

Arts & Entertainment

NU not 'Harvard of the Plains'

By Stu Pospisil
Daily Nebraskan Staff Writer

Lisa Birnbach's College Book, 516 pp., Ballentine Books, \$9.95.

How many of you actually think Nebraska is "The Harvard of the Plains"? Come on, raise those hands a little higher.

OK, put them down, because you won't believe that after you read Lisa Birnbach's essay on UNL in her new guide to colleges.

You may remember Birnbach as the author of "The Official Preppy Handbook," which caused Izod to record

"the apartheid never had it so good," according to Birnbach.

Greeks recruit "as aggressively as Fuller Brush salesmen." People in Greek organizations think they are more connected to UNL than non-Greeks, she says.

P.O. Pears is described by her as a meat market. The Daily Nebraskan provides the token liberal point of view

25th Street, which hits close to my home.

Even in the list, Birnbach can't avoid controversy. She says the infirmary (University Health Center) takes a passive role in providing birth control. The presence of gays is "more than people realize, but not very prevalent." Interspersed throughout the book are short essays and quizzes on topics such as high school vs. college, a roommate desirability list and the definitive "pull-out" chart.

How does Birnbach view the other Big Eight schools she visited?

Iowa State's campus is fraught with sameness. "People look alike and share a set of neutral points of view." At Colorado, even those who are unhappy are happy in Boulder. Four people usually share a two-bedroom apartment that rents for \$615, which leaves enough allowance "to get smashed almost every night of the week."

People are so satisfied with Kansas that they say they have difficulty leaving, usually taking a minimum of five years for their bachelor's degree. For most of Missouri's students, Columbia "is the big time."

According to Birnbach, religion is strong at Oklahoma State. Coke dates are popular, and the Campus Crusade for Christ sent a bus down to Daytona Beach.

Oklahoma's favorite hangout is Denko's, which is the best in the nation. There, you eat a Denko's Darlin' and then buy a T-shirt that reads "I Ate My Darlin' at Denko's." Birnbach says that is a ritual almost as important as registering for freshman classes.

I am confused as to Birnbach's intent in writing the "College Book." Does she mean it to be a guide that high school seniors can use to accurately select a college, or is it another attempt at humor? A local bookstore shelved the book in both the humor and study aid sections, adding to, rather than resolving the question.

Much of what Birnbach said about UNL is believable. Her description of the Greek system is not insulting, and even some statements about blacks and athletes are true, though we may not want to admit to them.

She does generalize, and some could even be characterized as fictional reality for the sake of humor.

As a book intended as humor for college students, I found it entertaining and informative. For a high school student trying to select a college, the generalities would distort any decision.

Book Review

huge profits and parents to wonder when their children changed their names to Biff and Muffy.

That success led to a project of higher magnitude — finding out the bests and worsts of colleges across the nation.

Birnbach traveled to 186 campuses in her three years of research. She claims she actually ate residence hall food, went to parties and sat in classes. Her observations are supplemented by questionnaires returned by students from each school.

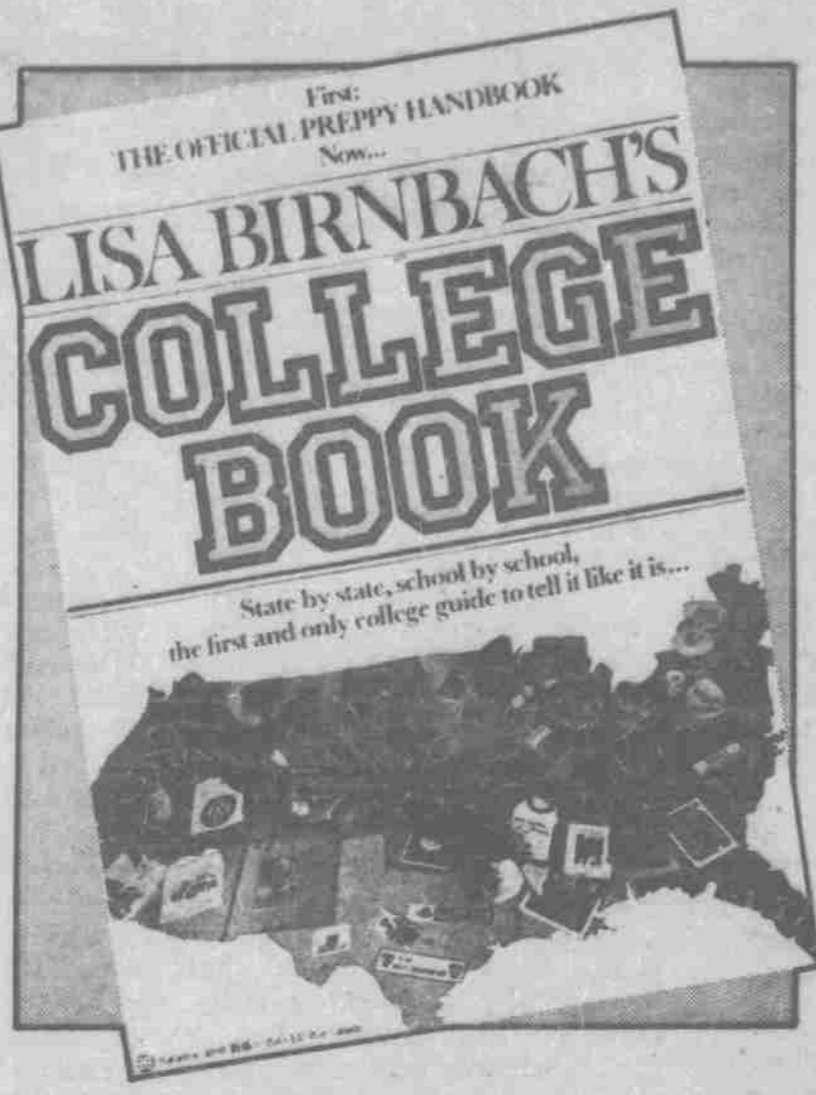
She emphasizes Eastern schools in the 516-page tome, but she does evaluate seven of the Big Eight schools. For some reason, she leaves out Kansas State, but Kansas State is left out of a lot of things.

What Birnbach has to say about Nebraska is not particularly flattering.

She begins her two-page essay by mentioning the influence Nebraska football has over the university. "Football is that which makes the university famous," she wrote.

Birnbach quotes a student: "I have a few jocks in my class and I never see them. How do they graduate when they're on the road? They have groupies and it's really bad. They are partiers (sic) and they can get any girl they want . . ."

Black athletes also are degraded. A student leader told her, "Let's face it, this place is South Africa." Because black football players date white sorority girls



in Lincoln. Love Library has the reputation of "harboring perverts."

Yes, Birnbach does evaluate academics. Geography professor Bruce Kopplin (spelled Koppliu by her) and art instructor Dave Read are the school's best. Gut — easy-to-pass classes — are Agricultural Communication 399 and Music Theory 387.

In a listing of campus attributes compiled from responses to her questionnaire, the best residence halls are Abel, Schramm and Neihardt, the worst, Pound and Selleck Quadrangle. Worst place off campus is around

Shorts

Art Galbraith and Gordon McCann, traditional Ozark musicians, will perform in Lincoln Friday and Saturday through the Mid-America Arts Alliance Program. On Friday they will offer a free jam session in the Sheldon Gallery Gardens at 3:30 p.m. The gardens are on the UNL campus at 12th and R streets. The public is welcome to attend and bring musical instruments if they like.

On Saturday, Galbraith and McCann will appear from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Acreage, 2700 Saltillo Rd. They will be a part of the weekend folk festival sponsored by LAFTA (Lincoln Area Folk and Traditional Artists) and the Acreage. Admission to the festival, including the Galbraith and McCann concert is \$2. Both appearances are sponsored by the Lincoln/Lancaster Senior Centers Foundation.

The late Ozark's folklorist Vance Rudolph called Art Gal-

braith the best Ozark's fiddler he'd ever heard. A fiddler for 65 years, Galbraith plays the Scottish/Ozark tunes — hornpipes, jigs, and reels — handed down in his family for generations, as well as more contemporary waitzes, rags and blues.

Since 1976, Galbraith has been accompanied by Gordon McCann, a fine guitarist and noted collector of Ozark folklore and music. Galbraith and McCann's authentic style and audience-pleasing fare have won them invitations to such major folk festivals as the National Folk Festival at Wolf Trap Park, the San Diego State College Folk Festival and the Frontier Folklife Festivals at the St. Louis Arch.

This program is made possible by support from the Nebraska Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts, through their participation in Mid-American Arts Alliance, a regional arts organization.

Student performers to show talent

Saturday's Homecoming football will feature the running, throwing, tackling, blocking and other assorted skills of the UNL football team, but several UNL students will showcase their own talents in another homecoming event tonight.

A barbershop quartet, a comedian and a dancing gymnast are among the performers scheduled to entertain the audience at the Homecoming Talent Show, tonight at 8 p.m.

Local musician and comedian Scott Jones will emcee the show.

UPC Walpurgisnacht Chairperson Cynde Distefano said the winners of the talent show will receive trophies and the

opportunity to be affiliated with the American College Talent Search. Videotapes of the winners will be sent to the talent search for further competition.

The eight final acts were chosen from auditions of some 23 acts, Distefano said.

Jones plays piano and guitar and does comedy. In addition to working a large college circuit, he has performed with Nick Gilder, David Bromberg, Dr. Timothy Leary and Michael Murphy.

Jones will perform a 30-minute teaser at 5 p.m. today in The Terrace in the East Campus Union. That performance is free. As master of

ceremonies at the talent show, he will perform before and between acts.

Talent show admission is \$2 for students and \$3 for non-students. A Homecoming event, the show is co-sponsored by UPC Walpurgisnacht and the UPC-East Kaleidoscope committee.

Performers are:
Harmony Jam, vocals
Stacy Glanat, dance and gymnastics

John Jewett, male vocal
John Boykin, comedian
Sandra Knecht, female vocal
Mike DeKanter, piano solo
Dave Sjuln, male vocal
Trash Can Alley, barbershop quartet

BLOOM COUNTY

by Berke Breathed

