

# Daily Nebraskan

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**Weather:** Partly sunny and warm today with a high of 36 (2C). Tuesday night, cloudy with a chance for snow flurries and a low of 12 (-11C). Wednesday, cloudy and cold with snow developing and a high of 18 (-8C).

Bob Brubaker/Daily Nebraskan

**Area magazine boosts the arts...Page 10**

**Young gymnasts lead the pack...Page 8**

## University officials investigate merits of liberal education

Naming a select 12-member commission, Martin Massengale, UNL chancellor, announced plans on Monday to conduct a major review on the status of general liberal education at UNL.

The review, according to the chancellor, will examine existing programs and curricula in an effort to "clarify a common university purpose" in building curricular coherence, a common learning experience, the role of general liberal education in professional and preprofessional programs and effective academic advising.

"I believe the time has come for us to launch a comprehensive university-wide review of the status of general liberal education," Massengale said.

"While each college at UNL already requires in varying degrees common courses of study, we have little uniformity among such requirements throughout the campus.

"We can all benefit from an attempt to clarify a common university purpose in undergraduate education. We need to focus on what intellectual qualities and skills should be essential to undergraduate education in addition to major programs and professional study for the remainder of the century. Further, there should be a more effective and integral relationship between general education and specialized study in a major field."

Noting that many schools have undertaken similar studies in recent years with often limited results, Massengale said he will urge his Chancellor's Commission on General Liberal Education to consider the total undergraduate experience of students, not just the first two years of study.

"We should have some required

courses in the university which seek to fulfill the aims of a general liberal education exclusively, not incidentally, and ones that deal with the integration and synthesis of knowledge. I believe we need to be assured that our students have some shared intellectual experiences that serve to improve their mental skills and basic knowledge.

"We must re-examine the fundamental aims of a general liberal education and provide a coherent structure to insure that these goals will be reflected in each student's course of study, and not just in the first two years but throughout one's undergraduate education. Our effort to formulate a more structured and coherent program of general liberal education at UNL must keep in mind the distinctive character and essential mission of this institution."

Massengale said Gerry Meisels, dean of UNL's College of Arts and Sciences, will lead the commission, assisted by John Yost, associate to the chancellor.

Other members of the commission will include Quentin Faulkner, associate professor of music; Ted Harting, dean, College of Agriculture; Robert Knoll, Regents professor of English; Stan Liberty, dean, College of Engineering and Technology; Willis Moreland, professor and chairman, Adult and Continuing Education; Gwen Newkirk, professor and chairman, Education and Family Resources; Clark Osborn, a junior from Grand Island; Keith Sawyers, professor of architecture; Gary Schwendiman, dean, College of Business Administration; and Linda Shipley, associate professor of journalism.

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Mark Davis/Daily Nebraskan

Lahniers

## U.S. District Attorney Lahniers hopes to continue dual career

By Michael R. Hooper  
Staff Reporter

Ron Lahniers is happy with his dual career.

Whether Lahniers, U.S. district attorney for Nebraska and a part-time UNL business law professor is giving legal advice to a student or combating a Lincoln drug problem with his staff of 12 attorneys, he says he's content

"where he's at."

Lahniers, 52, has been teaching a business law class at UNL since 1983.

On Nov. 30, he will be up for a four-year reappointment as U.S. district attorney for Nebraska, a presidentially appointed post. He wants the reappointment, he said.

"If Reagan is happy with my work, I'm happy where I'm at," he said.

Lahniers said he likes getting his 35 students to share opinions about legal cases during class. But, he said, "35 (students) is getting a bit large for group participation."

During one class period students answered a legal question and Lahniers said to his class, "You're getting better, I'm proud of you."

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## Paddlefish's plight enlists concern

# State fish proposal in the swim again

By Brad Gifford  
Senior Reporter

Adopting an official state fish would make Nebraskans more conscious about the quantity and quality of water, according to an American Fisheries Society official.

Randy Winter, vice president of the society's Nebraska chapter, said a state fish would be more than a symbol of state heritage.

"It would bring attention to the fact that water means more to the state than just to be pumped out," Winter said.

"The importance of a state fish is to show people that the quality of water is important to something else besides us," said Edward Peters, a UNL Associate Professor of forestry, fisheries and wildlife.

State Sen. Lee Rupp of Monroe, who introduced a legislative bill calling for a state fish, said he thinks a state fish would primarily be an educational tool for elementary teachers.

"Third-, fourth- or fifth-grade teachers might have students go out and find a picture of the fish and write 100 words on it," Rupp said.

The aquatic animal being asked to deliver these things is the paddlefish.

Peters said the paddlefish is an appropriate selection. Although it is not found primarily in Nebraska, it is unique when compared to other varieties in the state.

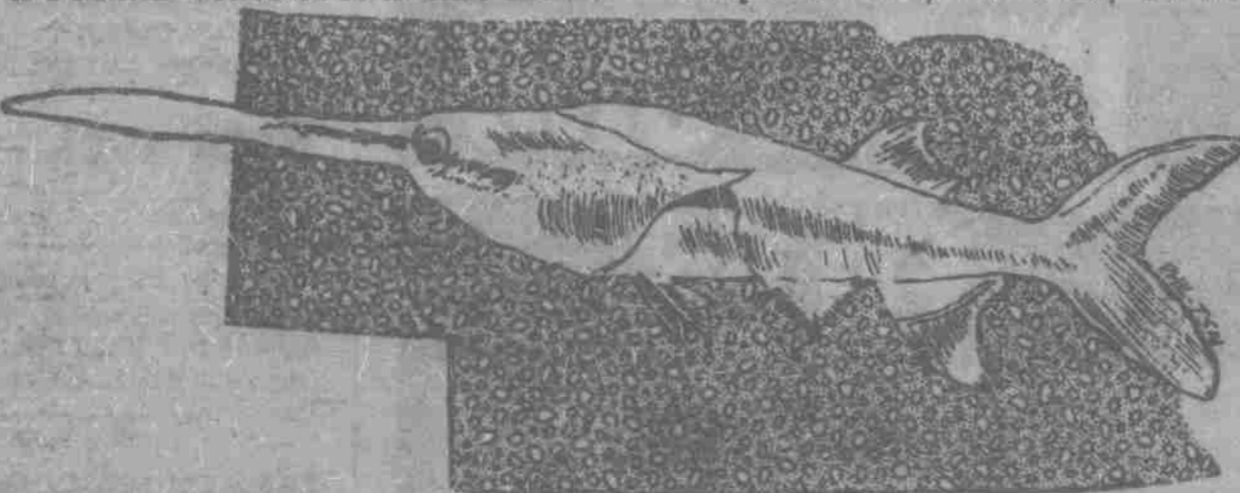
The largest paddlefish caught in Nebraska was six feet long and weighed 85 pounds. They are battleship gray, have smooth skin with few scales and are leathery-looking. The most distinguishing characteristic is their elongated snout,

which may comprise one-third of the fish's length.

In Nebraska, paddlefish swim mostly in the Missouri River, especially between Gavins Point Dam and Ponca State Park, where the Missouri is a National Recreation River. Some also are

feed by swimming through water filled with plankton and small plant particles and filter the nutrients with their gills. The only way to snare one is to cast a heavy-duty hook in a fast-moving channel and hope one inadvertently snags it.

"People work at it," Peters said, "But it's



The Paddlefish

found in the eastern reaches of the Platte River.

The paddlefish is a survivor. One of the earliest water animals, it has no bones or teeth. The skeleton is made of cartilage as flexible as humans' ears or noses. But because of its size, it has stayed off millions of years of would-be predators.

"When they get over 50-100 pounds, the only thing that eats them is man," Rupp said.

Catching them is no picnic, though.

Since they have no teeth or defined mouth, paddlefish don't bite baited hooks or lures. They

more by chance that they catch them."

People who are lucky enough to hook one savor both the accomplishment and the nourishment. Rupp termed paddlefish "poor man's lobster."

However, man has managed to keep paddlefish populations low by building dams and other water diversions. Paddlefish require vigorous water flow around gravel bars for reproduction. Dams have flooded and silted these spawning sites and sometimes make prime reproduction areas inaccessible.

Paddlefish are classified by the U.S. Fish and

Wildlife Service as a "species of concern," the last category before the threatened or endangered list.

Winter said that if people sympathize with the plight of the paddlefish, they might be more supportive of pending legislation that would protect instream flows. Rupp is co-sponsor of LB673, which would protect river- and stream-dependent life by establishing minimum base flows. The measure's intent is to regulate the amount of water diverted from streams and rivers.

The paddlefish has been nominated for state recognition before. Winter said the Nebraska chapter of the American Fisheries Society selected the fish several years ago and enlisted Lincoln Sen. Shirley Marsh to sponsor the measure in the Legislature in 1982. That proposal made it out of committee, but the full Legislature ran out of time to debate it.

Rupp introduced the fish bill this year again at the request of the society. LB95 is currently in the hands of the Miscellaneous Subjects Committee awaiting a hearing date. The bill will not cost the state any money, Rupp said. Nebraska would be the 22nd state to adopt a state fish. Florida has two.

Rupp, who was a fisheries biologist for 13 years, called the paddlefish an "excellent choice."

Peters said there was nothing wrong with selecting the paddlefish, but if he had his druthers...

"It's a neat fish, but it's not unique to Nebraska or anything," he said. "If I had a vote, I would have taken the Plains Topminnow."