monday, april 9, 1979

Easter Seal camp gives UNL students valuable experience

By Liz Austin

Camp Kiwanis may look like an ordinary summer camp, but it is really a very special place for special people.

Camp Kiwanis is special because it is the only camp in Nebraska that serves handicapped people. The camp is sponsored by the Nebraska Easter Seal Society.

According to Gary Staats, Nebraska Easter Seal Society director of programs and services, UNL students are given the opportunity to participate as staff members of the camp. As staff members, students could gain valuable experience in their field of education, Staats said.

The camp is 1½ miles outside of Milford, and usually has sessions all summer. However, this summer it will be open for only seven weeks because it is in the process of being winterized, Staats said.

The camp is for mentally and physically handicapped people with no limits on the severity of the handicap, he said.

"The camp provides the handicapped with opportunities they don't normally have," Staats said. "We try to give them as much independence as possible."

The camp staff consists of 30 to 40 people.

Camp work can be applied as practical experience in students' related fields of study, including special education, sociology, and physical education, Staats said. Internships can be contracted between students and professors as fulfillment of field experience requirements.

But, he said, staff positions are not necessarily limited to those who need field experience. Staff members can be anyone who enjoys getting out and being with people, he said.

In addition to the personal satisfaction and experience gained from the camp, students are provided with room and board, routine medical care and pay ranging from \$55 to \$80 per week, he said.

The summer is divided into separate sessions for adults, teenagers and children. There are usually about 65 campers per session and at least one staff member for every two campers.

There is a one-week session of staff training with professionals in areas such as special education and sociology, he said.

The camp includes programs in arts and crafts, music, recreation, nature and swimming. Miscellaneous evening activities include dances, scavenger hunts and speeches. daily nebraskan

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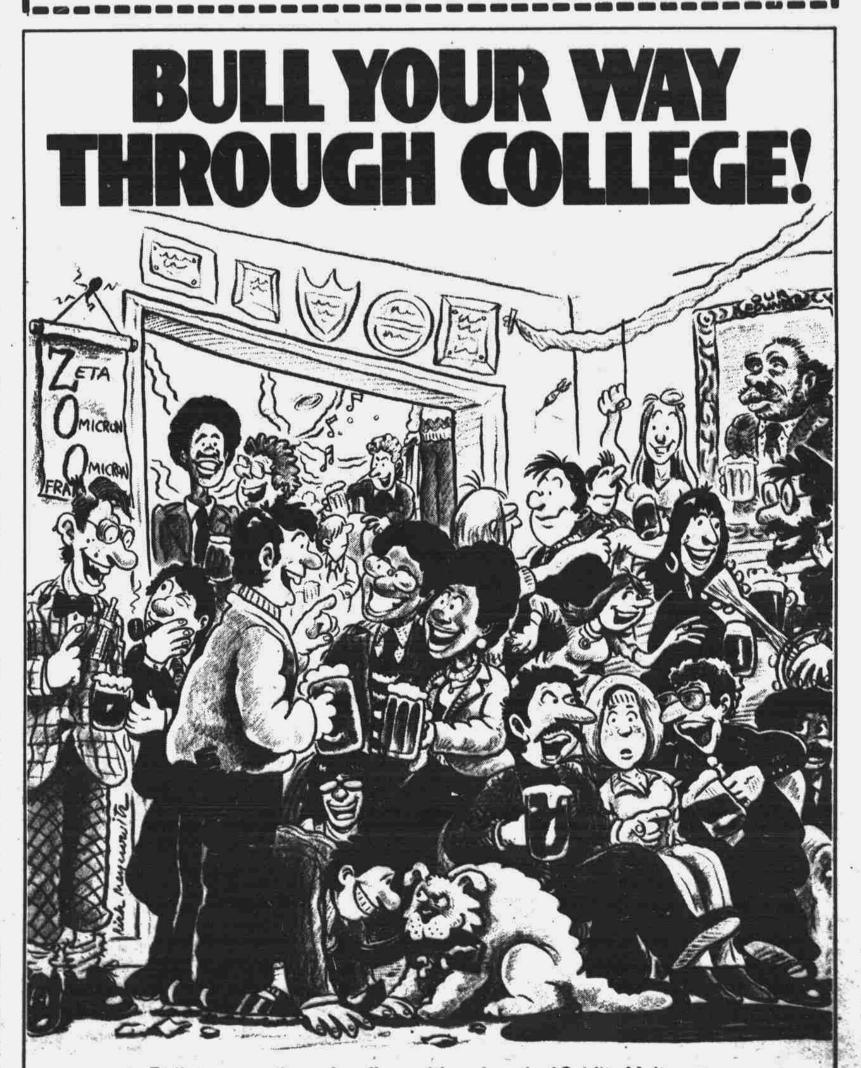
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