

A jump start: Teens graduate college ahead of their time



GRANT CARMICHAEL, THE TARTAN, CARNEGIE MELLON U.

By Millie Llerena
 ■ The Daily Illini
 U. of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana

Paul Mendoza will graduate next month with a degree in computer engineering. He turned 19 this year.

Mendoza is among a minority of students who have been admitted into the U. of Illinois earlier than the traditional entrance age.

His story goes like this: He skipped half of first grade, all of second and half of third, fourth and fifth.

That puts him three years ahead of most students.

But he doesn't consider himself extraordinarily intelligent. "Anyone can be pushed up a couple years in elementary school and they'll turn out fine," he says.

Ellen Drucker is an 18-year-old junior in accounting. Her age isn't an obstacle. It was her decision to finish high school in three years, and she says college actually is somewhat easier.

With her involvement in the school's marching band,

she leads a "normal" life.

Edna Friedberg, 17, a sophomore in liberal arts, says some teachers don't take her seriously. But that just makes her work harder to succeed. And she, too, feels her college workload is lighter than it was in high school.

Ellen Johnson, a sophomore majoring in political science, says she has no problem relating to other students although she also entered the university when she was just 16. But after completing most of her schooling early she admits, "It's easier to get burned out."

Although most advanced students at UI haven't had much trouble managing academically, college life is more than classes, teachers, exams and books.

The social aspect of their lives seems to be their biggest trouble.

But while some advanced students joke about being carded at R-rated movies or needing their parents to sign forms that their friends sign themselves, they agree, for the most part, that friends are easy to find and age becomes an inconsequential matter.

Comic

Continued from page 8

said. "That was a mistake.

"I've been in college forever. The goal is to get a college degree before my 10-year high school reunion — either that or I'm going to start driving a cab," he said.

"I couldn't make it for the five-year reunion, but at the 10-year reunion I'll be able to honestly say, 'I'm still thin, and I have a degree.'"

Berry said producing a daily strip is tough. He sometimes finds himself drawing at the last minute.

His creative muses assault him from all angles of his personal experiences, which usually trigger inspiration for his cartoon.

He can be inspired at any time.

He could be driving down the road, watching the news or sitting in class, and an idea for the strip will surface, he said.

"Sometimes my professors will look at me and think I'm actually paying attention for a change, when I'm really thinking about what to do with Filbert next week," he admitted.

Berry said his favorite cartoonists are Gary Larson — "just because he's so odd" — Bill Watterson, Berke Breathed and Garry Trudeau.

"But the cartoon god is Charles Schulz," Berry said. "I'm a big fan of his. Back in junior high I used to buy those little books of Snoopy cartoons. Actually, I bought one just the other day. He's my idol."

When Berry sees people reading the comics page in the *Collegian* without laughing, he rationalizes that they probably aren't reading his strip.

"I want to ask them why they didn't laugh. But then if they told me why, I'd say to myself, 'They ain't got no sense of humor anyway,'" Berry said.

Berry said he hopes eventually to make a living drawing comic strips, even though cartooning is sometimes a thankless job.

As far as feedback goes, he cherishes the few comments he receives.

"I do get a little feedback, but not much. Some people come up to me and say, 'I really liked that last one,' or sometimes they'll say they didn't."

Berry said the drive for the comic strip comes from one basic impulse — to put a smile on someone's face.

"Anything from a little grin to an outright laugh, and I've done what I need to do," Berry said. "I'm a closet comedian, I guess."

Get extra credit in communications.



Get the AT&T Reach Out® America Plan by December 31 and get a free hour of long distance. Call 1800 654-0471, Ext. 2480.

You don't have to be a finance major to figure out which long distance company gives you a great deal. All you have to know is that when you sign up for the AT&T Reach Out® America Plan by December 31, we'll give you one free hour of long distance service.* We'll also waive our \$5 set-up charge.

As part of the AT&T Student Saver Plus program, the Reach Out America Plan could save you money every time you make a long distance call. 25%, for example, on out-of-state calls made after 5PM.**

Whether you call a little or a lot, there's an AT&T Reach Out America Plan that's right for you.

So call us. And put us to the test.

AT&T. Helping make college life a little easier.

The AT&T Reach Out America Plan may not be available in residence halls on your campus.
 * A \$6.00 value good for a free additional hour of weekend and night calling. New subscribers only.
 ** 25% savings applies between 5 and 10 PM. Savings potential depends on subscriber's calling patterns.
 © 1990 AT&T



AT&T

The right choice.