

# Daily Nebraskan

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**A&E**  
**Cypress Hill**  
to play Omaha's  
Civic Auditorium.  
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**Thursday**  
**55/25**  
Today, partly cloudy.  
Friday, mostly  
sunny and breezy  
with highs in the  
40s.

## 'Guilty'



Jury members declared Roger Bjorklund guilty of murdering Candice Harms Wednesday.

David Badders/DN

### Judge schedules sentencing date for January 24

By Alan Phelps  
Senior Reporter

Jurors found Roger Dale Bjorklund guilty Wednesday of the first-degree murder of Candice Harms.

Bjorklund showed no emotion as the clerk of the Lancaster County District Court read the verdict shortly after the jury returned at 10:22 a.m.

Bjorklund, wearing leg shackles, a green shirt and denim jeans, swivelled in his chair and glanced around the courtroom as the 12 jurors individually verified the verdict by saying "guilty" or "yes."

Family and friends of Harms, including her parents and her boyfriend, Todd Sears, sat directly behind Bjorklund in the front row of the gallery. Many of them had waited through 13 hours of jury deliberation since

closing arguments ended Monday.

Bjorklund's wife, Shannon, clutched a coat and cried as a friend comforted her.

Lancaster County District Judge Donald Endacott pronounced Bjorklund guilty and set a sentencing hearing for Jan. 24. Endacott said he alone would determine Bjorklund's sentence rather than the three-judge panel normally requested for possible death penalty cases.

Chief Deputy Public Defender Scott Helvie objected to Endacott's sentencing decision and was overruled. Bjorklund was handcuffed and led away by sheriff's deputies.

As spectators filed out of the courtroom, Stan and Pat Harms, Candice Harms' parents, hugged friends, family members and prosecuting attorneys. The Harmses said they were thankful Bjorklund was convicted.

"Although it doesn't bring our lovely Candice back to us," Stan Harms said, "at least we know justice prevailed."

Shannon Bjorklund was led out of the courtroom by Sheriff Tom Cassidy. She refused to comment on the verdict.

Helvie did not immediately comment to reporters other than saying he was not sur-

66  
*Although it doesn't bring our lovely Candice back to us, at least we know justice prevailed.*

— Stan Harms  
Candice Harms' father

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prised by the verdict.

Lancaster County Attorney Gary Lacey said he was "much relieved" jurors found Bjorklund guilty two days after beginning deliberations.

"Frankly, I was getting a little worried," he said. Lacey, who met with jurors before talking to reporters, said the jury spent the time going through evidence in the case piece by piece.

Lacey said jurors examined the question of whether Bjorklund made his first statement to police Dec. 6 because he thought he might be let out of solitary confinement.

"Ultimately, they concluded the confessions were voluntary," Lacey said.

See VERDICT on 3

## Verdict brings smile, memories still linger

By Jeff Zeleny  
Senior Editor

Todd Sears smiled sincerely Wednesday for the first time in more than a year.

"I've been walking around with a fake smile for 14 months," he said. "This afternoon is the first time I've smiled. I can't stop smiling."

Sears' girlfriend, Candice Harms, was abducted, raped and slain Sept. 22, 1992. Jurors Wednesday found Roger Bjorklund guilty of murdering Harms.

For 13 days, 12 jurors from Cheyenne County viewed evidence and heard testimony from witnesses. Sears, 24, took the stand during the first day of the trial.

"It was really rough the day Stan, Pat and I had to testify," he said. "If none of this would have happened I could have been planning a wedding, but instead I planned testimony."

After the first day, Sears and the Harms family were sequestered witnesses and not allowed in the courtroom. Sears said he thought about the trial constantly and kept up-to-date by talking to his parents, who attended the proceedings almost every day.

"It consumed every minute of the day," he said. "We were banned from the courtroom. Even though I was at work, I was thinking about it the whole time. I tried to get any bit of information I could."

The waiting was the most difficult part of the trial, he said. As the jury deliberated for 13

hours Monday afternoon, all day Tuesday, and Wednesday morning, the Harms family and friends waited near the courtroom.

"We didn't know what to say to each other," he said. "Thankfully, there were a lot of us there. As soon as one of us started thinking that way, another one jumped in and said, 'be patient.'"

"It was very trying just sitting there," Sears said. "We didn't know if they were dismissing the confession or just taking a long time to listen to them."

After the verdict was reached Wednesday, the 12 jurors talked to the Harms family about the difficult decision they had to make.

See SEARS on 2

## NAFTA passage will be positive force, professors say

By Paula Lavigne  
Staff Reporter

Two University of Nebraska-Lincoln professors said Wednesday the NAFTA victory would give the United States a stronger international position and President Clinton a stronger image.

After a heated battle in the House of Representatives Wednesday night, the North American Free Trade Agreement passed with a 234-200 vote. Republicans outnumbered Democrats in support of the trade agreement.

Dr. Wes Peterson, UNL agriculture economics professor, said he was delighted with NAFTA's success. He said the trade agreement would have a smaller effect domestically than predicted.

"The effects the treaty will have on the economy are very small," he said. "There will be an enormous impact on positive foreign relations."

"We turned our back on protectionism instead of turning our back on the world," he said.

NAFTA's victory for Clinton will be a downfall for independent challenger Ross Perot, Peterson said.

UNL economics professor, Dr. Craig MacPhee, said he was one of the majority of economists who favored NAFTA.

MacPhee also said the direct effects of NAFTA would be small compared to the indirect effects.

"All this stuff about (lost) jobs and wages is baloney," he said.

"This has been a defining moment for Amer-

ica," MacPhee said. "With the passage of NAFTA, America has turned outward towards liberalizing free trade and investments."

MacPhee said NAFTA also would provide Clinton with an advantage in negotiating further trade agreements.

"We have demonstrated we are willing to open our market to countries willing to open their markets to us," MacPhee said. "This will send a message to Japan and the European Community."

MacPhee said NAFTA gave Clinton extra backing in his meeting with Asian economists in Seattle this weekend. He said it also would lend a hand in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade negotiations in Geneva.

Although NAFTA was a victory for Clinton, it was not passed as a victory for the Democratic

## Harms' father says Bjorklund should receive death penalty

By Steve Smith  
Senior Reporter

Moments after Roger Bjorklund was convicted of killing Candice Harms, a relieved but somber Stan Harms said the men who murdered his daughter should be executed.

After 13 1/2 hours of deliberation, 12 jurors found Bjorklund guilty Wednesday of the first-degree murder of University of Nebraska-Lincoln freshman Candice Harms.

When reporters asked if Bjorklund should receive the death penalty, Pat Harms quickly replied, "Yes."

Stan Harms said his family had considered seriously the question of Bjorklund's possible execution.

"We've been praying about this a lot the past year, and it's definitely a serious question," he said. "But I've prayed and prayed to God, and I do feel that, yes, there is a place for the death penalty in our society."

"I feel that both (Bjorklund and Scott Barney) should get the death penalty."

Scott Barney is the other man charged in Harms' death. He has pleaded guilty to first-degree murder.

Lancaster County District Judge Donald Endacott set Bjorklund's sentencing for Jan. 24. Prosecutors have requested that Endacott sentence Bjorklund to death. The victim's parents, flanked by friends and relatives, tearfully addressed the media for the first time since Bjorklund's trial began in late October.

The death penalty should be sought because neither man involved in the death appeared to be sorry, Stan Harms said.

"There's no redeeming value in (Bjorklund and Barney)," he said. "There's no remorse in them ... and that's the sad thing. Even when the guilty verdict was in, he still didn't have any remorse."

Stan Harms said he couldn't feel sorry for Bjorklund or Barney.

"I don't know how anybody can have sympathy for them," he said. "They're frightening people, and they're deadly people. We just don't need them on our streets."

But even if the judge sentences Bjorklund to death, Stan Harms said, he probably wouldn't be executed.

He referred to the case of Harold Lamont "Wili" Otey, who was convicted of murdering Jane McManus of Omaha in 1978. Through appeals, Otey has eluded execution for 15 years.

"We'll probably be going through the next 15 to 20 years like the McManus family, and we don't look forward to that," he said. "Nobody should have to go through that — we've gone through enough. Once was enough."

"The state of Nebraska hasn't seen an execution since Charlie Starkweather, though, and I think it's time that we started getting rid of a few of these people."

Stan Harms said the three-week trial had been extremely difficult for his family.

"It's like hanging from a cliff, a thousand-

See HARMS on 2

party. Political science professor, Dr. Bill Avery, said the weak Democratic support could be blamed on organized labor, and the remaining environmental groups protesting the agreement.

He said a vote for NAFTA by some Democratic representatives would be the "kiss of death" because many of their constituencies were labor based.

Avery said, overall, the vote for NAFTA was important to the president and the United States.

"This will make us part of the largest trading block in the world," he said.

"We shouldn't be afraid of free trade," Avery said. "It's the basis of our country."