

Wednesday

**WEATHER:** A clear, cold morning Wednesday, then partly cloudy. High 20-25 and wind northwest 5 to 15 mph shifting to west 10 to 20 mph in the afternoon. Mostly cloudy and not as cold Wednesday night with a few snow flurries possible. Low 10 to 15 above. Partly cloudy and warmer Thursday with a high of 33.

## Huskers hope to rebound against Southern Illinois

Sports, Page 9

## 'A Flea in Her Ear' Foppish French Farce

Arts and Entertainment, Page 11

# Daily Nebraskan

December 10, 1986

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Vol. 86 No. 74

## NU budget cut advances

By Michael Hooper  
Senior Reporter

State senators gave first-round approval to a \$6.8 million budget-cut package that includes a \$1.6 million cut to NU's 1986-87 budget.

Without further debate over the cut to the university, senators passed LB1, 33-8.

Senators are expected to continue budget debate Wednesday, when they could be faced with more amendments.

LB1, which primarily consists of budget cuts assembled by the Appropriations Committee, did not advance to second-round debate until after lawmakers rejected amendments that would have spared public elementary and secondary education and mental-retardation services from cuts in state aid.

Papillion Sen. Ron Withem proposed an amendment to preserve the \$1.9 mil-

lion in state aid to public schools that was suggested by Gov. Bob Kerrey before the special session of the Legislature began last Friday.

Withem's amendment failed in the morning, 24-19, one vote short of approval. In the afternoon, Lincoln Sen. Don Wesley presented a motion to reconsider Withem's amendment, but it also failed 19-22.

Pleasant Dale Sen. Harold Sieck, offered an amendment to LB1 that would spare a \$300,000 cut from state aid to the mentally handicapped. The motion failed, 20-20.

Sieck said the money is needed for mentally handicapped people because "in the long run, it will save Nebraska dollars." He said mentally handicapped people are able to work and benefit the state economically.

See LEGISLATURE on 7

## 33 senators needed for tax petition

By The Associated Press

If 33 state senators officially agree to call a special session to raise the state's individual income tax rate, Gov. Bob Kerrey would have five days to convene the Legislature.

Secretary of State Allen Beermann gave this explanation of the procedures involved:

Ordinarily, Beermann would take the petition circulated among lawmakers by Sen. Vard Johnson of Omaha, calling for the special session. Beermann would then survey those senators whose names didn't appear on the petition.

However, Johnson said that if he didn't get 33 signatures, he wouldn't submit the petition to Beermann.

"I've got 22 signatures right now, and it's getting a little tough," Johnson said. "It doesn't look real good right now, but we'll have to wait and see."

If the petition is submitted to Beermann, he would poll the remaining senators by registered or certified mail. He said he could probably do that job quickly by sending the letters to the clerk of the Legislature, who could quickly give them to the senators who are meeting in Lincoln.

Beermann has 10 days to complete the polling, but said he would try to complete the job as quickly as possible.

## Supporters to try again to save nursing program

By the Associate Press

Supporters of a four-year nursing program at Scottsbluff plan to mount a push in the Legislature to reverse a decision to wipe out state funding for the program.

"It's close, but I think there's a good possibility that the votes are there," Sen. Sandra Scofield of Chadron said Tuesday.

Scofield said an amendment might be offered during second-round budget debate that would restore \$100,000 for the new University of Nebraska nursing program at Scottsbluff.

Lawmakers gave initial approval to the budget bill Tuesday and were expected to take up second-round debate Wednesday. The bill would trim \$6.8 million from the state's current general-fund budget.

By stripping the \$100,000 for the

Scottsbluff nursing program during first-round budget debate Monday, lawmakers eliminated financing for the program created by lawmakers earlier this year.

Another option for supporters of the Scottsbluff program would be the reintroduction of an amendment presented Tuesday by Scofield. The amendment would state the Legislature's intent for the NU Board of Regents to phase out UNL's nursing program over three years.

Funds for the UNL nursing program would be transferred to the Scottsbluff nursing program. Scofield abruptly withdrew the amendment after debate and shortly before a vote.

"Can you justify two schools of nursing that are 60 miles apart?" Scofield said during the floor debate, referring to nursing programs at UNL and the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha.

## Profs: Write early and often

By Merry Hayes  
Staff Reporter

In reaction to reports claiming university students cannot write well because they aren't taught proper writing skills in elementary or high schools, some UNL professors said writing needs to be emphasized in all courses and much earlier in a student's education.

A recent report by the National Assessment of Education Progress stated that "performance in writing in our schools is, quite simply, bad."

"The reports are right," said English professor, Robert Knoll. "Students cannot analyze ideas, they cannot express themselves, they cannot handle the language."

He said students come to the university less prepared than they used to be.

"Each generation is less educated than the generation before," he said. "It's a dreadful state of affairs we are in."

Knoll said he does not think students' writing is any worse mechan-

cally, but students do not have a feel for the language.

"The problem is not simply with skills, it's not having read the books from our history," he said.

He said his students cannot read as well; many of them cannot read out loud in class.

"They need the basic fundamental reading and writing," he said. "They don't need technical or career education."

He said cutting funds for education also hurts students.

"The constant harping at education is eating our seed corn," he said.

English professor Leslie Whipp said the reports should not be taken at face value because the behaviors tested are complex and the means of testing them fairly primitive.

He said people should be careful when making generalizations because the United States has more people in schools trying to learn to write than in any other country and they all are being tested.

However, Whipp said there is a lot of room for improvement.

He said the emphasis is not on writing but on grammar in most writing programs.

"We have known for 75 years that teaching grammar inhibits the learning of writing," he said.

Whipp said significant changes won't occur until there is a much lower student-teacher ratio in teaching writing, writing is stressed in all courses and intellectual activities are elevated over athletic activities.

"If we want to improve our writing, we must get something other than football as God in the state," he said.

Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Robert Furgason said student writing skills in general are not good.

He said there will be less resistance if writing is an expectation at the beginning of a student's education.

"I have found that the only way to learn to write is to write," he said. "I believe we need to ingrain this in people's thinking much sooner."



Paul Vonderlage/Daily Nebraskan

### Oh, Christmas tree

Heather Brogan, 7, of Lincoln helps her parents Tuesday pick out the right tree for the holiday season. The Brogans picked out their tree from William's Garden Center, which has sold over 700 trees since Nov. 28.

## Buy a Christmas tree, but take care of it

By Anne Mohri  
Staff Reporter

College students away from home might bear responsibility for a bouncing balsam fir this Christmas season for the first time.

One problem is keeping the tree fresh once it is home. Bob Berrier, co-owner of Scott's Garden, said cutting about two inches off the base of the tree just before placing it in water can help. Larry Westfall, of Earl May, and Berrier both suggested buying Christmas-tree preservative to mix with the water.

Dry Christmas trees are a fire hazard, said Ron Peery, a Lincoln Fire inspector, especially when they

are decorated with lights not listed or tested by Underwriter Laboratories (UL).

Because of the fire hazard, live trees and wreaths are not recommended as decorations in residence-hall rooms, halls or lounges, said Bill Welsh, coordinator for residence-hall administration.

Trees themselves are not the only Christmas hazards.

Households with small children should keep small ornaments out of reach because they easily can be swallowed or choked on, said Frank Brauer of the Consumer Product Safety Commission in Washington, D.C.