

Possible poisoning of Vets studied

By Bill Hayes

Dioxin, a poison that could be present in the body fat of some Vietnam veterans, is being investigated by the UNL chemistry department.

The poison was a contaminant found in a principle ingredient of Agent Orange, a defoliant used in Vietnam from 1962 to 1970.

According to the Veterans Administration, Dioxin is as deadly as strychnine.

Defoliants were used to kill dense foliage which hid North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces.

University chemists are analyzing 25 samples of fat removed from veterans claiming that they are suffering from dioxin poisoning and from veterans who weren't exposed to Agent Orange, according to VA and university officials.

Several of the fatty tissue samples were taken from Lincoln veterans who alleged that they were exposed to Agent Orange or were in Vietnam during the defoliation campaign, according to Dr. Carlos Mota, Chief of Surgical Services at Lincoln Veterans Hospital.

According to Mike Gross, director of the UNL Midwest Center for Mass Spectrometry, which is conducting the study, no preliminary test results are available.

Gross said the center has been studying dioxin for the past 18 months.

"The Agent Orange study is a blind study," Gross said. "All the samples that have been sent to us are coded. We won't know the results until the codes are broken."

Gross said he plans to publish his findings in about a month.

According to Gross, the only way to detect dioxin in the samples is through modern analytical chemistry methods.

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Photo by Tom Gessner

Book-buying blues

Chris Smith goes through the bi-annual process of purchasing books for the upcoming semester. The Nebraska Bookstore has extended its hours until 9 p.m. to handle the crunch of scrambling students.

Campus crime increases during first weeks of school

By Cindy Coglianes

As thousands of students descended on the UNL campus this week, the UNL Police Department found its hands filled with an increase in vandalism, larceny and disturbances.

Robert Fry, a crime prevention officer with the UNL Police Department, said that the increase of crimes the first few weeks of school is similar to a neighborhood that gets new neighbors. He said many students are not aware of police rules and regulations.

"Kids are out on their own for the first time. They have to test themselves, each other and authority figures," Fry said.

"All that, added with a bit of apprehension, a new environment and a couple of

beer parties will cause the crime rate to increase," Fry added.

According to police reports from the last week, stolen books, bikes, wallets and checkbooks have filled the police log book. Disturbances at residence halls, larceny in parking lots and in some buildings on campus have also been reported in the last week.

Fey said larceny is the biggest crime on campus, explaining that larceny occurs when something is stolen from an open, unlocked space, whereas burglary is reported when there is a sign of forceable entry.

UNL Police Chief Gail Gade said some of the crime occurring the first couple of weeks of school results from new students and students that have had no previous contact with the police department.

"One thing we've tried to combat here at the university is that we are a professional department with the full power of arrest," Gade said, adding that some students think the police department is nothing more than a security force.

He said the 10-year-old operation is the only type of operation of its kind in the state. All other colleges in Nebraska have security forces only on their campuses.

Fey said the UNL Police Department has jurisdiction over the entire state and the 33 police officers actually are commissioned as deputy state officers. The UNL Police Department also has a uniform traffic patrol and a crime division. The police department employs students part-

time as building and residence hall security officers.

As a preventive crime officer, Fey recommended that students pay close attention to their belongings to prevent them from being stolen.

"Some of the larcenies occurring happen simply because the opportunity for theft was there," he said. "If you don't watch your belongings, something might happen to them."

Fey said the crime on campus should level off after the next couple of weeks of school. Chief Gade showed police reports from early August that barely filled a complete page. He said he expects the reports will fill at least two pages in the next few weeks.

John R. Ellis will be eligible for parole next month

By Val Swinton

An attorney for John R. Ellis says the former UNL student may be eligible for parole "almost as soon as he checks in" to the state penitentiary, but the chairman of the state parole board calls that assessment a bit too optimistic.

Ellis was sentenced to 10 years in prison last Friday on charges of manslaughter, following his conviction last spring by a District Court jury in Lincoln. He was original-

ly charged with first-degree murder in the death of another UNL student, Debra Forycki. She disappeared in October of 1974 and her skeletal remains were discovered near Elmwood last Sept. Ellis was given a flat 10-year sentence by Judge William Blue, according to state statutes, he becomes eligible for parole after serving one year. Judge Blue also gave Ellis credit for time served in county jail, since Sept. 21, 1978.

"It's possible he's eligible for parole the day he checks in," his attorney, Robert Creager, said.

Actually, Ellis was transferred from the County jail to the state penitentiary over the weekend and has about a month to serve before his first year behind bars is up.

EVEN THOUGH he becomes eligible for parole, it is difficult to determine whether he will receive it, according to John Greenholtz, chairman of the state Board of Parole.

"Just because he's eligible for parole doesn't mean he's entitled to it," Greenholtz said.

He also said that Ellis will be interviewed by the board and that a counseling program will be established for him in prison.

But, he warned, it is too early to determine whether the parole board will grant Ellis his freedom.

"I haven't even seen him yet," he said. Defense attorneys argued before Judge Blue, in pressing for a lenient sentence, that Ellis had served his first 11 months in a county jail, not a state penitentiary, which they considered to be "harder time."

"THERE'S NOT as much to do in a county jail," Creager said. "You just sit around in a cubicle. Inmates in a state penitentiary have more room to move around and recreational programs."

However, that argument apparently didn't carry much weight with the Lancaster District Court Judge. The 10-year sentence is the maximum possible for manslaughter conviction in Nebraska.

And, according to Greenholtz, it won't carry any weight with the parole board either. Greenholtz said that jail time is jail

time, regardless of where it's been served. "If they didn't intend for him to serve any more time than he already had, they would have released him," Greenholtz said.

NO MATTER how much time Ellis serves, Creager is confident it won't be the full 10 years. Because of the state's good time provisions, Creager said, "it's impossible for him to sit out there for 10 years unless he screws up everyday."

Creager added that because Ellis stands a good chance of serving a limited sentence, he may be out of prison before the State Supreme Court decides whether to grant an appeal. Both Ellis' conviction and sentence will be appealed to the Supreme Court.

Although Ellis continued to his innocence, Creager said the sentence was "the most favorable he could have had." And, Creager added, once the appeal, called a writ of error, is filed with the Supreme Court, bond must be set for Ellis in a District Court, affording him another chance to go free before an appeal would be decided.

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