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J.J. HARDER

Time to grow up

Blaze your own trails in college and learn how to live

J.J. HARDER is a senior political science and broadcasting major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

Five-hundred sixty-five dollars. That's how much cash you scored from your high school graduation. And along with a few towels and toasters, getting that diploma was quite the payout for you.

Now, wasn't that little ceremony the perfect nightcap to that huge party known as high school? Gifts and money galore from relatives you never met, free deli meats for your buddies and a whirlwind of pats on the back all around.

All of the remembering and reminiscing, laughing and yearbook signing — I'm sure it put a smile on your face for a good week or two. You were still thinking about the great times at the state tourney or your favorite dance or that road trip with your friends. The last month has probably been one huge sigh.

Well, now it's all finally over, and you're ready to move into that pre-reality purgatory known as college life. The five-year waiting period before you're approved to enter the real world.

The sad thing is that college isn't a break before you have to be a "grownup." This is where you grow up.

College is a big pin that deflates that head you got in high school. You find out that four other kids in your Western Civ class were student body presidents. At the Rec Center, half of the guys were probably all-state or all-conference in something. And it means jack.

High school accomplishments mean little or nothing now. All of that

stuff was valuable, but, in the larger scheme of things, it doesn't mean a heck of a lot. You're not going to get a discount at Amigo's because you were prom queen. And guys, the 23 year-old women here aren't going to pay attention to you like the pre-pubescent freshmen girls in high school.

Here, you're just an ant among thousands. You have no reputation, family name or seniority. This, my friends, is the real world.

It's up to you to take advantage of it. It is time to become your own person. And the worst part is — you think you are your own person. But actually you're just a kind of amalgamated mass of your parents, teachers, environment and cultural propaganda mixed into an 18 year-old body.

You believe what you believe because Mommy and Daddy believe it. Take, for instance, politics — they're Republicans, you're a Republican. Or religion. You most likely go to a certain church because of your family.

Chances are your knowledge of the world's history revolves around a old teacher/wrestling coach and an equally old single textbook. Knowledge is still totally objective, not subjective. Competing theories and different versions of history are as foreign to you as Dmitri, the Russian exchange student.

You live in an animated, bubbly world created by MTV and the Gap. The media is your master and you bow regularly. You are simply what the culture is. So believe me — it's time you became your own person.

I'm sure you went to Mexico once or read the

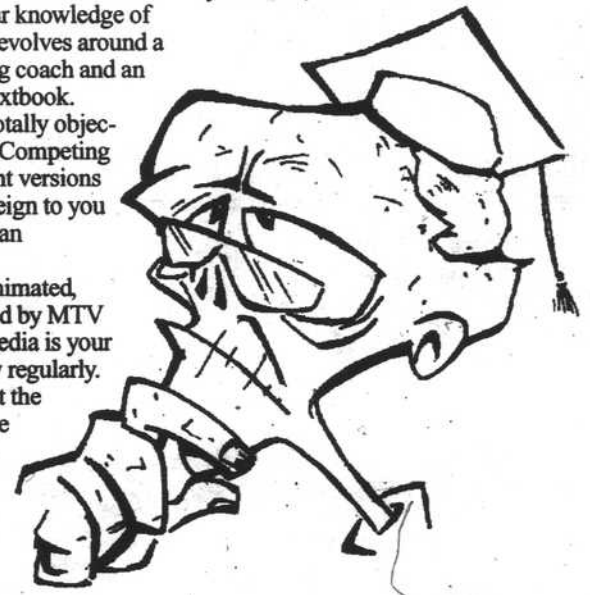
Communist Manifesto. Maybe you actually know what a true political ideology is or understand the Federal Reserve interest rates. You've had a peek into the world that awaits, and you liked it. Good. Come to college and experience it. Experiment. Learn. Think.

See if your family's ideology and values are legitimate. Don't throw your parents' advice out the window; just find out why they've been giving it to you all this time.

Interaction with 25,000 other kids will give you quite the wide variety of backgrounds, so try to tap into those lifestyles. See the world and find out what you like and don't like for your self.

Find something that is uniquely yours. Like that old pair of jeans that fit perfectly. Develop a set of values, ideologies, and beliefs that are tailored specifically to your character.

Come to college and seek the truth. But, after you find it, make sure you live it, too.



The DN provides plenty of fun

MCKEWON from page 2

Love ya, Girls of Sorority No. 1

Fraternity No. 1 responds: Hey gals, you can canoodle and eat baked fish with us anytime!

The Men (always men, understand) of Fraternity No. 1

Realize that these groups pay to have this printed.

Other classified ads that actually are useful. Jobs, stuff, etc.

Ads from lingerie stores. They're in other papers, too, but they're bigger here.

Letters to the editor from closet geniuses, know-it-alls, imbeciles, people who think we're imbeciles, racists, sexists, drug addicts, Democrats, Republicans, student officials and occasionally people who used to work here. Courtesy of

the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus.

Important information you might need. The day, the date and the weather is prominently displayed, lest you forget what planet you're on during the week.

Berry, berry good photos. As I was the sports editor last year, I became amazed at just how good our photo staff was. It's top notch, I assure you. Among the best.

Columns from every edge of the spectrum. Our research shows that students read columns before anything else. It's too bad you missed out on the comic genius of Todd Munson, who just graduated, but chances are high you'll develop a favorite columnist very quickly. Some will make you very angry, too.

A view into Nebraska sports unlike you've ever seen. Maybe you care, maybe not. But you won't see

much of an emphasis on pro sports here. It's Nebraska stuff 24/7. There's plenty football, don't get me wrong, but the other sports get their due time, too.

Thousands of other great parting gifts! OK, that's a lie. But it sounds like a good ending.

One other thing. As you get to go on a tour of this fascinating campus, let me give you a tip: have them take you by the Daily Nebraskan. It's a good place to be. You'll get here eventually, as you'll be placing a classified ad with us sooner or later.

If you want to work here, do it. Don't wait to do it as a sophomore or junior. Do it right away. It's good experience for anyone, even those who don't want to be reporters. It pays, too.

You didn't think you'd get out of this column without an advertisement, did you?