

# Senate backs victim service

By Matthew Waite  
Staff Reporter

ASUN senators passed an emergency resolution Wednesday in support of a new victim support service.

The resolution, introduced by General Studies Sen. Mark Byars, supported the creation of the Victim Services Center at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.



Byars said because of recent events—including the assault of UNL student Boon-Chung Ong on Oct. 17 and the ongoing trial of Roger Bjorklund, who is charged with first-degree murder in the slaying of UNL student Candice Harms—the service needed recognition from the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska.

"We need to realize that there are victims of these crimes, and they need our support," Byars said.

Lisa Cauble, coordinator of victim services, told ASUN senators the

center provided a place for victims to talk about their experiences. She said all information given by victims and about victims would be confidential.

Cauble said part of the reason she was heading up the program was because of her past experiences with crime. She said she was the first carjacking victim in Lincoln, and her brother was kidnapped.

"At that time there were no support systems for families," Cauble said.

Byars brought the measure before the senate after listening to a presentation by Cauble.

Cauble said the service had helped between 35 and 40 people, and they had talked to hundreds more.

"The presentation had an impact on me," Byars said. He said the issue was fresh in the senators' minds, which contributed to the measure being brought up on emergency status.

Cauble said she appreciated ASUN's support. The program is a pilot program and is up for review and renewal at the end of the academic year.

"It's nice to know that students are aware of recent incidents and are

concerned enough to try to do something about them," Cauble said. "With the support that I have so far from the campus community, (the program) will remain."

Byars said the resolution was beneficial to both ASUN and victim services. He said it helped get the word out about the service and it helped students, which Byars said was ASUN's responsibility.

"This was a simple and effective way to do that," Byars said.

The general education requirements bill that was scheduled for debate was pulled off the agenda because ASUN President Keith Benes was unable to attend the meeting.

Benes said he pulled the bill from the agenda because he had to attend the NU Board of Regents presidential selection committee meeting.

He said the bill would be brought before the senate next week, when he would be able to answer questions about the bill.

Benes said he was trying to get someone from the Academic Affairs Office to speak to senators about the bill.



Travis Heying/DN

A fraternity member attempts to block the camera filming the scene of the accident Wednesday.

## Fall

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UNL Police Chief Ken Cauble said Knoll was conscious and breathing when he was taken to Lincoln General Hospital. Cauble called the incident an accident.

Details of Knoll's injuries were not known Wednesday evening. As emergency teams placed

Knoll in an ambulance, fraternity members attempted to use shirts and their bodies to block television news cameramen from filming their house and Knoll's stretcher.

After Knoll was taken to the hospital, university and Lincoln police officers walked around the inside and outside of the house, shining flashlights on the open third-floor bathroom window.

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## Bjorklund

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Endacott adjourned the court shortly after the jury read a letter police say Bjorklund sent to Candice Harms' father, Stan Harms, on Dec. 24. Bjorklund is on trial for the murder of Candice Harms, a University of Nebraska-Lincoln student.

In the letter, police say, Bjorklund expressed regret about what happened to Candice Harms and said he hoped to meet her parents in heaven. He asked the Harmses to forgive him in the letter, police say, but he did not specify what he needed to be forgiven for.

Stan Harms said when he received the letter, he did not read it. He said he turned the letter over to police the following day, and he received a photocopy to read.

Prosecutors spent the afternoon session questioning those who were involved with delivering the letter, including James McKinney, former acting director of the Lancaster County Corrections Department.

McKinney, now with the Iowa Department of Corrections, said he found out about the letter four days after it was dated.

Helvie said because McKinney didn't see the letter being written, he

could not know the circumstances under which it had been written or whether police influenced the writing process.

Much of the morning testimony centered on handwriting analysts, who were asked to conclude whether Bjorklund wrote the letter.

Marlin Rauscher, a handwriting and fingerprint expert with the Lincoln Police Department, testified he thought Bjorklund wrote the letter.

"It is my opinion no one other than Roger Dale Bjorklund wrote the letter and the envelope," he said.

Rauscher compared the writing in the letter with a sample of Bjorklund's handwriting police obtained Sept. 29 through a court order.

Helvie objected to the handwriting sample being entered as evidence because he said police did not inform Bjorklund of his Miranda rights before he was instructed to fill out the form. The jury was removed from the court for a special hearing about the issue.

Endacott then overruled Helvie's objection.

During the hearing, Lincoln Police Department Sgt. Sandy Myers said she and Detective Greg Sorensen met Bjorklund the evening of Sept. 29 at the county jail.

Bjorklund agreed to fill out the court-ordered handwriting form, but only after the Country Music Awards television show was over.

"He said he lived for this one show, this time of year," Myers said, "and he wasn't going to miss it."

When officers came back at 10 p.m., Myers said Bjorklund told them he wanted to fill out the form at the Lincoln Police Department, where he could have a soda and cigarettes.

Bjorklund also wrote down various sentences and phrases the officers dictated to him. Myers said after one sentence, Bjorklund wrote, "Scott Barney is a liar."

Police say Barney, another man charged in the slaying of Candice Harms, told them Bjorklund killed Harms.

On another section, Bjorklund was instructed to write a particular passage from the letter police say he sent to Harms' parents: "I hope to meet you and your family in God's kingdom."

Instead, Myers said, Bjorklund wrote, "I hope to meet you and your family and not Scott Barney in God's kingdom."

The trial will resume Thursday at 8:30 a.m.

# Bjorklund trial attracts crowds

By Dionne Searcey  
Senior Reporter

Each day a steady stream of trial watchers drifts in and out of Courtroom No. 2 on the third floor of the County-City Building.

City employees drop in to hear 10 minutes of testimony during their coffee breaks. Lincoln residents conducting legal business carry new license plates and parking ticket receipts into the courtroom. Law students observe how the real-world legal system works.

Roger Bjorklund's first-degree murder trial has drawn a daily crowd of ordinary people, all hoping to fulfill their own needs by attending.

Tracey Williams, a University of Nebraska-Lincoln junior in pre-nursing, said she went to the trial because the death of UNL student Candice Harms made her face reality.

"It could happen to anyone," Williams said. "This could be a trial for my sister."

Williams had never been to a murder trial, she said, and didn't know what to expect.

"It seemed like it was kind of slow," she said.

Terri Teuber, a reporter for KOLN/KGIN-TV, said many people expected to see an action-packed trial.

"They expect it to be glamorous and fast-moving like what they see on TV," she said. Instead, she said, spectators find a meticulous process of foundation testimony.

— "They expect it to be glamorous and fast-moving like what they see on TV."  
— Teuber reporter, KOLN/KGIN

Nonetheless, Teuber said the trial was well-attended by Lincoln residents.

"As far as the courts go, it's gained more attention than any trial in 10 years," Teuber said.

Ryan Osentowski, 19, went to Tuesday's hearing with other clients of the Nebraska Services for the Visually Impaired. Osentowski said he had been keeping up with the latest radio and TV reports of the trial.

Jeremy Webster, a 17-year-old senior at Lincoln High School, experienced his first murder trial Tuesday as he watched Bjorklund sit in the courtroom.

"He's kind of scary, that guy is," he said.

Webster's criminal justice class attended the trial to get a firsthand view of the legal system.

Webster said he thought most high school students didn't know much about the case.

"They know what happened," he said, "but they don't know the details."

On UNL's campus, student awareness about the Harms incident has increased since the trial began, Judith Kriss, director of the UNL Women's Center, said.

Kriss said several students had called the Women's Center with concerns about the trial.

"As a result of Candi's disappearance and the horrible details of the murder, all of our lives are different," she said. "I don't know anyone who walks with the same sense of safety as before."

Women are more afraid to walk to their cars, she said, and even feel threatened in their own driveways.

"I've talked to women who have this kind of heightened sense of fear," Kriss said.

The UNL Women's Center offered a support group Monday for students with concerns about the trial. The group was to discuss safety and self defense, she said, but no one came.

"It's not one of those programs you offer with the hope of filling the room," Kriss said.

Women, she said, probably were meeting their emotional needs with friends or family members.

Still, Kriss said, a counselor will be available from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. every Monday during the trial.

"We wanted to have a place where people could come with any concern—fear for their own personal safety, concern about the senseless violence against women," she said.

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