

Arts & Entertainment

Lunches and laughs at library this month

By Carrie Ahrens

"I Robert Kerrey, Governor of the state of Nebraska, do hereby proclaim the month of March, 1984, as Nebraska Humor Month and ask all citizens to participate in these events."

Kerrey signed this proclamation of the state of Nebraska on Feb. 29. The purpose of Nebraska Humor Month is to increase the public's awareness and support of the Heritage Room, a section of Bennett Martin Public Library, at 14th and N streets, which houses a collection of more than 4,000 volumes representing more than 700 writers from Nebraska. The books cover Nebraska fiction, poetry, folklore, history and art.

The National Endowment for the Humanities has awarded the Lincoln library \$106,000 in a challenge grant to support the Heritage Room Service. Lincoln's public library is one of only seven public libraries in the United States to receive a challenge grant award. The challenge grant must be matched by

\$300,000 to be raised by the Lincoln City Library Foundation from new sources or increased contributions from existing donors during the next four years.

The Heritage Room has been in existence for the past 12 years and is located on the third floor of the Bennett Martin Public Library. Grants from the Junior League of Lincoln have been used to keep the room open to the public during the past three years, but their contract ends in June.

Consequently, through the Junior League of Lincoln, the Lincoln Library Board, and the Lincoln City Library Foundation Board, a support group has been formed. This group, the Nebraska Literary Heritage Association, is directing the fundraising campaign to match the challenge grant.

The celebration of Nebraska Humor Month began with a presentation on plains folklore by Roger Welsch in the Heritage Room on Feb. 29. On March 1, a brown bag lunch continued the festivities with the showing of Nebraskan Harold Lloyd's *Never Weaken*

on the fourth floor of the main library.

Throughout the month of March, more humor activities will take place. A coffee hour featuring Nebraska author Shirley Lueth will be Thursday from 10 to 11 a.m. in the Heritage Room.

On March 15, another brown bag lunch will feature Jim McKee's light look at Lincoln history. The lunch will be in the auditorium of the main library from noon to 1 p.m.

On March 22 from 8-10 p.m., "An Evening of Nebraska Humor," featuring state poet William Kloefkorn, Nebraska author Ted Kooser, and local comics T. Marni Vos, Peg Sheldrick, and Craig Anton, will be at Barrymore's, 124 No. 13th St.

The final program of Nebraska Humor Month, a brown bag lunch featuring a videotape of Roger Welsch's appearance on the Dick Cavett show, will be at the Gere Branch Library, 56th Street and Normal Boulevard at noon on March 29.

All events are open to the public and free of charge.

Newman movie lacks heroes

By Patty Pryor

Harry and Son, the new Paul Newman offering, is a kind of ineffective look at life's missed opportunities.

Directed, co-produced and co-written by Newman, along with Ronald Buck, the film depicts the relationship

Film Review

between Harry Keach, played by Newman, and his son Howard, played by Robbie Benson.

The two live alone in a comfortable house on the Florida coast, after the death of Harry's wife, Jenny, two years earlier.

Already facing a difficult time getting over the loss of his wife, Harry is dealt another blow when he loses his job as a wrecking ball operator because of vision-blurring headaches.

Howard, meanwhile, seems content to wash and wax cars, surf and sit in the backyard jacuzzi as he waits for someone to publish his writing.

Considerable tension builds between father and son as the disparity between their values and lifestyles grows increasingly apparent — as Harry says to Howard, "I want to work and can't; you can and don't."

At his father's directive, Howard undertakes a half-hearted job search, but finally tells Dad, "I don't want to spend my time at a job that pisses me off."

Harry can't understand how Howard *does* want to spend his time, and it is in this conflict that the "missed opportunities" theme comes through, although not quite successfully.

The theme is further carried out in Howard's relationship with Katie, an old girlfriend who has since become pregnant. Howard's decision to take

the girl, played by Ellen Barkin, under his wing deepens the misunderstanding between him and his father.

I've never been an avid Robbie Benson hater, but he seems unable to break out of that super-sensitive, "Gee, isn't life neat?" mentality, and his roles usually suffer because of it.

In this film, Benson's character just bubbles over with wide-eyed naivete and optimism. Lines like, "Things'll get better, Pop," and "We'll make our own luck," flow from his mouth no matter what obstacle lies ahead next.

Such an unrealistic view on life can be nothing but grating to audiences who know it ain't so.

At one point, after Howard's whining about all the jobs for which he just doesn't have the right disposition, Harry tells him, "Once you get out and feel the heat, you'll see the light." We're supposed to feel sorry for Harry and his calloused attitude (Why can't he just enjoy life?), but I don't think it works. I think he's right on target.

Harry may not have taken enough time to stop and smell the roses, but he knows the realities of life and fears, or maybe envies, his son for his rose-colored perspective.

Despite its drawbacks, the film does have its redeeming qualities, not the least of which is Newman's performance. His acting certainly makes up for whatever he lacks in writing or directing.

The chemistry between Newman and Benson has its engaging moments as well, including a scene in which Harry tracks Howard down to the beach and wades in waist-deep to chew him out for leaving half a can of dead beer in the refrigerator.

Overall, though, the film is less than entertaining, and its ad campaign — "Two heroes for the '80s" — is a bit misleading. I really didn't find too much heroic about either one of them and am not sure why anyone else would, either.



Craig Andresen/Daily Nebraskan

Beatrice (Mari Weiss) has a little fun at Benedick's expense in the climactic sequence of *Much Ado About Nothing*. The play is showing through Saturday at the Howell Theatre.

Huzzah! Slapstick, romance make 'Much Ado' pure fun

By Mona Z. Koppelman

Five huzzahs for cast and crew of *Much Ado About Nothing* in production at the Howell Theatre in the Temple building. Merriment and frivolity

even through its radical tone changes — the witty interchanges, quaint romance, bawdy slapstick and sulky melodrama.

The play, of course, is a romantic comedy. Don Pedro, prince of Arragon, fixes up his brave companion, Claudio, with the desire of his heart, Hero. Hero is daughter and only heir to Leonato, governor of Messina. Don Pedro's brother, John, and two villainous henchmen hatch a plot to stop the marriage of Claudio and Hero. Age-old nemeses Beatrice and Benedick join to bring Hero, Beatrice's cousin, and Claudio, Benedick's friend, back together. And meantime, a good-natured plot to spark love between the avowed singles, Beatrice and Benedick, succeeds. Beautiful.

The Claudio-Hero team of Jeff Talbott and Lynette Welter was almost sickening in their sweet naivete, but was successfully carried off, nonetheless. Neither captured a lot of empathy from the audience. Hopelessly-in-love couples are always flaccid, and it's hard to get excited about flaccid.

Continued on Page 9

Theater Review

abound. Director Paul Barnes brought a common denominator of pure fun to Shakespeare that can be enjoyed by young and old with no effort at all.

Christopher Wineman, stage manager of *Much Ado*, said the youthfulness of audiences has been surprising and gratifying.

"They haven't been waiting until the English professors showed up to get the jokes," Wineman said.

It always takes time to warm audiences up to Shakespearean language and wordplay, but even the opening night crowd quickly got acclimated. The audience stayed with the play,

Corrections

The article entitled "Record Shops Never Slip a Disc" (Daily Nebraskan, March 1) contained some misleading information about Dirt Cheap Records and Gifts, 217 N. 11th St. and East Park Plaza.

The analysis mentioned sale prices at other record shops but failed to note Dirt Cheap's sale offerings. Both stores have a number of albums on sale for \$5.77.

In addition, the analysis claimed prices between the Downtown and East Park Plaza store varied significantly.

Although prices at the two stores may vary depending on special markdowns, the pricing policies between the two stores are basically the same.

We apologize to Dirt Cheap and anyone else misled by this error.

In another article about pianist Fernando Laires, the date he will be performing was inadvertently omitted. Laires will appear at Lincoln's Kimball Hall March 9. There is no admission charge.