

Former Soviet scientist thanks UNL professor

By Jen Deselms
Staff Reporter

Scientist A.M. Khazanov gave a UNL English professor an Israeli wooden camel as a gift of thanks for encouraging him while he was in disfavor with the Soviet government.

During a press conference Thursday morning Khazanov said a letter from Prof. Paul Olson gave him encouragement when the Soviets curtailed his scientific studies. He said Olson's invitation to attend a conference at the Nebraska Center for Continuing Education pleased him even though he did not expect to attend.

Khazanov, an internationally recognized expert on the nomadic indigenous people of middle Asia, is in Lincoln this week for a Great Plains Center conference on "Plains Indian Cultures: Past and Present Meanings."

When Khazanov applied for permission to emigrate to Israel six years ago, he said, the Soviet government refused his application because it was not in their interest for him to move. Khazanov said he wanted to move to Israel because he is Jewish.

Olson first wrote to Khazanov 18 months ago to invite him to the conference. But Khazanov couldn't attend the conference because he couldn't leave the country. If someone had told him then that he eventually would be able to attend the conference, Khazanov said, he would have thought it was a

"cruel joke."

Olson's letter surprised him, Khazanov said, and he sent a reply through friends in Finland.

When asked how he got the letter out of the Soviet Union, Khazanov at first would not answer. Then he replied that he sent the letter by "pigeon post" since birds have no borders.

After the government refused his emigration application, Khazanov said he was removed from the Soviet Academy of Sciences, and couldn't speak about or publish his research. But, he said, he was able to send manuscripts to other countries for publication. Khazanov continued to insist on his right to emigrate. Then, last November, he was called into the KGB office and given a last official warning to stop insisting on the move to Israel.

But just when he thought he would be sent to Siberia, Khazanov said, the government told him he would be leaving for Israel in three days.

Khazanov and his family now live in Israel, where he teaches at Hebrew University.

Even after Khazanov arrived in Israel, communication was difficult. Olson finally found him after contacting Khazanov's relatives who also are living in Israel.

Khazanov said he thinks the conference goes beyond Nebraska and the United States. This may be the most important conference in this area of study in recent years, he said.

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Police Report

Two microphones valued at \$300 each were reported stolen from the auditorium in the College of Business Administration on Wednesday.

Police say the microphones are believed to have been taken from a storage cabinet.

Other incidents reported Wednesday:
12:10 a.m. — License plates reported stolen from a car in Parking Area 3 at 14th and New Hampshire streets.

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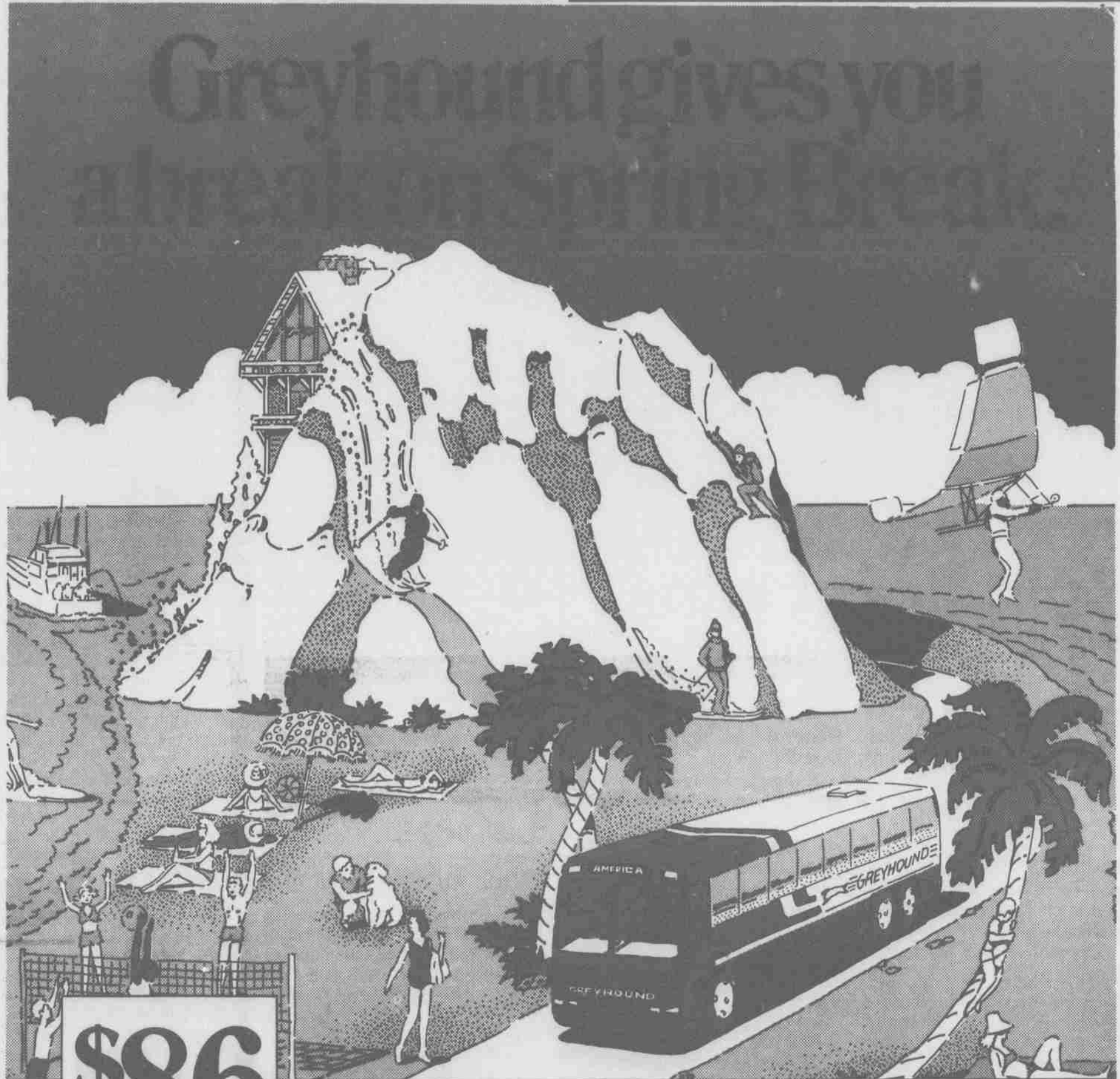
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