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daily nebraskan

To folk enthusiasts

Instrument kits appeal

"Life is like a mountain dulcimer."

This ad in Sing out! a folk song magazine, appeals to the increasing number of mountain and folk song enthusiasts. The person who purchases a dulcimer, like other mountain instruments. now can either buy or build the instrument.

The dulcimer has wire strings of different lengths stretched over a sound box, and is plucked by the fingers or played by two

Advertisements for dulcimers, banjos, guitars, mandolins, and the more exotic psalteries and thumb pianos crowd the classified sections of magazines such as Sing out! and Saturday

Construction plans or kits are not limited to folk instruments. Companies such as Burton's Harpsichords, in Lincoln, feature kits for harpsichords and clavichords.

Companies also sell wood, fingerboards, bindings, and accessories to build the instrument without a kit.

Is it worth it? Opinions differ. UNL student Laurie Edwards, who ordered a \$36 dulcimer kit from a Denver company, said she did not find the kit too difficult and was pleased with the results.

An article in Mugwumps' Instrument Herald, a folk instruments journal, about assembling a \$99 Stewart-MacDonald banjo, noted that most anyone could assemble their kit easily.

Bob Fenton of Dietz Music House in Lincoln was more cautious. He said two people who bought violin kits from him gave up and had a violin repairman finish their instruments.

"Don't believe that a kit and a tube of glue are all you need. Special home tools are needed for some kits," Fenton said.

'No musical background is needed, however. It doesn't matter if you don't know which end to play," he said.

Neill Roan of Guitar Gallery compared the better kits to good electronic kits.

When completed, Roan said, a \$250 banjo kit will make an excellent instrument. He said that, depending on the individual, a kit might take from a few days to a month to complete.

"In contrast, a guitar kit is a waste of time. It is as difficult as violin making," Roan said.

The Guitar Gallery sells kits for Appalachian dulcimers, five types of banjos and mandolins.

Growing interest in bluegrass is demonstrated by construction requests for homemade instruments like the washtub bass and musical saw, Roan said.

"Of course, take a bass fiddle E-string and washtub and you have a washtub bass. And since a jug is a jug, apple cider jugs work as well as white lightning," he said.

Merger enables some to minor in religion

Current restructuring of UNL's School of Religion, formerly Cotner College, should enable students to obtain a religion minor beginning in the fall of 1977.

Restructuring of the school resulted from the merging of the Cotner Foundation with the University Foundation in a trust agreement. The Cotner Foundation will turn over its building and funds to the University. The building is at 1237 R St.

Dean Raleigh Peterson said the restructuring of the school will benefit students in two ways.

He said students who are interested in religion will be able to fill gaps in their class schedules that occur under the present religion program.

"Some courses now may not fulfill group requirements," Peterson explained. "Some religion courses are taught outside the University course framework and do not count towards University requirements," Peterson added.

Students now taking religion courses offered outside the University transfer credits to their transcript and these classes appear under religion on student records. The credits earned under the present religion program count toward graduation.

Peterson said 23 courses now are offered and said that combining courses from various UNL departments with the religion program would result in the "opportunity for a minor in religion."

Students will also benefit from the school's restructuring because more students can be accommodated in the program, Peterson said. The school currently enrolls about 200 students in its courses, but he did not speculate how many students will seek minors in religion.

Peterson said all types of students take the inter-religious and inter-denominational classes offered in the religion program.

"Students with no religious beliefs and students with fundamentalist beliefs take religion courses," Peterson said. "We also have American Indian and black students, as well as Phi Beta Kappas taking courses," he added.

Religion classes are taught in a historical, cultural and philosophical context in keeping with a recent Lancaster Court ruling, Peterson said. "UNL's religion courses neither promote nor attack religion," he added.

A full-time professor of biblical studies will be hired to coordinate the development of the school's program of religion studies, Peterson said. In addition, the College of Arts and Sciences will be encouraged to develop new courses of religion study, he

Also included in the restructuring of the school is the addition of three new classes in Hebrew, world religions and biblical course, Peterson said. These courses, must be approved by the regents before they can be offered, but Peterson said he expects the regents to approve the classes soon.