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Teaching from experience



Reuben Lerma, a sophomore history major, answers a question from Shelley Zweibahmer, a senior business major, after Lerma spoke to Greg Weaver's sociology of crime class Monday in the Military and Naval Science building.

Jeff Haller/DN

Student shares insight of prison years

By DeDra Jansson
Senior Reporter

Reuben Lerma is making his life an open book.

An open textbook, that is. Lerma, a sophomore history major at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, spoke Monday to a sociology class about the two and one-half years he spent in prison.

The 25-year-old from Overbrook, Kan., said he could teach students more about the prison system than any textbook.

"No book can teach that," he said. "And no book can answer the questions I can answer."

Lerma was in prison from October 1990 to May 1993 for writing bad checks. He spent most of that time in Norton Correctional Facility in Norton, Kan. He also spent time in four other Kansas institutions.

"Probably 50 percent of people on this campus have bounced a check," he said, "just not in the numbers I did."

In the last year, Lerma has spoken to students in both criminal justice and sociology classes, not to dissuade them from doing something that could land them in prison, but to tell them about prison.

He talks during his presentations about such things as the daily routine of prison life and the social order that emerges in prison, Lerma said.

Lerma said he also told of the racism and violence that go on behind prison walls.

"It's not an inspirational speech," he said. But, he said, his speeches were designed to help students understand an actual former inmate's perspective of prison life.

Lerma said his daily routine in prison began about 5:30 a.m. By 6:30 or 7 a.m., Lerma said, he went to work at a wildlife

refuge, where he stayed until about 3 p.m.

Meals were served at set times, he said, and inmates had to eat what was served.

"The food sucked," he said.

After dinner, which was served about 6 p.m., Lerma said he had free time to watch television, lift weights or gamble.

"If I wasn't gambling, I was watching TV," he said.

Lerma said mail call was the most important part of the day.

"A lot of people subscribe to magazines just to get mail," he said.

The state gives inmates \$21 each month, Lerma said. They could spend their money at a prison convenience store that sold items including hot chocolate, cookies and pasta. Lerma said the inmates did not use money for gambling.

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Fans dig deep for admission into showdown

By Chad Lorenz
Staff Reporter

Tickets to watch the Big Red's big game Saturday are going for big bucks.

Cindy Bell, NU ticket manager, said a pair of tickets to Nebraska's homecoming football game against Colorado could cost about \$300. Interest in the game between the No. 2 Huskers and No. 3 Buffaloes has driven demand for tickets higher, Bell said.

The ticket office sells general admission tickets for \$30 each, Bell said, but all general admission tickets were sold out after season ticket sales ended.

Student tickets are worth \$15 at face value, but some students find tickets are worth about four times as much.

Sarah Bahr, a junior interior design major, said she advertised for one Colorado ticket in the ticket exchange section of the Daily Nebraskan and received more than 10 offers on the first day she advertised.

Tickets may be traded because Nebraska doesn't have any scalping laws. Student tickets are transferable between other full-time students. They may be used by the general public by paying a validation charge.

The validation fee is the difference in cost between general admission tickets and student tickets.

Bahr sold her validated student ticket for \$60 after two \$100 offers backed out, she said.

She said she regretted selling her only ticket because of the excitement of the upcoming game.

"I almost wish I would've kept it," Bahr said.

Vince Kirby, a junior construction manage-

See TICKETS on 2

New patrols split opinions among greeks

By Matthew Walte
Senior Reporter

The addition of the greek houses to areas patrolled by community service officers has fraternity and sorority members split over their support for the program.

Jim Collura, the president of the Sigma Phi Epsilon Fraternity, said a huge misconception existed that the CSOs were nothing more than an alcohol patrol.

"I can't honestly say that I see that," he said. "I may have at first."

The expanded patrols, which began this year, involve one on-duty CSO patrolling the areas around the greek units and other university buildings. The officers work seven days a week, eight hours a night.

CSOs are not armed or as extensively trained as regular officers. They are allowed to enter greek houses with probable cause.

Collura said the patrols offered more safety to the houses and also prevented vandalism. He said if the CSOs were looking for alcohol, things would be different.

"If this was an alcohol patrol, they would be in my fraternity every day (looking for violations)," Collura said. To date, he said, the officers had been to his house three times.

Collura said he did not know of a fraternity that CSOs had cited for alcohol violations. He said, however, the addition of the officers would not eliminate alcohol consumption in greek houses, just as the addition of CSOs in the residence halls did not.

But changing times have turned his house into an alcohol-free house, along with a growing number of fraternities and sororities, Collura said.

See OFFICERS on 2

Speaker questions students' alcohol abuse

By Sean McCarthy
Staff Reporter

Dr. Tom Goodale has experienced alcohol's effects in all areas of his life.

Goodale, vice president for student affairs and a professor at Virginia Tech University, was key speaker for the 11th annual "Do It Sober" program at the Lied Center Monday night. Goodale spoke to an audience of more than 1,800 about the effect of alcohol on students and his experiences with the subject.

In his hour-long speech, Goodale spoke of his experiences with both students and his family regarding alcohol abuse. The son of an alcoholic mother and brother of a recovering alcoholic, Goodale was the co-founder of the national organization Boost Alcohol Consciousness Concerning the Health of University Students. The organization has more than 500 chapters in the United States and Canada.

"As long as I am given the breath to talk and the energy to do it, I will talk about the issues of alcohol," Goodale said.

A poignant part of his speech came when he told of a time when he met the parents of a student who died of an alcohol overdose. Goodale said the student consumed a 32-ounce bottle of tequila in 15 minutes and died at a hospital four hours later.

"Why does this carnage continue?" Goodale asked. "Because it's legal; it's cool; it's available, and everybody does it."

The U.S. culture plays a large role regarding alcohol use, Goodale said. When guests visit, Goodale said his first response is to ask if they want a drink.

"Even before they get their coat off, I ask if they want a drink because it's culturally important," he said.

Adults had long-since made their decisions on drinking, Goodale said, and even most

college students had already done the same. The most impressionable age that needs to be reached are those who are about 10 years old, Goodale said.

The combination of sex and alcohol, another topic of importance to college students, was a key point that Goodale addressed. Because alcohol is a mood-altering chemical, people would do things that they would not necessarily do sober, including having sex, Goodale said. However, Goodale said he stressed the importance of keeping the topic of both sex and alcohol open for discussion.

"Because we don't talk enough about sex and alcohol, there's so much about it on commercials," he said. "It's the allure of the unknown that keeps it so popular."

"Dream about the possibility of what it is like to be free of drugs and alcohol," he said.

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