

Daily Nebraskan

Monday, March 5, 1984

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Vol. 83 No. 113



Craig Andresen/Daily Nebraskan

UNL swimmers came home with their fifth Big Eight Championship title last weekend. From left, Jon Linder (3rd), Jim Fellows (5th), Ernie Duran (1st) and Per Ove Staveland (6th) competed in the 1650-yard freestyle at KU's Robinson Pool in Lawrence, Kan. Complete results on Page 8.

UNL College Republicans trying to change 'stuffed shirt' reputation

By Stacie Thomas

Editor's Note: This is the first of a three-part series on UNL political groups.

The UNL College Republicans worked for a year to gain the approval of KZUM-FM radio to broadcast a call-in talk show. The half-time program, called "Right Word," aired Feb. 24.

Mike Kratville, host of "Right Word," said the show's debut was a success.

"There were so many calls, we could have gone on for an hour," Kratville said.

Kratville said the KZUM officials allowed "Right Word" to be broadcast because they needed a conservative view to balance their more liberal program list. KZUM broadcasts a variety of information shows including Radio Moscow, a lesbian show and a show by the Nebraska Civil Liberties Union.

"Right Word" is just one of the UNL College Republicans' efforts designed to change the image of the Republican party, Kratville said. Last November, he said, the group tried to eliminate its stuffed-shirt image when it sponsored a mud-wrestling tournament.

Kratville said the group may have surprised people by inviting state Sen. Ernie Chambers to speak on the broadcast.

"We want to show the campus that we want to hear all sides," Kratville said. "We don't just want people to tell us things we already believe."

Another activity, designed to inform students about the Republican group, is Reagan Week, which

starts today. Part of the week's activities will include a Ronald Reagan film festival, the sale of buttons, bumper stickers and a mock presidential election. The week should raise money and recruit members, Kratville said.

Because the president has 68 percent of the vote in Nebraska, Kratville said, Reagan Week will end the group's campaign activities.

The group will concentrate on Nebraska legislative campaigns. The group can make the most impact there, Kratville said.

Although the College Republicans sponsor voter registration drives in the Nebraska Union, Kratville said, few people register.

"It's hard to motivate students politically," he said.

Kratville said students don't see the choices in political candidates they have, nor do they see that politics affects them or can do anything for them. He also said he thinks neither the Democratic nor the Republican party has made a large effort to get students to work for them.

Kratville said the Democratic party is more aggressive — an attribute he thinks the Republican party needs to acquire.

"I think the Democratic party helps their candidates much more than the Republican does," Kratville said.

He said he hopes the new party state director, Kermit Brashear, will help accomplish that.

The UNL College Republicans group was re-established in 1945 after a short absence during World War II. The group now has 123 members.

Thriving despite and because of history

Latvian librarian recalls World War II

By Susan Kisicki

Elsie Thomas, UNL associate professor of libraries, works in a world of the past. She works in the archives and special collections of Love Library.

It is there people and events in history are recreated. It is there that books made hundreds of years ago rest. And it is there that Elsie Thomas thrives.

Thomas said she always was fascinated by history, world literature and old books. She said her job is fun because most studies using archives or special collections are original research.

But it might seem odd that Thomas would like history, since she has seen first-hand some of its ugliest scenes. She has seen communism and Nazism tear Europe apart.

Thomas was born in Liepaja, Latvia, when Latvia was still independent of Russia. Thomas said she has fond memories of beaches, sailing, swimming and horseback riding.

Then Hitler and Stalin signed a non-aggression pact in 1939. Latvia became a part of Russia, but Germans in Latvia could repatriate or move to Germany. Because her father was of German descent, the family moved to German-occupied Poland when Thomas was a senior in high school.

Thomas was sent to Poznan, where she attended Poznan University. Her parents were sent to Kalisz, which was about 150 miles from Poznan. Thomas said she could travel freely.

She said life in occupied Poland was



Ted Kauf/Daily Nebraskan

UNL associate professor of libraries Elsie Thomas.

very depressing, and she slowly became aware of the true nature of Nazism. In 1942-43, she attended the Library School of the Prussian State Library in Berlin. She said she experienced many exciting cultural events there, but often was reminded of the war. She experienced her first air raids in Berlin. She said her final exams frequently were interrupted by air raid sirens.

Thomas returned to Poznan to work in the university's library after graduating. But in January 1945, the threat of the advancing Red Army caused her to flee to Germany. Her widowed mother came to Poznan to pick her up after fleeing from Kalisz. Thomas said she took only two suitcases with her.

In bitter cold and snow, she watched

as thousands of people climbed aboard the trains. She said she saw horrible scenes of families being separated and deserting soldiers being caught.

Thomas and her mother boarded a freight train and went to Dresden. Thomas said she felt scared and uneasy in Dresden because she had a premonition that something was going to happen. After two weeks, Thomas and her mother went to Leipzig, missing several consecutive air raids on Dresden by only 24 hours.

They stayed in a camp at Leipzig. Her fiance's father also lived in the camp and was a good friend of the Thomas family. The didn't stay long in Leipzig after friends and relatives offered them housing in Mecklenburg. Once again, Thomas and her mother moved.

Thomas said in Mecklenburg she could see her fiance, who was on leave from the German navy. She said her fiance, who also was Latvian, had the choice of volunteering for the navy or being drafted by the stormtroopers. She said he chose the navy to avoid the stronger Nazi affiliation of the stormtroopers.

His leave in April 1945, was the last he received. He returned to duty and was eventually captured by the British.

The Red Army kept advancing in Germany. From Mecklenburg Thomas and her mother moved to Schleswig-Holstein, which later became part of East Germany. The British were advancing from one side, the Russians from the other. Thomas said she had hoped the British would arrive first, but the

Red Army did.

While in Schleswig-Holstein, Thomas received word that her fiance was in Hanover. In August 1945 they were married there.

Thomas and her husband lived as refugees in West Germany from 1945 to 1952. Two of their sons were born there.

Thomas said refugee life was horrible. She said the living conditions were poor for the 20 million refugees in West Germany. She said her family slept in an attic used for grain storage.

In 1952 they emigrated to the United States and were sent to Lincoln, where they have lived ever since. Thomas said she now is beginning to realize that emigrating to the United States was a giant step. A step, she said, they have never regretted.

Thomas said although her life is no longer adventurous, it is never dull. She has her husband, three sons, two horses and two dogs to keep life interesting, she said.

UNL impresses industrial engineers

Guest speakers, a banquet, a night on the town and new friendships worked together last weekend to make UNL's Institute of Industrial Engineering Conference a success, said the co-chairperson of the event, Pamela Olson.

Olson said that when the conference organizers received a standing ovation for their work, all the effort put into the annual three-day conference was worth it.

She said she never seen a standing ovation at a conference before.

"I think many people came to Nebraska thinking we were hicks from the sticks... but they were impressed," she said.

The conference helped IE students develop organizational and leadership skills and exchange technical information, Olson said.

One hundred eighty IE majors from

nine states attended the regional conference, she said. Nebraska hosts the conference about every 10 years.

The conference featured an essay contest. Fifteen students entered essays on IE subjects ranging from management to health care. Robert Dunlap of Purdue University, West Lafayette, Ind., won the competition. He will take his essay to the national competition.

Monday

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