

# Non-traditional students focus on individuality

By Brad Gifford

In a typical interest group, personal interests are usually smothered by the "majority rules" theory. The Non-Traditional Student Association, however, is no typical group; it is founded on individualism.

This assemblage, which consists entirely of UNL students who are at least 25 years old, is always changing to meet the needs of any one of its members, Margie Thomssen, a member of the board of managers, said.

"We're not an exclusive group," she said. "We're whatever anyone wants us to be."

The 3-year-old group is providing most of what it has been asked, Thomssen said, and social interaction is the most sought after service.

The association meets in the Nebraska Union for a carry-in lunch every Friday from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. These gatherings are far from a basic parliamentary proceeding, Thomssen said, stressing that just being together and sharing experiences dominate the two hours. Once a month, a speaker addresses the meeting on issues pertinent to non-traditional students.

Information also is provided to the members through the group's newsletter, which is now being mailed to 115 members, a number which is growing.

"On the first two days of classes this semester, 60 people joined at a booth at the Nebraska Union," Thomssen said, which makes her believe that there will be many more joining as the group gains exposure.

The membership probably has the broadest base of any group in existence. Parents, divorcees, widows, singles and grandparents all can be found on the group's roster, which has members from each decade since the 1920s.

"We're a cross section of the general public, and the common bond that we have is that we're all going to UNL," Thomssen said.

In Thomssen's estimation, about 20 percent to 22

percent of UNL's students are non-traditional, and she believes that it is essential that the association reach as many of these people as possible to advise them that they are basically just like any other student.

"We constantly have to remind ourselves that we can participate in any activity that the university offers," Thomssen said. "It sounds funny, but sometimes we think that just because we're older we shouldn't do certain things, but that's just not the case."

Thomssen, a senior majoring in consumer affairs, said that there is one prominent problem for all non-traditional students: time.

"We're probably as busy as any other student off

campus," she said, noting that although some traditional students have jobs, not very many have jobs and families. She also said that she wanted to clear up the misconception that most non-traditional students take only a few hours of classes and attend only night school.

"There are some in the group that take about six or nine hours, but the majority of us carry full-time status," she said.

"We're very protective of our time, but we make time to be together and share our experiences with each other," Thomssen said, and added that she would like any student who is over 25 years old to join the group at McGuffey's Friday for their first FAC of the year.

## Residents opposed to street closing

A proposal to close Sumner Street from 33rd Street to Memorial Drive drew opposition from neighborhood residents in a hearing before the Lincoln City Council Monday afternoon.

The proposal was part of a request by the Joe R. Seacrest family to have their home at 33rd and Sumner subdivided into a duplex.

Kent Seacrest, representing the Seacrest family, said that closing the road was preferable to paving it.

"We feel that paving the road would create more traffic," Seacrest said. "We also don't like the additional expense of paying for it. We don't want to pay for it and we don't feel the city can afford it."

Residents of the neighborhood said closing the street would force them to take another, longer route to get to downtown.

O.M. Anderson, who lives at 33rd and Kajan Drive, expressed the opposition of the neighborhood to the

closing of the street.

"We are definitely opposed to having this street closed," Anderson said. "If they close that street we have only one exit and one entrance."

Seacrest said he understood the opposition of the neighborhood residents.

"I understand their objections," he said. "They are perfectly understandable. But most of the people on 33rd Street, which would get most of the overflow in traffic, support our position."

Seacrest said he also was concerned with preserving the area around Antelope Park, which would receive heavier traffic if Sumner Street were closed.

"It's ironic that we're trying to preserve the park," Seacrest said. "Usually it is the neighborhood that is preservation minded."

The council will vote on the proposal at their meeting next week.

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