

# I-House retreat examines group relationships

By Ken Merlin

Carmen Herrera, 20, dressed in farm overalls, a Star of David hung around her neck, sat playing a guitar on a sunny hill opposite the Camp Eagle lodge near Fremont, site of the UNL International House retreat last weekend.

Tired of the hassles of school and glad to be away from Lincoln, she sat alone playing her guitar and singing. Her voice, carried by the wind, could be heard from the lodge where moments before she was among 30 students attending the retreat who were asked to "do your own thing"

for an hour before the Saturday evening meal.

"I can't sing unless I'm bothered," she said.

Herrera once sang the part of Dion in the rock opera *Hair* on Broadway. Her voice attracted others who came and sat silently in the field a few feet away.

One in the group was Beth Popken, I-House head resident. Earlier, she had conducted a group dynamics session on listening.

"Good listening is important in understanding another person," she said. "In group dynamics we do things

which teach us how to communicate—what we need to do to get to know each other."

In the first session, housing representatives were introduced to the group using group dynamics techniques.

Rather than introduce themselves, Bill Schnackel, complex program director, Georgia Glass, Women's Residence Halls director, and Popken asked the group for first impressions in a game of "biographical guess."

Introductions were followed by sessions focused on the individual's relationship to I-House and others in the group.

Popken said the tendency was to build a shell and let people think what they want without trying to clarify wrong impressions.

To test this, each member drew a picture of himself in relation to I-House, pinned it on his chest and mingled in the group looking for a partner.

"Pretend you're at a cocktail party," Popken said, "and move around till you find someone interesting you don't already know."

After the retreat, Popken said members had developed a good feeling about each other and a sense of commitment about doing things for the house.

I-House is located on two floors of Piper Hall in Women's Residence Hall, 540 N. 16th.

I-House began in fall, 1971. Its 68 members (38 men and 30 women from 17 countries including the U.S.) are governed by a constitution adopted last spring and administered by a Council of Five which meets weekly.

According to its constitution, the house was developed as the focal point of intercultural exchange on campus where individuals are encouraged to step out of their own cultural framework.

Much of this stepping out is accomplished through daily contact with a roommate or Piper Hall's Blue Lounge. Coffeehouse, which meets every other Sunday in the house basement, features slides of a country presented by a guest speaker.

The house also sponsors group discussions that can be taken for independent study credit through either the Speech and Communications or Anthropology Depts.

Schnackel, a part-time housing office employe, said the I-House concept was similar to a differentiated housing proposal being studied by the Council on Student Life (CSL).

He said dormitory students who pin their hopes for a better life at UNL on relaxed visiting hours and permission to drink alcohol on campus should consider what has been done at I-House.

Schnackel spent several years as a student advisor (SA) and member of the housing staff at Purdue University before coming to UNL as resident director of Harper Hall last year.

He said I-House has succeeded where others often failed at universities across the country and attributed much of its present enthusiasm to Popken.

"But we need to raise funds if we're going to do anything this year," Popken said.

According to Altaf Malik, chairman of Council of Five last year and men's floor SA this fall, the ASUN budget committee interviewed I-House representatives three weeks ago concerning the house request for \$1700.

Last Wednesday, the committee agreed to fund \$290 and threatened to chop another \$165 which had been requested for more reference books for I-House library.

Malik said ASUN feels the books should come from Love Library. He said the house received \$700 in 1972 of \$1200 requested from the Human Rights Committee, but that committee no longer handles budget requests.

Popken said fewer coffeehouses would be scheduled and a planned spring retreat would be cancelled if additional funds could not be raised.



Beth Popken, head resident of International House

Sen. Curtis  
to speak  
at dedication  
of tree lab

A new forestry sciences laboratory on the UNL East Campus will be dedicated at 10 a.m. Friday.

The laboratory will be used for research to upgrade tree species of the Great Plains area, to identify and control tree diseases and to develop beneficial tree varieties.

The laboratory will be operated by the U.S. Forest Service in cooperation with state and federal agencies.

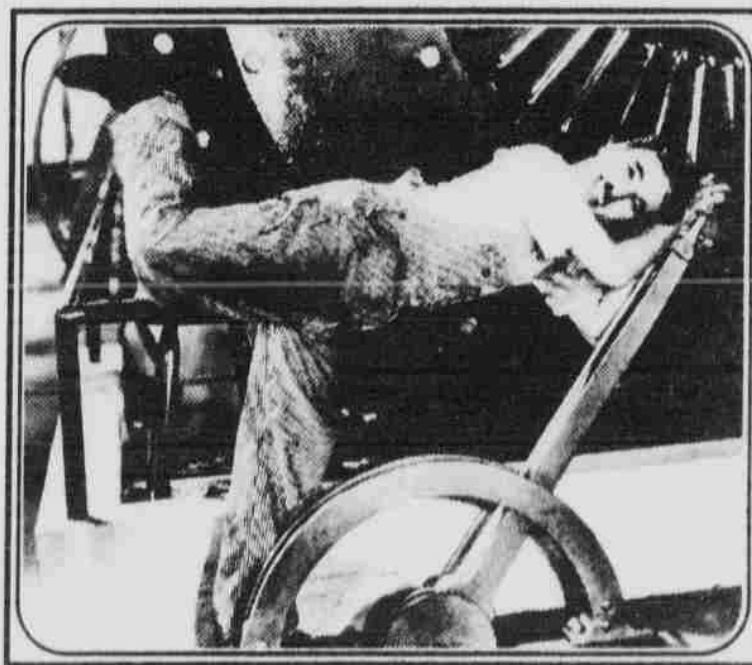
Sen. Carl Curtis and John McGuire, chief of the Forest Service, will speak at the dedication.

The laboratory will have an open house from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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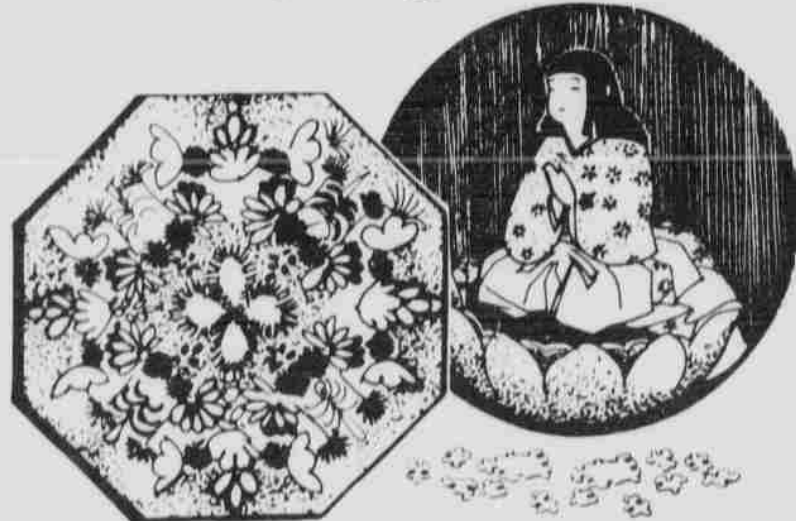
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Oct. 20th—3, 7, & 9 p.m.

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