

Humble hero

Red Letter Day guide offers answers to campus-related questions



MATTHEW EICKMAN is a senior finance and economics major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

My editor tells me I'm not doing a very good job. He says my columns don't let you know who I am.

So, I scrapped all of my ideas. I chose not to write in favor of Initiative 413. I decided not to tell you to be nice to people.

No political column here. No moral issues. Just a little about one of my heroes.

Realize first that I have many heroes. They include Magic Johnson, Bill Gates, my father and the guy who invented the remote control (bless his soul).

But, I want you to hear about a hero you may be more familiar with.

He is a Red Letter Day tour guide.

I admire his knowledge, his dedication and his tolerance for annoying questions. I sat down with him and asked him questions about his job.

Out of the kindness of his heart, he discussed some popular questions and told me the answers he is trained to give.

Because my hero is a humble young man, he asked that he remain anonymous. For purposes of this column, we'll just call him Campustourguy.

Hey Campustourguy, I see fraternities, sororities and residence halls. Where should I live? And where can I partake in alcohol?

All of your options will give you a chance to meet new people.

The fraternities and sororities are kind of cool. You have more people to share clothes with, and you will probably have a test file

that makes exams easy.

Some of the fraternities are dry, and some pretend to be dry. Make sure you find out if you can get trashed in your room or if you need to go off campus.

The halls are cool in their own ways. You can get your own room or you can share. Either way, you will have more privacy. There are actually doors on all the bathroom stalls so you can read your newspaper privately.

Alcohol is not legal, so you need to ask your SA what the best way is to sneak it into the halls.

It seems this wasn't covered in the freshman halls this year, and kids haven't realized that paper sacks may be an obvious indicator.

Hey Campustourguy, do you have a student government on campus? I want to be a politician.

Why yes, it's called the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska. In theory, it is a powerful decision-making body. Realistically, it serves as the powerless voice of the students.

If you want to be a politician, you may be in luck. See, it used to be a requirement that you be greek to be in ASUN. However, the last couple of years have seen increased emphasis on involving all students.

In fact, the person who will probably be the next ASUN president will probably be successful because he/she realizes that real people live in the halls and off-campus.

It's just too bad that they had to take a step backwards by disregarding the Athletic Department in the Homecoming process.

Hey Campustourguy, I'm thinking of going to UNL instead of Doane because I don't want a liberal arts education. At UNL, will I be able to focus on my major area of study?

There are these things called IS/ES classes. Basically, they suck.

To fulfill the requirements laid down by the programs, you must take a diverse collection of classes that fulfill certain requirements.

UNL has figured out that these classes make it more of a pain to graduate, so you have to stay here longer, so more money comes in.

You then have two options. You can stay here for seven years, fulfill your IS/ES requirements, owe thousands of dollars in

loans, and leave a well-rounded poor person.

Or, you can take all the classes in your major, ignore the foreign language restrictions, drop out and become a cigar salesperson for the federal government.

The sales position is actually an

internship, so you may only be paid with gifts from high-ranking government officials.

Kind of leaves you no choice but to receive a liberal arts education. At least Lincoln is bigger than Crete.

Hey Campustourguy, I assume there are a lot of things to do in Lincoln. What are the neatest things about UNL?

UNL offers lots of cool things. Most importantly, you can use your student ID to charge an 85-cent pop before every class. The pop will then either be paid for by loans or your parents.

If you get screwed into buying more than \$250 of books, you can get a cool sweatshirt for free. The sweatshirt can then serve as a student ID because every student has one.

You can play intramurals in one of the best intramural sports programs in the nation. If you're like my friend TJ, you can even become a ref and eject players every game.

If you live in the halls, you will have free Internet access. You will be able to download nude pictures faster than ever with the fast connection.

Oh yeah, we also have a football team.

Hey Campustourguy, I'm from Florida and I'm used to warm weather. What's it like in Lincoln?

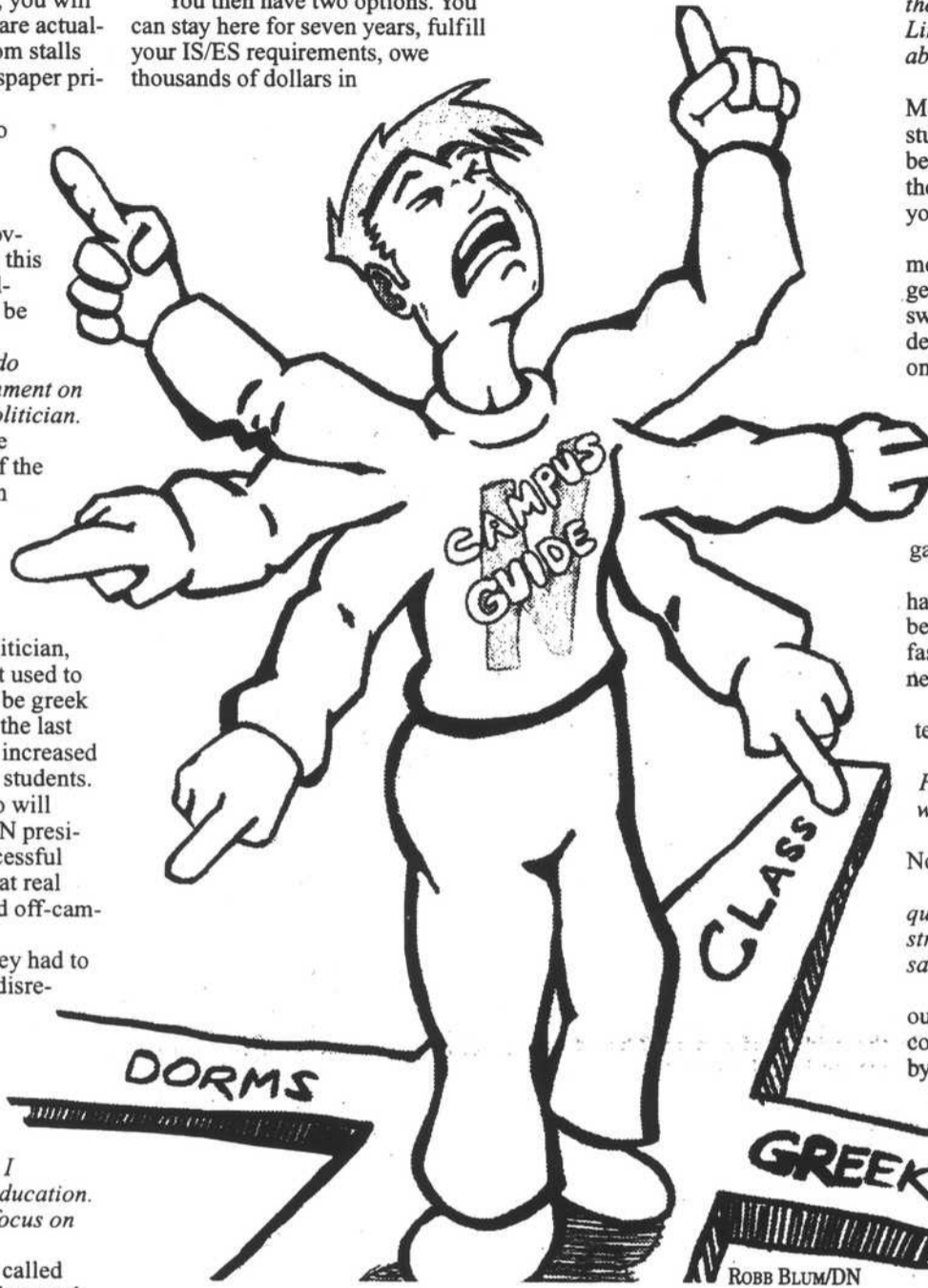
Hey, you could go to school in North Dakota. Any other questions?

Hey Campustourguy, one more question. What's with all this construction? I have wood chips in my sandals.

Oh, that mess over there? That's our 15-year plan to recruit more construction management students by automatically giving them jobs on campus.

You will have to pay for it, but you may not ever use it. So it's kind of like life insurance or required textbooks (from the smart-ass at the end of the line)?

Oh, another future hero in the making.



ROBB BLUM/DN

Crash the parties

If students COMMIT to ACTION, ASUN idea might fly



JOSH WIMMER is a senior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

So, I got pretty worked up last Wednesday.

The Daily Nebraskan ran this story reporting that student leaders – among them Sara Russell, president of the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska – wanted to eliminate parties.

Of all the sick, sick, sick ideas. I was just plain outraged. I was like, "The J-Dogg will not stand for this!"

And then my ex-girlfriend showed up and read the article, and said, "Josh, you bonehead. They're just talking about getting rid of the party system for ASUN elections."

And then she slapped me around a little and said, "And drop this 'J-Dogg' thing, you freak. You're white, and you're from North Dakota."

Normally, at that point I would have reminded her that Fargo is the

birthplace of Pras of the Fugees – whose full name, after all, is Bjorn "Pras" Odegaard – but I was too interested in this ASUN thing.

I mean, I've been here four years now. The ASUN party system is pretty much a way of life for me.

I'm accustomed to seeing posters and newspaper stories flashing bold, catchy, completely capitalized party names at me – names like ACTION and NASA and AC/DC.

And I confess, once my roommate and I even led our own party, albeit briefly. No, seriously – we were the EXIT party because we figured we wouldn't have to hang up many signs that way.

The point is, before last Wednesday, I'd never imagined elections without the party system. And when I did think about it, it seemed like a good idea, but it raised some significant concerns.

And I'm talking significant concerns here, folks. There are minor concerns to consider too, of course. Like, what is the function of the greek system, if not to govern our student body? And, if we eliminate parties and a bunch of greeks still win, what are the hundreds of other students who didn't make time to vote but still feel oppressed going to bitch about?

But those concerns are trivial. I'm worried about things like, if we get rid of the party system, who's

gonna vote?

Should ASUN make a go at the no-party plan, I predict a low, low, low voter turnout – as opposed to the merely low, low turnout we're used to.

If there isn't one greek party, the fraternities and sororities can't mobilize en masse to vote for it. We'll lose a great big chunk of the potential electorate right there.

And should that be the case, there won't be a lesser of two evils for the rabid, um, non-conformists to mindlessly band together and vote against.

So I see almost zero voters. No biggie, though. There's something more important to consider.

I'm betting on a lot fewer candidates too.

See, us humans, we're social animals. By and large, we hate doing stuff by ourselves.

If your friends aren't thinking about running, or if nobody in your house is thinking about running, are you going to give it a shot?

It'd be a lonely business. Like I said, my ASUN party disbanded after one day in the race, so I don't know firsthand what it'd be like. But I bet making posters and fliers is a lot more fun with 40 or 50 other people than it is with just your roommate.

My next concern follows logically: If we lose all these potential candidates for lack of camaraderie, the

only people left over will be, like, these bold, do-it-yourself, lone-wolf types.

They'll be nuts. They'll believe that they alone, without the support of a whole gaggle of other folks, are fit to lead the University of Nebraska into the future.

So they'll probably be conceited bastards.

And, that said, they'll probably all be running for president.

Seriously. Trust me. 'Cause if the J-Dogg isn't an expert on conceited-bastardness – well, then no one is.

So we'll have, like, five or six separate people – at least – vying for the honor of leading our student body. And probably some of them will have toadies running for vice president. I hate toadies.

But honestly, I think there's some solid reasoning going on there. (Of course, naturally I do, because I just wrote it.) We've got ASUN spots that are still unfilled this year, and last year's election was supposed to have been pretty successful.

So truly, if you're a conceited bastard – as we've already established you are – and you're running for ASUN, are you going to campaign for "Senator of the College of Human Resources and Family Sciences" when you could be queen bee of the hive or alpha male of the pack? I bet not.

All these concerns aside, I do

want to give a big thumbs up to the members of ASUN's COMMIT party who have been bold enough to suggest dismantling the party system.

Please, gentle readers, allow me to wax corny for a moment.

The folks in ASUN are faced with a pretty whiny and apathetic constituency – a student body that is often heard muttering about greek control of student government but rarely seen making the effort to do something about it.

In spite of all this, some of our ASUN representatives have taken the time and trouble to try to change things, essentially to rebuild the electoral process from the ground up, so that some of them may very well have trouble getting re-elected next spring themselves.

I want to send them a shout-out from the J-Dogg.

(And if that doesn't get me into Sara Russell's pants, I don't know what will.)

And I hope they do decide to abolish the party system, because I am 100 percent in favor of a revolution, baby. It could be a flop or it could be the best thing since cyberporn, but we're never going to know if we don't try, like that little engine that could.

And if we do try it, and it does work, hey – let's have a big party. J-Dogg out.