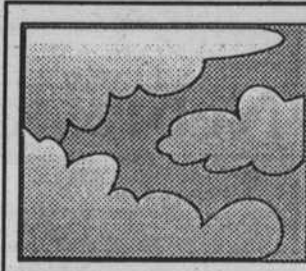


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TODAY'S WEATHER

18/0

Today, considerable cloudiness with some snow flurries. Tonight, mostly clear. Wednesday, partly sunny. High around 25.

Attorney general to investigate closed sessions

By Wendy Navratil
Senior Reporter

Lobbying group concerned with possible violations

The Nebraska attorney general's office is looking into closed meetings both of a subcommittee of the NU Board of Regents and of the Budget Reduction Review Committee to determine if they constituted violations of the state open meetings law.

Dale Comer, assistant attorney general, said that Attorney General Don Stenberg agreed to explore the matter after receiving requests from Common Cause/Nebraska, a group that lobbies for openness in government, and Lincoln Star editor Tom White.

Bill Avery, a spokesman for Common Cause and a UNL political

science professor, said the group first became concerned about the university violating the open meetings law when the BRRC began holding closed sessions to discuss budget proposals early in November.

When the regents general affairs subcommittee held a closed meeting soon after, the group wrote a letter to Stenberg asking him to investigate both matters.

White's concerns focused on the regents subcommittee meeting, Comer said.

He said the attorney general's office responded to the requests by asking NU general counsel Richard Wood to provide his analysis of the facts in

both cases.

Wood has not prepared his response yet, but he said that he would have it ready within the next week.

When questions were first raised, Wood indicated that neither of the closed meetings constituted a violation of the open meetings laws.

He said that the BRRC is only an advisory committee to the UNL chancellor and is not taking formal action; it is merely making recommendations. Therefore, it may hold its meetings in closed session.

With regard to the regents subcommittee meeting that five of the eight Board members attended, Wood said that no violation of the law oc-

curred because the meeting was of a subcommittee.

Although full regents meetings must be open according to the law, subcommittees are exempt unless they are holding hearings, making policy or taking formal action. The subcommittee did none of those things at its meeting, Wood said.

Comer said he would examine Wood's response before drawing any conclusions. He said he probably will render his opinion on whether Wood's interpretation of the open meetings law is correct and then Stenberg will review it.

"There is not a lot of interpretation from our courts saying how this law

should be read," Comer said. "So we're left with the plain language of the statute."

Avery said at the very least, both closed meetings violated the intent of the open meetings law, which is to ensure that the public is informed of governmental bodies' decision-making processes — not just the final decision, he said.

Avery said he thought that Stenberg would find that violations had occurred, and the attorney general's office would establish guidelines for future meetings to avoid further violations.

At the same time, Avery said Common Cause will look into ways that the law could be tightened so that subcommittees and advisory committees would be explicitly included.

Journalism college needs more space, dean says

By Chris Tipton
Staff Reporter

The UNL College of Journalism has outgrown its home and is looking for a new one, the dean of the college said.

Will Norton said a study done last year by former dean R. Neale Copple showed that the college needs more space.

When the journalism college moved from Nebraska Hall to Avery Hall in 1979, its new area held 600 students. The college now has more than 1,000 students, Norton said.

The college is looking at the old Whittier Junior High School building as a site for possible relocation, he said.

The Whittier school building, located at 22nd and W streets, was bought by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln about five years ago.

Bill Splinter, interim vice chancellor for research and dean of graduate studies, said the Whittier building houses three enterprise businesses.

Brine shrimp and angelfish are being raised in a building adjacent to the school building as part of two enterprise businesses. Another business manufactures aircraft machinery.

Splinter said that all three companies now pay the university for rent and utilities.

Because the Whittier building is so big, Splinter said, he thinks there is plenty of room for both the journalism college and the three businesses.

The Whittier building looks promising in terms of the journalism college's space needs, he said, but he added that the building needs a lot of work.

"If the proper amount of money was spent on renovation, the Whittier building has the potential to be one of the finest mass media facilities in the country," Norton said.

No official estimates have been made on how much it would cost to make the needed renovations, but Norton said it could cost \$10 million. The building needs asbestos removed and possibly an underground heating and cooling duct.

John Benson, director of institutional research and planning, agreed with Norton that the building needs work.

"We are anxious to help them in reviewing that (the Whittier building) as a possibility," Benson said.

Right now, Benson said, all of the

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Shaun Sartin/DN

Lee Thurber, a sophomore agribusiness major, is the new national president of The National FFA Organization.

To the top

FFA leader continues Nebraska tradition

By Juliet Yenglin
Staff Reporter

Nebraska tradition will continue under the leadership of Lee Thurber, 20, newly elected president of The National FFA Organization.

Thurber, a sophomore majoring in agriculture honors with an emphasis in agribusiness at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, will leave for Washington, D.C., Monday with five other national officers to fulfill the first part of his position as national president.

In reaching the top position, Thurber will be the third national FFA president from Nebraska in the past five years.

Thurber's bid for the FFA presidency began in early November, when he participated in weeklong interviews at the National FFA Convention in

Kansas City, Mo. He was selected national president out of 50 candidates.

Thurber said preparing for the conference was a satisfying experience under the guidance of Rich Katt, executive director of Nebraska FFA.

"(Katt) taught me to think, and I was prepared to see the issues, evaluate the situations and react in a confident way," Thurber said.

Katt suggested ways of approaching the interviews in a genuine, confident manner, Thurber said. The process taught him more about himself, his strengths, how to capitalize on those strengths and how to develop answers smoothly, he said.

Thurber participated in a series of six interviews, each having a different theme, including one-on-one discussions of values, thoughts on local, national and worldwide agricultural issues, FFA knowledge, activity planning and handling

group situations.

Thurber said one of the themes was to plan and present an FFA program to an urban high school.

"My philosophy is to be myself, genuine and ask questions," he said.

As part of his duties as the national FFA president, Thurber will take a yearlong absence from UNL and travel more than 200,000 miles throughout the United States, Japan, Hong Kong and China representing FFA.

After returning from an officer training session in Washington, D.C., Thurber will spend Christmas with his family in Roca before his agenda of conventions and conferences takes priority.

He will depart for his 17-day tour of Japan on Feb. 1. He will meet with the mayor of Tokyo and high-level agricultural leaders, visit Japanese greenhouses, learn about the agricultural systems in Japan, and stay

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Proposed plan would integrate student groups

By Erik Unger
Staff Reporter

A proposed plan to integrate the ideas of campus organizations would better represent student's needs, the University Program Council president said.

Frank Forman said the plan calls for a group of about 30 organization leaders to meet and discuss issues that concern students at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The solutions would be based on a consensus that he said he hopes would represent student views.

"It will bring people together, to help break down the boundaries," Forman said. "That is what this campus needs."

The initial plan was drawn up in a meeting in October that was attended by about 20 people, Forman said. Under the plan, either all 270 student organizations at UNL could be invited to express views on each issue, or representatives from the organizations could be chosen to participate in round-table discussions, he said.

The group must be narrowed to about 30 people, Forman said, to facilitate discussion.

Forman said he worked with Marilyn Bugenhagen, director of Campus Activities and Programs, on the initial program plans but credited her with turning the idea into more.

"My idea last spring was just to have a structured outreach," Forman said. "Marilyn and the Racial Pluralism Action committee decided it

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TUESDAY

Huskies freeze Bulldogs' attempt at winning.
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