

Nikki
FOX

Human Nature

Take time to smell the flowers

FOX is a junior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

Last weekend I went camping at a state park. The park was filled with mainly trails and historical sites.

The trip was filled with the usual experiences of putting up the tent with a few less parts than needed; around-the-clock attacks by blood sucking mosquitoes, campfires that take too long to start and days of not showering and a rock-hard build up of sweat, dirt, bug repellent and sun block.

But it was worth it.

In the middle of the United States it's hard to be face-to-face with nature, considering that a lot of the original species that helped define the area are gone. Also it can't help but be noticed that Nebraska is an agricultural state. So much of the rolling seas of grasses are replaced by plowed-under fields of corn and fenced areas for cattle to graze.

When will the entire earth become like Nebraska?

When was the last time you washed your car with a bucket of soap and the outdoor hose in your swimsuit?

When was the last time you laid down on the freshly cut summer grass to look into the sky and make shapes from the clouds?

When was the last time that you threw an insect outside instead of stepping on it (cockroaches are exempt)?

When was the last time you sat under a tree, used its trunk to lean on and really felt a moment of peace and tranquillity?

People need to leave the superficial crap that defines today as the capitalistic, fast-paced, materialistic, impersonal society. Don't get me wrong, don't quit your college career to buy a motorcycle and bike down to a poverty stricken village in Mexico to help the community rebuild itself.

I'm gearing this toward reviving your own childhood innocence. There used to be something in each of us that was literally untouched by the pollutants of human kind; things that clouded your compassionate and untainted outlook of life.

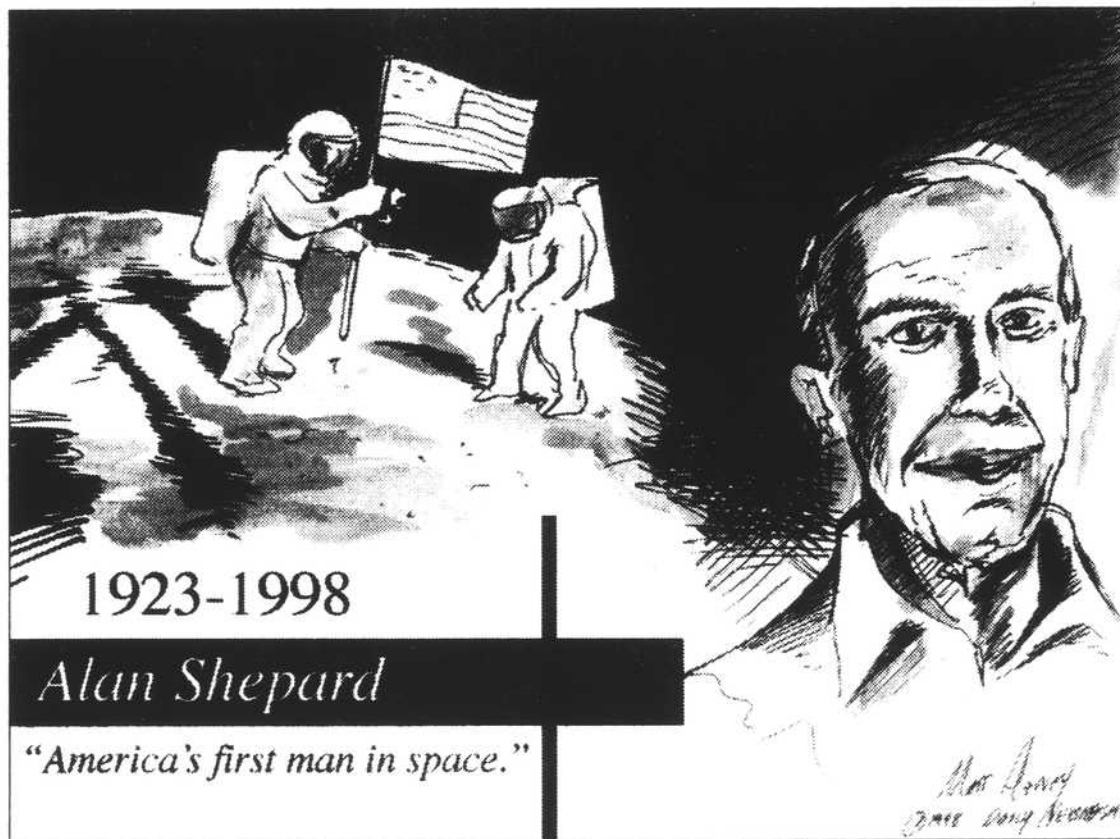
Childhood is defined by learning. We were all wanting sponges of nature, knowledge, emotions and experiences of pure truth.

What made it so great to chase the lightning bug, catch it and feel it in your hand to finally see where that light comes from? And what made it so great to do it all night long?

There are simple pleasures found in acts of childhood. Sometime between then and now a lot of people have forgotten this.

So please, take a time-out in your summertime to indulge yourself in playtime.

Haney's
VIEW



Barb
CHURCHILL

Best of the Century?

Multitude of 'best of' lists lacking content

CHURCHILL is a graduate student in saxophone performance and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

We're near the end of the millennium. Beware, many "best-of-the-century" lists are falling out of the sky, and they may hurt someone if we don't do something.

Apparently, every so-called "expert" in America wants to weigh in on their chosen medium, whether it be books, television programming, music, sports, current events or basket weaving.

What, exactly, is this latest fixation with "best-of" lists all about? It's the newest craze: "Hey, I'm Joe Schmoe, and my group has put out the 'Top Ten List of Underwater Basket weaving sites for the past 100 years. Please put me on the cover of the New York Times.'"

Exaggeration? Think again!

TV Guide put out several lists of their favorite television shows in various genres. Cinescape has weighed in with their "Top Movies of the 20th Century" list, ESPN's "Greatest Sports Stories of All Time" have been related, the "Top 100 Rock and Roll Records" have been picked by various sources and the "Top 100 News Stories of the 20th Century" according to the United Press International and the Associated Press have been named. And, if all those lists weren't enough to convince you of the latest "best-of" list epidemic, the top 100 greatest English-language books as named by Modern Library were announced on July 21, 1998.

But probably the most egregious example of profitable, born-again-listing comes to us from the American Film Institute. The AFI put out a "Top

100 Movies" list this past spring, with a new wrinkle. The AFI had a significant print presence, with Newsweek's special summer 1998 issue "2000: The 100 Best Movies, Ranked by the American Film Institute" was completely devoted to the AFI's list. But the AFI also decided to do something a little bit different. They added television coverage to the mix.

That's right. The AFI, in their infinite wisdom, made their list an event by announcing their favorite movies, with great fanfare, on CBS-TV.

And, if your heart is palpitating and you feel like you might go into anaphylactic shock because you missed the AFI's special on CBS, don't worry. It'll be on again.

Despite all the other newsworthy stories in the world, such as the India/Pakistani nuclear missile crisis, the NBA lockout, President Clinton's crisis-of-the-week or even Chelsea Clinton's nascent sexuality, AFI has somehow conned TNT cable television into promoting AFI's list of the Top 100 Movies every Tuesday night from June 23, 1998 onward throughout the summer.

This TNT tie-in proves the "best-of lists" fad is based on one thing — capitalism. Otherwise, why would the AFI and others, such as ESPN, make hay, or in their cases, TV specials, out of their various "best-of" lists?

Is the AFI spurning many popular science fiction films because sci-fi films have been viewed as a lesser art form due to their popularity? And if so, isn't this hypocritical, when the AFI has cashed in on the "best-of" lists craze themselves with their CBS special and

the series of TNT shows?

But the AFI isn't the only offender here. The 100 best English-language books list also provoked my profound irritation.

There are many previously-acknowledged classic books on this list, but the problem is in the ranking. How many of these books has the Modern Library actually read?

For example, is Vladimir Nabokov's "Lolita" truly the fourth-best book of the 20th century? Also, why is Dashiell Hammett's "The Maltese Falcon" on this list? Did the Modern Library editorial board feel the 20th century detective book craze must be represented?

And if you want speculative fiction, current novels or controversial choices, you'll have to go elsewhere. The Modern Library certainly isn't providing them.

Bret Easton Ellis' "American Psycho" is missing, as are many great science-fiction books. Robert Heinlein's many novels are conspicuously absent, as are Ray Bradbury's "Fahrenheit 451," Steven R. Donaldson's "The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant" series and current author Lois McMaster Bujold's masterpiece "Mirror Dance." The only books ever considered controversial are George Orwell's "1984" and Aldous Huxley's "Brave New World." However, these books are now considered part of the academic canon. Do they really need to be promoted on a "best-of" list of this type?

The moral of this story is: if you need a job, create a "best-of" list. Then, get the print media and/or the networks behind it. You'll have it made — you'll be on the gravy train for life.

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