

The last hurrah

Five years at UNL really makes for best years of life



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Well, this is the moment East Campus has been waiting for. It's time for me to say adios to the DN and dear old Nebraska U.

Believe it or not, come May 8 I will be graduating, unless I join the circus instead of taking my last final.

Who'd have thought a moron like me could graduate from a third-tier institution of higher education?

My high school counselor didn't. He told me to skip college because I'd just find myself on the A.P. list. He made sure I knew he wasn't talking about advanced placement.

Well, poop on you, buddy. I'm graduating in just half a decade, and never was I once placed on academic probation. And poop on that English teacher who said you can never start a sentence with the word 'and.'

But the last bit of poop is the biggest. A long time ago, I was known classified as a "gifted and talented" student. I think the correct term was "able" student. Able to do what, I don't know. After a few years of the egghead biz, I realized goofing off was a lot more fun than writing a 20-page research paper about Sweden at age 12.

Five years after falling off the academic wagon, I applied to a special mentoring program where high school seniors could shadow a professional out in the "real world." Instead of wanting to observe a radiologist or any other "ist" job, I wanted to see what it was like to be a radio DJ.

Two weeks after applying, I received a letter in the mail from a woman telling me that I didn't have the talent needed for the mentoring program. Actually, it told me I was stupid more than anything. If I were the kind of person who carried a note pad with names of people who needed to be killed, either execution or gangland style, she'd be near the top. The letter was that nasty.

Fast forward to Todd's first week of college. The confused little freshman couldn't find his way around campus without a map, but, duh gee, he must have grown some brains over the summer because he was on the air at KRNU. A couple of weeks later, he was showing the new people how to run the station. That means showing people how to be a DJ, the very position he was too stupid for just a year earlier.

Just like a rock star, any good columnist needs a list of thank yous.

First on my list is Rick Alloway. Y'all know him as the NRoll guy. Rick - who's so cool, he doesn't even go by Prof. - thought that I would make a fine teacher's assistant. He saw me as someone eager to learn, not as the kid with the reputation for not doing his famous presidents word jumbles in history class.

Not even a week into it, I knew college was a very cool place. It was a chance for a new beginning. Most importantly, it was a chance to study the subject of your choice without the mindless busy work. Mine was broadcasting. Declared as a freshman and never changed. I thought about it just once, but the "no math requirement" for broadcasting students was too good to pass up.

For five years, Rick and the broadcasting faculty have put up with my shenanigans. They set me loose with all sorts of cool gear and now that I'm ready to be set loose, I'd just like to say thanks.

Next on the list is dear old Nebraska U. It may be a third-tier

land-grant institution, but it's our third-tier land-grant institution, damn it. And it's responsible, at least in part, for everything I've experienced in the past five years. In high school, I gave a lot of thought to not going to college. Unless a magical fairy ever drops a million bucks and a baker's dozen of virgins at my feet, I don't think there'll be anything I'm more thankful for than the education I've received here.

Every now and again, I think of what life would have been like without going to college, and all I can do is shudder like a crackhead going through withdrawal. Instead of becoming a lay-about slacker, I used college for its intended purpose - opportunity. I've learned more than I ever thought I could learn and experienced many great things. With the exception of just a couple of bad apples, the professors here are top-notch and should really be paid what they're worth.

Standing above the rest is the two-person film studies department of Drs. Dixon and Foster. The effort they put into their classes is incredible. Thanks to the film studies program, a huge layer of crud was scraped away from my brain and a dam of creative juice was opened wide up.

I'd also like to thank the state of Nebraska - not the government but the whole damn state. Believe it or not, I'm proud to say I'm from Nebraska. Growing up in Nebraska has taught me a good many things. Topping the chart is politeness. My feeble math skills tell me that at a rate of 12 people per day, it'd only take 34.2 years for someone to piss off the entire state. Thus, being polite to everyone is very important. Move out of state - you'll see there isn't a general populace more polite than Nebraska's.

There's also the ethos known as the Nebraska work ethic. If you're from out of state, you're living in Lincoln for the summer and need a job, I highly suggest über-heinous task of detassling corn. I worked in the fields for a couple of summers and honestly, it was the worst job a person could have. Spend just a week getting up before dawn to do 10 hours of paid slave labor out in a muddy sweltering maze of corn with a "Lord of the Flies"-esque management structure and you'll never complain about how your job sucks and vow never to drop out of college. If you've done it, you're a better and stronger person than most of the country. If you grew up in Nebraska without detassling for at least one summer, you're a pathetic weakling.

Last but not least are my friends. Like my Johnson, the list is long but distinguished. In fact, the list is too long to named everyone involved. A special thanks goes out though to the BSB and all the Cornfed Mofos out there. That collection of rat bastards probably took five years off my life but that's OK. It was definitely worth it. Even in my last semester, I'm still making some great friends. The brochure to get into this joint says you'll make a lifetime of friends here. I couldn't agree more.

Wow.

That was pretty heavy back there.

Tell you what, I just realized I own not a stitch of Nebraska-related paraphernalia. So while I take a break to go get some tacky Husker item, enjoy these factoids. Then we're gonna get to the fun stuff.

By The Numbers and Other Insignifica (or how Todd spent five years of college)

- 300: Approximate hours spent watching "The Simpsons"
 - 660: Approximate number of burritos eaten
 - 3: Number of broken bones
 - 18: Number of different roommates
 - 1820: Approximate hours spent playing Ultimate
 - 7500: Approximate number of miles ridden by bicycle
 - 8: Number of times drove to class
 - 22: Approximate number of times vomited due to excessive partying
 - 0: Number of times arrested
- I believe I now own what is quite possibly the most obnoxious Husker item in existence. I am now the possessor of a big-ass Big Red cowboy hat. Just putting it on makes me feel 30 years older. That gives me an idea.

The year is 2029. Todd is 53 years old. At the dinner table one night, the mashed potatoes remind him of a particular experience he once had in college. For the next five hours, he launches in a misty-eyed tale of how great his college days were, forcing his children into dyspeptic fits and his wife into shock. The following are the tales worthy of telling 30 years from now.

"When I was a freshman ..."
We filled our time not with studying, but with tomfoolery at its finest. We made a bazooka and shot bottle rockets at the chicks living across the way at Sandoz Hall.

We bounced bowling balls off the floor and

ceiling to annoy our neighbors and when we grew bored with that, we sent the bowling balls down the trash chute to annoy everyone.

I drank a glass of tabasco sauce for 15 bucks, and then had to crawl on my hands and knees to get some Pepto Bismol at the Q4Qwik.

A week later, I valiantly tried to eat 15 bowls of Cap'n Crunch but the Soggies got to me. Then we had those dry ice bombs ...

"Back when bands knew how to rock ..."

I went with my roommate to go see KISS in Kansas City. The show started at 8 p.m. He picked me up at 5:30. It was a three-hour drive, mind you. In the back seat was cooler full of beer and frozen peas to keep it cold since ice was too expensive in those days. Six pee stops later, we made it just in time to find our seats in the absolute last row of the arena. After the show, I blew the last three dollars to my name on a waffle house waffle. The next morning we woke up at a rest stop not knowing how we got there.

"I woke up in more than a few strange places ..."

But none were stranger the field where I woke up all discombobulated and bruised like a fallen apple. Why? Thought you'd never ask. It was a party of epic proportions and in a vain attempt to win the party, I arranged the empty kegs like bowling pins, walked to the top of a very steep hill and rolled down like a human bowling ball. The kegs fell and so did I - face down into a world of hurt.

"Shenanigans? Why, we were the kings of the game ..."

We established our dominance one evening, the night before new students moved to campus to be exact. At 3 a.m., we went around to

every emergency phone and drew chalk body outlines complete with fake blood. A gristly crime scene at every turn had students and their parents mortified. We just laughed and laughed and laughed.

"Ultimate, I've got more tales about that sport than the folks at Canterbury ..."

I'm sorry, but if I told you, I have to kill you. They're top-secret. But let's just say our motto was "We might not win every tournament, but we'll always win the party."

"The best day of college? I didn't have one, I had two ..."

When I was a senior, we got a fall break and damn it, we made the best of it. I had one day to have fun and after driving all night. We had breakfast in Winter Park at 8 a.m., mountain biked all day and by 3 a.m. I found myself face-down in a waffle house parking lot. That very day was the definition of "epic."

The other best day was Jan. 31, 1997. We spent all day in front of the Stuart Theater to be the first in line for the re-release of Star Wars. By itself, that was great, but what really made the day great was at 12 that morning, I got laid. What a day! Oh, I pulled all the chicks. Um ... sorry honey.

The future is now

Well, space is at a premium right now so I better pinch this sucker off. For two years, I rotted your minds with worthless swill and demented ideas. Right now, I have but one last bit of advice for y'all and please, if you only remember one thing I ever write, remember this bit of advice.

When in doubt, never be afraid to go big. That said, I'll see you turkeys later. I'm going to Hollywood.

