

Daily Nebraskan

Wednesday

WEATHER:
Wednesday, cloudy and cool with a 70 percent chance of showers. High in the low 50s and winds from the northeast from 5 to 15 miles per hour. Wednesday night, a 40 percent chance of showers and a low in the 40s. Thursday, mostly cloudy and warmer with a high from 65 to 70.

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University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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Official says UNL not vulnerable

Universities warned of liability for viruses

By Kendra Gill
Staff Reporter

Although universities have been warned they are liable for computer viruses started on their system, a UNL official said he does not think the University of Nebraska-Lincoln is susceptible to such lawsuits.

A report conducted by United Educators Risk Retention Group and the American Council on Education last March showed that universities can be liable for viruses on their systems.

Gerald Kutish, associate director of academic computing at the UNL Computing Resource Center, said he does not believe that UNL is vulnerable to lawsuits at this time because of the university's policies and because no legal precedent exists.

If a student was accused of creating the virus, the plaintiff would probably have to prove the student acted on behalf of the university and not of his own free will, Kutish said.

Even if an employee created a virus, Kutish thinks UNL has taken enough precautions to protect itself from a suit.

A plaintiff who brings suit against the university would have to prove that the university was negligent in taking precautions against viruses, he said.

A virus is a program that duplicates itself and travels from computer to computer destroying or altering data in its path. When it expands, the virus can erase other programs.

The study, "Computer Viruses: Legal and Policy Issues Facing Colleges and Universities," was commissioned to inform colleges of the risks they faced if a virus was found to have originated on their computer system.

Someone damaged by a computer virus would try to recover losses from the defendant with the "deepest pockets," the report noted. The institution, not the individual who wrote the rogue program, would be targeted.

The schools' interest in their potential responsibility for computer-virus cases was

piqued by last November's incident at Cornell University when graduate student Robert T. Morris allegedly caused the shutdown of about 6,000 computers across the country with a maverick program.

This summer, Morris was indicted under the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act. The report predicts that colleges also may have to shoulder the blame for viruses.

Few laws deal with computer viruses and no court decisions to date have set precedents to give colleges definite protection from lawsuits. The report suggested that colleges minimize their risks by:

- Setting policies to discourage students and employees from creating viruses.
- Spreading information on the damage a virus causes and strategies to deal with an outbreak.
- Creating plans for a coordinated response to a virus outbreak, including provisions to work with law enforcement agencies when necessary.

● Contracting warranties that limit access of campus computers to people outside the college.

● Reviewing insurance coverage to ensure policies pay for the costs of fighting a virus.

UNL has Computer Abuse Policies designed to protect the university against liability and discourage computer abuse, Kutish said. Also, civil or criminal charges based on NU Board of Regents and Nebraska bylaws could be filed against anyone tampering with programs or destroying equipment, he said.

Policies, newsletter articles and identification requirements for lab access help discourage computer abuse, he said. But fully one-half of UNL computer labs are unstaffed. With this freedom of access comes the temptation to abuse computer privileges, Kutish said.

One attempt to inject a virus into UNL's computer system happened last fall in the microcomputer lab in Schramm Hall. Kutish

See VIRUS on 5

UNL biology professor snubs warnings; will journey to Colombia to hunt frogs

By Natalie Weinstein
Staff Reporter

In less than three weeks, John D. Lynch will travel to Colombia despite warnings from the U.S. government of the danger from drug lords.

But Lynch isn't scared. "I don't pay attention to the U.S. government. What do they know?" said Lynch, a University of Nebraska-Lincoln biology professor.

In fact, Lynch said, he is looking forward to the trip.

Lynch will speak at the 11th Latin American Congress of Zoology in Cartagena, Colombia. He said a close friend has assured him this Caribbean coast city is safe.

Lynch has spent 13 of the last 15 summers catching and studying frogs in rural parts of Colombia and Ecuador. He spends half his summer in the wild and the other half at the Institute of Natural Sciences in Bogota. Lynch uses the frogs to study their evolution.

Of the 3,500 known species of frogs, Lynch has named about 150 of them. He has another 50 to 60 unnamed species sitting in his office and even more at the museum in Colombia. Lynch also spent fall 1985 teaching as a Fulbright professor at the National University of Colombia in Bogota and other Colombian universities.

Frog hunting in Colombia always has been risky, he said. When he first went in 1967, guerrilla groups were threatening the country. He waited 12 years before he returned.

It wasn't until the mid-1980s, however, that the drug dealers became a "big pain," he said.

Lynch has never been threatened, but he always takes precautions. Before he leaves each summer, he reads the newspapers, watches the news, listens to the radio and talks with friends to find the relatively safe places.

His fluent Spanish tricks a lot of Colombians into thinking he's European. He usually doesn't let them know they're wrong, he said.

Lynch said he knows he is going there just to find frogs, but "who is going to believe that?" He said many Colombians would pin him as an emerald smuggler, a drug dealer or a member of the CIA.

Yet it would take "something fairly dramatic," such as a civil



Dave Hansen/Daily Nebraskan

UNL biology professor John D. Lynch with Colombian frogs he uses to study their evolution.

war, to stop him from returning.

Drug lords aren't the only dangerous aspect of his work. His greatest fear is getting lost by himself, which has happened several times. But the best frog hunting takes place at night in rain forests, swamps and high-altitude grasslands.

Along with frogs, these places are populated with electric eels, poisonous snakes, crocodiles, scorpions, centipedes, spiders, piranhas and jaguars. He has been bitten before, he said, but it's part of the job.

"I won't hold myself hostage to fears," he said.

Officials to film stands to catch cup-throwers

By Emily Rosenbaum
Staff Reporter

Officials concerned about the dangers of cup wars during Nebraska football games will film students to prevent the problems that plagued the stands two years ago.

Three cup fights were started in the student section during the Nebraska-Northern Illinois football game Saturday, said Lt. Ken Cauble of the UNL Police Department.

Lincoln police and the Nebraska State Patrol stopped the fights.

At the first game two years ago, plastic cups were stacked together to form a "snake" and then were thrown in the stands. Several spectators were injured by flying cups and other items.

Cauble said officials taped students last year and the year before and reviewed the tapes after the games. Students who could be identified were charged with various violations, depending on what they did, Cauble said.

Cauble said cup throwing eventually stopped because students realized it could cause injuries. He said it started again because students forgot about its dangers.

UNL police officers will videotape the stands at the stadium and concentrate on sections that create problems, Cauble said.

UNL police Sgt. Mylo Bushing said the plastic cups may seem harm-

less but have caused injuries in the past, especially when they are stacked together.

Capt. John Becker of the Lincoln Police Department said, "It's no longer a fun event when people get hurt."

'It's no longer a fun event when people get hurt.'

-- Becker

Police officers can remove spectators from the stadium and arrest them when they throw cups or other items, Becker said. Serious offenders also can permanently be banned from UNL football games, he said.

"We'd like to get a handle on it (the cup throwing) now, before it gets bad . . .," Bushing said. "We're going to keep a close eye on it."

"We're asking for common sense from the spectators," Becker said. "We'd like to rely on their maturity to stop this activity."

He said cup throwing often leads to the throwing of other items, such as bottles.

One spectator was injured Saturday by a whiskey bottle tossed in the crowd, Becker said.

See CUPS on 6

Inflation hinders library

By Barb Tillman
Staff Reporter

Even with a 3 percent increase to its base budget, Love Library actually is losing ground this year because of a 9 percent inflation rate on books and journals, said Kent Hendrickson, dean of libraries.

"We'll be able to buy fewer new items than last year," Hendrickson said, "but some of this will be offset by one-time funds from the chancellor."

These funds have been around \$125,000 a year for the last two years.

Love Library also will receive additional funding to support research initiatives.

Hendrickson said he does not anticipate cutting any library programs. But because the cost of journals and books is rising, the library cannot buy additional subscriptions or build on book collections, he said.

"We won't be able to add new journal subscriptions unless we cut something, but we don't anticipate it," Hendrickson said.

This year's budget for books and journals is short \$600,000 or \$700,000, Hendrickson said.

UNL generally ranks in the lower half of the Big Eight in terms of library funds and collections.

"We're always ahead of Oklahoma State and Kansas State," Hendrickson said, "but we generally fall behind most of the others."

This year, Love Library expects to receive new library automation equipment. This equipment eventually will replace the card catalog system with a computer system.

The Legislature allocated \$1,500,000 to be shared by UNL and the University of Nebraska at Omaha for library automation.

"We hope to have it all up and running by April of 1990," Hendrickson said.