

Daily Nebraskan

Monday, December 10, 1984

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

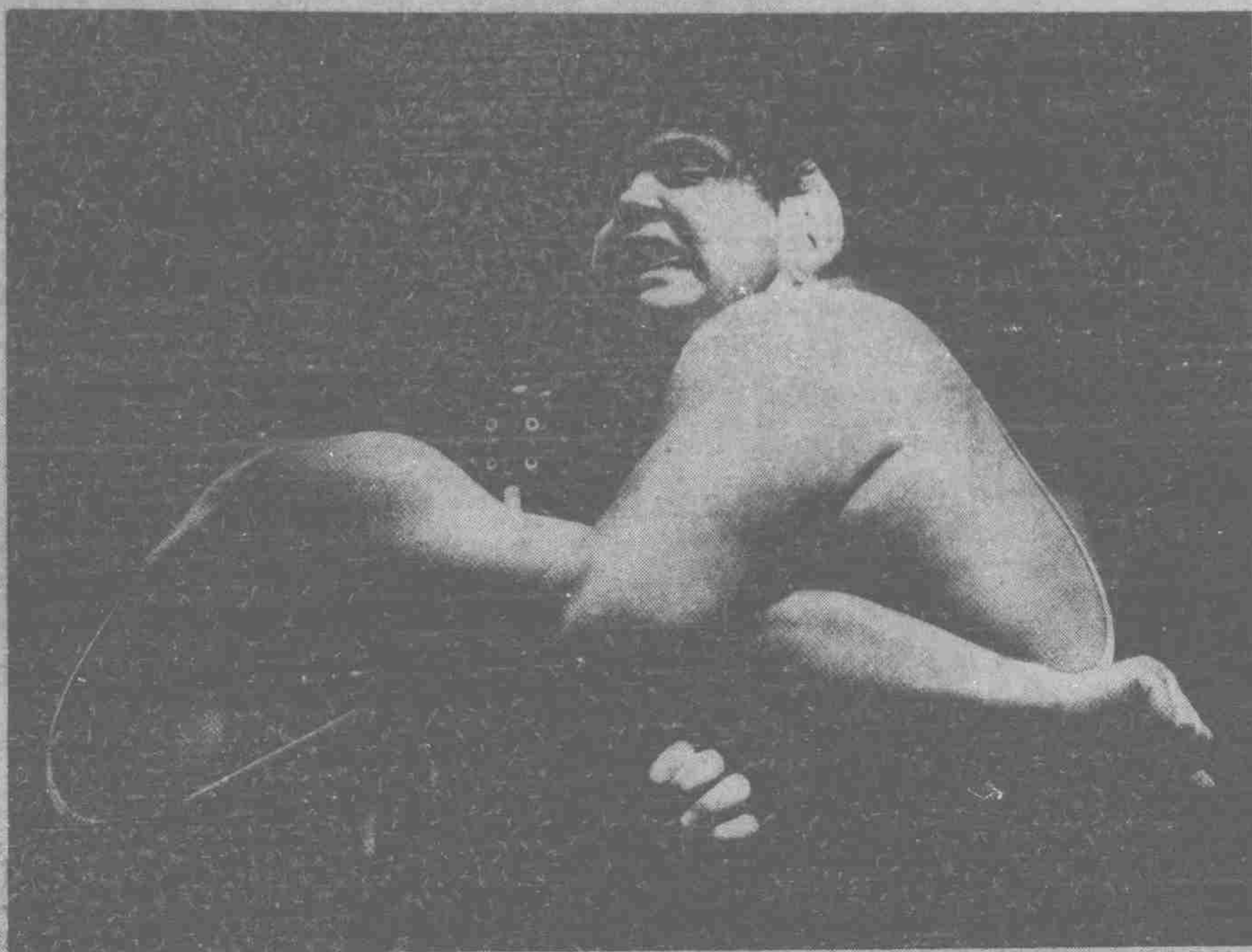
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Weather: Today, becoming sunny by afternoon with a high of 61 (16C). Tonight, clear and warm with a low of 32 (0C). Tuesday, mostly sunny with a high of 57 (14C), but increasing clouds later in the afternoon with a slight chance of showers.

Bob Brubacher/Daily Nebraskan

Photos depict colorful history...Page 12

Nebraska falls into Pacific...Page 8



Mark Davis/Daily Nebraskan

Put your headgear on my shoulder, ya big galoot...

UNL heavyweight wrestler Gary Albright, right, grabs the arm of Al Holldemn of South Dakota State. Albright pinned Holldemn in 1 minute, 42 seconds. Albright is ranked as the No. 1 heavyweight in the nation. Story on Page 10.

Retail spending up 12 percent

Mild weather, better economy boost holiday sales

By Ann Lowe

Daily Nebraskan Senior Reporter

Editor's note: This is the first article in a five-part series on the fun, festivities, economics and headaches of the holiday season.

Lincoln merchants say warmer days and a brighter economy have boosted this year's holiday sales over the last few years. Some hope for "record-breaking" December sales. Others have more conservative expectations.

"So far, it's been an excellent holiday shopping period," said Sam Marchese, vice president and director of development at Gateway Shopping Center. "The conditions this year have been ideal."

Blowing snow and icy streets last year kept would-be shoppers at home, Marchese said. This year,

however, mild weather has given holiday shoppers an early start, he said.

And folks are buying more this year, Marchese said. Low interest rates and unemployment figures mean people have more money to spend, he said.

In recent years, people have bought "needs" instead of "wants" for Christmas gifts. With a better economy this year, they're "buying a little bit of each," he said.

An "extended weekend with Christmas Eve on Monday" will be "record-breaking sales days," Marchese predicted.

"I expect this will be the best Christmas selling season of the '80s so far."

Bob Morand, owner of the Toy Room at East Park Plaza, is less sure of a booming shopping

period.

Sales are "holding their own," compared to the past two years," Morand said. But the hope of a record-breaking season is "media hype," he said.

"You read the papers that sales are going to be up," Morand said. "They're about the same as last year."

"People are still pretty conservative — money's still tight," he said.

Statistics show, however, that Lincoln residents are spending more. According to a November report from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, Lincoln's 1984 sales through December were up 12 percent from the same period in 1983.

Shirley Kling, DEO staff assistant, said she can't explain the

jump in Lincoln's sales. Most other Nebraska cities show sharp declines in retail business, she said.

Kling also said she can't tell whether Lincoln's buying pattern will continue through Christmas. Retailers hope they will.

"You live 10 months of the year for two," Morand said. "No matter what business you're in, the last two months will make or break you for the whole year."

On the average, retail stores make 40 percent of their annual sales in the last three months of the year, Marchese said. And merchants generally make half the year's profits in October through December, he said.

Morand said he does about 30 percent of the year's business in the five weeks before Christmas. Depending on the merchan-

dise, December sales at Miller & Paine are "at least 50 percent more than an ordinary month's" and twice as much as a slow month's sales, Vice President Bob Campbell said.

Miller & Paine holiday sales are good so far, Campbell said.

"It's started very well, though it's difficult to compare one year against the next," he said. "A Monday last year was two days closer to Christmas."

Campbell said he can't predict how the year will end. But he said he's confident this year's sales increase will continue through the holidays.

"Looking at the national trend, it appears that we will have a good late business," he said.

Academic computing support may help UNL 'keep pace'

By Gene Gentrup

Daily Nebraskan Senior Reporter

UNL's academic computing program could take significant strides in updating its equipment by the 1985-86 fiscal year, according to two UNL officials.

Don Leuenberger, assistant vice president and director of universitywide computing, said if UNL receives \$1.6 million of a proposed \$4 million improvement project, it could advance UNL's support of academic computing to 80 percent of its peer institutions. The NU Board of Regents

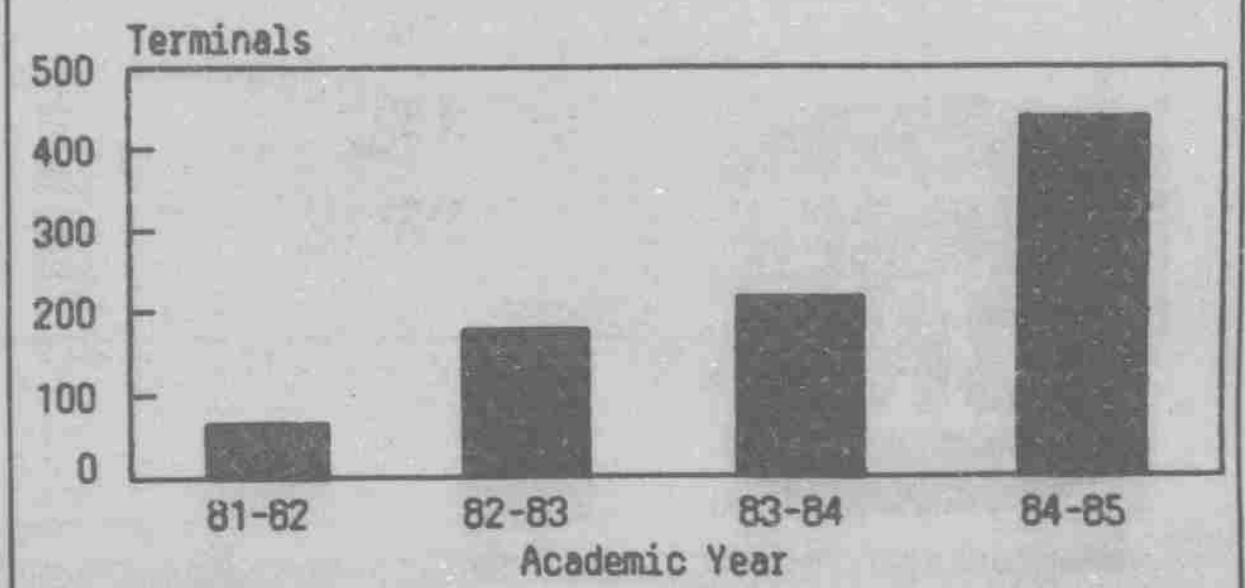
has approved a needs statement for the proposal and will submit it to the Legislature in January.

UNL's lack of sufficient academic computers caused students and faculty to protest in 1983, and UNL Chancellor Martin Massengale used encumbered funds to begin improving the computer program.

"The specifics have been laid out for the next 18 months to two years, but beyond that it's tough," Leuenberger said.

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Number of Public and Semipublic Terminals at UNL



Courtesy of UNL Computing Resource Center