

## Downtown Lincoln sculpture remains shapeless

By Patty Pryor

Proposals have come and gone, but Lincoln still has no sculpture at the corner of 13th and O streets.

"The city has been in the process for over five years now of acquiring a sculpture for that corner," Elaine Carpenter, administrative assistant to the mayor, said.

"We've looked at a number of artists' proposals, but none of them have been sat-

isfactory," she said. "They've either been inappropriate or too expensive."

The National Endowment for the Arts has provided a \$40,000 grant for construction of the sculpture, Carpenter said. Local funds are to match that amount.

Guidelines set by the endowment, however, have compounded problems in finding a suitable proposal, she said. For instance, one of the guidelines requires that the sculpture involve the entire intersection, she said.

"This is basically so that the piece isn't viewed as a private piece, so that it's known as a public sculpture," she said.

A sculpture spanning across all four corners is too costly, Carpenter said, and a sculpture in the middle of the intersection would be too obstructive.

The mayor's sculpture committee, composed of seven private citizens, would like to see something built on the corner of the NBC building, where there is plenty of open public space, she said.

The committee is trying to get some of the endowment's guidelines changed, so such a proposal would be acceptable, Carpenter said.

In any case, the \$40,000 grant is still secure, she said.

The proposal for artwork on the corner originated as a Bicentennial project, Carpenter said, but when no suitable design was found in time, the project became part of the city's downtown beautification plan.

## Foreign teaching assistants communicate with students

By Ward W. Triplett II

The inability of some foreign graduate teaching assistants to communicate with their students is not as prevalent as student's complain, said the director of a UNL program that teaches English to speakers of foreign languages.

"I'm not trying to deny that there are some problems," Hassan Sharifi, an associate professor of English said. "But most of the complaints that I hear are imaginary."

Although foreign students make up a small percentage of the teaching assistants, it is not uncommon for students to register complaints to department heads claiming they cannot understand the assistant. Sharifi said few of those are legitimate.

"Many times, it is a matter of psychology," Sharifi said. "They see someone in front of them who is speaking different than what they are used to, and then decide there is no way they can understand this person."

Sharifi said instructors from Texas or the deep South would have the same problem, because many university students are from small Nebraska towns where few people speak different dialects.

"When you add that to the skin color of most TAs being different, it is no surprise that some students will complain," Sharifi said.

Russell Nelson, associate dean of graduate studies, said his office receives complaints about foreign-speaking teacher assistants.

"I don't know if we've had any specific complaints reach this office this semester," Nelson said.

Nelson said the office is aware of the communication problem and will continue to monitor it carefully. Selecting the TAs themselves is a part of the monitoring.

"Usually a foreign student cannot hold

a teacher assistant position his first year at the university," Nelson said, "but that can vary depending on how much English is taught in the country they're coming from. For example, students from Europe are very well versed in English, and can step in right away."

Nelson said figures for this semester aren't available yet from the various departments, but last fall, there were 60 foreign TAs, and 64 foreign research assistants at UNL.

All foreign students must pass an English test to be admitted to an American university, Sharifi said. Once on the UNL campus, they are supposed to take an additional test through the student's department.

Sharifi said a special effort is made for prospective teaching assistants on the test, but it is up to the individual departments, or the assistants themselves to ensure that they do well on the tests.

"If the departments that hire these people don't tell me they have people who do have trouble with the language, I cannot scrutinize them," Sharifi said. Some TAs come in on their own to improve their pronunciation or other specific grammar skills, he said.

"I also have some who want to improve their English, but after I talk to them a little while, it's obvious that they know and speak English extremely well," Sharifi said. "It's just that someone has been telling them they can't do it."

Sharifi said he sponsored a proposal to teach special class sections for non-native speaking teaching assistants, but the UNL Teacher Council rejected the grant needed for the project.

"I thought that would be an effective way to help solve this situation, but I didn't succeed in getting the grant," Sharifi said.

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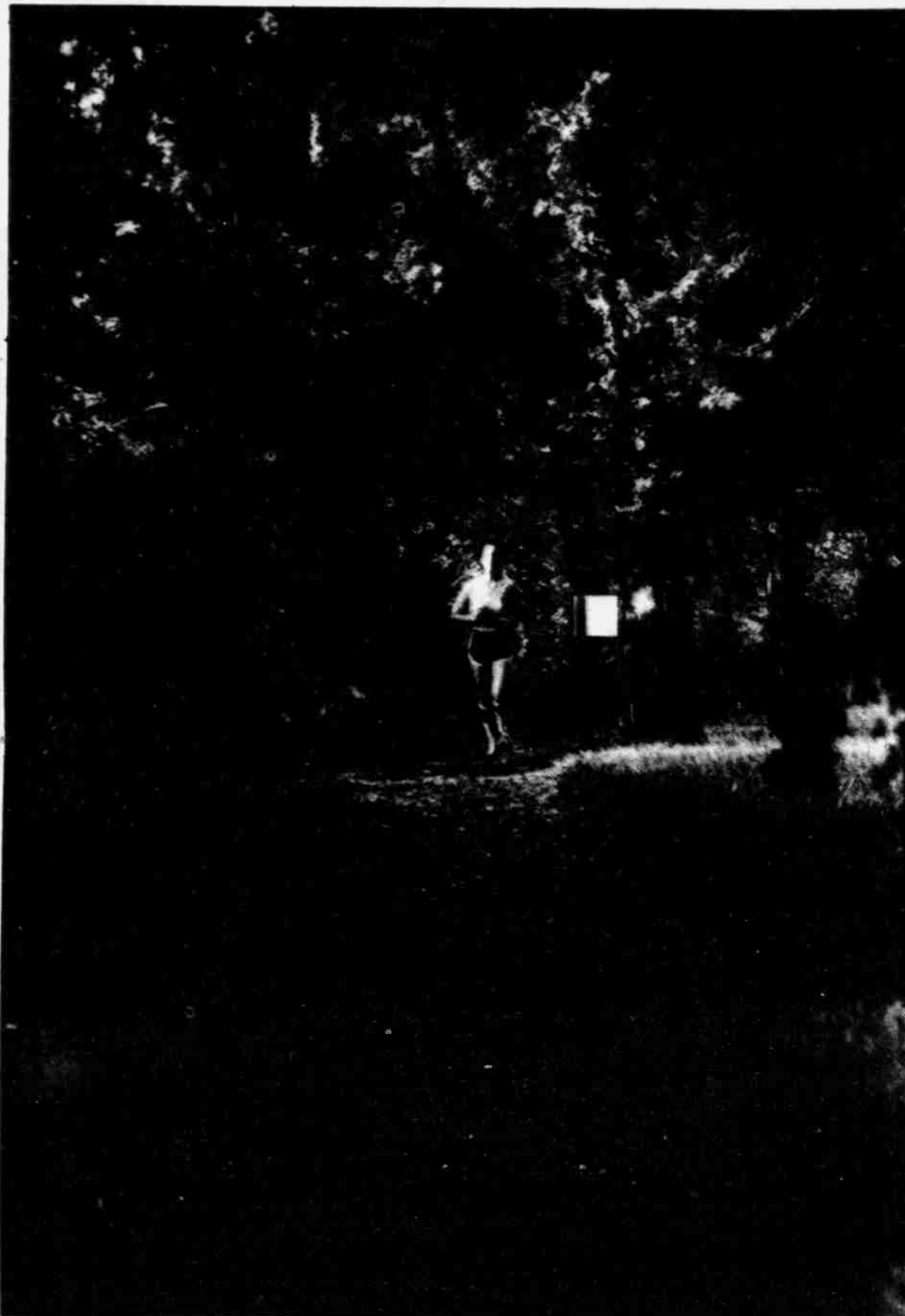


Photo by Kent Morgan Olsen

Christine Kess takes a quiet run down one of Wilderness Park's secluded jogging trails.

## Rape abuse line offers 24-hour support system

By Patty Pryor

Volunteers are needed for the Rape/Spouse Abuse Line, a 24-hour hotline run by the Family Services Association, said Margie Ryan, FSA community educator.

Volunteers also serve in other ways, she said, including advocacy programs and public speaking.

"It really depends on what they want to do," she said. "We don't ask for any kind of commitment right away."

The hotline is staffed by about 40 volunteers, Ryan said. Each one usually takes one shift a week. Only one volunteer is on the line at a time, she said.

Callers are often seeking information or referrals, she said.

The volunteers are able to refer callers to one of two domestic violence shelters in Lincoln, she said, and to various low-cost legal agencies, although no actual legal representation is offered by FSA itself.

The frequency of calls varies widely, Ryan said, but averages 15 to 20 a day.

Most volunteers on the line are college students, she said, but there have been a few 17- and 18-year-old volunteers in the past.

Pretty basic

"The phone counseling technique is pretty basic," she said.

In addition to the hotline, FSA offers an advocacy service, which involves accompanying a rape victim to the hospital or to court proceedings, Ryan said.

"It's mainly just a 24-hour support system," she said.

FSA also maintains a speakers bureau as part of its community education program. The program usually involves about six volunteers, Ryan said.

The volunteers use a general lecture format, she said, which they take to schools, women's groups and other interested organizations.

The association recently added a program dealing with sexual assaults on children, Ryan said.

The program was presented to a Parent-Teacher Association meeting last spring, "and the response was just incredible," she said.

There have been quite a few sexual assaults on children lately, and she said this has helped raise parents' concern.

"I think they're more comfortable with not having to initiate a conversation on sex with their kids," Ryan said. "They're glad to have someone else talk to them."

Non-threatening

"And we do that in a real non-threatening way," she said. "We handle the subject through basic safety tips."

The Family Services also offer in-service training for people in the community, such as police officers, attorneys, emergency room personnel and short-term counseling for victims.

"When a victim calls, we really try to encourage them

to come in (for counseling and possible referrals)," Ryan said.

Before beginning any work, all volunteers participate in a training session, which will be held Oct. 7 through 24 at the FSA office, 1133 H St.

The training prepares volunteers for all the various areas of service, Ryan said, and consists of role-playing and discussions on sexual assault, domestic violence and crisis intervention.

The training sessions, held twice a year, usually draw 15 to 20 volunteers, she said.

This fall, the association is more actively seeking male volunteers, Ryan said.

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