

# 'Environment ethic has become cultural artifact'

By Maxine Kubicek

Most Americans have no basic understanding of the environment and no idea of what ecology really means, according to an environmental law expert.

Roger Hansen, associate professor at the College of Forestry and Natural Resources at Colorado State University, spoke Wednesday at the UNL Law College about

*Environmental Policy—Disappointment and Opportunity.* Hansen spoke in connection with Law Day activities sponsored by the Student Bar Association.

The once-popular environmental ethic has become a kind of cultural artifact which was replaced by the energy crisis, he said. He added that ecology is sometimes thought of as the product of "wilderness nuts and bird-watchers."

However, he noted that a recent Harris poll indicated Americans still give concern for the environment a high priority rating.

### Simultaneous crises

He said the environment is facing a number of simultaneous crises such as the Arab oil embargo and the natural gas shortage. He said a major change in the American lifestyle is needed to combat these crises.

"This doesn't mean adding five inches of insulation to your home, turning down the thermostat and being 'comfortably miserable.'"

"I'd like to see cars taxed on a graduated scale according to weight, gas mileage and emissions, with speed limits based on these factors," he said.

Hansen's suggestion of a speed limit of "80 miles per hour for Volkswagens and 35 mph for Buick station wagons" brought applause from the audience.

He said the auto industry is fighting emissions standards "tooth and nail" while, in the meantime, Americans are flocking back to the large cars.

### Trip to the dump

A major problem of society is that Americans rely too much upon technology and consumption, he said. In a natural ecosystem the rates of consumption and renewal form a cycle, he said, but in American society "it's a one-way trip to the dump."

Existing laws regulating environmental protection treat environmental problems individually, "as if they existed

in a vacuum," he said. Unrealistic deadlines, lack of technically qualified personnel and extensions of deadlines compound the difficulties of regulation, he added.

Hansen cited goals in the areas of clean water and land use as perhaps the most difficult to attain. A land use act patterned after the air, water and solid waste act implemented by the states is badly needed, he said.

"I'm not very optimistic because there are too many real estate developers in the state legislatures and city councils," he said.

"Still, the opportunities of the future really are greater than the disappointments of the past."

## Noble to speak

Massachusetts state legislator Elaine Noble, the first admitted lesbian to hold public office, will speak in the Nebraska Union Ballroom tonight at 7:30.

Noble's chief concerns as a state legislator have been the rights of minorities and political reform.

Noble, Harvard-educated, has made it clear that she did not run as a gay candidate, but as a qualified political candidate who did not hide her lesbianism.

Noble will participate in an informal discussion on women in politics from 9:30 to 11 a.m. today in the Union. Room number will be posted.

Her speech, open to the public, is sponsored by the Nebraska Union Program Council Talks and Topics Committee, the University Gay Action Group and the Women's Resource Center.

## FAB agenda

The Fees Allocation Board will meet at 6 tonight in the Nebraska Union. Room number will be posted. The agenda:

- I. Approval of minutes.
- II. Major fee users and increase hearings
- III. Subcommittee recommendations on A funds
- IV. Other business
- V. Announcements



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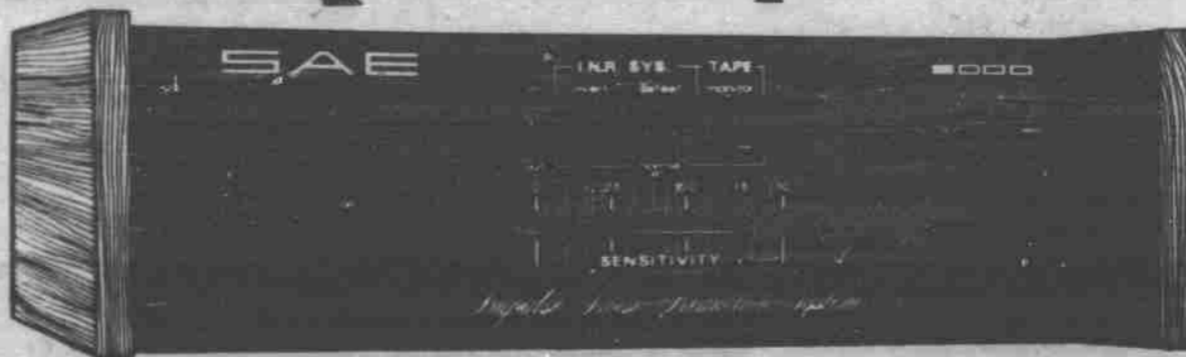
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