

Golden Age revisited

When classes opened this fall, things looked rosy. Following directly on the heels of one of the most involved, improving, vital years at UNL, one could only think that this year would be better yet.

Last year, you will remember, was the year when students campaigned in droves for the primary election. It was a year when on and off campus students lobbied effectively for more liberal coed visitation policies. Free University was running like education on the hoof. The ASUN Book Exchange and Record store began to kick some collateral back to the students in the form of decreased prices. And the PACE program was hauling in unbelievable amounts of greenbacks to share in the cost of educating. It was a veritable golden age of activism.

So, returning this fall, one had to believe that things would take up where they left off last spring. Emerging projects including food cooperatives, student discount cards, student art shops and innovative theater groups all seemed to forecast an even-better world right around the corner.

True to form, things started off just swell. The project leaders began touting their causes, rolling out the old rhetoric, saying the things which had brought successes in the spring. But nothing happened. The old battle cries didn't work, so new ones were devised. Still nothing. Clearly something had changed.

Where a few months before cries of "improve, improve" had echoed in the halls of academia, there was little but silence to be found. A campus that a few weeks before had buzzed with innovation, creativity and change suddenly had become snail-paced. The project leaders soon found their brilliant rhetoric was being lost forever in a bottomless vacuum.

Somewhere along the line, the Golden Age had

ended. Students, faculty, administrators no longer cared. The campus of this fall was totally unrelated to the semester preceding—another world.

And so the activities, or rather inactivities, of the campus proceeded all semester. Brilliant plans appeared and died, fostered by the few souls who managed to remain interested and not become disillusioned by apathy. Improvement slowed to a near-halt.

This week the final crashing embarrassment occurred. After the amount of contributions to the Program for Active Commitment to Education (PACE) had been totaled, they had fallen to approximately one-third what they had been one year earlier.

Student mentors claim most of the decrease is due to a lack of publicity for this semester's drive and a change in contribution form which required the student to add \$3.50 to his tuition if he wished to contribute, rather than subtract \$3.50 if he did not wish to contribute.

Actually, these two areas seem to be convenient excuses to cover up the total apathy and nonconcern of those not contributing. And, once again, an outstanding program must suffer at the hands of the growing tide of non-involvement.

What caused the new flood of non-caring is hard to say. It could spring from any number of origins, justified or not. But one thing is certain—for most within the nonmovement, it represents a shelter from thought, emotional involvement and commitment. It seems easier to remain unconcerned and uninvolved, but mostly stagnant.

Christmas 1972 can't help but be a little bit sadder and a little bit more hopeless because of it.

Jim Gray



Democrats may recover for 1976 campaign

In an atypically bright move, Jean Westwood has managed to save her face (if not have it lifted a little) by resigning her lofty position as Democrat National Chairwoman. So now that at least the figurehead of pernicious McGovernism has been banished into exile, the party of Franklin Roosevelt and John Kennedy can get back on the road to recovery and rebuilding with the sure and steady hand of Texan Bob Strauss at the helm.

Assuming that Strauss does a credible job as national chairperson, and that Nixon's GOP has the usual share of second term problems, the Democratic presidential nomination in 1976 is likely to be worth considerably more than it was in 1972. And the chances for an even larger number of candidates materializing than the dozen or so we had to sort through this year are very good, indeed.

Teddy Kennedy regretfully comes to mind as the prime contender should he desire the honor, but my hunch is that he does not want to be President, let alone run for the job. Furthermore, the scandal-a-year Senator from Massachusetts (the One and Only) is not a salable product to the voters now, and all the Madison Avenue tricks in the country are unlikely to improve his political marketability in the future.

George Corley Wallace, once more a respectable member of the Democratic establishment, is unlikely ever again to stray from the party fold, and will figure prominently in any '76 odds. The Alabama governor

could easily become a rallying point for conservatives and moderates should the liberal wing of the Democratic party come up with a clear front-runner.

Of those fighting for the nomination this year—Humphrey, Muskie, Lindsay, Jackson, Yorty, Mink, Mills, Harris, Hartke, Coll and Chisholm—only

john vihstadt different drummer

Chisholm is apt to try again, although HHH, Muskie and Scoop Jackson will be around as elder statesmen. Of those that almost entered the primaries but didn't, however, each will no doubt give the nomination a stab next time.

Sen. Birch Bayh, 44 years old, darling of the AFL-CIO, and popular in the Midwest, is sure to run if he can survive a tough re-election battle back home in Indiana come 1974.

Harold Hughes of Iowa has his eyes on the nomination, but he too, must first win re-election two years from now. This latter prospect was made dubious, however, thanks to his recent revelations that he believes in ghosts and seances and that he occasionally smoked pot in his salad days. Things like this don't sit too well with Iowans, and Gov. Robert Ray is already moving to run against the senator.

Alaska Sen. Mike Gravel, who offered himself as a vice presidential candidate at the Democratic National Convention and collected a fair number of votes in the process, needs a big victory margin in his 1974 re-election bid if he is to have a chance in four years.

Certainly William Proxmire of Wisconsin must have something up his sleeve. After all, why else would a man spend thousands of dollars getting a hair transplant and the bags under his eyes removed? A crusader against Pentagon fat (some say muscle) and a fanatical health nut, the senator could prove to be one of the Democrats' best prospects.

It goes without saying, of course, that McGovern, Eagleton, and Shriver are washed up, forever.

What will happen from now to election day 1976, is anyone's guess, but a quick rundown of potential Democratic candidates shows that this party is not lacking in people who could win back the White House from the Republicans.