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TODAY'S WEATHER

65/30

Today, mostly sunny, and warm, northwest winds 20 to 30 mph. Tonight, partly cloudy. Saturday, mostly sunny and mild with a high of 55 to 60.



Out with the old, in with the new

Tom Day, a welder with University Maintenance, builds a goal post under the north end-zone stands Thursday. The goal post replaced the one torn down by fans after Nebraska's defeat of Oklahoma in November.

William Lauer/DN

Bill to give athletes new scholarship protections

By Andy Raun
Staff Reporter

Students facing termination of their athletic scholarships would be allowed better defenses under terms of a legislative bill, the measure's principal sponsor said.

Sen. Merton Dierks of Ewing said LB1185, the subject of the judiciary committee's last public hearing of the 1992 session Thursday, would create "new avenues of due process" for challenging scholarship cancellation.

Passage of the measure would "establish Nebraska as the nation's clear leader in protecting the rights and dignity of student athletes," Dierks said.

The bill would require that athletes facing cancellation of scholarships be notified in writing by April 1 of the preceding academic year.

The athletes also would have the right to a hearing before an impartial board. The hearing would have to occur before May 1 unless a continuance was agreed to by the athlete.

Under current UNL procedure, scholarship termination appeals are heard before a board comprised of the UNL vice chancellor for student affairs, the director of scholarships and financial aid, the president of the Academic Senate, the school's Big Eight and NCAA representative and the athletic director.

Having officials associated with the athletic department serve on the appeals committee is inappropriate and creates a conflict of interest, said James McFarland, a Lincoln attorney who represented a UNL woman athlete in a spring 1991 termination appeal.

McFarland said that in his client's hearing, he was not allowed to speak or cross-examine the coaches who had decided to cancel the scholarship.

LB1185 would allow such cross-examination and place with the institution the burden of proof for justifying the cancellation.

McFarland said he thought that at UNL, women athletes were treated worse than their



Dual roles difficult, panelist says

Speaker urges blacks to end discrimination

By Jeremy Fitzpatrick
Senior Reporter

Lincoln resident Richard Nockai-Diaz's dual life as an African-American and a gay person is not an easy one, he said Thursday at a panel on multicultural awareness sponsored by the Gay Lesbian Student Association.

A barrier Nockai-Diaz must face, he said, is discrimination against homosexuality from within the black community.

"Somehow our being gay makes us not blacks," he said.

Nockai-Diaz, co-chairman of the Lincoln Gay and Lesbian Coalition for Civil Rights, said he thought it was contradictory for Afri-

can-Americans to discriminate against homosexuals. He said discrimination against homosexuals is not any different than racial discrimination blacks have had to face.

He said if he went into a black community and used the word 'nigger,' he would be met with an angry reaction. But discriminatory language against homosexuals would not produce that reaction, he said.

"It wasn't very long ago that black people were considered niggers," he said. "We were not people."

"For a black person to (discriminate) against gay people is to do exactly what whites did to them."

Nockai-Diaz said African-American gay and lesbian people needed the support of the black community.

"If your community doesn't support you, you are nothing," he said. "It is very difficult to

find an anchor."

But Nockai-Diaz said ending discrimination would not be easy.

"Unfortunately, it's a very difficult thing to point out to people when they are being discriminatory," he said. "They do not want to admit it."

Donna Polk, a graduate psychology student at UNL, urged the 20 students attending the panel to get involved in civil rights issues — any civil rights issue, as long as they got involved.

"Sexual issues, civil rights issues are very important to me both in my position as a lesbian and as a human being," she said.

Polk said many groups in society hated "Jews, blacks, gays and anyone who supports them."

Many people, she said, subtly support

See **PANEL** on 6

See **SCHOLARSHIP** on 6

Program aims to preserve communities

By Trevor Meers
Staff Reporter

America's future is determined in its neighborhoods, and a UNL program is helping Nebraska communities plan ahead, an organizer of the program said.

Steve Larrick, coordinator for the University of Nebraska Community Improvement Program, said he organized the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's participation in helping urban-Nebraska neighborhoods build

a sense of community.

"There are so many forces pulling communities apart," Larrick said. "There needs to be an effort to pull people together and assess the problems they face."

UNCIP began in 1963 as a cooperative effort between UNL, the state government and private utility companies, Larrick said. Strong communities are important because healthy neighborhoods are good for business, he said.

In the 1960s, Americans were interested in building their neighborhoods

and country, Larrick said. He attributed this strong work ethic to President John F. Kennedy, who told Americans to ask what they could do for their country.

"There was a sense that people were improving their communities and at the same time, their nation," Larrick said.

UNCIP coordinates Nebraska communities' organizations with programs at all four NU campuses.

Larrick said he had coordinated efforts of Omaha neighborhood organizations with sociology classes at

the University of Nebraska at Kearney and public administration classes at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

At UNL, the College of Architecture frequently helps neighborhoods through class projects, Larrick said.

The South Salt Creek Community Organization is an example of a UNCIP project, he said. The college helped the neighborhood design a community bulletin board/kiosk as a memorial to a neighborhood leader.

UNCIP will host a potluck supper and awards ceremony tonight at Old City Hall to recognize outstanding

neighborhood leaders, Larrick said. Kim Bobo, a neighborhood-planning expert from the Midwest Academy in Chicago, will deliver a speech entitled, "Why build a powerful neighborhood association?"

Bobo and another representative from the academy will lead a workshop Saturday at the County Extension Center, 444 Cherry Creek Rd., called "Nuts 'n bolts of neighborhood organizing for neighborhood improvement."

The workshop is open to the public. Tickets are \$7 at the door.

Fired custodian sues university for job

From Staff and Wire Reports

A UNL custodian fired last summer for bringing an allegedly offensive key chain to work has filed a lawsuit to get his job back, his attorney said Thursday.

Attorney Richard Scott said Douglas W. Geiger filed a suit Monday in U.S. District Court in Lincoln. The suit names the NU Board of Regents, the university grievance committee and various supervisors.

Geiger, who was fired last July, said in his suit he was wrongfully discharged for bringing a novelty key chain with sexually oriented phrases

to work, Scott said. The key chain displayed about 10 phrases or words, including "screw you," at the push of a button.

John Marker, operational manager of the custodial division at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, said he would not comment on the suit.

Rich McDermott, director of facilities management at UNL, was unavailable for comment.

According to the suit, two supervisors told Geiger they found the key chain offensive and told him not to bring it to work again. The next day, after Geiger told a supervisor he had put the key chain in his locker before

work, he was placed on administrative leave.

Geiger, who had been a custodian for 14 years, was notified later that he had been fired for "bringing sexually oriented items to the work site" and for "interfering with the job performance of others," the suit says.

Geiger said performance reports from 1988 to 1990 did not mention him interfering with others' job performance, and he did not receive an evaluation in 1991.

Scott said Geiger was seeking reinstatement, back pay and lost benefits related to his pension, medical care and retirement.

FRIDAY

Corrections: A Feb. 21 article about changing Nebraska's method of execution from the electric chair to lethal injection should have indicated that William Beatty Brown, who spoke in opposition to the bill, supports the death penalty under justifiable circumstances.

The time of the Omaha Symphony Orchestra concert at the Lied Center on Sunday was incorrect in Thursday's calendar. The concert will be at 2 p.m.

Commonwealth says concerns about scientists defecting are exaggerated. **Page 2**



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