

U MAIL

Think before you print

I am blown away by the amazing intellectual content of your magazine: shades, sex and smoking. Thanks for bringing the important stuff to me in such a friendly format, and timely news updates too. Do you have any more on that flood in Iowa? You folks are pathetic. Let me know when you get a clue.

*Henry Throop,
graduate student, U. of Colorado*

Bridging the content divide

The discussion about feminism ("Making Gender Realizations," August 1994) is useful in breaking down stereotypes and showing that there are all types of feminists. What feminists all have in common is a belief that women are capable people who have autonomy over their

own lives and [who don't have to] conform to gender roles. In other words, freedom. Not such a bizarre concept after all, is it?

*Rachel K. Bussel,
sophomore, U. of California, Berkeley*

Fresh alternative

I just finished reading your August 1994 issue. Being a freshman here at Moorhead, I am exposed to a barrage of publications claiming to be the alternative newspaper for me. Your paper is the first that I have found to be "alternative."

*Jerad Hoff,
freshman, Moorhead State U.*

All the president's men

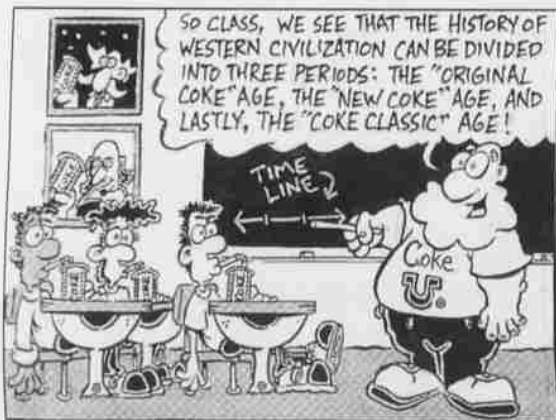
I am writing in regard to the "Tepeepee" article (September 1994). Although the article itself was well-written and fairly accurate, there was a mistaken piece of information in the article. The interim president for U. of Oklahoma is not Scott Martin. Dr. J.R. Morris is the interim president. Scott Martin is the '94-'95 OUSA President.

*Wendy McGuckin,
graduate student, U. of Oklahoma*

Editor's note: U. regrets the error.

U. goofs

In the September issue, the wrong picture ran with the Exit to Eden preview; the photo credit on page 23 should have read Adam Hyman; Craig Sheffer's name was spelled incorrectly on page 23; and it was the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals involved in the "Dewey Defeats Truman" story on page 10.



Jason Birmingham, Sagebrush, U. of Nevada, Reno

Student Opinion Poll

Do you believe in God?

He lives with the tooth fairy at the North Pole. *David Lathic, junior, U. of Arizona* • You feel it and you know it's there, but you can't see it. Everything that's in existence doesn't have to be seen to know it exists. *Elisba Smith, junior, U. of Maryland* • I choose not to belong to any one religion. I have always doubted the Bible and my religion teachers. *Vanessa Santorelli, junior, Penn State U.* • I'm a religion major, and even after all the B.S. I've heard in religion courses, I believe in God. *Josh Timmerman, freshman, Grandview College* • I do not understand how someone cannot believe in God. Everything is too perfect to have just happened. *William McIntire, senior, U. of Michigan*



Do you believe in ghosts?

I believe that when a person dies, their spirit has a choice to either move on or stay where it is. Many stay where they are because of sudden death or because they weren't ready to leave their family. *Lauren Pope, freshman, Sam Houston State U.* • I do believe that there are some sort of ghosts — maybe not the ones we hear about on the news or in the tabloids, but there are spirits around us. *Kimberly Roberts, sophomore, U. of Michigan*



This Month's Question

Do you expect to graduate in four years?

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The word made flesh

It's hard for me to face it. In fact, part of me wants to run screaming from the reality of the situation, but admit it I must.

Body modification — piercing, tattooing, branding, scarring — has become mainstream. (See "Body Rock", page 11).

It's just another part of a predictable predicament. The cultural fringe makes a fashion choice that is considered weird, odd or downright tasteless. Your folks ask, "You aren't planning on piercing your tongue/getting tattooed/shaving 'I Love Lucy' on the back of your head are you?!" And from that moment, you can predict that in three years you will be surrounded by a mall full of people who look "alternative." *Just like you.*

The realization hit home a few weeks back when I was visiting what is lovingly referred to here at U. as the "ladies dorm" (where U. assistant editors Beth, Bonnie, and Aimee reside). Glenn (U.'s other assistant editor, who lives next door to the dorm and stops in whenever he pleases) and I were enjoying the evening relaxing, drinking martinis and listening to the soothing strains of the Beastie Boys with pipes clenched between our teeth.

The gentle moment was shattered when Bonnie and Beth returned from the beach, their bare midriffs highlighted by silver rings looped through each navel. I, of course, dealt with the discovery in a logical fashion.

"ARRGHHHHH! What the hell have you done?!" I calmly inquired.

We listened as Bonnie and Beth excitedly recounted their tale of the Venice Beach piercings, then flooded them with questions: "Did it hurt?" "How much did it cost?" "How big was the needle?" "Where did you get it done?" And, of course, we both admitted, "I've been thinking about doing that."

I tried hard not to sulk visibly. You see, it was the first time in a long time that I'd felt behind in taking the next "alternative" fashion step, and, quite frankly, I felt like a geek.

In my small, conservative hometown, I was the first guy to get his ear pierced once, much less three times. I got my first tattoo in 1989, back when most college students thought of tats as something sported only by bikers and drug-addled rock stars. I had been thinking about getting my nipple pierced, but, in a single moment, Bonnie and Beth shut me down. High on endorphins from the piercing, they made me feel lame for balking at getting pierced for fear that "it might hurt!"

As if that were not enough to convince me that the age of body modification had kicked into high gear, my father called recently to inform me that he'd gone under the needle, as well. Gotten a tattoo, that is.

This is the same man who told me that if I got my ears pierced, he'd remove the earrings, and my ears to boot. The man who, when I got my first tat, said, "You'll never amount to anything now. No employer will hire you." (Dad has his ear pierced now, too.)

In the name of Maury Povich, what's a rebel to do? Look for strange new instruments to implant in my skin? Wear three-piece business suits as a counterstatement to the counterstatement? Drape live animals over my shoulder? The possibilities are dwindling fast, and the emperor is looking for new leisure wear.

The only good thing to come out of all of this was hearing my father whine about his latest visit with my grandmother. She told him: "You'll never get anywhere with that tattoo."

I listened to him complain, thinking about how comic karma can be, then I grabbed the *Yellow Pages* and flipped to "Clothing: men's business."

Rantz A. Hoseley, Assistant Editor

Tell us what you think. Letters to the Editor, *U. Magazine*, 1800 Century Park East, Suite 820, Los Angeles, CA 90067; fax to (310) 551-1659; e-mail to umag@well.sf.ca.us or Umagazine@aol.com. All senders: Include name, year, school and phone number. **Internet** users should include permission to reprint submissions. Letters should be less than 200 words. **U.** reserves the right to edit submissions for length and clarity.