

# Backpacking legions threaten wilderness

By Joe Hudson

The overabundance of "drugstore backpackers" may mean closing entire sections of American wilderness, according to a University of Nebraska-Lincoln backpacking instructor.

"Drugstore backpackers," said Doug McCallum, "are those who backpack just because everyone else is doing it. They leave trash, tear up the trail markers, and are just plain careless."

"They've ruined it for a lot of people," he said, noting that permits are now required for backpackers in the Grand Canyon and in certain parts of Colorado's Rocky Mountain National Forest.

McCallum, 27, organized UN-L's backpacking course and just finished teaching its first semester. True to the national trend, 120 registered for the class designed for 20 students. Two more sections were added, making room for 40 more students.

#### Teach them to enjoy it

His teaching goal is not to fuel the rising popularity of backpacking, but to "teach those people who go out to go out with the skill to enjoy it and not ruin it for others," he said.

"All the easily accessible trails are now overcrowded. Where you used to go seven miles, you have to go 30 miles to get away," he said.

Sometimes even 30 miles isn't enough. A group of his once hiked that far into the Wind River Range in central Wyoming only to stumble upon two cases of empty whisky bottles.

"It took us two days to dig a big enough hole to bury them in and cover it up again" so that it looked natural again, he said.

#### Prohibit wood burning

Most areas, McCallum said, now prohibit the gathering and burning of wood simply because there isn't any left.

"People have burned up all the wood and started cutting

limbs off trees. And of course there's the danger of forest fires." Portable camp stoves have replaced most wood fires.

McCallum said he doesn't "like to have to go through the hassle of all the regulations, but it's probably the only way to keep from totally ruining our wilderness areas."

"It may come to the point where they may totally restrict some areas and let them recuperate from man."

The trouble with waiting lists and other regulations, he said, is that they often fail to discriminate between the careful and careless campers.

"But there's got to be some kind of control," he said.

#### Enough wilderness

"I think there is enough wilderness for everyone if people would pack in and pack out everything," he said. "There are still areas you can go where there's hardly a soul, and that makes it all worth while."

Even if he has to walk a few more miles than in past years to "get away," the brown-haired mustachioed McCallum still looks forward to at least one major backpacking trip each summer.

He got his first taste of backpacking in 1963, his sophomore year in high school, when "the local druggist took another kid and me to the Rockies."

#### "I've gone every summer"

"I've gone every summer since then," he said, including trips in Wyoming, Washington, Colorado, South Dakota, Arizona, and Nebraska.

"The Rockies are probably my favorite, but Wyoming is fun, too. And it's not as populated as the Rockies."

#### Nebraska plains hardest

Despite the steep slopes in Colorado and the Grand Canyon in Arizona, McCallum said "the hardest walking I've ever done" was across Nebraska's plains two years ago along the Oregon Trail route.

"We had to cross four to six fences between each mile road

and the alfalfa was over knee high," he said. "And it was hot—about 98 degrees. Coyotes howled all night, and we didn't get much sleep."

His dog suffered a heat stroke early in the trip, shattering their "visions of making it to the middle of Nebraska, around Minden or Holdrege." He called it quits after three days and thirty miles.

"I doubt if I'd ever go again, but it did give me a perspective of what the pioneers had to face. Just you and the prairie and the wide open sky."

#### Backpacking offers solitude

The solitude backpacking offers is one of its major assets, McCallum said.

"You're not competing with another team or individual for honors. It's all within yourself."

McCallum said the pressures and demanding timetables of coaching three sports in Valentine, Neb., drove him to Lincoln in 1972. He received his masters degree in physical education in 1973, and the same year submitted an outline for a backpacking course to the department chairman.

#### Class offered in spring

After "two years of red tape," the class was finally offered in the spring of this year.

Despite the large demand for the class and the burden of teaching all three sections (he is the only one qualified to teach the course), he finds the atmosphere more to his liking than his days as high school coach.

"You don't have to be the world's best at it," he said. "Everyone gets cold at night and everyone huffs and puffs up the hills."

"It's not a thing you pursue just on a Saturday night as in football, but for a whole lifetime. That's what I'd like to pass on to people."

Unless the "drugstore backpackers" get in his way, McCallum counts on hiking the trails for years to come.



Widely acclaimed female pianist, Claudette Sorel will give a free performance at Kimball Recital Hall, Thursday, June 12 at 8 p.m.

## Sorel piano recital featured in series

A performance by Claudette Sorel, "one of the most famous female pianists on the planet" will climax a series of piano recitals on the UN-L campus this week, according to Thomas Fritz.

Fritz, professor of piano at the UN-L School of Music organized the series of recitals to accompany the Comprehensive Workshop in the Teaching of Piano. The workshop begins today and will end on Friday, June 13.

Sorel will present an all Rachmaninoff program on Thursday evening. Fritz said that such a program has not probably been played in this area for a decade.

"Rachmaninoff treats the piano better than most other composers because he was a great pianist himself. The music is very 'large,'" Fritz said, noting the distinctive Romantic/lush style of the composer.

Sorel was a child prodigy who is now the only woman to hold the position of Distinguished University Professor in the State University of New York

System (SUNY). Fritz said that Sorel is a clinician in great demand between her frequent recording sessions and heavy concert schedule.

The first recital in the series, to be presented tonight, will feature a program of American piano music from colonial times to the present day.

Jack Winerock, professor of Piano at the University of Kansas, another clinician in the workshop, will be the piano soloist.

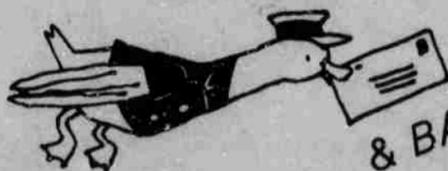
On Tuesday evening Fritz and Cary Lewis, a professor of music at Nebraska Wesleyan, will present a duet concert on two keyboards. The program will include a Brahms piece and several Schubert dances.

Pieces which are often assigned by piano teachers for their students will be presented in the Wednesday recital by David Kraehenbuehl, presently a composer for the National Keyboard Arts Associates. He will also play some of his own compositions.

"Those pieces should be a treat for the teachers whose ears have been unkindly

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