

# Daily Nebraskan

February 8, 1993

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Vol. 92 No. 98



## Chambers' attempt to kill death penalty fails

By Michelle Leary  
Senior Reporter

After a public hearing Friday, the Judiciary Committee failed to advance to the full Legislature a bill that would repeal Nebraska's death penalty.

Under LB651, sponsored by Sen. Ernie Chambers of Omaha, the death sentence would have been replaced by a sentence of life without possibility of parole.

The bill also contained provisions stating that restitution be made by the

### Bill to widen the definition of stalking

Subtle offenses would be illegal

By Michelle Leary  
Senior Reporter

A legislative bill that would broaden the meaning of threatening conduct in a 1992 stalking law moved to general file after discussion in a judiciary committee hearing Friday.

LB299, which was sponsored by Jennie Robak of Columbus and other state senators, revised last year's definition of the course of conduct committed by a stalker, incorporating more subtle actions as unlawful.

The credible threat section of 1992's stalking bill, which stated that a threat had to be made against the life of a person, or had to cause great bodily injury to a person, was removed from this year's revised stalking bill.

Tom Casady, sheriff of Lancaster County, said he was pleased when the stalking bill was passed last year, but his department had "experienced difficulties with it."

Casady said his officers had problems making arrests and enforcing a law where there had been no specific threats of death or bodily injury to a victim by a stalker.

LB299 would amend the credible threat statute, stating that any person who willfully and maliciously harasses another person with the intent to terrify, threaten or intimidate commits the offense of stalking.

See STALKING on 3

### Committee advances bill for lethal injection

murderer to the victim's family.

Sam R. Sheppard, son of Ohio Army doctor Sam H. Sheppard who was wrongly convicted in 1954 of murdering his wife, told the committee that families of murder victims want an alternative to the death penalty.

"We know hatred, vengeance and

retribution to be cancerous emotions that should not be prolonged," Sheppard of Cambridge, Mass., said.

"We want tough but humane... action taken in the field of justice," he said. Sheppard is the vice co-chairman of Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation.

The bill was supported by Catholic, Lutheran and Methodist church officials, the Nebraska Civil Liberties Union and Nebraskans Against the Death Penalty.

Lincoln attorney Alan Peterson said nearly half of the 20 death sentences handed down since 1973 had been overturned by courts because of problems with Nebraska's law. There are currently 11 inmates on Nebraska's death row.

Supporters of LB651 said Nebraskans favor the alternative sentence of life without possibility of parole.

They were referring to a 1991 telephone survey of 504 Nebraskans conducted by Northeastern (Mass.) Uni-

versity. The survey indicated that 64 percent of those polled supported replacing the death penalty with life sentences without parole if the sentence included requiring convicted murderers to pay restitution, through prison salaries, to the family of the victim.

But opponents of the bill said there was no guarantee that a murderer would not be pardoned by the State Board of Pardons and later paroled.

Becky Mehring of Grand Island, whose father, Eugene Zimmerman,

See DEATH on 3



### Husker hysteria

Husker fans swarm around Nebraska Coach Danny Nee during his postgame interview with ABC commentator Dick Vitale. The Huskers upset 3rd-ranked Kansas 68-64 Sunday.

Travis Heying/DN

## China needs democracy, speaker says

United States could help by pressuring government

By Steve Smith  
Senior Editor

Displaying the charisma that thrust her to the forefront of China's 1989 student democratic movement, Chai Ling brought a Centennial Ballroom crowd of 400 into a thundering round of applause after her speech Friday evening.

Her message was simple: Don't forget Tiananmen Square — show support of Western pressure on the Chinese government to make democratic reforms.

"We want to push the central government to reform very quickly," Chai said. "If they don't soon, they're asking for chaos."

Chai, the keynote speaker for the University Program Council's Nebraska Model United Nations conference, first came into American consciousness in a videotaped interview secretly made after tanks rolled through Beijing's Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989 to break up a student democracy demonstration.

Chai, a leader of the Tiananmen Square student movement, escaped from China and came to the United States shortly after the incident. When she escaped, she was No. 4 on China's "most wanted" list.

Communism in China has continued to collapse since the Tiananmen Square bloodshed, Chai said. Currently there is a small, yet "very strong" underground democratic movement in the country.

"The leader of China's communist party is 88 and has terrible health," she said, referring to Deng Xiaoping. "When he dies, there will be little to hold the system together. Everyone will look back to June 4."

When that happens, she said, the floodgates to democracy will open and the chances of governmental reform will be at their greatest.

See CHINA on 3

## Phone lines to replace long lines for UNK registration

### UNL to install same software by fall of 1994

By Mindy Leiter  
Staff Reporter

UNL students will have reason to be envious of their University of Nebraska at Kearney counterparts when registration for fall classes rolls around, a UNK official said.

While many students at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln endure long lines at general registration, UNK students will be registering by phone.

Barbara Snyder, UNK vice chancellor of academic affairs, said the university planned to have an IA Plus computer software system installed,

which would allow students to register for fall classes over the phone.

James Griesen, UNL's vice chancellor for student affairs, said he hoped UNL students wouldn't have to be envious for long.

Griesen said UNL had acquired the same software as UNK, and UNL students should be able to phone in their registrations by fall 1994.

The software will cost the university an estimated \$3.67 million over the next five years, Griesen said.

James Van Horn, interim vice president and associate vice president for business and finance, called the price a bargain.

"We got price breaks because of a universitywide contract," he said.

UNL, UNK and the University of Nebraska at Omaha purchased the same software system through the same company. The package deal drew a better price for all universities,

Griesen said.

The software addition was funded through money from UNL's 2 percent tuition increase and other funds, he said.

Griesen said the university would hire seven employees to implement the new system.

UNK and UNO already have IA software, he said. The two campuses will now convert to the more sophisticated IA Plus.

Updating software is a larger challenge at UNL than at the other two campuses, Van Horn said, because UNL uses "an antiquated and home-grown system."

"Most of the systems are developed in-house," he said. "It is not an internal package — it is mini-programs wired together."

Under the new system the computer functions of each department will be integrated into a mainframe,

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—Griesen  
vice chancellor for student affairs

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he said, creating greater efficiency.

For instance, he said, it will centralize the billing procedure and lower the number of bills students receive per month to one.

"Now at UNL, you can get 5 to 6 bills in a month: a bill for tuition and fees, and housing separately, the bookstore, the telephone, health center, library fines and parking fees," he said.

Another benefit of an integrated system, Griesen said, is that students and advisers would have greater suc-

cess with graduation audits.

The tool could also be used by students who want to change their majors, he said.

Students would simply match their transcripts with the graduation requirements of their new major.

However, Griesen said, the university would concentrate on the voice-operated registration system first.

"That is a tangible thing that students want to see," he said, "and that is what we have decided to do."