

Daily Nebraskan

Thursday, October 11, 1984

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Vol. 83 No. 35

Domestic violence week to combat spouse abuse

By Lisa Nutting
Daily Nebraskan Staff Reporter

Under my thumb there's a squirming dog/who's just had her day/Under my thumb there's a girl/who's just changed her way/It's down to me, whore/The way she talks when she's spoken to/down to me/a change has come/she's under my thumb...

These words, from "Under My Thumb" by the Rolling Stones help to create the impression that violence against women is acceptable and even desirable, according to a flier put out by Women Against Violence Against Women.

In the April '84 issue of SELF magazine, a makeup company advertisement used a closeup photo of a grimacing woman with a clenched male fist near her cheek.

Margie Rine, community educator and counselor at the Rape/Spouse Abuse Crisis Center in Lincoln, said she thinks the way women are used in the media may effect the possibility of spouse abuse. The crisis center is a program of family services.

"Spouse abuse is subtly, or sometimes not so subtly, reinforced in our society," she said.

The week of Oct. 8 to 14 is National Domestic Violence Week and is a serious attempt to bring spouse abuse to national attention.

"It's not just the case of a few guys out there beating up their wives — it goes much deeper," Rine said.

National statistics show physical abuse occurs at some point in 75 percent of all marriages. More than one million women each year seek medical help for injuries caused by battering. And 30

percent of all victims are killed by their spouse or boyfriend.

A statement from Parents' Magazine says: "The family is the most violent group in society, with the exception of the police and the military. You are more likely to get killed, injured or physically attacked in your home by someone you are related to than in any other social context. In fact, if violence were a communicable disease, like the swine flu, the government would consider it an epidemic."

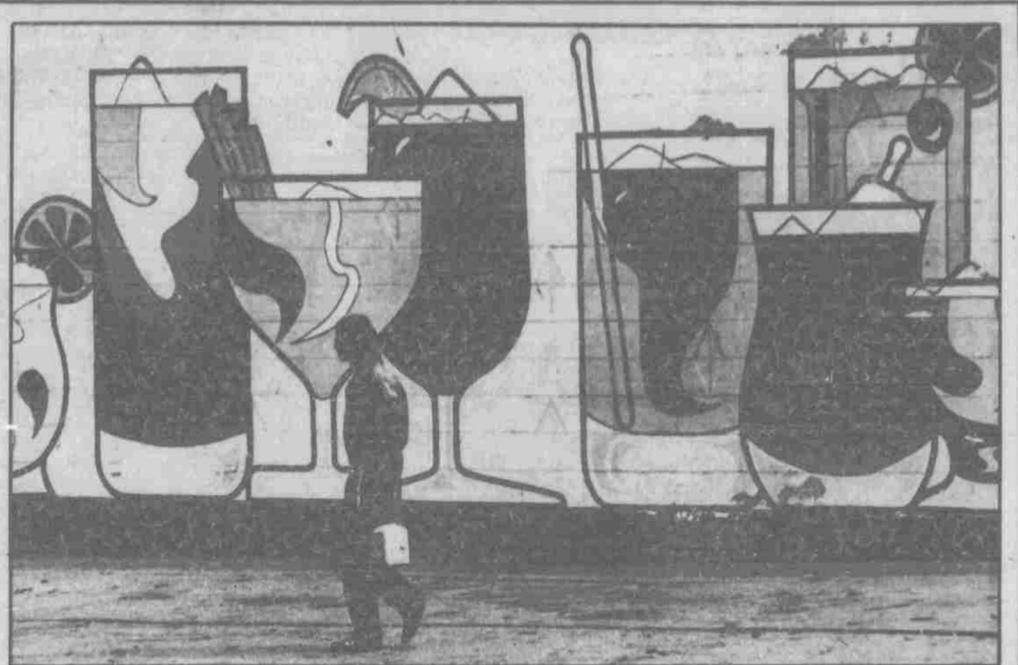
On the local level, more women seek help every year. In 1983, the Crisis Telephone Line, also a program of Family Services, received 2,069 calls. The Crisis Center added 260 new clients for face-to-face counseling. So far this year the Crisis Line has received 2,354 calls, and the Crisis Center has 264 new clients for counseling.

Rine says the increase may be because of a thrust in community education about spouse abuse, and the visibility of programs which can help.

"It's a serious problem," Rine said. "Women are realizing they don't have to live that way — and there's somewhere they can get help."

One myth about spouse abuse is that most women could leave if they wanted to. In many cases the woman cannot leave the marriage because she is financially and emotionally dependent on her husband, Rine said. Many women love their mates and don't want to leave them — but they do want the beatings to stop. Others fear what their husband will do if she decides to leave. And some have a low self-concept, often with nowhere to go and no support system.

Continued on Page 6



Mark Davis/Daily Nebraskan

The social pressures to drink are always present, but some still prefer to keep it clean.

Researcher says students drink to avoid 'nerd,' wet blanket image

By Gah Y. Huey

Daily Nebraskan Senior Reporter
Editor's note: This is the final article of a four-part series examining various issues on alcoholism and its effects on students. This series is in conjunction with National Collegiate Awareness Week, through Friday.

Dimmed lights haze from the

Alcohol Awareness Week

8-foot ceiling. The old wooden

floor vibrates beneath students bopping to the music of Prince's "Let's Go Crazy," blaring at multidecibels.

Enter Allie McShane, an 18-year-old freshman, who just wants to mix in. Appearing at the party with her newly found friends, she is immediately led to a keg of chilled, cheap beer.

Uncomfortable, shy Allie wants desperately to be part of the crowd. Grasping a filled cup of beer at the urging of friends, she starts on the path of what many college students consider "social drinking."

The desire to be part of the group causes many college students to drink, said UNL

psychology professor Clay Rivers.

When freshmen begin college, they are thrust into a new environment away from all of the things that have governed their lives. Students find themselves in a new situation where they tend to do things they normally would not do, Rivers said.

Alcohol can give the drinker euphoric feelings and unusual sensations, he said, and makes a lot of shy people less shy. Drinking allows students to handle many social situations they could not handle otherwise, he said.

Continued on Page 6

Chilly Midwest climate keeps gays in closet

By John Koopman
Special to the Daily Nebraskan

The old house sits nestled amid the clustered neighborhood of Lincoln's near south. Nondescript on the outside, the house is nicely furnished with antique furniture, tasteful paintings and small statues.

The couple who live in the house are just as nondescript — in a way. They have been together for seven years. Their relationship is based on love and respect. They try not to be too confining, they say, yet they want to spend the rest of their lives together.

And yet, they are different. Society labels them "deviant." Their names are Larry Weiss and Rusty Johnson (not their real names).

The lives of Weiss and Johnson aren't necessarily typical of homosexual men in Lincoln. But neither are the lives of any of the city's gay men. Kathy Brzezinski-Stein, a psychologist at UNL, likens the homosexual existence to a "multi-layered onion." Backgrounds, interests, likes and dislikes are as varied as the number of men who comprise Lincoln's gay community. No two stories are the same.

But nearly all gay men have

some of the same problems. Problems such as discrimination, possible loss of jobs and housing, the threat of physical violence and unstable relationships with family and friends.

The Lincoln subculture of male homosexuals encounters the same problems as those in other cities. Yet, each gay community is unique. Each has its own sense of pride, or lack of it. Each knows the limitations imposed on it by the majority straight community. Each has its various support organizations and civic leaders. And so does Lincoln's.

As a relatively small city in the Midwest, Lincoln has its own "climate for homosexuals." Scott Stebelmar, former co-chair of the Lincoln Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights, said homophobia is a common problem throughout the region. He defined homophobia as a fear of homosexuals and homosexuality.

"Lincoln has a more supportive atmosphere than Omaha or say Ogallala or the rest of the state," he said.

Gay men in Lincoln offer a variety of views concerning life as a homosexual in the Midwest. Weiss and Johnson for example.

Weiss comes from Bellevue; Johnson from Lincoln. Two Ne-

braska natives, yet their lives as homosexuals have differed greatly.

Johnson has lived in Lincoln since he was 10. He says he knew he was a homosexual, or at least not heterosexual, since he was 5.

"When I was 5, we used to play 'Hide and Seek.' Sometimes I did it with a boy and sometimes with a girl," he said.

Johnson began to fully realize his attraction for men when he was about 10, although he had relations mostly with women while in high school. He had so many sexual relations, with boys and girls, that he lost count. Raised a "strict Lutheran," he outwardly appeared to be heterosexual. He didn't consider his attraction for men normal so he was forced to lead a "double life."

"Society thought it was wrong," he said. "I didn't."

Johnson said many of the men and boys with whom he had sex have since led heterosexual lives. They are the most homophobic, he said, because they have turned their guilt into hatred.

Johnson said he doesn't talk much to his family anymore, all having long since moved away. His mother knew he was gay when he was 13 when she caught him having sex with an older

man, his reading tutor.

"We never discussed it," he said. But when his father learned of it, he swore at him.

Today, as he has done all his life, Johnson considers himself a bisexual. His partner, Weiss, disputes his claim.

"You mean to tell me that you could live with a woman?" he asked.

"Yes. Well, it would depend on the person," Johnson replied. "I mean, if there were a room full of men and women, I wouldn't necessarily look at the men. I would look at the women, if they were good looking."

Weiss, on the other hand, sees himself as strictly homosexual. He also differs from Johnson in the manner in which he realized his homosexuality.

The stepson of an Air Force staff sergeant, Weiss moved to Bellevue when he was 10. He went to high school and college there before moving to Lincoln seven years ago.

"When I was growing up, I didn't have any concept of sexuality," he said. "It was never talked about at home. I didn't know what a 'queer' or homosexual was."

Larry said he was always

attracted to other boys, but he didn't realize the significance of it until he was in high school. His friends were different. They were dating girls. That uncertainty made him feel "totally different and isolated."

Larry had his first homosexual experience in college. He went shopping with a friend who then made a pass at him. He let it happen and later felt tremendous guilt. He justified that act because he hadn't initiated it or reciprocated in any way. He repressed his feelings and pretended it never happened. Until the next time.

Two years passed before Weiss had another experience. This time he did reciprocate. And again he felt the guilt and again he repressed his feelings. He was in the middle of his college years, yet he didn't date and he was having no sexual relations of any sort.

He repressed his feelings until just before he graduated. He was lonely, unhappy and bitter because he felt others were telling him how to live his life.

"I realized that the only way I could become a happy, whole person was to become gay," he said. And so he did.

He began to frequent Omaha's
Continued on Page 14