

UNL debate team accomplishes goals

By Mary Louise Knapp

Cornhusker Forensics, the UNL speech and debate team, is alive and prospering.

During the first four months of tournament competition the UNL debate teams and speakers won 38 awards at both the regional and national levels.

Jack Kay, director of forensics, said the team has done "phenomenally well" this year.

"One of our major accomplishments this semester was winning first place in the Pittsburgh State University Tournament Jan. 1," Kay said.

"We have had limited experience at the national level because of limited funding, but we do well at national tournaments."

The speech and debate team is not a selective organization, explained Debbie Redford, assistant debate coach.

"Anyone, regardless of the amount of experience he has, can sign up," Redford said.

Students can compete in national tournaments if they choose, but it is not required for team membership.

Speech is divided into several divisions, such as extemporaneous speaking, impromptu speaking, oratory, interpretation of literature, prose and drama, informative address and rhetorical criticism.

The debate teams are divided into intercollegiate, junior varsity and senior varsity divisions.

Keith Freadhoff, a senior varsity debater, said debate entails "lots of work and commitment," especially at that level. The debate team has been traveling to tournaments almost every weekend since the season started.

Freadhoff also said a senior varsity debater must spend an hour or two every day researching and practicing.

"If you allocate your time right, you can do it," he said. "Fortunately, I have always been able to fit debate into my schedule without much trouble."

Freadhoff said that the debate team received a slight increase in their budget this year, which enables them to travel more.

UNL will host a National Oratory tournament on Feb. 21 to 24, Redford said. An approximate 40-45 schools will be involved in the tournament, which will begin with individual speech competition and finish with debate.

Survey reports mental distress

Single parents, unemployed persons, and those with lowered financial prospects or low educational attainment are the groups most likely to experience mental health problems in Nebraska, according to the 1979 Nebraska Annual Social Indicators Survey (NASIS).

In a report written by Peter Beeson of the State Department of Health and UNL Sociology professor Alan Booth for the NASIS survey conducted by UNL's Bureau of Sociological Research, 16 percent of Nebraskans reported in 1979 that they felt they were going to have a nervous breakdown, remarkably close to the national 15 percent cited by the President's Commission on Mental Health in 1979. The percentage is consistent with findings in NASIS surveys since 1977, in which about 15 percent of the respondents reported feelings of mental distress annually.

According to the 1979 survey, women reported more mental distress than men, and married couples with children who had other relatives living with them reported more mental health problems than couples alone or couples with children.

About one-fourth of single parents with children reported possible nervous breakdowns, although recent loss of a spouse through death or divorce could account for some of the distress, in addition to the problem of raising children singlehanded.

People living alone were not found to have greater mental problems than married individuals with children, but those showing the fewest mental problems were married people without children.

The NASIS researchers found mental distress more common in the middle age range (35-59) than among those younger and older. Those employed full-time seemed to be especially free of mental health problems, while those who were unemployed were nearly three times as likely to report such problems. Retired persons

seemed to be relatively free of mental health problems, while those keeping house and those working part-time made up the middle range.

The researchers found that personal finances played a role in mental anguish, with those who felt they were worse off financially than they were two years earlier more likely to report experiencing the possibility of a nervous breakdown. Those with less than a high school education were more likely to report mental problems than high school graduates, and those with training beyond high school were the least likely to have such problems.

Beeson and Booth said that contrary to common assumptions, there was no apparent difference between rural and urban residents in the tendency to report mental health problems, although those living on farms were least likely to report mental health problems and rural non-farm residents reported more problems than all urban residents except those from Lincoln, the urban area which stood out from the rest in likelihood of having persons report mental health problems.

The researchers also found a correlation between those experiencing physical health problems with those experiencing mental health problems, and a direct relationship between mental health and happiness and satisfaction. Those expressing low happiness and dissatisfaction are more likely to report mental distress than those indicating a general level of personal happiness.

The researchers said the NASIS survey revealed that seven percent of the respondents reported their experience of mental health problems had caused them to reduce their usual activities.

"While seven percent may seem small," they said, "projections based on recent population estimates indicate that the actual number of Nebraskans affected in this manner last year was in excess of 76,000."

Women's Center enters tenth year

By Diane Andersen

1980 marks the tenth anniversary of the Women's Resource Center and 10 years of what center coordinator Ellanora Ward calls "active feminism and contributions to the university community."

The WRC office, on the first floor of the Nebraska Union, is the scene for informal discussions and organized rap groups on sexuality, politics and other women's topics, Ward said. More than 1,000 books and magazines discussing rape and abuse, minority women, psychology, abortion, women's health, aging and careers can be found in the office library, she said. These are books "you wouldn't find elsewhere in Lincoln," according to Ward. "We're a collective," Ward said, explaining that she makes administrative decisions, but policy and programing decisions are made by all staff members.

"I do make decisions in times of crisis," Ward said. The Women's Resource Center has 10 active volunteers to help visitors get in touch with agencies or material to help them handle their problems. Barbara Kerr, the center's paid psychologist, runs the counseling program, Ward said. In addition, Ward's own salary is paid by the center, she said.

The center also employs three women through a work study program.

'Not typical'

"We're not a typical student organization," Ward said. "These women represent so many different lifestyles." Ward said older women returning to school, lesbians, bisexuals and all other women are accepted by the center with "positive feelings."

"We welcome all women to come and volunteer," she said. The center advocates a pro-choice philosophy not just on the issue of abortion, she said, but in the sense that all women should be able to make their own choices about their lives.

"We all feel a certain way," she said, adding that volun-

teers who do not have a pro-choice philosophy may feel uncomfortable at the center.

The center's feminist counseling service, where women receive free help, is a major function of the center, Ward said. Many women come to the center during difficult periods in their lives, when they are upset about relationships, according to Ward.

Women can be counseled at the center on pregnancy problems, school goals, homosexuality, rape and abuse, Ward said.

"About 30 percent of the women who come in are either raped or battered or have had incest problems," Ward said.

Safety main concern

"Our main concern is her (the victim of violence's) safety," she said.

If children are involved, the case must be reported to authorities, Ward said. But in most cases, the counselors encourage the women to do what they really want, and encourage the involved men to get counseling.

"We're not interested in destroying the man," she said. "He has a problem."

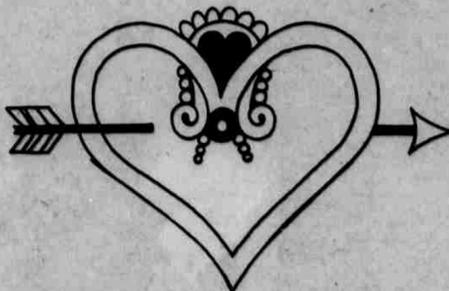
Ward said the center's counselors, all trained by Kerr, try to get the abused woman to realize she is a valuable person. They stress that she has done nothing to deserve being raped or beaten.

The center also sponsors a lesbian rap group on alternate Wednesday and Thursday nights and a women's support group on Thursday nights.

Ward said the big project for this semester is Women's Week, April 21 to 25. On April 23, feminist musician Holly Near is scheduled to give a concert. The chief Women's Week speaker will be Ginetta Sagin, president of Amnesty International. The resource center will sponsor an open house on April 21, as well as other workshops and lectures during the week.

Both men and women visit the center, Ward said. "Some men enjoy it because we are so free and open," she said.

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