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OCTOBER 7-9, 1994

Chief: Cops tried talking with Renteria

By Brian Sharp
Senior Reporter

Police are not to blame for failed communication with Francisco Renteria, said Lincoln Police Chief Tom Casady Thursday.

Casady said Renteria did not acknowledge gestures or police commands. He also did not respond to a citizen shouting to him in Spanish while officers struggled to arrest him, Casady said. Casady would not comment on what the citizen said.

Renteria, 30, died Saturday at Lincoln General Hospital after a struggle with university and Lincoln police.

Casady said two of the officers at the scene had at least some background in the Spanish language.

Another officer, considered fluent in Spanish, arrived at the scene 20 minutes after the initial contact with Renteria, he said.

But the struggle was over within minutes, he said, and the officer only interviewed witnesses.

University Police Chief Ken Cauble said no university officers were fluent in Spanish, but some were "conversationally adequate."

Both chiefs said their departments had a group of volunteer translators that could be called when needed.

Cauble would not comment on what would have happened if the UNL officer had been able to speak to Renteria in Spanish.

Cauble also would not comment on whether any attempt was made by the University Police to call a translator to the scene.

Friday's incident has stirred a lot of emotions in the Hispanic community and Lincoln, Casady said. Both the UNL and Lincoln departments have received calls ranging from personal threats to calls of support.

"The problem is that most of those people are not familiar with all the facts," Casady said. "I'm not either."

Anger toward police has intensified since the incident, he said. And he said he didn't know how police would repair their relationship with the Hispanic community.

"We're feeling bad," Casady said. "We've worked hard to improve our relationship with the community, especially with Lincoln's Latino and Hispanic community. And they've taken a big step back. I don't know what it will take to repair that."

For years, police have operated a booth at the Hispanic Heritage Festival, Casady said. This year, police were not invited to operate a booth at the festival, which is this weekend.

Police think they aren't welcome, he said.

"It really cuts to the quick to be portrayed as a brutish gang that crawled out from underneath a rock," he said. "Right now, it's very debilitating."

Most people in the Hispanic community who have worked closely with the police have "either remained silent or had some alarming things to say" about the incident, Casady said.

"It's a bit depressing to see that the people

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Cool beans



Michelle Paulman/DN

Dominique German, a French major, studies at The Caffe' Caper at 13th and Q streets. German said she didn't like to study in the Nebraska Union because it was noisy and "not personable."

Coffee shop craze catching on

By Jeff Randall
Staff Reporter

Caffeine may be addictive, but you won't find the owners of Lincoln coffee shops complaining.

Coffee has been growing in popularity for years, but the real changes for coffee have taken place in the settings where people consume it. Coffee houses, a popular tradition for centuries, are making a comeback nationally and locally.

Within the last seven years, downtown Lincoln has seen its coffee-house population grow from one to four.

The Mill, located in the Haymarket at 800 P St., has been open for almost 20 years, co-owner Dale Nordyke said. As the oldest coffee house in the area, The Mill has watched the coffee craze evolve.

"I'd say the interest in coffee shops has been gradually increasing, especially over the last six years or so," he said.

Nordyke said The Mill's tradition of doing its own roasting and packaging of beans on site always had been a major draw. The Mill's wide range of customers has been another factor for the store's continued success, he said.

Competition wasn't a factor for The Mill until seven years ago. The Coffee House, 1324 P St., opened in 1987, right around the time of a national resurgence of coffee houses.

Mark Shriner, owner of The Coffee House, said the factors that set his business apart from other coffee houses included the daily selection of 16 coffees and the availability of smoking or nonsmoking sections.

He said his customers varied in background, but his regulars came primarily from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and surrounding businesses.

Shriner said the coffee craze had a major influence on his success.

"I would say business has tripled in the last three years," he said.

The Caffe' Caper, 245 N. 13th St., was the next such store to arrive downtown. Co-owner Jan Havranek said she and her partner, Becky Nelson, opened the shop a little more than a year ago. She said their shop was unique for the area.

"We have tried to make an authentic West Coast-style espresso bar," Havranek said.

She said she always wanted a coffee shop but wanted to try something different. She

got the idea from similar shops in Arizona, California, Colorado and Washington.

"It's like another world out there," Havranek said. "You see places like this around every corner, but here this is something new."

The newest entry in Lincoln's coffee house race is Le Cafe Shakes, 1418 O St. Owned by Reg McMeen, Shakes has been open since May.

Chris Hillier, Le Cafe Shakes manager, said the major difference between Le Cafe Shakes and other coffee houses was in entertainment.

"We do rock shows on a pretty regular basis," he said. "Plus, poetry readings, and we're trying to get some live theater in here."

Havranek agreed that a driving force behind the coffee craze was simply providing something to do.

"The love of coffee hasn't really changed," she said. "People have always loved coffee, but what has changed is the fact that people are going out to meet people in a non-alcohol environment."

"A coffee shop is a terrific alternative for those who are tired of the bar scene."

Rising tuition may delay graduation for some students

By Chad Lorenz
Staff Reporter

Economic conditions are forcing some students to delay graduation, said James Griesen, vice chancellor of student affairs.

From the 1984 freshman class to the 1988 freshman class, it took students an average of 9.3 semesters — or about 4 and a half years — to graduate, not including summer school, he said.

Those numbers include only full-time, traditional students who have

graduated within six years. At that time, full-time students only had to take seven credits per semester.

Griesen said the trend of delaying graduation was a national one. Ten to 20 years ago, it was more common for students to graduate in four years.

Joan Leitzel, vice chancellor of academic affairs, said increasing tuition costs have forced some students to work while taking classes, resulting in a reduced class load.

Students work to cover their college expenses, but sometimes they work or intern in their area of study.

When that happens, Griesen said, the student actually benefits from having to work.

"Job experience is added value to a student's education that makes them more marketable in finding a job," he said.

Leitzel said the architecture, engineering and journalism colleges commonly recommend internships.

Stan Liberty, dean of the College of Engineering and Technology, said some students took fewer classes to bring up their grade point average.

He said taking fewer classes al-

lowed them to spend more time on each class.

Some students have to delay their graduation because they transfer to another school. Joe Krause, a computer engineering senior, spent two years at Kearney before it became a state university.

He said many of his credits didn't transfer to UNL, which will probably lengthen his college years to six.

"I would have liked to have been out a little earlier," he said.

The transfer was compounded by the fact that the engineering college

has the highest credit requirement at UNL — about 136. Most colleges require about 126 credit hours for graduation.

Graduating in four years isn't impossible and might be preferable, Leitzel said.

Students can graduate in four years by taking summer classes and entering with advanced placement credit, she said. Those credits can be earned by high school students who take advancement placement tests.

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