

Fitness programs deserve research

Fitness is "in," and for the Woman of the Eighties, this means that being assertive and independent are no longer enough. This "new woman" must also be lean and physically fit; but if she isn't careful, she may also find herself broke.

No matter what the latest fad happens to be, somebody out there is going to make a lot of money by exploiting it. Now that fitness is in vogue and sweating has become socially acceptable, a whole new market has opened up, designed to take advantage of those women who are seeking that elusive physical ideal.

High-priced health clubs for women are springing up everywhere. They boast of saunas and whirlpools, tanning booths and disco music. But the careful consumer would



Julia O'Gara

do well to look beyond the pastel carpeting and the gleaming chrome dumbbells, and make a critical examination of the club's overall philosophy.

The quality of programs and facilities for women in Lincoln varies greatly. Several questions to answer before deciding to commit your body and money to a fitness club are:

1) Does a club's fitness program strike a balance between aerobic and non-aerobic exercise? A good program should stress both aerobic exercise like aerobic dance, and non-aerobic activity like weight training. Availability of a swimming pool and stationary exercise bicycles offer good aerobic alternatives.

2) Does the facility have experienced, knowledgeable instructors? Unfortunately, some fitness clubs for women hire instructors who are really little more than salespersons. A competent instructor will have some formal training in fitness or health education, not just the club's own employees training program. Since you plan to trust your body to this person, you have good reason to ask for credentials.

3) Is a medical history and a fitness pretest required before beginning an exercise program? Most clubs require brief medical histories for insurance purposes. But with a detailed history and a carefully conducted pretest, a good instructor can determine your level of fitness and design a specially tailored exercise program that meets your individual needs.

For many women, though, cost is the deciding factor. A \$300 to \$400 yearly membership fee is quite expensive, but a slick sales pitch can be hard to pass up. Before deciding to invest that much money into a membership, ask yourself some questions: Do the instructors have the proper background for what they are teaching? Is the equipment safe and properly maintained? Are there evening and weekend hours? Will I be able to work out at least three times each week?

If you answer "no" more times than "yes," then perhaps you should reconsider your purchase; you may end up paying for something you might not use.

Joining a fitness club "for the sake of health" can be a good way to get into shape, but be careful. It can also be an expensive way to sweat.

Blonde discovers...

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"That's why reading those columns about the contest upset me so much. I read about all those women singing the praises of being 'sexy' and 'hot,' and I just couldn't understand it. It's something I've been running from my whole life, and here are women who seem to be able to think of nothing else.

"I am grateful that God didn't make me go through the hell of being physically deformed or sickly. But looking the way I do has been an obstacle to my emotional health, and at least in my mind, it has been more of a curse than

an asset. I don't like feeling the way I do, but I can't help it.

"Those women in the contest, the women you quoted — they send as if pleasing men is the most vital function they can think of. I'm not sorry that I've never had a boyfriend. I really don't ever want to have one. I truly hate men, and all I want from them is to keep their hands off me and keep their comments to themselves. I just want them to leave me alone."

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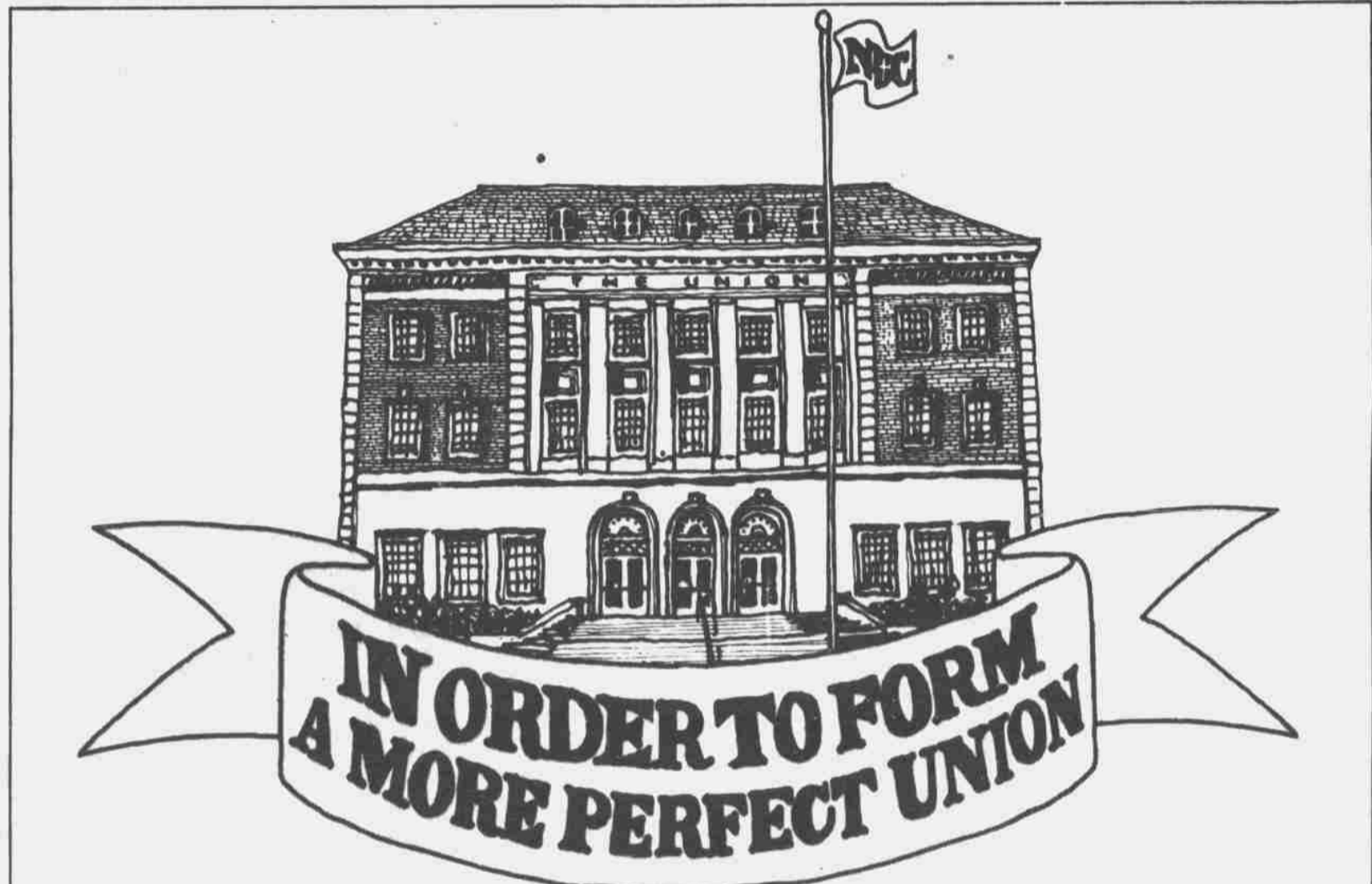
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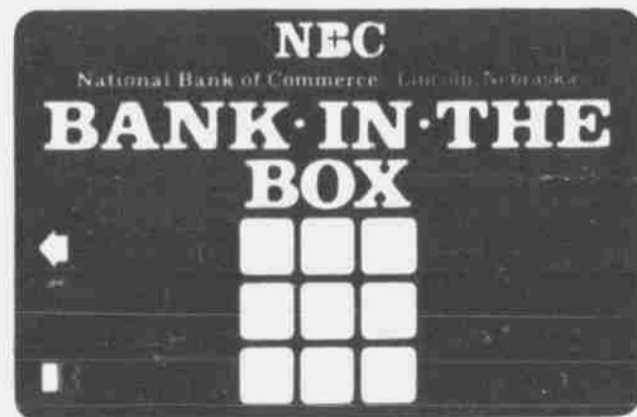
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