Daily **Nebraskan**

Since 1901

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Paid to lose

Husker blowouts cheat fans out of time, money

Next September, Troy State will come to Lincoln with absolutely no chance of winning its football game against Nebraska. They will step onto the Tom Osborne field full of fear as 75,000 strong make a noise unfamiliar to them.

Three hours later, Troy State will exit battered and bruised, ridiculed. Nebraska's side of the scoreboard will read a strange number for football, most likely something in the 70s.

The Trojans won't be the only ones with that sinking feeling in their stomachs. Nebraska's football players will be frustrated by the lack of competition offered by the visitors. And the fans, scorched by the late summer heat, will feel like they've been cheated out of a real football game.

The athletic directors will be the only ones left smiling, because their athletic departments will both be significantly richer.

Haven't we seen this before?

Northern Illinois, Middle Tennessee State, Pacific, Akron, Alabama-Birmingham have all been prostituted to the Big Red for a couple hundred-thousand dollars.

One more NU football Saturday a year means that many more tickets are sold, that many more programs are hawked, that much more apparel is bought.

They don't deserve to be on the same field as the Nebraska Cornhuskers. They don't want to be on the same field as the big, bad Red, no matter what they say.

They keep getting asked back, though, for the same reason they keep coming back – cold, hard cash.

Make no mistake. Athletic Director Bill Byrne and Coach Frank Solich know what they are doing when they schedule these cream puffs. We don't believe for a second that they can't find other, more worthy opponents, even on short notice.

For starters, teams like Troy State are an automatic win for the Cornhuskers. Coaches, an uptight, paranoid breed, like automatic wins.

Of course, Nebraska almost always beats much more well-known schools (California, Michigan St. and Iowa to name a few) whose fans enjoy watching and players enjoy playing. The Huskers have only lost eight games in the last seven years, after all.

Much more importantly, though, it is the guarantee of another Husker home game that keeps athletic directors from the Southland, MAC and Big West conferences on Byrne's speed dial.

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Byrne could get decent schools from major conferences to come to Lincoln. He won't, though, because in order to get Arkansas, BYU or Minnesota to venture to Memorial Stadium, he must guarantee them that the Huskers will return the favor.

Why do you think Texas Christian University, a talented team originally scheduled to play Nebraska in 1999, 2000 and 2001, jumped ship in the first place? Possibly because two of those games were in Lincoln, and Nebraska didn't want it any other way.

Instead, fans, who pay ever-growing season ticket prices, are left with teams with directional titles (Central Florida), named after oceans (Pacific) and outright unknowns (Utah St.).

They, and we, thank you from the bottom of our Big Red wallets. May your pockets grow ever fatter.

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Neal Obermeyer/DN

Letters to the editor

Another greek opinion

This letter is in response to Joe Scharfbillig's letter in Wednesday's paper entitled "Greeks blowing smoke." I have been here 5-plus years now, and have formed some opinions of my own.

I thought some of his comments were correct, but some were a little stereotypical and ignorant.

The first reason why "people hate the greek system" was because of the stupid things that fraternity members do that are publicized. As a leader of a greek house last year, I can reaffirm his comment that some greek members do make bad decisions. I wish they wouldn't.

However, I'm pretty sure that stupidity permeates all student groups, including the residence halls, off campus students, and maybe even Honors Program students.

It does not work this way for residence halls, whose students are disciplined and criticized on an individual basis.

The third reason Mr. Scharfbillig gave that people hate the greek system was that "people don't understand them."

That was a good one. Let's hate because we are ignorant.

Brent Claassen
agribusiness
graduate student

Sex symbols

I have a question for the Abel Residence Association. Can I have a symbol put on the door of the ARA's office because of my sexual orientation?

I like to have sex with farm animals. Would the ARA please put some geometric figure on its office door so I know that Abel is a safe space for me, too?

Perhaps a green circle or a blue diamond would work well.

What about the heterosexuals? It's only fair that they also have a colored figure on the ARA's door.

The point of my sarcasm is to show we need to think of people without regard to sexual orientation, race, religious belief, ethnic background or social class.

Why not just put a sign on the door that says everyone is welcome here, or better yet, why even put up a sign at all?

Josh Harshbarger
Freshman
Physics

The sphere's eureka finding

petaluma watson

"Weirdo," Jayme says, thrusting a fruit punch sucker into her mouth. Before our class together, we eat Dum-Dums, fruit punch and butterscotch, while we point and click on various faces around the room, making up stories based on their clothes, their hair, their little pimples.

Whatever can be seen, we use. We're traveling critique girls, galloping second to second in our gorgeous detachment. It's a Zen of sorts, an ecstasy of derogatory remarks. As safe as my room is after a long night of rain. As safe as it must have been for Calvin, squinting across those ferns, laughing, tipping his cap.

"Weirdo," she says again, and it annoys me on second reference. Yes, I tell her, I got it. I think so, too. I did not *tell you* for reaffirmation. Sometimes, I just wanna be a girl and bitch about my cowboy hallucinations.

A third reference would follow if Jayme didn't have her Henry to twiddle on about, as if breathing lavender walls could rise to the importance of his "bigger than expected rod." Let me sum it up her 20-minute description like this: You know his rod? It's bigger than I expected.

"So you know what he says when he cums?" Jayme asks.

"Um … no."

"He says he's gonna 'kill it' all over me."

"Kill it?"

"Kill it."

"As in … 'Ohhhhhhh, Jayme, I'm going to murder my white slippery stuff all over that hip of yours?' Like that?"

Jayme nods. Nice. This is how modern, sexual men talk.

She prattles for a moment longer but I've zoned out. In class, we've got a pear-shaped circle of the room – the row of desks bulges near the back like a middle aged woman's thighs, then, near the front, tightens up into a clump of four desks near the top. A class circle is never a circle. Not once. Not ever.

From my fleshy part of the room – that part of the pear that always bruises first, I see her, near the top. *Notice* is the better word; I've seen her before. But now I register things – the jumpsuit, the tag on the backpack, the way her wet hair tightens itself into one of those high ponytails that looks like a pith helmet, the dark, sunken eyes, the lack of eyeliner or lip gloss or toenail polish.

Ever meet your eureka moment? Where things click into place? Where you're suddenly smitten with whatever, whoever? I point my butterscotch sucker toward her in slow motion, like a dainty finger.

"Who is that?"

Jayme's Dum-Dum is half-crunched already.

"Athlete," she says.

"How do you know?"

"The outfit," she says, her sucker moving up and down to regard the girl's lanky frame. "They all wear university stuff like that. They get it for free."

And yes, Jayme is right, for I get the backpack tag now, those snappy little dog cards with a picture and their number on it. I can make out neither from the fleshy part of the pear, nor her sport, which seems directly printed below.

"What sport does she play?" I ask.

Jayme shrugs.

"Maybe volleyball," Jayme says. "She's so big and all."

Volleyball. Volley. Ball. I like how my mouth moves to the word. Lips touch, tongue protrudes, lips touch. I suck on lemons the same way. Other things, too.

Closing my eyes to a blast of a lemon volleyball, Teach walks in the room. Teach is short and rotund and stringy-haired, like fur balls perched on her head and made camp. Her thin voice makes every word die on the back molars of her jaw, leaving this lazy hold of vowels and consonants hanging in our ears.

It's better than a lisp, I guess; there's no spit polloping on our desks.

We had this assignment we're meant to turn in, this *spherrrrrrrre of innnnnnnfluence* of the people most important to our lives. Like a college educated teacher with a fur ball of a head, Teach likes to mix metaphors and actually structure the sphere like a clock, thus eliminating the nature of the sphere, but keeping the name because it's cute and cheap.

"*Puuut the moooost importaaannnt peeeeople at the siiix and the twellllllve of your spheeeeeere*," she says.

Then, she says, put the auxiliarily (she likes using versions of words that don't actually exist) important people at the three and nine. Then, since it's a clockwork sphere of influence, put people, in ascending order of importance, at the one and the two, the four and the five, the seven and the eight, and the 10 and the 11.

And if there's *even more* influential people to plug into your sphere, Teach says, plug them in the half-hour marks, but start at the 12, then the six, then nine then three, then 11, and move backward from there.

Points earned for assignment: 10. Percentage of grade earned: seven. A bottom-dollar college education I'm getting.

Jayme's sphere is all nifty, done up in the shaded purple colored pencils she swiped from the university store. Shock of shocks, she has stocked her sphere with influence, and there I am, promptly stuck at the 11 'o'clock spot, while Henry is at the three 'o'clock spot, ahead of me. At least I know what all those Zen moments of derogatory ecstasy were worth.

Teach asks for mine and I offer up my thoughtless act of forgetting, as if I ever started. My excuse is short and cute because her presence is a distraction to my discovery – this collection of Volleyball's physical traits that popped like grease in my brain. Slouched to my straight. This blank, obtuse look to my searing inquisitive one.

You look for writing subjects in vain most of the time. Then, when you locate one, the kind of polarizing being that can make a campus move to her riff, it's an ecstasy all completely different.

The artist perks and bobs and rushes headlong into a deep self-absorption of another kind. That of a creator, of a sculptor, a shaper, this idea of achieving something more … *this is the girl.*

Jayme breaks me out of my bliss.

"I'm bloated today," Jayme said. "I had one of those creme donuts this morning – I knew I shouldn't have – and I've been burping like a tugboat ever since."

"Well," I say, plumb-bobbing my Dum-Dum in the air of my ecstasy. "You are what you eat."

Beating back debt collectors

Emily Moran

Debt collectors are ruthless. They are the bite in your bills. You know the situation. I know it too well.

I joined the world of debt when I failed to answer this question: How many jackets can someone purchase in September?

The normal person would purchase one or two. But I *charged* four and was just warming up. Add $350 of clothing and $50 sunglasses from Younkers. Then a $450 stereo at Best Buy. Subtract one return to Target and re-credit the store card … Total increases to a $1,000 …

I'll stop there. Point is, I got in debt and fast. I don't even really know why. But I do know how fast. Four months.

I thought store cards didn't seem as dangerous as credit cards. So I applied and got six with no credit history. I didn't know store cards had higher interests or how long it would take to get out of debt.

So I just applied and didn't read the fine print. Or care so much about the fine print, for that matter. I should have.

Now I pay the $25 minimum each month – $20 of which is interest. So basically, I get out of debt $5 at a time. And that is just one card out of six.

Returned check? Expect a $20 fine from the bank and $25 fine from the card. Then add the $20 interest. Now I am $65 more in debt plus the prior amount.

Skipped payment? Expect at least 20 "Out of Area" messages on the caller ID after class. These debtors can be ruthless. So can I. I take lots of messages promising "to tell Emily she needs to pay her bill as soon as she gets home."

And it's not that I don't want to get out of debt. I want to more than I want to graduate. If I had the money to get out of debt, I would. But I don't have the funds to pay off the entire amount. So I pick at the amount one month at a time.

I pay the minimum monthly amount and don't budge more than $15 or so each month after interest charges. I could send out $100 in payments and only get $35 out of debt. $35 a month will keep me in debt until I am 30.

Sound familiar? I know I am not alone in the debt department. I have been dealing with debt collectors for awhile now. So I will pass on some pointers I found in a book: "Surviving Debt." These pointers explain debt collector conduct that violates the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act.

These are your rights, read them. Then repeat these rights on the phone to harassing debt collectors, and they'll shut up for at least two days.

Because debt collectors – the people whom the store sends your debt to when you can't pay it on time – can be experts at harassment. And harassment is illegal.

Harassment includes discussing your debt with a third party. Employers, roommates, friends, etc. are not allowed access to this information without your permission. No exceptions.

Debt collectors are not allowed to use obscene or insulting language. Whether or not you do is at your discretion.

Do not tolerate repeated and frequent telephone calls. Debtors are allowed to call between 8 a.m. and 9 p.m. but not twice in 5 minutes. Keep track of the phone calls and report them.

I know people who have been threatened with arrest or seizure of property. Don't tolerate it. The debtor has to have legal authority for that. No one is arrested.

They can't fake legal authority or misuse legal letterheads in mailings, either. Debt collectors like to give you false impressions that they are affiliated with the government, too. Do the research first. Most are not.

Debt collectors also like to deposit post-dated checks before their date. If they do, they are breaking the law.

Most debt collectors are ruthless and will do anything to get you to pay, even if your accounts are current. Understand the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act.

Don't tolerate violations to this act. There are 25 rights listed and I covered seven.

I am getting out of debt.

Are you?