

CEP—hippies, or intellectuals

by Mary Voboril

In its two and a half year history, it's been labeled a hippie haven, a drug colony, a think tank and a donothing educational system. But its real name is the Centennial Educational Program (CEP), and Ted Beck calls it an intellectual community.

Beck, a senior "fellow" or teacher-adviser at CEP, commented on the program's progress after five semesters.

Academically, CEP is "as strong as it ever was," but Beck said the social chemistry leaves something to be desired. He said the community was most cohesive its first year.

The 1969-70 moratoriums and the May 1970 student strike helped unite the community that first year, he said. The most controversial issue this year was coed visitation in dormitories, but a compromise was reached before the planned male visitation could occur.

"If this dorm protest had gone through, it might have helped student cohesiveness," said Beck, smiling.

CEP, initiated in 1969 in conjunction with the University's 100th birthday, was first intended to be an experimental college of problem solving. But Beck,

who has been with the program since it began, said this idea is "preposterous."

"It's impossible to force all courses taught at Centennial into a problem-solving format," he said. While many courses do involve problem solving exercises, others, like a history of Darwinism course, do not.

There are three academic objectives at CEP, Beck said. The first is that students be able to think critically. Another is that they develop a range of intellectual and cultural interests. A third is that they learn to communicate effectively.

Beck, also an associate professor in English, thinks of CEP as an intellectual community because people there become more interested in ideas, reading and the arts. He believes people studying in CEP discuss issues and ideas more freely than other students. He attributes this to the atmosphere at CEP, where most students live within the complex and study together.

Beck announced last Tuesday the next series of 4-week projects in CEP. Schizophrenia, parasitology, poetry-writing and Russian culture are among the 24 courses offered. After the fourth week of study comes a week of evaluation, in which each student is required to turn in a written report on how well he thought he and the group as a whole performed.

Some courses are taught by CEP students, in which cases some CEP fellows become students. Beck thinks this is a good arrangement.

"A professor is really a professional student," he said. "In a group learning situation, the fellow becomes a model of a student. Everyone learns together."

The senior fellow said the staff has learned not to expect too much from regents' scholars.

"Some do beautifully, but others do absolutely nothing," he said.

Other students enter CEP with mediocre or worse high school records, but Beck has seen some "suddenly blossom," studying hard and turning out productive work.

Admissions to the college are "completely random," although exceptions are made for minority students. One student used the word "homogenous"

to describe CEP personnel. About 200 students, 40 per cent freshmen, are in the program. Twelve fellows, most of whom are on leave from their departments for two-year intervals, study with them.

Lee Neiligh, now a student assistant in Heppner Hall, is in his sixth semester at CEP. He said CEP is good because "people really get excited about education here."

"You could stay in Centennial all four years and never duplicate your experiences," he said. People in CEP are "continually growing" intellectually, he added.

"CEP teaches people how to use facts and motivates people so that they want to think."

A CEP dropout is Linda Brownlee, a sophomore in business. She said she left because CEP took too much of her time and she feared she would not be able to meet her course requirements. CEP takes six hours a semester, and no more than 10 hours of outside courses are allowed.

Brownlee said she learned more about how to live with people than about academics at CEP, but found the program a little too closely-knit.

"Most people just stayed in Centennial at night and on weekends," she said. "Or when they did go somewhere, they went with people from Centennial."

She said she did not get to associate with enough people outside the college. CEP is something like a Greek house, she said.

"It's a place to identify with."

A freshman CEP student, Kathy Rice, called her high school classes "a complete waste" in comparison to her classes at CEP. She finds herself studying harder and enjoying it more because she can take whatever course she's interested in. Right now she's interested in anthropology and Dante.

She likes CEP's pass-fail grading system.

"You are working for yourself and the people in your project group, not for a grade," she said. She said she likes the idea of continuing further in independent study.

"In a class outside Centennial, if you don't learn the material by the end of the semester, it's too bad. But here you can go on and learn more."

First-time voters converge on '72 elections

The following article on young voters is the first of a three-part series by Daily Nebraskan staff writer Steve Arvanette on election year activities. The other articles will consider young candidates and third parties in both local and national elections.

by Steve Arvanette

Long after the votes in Tuesday's New Hampshire primary election are counted, politicians and political experts will be scrutinizing the results to see how strongly the state's 18 and 19-year-olds voted.

According to U.S. Census Bureau figures, 25 million Americans will be able to vote for President for the first time this year. That figure includes 11 million 18 to 20-year-olds, and 14 million people who will have reached age 21 since 1968.

The major problem, however, seems to lie in getting new voters to register.

A Gallup Poll released March 5 showed 65 per cent of all college students had registered to vote. That figure is considerably higher than those non-college people 18-20. Gallup's poll showed that only 40 per cent of the non-student voters had registered.

Nationally, Gallup figures show 74 per cent of the American population has registered to vote.

Gallup's statistics do not seem to correspond with Nebraska figures. Nebraska Secretary of State Allen Beermann estimates there are 100,000 18 and 19-year-olds eligible to vote in Nebraska.

According to Beermann, about 35,000 of Nebraska's young people have registered thus far. "A lot of them probably plan to register during spring break," Beermann said.

"Too many of these voter drives have been aimed at college students," Beermann said.

His criticism may be valid if a Gallup Poll of April 18, 1971 is correct. That poll showed that of the 11.4 million 18-20-year-olds, 4.9 million are students, 4.1 million are employed, 1.8 million are housewives and the remaining 800,000 are serving in the armed forces.

Even in Lancaster County, with the largest student population in the state, only 2,000 18 and 19-year-olds are registered thus far. What makes that figure even more significant is that Lancaster County has roughly 10 per cent of the state's registered voters.

One problem with registering young voters is the frequency with which they change their residence. Beermann noted a student who claims a campus address when registering would need to re-register if

he moved into a new dorm room across the hall.

Several small communities with large campus populations feared students could take over the town's politics if they were permitted to register at their college address. As a result many election boards required students to show an unusual amount of proof that they were residents in the community.

In case after case, courts have struck down these stringent proof of residence requirements. "It is no longer constitutionally permissible to exclude students from the franchise because of the fear of the way they may vote," John Swainson a Michigan supreme court judge said.

City elections last fall in some communities such as Berkeley, Calif., have seen students elected to such posts as city council largely through strong campus turnouts.



Beermann stressed his office has not taken a position on where students must register. "We think it is best they register at their parents' home address," he said, however.

Beermann noted students may find it financially feasible to register outside of Lancaster County.

When entering the Lancaster County election commissioner's office, a sign easily observable says: "Students—If you intend to be a legal resident of Lancaster County, you are eligible to register to vote. If you register to vote you will legally be responsible to: 1) Register your motor vehicle in Lancaster County, 2) Change the address on your driver's license, 3) At age 21, become eligible for jury duty."

By registering a car in Lancaster County, a student would pay a higher property tax figure plus a wheel tax. He could also notice a substantial increase in car insurance premiums.

Assuming a considerable number of young voters will register to vote this year, the question of

interest to politicians is what effect the young will have on elections.

Gallup's figures show students registering 42 per cent Democratic. The Republican party nation-wide is registering only 19 per cent of potential student voters.

Beermann, a Republican, acknowledges that Democrats are registering more young voters. He described the advantage as a slight "edge."

State-wide figures are not available yet. However, in Lancaster County as of Feb. 1 with just short of 2,000 18 and 19-year-old voters, 55.8 per cent were registered Democrat, 31.5 per cent Republican and 12.7 per cent independent.

Robert Sittig, UNL political science teacher, said there has been a national trend to the Democratic party since 1920.

"Candidates for the President may have encouraged some students (to register Democratic)," Richard Marvel, state senator from Hastings and political science instructor at Nebraska Wesleyan, said.

"Facts in any study that I have seen show younger voters tend to vote less than those in their 30s or 40s," Marvel said.

Sittig agreed, saying the turnout of young voters this year will be less than the national average unless something should spark their interest.

A special congressional election last spring in Maryland had only six per cent of the eligible 18 to 21-year-old voters registered. Over 35 per cent of those young voters participated in that special election, far above the state-wide average.

If just six million of the 25 million new voters were to vote in 1972 presidential election, splitting 3-1 Democratic, that would give the Democrats a three million vote advantage. Such a vote would have changed the outcome of the 1968 race for the White House.

New young voters will out-number by three times the margin of victories that 71 House of Representatives seats were won by in 1970. Of those 71 seats, 40 are held by Republicans and 31 by Democrats.

It remains to be seen if young people will take advantage, in any significant number, the right of suffrage that the 26th amendment to the U.S. Constitution has provided them. That amendment was ratified in record time of two months and seven days with the approval of the Ohio legislature last July 1.