

All in the family

Close friend assumes brotherly role twenty years after the fact



ERIN REITZ is a senior theater performance major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

My big brother is the bomb.

He was born in Georgia (his "I'm a Georgia Peach" is always said with a really awful Forrest Gump accent), he's 6'2", and he's a Gemini, which makes him naturally superior. He can laugh at himself when he does something stupid and will laugh twice as hard when you do.

He's bailed me out of numerous frightening situations that could have easily put me in jail. Okay, maybe not jail. More like Leavenworth.

Take, for instance, that little thing I like to refer to as "the gas station incident."

One beautiful summer afternoon, I went to my local corner gas station to fill up my beloved Skippy (referred to by most people as "Erin's car," which is not nearly as fun and creative, by the way). I wrote a check, and amazingly, it got rejected by the scanning company.

I say amazingly because, up until just now, I had forgotten about all of those checks I bounced last year. Makes sense, I guess. Dammit.

So there I was, wiggling out at the register counter with no cash, nothing in the bank until the next day (hence the logic behind writing a check) and a few maxed-out credit cards. I started calling everyone I knew.

I must have called fifteen numbers in about 2 minutes - absolutely no one was home that afternoon. Then I remembered that my brother wasn't at work. He was home and didn't even think twice about freeing my vehicle

from the evil clutches of Q for Quik. I'm not sure what I would have done if he had been at work that day.

I haven't paid him back yet, but he doesn't make a deal about it. He just reminds me of it (and all of the other money I owe him) in an awfully smart-ass way from time to time, of course.

He also helped save my butt this past Halloween. In the name of holiday decoration, big bro (and some other very rad people) stunk up his shirt for a couple of hours, helping me cover a hallway with cut-up garbage bags and spider webs. It was not fun work (is that an oxymoron?), but we got it done eventually. So maybe I sort of used him for his height, but he knew that. He's a very understanding guy.

The thing about my big brother is this: it hasn't just been me that he's gone out of his way to help out. He put his butt on the line to move a co-worker out of her abusive boyfriend's apartment this fall. He didn't blink when she called him up at 1 a.m. and told him she needed his help. He just did it.

He's a Dumpster for my floor's guy problems, and they use his services on a regular basis. I am referring, of course, to *listening* services, people. Minds out of the gutter, for God's sake!

Those who know him are blessed with his willingness to absorb our troubles. He's so generous with the extra time he doesn't really have. I suppose I end up taking him for granted every once in awhile, but he has a talent of reminding me of that in his own subliminal, yet hilariously blatant way.

For all of the crap I throw at him, it's pretty cool that he still stands by me when I need him. Sticking up for the people that matter to him comes naturally, and he has no qualms about setting things straight. He has a need to see his friends and relatives happy and respected. If they're not, he'll find whoever's responsible for it and make the world right again. What a stud.

Okay, I do have one thing to con-

fess. I must come clean. He's not really my brother. The irony is that he's actually a day younger than me, and his name is Aaron. I think we may have been separated at birth. (Okay, so maybe he's blonde and 9 inches taller than me, but those are just silly details, don't cha' think?)

We've lived in the same hall since last fall, and we're pretty tight. I don't remember when he started referring to himself as my big brother, but I thought it was pretty fly when he did.

I'm not sure if I am able to express how infinitely rad it is to finally get the big bro I never had as a kid. It's not that I don't

appreciate my two mad-lovely and talented sisters, mind you.

They are far

superior to most hooligans walking on this earth and I'd be lost without them. But having a brother is different.

He's the manly man who wants to meet all the guys I have dates with, and he will tell me if he doesn't approve.

(Side note: It's kinda' funny how I say "all the guys," like it's this massive cartel of males I get to randomly choose from or something. One can dream, though. Sigh.)

He's offered (or sometimes threatened) to beat the crap out of those who didn't treat me the way he feels I should be. "Reitz, want me to take care of him for you?" is an expression that a few bystanders have probably heard a few times. God, you've gotta love it, huh?

He's around to give me "guy perspective" on things and even admits that he needs the "psychotic and naturally wicked female perspective" from me from time to time. He knows that's my area. He's a smarty.

Aaron's always saying corny male crap that will never stop amusing me. If I say something suggestive, he'll say "Ooh baby!" Peter Brady style (you know what I mean). He also is quite fond of screaming my name across the cafeteria, because our rule states that I'm supposed to yell "Sex Toy!" back at him.

We're a couple of sickos and we love it.

The best way to sum up my relationship with him is this way: If he were a chick, he'd be in my wedding. With Aaron I can be as serious or as stupid as I need to be, and the same goes for him. Because of him, I have this sense of security that only a brother can provide. I really wish that he'd been around for those first 20 years I went brotherless.

For you gals lacking a big brother, I strongly suggest you find one. They really are a nice support to have around in those tough (and not-so-tough) times.

So here's to you, Ritter. Keep on fighting the good fight and, in return, I'll pay you back for that gas someday.



AMY MARTIN/DN

Gobble.com

Interesting Web sites can dispel Thanksgiving blahs



TODD MUNSON is a senior broadcasting major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

Gobble, gobble my fellow turkeys. Unless you're like the hapless J-Dogg, whose only invitation for Thanksgiving came from a guy named Arthur, y'all are probably counting down the minutes to five days of unadulterated freedom at home with your relatives.

Just two days from now, you might find yourself at the kid's table trying to scrape Aunt Suzie's armpit-flavored gravy from your turkey or maybe sandwiched between Uncle Stu and Uncle Maynard, the one who smells like urine, on the couch watching the "Smokey and the Bandit" trilogy.

However, I've got the perfect antidote for the Thanksgiving blahs. When the fam's all gathered around fighting for a slice of Aunt Bettie's goat-cheese pie, what better way is there for social interaction than to belly up to the ol' computer and log onto the Internet.

Until recently, I thought the

Internet was a barren computerized wasteland for pedophiles and Star Trek fans with way too much time on their hands. However, in the last few months, I realized surfing the Net is a magnificent way to whittle away hours that could be spent doing something a little more worthwhile like studying or actually doing something productive here at the Daily Nebraskan.

Curse this sodding newspaper. Down at the DN, all the computers are hooked up to a super-fast Internet connection. That means no lines, no waiting for a World Wide Web of a whole lot of nothing just a click of a button away. And that means a column which, in theory, takes only an hour or so to write, is usually done in three. Curse this sodding newspaper.

Anyhoo, while serving out my sentence down here, I've stumbled onto enough cool Web sites that it would take a person about an entire day to fully look at all of them. And by entire day, I'm referring to Thanksgiving Day. Woo hoo, no rubbing Great Aunt Lurlene's bunion-encrusted, eight-toed feet.

I'd also like to note, a few examples of elephantiasis and graphic jive aside, I'd rate all the sites listed PG-13 at their worst. For some strange reason, perhaps that I consider myself a normal and productive member of society, I have yet to look at the Internet porn all the lawmakers are fussing about.

What better way to start than with the site dedicated to the greatest liquid

in existence, the fine mysterious sludge that constitutes a lovely pint of Guinness. At <http://www.guinness.com>, you can learn all the secrets of this 200-year-old recipe, take a virtual tour of the St. James Gate Brewery or try to brew your very own batch of the stoutest of the stouts. Just looking at the site makes me fantasize about a pint or two.

Hmmm ... it's only 9 p.m. Maybe I will.

45 minutes later ... Curse that sodding Guinness.

Now that I'm good and buzzed, I'm in the mood to send out some silly e-mails. Since bigred is the e-mail equivalent of Pong, I'll use my Hotmail account courtesy of my good friend Bill Gates. If you don't have one, I highly recommend getting one. It's even free, and unlike bigred, you can log onto a Hotmail account from any computer with Internet access. Thanks to Hotmail, I stay in touch with friends who are too lazy to send letters but will gladly e-mail pictures of a wild dominatrix at a Halloween party in San Francisco's Castro District. Thanks Dave! Check out his photography at <http://cdm.sfsai.edu/users/dsnorris>. Log onto <http://www.hotmail.com>, fill out a couple of things, and in minutes, you'll be like all the cool kids. Even my mom has Hotmail.

A great site to find some humorous images to send out through your new Hotmail account exists at http://members.tripod.com/~krazy_keith/Ballz.html. On this page, you'll find

more than 320 hyperlinks to almost every "Ate My Balls" page in existence. Just what is an "Ate My Balls Page"? Well, it's just about as it sounds. For example at the "Mr. T Ate My Balls" page, you'll see a collection of photos of Mr. T with some humorous captions about how much he likes balls. "I pity the fool who don't like balls" is just one of his many catch phrases. Crazy Keith even went through the trouble to alphabetize all the sites, so you easily find out which celebrities have a knack for balls.

Speaking of balls, some really peculiar photos of elephantiasis, along with some other graphic photos, can be found at <http://www.rotten.com>. I hope the address serves as fair warning. Along with basketball-sized gonads, you'll find a bevy of political figures caught in rather awkward moments. Betcha didn't know Queen Elizabeth picks her nose. As the name suggests, there is a collection of rather rotten photos. You don't have to see them if you don't want to. But if you really want to see the Abominable Infants section, wait until after dinner.

If you want to put the day to good use and learn a foreign language, check out <http://www.jiveon.com>. I must warn that there is a lot of explicit language but that's an integral part of Jivin'. If you want to learn the raps wit' out havin' to Fake the funk, read the "Jive Bible" from Albert to Zeus. If you still have questions ask the "Jive Guy" or submit something to the "Jive Translator." If you really want to

have some fun, teach some of the more explicit terms to your younger cousins and sit back and watch the mayhem. Soon you'll be a *Half Strainer*; spoutin' jive just like the J-Dogg wit' out havin' to grow up on the streets of Fargo. If you miss the J-Dogg over the holiday, check out his page at <http://incolor.inetnebr.com/wimmer/>.

As for other DN employees on the Web, if you like to honk to tonk check out <http://www.cactushillne.com>. Here you'll find David Wilson, sportswriter extraordinaire, in action as the fiddle player in Cactus Hill, the boot scootiest country band in the land.

The final site I want to recommend is the one that will take the longest to download. Ironically enough, it came from the editor in chief herself. Kinda makes you wonder what she does in her little office. At <http://www.perp.com/whale>, you can witness one urban legend debunked once and for all as the entire television news report of the Oregon State Highway Division blowing up a beached whale with a quarter ton of dynamite. Silly beyond belief. As Dave Barry said in his report of the incident, I am not making this up.

And I'm sure most of you won't bother to take this home over the holiday so to make things easier, go to <http://www.unl.edu/DailyNeb>, where Webmaster Gregg has hyperlinked each and every address for your viewing pleasure.

Happy Thanksgiving, turkeys.