

Figures show rising tide of racism

AMHERST, Mass. — Twenty years after race riots tore up cities and an assassin killed civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., a rise in campus racial incidents is shaking some of the nation's ivory towers.

"Even from our crude figures we can see a tremendous increase in the number of reports of racial incidents in schools," said Eva Sears of the Center for Democratic Renewal, a Ku Klux Klan watchdog group in Atlanta.

"We're not talking about juvenile jokes here. We're talking about

something that can have a horrible, horribly vicious outcome," she said.

The number of incidents logged by the center has jumped from 14 in 1985 to 56 last year, she said.

They range from racist jokes on a talk show at the University of Michigan last year to alleged beatings of black students by whites at the University of Massachusetts in 1986 and earlier this year. Last spring, a caricature of a black man with a bone through his nose was drawn on a University of Wisconsin fraternity

lawn.

At the University of Pennsylvania last week, campus police maintained round-the-clock protection for a black activist who reportedly received death threats. A school fraternity was ordered to close for 18 months for sponsoring a strip show in which white students jeered black dancers.

"It was just a matter of time before things began erupting," said Joseph E. Lowrey, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in Atlanta.

Corrections

In the article, "UNL students go to prison for class," in the March 2 Daily Nebraskan the students were from two classes taught by Suzanne Ortega.

In Thursday's article, "Two hall presidents announce candidacies for RHA posts," the candidates announced Tuesday.

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Gunman opens fire inside crowded church

EMPORIA, Kan. — A heavily armed man walked into a crowded church Sunday and opened fire, killing one person and injuring four others before he was subdued by church members, authorities said.

The gunman entered through the side door of the Calvary Baptist Church during services shortly after 11 a.m. and fired several rounds from a semiautomatic handgun at the 100 people inside, police Chief Larry Blomenkamp said.

"He had no particular target. He just entered and started firing random shots," Blomenkamp said.

One witness told Emporia radio station KVOE that the gunman shouted "White supremacists!" before firing at parishioners in the predominantly white congregation. But Blomenkamp disputed this.

"He said absolutely nothing. He just walked in and began shooting," the police chief said.

The gunman was not a member of the church, and no motive was known, Blomenkamp said. The man

was taken to the Lyon County Jail, but no formal charges were filed.

Police said they were trying to confirm the name of the man, described as about 30 and of Oriental descent. Police believe the man drove a car with California license plates.

A young woman who said her father was killed in the shooting said the gunman entered the rear of the church, shouted at the congregation and began firing.

"I thought it was a joke," she said. The woman declined to give her name.

Parishioners scrambled for cover under the pews. When the shooting stopped, the woman said she "saw blood everywhere" and discovered her sister had been shot in the arm and her father was gravely wounded.

One man was dead on arrival at Newman Hospital about 11:15 a.m., nursing director Paula Wilson said. Two people were reported in good condition and a third was in serious but stable condition, she said.

In Brief

American helicopters in Persian Gulf attacked

MANAMA, Bahrain — American helicopters on a reconnaissance flight escaped Sunday after drawing heavy machine gun fire from an oil platform and several boats in the central Persian Gulf, U.S. officials said.

Iran was believed to be behind the attack. No casualties were reported.

The attack came about 25 hours after a U.S. warship, on patrol further north, fired at what were believed to be Iranian speedboats moving toward one of the Navy's offshore supply barges.

The two encounters shattered one of the longest periods of quiet in the gulf since the gulf's so-called "tanker war" began four years ago. There have been no reported attacks on shipping by either Iraq or Iran since Feb. 12.

But the two warring nations continued Sunday to trade savage missile attacks on each other's cities.

Both sides reported civilians killed or wounded in the missile and bombing attacks, but gave no figures.

Man in wheelchair charged with drunk driving

GALLATIN, Tenn. — A man who rode his motorized wheelchair in the path of a police car has been charged with driving under the influence.

James L. "Ironside" High, 29, of Gallatin, was arrested early Friday, Assistant Police Chief Wayne Brooks said. The incident occurred about four miles from High's residence. He was not struck.

High, who uses the wheelchair because of a farming accident 20 years ago, said he drove his wheelchair in front of the police car to avoid a ditch. Detective David Lane said High fell out of the wheelchair as an officer tried to question him.

Air ambulance probe uncovers violations

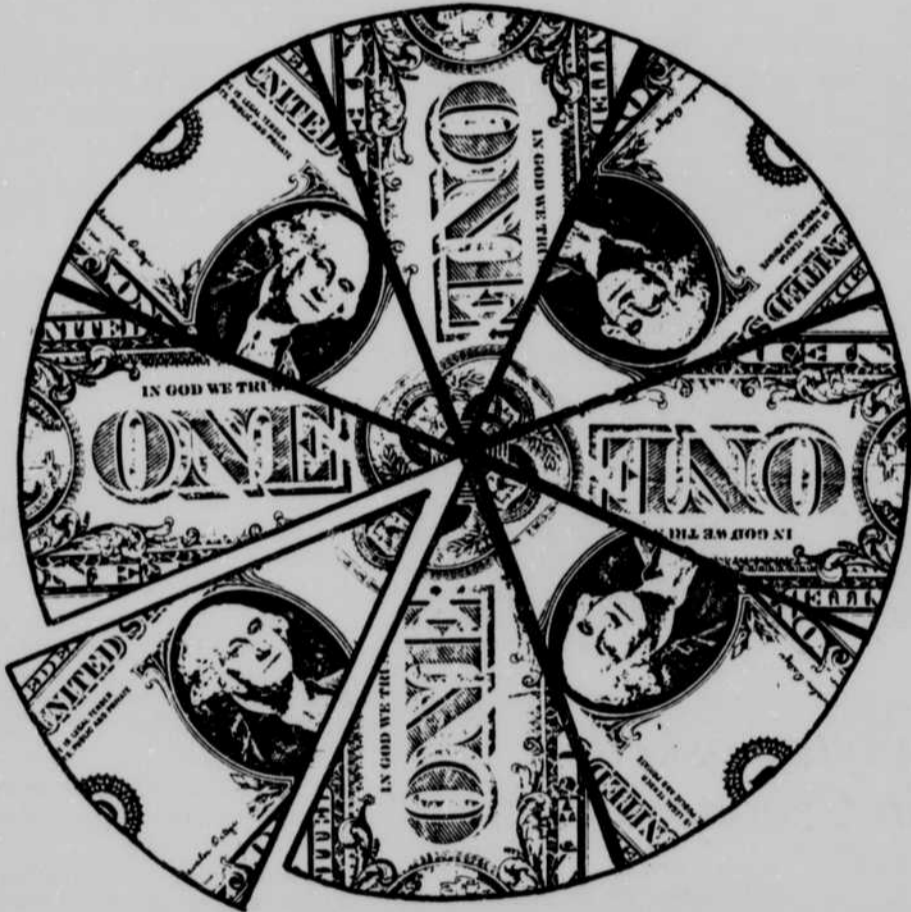
PITTSBURGH — A federal investigation has uncovered about 120 violations of federal aviation regulations by the company that provides helicopters and crews for one-third of the nation's civilian air ambulance services, a newspaper reported Sunday.

Rocky Mountain Helicopter has been the target of a two-month Federal Aviation Administration probe into company safety procedures and regulation compliance, according to a copyright story in Sunday's Pittsburgh Press. The company supplies aircraft, pilots and mechanics to hospitals in 39 cities, including hospitals in Nebraska.

In January, a Rocky Mountain helicopter went out of control while taking off from the University of Nebraska Medical Center. The pilot and a flight nurse received minor injuries. Company officials said at the time that an ice crystal in the hydraulic system may have caused the crash.

Hospital spokesman Tom O'Connor said on Sunday that the FAA report on the crash won't be released for another 90 days.

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