and I proved that in 1992 when I asked then-freshman I-back Derek Brown to marry me. Once, during a night game on Halloween weekend, I wore a pumpkin on my head. It was elaborately carved out to resemble a Nebraska football helmet. It stunk, Mr. Byrne. It smelled like turtle farts, but I wore it the whole game anyway because I loved Nebraska. Even today — five years later — I still find seeds in my hair, though, oddly, they're seeds from a cucumber.

Like most students, Mr. Byrne, I enjoy standing in the student section. It's as rowdy and morally bankrupt as any good student section should be. I love standing on my seat and getting pelted in the back of the head with plastic cups. I love screaming "LET'S GO HUSKERS!" into the ear canal of my friend during a television timeout. And only in the student section can I feel completely at ease when a stranger beside me relieves him-

self into an emptied whiskey flask.

I wouldn't sit somewhere else for all the money in the world. I'm still a big fan, Mr. Byrne, but I feel myself slipping away from my team. Every time you threaten or alienate the students, I move one step closer to rigging your office toilet so that it backs up every time you use the phone. I feel like you are purposely trying to anger students so they will quit attending games, allowing you to sell their tickets to other fans willing to pay more.

That isn't right. Yes, this is the state's team, but it is the University of Nebraska's team first. It's the students' team. My fellow students are the stars who rake in the money you seem to be so infatuated with. And I'm sorry if I seem mean, Mr. Byrne. I don't think you're Satan, but I think you know him. Perhaps you do his bookkeeping. I'm just seeing this as another in your long line of student screw-overs. Sometimes I wonder what kind of game my children will

get to go to. They'll probably have to watch games from home on pay-per-view. And they won't be able to cheer without prior approval from the Athletic Department.

Son: "Umm, Sir? Nebraska just scored again. Can I say 'yahoo' please?"

Phone Clerk: "I don't know. Let's see. Name?"

Son: "Um, it's Steve Willey Jr., sir."

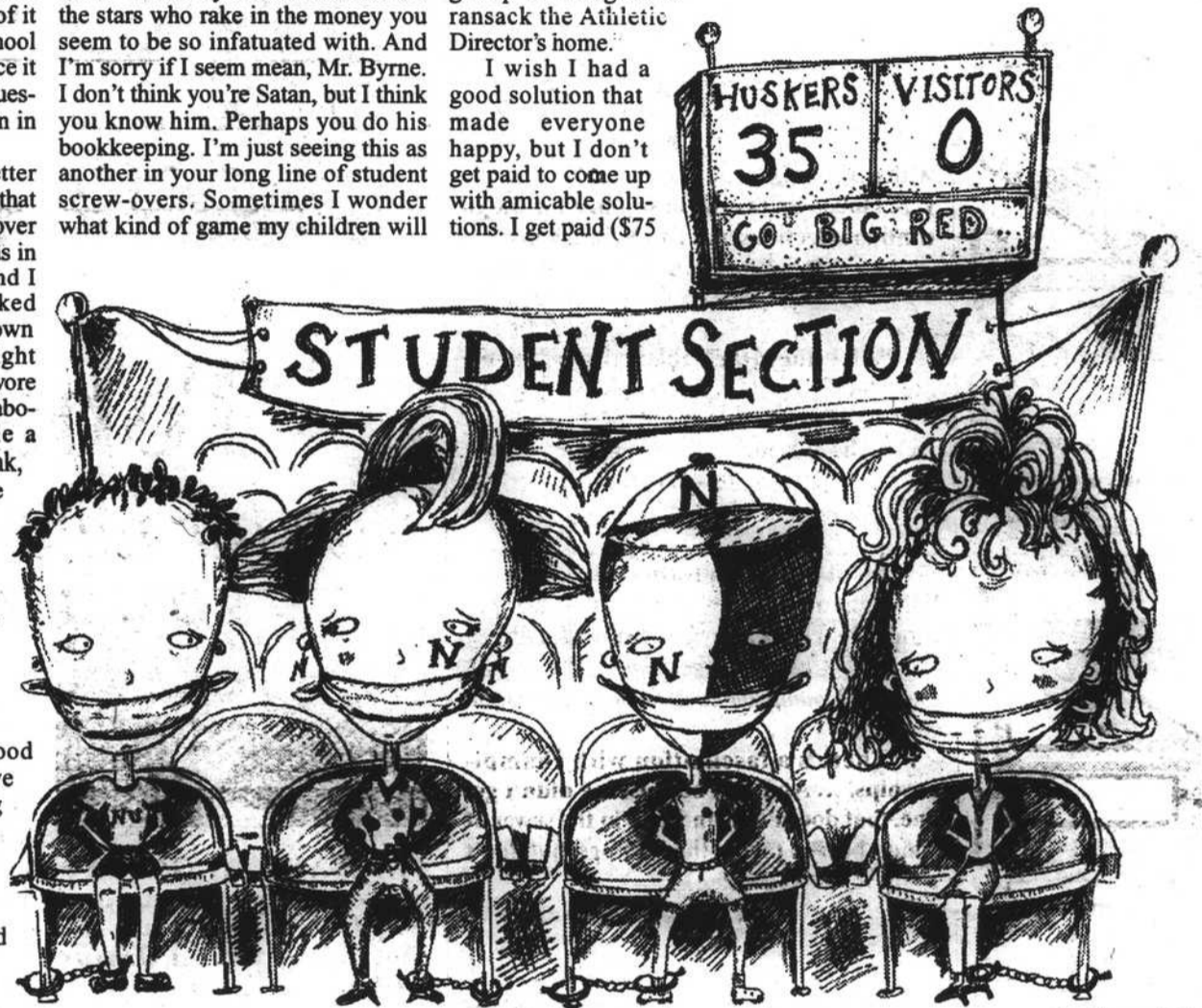
Clerk: "Steve Willey Jr.? Shouldn't you be at an AA meeting with your father?"

Son: "Nossir, he's in prison. He was arrested last week after inciting a group of midgets to ransack the Athletic Director's home."

I wish I had a good solution that made everyone happy, but I don't get paid to come up with amicable solutions. I get paid (\$75

a week from stockholders) to stay out of Perkins restaurant because I once got a plate of linguini stuck to the ceiling. But I'd be happy to sit and visit with you and Association of Students of the University of Nebraska President Curt Ruwe, whom I have known for years. I'd do it free of charge, too. I'm sure we can come up with something that makes students, fans and athletic directors happy as clams. I will await your reply and, for the time being, keep your home weasel-free.

Sincerely,  
Steve Willey



AMY MARTIN/DN

## Get in the G.A.M.E.

*It's not too late for meaningful campus experience*



**AARON COOPER is a junior English major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.**

There is a mad virus on the loose. Yes, that's right, folks. There is a predatory disease that has been unleashed onto campuses all across the United States. No doubt most of you may try to fight it off, but I urge you not to be so quick to flee.

This virus could save your life. No, we're not talking about some twisted, infection-like, reverse mind degeneration, but it is, in fact, a disease of the mind. Think Ted Bundy or Hannibal Lector.

The good news is that it won't cause any permanent brain damage (hopefully), and the bad news is that it may require thinking, reasoning and other intellectual skills. Now all we need is a way to identi-

fy it.

G.A.M.E.

I know it's not sexy, but it's got teeth. Think of it as the Get-your-Ass-Moving-or-Else virus. If you're still weary and clutching dearly to the summertime blues, I feel your pain. But none of that sentimental indulgence can take you where you want to be. And where, you might ask, is that exactly?

For me, it's the top. Not just a metaphorical "top" where the successful go, but I mean an ultimate high point of a one-time, all-or-nothing journey which most of us began about 20 years ago. If life were measured in an elliptical arc pattern then the top is the point you come to where everything else leads only in one direction — downhill. I'm hoping to hit that point within the next few years and stay there, defying gravity, for about 30 to 40 more.

Anything's possible.

Not hit by the mad virus yet? Well, maybe you should be. If you're the kind of person who doesn't recover from summer until November, that means two things: First, you must've had the mother of all vacations (Rock on!), and second, you're probably not on top of things the way you could be.

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*If you're still weary and clutching dearly to the summertime blues, I feel your pain. But none of that sentimental indulgence can take you where you want to be.”*

Then, there's only one thing to do.

Get in the game.

Stop waddling up to the plate halfheartedly, half-hungover, with both eyes slowly opening and closing. Start walking up there like you mean business, ready to play — ready to smash the cowhide right off those pitches that are meant to fool you. Oh, yes — there will be knuckleballs and wicked curveballs along the way.

Will you be ready?

G.A.M.E. is the mad virus that can save you from mental Gumbyhood and the intellectual equivalence of a purple cow with no legs. And, yes, I have seen them!

Get up. Stand up. Come on, throw your hands up ... and everything else that might save you from that looming house of pain, where the midnight oil burns. Get your head ready for the business at hand and the rest is merely in the details.

Don't remember what a chemistry book looks like? That's OK.

Just say an extra "hello" or two a day to your professors and bring plenty of dead presidents along. All major credit cards accepted.

If you want inspiration, go to church. If you want perspiration, join the Army. If you want to touch up on your "Aliens stole my car" excuses for being late and wage all-night Mountain Dew adventures then you have come to the right place. I dare you to take on the mad virus.

But the choice is up to you.

In the words of George Carlin, "You can lead a gift horse to water in the middle of the stream, but you can't look him in the mouth and make him drink."

Exactly.

There will be days when you will want to give up. There will be days when you will feel invincible. And during Finals Week, if you're lucky, you will beg for a visit from a doctor: Kevorkian, that is. The temptation will be all-powerful.

Don't give in. Don't give up. Face the challenge head-on and let your barbaric "YAWP" resonate through the halls of higher learning. Send the message that you will not go quietly.

But don't wait too long. Seize the moment. Don't sit in the corner of the classroom, hiding behind a book you're never going to read, missing out on the very thing you should have come here for.

Make some noise. Take a few prisoners if you have to, but fight the good fight.

We have no use for water boys on this field.

Not sure about your major yet? That's OK. There's plenty of time to iron that out, unless you're in your fourth senior year. Then you might want to choose before you wake up tomorrow morning. I have only one suggestion: Don't major in sleep.

There just aren't enough hours ....