

Drought, soil, pollution among Nebraskan concerns

By Mike Schmoldt

The environmental problems most important to Nebraskans are water shortages, soil quality and water pollution, a survey indicates.

The fourth part of the first Nebraska Annual Social Indicators Survey dealing with environmental issues was released Wednesday. It was conducted by the UNL Bureau of Sociological Research and reported that recognition of problems seemed linked to the location in which the survey participants lived.

People in Omaha and Lincoln said they believed air pollution, water pollution and natural resource depletion to be much more of a problem than did other residents of the state.

"The fact that those aware of these problems are the younger, more active and educated citizens of the state means the environmental issue will receive more much needed attention in the future," those who prepared the report said. It was made by UNL political science professor Susan Welch and sociology professor Alan Booth.

When the survey was conducted, before the wet summer and fall in most parts of Nebraska, more than two-

thirds of the sample believed water shortage to be a problem.

Lincolniters were more likely to see it as a local problem than any other group, including farmers and other rural dwellers.

The 59 percent of the Lincolniters who saw drought a problem were justified in their concern. The drought continued in southeast Nebraska throughout the summer months.

Director of the UNL Conservation Survey Division, Vincent Dreeszer said drought has been a major worry of Nebraskans for the past 2½ years. He said before recent wet weather, the state experienced a near-panic situation. He said people wanted simple solutions to problems like dry streams which were caused for the most part by a simple lack of adequate rainfall.

He said the problem has not been cured, but that since 1950, Nebraska has been developing a drought strategy. He said the equipment to irrigate 6.5 million acres has been developed since 1950, when only about 1,000,000 could be irrigated.

Dreeszer said the State Dept. of Water Resources has increased their manpower as a result of legislative appropriations and can now better administrate water rights and make checks to prevent the illegal use of water resources. This includes halting use of pumps and temporary dams without permission.

Water pollution also was seen as a problem by two-thirds of those surveyed. Lincolniters and Omahans were more likely than other residents to recognize the problem.

"Like drought, water quality is a time-dependent problem," Dreeszer said. "Pollution of surface water (streams and rivers) is a visible and real problem."

He said chemicals, wastes and sewage dumped into streams create more direct problems than the slow changes in groundwater supplied and reservoirs, which are insulated. He added that nitrate levels in the water have become a state-wide problem.

Other results of the survey indicated that less than half of all Nebraskans feel air pollution is a problem, and that 43 percent are concerned about soil quality in their area.

ASUN agenda

- I. Call to order, Approval of minute, Executive reports
- II. Senate committee reports
- III. Old business
 - Appointments
 - Senate bill no. 11-appointments
 - Senate bill no. 12-constitutions committee
 - Resolution no. 9-bond issue
 - Resolution no. 10-educational community
 - Organic act no. 4-rules procedure
- VI. New business
 - Senate bill no. 13

short stuff

The Community Involvement Service needs a reader for a student. Those interested should contact Union 200 or call 472-2484.

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The Gay Women's Rap Group will meet at 5 p.m. at the Women's Resource Center, Union 116.

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Lambda Tau will meet at 7 p.m. in the health center.

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ASUN will meet at 7 p.m. in Union 202 to hear Stan Juelfs, republican candidate for governor.

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The Undergraduate Sociology Association will meet at 12:30 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. in Oldfather 722.

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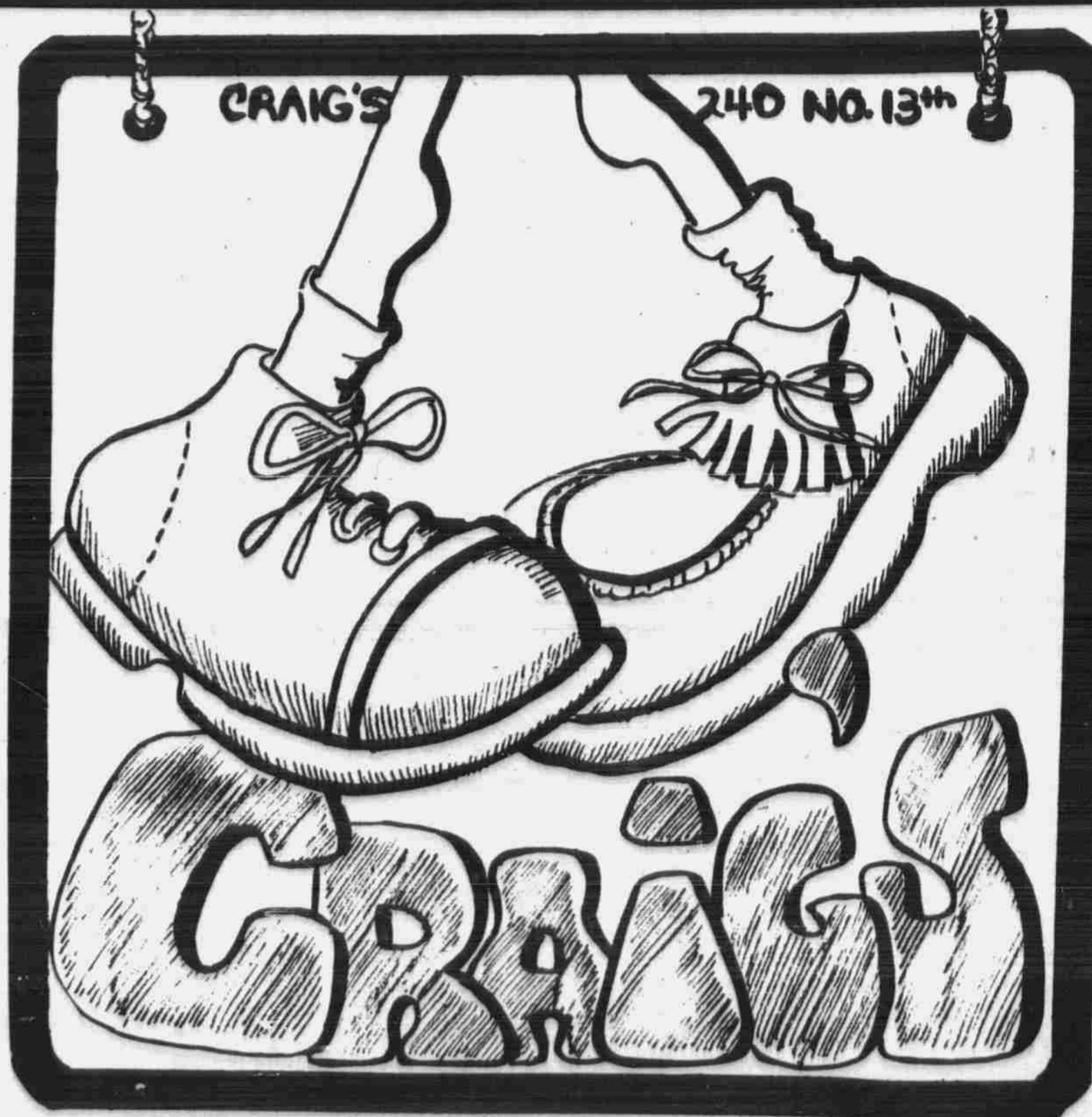
The UNL Society of Women Engineers will meet 7 p.m. Thursday in Nebraska Hall W185.

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The Union Program Council's American Film Classics Series will present "High Noon" at 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. in the Union Centennial Room.

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NUPIRG's Family Farm/Ranch Task Force will meet 6:30 p.m. Thursday in the Nebraska East Union on the Terraces. For more information call 472-2448.



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