RHA candidate asserts communication is needed

By Patty Pryor

Ross Snygg, a junior financing major living in Harper Hall, has announced his candidacy for Residence Hall Association president. Snygg is running with the CARE Party (Concerned Adult Residents for Excellence). Other CARE candidates include Tom Macdissi, a junior civil engineering major living in Harper, for vice president; Chris Little, an undeclared freshman from Neihardt Residence Center, for secretary; and Gary Brethour, a junior civil engineering major from Cather Hall, for treasurer.

Communication is the key plank in the party's platform, Snygg said.

To strengthen contacts between the residents and RHA, the platform states executives will attend individual hall meetings to keep informed on issues in each hall.

The CARE Party also wants to place suggestion boxes in each of the halls.

Simplified parliamentary procedures RHA meetings also will increase student involvement in the association, Snygg said.

Residents will feel more comfortable attending meetings and more will be accomplished with less rigid rules of order, he said.

Snygg also wants to improve RHA's ties with the regents by implementing a program called "Adopt a Regent."

RHA would establish and maintain close communication with one of the regents. The regent would keep the association informed of the board's concerns, and would in turn relay the residents' concerns to his fellow regents.

The same would be done with ASUN, Snygg said. An RHA member would be appointed to attend ASUN meetings each week and to keep a "constant line of communication" open between the two groups, according to the platform.

Prof: Shock is not remedy

By Kim Hachiya

Sending a criminal to prison for a short term in order to shock him or her into reforming may not be the criminal justice panacea some have made it out to be, a criminal justice professor from Temple University said.

Gennaro Vito, speaking to a group of students last week in the Nebraska Union Rostrum, delivered a speech based on research he has done on the shock probation system in Ohio.

Vito described the program as a sort of "Scared Straight" for adults. After conviction a presentencing investigation, an offender can be sent to prison for a short term and then released on probation, subject to the usual probationary rules.

Vito said research has shown that the repeat rate for people on shock probation and regular probation is similar, which leads him to question the necessity of "sending people to prison who don't need to be there."

"If they come back worse than when they went in, we're in trouble," he said. "There are other alternatives in sentencing, such as community service duties."

Vito said the stated purpose of shock probation is deterrence, but he said the real purpose was to give judges "another weapon in their discretionary arsenal."

Shock probation allows the judge to decide when to release the person from prison into probation, thus the judge retains control over the individual's destiny longer than a simple sentence.

Vito said the main problem with shock probation is that judges are keeping people in prison longer than necessary to shock them, and the long sentences are not as effective.

He said 30 to 130 days is the most effective sentence length, but some judges have not released prisoners for as long as eight to 12 months after incarceration begins.

"We must remember that shock may not have the same effect on all people," Vito said. "Often we do not include an assessment of effectiveness on certain people."

Vito said because the effectiveness of the shock is unknown, the usefulness of the whole program is questionable.

"It makes no sense to me to lock a person in a cage, strip him of his individuality, subject him to sexual assault and then expect him to come out happy and adjusted.

"The shock itself may have a negative effect, it may not be deterring. Instead of making them better, it makes them worse.

"I can only recommend that you don't lock the person up for any longer than 30 days for this program to work. Any longer over-shocks them and impedes reintegration into the community."

Vito's visit to UNL was sponsored by the Criminal Justice Student organization, the department of criminal justice and the graduate college.

Correction

The Daily Nebraskan incorrectly reported in a story Tuesday that UNL student Mike Kratville violated bylaws of the NU Board of Regents and ASUN by registering as a second student lobbyist in the Nebraska Legislature.

According to Nette Nelson, chairman of the Government Liaison Committee, any student may register as a lobbyist under the bylaws, but only she can officially represent the UNL student body.