

# The fun is where the friends are

## Location doesn't matter



**KLAUS MARRE is a senior broadcasting major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist**

Spring break is just around the corner, travel agencies are throwing brochures at you, and ads in the paper are offering you unbelievable travel deals.

You are still torn between Daytona Beach and South Padre Island, but you are certain this spring break will be the best time of your life. After all, eight to 10 days of drinking and sexual adventures lay ahead of you, and spring break is what college is all about.

In order to make the best choice for a spring break trip, consider the advantages of these two locations.

In Daytona Beach, you could hang out with tens of thousands of drunk college students.

But in South Padre, you could hang out with tens of thousands of drunk college students.

Tough choice?

No. Neither place appeals to me. Neither do all the other popular spring break sites.

Maybe it's because I'm somewhat appalled by people who need to be drunk or around other drunks to have a good time.

But, most importantly, it's because having fun on spring break has nothing to do with where you go. All that matters is who you go with.

I admit, some of the best vacations I have taken were trips to Greece, to Spain and to a sailing camp in France.

But spectacular locations didn't make the trips great. The friends who came along did.

Therefore, I would rather spend a week with friends in western Nebraska — in my opinion, the most boring place on earth — than by myself in Hawaii.

Spring break serves different purposes.

First and most importantly it provides students with time to get away from school, and I encourage everybody to do so.

So don't stay in Lincoln. Go somewhere — anywhere — as long as you get a change of scenery.

Next, make sure you get some rest during the break. If you don't, it will come back to haunt you before and during finals.

Once you're out of town, the perfect vacation awaits you.

I'll give you a few examples:

In Germany, we have a holiday called "Pfungsten," which is like spring break, because we get a week off of school about a month and a half prior to finals and summer vacation.

Every year on Pfungsten, about 10 of my best friends and I would

pack our things and take off to a place in the hills about two hours away from our homes.

Bleckhausen, the town we picked as our annual destination, was extremely boring (we actually were the annual highlight for many of the locals). And the house there did not have any outstanding features.

But that's not what made the trips perfect.

The fun of these trips would start weeks before we left.

Anticipation and planning, as well as the memories of last year's adventures, were as much a part of the experience as the time spent in Bleckhausen.

Plus, every Pfungsten vacation had a series of components which can never be altered: beer, barbecue, seemingly endless card games and an annual trip to the top of the mountain above our house.

A number of rituals also were involved, and they made the trips legendary at my high school.

The first ritual occurred just after arriving, when we placed a single sausage underneath the coals of the grill. At the end of the trip, one lucky guy got bribed to eat it. Normally, the eater was my friend Jan, who would eat pretty much anything, including the deodorant stick he ate for \$6 in 1992.

Another ritual started when we ran out of beer while playing cards.

We found a David Hasselhoff song on a compact disc (hello, stereotype) and decided to play it continuously until one of us couldn't stand it anymore. The person who turned off the tune would have to go and buy more beer.

But we underestimated our own strength. The song ran for 14 hours straight before we realized our own stupidity and went to the store together.

Granted, almost all of these stories are the "I guess you should have been there" type, and I could go on forever writing about anecdotes only I could find funny.

But that's my point. Going somewhere — anywhere — with your best friends creates memories and bonds stronger and, most likely, more fun than anything Daytona Beach can offer.

Though I see my friends only once a year, and we all have chosen different paths, we still sit together and share our Pfungsten memories. And every time, it seems as if nothing has changed between us.

So, if you have yet to make spring break plans, and you don't want to do what everybody else is doing ...

And if having a good time is more important to you than saying you have been to some exotic locale ...

Then I encourage you to find a house somewhere within five hours of Lincoln, get some friends together and take off.

I promise, with the right friends, you will not regret it.

Plus, you'll return to school physically rested and mentally prepared to face the last weeks of classes.

# Leading, not lounging

## Program helps students shine

BY LINDSAY YOUNG  
Assignment Reporter

Sixty UNL students will refuse to relax in the sun or ski powdered slopes during the seven-day recess from classes this spring break.

Instead, they will spend six intense days learning effective leadership skills at The LeaderShape Institute at Camp Carroll Joy Holling.

It's worth the sacrifice, past participants said.

"I learned more in that one week than I have in any other experience in my life," said Doug Kucera, a junior international business and Spanish major who participated in The LeaderShape Institute last year.

"It beat the hell out of Padre," said Matthew Eickman, a junior finance and economics major, adding last year's conference was better than going on any trip.

The 60 students were chosen from a pool of applicants to participate in LeaderShape during spring break. One-third of the group will represent greek organizations, one-third will represent residence halls and one-third will come from off-campus housing.

This year's group of students was hard to choose, said Vernon Miller, a member of the LeaderShape central planning committee.

"After experiencing LeaderShape, I wanted everyone to experience it," he said.

But about 25 students now sit on the conference's waiting list.

Marilyn Bugenhagen, LeaderShape campus program administrator, said the conference helps chosen participants lead with integrity.

The conference is set up with a different theme each day, including: "Building Community," "Staying in Action" and "Bringing Vision to Reality."

To achieve leadership goals, stu-

dents work in both large groups and small "families," which Eickman said made the conference more effective.

The learning experience doesn't stop when the conference is over, Miller said.

By the end of the LeaderShape week, participants develop a vision for improving the community or the groups and organizations they lead, and they decide how to turn the vision into a reality.

For one year after the conference, participants attend follow-up meetings and activities in order to renew their motivation to follow through on their visions, Bugenhagen said.

"It's definitely going to have an impact on our campus," Miller said.

Pasha Korber, a senior mechanical engineering major, attended LeaderShape last year and created a vision of improving the retention rate among her fellow engineering students.

Korber finished her vision during the first week of the fall semester, she said. She spoke to all 400 incoming freshman engineering students in their introduction engineering seminar.

"I think I've opened some doors for some freshmen," she said.

Because the conference is set up with a more personal focus than a traditional leadership lecture, it is more effective and more rewarding, said Robert Sheehan, executive director of LeaderShape, Inc.

Groups including University Foundations, the office of Student Affairs and academic colleges sponsor students who attend the program. The conference costs about \$500 for each student, but the students don't pay a dime.

More than 5,000 students have gone through the program since it began in 1986.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln is the only campus whose students attend the program during spring

"It's definitely going to have an impact on our campus."

VERNON MILLER  
planning committee member

break, Sheehan said, although 20 universities will hold LeaderShape near their campuses this year.

The University of Kansas holds the program during its winter break, and other schools hold the program during the summer after spring classes end.

Last year was the first year UNL hosted the program. Before that, UNL sent its LeaderShape students to one of the seven sessions held at The LeaderShape Institute's base in Champaign, Ill.

Sheehan said he was excited when he heard UNL wanted to conduct the program during its spring break, because the week is more productive and positive for students than traditional spring break trips.

"I thought that was an exciting innovation," he said. "The whole idea of an alternative spring break I find appealing."

At the end of spring break, most students won't end their trips with tears.

But many LeaderShape participants did.

It was hard to say goodbye to other participants who they had grown close to during the six-day workshop, they said.

Eickman said these tears show the conference has a large and lasting impact on its participants.

"Everyone stands in a circle with tears in their eyes," he said. "It shows how close you become with one another."

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