

Beginning of the end

Friend's wedding a warning flag of oncoming adulthood

CLIFF HICKS is a senior news-editorial and English major.

Dear God, one of my oldest and closest friends is getting married.

Who allowed this to happen? Why wasn't I informed sooner? Doesn't anyone consult me on these things anymore?

Oh yeah. I keep forgetting I'm an adult now. I don't think I'm keen on this whole "maturity" thing. The hell with that.

I haven't heard from my good friend Tristan in a little over a year, but we're still fairly close. This explains why I was a bit surprised.

Still, you'd think he could call to tell me. Instead, on Tuesday, I got an invitation to his wedding next month. No accompanying note. No phone number to call. I had to call up his old school, get his phone number from them and call his ass at home.

Now, I don't want anyone to misunderstand me - I'm happy for him, ecstatic, bounding with joy. It's this whole wedding thing I'm edgy about, for a lot of reasons.

It isn't as though I haven't been to a wedding before. I've been to one. I was invited to another last week by a guy I grew up with but don't really know anymore. This is different, though.

Hell, this is Tristan.

Tris is a guy I spent the better part

of two years hanging out with on a weekly basis. I still have a bunch of photographs of him, Topher (my roommate) and I that were taken our freshman year in college.

This, you realize, means the end is nigh.

I've long subscribed to the theory that once one of your inner circle of friends goes through the marriage thing, the domino effect takes over.

Much sooner than you are comfortable with, another friend will get married. Then another. Then another.

Oh, sure, sure, call me irrational if you like. It's not a logical train of thought by any stretch of the imagination, I grant you.

But, soon, far too soon, another will fall.

See, if I had to pick any of my friends who I thought would be getting married soon, Tristan would not have been at the top of that list.

There are six friends who I trust completely. Out of them, Tristan would have been third on that list, I think.

At the advice of my friend Nikki, I am putting a list of names on my wall at home - those close friends I have - and each time one of them gets married, I'm crossing their name off the list.

Somewhere in the background, Queen is singing "Another One Bites The Dust."

My friend Tristan will soon have a Mrs. That idea is a tough one to wrap

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my head around, as is the possibility that he could be a father.

He could be spawning.

When the letter arrived Tuesday, I lost it. I flipped out. I sat down on my couch, then stood up, made it somewhere close to my bed, sat down again, shook my head, looked at the invite then called everyone I knew and a few people I didn't.

An hour later, I had tracked down Tristan's home phone number a few states away, called four of the remaining five of my friends and one of them had come over and was making me a very strong drink. Which I desperately needed.

For the next hour, I talked a lot about Tristan, picking up and putting down the invitation at least a hundred times.

It means a lot of things. It means I have to rent a tux. It means I have to drive a few states to a wedding. It means my friend will be up there saying "I do."

It means I'm getting old.

I hadn't really felt old up until that invitation arrived in our mailbox. Maybe I'd been avoiding it, maybe I just was trying to stop myself from thinking about it, maybe I really had thought I could be young and free forever.

It's all a sham, I tell you, this innocence of youth. Sure, we've all thought we felt old before. I remember feeling old when they handed me my high school diploma. I remember feeling old when I signed the contract for my first apartment.

But this, this is harder to take than any of those. My roommate's right, though. It's not like he's dying. I'm not losing a friend.

Still, that idea of being one of those people scares the living day-lights out of me. I'm at that age.

The age where: Mom always asks when you're going to "get married and settle down and make grandkids;" your friends call to tell you about the

sound their new baby made when it threw up for the 438th time; the question goes from "what are you going to do with your life?" to "what are you doing with your life;" you have to think about getting a lawyer, doctor, insurance agent, etc. of your own.

And you have to start attending weddings, baby showers and the like.

I didn't attend a funeral until my sophomore year in college. The only wedding I've been to thus far wasn't that long ago either.

I blinked and went from youth to adult. Somewhere along the line, I missed the change. I just woke up one morning and realized that I wasn't allowed to call my friends' folks Mr. and Mrs. any more - everyone's a on first name basis now. Younger siblings of my friends are going to college. The music I grew up listening to is being played more on VH-1 than MTV.

People are calling me "sir," dammit!

When the Year of Naught rolls around come January 1, who knows what will happen. Another one of my friends will probably be planning his or her wedding.

One thing I do know, though, is that I'll have to be dragged kicking and screaming into marriage, mind you. Or talked into it by someone very persuasive. Or drunk. Or all the above.

Watch yourself, ladies and gents. Don't turn your back. EVER.

This could happen to you.

Mark Baldridge's
*How I Spent My
Summer Vacation*



Episode 5

A Week in the Life

Live music, loud explosions and a full-day blackout highlight week

MARK BALDRIDGE is a senior English major.

July 1

Craig Imig is late. He was supposed to be here at 6:30 to take me to the show.

"Edible Eddie and the Cannibals: 7:00 p.m." the newspaper had said, and I couldn't be late. They literally couldn't start without me: Edible Eddie, at your service - though you can call me Edible.

Craig was supposed to be one of my cannibals.

I fidget in the hallway with my guitar, my cello, my amp and mic, my bamboo sax and a terminal scowl. It's 6:45 - it's 6:50 - it's 7:00.

I notice my neighbor is home.

"Look," I tell him, "my ride didn't make it. Why don't you take me to see me, I hear I put on quite a show. Please, please, please!"

I ride in the back of his pickup like a happy puppy.

At the park, Fred arrives (another cannibal) and unpacks his zither.

"Craig didn't show," I say. We both

laugh.

A group of kids are sitting around on the concrete stage, plunking away, playing with toy instruments I brought along.

Inspired, I break in with a half-sized cello strapped to my chest like the big *guitar* of the Mariachis and suddenly we are playing music, my makeshift band and I. After the first song I introduce the group.

"Hi, I'm Edible Eddie and these are my cannibals - those we didn't eat."

I don't think the kids had realized they were in the band.

We do four songs together, I do a solo on piano (belongs to the band-shell.)

Fortunately Fred has wheels and takes me home, show over.

July 2

Craig shows up 24 hours late.

He knocks once at the door and walks in.

"You said to be here at 6:30," Craig says.

"Yeah, Craig, wait a minute. I'm naked, do you mind?" I struggle into

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I find a pair of opera glasses indispensable to participating in the life of the neighborhood and the 4th is no exception ...”

blue jeans. Then, "Uh, Craig, that was 6:30 *yesterday*."

So his trip will not be a total loss I make him take me to dinner.

"I'd like to put together a little combo," I tell him, daydreaming. "A little trio even, with some clowns or tumblers or something. A girl singer showing a little leg. Cabaret style, you know?"

"Is that like klezmer music?"

July 3

I rent "Cabaret." Liza Minnelli looks so much like her mother, at

times, it's eerie. At other times, she looks an awful lot like Liza Minnelli.

It is a pretty boring film, really, though it was considered daring in its day - themes of homosexuality, promiscuity and (yawn) abortion.

"Life is a Cabaret, ol' chum!"

July 4

Out on my fire escape, I am reminded that sound travels slower than light: the rocket's red glare beats the thud of bombs bursting in air to this X-marks-the-spot where I sit, four out of five senses celebrating (all I taste is beer, which could make it any day of the year) my nation's birth.

It's nice to know something I learned in 3rd grade is still true.

I find a pair of opera glasses indispensable to participating in the life of the neighborhood and the 4th is no exception; I can practically see the severed fingers from here.

July 5

Nothing ever happens to me on the 5th; I can't explain it. I probably drink. Or something.

July 6

I stand in the bathroom, my six-inch, maroon goatee grasped hard, a pair of scissors poised in the other.

Snip.

Instant butch.

Later, like about 11 that night, I will crash my bike on the sidewalk on the east side of 13th street between G and H heading home.

About a three-inch disparity in sidewalk height, like the crust of the earth rising up to form a miniature Matterhorn, will trip me up.

I'd have been on the street but a cop stopped me a couple weeks ago to tell me it's illegal to bike down 13th.

Well then why the hell aren't the sidewalks F'ing safe, I want to know.

July 7

I nurse my slowly congealing scabs with alcohol wipes and limp on down to the offices of the Daily Nebraskan to tippy-tap-type this up for you: my "Week in the Life" for futuristic historians to use as a kind of coordinate to find me on their viewer-scopes.

Can you see me guys? I'm waving!