

Pride of editors spans years, trends, issues

By Patti Gallagher

It was the Daily Nebraskan that headlined the issues of the day: "Junior Ak-Sar-Ben queen named" read one banner head; "NU to offer 502 courses in summer" read another. Others announced "Students invited to church services", "Ivy Day Easter Break" and "Sooners to rely on strong infield."

It was a Daily Nebraskan of 1950. It ran sports on the front page, a gossip who-pinned-who column on the inside page, and Greek news on every page.

Today, 30 years later, the headlines have changed. A sampling of this semester: "Ronstadt to appear at Sports Center," "Students may lose federal financing" and "Dean of Big Eight Coaches loses cancer battle."

The focus has switched from parochial interests, said the current editor-in-chief, Randy Essex, to more relevant campus and city coverage.

THE HEADLINES have changed in 30 years, but so have the students. And so have the student interests. Yet, according to Essex, the paper of now is a continuation of the 1950s paper.

Although he has "no idea of what their philosophies and ideas were," on the 1950s staff, Essex said that, "what they did is a part of what I do. My authority is part of what they established."

Because of the transient nature of the staff, he said, no editor or staff can tear down or ruin the paper. Troubles may come and go from semester to semester, but the paper remains and survives.

It survived the "yellow rag" image of the 1960s, according to Essex. It survived the issues of the '50s, according to the editors of 1949-50 school year. And it has survived in one form or another since its birth in 1891.

It seems the key to the survival of the Daily Nebraskan has been the attitudes of the staff, editors, and readership. All three editors, Essex; Fritz Simpson, who was editor in the spring of 1950; and Alan "Cub" Clem, editor in the fall of 1949, spoke of the Daily Nebraskan as one of those "once in a lifetime" experiences.

"**THE EXPERIENCE** was invaluable to me," said Simpson, now the publisher of the Atlantic News Telegraph in Atlantic, Iowa. And although every person may not have shared his opinion of the paper, he said, "The people I associated with thought it was pretty important."

Most students, however, looked forward to receiving the Daily Nebraskan. Simpson said, "It was pretty much of a focal point of campus," he said.

Clem, now a political science professor in Vermillion, S.D., remembers the "feelings of self importance" the paper gave him and his fellow staff members.

"I thought we were trying to be the voice of the students," Clem said. Being on the staff made him feel worthwhile, he said. "My grade point average couldn't have done that."

Talking with the two past editors supports Essex' statement that "when you talk to them about the rag, you somehow know that they wish they were back here." Yet,

Essex shares their concept of the "rag" and said he expects the "memories are some of the ones I'll carry to the end of my life."

ESSEX SAID he will most remember the freedom of being editor of a college newspaper. "Down here, it's your newspaper. You start thinking that what you do is good, is powerful. And you know, it's just not ever going to happen again."

According to Clem, the paper staff of the 1950s had its share of power and influence beliefs.

He said he remembers himself as being "awfully self-centered" and remembers the paper playing up some trivial things. He said favorite editorial topics of his were "the growth of democracy" and "the perils of communism."

The differences between the current Daily Nebraskan and that of 1950 seem mainly time-induced. The staff is larger in 1980, the pay is higher, the paper is larger, the coverage is broader. The paper has grown with its audience and its audience's expectations.

According to Essex, that audience has become more demanding.

"The philosophy has developed," he said, "that the Daily Nebraskan is remiss in its purpose if it doesn't cover government action, at least for the student angle."

BECAUSE THE audience of the 1950s

was predominantly Greek-affiliated, the Daily Nebraskan and its staff reflected that, according to Simpson and Clem.

Said Clem: "The staff never questioned the Greekness because they were all Greek. It just seemed like the way the world was run."

In addition to Greek coverage, which included articles on new pledges, special activities and sports events between sorority and fraternity houses, the paper of the 1950s covered what Essex said was "harmless parochial news." It seems Daily Nebraskan staffers today like to think the coverage leans toward more meaty issues, more relevant news, less who-got-pledged-where news, than in the 1950s.

Indeed, random headlines from a few 1950 papers are very on-campus oriented. Lead articles include a play review, announcement of senior skip day, the sale of parking permits, and the loss of a football game.

What Simpson remembers as the issues of his term as editor included whether to change the size of the paper (it was "king size" while the 1980 paper is tabloid size), how to instigate a teacher grading system, remodeling of the Nebraska Union and the lack of a union on East Campus.

Besides the coverage and Greek flavor, the student newspaper of the '50s and the '80s are different in:

-STAFF SIZE. Clem estimated that 25

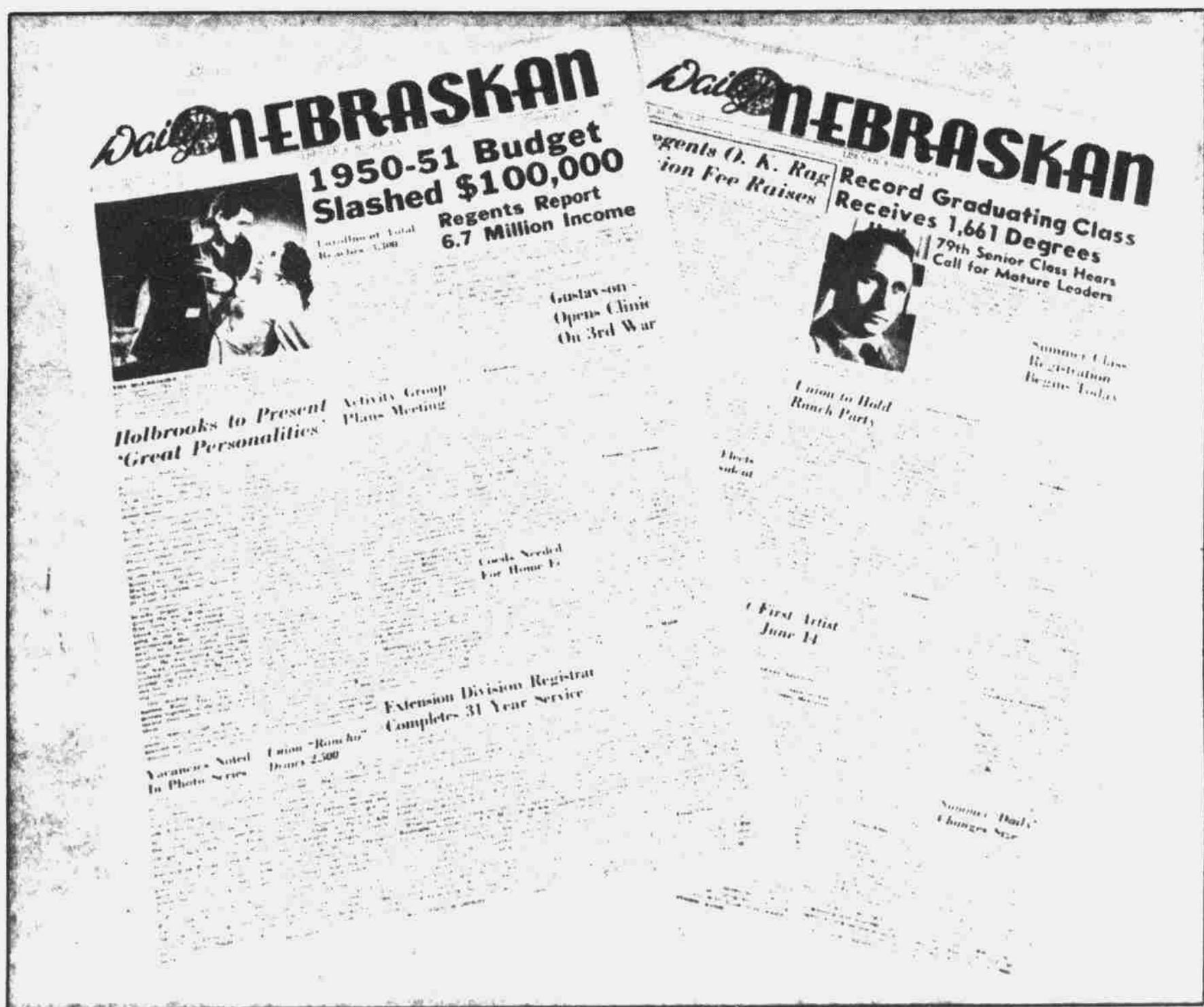
people made up the staff in his day. Essex said that about 125 work on today's Daily Nebraskan.

-PAPER LAYOUT AND SIZE. The usual 1950 front page resembled a Wall Street Journal: the type was smaller; the page was fuller; the pictures were fewer. Between 15 and 20 articles were typically run on the front page. Most of the papers were four pages: a front "news" page, editorial page, sports page and additional news page.

Today, usually three and sometimes four articles run on the first page. White space, photos and graphics are used extensively. Twelve pages are the common copy size, with an editorial page, sports page and entertainment page running every day. Advertising is about 50 percent of each paper.

-SALARIES. According to Simpson, editor salaries were between \$30 and \$50 in 1950. Clem said the editor in chief made enough to "keep you in Cokes"—the "princely wage" of between \$50 and \$60 per month.

Today, the editor-in-chief makes \$600 monthly, with other editors making between \$300 and \$400. A part-time reporter, writing two or three articles per week, makes \$65 monthly—more than either Simpson or Clem made as editors.



Contests, dances emphasized in 1950 socializing

By Suzanne Sayed

University of Nebraska students in 1950 participated in a plethora of special events, many of them designed for participation by sororities and fraternities.

In 1950, Henry Fonda chose six University of Nebraska girls for the title of Cornhusker Court Beauty Queen.

And Fonda, the famous screen and stage star and former Nebraskan, wrote a personal letter to the editor of the Cornhusker Yearbook, saying that of the 12 pictures of "beautiful ladies" that he had received, it was extremely difficult to pick only six.

Nebraska's eight most eligible bachelors were chosen during a 1950 Mortar Board Ball featuring Jimmy Dorsey and his band.

The Gamma Phi Beta sorority and the

Sigma Nu fraternity tied for first place for homecoming honors that year, with themes of "Gonna Wash Those Hawks Right Out of Our Hair," and "Give 'em Hell," respectively.

AND INSTEAD of 12 bonfires up and down R and 16th Streets, the students of 1950 "burned the jayhawk" on the eve of the Kansas-Nebraska football game.

Although the students must have been about the same as those of today, it seems the times were a little different.

Take, for example the annual Farmer's Fair. Complete with a bucking bronco, an all-ag college parade, and a coed calf-catching contest, the agriculture students really had their hands full.

Royalty was also crowned during the

event, with Mavis Musgrave as the "Goddess of Agriculture," and Max Rogers, as the "Whisker King."

NU Chancellor Reuben Gustavson sponsored dedication services for Ralph Mueller, the donor of the carillon bell tower. The tower performs for 1980 students by playing the Nebraska fight song and scores from "The Sound of Music" during lunch hours and between classes.

OTHER SPECIAL events of 1950 included the Penny Carnival, the Coed Follies, Interfraternity Ball, and the Frosh Hop.

The Alpha Phis won first place in the Penny Carnival with their "Phi Gum" booth. As the caption in the 1950 yearbook reads, "Just a drop of the coin and a

cutie comes sliding out of the machine.

During the Coed Follies, Janet Carr was revealed as the "Typical Nebraska Coed of 1950," and the Delta Gamma sorority won first place for their skit "Destination Dreamland."

The Frosh Hop, which brought the freshmen men and women together, was also a popular event... with the students learning dances such as the Bunny Hop and the Flying Dutchman.

And, before Model United Nations came into existence, students participated in the Nebraska University Council of World Affairs. Students learned about the United Nations from a series of evening movies.

It seems the students of the 1950s thought of virtually everything. Except, perhaps, Walpurgisnacht.