

Daily Nebraskan

March 9, 1994

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Vol. 93 No. 120



A&E
Lights, Camera, Action!
An in-depth look at the jobs of those people outside of the spotlight.
Page 9



Wednesday
41/20
Today, mostly sunny and warmer.

Inmate says Bjorklund bragged of rape

By Kara G. Morrison
Senior Reporter
and Todd Neeley
Staff Reporter

An inmate whose cell was near Roger Bjorklund's testified Tuesday that Bjorklund bragged of raping and murdering Candice Harms.

In the second day of Bjorklund's sentencing hearing, prosecutors called Jeffrey O'Kelly, an inmate who was housed near Bjorklund at the Lancaster County Jail in December 1992.

Prosecutors are seeking the death penalty against Bjorklund, who was found guilty in November of murdering Harms, a UNL student.

"(Bjorklund) was not remorseful at all," O'Kelly said, "and he said if he got out, he

would do it again."

Defense attorneys argued that O'Kelly, who now is an inmate at an Oklahoma federal prison, was testifying so he would be considered for a reduction of his sentence.

O'Kelly is in prison for federal drug conspiracy and money-laundering charges.

O'Kelly said Bjorklund told him that he and Scott Barney, who pleaded guilty to the murder last week, were looking for someone to abduct when they followed Harms to her apartment and pulled into her parking lot.

Bjorklund told O'Kelly he got out of the car, grabbed Harms and "put a gun in her face."

O'Kelly said after Harms was abducted and brought to a remote area near 86th and Have-lock Avenue, Bjorklund sent Barney to town for condoms, Vaseline and gasoline.

O'Kelly said Bjorklund told him he and Barney then took turns penetrating Harms while the other forced her to have oral sex.

"They forced her to say nasty things to them," O'Kelly said. "They made her say how good they were."

Bradly Johnson, a correctional officer at the Lancaster County Corrections Department, said he monitored a conversation between Bjorklund and O'Kelly on Dec. 18, 1992.

Johnson described the tone of conversation as serious.

Bjorklund "wasn't smiling or laughing, but there were no tears coming out of his eyes either," Johnson said.

Johnson said he monitored only one conversation between the men, but said he did not hear Bjorklund give details about raping Harms or

other details O'Kelly testified to hearing.

Special Deputy Public Defender Richard Goos questioned the credibility of O'Kelly's testimony, calling O'Kelly a known drug user. Goos said O'Kelly had previously not been able to remember details relating to his illegal drug dealings.

O'Kelly said he remembered his conversations with Bjorklund clearly and said he "could care less" about getting his sentence reduced. "I came forward because of what he did to Candi Harms," O'Kelly said. "I remember the sick things that he said that he done."

O'Kelly said his conversations with Bjorklund occurred through holes in a steel door connected to a sub-day room where inmates were

See **BJORKLUND** on 2



Not even a twitch

Angelisa Drummond, a junior art major, poses as part of a still life during a drawing class Tuesday afternoon in Andrews Hall.

Travis Heying/DN

Two proposals get approval from senators

By Matthew Waite
Senior Reporter

An amendment that would give victims of crimes some basic rights received second-round approval from the Nebraska Legislature on Tuesday after more than 5 1/2 hours of debate.

Omaha Sens. Ernie Chambers and Carol Pirsch sparred over LR29CA, an amendment to the Nebraska Constitution, for most of the day.

If approved, LR29CA would guarantee victims of crimes certain rights, including:

● The right to be informed of all criminal proceedings in which the victim has the right to be present.

● The right to be present at all criminal proceedings at which the victim is allowed.

● The right to submit statements, oral or written, at all criminal proceedings.

● The right to receive prompt restitution of injury or loss from the person convicted of the crime.

Chambers' main argument against LR29CA was that a constitutional amendment was not needed to achieve the results that LR29CA seeks.

"The constitution should be reserved for important ... matters that can't be resolved by statute," he said.

Chambers criticized Pirsch and the proposed amendment, calling it a political move.

"People will believe that this (amendment) fights crime — that it will make the streets safer," he said. "People will believe (the amendment) will do all these things politicians say during the lying season, which is what we are in."

Calling the amendment a travesty and a mockery of the constitution, Chambers said the sponsors of the bill did not understand the bill.

"We cannot be weak-kneed and with trembling hearts when dealing with the constitution," he said. Chambers said the amendment offended the constitution.

"When you offend the constitution ... you get on the fighting side of me," he said.

See **LEGISLATURE** on 2

Kerrey: New technology worth the cost

By Brian Sharp
Staff Reporter

Communication technology may bring wealth and happiness, but Sen. Bob Kerrey said it might also further separate the rich from the poor.

Kerrey spoke at the Nebraska Center for Continuing Education on Tuesday as part of the Governor's Conference on Information Technology. The conference was attended by com-

munication, education and business personnel.

Unless a state fund is established to keep everyone familiar with technology such as Internet, Kerrey said, those who can't afford it are going to be left behind.

But the costs for the programs are beyond what most public schools and average families can afford, he said. And when it comes to teaching the needed skills, "the home is the first defense."

Problems arise if a family cannot afford the

technology, Kerrey said, because the child not only will have more trouble grasping the skills but also may not learn them at all.

Kerrey said the costs for technology would have to be shouldered by everyone in the state, which meant more taxes. But, he said, the benefits to Nebraskans would far outweigh any cost burden.

"I have never felt more confident with a

See **KERREY** on 2

Senate votes on grades, faculty parking

By Angie Brunkow
Senior Reporter

The newest proposal to change UNL's course grading system met with silence at the Academic Senate meeting Tuesday.

The proposal, presented by psychology professor Don Jensen, did not get the required second that would open it up for senate consideration.

The Jensen proposal would have professors assign students an A, B, C, D, F, P or N for each credit hour of class.

The current system, consisting of letters and

pluses, does not function well, Jensen said.

"Sooner or later we will need to take action," he said.

Senate members voted down a proposal to add minuses to the system after a 2 1/2 hour discussion at their meeting last month.

By a close vote, senate members decided to give the new proposal to the grading and examination committee for consideration.

"I think that we're probably exhausted with the issue at the moment," Gerald Parsons, agricultural communications professor, said.

In other business, the senate gave its approval to a faculty parking permit fee increase that would more than double the current cost.

A proposal presented by Law Senator Richard Duncan would have kept the increase tied to a faculty salary increase, which is at about 2 percent.

Faculty permits, which now cost \$58 per year, will increase to \$120 per year.

Duncan said the increase was sizable enough to absorb a substantial portion of the faculty salary increase.

"It's a week worth of groceries for a single parent," he said.

But Paul Carlson, interim business manager, said the increase amounted to little more

See **SENATE** on 2

Meet NU
President
Dennis
Smith



See Question and Answer
Interview on page 3.