

Bill would require creationism taught in schools

By Kim Hachiya

Amidst references made to the Scopes Monkey trials of the 1920s, in which the court said it was not illegal to teach evolutionary theory in the public schools, testimony was heard Tuesday afternoon in the Nebraska Legislature's Education Committee hearing to require the teaching of creationism theory in public schools.

LB182, introduced by Grand Island Sen. Howard Peterson, would require creation-science theory of man's origins to be taught concurrently with an evolutionary theory.

Peterson testified that the proposal would "foster balance of fairness and not advocate religious teaching" on the origin of man.

He added that he believed the bill would "save our public schools" and prevent the weakening of the public school system by slowing down the number of parents who are removing their children from public schools to avoid teaching contrary to their religious beliefs.

Peterson disputed a Nebraska Attorney General's opinion which says the constitutionality of the bill is doubtful, citing a statement released by Neligh Sen. John DeCamp, who said he thought the bill was constitutional and offered his support.

Peterson also disputed the theory of evolution, by saying that if evolution was valid, it would be unnecessary to

try to preserve whooping cranes because under an evolutionary concept, if the rare birds die out, they will simply re-evolve and reappear from another species.

Tom Kolb, a tutor from Franklin, Nebr. spoke for nearly an hour in favor of LB182.

"This bill is morally troubling," he said. "On one hand you have the right of the schools to be allowed to determine the appropriate curriculum, on the other, there is the right of the student to be given both sides of a controversial issue."

Kolb argued for a "balanced approach," saying that his experience as a teacher showed him that students are often troubled by evolution theory which "goes against" their religious upbringing.

He said teaching both methods would allow students to make their own choices as to whether to accept either theory.

Several committee members expressed reservations about the Legislature interfering with local school board's curriculum choices.

Sen. Chris Beutler of Lincoln, said, "Rarely, if ever, have we interfered with curriculum on the local levels. If the legislature is to interfere, who is to decide which theories are appropriate and balanced?"

Committee chairman Gerald Koch told Kolb that curriculum changes should be made on the local level, not at the Legislature.

Charles Nichols, a faculty member of the Grace College of the Bible in Omaha, said the bill was necessary because school boards are unresponsive to the requests of citizens to include creationism theory.

According to Sen. Ernie Chambers, "LB182 is ridiculous." Chambers said it would be impossible to separate religious Biblical doctrine from the teachings."

Chambers cited 12 states where similar bills have been introduced but killed.

"The trend is clear. The education committee would do a disservice to the state, to teachers and to religion if this thing is put into the public schools," Chambers said.

Dick Kurtenbach of the Nebraska Civil Liberties Union also voiced opposition to the bill, saying it was designed "purely and simply to promote one religious point of view in the public schools."

Anne Campbell, State Commissioner of Education, said the State Department of Education and the State Board of Education both oppose the bill because it would mandate curriculum on the state level.

"Teaching techniques and curriculum should be the local school board's prerogative," Campbell said.

Campbell estimated the cost of implementing the bill would be more than \$3 million dollars in textbook purchases, library books and teacher training.

The committee will decide the fate of the bill later in the session.

SURE party announces candidacy for ASUN

By Tom Prentiss

Sen. Rick Mockler announced his candidacy for ASUN president Tuesday.

Mockler, the current ASUN speaker, heads the ticket of Students United for Responsible Education, which is the first party to declare for the March 4 election.

Mockler, a junior political science from Omaha, said students should be viewed as consumers of education. He said students should research the "product of education more closely, so that education will indeed be responsible."

Dan Wedekind, an agricultural engineering major from Newman Grove, is the party's first vice-presidential candidate. Sophomore Doran Matzke of Sidney, an undeclared student in the College of Arts and Sciences is the second vice-presidential candidate.

In his roles as ASUN senator and past vice president of the Residence Hall Association, Mockler said, he gained a "good sense of how to deal with administrators effectively and diplomatically."

Mockler said he would like teacher evaluations to be published so students could use them as a "consumer report on teachers."

Matzke said SURE would like the

Health Center to be more accountable for its use of student fees. The Health Center receives \$32.62 per semester from each student's fees, she added.

"The Health Center receives the largest portion of our student fees. Yet the Health Center submitted to the student Committee for Fees Allocations merely a three-page budget summary," Matzke said.

Mockler said the Daily Nebraskan, which receives 70 cents from each student per semester, submits an "elaborate detailed budget" to the CFA committee.

More student involvement in forming the Five-Year Plan could have made a difference in the decision to raise laboratory class fees last semester, Wedekind said.

"Changes are brought about by representing the feelings of an informed student body, having a working knowledge of the university system, and having an approach to working with people that only comes from experience," Wedekind said.

Mockler said the SURE party has about one-third to half of their candidate selection completed.

The filing deadline for the March 4 election is Feb. 18. Filing can be completed through the ASUN office and the Electoral Commission.



Rick Mockler

Photo by Mitch Hrdlicka

City Council proposes waste-burning energy plant

By Abby Maahs

A proposal by the Lincoln City Council to build a plant to convert Lincoln's trash to useable steam energy and which names UNL as a potential customer does not leave UNL holding their breath over the deal.

The waste-burning steam plant would produce more than enough energy to serve both UNL's City and East campuses according to a feasibility study conducted for the council by Gibbs & Hill of Omaha, the State Energy Office and Lincoln Electric System.

Dr. Ronald Wright, UNL vice chancellor for business and finance, said the real problem is finding a location for the plant.

"It takes a large-sized property to handle the volume of garbage trucks without disrupting the surrounding neighborhood," he said.

Archer Daniels Midlans, another potential recipient of the energy, has already

offered to locate the plant on its property. The plant would not generate enough power to serve both UNL and an industry such as ADM, which is a Lincoln soybean processing industry.

Wright said UNL's Christmas and summer vacations create a peak-and-valley demand which would create inefficient energy use compared with the year-round demands of industries like Goodyear and ADM.

"Likewise, we depend on a constant availability of energy. We can't afford to have the plant call up and say 'sorry, there's not enough garbage today,'" Wright said.

"I personally believe that solid waste is a source of energy we must explore. We don't have unlimited resources and much of what we throw away has petrol derivations. But the cost of solid-waste energy is about twice that of natural gas or electricity. Right now it's just not economically feasible."

Gibbs & Hill representative Lee Snyder estimated the cost of the plant at \$52 million and said it could be as high as \$7 million by the time contractors begin planning.

"If the City Council decides to go ahead with the plant, their next step is to look over potential customers and negotiate steam contracts," Snyder said. "They will have to implement a garbage haulers agreement and, most importantly, apply for state and federal grants for funding."

Lincoln's garbage is currently taken to Arrow-Airport East landfill. According to the feasibility study, the plant would have an ash residue which will be disposed at the landfill. Water for operation would be "graywater" from Lincoln's municipal sewage treatment system.

The study cited pollution control and the creation of 50 employment positions as

positive effects of the plant. Snyder said the cost of the plant would be the major deterrent for the council.

inside wednesday

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