

## New rules confuse future of retarded



Brian Mills

by Tim Anderson

Many mentally retarded children currently enrolled in programs at the Lancaster Office of Mental Retardation (LOMR) may soon find themselves forced into the Beatrice State Home.

It could happen, according to Ann Coyne, director of community services at LOMR, if proposed regulations for social service recipients are adopted. They will become law March 14.

The Health, Education and Welfare Department proposal would further limit federal payments to states by allowing funds only for actual welfare recipients or those expected to be on welfare within six months, she said.

Currently, federal funds are available for persons who have the potential to become welfare recipients within five years.

Locally, this would mean that of the 62 children enrolled in the Human Development Program at LOMR, 55 would be ineligible, Coyne said.

"The program cost us \$24,300 in January," she said. "If the cuts had been in effect then, we would have lost \$17,500."

Thirty-one children are enrolled in the residency or hostel program in Lincoln. None will qualify if the proposals are adopted, she said.

In January, the hostel program cost LOMR \$11,000; the loss because of cuts would have been \$6,800, she explained.

In addition, LOMR would lose almost half of its money for social workers, she said.

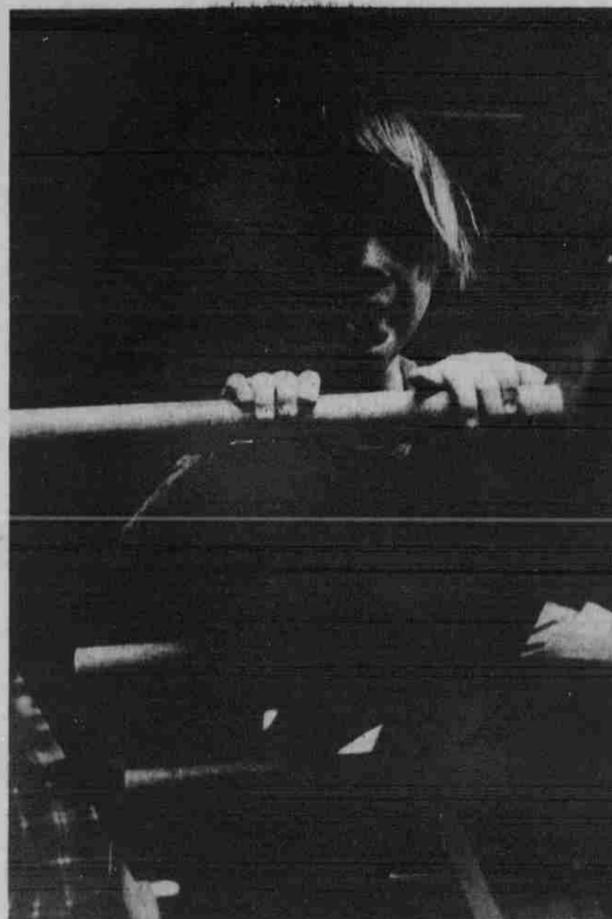
"If all these children are shut out of our programs, they've only got a couple of choices of where to go. They can either go home which may be in some isolated rural section with no special schools, or they can go to Beatrice."

What, if anything, can be done to stop proposed changes from being adopted?

"We've set up a booth in the north entrance of the Nebraska Union to try to get students to sign a petition opposing the proposals and we're getting pretty good response," Coyne said.

"However, what we really need is some letter writing," she said. "If people would write to the administrator of Social and Rehabilitation Services in Washington, D.C., it would really help."

"Philip Rutledge is the administrator and it will have to be his decision to reassess these proposals. But those proposals go into law in two weeks—we just don't have much time."



Bobby Kobza

photos by Dan Ladely

## ASUN toasts liquor request

With dormitory rate increases on the agenda for Saturday's NU Board of Regents meeting, the ASUN Senate Wednesday passed a resolution urging that alcohol consumption and coed visitation privileges be granted to enhance dormitory living.

Another resolution that was passed recommends the University attempt to "improve the living environment of the halls...and cut unnecessary costs."

ASUN also will invite UNL Housing Office representatives to report to the body next week on the proposed dormitory rate increases.

The two original resolutions were introduced by ASUN Sen. Bill Fruedenburg and Sen. Ann Henry.

Fruedenburg's resolution stated that "dormitory rates should not be raised." Henry's said "dormitory rates will inevitably increase."

Both recommended liberalization of alcohol and coed visitation policies, although Fruedenburg's original bill was more critical of spending policies of the UNL Housing Office.

"The very least we can do is minimize the economic effect on the students," Fruedenburg said. "It's up to this group to stand up for the rights of students."

Henry said she had been investigating

dormitory rate increases.

"After talking to the Housing Office, I can't see how they can cut any more," Henry said. "You have to pay to eat, and food prices are rising."

Because rate increases will definitely come and dormitories will be forced to compete with off-campus housing, alcohol and coed visitation liberalization will help on-campus students "get as much for their money," Henry said.

Both resolutions were passed by the senate, but Fruedenburg's clause condemning the rate increase was amended out of the final resolution.

In other action, Henry reminded the senate that the bill providing for a student regent comes before a legislative committee Thursday for hearing and urged everyone to attend.

"Student interest is very important on this bill," she said. "You don't have to say anything, just show your interest."

ASUN President Bruce Beecher reported on the progress of the library study being done for ASUN by a consultant firm.

"I've been really impressed with the kind of work they've been doing," he said. "(UNL Chancellor James) Zumberge indicated things are really going to roll now."