

# Gambling bill gets first round nod from Legislature

By Randy Essex

Armed with a stack of gambling devices called pickle cards, and feeling like "the captain of the Titanic trying to peddle icebergs," Neigh Sen. John DeCamp won first round legislative approval Thursday for his bill that would make all gambling crimes misdemeanors.

Debate on LB152 came the day after a statewide gambling crackdown by the Attorney General's office. The action was coordinated in O'Neill, a town in DeCamp's district. It was the first gambling crackdown under the four-month-old criminal code that established felony penalties for certain gambling crimes.

But it was DeCamp's contention that if the penalties for bookmaking are too stiff, "small time, local" people will be forced out of the business, and organized crime will take over.

The Miscellaneous Subjects Committee, responding to law enforcement concerns, proposed to amend the bill to make bookmaking operations handling more than \$500 guilty of a felony, but DeCamp was successful in returning the bill to misdemeanor form.

### Amendment passed

DeCamp's amendment to the committee amendment passed 20-3.

DeCamp beat back an attempt by Omaha Sen. Patrick Venditte to include tougher prostitution laws in the bill. "I hate to see you put a hooker in this bill that might ruin its chances to pass," DeCamp told Venditte.

Venditte offered an amendment which would have increased the penalty for prostitution to a harsher misdemeanor than it is. The Omaha senator said, "Women from all over the country have come to Omaha to sell themselves" since passage of the present law, and those women are "laughing at the law."

Speaker Richard Marvel ruled that Venditte could add the amendment to DeCamp's gambling bill, even though it dealt with different subject matter. But the amendment fell five votes short of adoption, 20-19.

Omaha Sen. Ernie Chambers was then successful in amending the bill so that possession of gambling records would not be a punishable offense in itself. That amendment passed 22-0.

But Chambers failed in his attempt to amend the bill so the misdemeanor penalties would be reduced even

further than DeCamp wanted. DeCamp said he thought the Chambers amendment was reasonable, but he had to oppose it because of the compromise he agreed to.

Chambers proposed that the penalty for bookmaking operations ranging from \$300 to \$999 be a maximum of six months in jail and a maximum \$1,000 fine. DeCamp proposed a maximum jail sentence of a year.

Chambers said since the state has accepted gambling as a profit venture, and since a person can lose an unlimited amount of money at horse races and face no penalty, a jail sentence of one year is too harsh for someone involved in a \$300 bet.

But his amendment failed, 13-24.

Several other amendments to the bill were pending, but then withdrawn after DeCamp received a message from the Attorney General's office pointing out the problems in the bill.

DeCamp said he and other senators were going to meet with Assistant Attorney General Patrick O'Brien Thursday afternoon.

O'Brien spent Wednesday in O'Neill, helping coordinate the gambling crackdown. DeCamp was quick in pointing out that his bill was drafted with the help of the Attorney General's office and the Douglas and Lancaster County Attorneys' offices.

The senator predicted that the Holt County attorney would have trouble getting convictions from the arrests made Tuesday because of problems in the present law.

## Library computer nears completion

By Diane Andersen

In a few months students and faculty owing LIRS (Library Information Retrieval Service) cards will be able to find books by punching computer keys instead of thumbing through a card catalog.

Library staffers with proper code numbers will also be able to find out how many books each the library patrons have checked out and how many they have reserved in advance. They will even be able to "block" the circuits so a person who has been abusing the library will be unable to check out any further materials.

All this will happen two months after the LIRS computer circulation system goes into effect early this summer, according to the assistant dean for planning and research, Brice Holbrook.

"We haven't begun public operation yet because we want to accumulate a massive volume of student and book files," Holbrook said.

He explained that the 2,000-3,000 students and majority of the faculty who now possess LIRS cards are currently using them to check out books just like student ID's have been used in the past.

### Loaded books

"One hundred forty thousand of our most recently purchased books are being loaded into the system next week," Holbrook said.

The LIRS system includes over \$250,000 worth of computer hardware in the basement of Love Library made up of the computer, CRT terminals, and a communication's system to UNO and the UNL Medical Center. The two Omaha libraries have three terminals each that are currently running, Holbrook said.

"We didn't have any way of knowing what the campuses in Omaha had before," he continued, explaining that LIRS will be a big help in resource sharing.

"We also need to achieve more accurate control over items with a turnover rate of 1,000 of those items each day.

"It saves the student time and it saved us a lot of headaches."

### First in Big Eight

Holbrook said NU is the first institution in the Big Eight to install such a computer system, although about 50 large academic libraries in the United States use similar systems. Some of these are at UCLA, the University of Utah and the University of Houston.

"We hope some of the others will follow along," Holbrook said.

Only those with authorized passwords have access to the library files. Each student card bears a code number as does each book, which will be read electronically at the checkout desk to determine the status of each.

"Your privacy is protected," Holbrook said.

Books in the LIRS system can be retrieved by title, author or number. A computer readout shows when a particular book was returned to the shelf, how many copies are available and how many copies are located in other branch libraries.

The UNL, UNO and UNMC systems will start public operation within a few weeks of each other, Holbrook said.

## Basketball star wins

East Lansing, Mich (CH)—How does a student get elected to the student council of a major university without being on the ballot, without campaigning and without even knowing about the election?

It helps if the student is Earvin "Magic" Johnson. The star of the NCAA basketball champions, the Michigan State University Spartans, was elected by write-in votes to the MSU student council minority member-at-large position.

The surprised Johnson said, "I would like to stay on the council if I could be of use." He added that he might have difficulty finding the time.

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