

Students, city clash over East Campus tree removal



photos by Don Tremaine

The 34 doomed pines on East Campus. . . "with a little imagination, the trees could be saved."

by John Russnogle

The recent agreement between the NU Regents and the City of Lincoln for widening Holdrege St. near East Campus which involves the destruction of 34 Austrian pine trees, has come under fire from some UNL students and professors.

"With a little imagination, the trees could be saved," said Walter Bagley, associate professor of horticulture. He suggested it might be possible to leave the trees on an island. Such a plan would not require much more land than is to be used now, he said.

The rumor that the trees are about to die anyway is not true, according to Bagley. He said the trees could live for at least another 50 years.

Bagley said he thinks Lincoln should research and develop a mass transit system to handle increasing traffic rather than continue to widen streets. He said cities have discovered that it is impossible to construct streets fast enough to keep up with the growing number of cars.

By continuing to construct new streets and rebuilding old ones, the city is building a "monument

to cars" which will eventually be outdated, Bagley said.

Robert Obering, Lincoln director of public works, agreed with Bagley concerning a mass transit system. The problem, he said, is that people are not willing to give up their cars in favor of mass transit. People will continue to use cars until there simply is not a place to park or it is financially unfeasible, he said.

"I wish we could get people to use a mass transit system, because there are many problems involved with widening streets and they are becoming more complex," he said.

Obering said many hours were spent trying to produce a plan which would avoid destroying the trees, but the most feasible plan is that they be removed.

Plans have been considered which would have constructed a retaining wall around the trees, but it was feared that this would destroy too much of the root system for the trees to survive, he explained.

The only other alternative would have been to tear down houses on the south side of Holdrege, he said.

Robert Holsinger, city traffic engineer, said the area around 48th and Holdrege Streets is the main accident spot in the city. He said Holdrege is carrying its maximum traffic load at peak hours. Holdrege will be widened between 45th and 48th Streets.

Some students are not convinced the trees need to be removed. Women residents in Burr Hall on East Campus have drafted a petition opposing the destruction of the trees.

UNL student Sue Torgersen has also been trying to start a movement to save the trees. She said she has found limited interest, but is contacting ecologically concerned organizations for help.

The trees scheduled for destruction were planted about 1900, according to Harvey Werner, retired professor of horticulture. He said they were originally planted to protect an orchard from wind.

This is not the first time the trees have been threatened, Werner said. In 1958 a large water main was to be placed dangerously close to the trees. A NU faculty committee conferred with city planners, who then decided to put the water main one block south of Holdrege Street saving the trees.

Actor Bikel knocks stereotypes

Every dramatic work should "contain a slice of life and a comment," Theodore Bikel told about

100 persons—mostly drama majors during a Thursday afternoon session in the Temple Building.

Bikel, a veteran stage, screen and television performer as well as an author and folksinger, said he particularly opposes musicals on the grounds that they are "copping out" by not being either a dramatic or musical production.

Bikel also said he didn't buy the traditional actor's stereotype.

"The lofty calling of an actor," he said, "by no means exempts you from the duties, responsibilities, privileges and joys of citizenship."

Known for his performances in such Broadway shows as *The Sound of Music* and the movies *The Russians are Coming* . . . and more recently, *200 Motels*, Bikel said one of his current concerns is how to instill more artistic desire in the public.

The problem, Bikel said, is that Americans are "not a theater loving people."

He noted that while plenty of talent is available, 66 per cent of the actors in the Actors Equity Guild were unemployed last year.

"Surely the cultural centers of America are not limited to Broadway," Bikel continued.

"If a nation is to be remembered by its arts, then how are we going to be viewed?" he asked.



Photos by Gail Folds

Senators reject tuition hike

The Nebraska Legislature's Appropriations Committee has turned down a proposal which would have forced tuition increases at NU and state colleges.

Sen. Ramey Whitney of Chappell had proposed charging students \$5 per credit hour for each hour between 12 and 16.

Students currently pay tuition based on 12 hours per semester but are permitted to take up to 16 hours without an additional increase.

Committee members turned down the proposal on a 6-2 vote. According to Whitney, NU President D.B. Varner opposed the plan.

In the Unicameral's Revenue Committee a request was made to divert \$750,000 in annual cigarette tax revenue into drug abuse programs.

The proposal came from Omaha Sen. Richard Proud who asked that one-half cent of the five cent per pack cigarette tax increase approved in 1971 be switched from the proposed UNL fieldhouse to the drug abuse programs.

In other committee action, the Education Committee voted 6-1 to advance a bill permitting \$500 tuition grants to students attending private colleges.