

# Study of foreign languages encouraged by commission

By Alice Hrnicek

Foreign language study before college should receive more attention, according to three members of the UNL modern language department and a recommendation to the President's Commission on Foreign Languages and International Studies.

The number of high school students studying a modern language has been declining since 1916, according to S. Fredrick Starr, special consultant to the president's commission and secretary of the Kennen Institute for Advanced Russian Studies at Princeton University.

Many people do not realize the importance of studying a foreign language, said Hans Gilde, instructor in UNL modern languages and literatures department.

"To convince people in the Midwest is hard because we are miles away from any foreign speaking peoples," Gilde said.

### Broader horizons

Gilde said an important reason to study a foreign language is that it enhances a person's horizons.

"The study of another language can make a better human being and give them a better understanding of other points of view."

David Gitlitz, associate professor and chairman of the modern languages and literatures department, sees foreign language study as a guide to cultural understanding.

"Our particular approach to the world is not the only one or necessarily the best one," he said.

He said there are other practical reasons for acquiring a second language.

"Nebraska is a major export state which deals with a lot of foreign owned businesses," Gitlitz said. Companies snap up people who can speak the language of the customer, he said.

"Exports are not as great as they could be," Gilde said and pointed out Germans and Japanese have excellent outputs partly because of their ability to converse with foreign customers.

Learning skills as a mental discipline and attaining better expression in English are some of the results, Gitlitz said.

"The old saw 'He learns his language best who learns a foreign language,' is very true," he said.

Starr said most of the federal government's support for foreign languages has been at the university level.

"The attempt was to build a structure from the roof down," Starr said. But he added that the structure has not worked.

A number of problems are eminent because of this structure, Gitlitz said.

### Use time better

First he said the time taken in learning the basic skills of a language at the college level could be better used for acquiring other knowledge if students already had a language background.

Evidence also indicates language learning is more efficient at an earlier age, he said. We pick up our own language best at age four or five, he said, so foreign language instruction would be valuable in elementary school.

Gilde said he believes students should start a consistent study program in the 5th or 6th grade and continue it through high school.

A current problem, Gilde remarked, is that children who are exposed to a foreign language often are not given the opportunity to stay with it.

Both Gilde and Gitlitz feel there is a tendency to promote language in doses too low to be effective.

"The goal is to become comfortable with a foreign language instead of using it as a functional tool," Gitlitz said.

### Confidence needed

Gilde added language teachers need to be confident. Too many are not," he said. "High school teachers have to make the class fun and games or else lose students."

This problem could be alleviated, he said, if foreign language study was mandatory for students preparing for college.

In Europe, university-bound students are required to start one language at age 10 and begin another at age 12, he said. Both of the languages are continued through high school so students obtain a reasonable control by the time they enter college.

However, Nicole Smith said she believes learning a language should be relaxing.

"If fun and games is the only way, then it should be used," she said. "Language is alive. Don't make it dead."

### Solution offered

Gilde offered a solution to the problem. Larger secondary schools should offer three languages—French, German and Spanish—from which the students can choose and the study should be required for anyone who is university bound, he said.

In smaller schools, he said at least one language should be offered. Gilde recommended Spanish or German for Nebraska, noting that French is a language of diplomacy.

The foreign language should be continued throughout high school, he said. The language requirement at the university could then be eliminated, Gilde added.

Although Gitlitz doesn't propose a plan as specific as Gilde's, he believes "something should be done. Nationally, it would be worthwhile to do more for language teaching at a lower level."

# Liquor licenses refused, allowed by Council

By Randy Essex

One former downtown liquor license holder was given new life by the Lincoln City Council Monday, but another—whose license was not renewed last month—was refused further consideration.

The council was asked to recommend a new license for Oscar's Lounge, 245 N. 13th St., under new ownership. Oscar's is closed, following state denial of a license last month. The State Liquor Commission acted on a council recommendation in refusing to renew the license.

Attorney Donald Thompson told the council he thought the main prob-

lem with getting the license last month was the presence of Oscar Mueller's name on the license. Thompson said Robert Bryant would buy out Mueller if the council recommended a new license.

Council members questioned the appropriateness of recommending a license before ownership had changed technically.

### Clean up time

"We've been talking about cleaning up the downtown licenses, and this is the first time (recommending refusal of Oscar's application) we've done anything about it," said Councilman Bob Jeambey.

"It would be amiss if we

back off because of what I consider a 'shuffle play,'" Jeambey said.

The matter was not on the council agenda, and no councilman would introduce the question for a vote.

However, the council recommended state approval of a license at a new location for the Spigot, at 1624 O St.

The Spigot had been in business at 304 S. 13th St. until May 1 when its lease expired. Owners of the bar then asked for council approval of a license in the

University Place area, which was refused.

### Desperate attempt

Spigot manager David Hansen told the council the application for license in University Place was made out of desperation. Hansen explained that the O Street location was not available at the time.

Hansen urged the council recommend the license because the Spigot would be the only bar in the area appealing to a white-collar clientele. Hansen told the council the new bar would offer an elaborate salad bar because businessmen and women would like it for a change of pace.

# Resolution endorses friendship with China

The Lincoln City Council Monday voted to recognize the People's Republic of China as a friend of the United States, to name the city's first commuter bikeway the Billy Wolff Antelope Bikeway, to deregulate Cablevision rates and not to change a street name.

The council joined the Omaha City Council and the Nebraska Legislature in recognizing China as a friend and ally of the United States and encouraging better diplomatic relations between the two countries.

The Antelope Park Bikeway, completed last summer, was named after a long-time O Street bicycle dealer. The bikeway runs from Holmes Park to about 21st and N streets.

Councilman Richard Baker said introducing the resolution was one of the most pleasant things he has done as a councilmember. Baker said his father bought Baker's first bike from Billy Wolff, and there are many stories of Wolff's service to the community and youths.

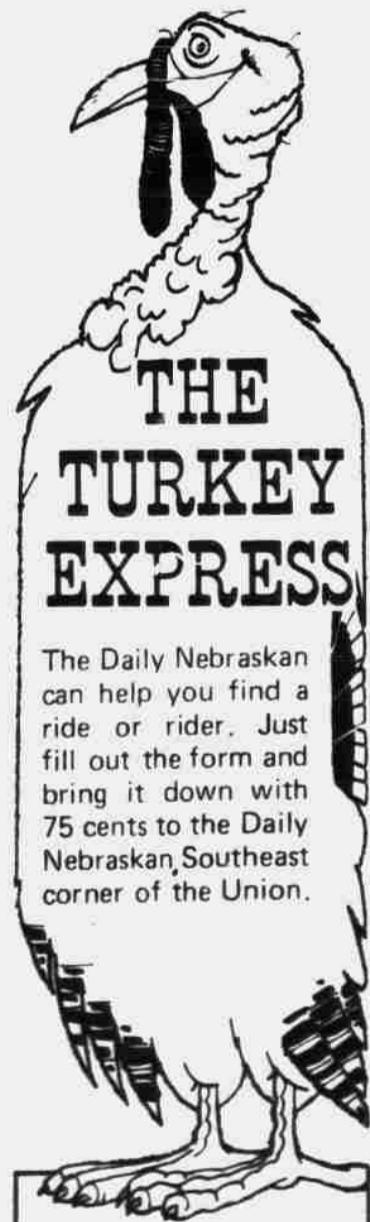
Baker told the story of a boy who told Wolff he wanted a bicycle, but didn't have any money. The boy went to work and earned 95 cents, with which he bought a bicycle from Wolff, Baker said.

Council members also voted to eliminate a law requiring council approval of Cablevision rate increases. The council will be able to get back into the business of monitoring rates if necessary.

Cablevision manager Tony Acone told the council last week consumer demands would keep rates fair. Acone explained that if rates were too high people would not subscribe to the service.

The council bowed to citizen pressure in voting against changing the name of Southwest 18th Street south of West Arlington Street south to Southwest 17th Street.

The name change had been requested so streets of the same name would be aligned after the completing of a new housing project. Citizens living on Southwest 17th Street appeared before the council three times to urge denial of the name change because of financial inconvenience caused by changing their addresses.



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