

Women editors on late shift overcame curfews

By Mary Jo Pitzl

When Velora Stewart, the former Velora Fiddock, and Jean Kerrigan were appointed news editors of the *Daily Nebraskan* 30 years ago, they assumed unique positions in NU newspaper history.

Not that Stewart and Kerrigan were the first women editors of the *Daily Nebraskan*. Women held editorial positions before, especially during the war years when there were fewer men on campus.

But they were the first women to work as night editors, Stewart said. A 10 p.m. curfew for women on campus made it impossible to work a night shift at the newspaper so Stewart and Kerrigan obtained special permission from the Dean of Women to keep their jobs.

After the two broke into the previously male-dominated news editor positions, "the door was open," Stewart said.

The job included late night shifts at the *Lincoln Journal* where the paper was printed, supervising last minute additions and corrections. Each of the staff's five news editors was responsible for one night shift a week. An escort service was mandatory for the two women editors since the Women's Dean said they could not leave the *Journal* office without an escort.

Took a taxi

When Stewart and Kerrigan finished their night duties at the printer's, a taxi took them back to their campus residence.

Stewart said the *Journal* was located in a bad neighborhood, with old winos roaming the streets. The office where she worked was at the top of a long flight of stairs inside an old building.

"I had to promise I would wait at the top of the stairs until the taxi driver came and got me," Stewart said.

"We had so many rules then, and we obeyed them without question." The stringent curfew limits were not enforced for security reasons, but because "little girls needed their sleep," she said. "They didn't trust us."

Campus crime in 1947 was practically nonexistent, Stewart said.

"We used to make jokes about the campus cop—I think there was only one."

The *Daily Nebraskan* of 30 years ago showed distinct differences from today's campus newspaper.

Low salaries

Reporters worked for free and news editors received \$25 a month.

"We weren't rolling in the dough then."

She figured her salary averaged two and one-half cents an hour.

The paper ran from four to six pages an issue and frequently competed with an underground rival called the *Pink Rag*," Stewart said.

Despite the 30-year difference, both past and present *Daily Nebraskans* had a Ralph. Instead of the popular comic strip character appearing on today's editorial page, the Ralph of 30 years ago was a real human being.

In 1947, Ralph Stewart worked as sports editor for the *Daily Nebraskan* when Mrs. Stewart was news editor. The two married during their senior year of college when both worked for the paper.

"There was a feature in the paper on how Ralph found his home at the Rag," Stewart said with a laugh.

Stewart was graduated from NU in 1948 with a bachelor of arts degree in journalism. A widow with nine children, Stewart lives in Omaha, where she is an elementary schoolteacher.

UN chapter receives anonymous gift

An anonymous gift of \$200 has been given to the United Nations (UN) Association chapter in Lincoln, to stimulate student interest and membership.

Memberships are available to those who have a genuine interest in the UN and its local chapter, and who could not otherwise afford to join, said Helen Garner, Lincoln chapter vice president.

The \$10 a year student dues will be paid with this donation if a student displays need, interest and responsibility for attending meetings, she said.

"We feel that our chapter could benefit greatly by adding students to our membership because their enthusiasm and knowledge would add to our cause," she said.

She said the purpose of the group is to give moral support to the UN and to educate the community about UN affairs.

Personal and direct contact with students is the main objective of the donation, she said.

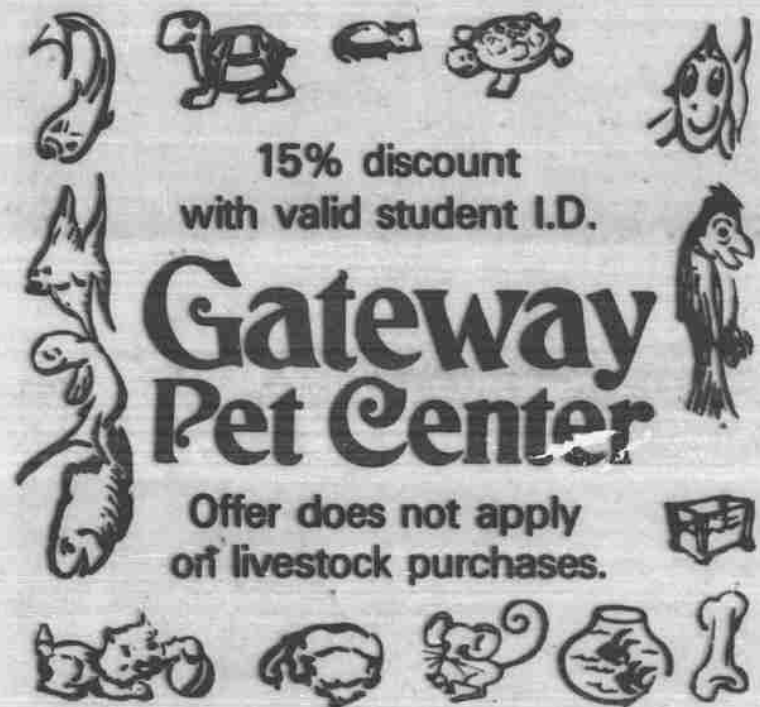
"We, who have been around since the beginning of the UN and who have had a great deal of interest in it for the last 30 years would like to see its continuance and student interest is a way of providing for this."

She said more money might be allocated if enough interest is shown and the caliber of the students is good.

The organization has 100 members, but no student members, Garner said.

One of the activities of the association is sponsoring the Model United Nations, she said. The group awards a \$100 scholarship each year to one participant.

Applications for the student grant should be made to Ralph Garner, association president, or Helen Garner. A reference from a faculty member also should be included.



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