

# Crusade talks and moos through bluegrass shows

BY DAWN WATSON

After a recent Bluegrass Crusade performance, a woman talking to band leader Steve Hanson asked incredulously if his group was the same Bluegrass Crusade her companion had seen ten years ago. "Sort of," Hanson said.

There have been several versions of the band since its birth in 1973. But Hanson, a charter member, and fiddler Dave Fowler, who joined a few months later, have been constant members. The two have shared positions in the band with six guitarists, four bass players and two mandolinists. Hanson said he wants to get Crusade alumni together for a ten-year reunion party in the fall of 1983.

The Bluegrass Crusade's first job, in February of 1973, was a western art exhibit at Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery. The trio of Hanson, Ricky Mann and Gary Howe had no sound system. "We just wandered through the crowd," Hanson said.

The first version of the band played only traditional bluegrass, Hanson said. Or, he added, the band attempted to play.

"None of us were as good as we are now," he said. The band tried unsuccessfully to imitate records, he said. He explained that it was hard for the city-born guys to replicate the southern rural sound.

Lack of stage presence was another problem the young Crusade faced.

"None of us wanted to say anything," Hanson said. When Miller McPherson joined the band he helped sing and talk, and "at

least he had a southern accent."

The modern Bluegrass Crusade is fortunate to have two members who like to talk: guitarist Pete Blakeslee and bassist Jim Pipher. The two share front man duties.

Pipher does most of the repartee between songs, Blakeslee said. If Pipher suffers "song block," Blakeslee takes over.

Blakeslee is in charge of another part of the band's performance-orchestrated noise-makers. A mooing cow, chattering teeth, a laugh box and a car engine sound-alike complement some Crusade numbers. The props provide humor and "grab the audience's attention when it's diverted elsewhere," Blakeslee said.

The addition of Blakeslee in 1977 and of Pipher a year and a half ago has meant more than clever stage patter, however. Both of the two newest Crusaders can sing. Before they joined, Hanson did all the lead singing.

"We can do more three-part harmony," Pipher said. "There's more emphasis on the vocals."

Though the Crusade still presents bluegrass music, the influence of the new members and the changing musical tastes of Hanson and Fowler have brought in new material in a variety of styles. Fowler said his musical taste and the direction of the band are "eclectomaniac."

The group does some "pseudo-jazz material," according to Hanson. Its repertoire also includes swing tunes, Irish tunes and novelty tunes like "The Tobacco Song," Blakeslee said.



Photo by Roger Bruhn

The Bluegrass Crusade, from left, Steve Hanson, Jim Pipher, Dave Fowler, Pete Blakeslee.

## PAY RAISE

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have meant cutting programs and there "isn't anything right now that we would want to cut from UN-L," Schwartzkopf said.

"They're going to be cutting anyway," Ms. Pratt said. "That's obviously the direction this university is headed in."

Pay raises were not granted, she said, because the regents have different priorities than the faculty.

In order to raise salaries and avoid cutting other budget items, Schwartzkopf said, the regents will have to look for more private funding. A recent fund raising campaign to pay off Gov. Bob Kerrey's campaign debt is an indication that the money is available, he said.

The board's decision also will have minimal impact at UN-O, according to Janet West, president of UN-O's AAUP.

Through collective bargaining, she said, UN-O has been able to keep up with its peer institutions. The recent 6.6 percent raise granted UN-O faculty brought salaries up to the median of what the Commission of Industrial Relations considers to be UN-O's peers.

The CIR used Central Missouri State, Cleveland State, South Dakota State, Southwest Missouri State, Central Florida, New Orleans, Northern Iowa, Texas-El Paso, Western Illinois and Wichita State as its sample peer group to determine the UN-O raise.

Ms. West said the UN-O faculty has not yet negotiated a raise for 1983-84. Instructors will need an increase of about 3 percent to remain at the median level, she said.

Following the July 5 regents meeting, Ms. West accused the board of trying to discourage UN-L faculty members from forming a bargaining unit. By separating the campuses, she said, the regents are able to punish UN-O faculty for seeking the pay hike by taking the funds out of their budget.

By indicating it will determine future salaries on the basis of peer institutions, Ms. West said, the board is sending a message to UN-L faculty members that they might be getting substantial raises without collective bargaining.

"We're not trying to use any scare tactics," Schwartzkopf said. "The campuses have separate identities because they each have a different role."

Because each of the three NU institutions have a different role, he said, they should not look to each other for financial help."

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