

Members hone speaking skills in club's friendly atmosphere

Two UNL students will help a Lincoln Toastmaster's Club celebrate its one-year anniversary Thursday night at the Harvester Restaurant, 1501 Center Park Rd.

The club, called the Single Toasters, is one of about 15 Toastmaster's groups in Lincoln, and is for unmarried people of any age who want to improve their public speaking, said Judi Pasek, a doctoral student of entomology.

Pasek and Ed Green, a senior psychology major, are two of about 22 Single Toasters. Six or seven of its members are UNL graduates, Pasek said.

Pasek joined the group for self-improvement and professional reasons. Since she must do research for her doctorate, the practice she gets researching topics for her Toastmaster's speeches is helpful, she said.

"This is a good forum for practicing speaking without people being highly critical of you," Pasek said. "It's a very friendly atmosphere."

Alice Fields, a Lincoln resident who is president of the singles club, said the club's anniversary is Friday, but the banquet will be Thursday, the club's usual meeting night. The banquet begins at 6:30 p.m. and is open to the public for

\$8.50. Fields said the banquet will have five speakers, including Lou Novak, the Toastmaster's Region 4 International Director; Jean Dyer, founder of the Single Toasters; the Toastmaster's area governor; and two Single Toasters members on the dating dilemma.

The group meets in the basement of Lincoln General Hospital, where the members give prepared speeches and impromptu "table topics," Pasek said. Not everyone must speak at every meeting; rather, people give speeches at their own pace. In any case, the club provides quick speaking improvement through evaluators' constructive criticism, she said.

"We have one club member who was so nervous the first time that he stammered and stuttered and finally had to sit back down," she said. Only a year later, she said, they "call on him for table topics and he just takes off."

Although Pasek and Green are the only current members enrolled at UNL, the club would welcome more people from campus.

"I would love to have more university people — students, faculty — to be in our club," she said.

Office provides help for handicapped

Handicapped students have taken an active role in planning new campus additions, Brad Munn, UNL's affirmative action officer, said.

Munn said some of the improvements to make building projects accessible to the handicapped may seem small at times, but other projects require major input. He cited the Lied Center for Performing Arts as an example.

"With the 2,500 capacity planned for the Lied Center, the seats would simply be too small for some people's posteriors for them to sit comfortably during a performance," he said. "We've worked with the Lied people and arranged to have six to eight oversized seats installed along with space for wheelchair bound people."

The handicapped program, which was added to the affirmative action office in 1978 after legislation required each institution to establish offices to meet the needs of disabled people, has been immune to the recent budget cuts, Munn said. Although the center only has a \$5,000 annual budget for operating expenses, Munn said many other sources contribute to the needs of UNL's handicapped students.

One such group, the Nebraska Commission for the Hearing Impaired, currently provides about \$20,000 in funding for interpreters for deaf

students. The federal government recently provided a \$100,000 grant that allowed the university to install a new computer room for handicapped students.

But not all assistance for handicap students comes from outside sources. Munn said many of the improvements are paid for by other university departments.

"Chancellor (Martin) Massengale and housing director (Doug) Zatechka have been good with all our requests," Munn said.

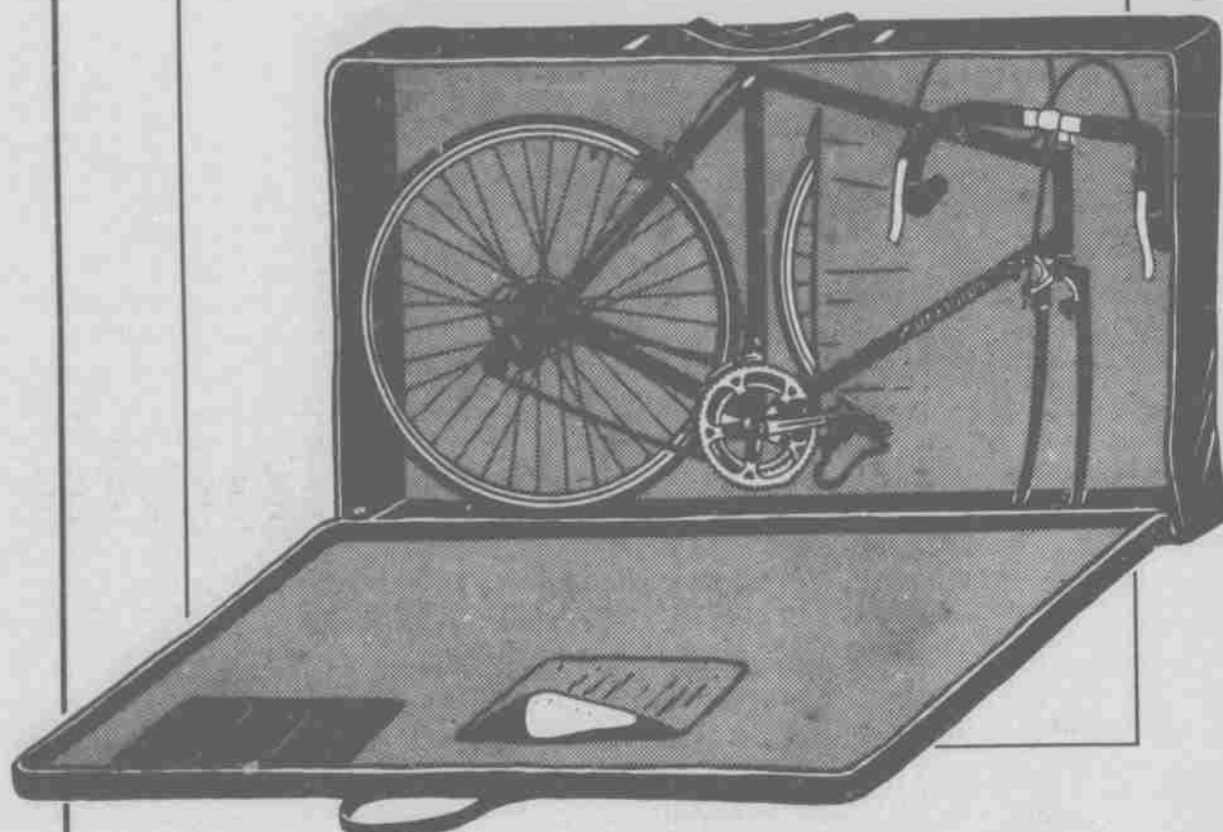
He cited the recent installation of a new elevator in Avery Hall and new wheelchair doors in Selleck Hall as examples.

Munn noted that not all improvements for handicapped students require large sums of money.

"If a student has a class on the third floor of CBA and has a heart condition which prevents them from walking up three floors, our office works with the instructor to move the class onto the first floor," he said.

Currently, UNL has 256 students who suffer from some sort of disability and use the handicapped office, Munn said. Some of the disabilities aren't as noticeable as others, however.

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