

Free University

Registration for Nebraska Free University—which, incidentally, no longer is free—begins next Monday. It is hoped that the University community as well as Lincolniters not connected with UNL take advantage of it.

Called an alternative to the present educational system, Free University this year is "striving for greater community involvement." With a list of courses seemingly limited only by the imaginations of persons volunteering to teach them, Free U can not be called short on attractiveness.

Literature, music and other traditional courses will be taught, though probably not on a traditional format. More unorthodox subjects include alternate life styles, human liberation for men and women, bridge and bartending. Practical courses are offered in such areas as sewing, arts and crafts and offset printing. According to the person who taught offset printing, the students who completed his course "got so good that they could complete every step of the offset process."

Free University has been around for about four years. Most of its former chairpersons agree that both the idea of a free university itself and most of the courses offered have been good. However, the success of the program has been retarded by a discouraging number of dropouts and class cutters. Generally, an encouraging number of persons enroll in the classes, but often more than two-thirds drop out.

It's difficult to understand why more persons do not take advantage of Free U. After all, where else can you get a relatively complete course in bartending—or nearly anything else—for only \$1.

Mary Voboril



A lonely president playing the piano late in the night.

to the editor



Dear editor,

After five semesters at the University, the visitation issue is getting a bit old. At least once a year, some students get stirred up and attempt to change a repressive system of rules governing coed visitation in the dormitories. They write letters, hold meetings, sign petitions, take polls, file law suits and use whatever other proper procedures available to change the system. Every year the result is the same—little or not change.

One would suspect that after awhile students

would get the message. Proper channels or appropriate proceedings through the system simply do not work. That ought to be clear from our experience and at least from the experiences of other universities. Appropriate procedures only give the authorities, the regents in this case, the opportunity to again properly deny us the changes we request. Each time they take advantage of that opportunity. Thus we are where we were three years ago.

I regret that this is true. Nonetheless it seems clear that only extralegal procedures such as mass violations, sit-ins and other peaceful—or possibly nonpeaceful—protest can have any effect toward changing repressive rules. Creighton University students flooded out two floors of one of its dormitories before they received visitation privileges. That was after appropriate procedures had failed. In our own case, the one minor change we did get was because of a threat of mass violation. Yet we still

have to keep our doors open. Efforts at change through the system are admirable but simply don't work. I wish those writing letters to the regents the best of luck, but I fear they will run into the same brick wall as before. The regents do not want open dormitories and won't let them occur as long as it can be avoided. Only change outside the system can have any effect. As I said, it is regrettable but, I fear, unavoidable.

Though I continue to live in a dormitory, I am not sure I care very much if visitation is extended. At one time I would have. But I am graduating in May and my girlfriend lives off campus. Still, I would hope that those students who will remain here for some time will stop beating their heads against the wall of change through the system and recognize that it is about time for some other means of change to be used.

Chip Treen

Greed, lust, sex mark comic book comeback

What is commonly called the Golden Age of Comics reaches into the early adolescence of most of us at UNL. Comics fell into a pretty dull period during the 1960s, but they're back now, and they may be better than ever. Two of the most promising current titles are *Conan the Barbarian* and the old-new *Wonder Woman*.

The comic book format is a writer's dream, for it allows him to create a fully detailed world as believable as the real one without long Conrad-like descriptions. If the storyteller wants to use a magic sword in his tale, he can. And if it's important the magic sword have rubies on its hilt, it will. Illustrations save a lot of words.

The world of the writer's mind is explored masterfully in *Conan the Barbarian*. Conan is a monarch of Cimmeria, a land-locked country southwest of Hyboria. Because of Hyboria's military and commercial importance, Conan's era (around 10,000 B.C) is called the Hyborian Age.

Conan is a remarkably resilient figure in the world of fantasy. Originally a pulp novel figure in a series by Robert E. Howard, Conan already has survived nearly 40 issues by Marvel Comics. He may be one of the most unpleasant as well as one of the most popular comic book heroes.

The Barbarian is pretty much an unabashed savage. His motivations are greed, lust and the need to assert himself; his assets are brute force and a conspicuous lack of doubt in the rightness of his cause. Yet he pursues his ends with a singleness of purpose charming in its simplicity. Every man has wanted to be Conan at one time or another.

Not the least of Conan's attractions is the sexual.

He spends an inordinate amount of time dealing with scantily-clad princesses, killing the bad ones and raping the good ones as if expected to. Perhaps there is something sensual in his dark, bare-chested naivete; Conan seems to have a lot of female followers among comic book fans.

It is sexuality—or the urge to deny it—that led Frederic Wertham to write *Seduction of the Innocent* in 1954, and that book prodded the comics industry

keith landgren desperate remedies

to formulate the Comics Code shortly afterward. The underground comics found in shops like *Dirt Cheap* are partly a reaction against the limitations on creativity in the Comics Code.

But no one, fortunately, can ever remove the implied sexuality of figures as old as literature itself. Batman and Robin are, rightly or wrongly, accused of homosexuality. Superman, we assume, is as good a lover as he is a fighter; we assume the same of Jason, Hercules, Thor and the other mythical superstars. The comic books, like the legends, don't tell us any of that. They don't have to.

One of the oldest stories in literature, and prominent in modern comic books, is that of the Amazons. To suggest that the Amazon has no sexual importance is simply to evade the issue. Her existence since the days of Theseus owes more to the idea of a superwoman than to any primeval need to do good.

Radical feminists saw the importance of the Amazon to their own cause, and DC Comics responded to their interest by returning *Wonder Woman* to her original home on Paradise Island. She had been a fairly straight, crime-fighting, multi-lingual boutique owner for several years before late 1972, traveling with a blind Chinese karate expert named I Ching. I, or Ching, met his death at the hands of a sniper in Issue 204 during an adventure that returned *Wonder Woman* to the island and the right hand of her mother, Queen Hippolyta of the Amazons.

It seems to have been a happy step backward. She has a job at the United Nations as a tour guide in her secret disguise of Diana Prince (command of a dozen or so languages has its advantages). But she spends most of her time in the strange vicinity of Paradise Island, fighting super-villains with her magic lariat and her plexiglass plane. A recently released 100-page anthology of older stories reveals she is better looking than she's ever been.

Most of us read comics voraciously for a while, then lost interest when they staled. And while some of the titles never recovered (war comics among them), many others are alive and well. *Wonder Woman*, with her tiara and without I Ching, is in excellent health. And Conan, with his suggestion of primitive virtue and violent death, seems made for 1974.