

Las Vegas bound

# Fraternity to lose 18 years of home cooking

By Sue Jepsen

At 60, after 18 years of cooking at the same fraternity house, Juanita Venerable says she's "not quite old enough yet to really retire."



Juanita Venerable Daily Nebraskan Photo

Venerable is leaving the Alpha Tau Omega house this May.

She said she plans to sell her house and move to Las Vegas to stay with her son and work.

"I'll find a job, I've got a good recommendation from this place," she said.

She said she plans to go to Las Vegas over spring break to "line up something for the fall," but a lot depends on whether she can sell her house.

Over the years Venerable has worked at several UNL Greek houses. She worked for the Sigma Alpha Mu, the Alpha Delta Pi and the Sigma Nu houses, before coming to the ATO house in 1962.

She said she prefers cooking in the houses because "it's just like a home, only in bigger quantities."

"In restaurants, you have to cook for too many people," Venerable said. "That's why I don't cook in a dorm," she said.

Cooking for a fraternity has its drawbacks, though, Venerable said. Most of the house members treat her well, but there are some bad times, she said.

"Usually when you buy a bushel of apples you get one or two bad ones," she said. "I try to treat them (fraternity members) all the same."

She said she has had some trouble, and over the years she's "taken a lot," but she has her own method of solving the problem.

"I just don't say anything," she said. "I just go ahead on."

"You get to thinking about the ones that are nice and not about the ones that are bad," she said.

She said that the troubles she's had have nothing to do

with her quitting now, but that she just needs a change of scenery. After her husband died last September, she said, there were "too many memories."

As a hobby, Venerable says she plays Bingo. She said she doesn't play as much now and has never won any "real big money." She said the most she's ever won was \$500 or \$600 in one night.

"There's nothing in Lincoln to do unless you go to work or church," she said.

While she's at work, Venerable said, she enjoys watching her two favorite afternoon soap operas while men on kitchen duty wash the dishes. In the 18 years she has worked there, she said the house members have bought her two television sets.

The house also provides her with her own phone for ordering food each week.

Venerable said her job has changed over the years. When she first started cooking she had a helper, but she says she prefers cooking alone.

"I was doing it all anyway," she said. "It's hard to find a good second."

Now she works from about 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. and prepares two meals a day. Five years ago she said she was preparing breakfast as well as lunch and dinner.

She said she thinks she is a good cook.

"These boys think so anyway," she said, adding that it will be hard for the house to replace her.

John Parker, a UNL senior majoring in geology, agreed. He said a committee was forming in the house to look for a new cook.

"She's the best," he said. "She knows us better than anybody."

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