

Daily Nebraskan

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University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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Weather: Mostly cloudy today with a chance of showers and a high of about 52 (11C). Thursday night, mostly cloudy with a slight chance of showers, low of about 43 (8C). Friday, cloudy with a high in the mid-50s (13C).

Bob Brubecher/Daily Nebraskan

Paul McCartney's autograph!...Page 8

Volleyballers head to West Coast...Page 12

Attorneys: S.E. Copple a Commonwealth victim

By Brad Gifford
Daily Nebraskan Staff Reporter

Attorneys for S.E. Copple, former Commonwealth Savings Co. president, Wednesday told the Legislature's Banking Committee that Copple was "as much a victim in this case as anyone characterized a victim."

John Stevens Berry, one of two lawyers who flanked Copple at the hearing, said Copple has no Commonwealth money and that he never illegally borrowed or stole any.

Berry presented documents to the committee showing that Copple had injected the faltering company with \$750,000 out of his own pocket during the last year of operations. Further evidence showed that Copple is individually bankrupt.

Attorney Robert Creager said that besides suffering financially, Copple also suffered from officials who tried to pin guilt on him.

Further discussion of that subject was limited to a closed session. Creager said the U.S. attorney's office had asked them not to divulge certain matters to the public that Copple would have otherwise discussed.

The information involved "knowledge that was in the hands of the office of the (Lancaster) county attorney," Berry said. He also called some of the actions of that office constitutional and conscientious violations.

State Sen. Chris Buetler of Lincoln said that the testimony concerning the county



Den Dulaney/Daily Nebraskan

S.E. Copple confers with attorneys Robert Creager, left, and John Stevens Berry before Wednesday's public hearing of the Legislature's Banking Committee.

attorney's office was one-sided. County Attorney Michael Heavican has been invited to testify.

Copple said high interest rates and devalued real estate were responsible for the institution's failure. But he added that efforts to overcome those problems before the closing were hampered by officials whose actions panicked the public.

Those officials included former special Assistant Attorney General David Domina, former interim Banking Director John Miller, Banking Director Roger Beverage, and former deputy receiver for Commonwealth Neil West. He said the Banking Department announced Oct. 31, 1983, that Commonwealth was being monitored.

The next morning people were withdrawing all their money, he said, and a close was imminent.

Copple contended that other institutions were being monitored at the same time, but that the department only announced the Commonwealth surveillance.

He also criticized the Domina-led investigation.

"You would think they would conduct an investigation assuming that the officers are honest instead of assuming that there is crookedness going on," Copple said, gesturing with a trembling hand.

Copple, 87, said he volunteered his testimony to explain what happened to

Commonwealth to prevent its recurrence, to clear his name and to help form a depositor-relief plan.

Irwin Deutscher, a Tennessee consultant who is working on a reorganization scheme for the industrial loan and investment company, said he would welcome Copple's input.

Deutscher said he found nothing wrong with Copple's bookkeeping, in contrast to the Domina report.

"The records were in good shape, as good of shape as I've seen in a situation like this," Deutscher said.

Deutscher was hired by a group of depositors because of his experience in reorganizing collapsed institutions.

Deutscher said that he has advised depositors that reorganizing Commonwealth would be better than liquidating it. The company's assets are mostly in property. But cashing-in those assets would not provide enough money for operation, Deutscher said. A state input of about \$25 to \$30 million would sufficiently restore the company, according to his estimations.

Sen. Loren Schmit of Bellwood said that if the state was going to invest that much money, the plan would have to cover the other troubled financial institutions in the state.

Committee Chairman John DeCamp of Neligh said he wants to have a special session of the Legislature in November so that a conclusion on Commonwealth can be reached by Jan. 1, 1985.

"It's time we bring this nightmare to an end," DeCamp said.



Mark Davis/Daily Nebraskan

Regent Edward Schwartzkopf pals around with UNL students before an open forum Wednesday in the Nebraska Union Main Lounge.

Regent refutes 'myths'

By Ann Lowe
Daily Nebraskan Senior Reporter

A proposal to make UNO a state college and to have a single governing body replace the NU Board of Regents and the state college board of trustees is "a real step forward" for Nebraska higher education, Regent Ed Schwartzkopf said.

Schwartzkopf is running for reelection against Lincoln dentist Don Fricke. He spoke Wednesday at a UNL open forum on some "myths" about the university and about his goal for "quality education," at UNL.

"There are a lot of myths floating around about the university," Schwartzkopf said.

The biggest, he said, is that UNL is being "moved brick-by-

brick to Omaha.

"I say that's baloney," Schwartzkopf said.

The regent said the university has spent about \$200 million on UNL construction in his 18 years as regent. At least \$50 million has been budgeted for current construction and remodeling projects, he said.

Decisions that appear to have shifted money to UNO, such as moving the dental and pharmacy schools there, have not hurt UNL, Schwartzkopf said.

"It's not coming out of our hide," he said.

In the last five years, UNL has received \$26.1 million — or 55 percent — of the \$47 million budgeted for the University of Nebraska system, the regent said.

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Remedial program unlikely despite low scores

By Barbara Comito
Daily Nebraskan Staff Reporter

Editor's note: This is the fourth article in a five-part series examining current issues on the quality of education in Nebraska.

Creation of a remedial English program at UNL is unlikely, although several indicators suggest there may be a need.

Of the 3,217 freshmen entering the university for the 1982-83 school year, 694 had an English ACT score of 15 or below on a 36-point scale.

While the number of freshmen entering with an English score of 15 or below dropped to 477 in

1983-84, the total number of students also dropped to 2,729. The score breakdowns are not yet available for the 1984-85 school year.

The Quality of Education

Schools frequently use an ACT score of 15 or below to determine students who need further testing, according to Sam Cargile, director of the office of Services for the Educationally Disadvantaged with the American College Testing Program.

Beth Ryan, a UNL English instructor, said she gets "a shocking number of students," about one-fourth of her freshman writing classes, "who cannot comprehend what they read and cannot write complete thoughts with a literate delivery."

Claire Mattern, assistant English professor, said the freshman courses she has taught during the past 10 years "have to be remedial," as students have not mastered the basics — spelling, punctuation, vocabulary and sentence structure.

Ryan, who has been teaching at the university for 17 years, agreed she "cannot proceed at the rate

you should proceed in freshman comp courses."

Marianne Hostetler, management development coordinator for Lincoln Telephone, said the basic writing skills she has observed during the past five years from both high school and college graduates has in general gone downhill.

Lincoln Telephone now offers a basic writing seminar to teach employees basic grammar and syntax, Hostetler said.

One view of remedial education, according to John Yost, UNL history professor and associate to the chancellor, is that if this is truly higher education we should

not be involved in remediation.

Competitive universities such as Rutgers University, however, do offer remedial education, partly in attempt to meet the needs of the disadvantaged student.

First-generation college students generally do not have the skill that students coming from a college-educated family have, said Vaughn Robertson Jr., assistant director of the Special services project at UNL.

The project is designed to help students with academic problems, although our help could not be defined as remedial, Robertson said.

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