

Daily Nebraskan

August 26, 1993

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Vol. 93 No. 5



SPORTS
Vital Statistics
Nebraska 1-back Lawrence Phillips is hungry for chance to play.
Page 14



Thursday
88/69
Today, partly sunny and humid. Friday, mostly sunny and hot.

Judge rejects sealing of Bjorklund letter

Defendant asked Harms' parents for forgiveness

By Jeff Zeleny
Senior Editor

A Christmas Eve letter from Roger Bjorklund to the parents of slain UNL student Candice Harms asks not for pity, but forgiveness.

The letter, introduced Wednesday during the fourth day of suppression hearings in Bjorklund's first-degree

murder case, was mailed last December to Stan and Pat Harms from the Lancaster County Jail.

"I hope some day you can forgive me," he wrote in the letter.

The handwritten letter was received by Lancaster County District Judge Donald Endacott despite motions from

Text of Bjorklund letter on page 9

Bjorklund's defense attorneys, who requested the hearing be closed and the exhibit sealed.

The third motion to close the court to the press was rejected by Endacott, and the document was not sealed. Bjorklund sat in the courtroom in a blue, jail-issued jumpsuit with his legs

shackled during the hearing.

In his letter to Harms' parents, he said God would help him.

"I am prepared by the grace of God to accept the full weight of the law in my life," he wrote. "I am not interested in any deals, any plea bargains, life is of much more value than that."

In the letter, Bjorklund said he was raised as a Christian and felt God's call to preach. He said he attended Union College and was a student pastor of a Falls City church.

"I thought I was saved, looking back I was not," he wrote.

Because of Stan and Pat Harms' Christian attitude, Bjorklund said he thought they were fair people.

"From what I have seen and heard

of you, I would be happy to have you on my jury, I can see you are fair and loving people," he wrote. "I hope to meet you in heaven."

In the letter, Bjorklund said it was not fair that the Harms' child was taken from them.

"... oh how I wish I could change places with her," he wrote.

The letter was introduced by Lancaster County Attorney Gary Lacey. Lacey called the former acting director of the Lancaster County Corrections Department James McKinney to the stand. McKinney, now with the Iowa Department of Corrections, said he became aware of the letter Dec. 28.

All mail from Bjorklund was reviewed by McKinney, in accordance

with correction center policy, he said.

Under cross-examination by Chief Lancaster County Public Defender Scott Helvie, McKinney said he didn't review Bjorklund's mail until the first-degree murder charge was entered Dec. 14.

Bjorklund, 31, and Scott Barney, 24, were arrested Dec. 2 in connection with seven Lincoln robberies committed last fall. Police say Barney later told authorities he and Bjorklund were involved in the Harms murder case.

Harms was reported missing Sept. 22. Her whereabouts were unknown

See BJORKLUND on 10



Travis Heying/DN

The heat is on

Nebraska cornerback John Reece cools himself off during a break in practice Wednesday afternoon.

Hot classrooms have professor boiling

By Dionne Searcey
Senior Reporter

Students in Raphael Zariski's 10:30 a.m. class fanned themselves Monday as sweat dripped from their faces. The windows were open in the room, but the still air didn't offer much relief from the humid summer morning.

"This is just unspeakable," said Zariski, a UNL political science professor, after lecturing for more than 30 minutes.

"The first two weeks are going to be deadly," he said.

The heat is on in some classes at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and students and instructors are just grinning and bearing it. Temperatures are expected to be in the upper 80s and low 90s through Wednesday.

The temperature outside was 83 degrees during Zariski's morning class in room 205 of the Military and Naval Science building. A National Weather Service official said that the temperature inside the un-air-conditioned room might have been at least 10 degrees higher.

Students sighed with relief as they left the

classroom while more filed in for the next class.

"Look at these students," Zariski said. "They're all fanning themselves, and class hasn't even started yet."

The high temperature Monday was 88, the National Weather Service reported. Tuesday's high was 91. Humidity was 55 percent both days.

After teaching in the seemingly tropical climate, Zariski asked political science staff assistant Helen Sexton to try to remedy the situation.

See HEAT on 9

Nelson praises his appointment for Hohenstein

By Steve Smith
Senior Reporter

Admitting his inexperience, but saying he's willing to work and to learn, new State Senator Leo "Pat" Engel took his first step into the public eye Wednesday on the north steps of the State Capitol Building.

Gov. Ben Nelson announced Engel's appointment to the Nebraska Legislature at the governor's weekly press conference Wednesday morning.

Engel, 61, will occupy the Legislature's 17th District seat, left vacant by the resignation of Dakota City's Kurt Hohenstein.

Hohenstein, who relinquished his Legislature seat Aug. 10, was convicted of a felony theft charge in Dakota County on the heels of a four-month state investigation. A federal probe into alleged wrongdoing by the former county attorney continues. At present, Hohenstein is awaiting sentencing.

"It's very regrettable that (Hohenstein) got himself in the position he's in," Engel said. "His actions were very reprehensible, and I feel sorry for his family and his friends."

However, Engel said, there would be no time to dwell on Hohenstein's personal problems — the state's interests takes top priority. "I'd like to put that in the past," he said. "I want to look forward into the future and see how we can make Nebraska a better place to live."

Engel's district includes Dakota and Thurston counties and parts of Burt, Cuming, Dixon and Wayne counties.

Nelson touted the appointment by talking about Engel's experience as a South Sioux City businessman.

"Pat brings a wealth of experience to his new post," the governor said. "I have every confidence he will make an excellent representative for the people of the 17th Legislative District."

Engel is a 1954 graduate of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and has been a State Farm Insurance agent for 34 years.

Nelson said Engel also served on the Dakota County Board of Commissioners and was a school board member.

"I'm sure the legislature and the 17th Dis-

See NELSON on 9

Athletes outpace foes in academics

By Jeff Singer
Senior Editor

While Nebraska athletes have excelled on the playing field for years, lately they've been leading the pack in the classroom too.

The Cornhusker athletic program raised its total of GTE All-Americans to 107, a national best and 33 more than second-place Illinois Wesleyan, according to the most recent figures. Nebraska also leads the way in academic All-Big Eight honorees and Top Six Award winners.

Of Husker student-athletes, 148 have been named to the Academic

All-Big Eight list, twice the number of athletes named to the list at any of the other schools in the conference.

But Nebraska's biggest honor might be its nine Top Six Award recipients. The Top Six Award is the highest award a student-athlete can receive, based on both academic and athletic success. The most recent recipient was volleyball player Janet Kruse, who won in 1992.

"From a chancellor's perspective, it's wonderful to have such strong student-athletes," UNL Chancellor Graham Spanier said.

"Nationally, there are so many schools that do well on the field, but

not academically — I think this reflects well upon the university and on the state."

The Nebraska football team leads all individual sport academic lists with a total of 46 academic All-Americans. The team also has had five athletes win the Top Six Award. The last recipient was linebacker Pat Tyrance in 1991.

Nebraska football coach Tom Osborne said his team's high academic success was one of the proudest facets in his 21-year head coaching

See ACADEMIC on 9

Nebraska leads the way in Academic All-Americans

- | | |
|----------------------|-----|
| 1. Nebraska | 107 |
| 2. Illinois Wesleyan | 74 |
| 3. Bucknell | 72 |
| 4. Notre Dame | 64 |
| 5. Millikin | 62 |



DN graphic