

# School

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Stineman from Centennial Elementary School in Utica said their favorite part was the jam session with the Nebraska basketball players.

The best part was getting out of school and not having to go to reading class, Tomes said.

The two boys showed their enthusiasm when Nebraska quarterbacks Brook Berringer and Frazier took the microphone.

Frazier said he learned a lot about reaching goals because he had to deal with setbacks throughout the season.

"I never gave up," he said. "I never quit ... Even though life is a roller-coaster ride, you have to stay

focused, stay positive, and good things will happen."

Camera flashes went off, and the students rose to their feet and waved their complimentary handkerchiefs, which were covered with the signatures of NU athletes, when Coach Osborne walked out to the center of the court.

Strong character and a solid work ethic both on and off the field are the keys to success, Osborne said.

"You want to be a finisher," he said. "A lot of people fall by the wayside. It's easy to quit. It's easy to drop out."

"There are some times when even if you make all the right moves and you still don't win," he said, "just hang in there."

# Legislature

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debate on welfare reform spending nearly two hours discussing an entirely different concern — health care.

But Wesely, chairman of the Legislature's Health and Human Services committee, said the two issues were actually related.

"If we can get people health care, then they won't have the need to go on welfare," Wesely said.

A portion of the committee amendments stated the Legislature's intent to make health care available to as many Nebraskans as possible by July 1, 1999.

Discussion of the health care portion of the bill began when Sen. Kate

Witek of Omaha offered an amendment that would erase that section of the committee amendments.

"Health care is already available to all Nebraskans," Witek said, "they just have to pay for it."

Witek's amendment to strike the language failed on a 16-16 vote.

During debate, Bromm said the health care section was merely fluff in a bill dealing with welfare.

"If it's the intent of the Legislature to do this, then why do we shift the responsibility to the governor?" Bromm asked.

The Warner/Bromm amendment forwarded later in the day gave the Legislature equal responsibility with the governor in directing health care legislation.

# Walking tall



Lincoln City Councilman Curt Donaldson looks admiringly at the newly completed O Street Skywalk Monday. A ribbon cutting ceremony was held in the skywalk to celebrate the opening.

# Mayor Johanns dedicates skywalk

By Angie Schendt

Staff Reporter

After nearly 25 years of planning and 10 months of construction, the new O Street skywalk opened Monday.

Mayor Mike Johanns dedicated the new structure at an afternoon ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Located over O Street between 12th and 13th streets, the skywalk is the fifth in the system of down-

town skywalks. It is the first to join the north and south sides of O Street.

"All of the other skywalks are over on the south side of O, and now, who knows?" Johanns said.

Johanns said skywalks were important because they created convenient access to parking, made getting around easier and improved the look of downtown. Johanns said the skywalk was historic.

"This is another feature in our downtown to be proud of," he said.

The new walkway connects properties north of O Street to businesses already in the skywalk system, he said.

"This is a dramatic symbol of what happens when the public and private sector work together, especially in downtown," Johanns said.

The 120-foot-long skywalk cost nearly \$950,000 to build.

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# Law & Order

A LOOK AT CRIME ON CAMPUS AND IN THE COMMUNITY

## COURTS

A man scheduled for a court appearance tomorrow stood before a county judge Monday. The judge informed him of yet another charge against him.

Chad Beers, 25, already faces three charges in connection with a Sept. 7 incident and has remained in Lancaster County Jail since that day. But in recent weeks, two separate incidents brought charges of assault against Beers.

On Monday, another preliminary hearing date was set for May 5 on the latest assault charge, which allegedly occurred against inmates.

Beers also is considered a fugitive from justice. He escaped from an Arkansas County Jail a week before his arrest after a high-speed chase with Lincoln Police that led to an accident with a university postal van.

He faces charges of attempted armed robbery for an incident before the chase, theft by receiving stolen property and flight to avoid arrest.

Before his escape, Beers was scheduled to be moved to Arkansas

State Penitentiary to serve 14 to 20 years for kidnapping and using a weapon to commit a felony.

A \$750,000 percentage bond still stands for charges relating to the Sept. 7 incident. The two assault charges have added a \$15,000 full-cash bond and a \$10,000 percentage bond.

## COURTS

Organizers of a local pyramid scam must pay the state almost \$3,000 as a result of an out-of-court settlement finalized Monday.

The agreement ended the state's case against the majority of defendants connected to the "Friends Network." An investigation into the money scam culminated last August with a number of arrests.

Lancaster County District Court Judge William Blue, in a five-page order, found the network was "a chain distributor scheme or pyramid sale in violation of (Nebraska law)."

The settlement involved four of the seven defendants named in the case, including David Klein, Michelle Fortney, Marti Fortney and Todd Floro.

It did not end arguments involving Jack Irons, who police say directed the scam. Irons is president of Iron Investments, Inc., and owner of Midwest Diamonds.

Participants in the "Friends Network" were asked to donate \$1,500 to be placed on the lower level of a 15-block pyramid. As more people joined, participants would move up the pyramid until reaching the top, where they receive \$1,500 from at least eight other participants.

Nebraska statute defines a deceptive trade practice as anything that "promotes the use of a chain distributor scheme ... in the conduct of any trade or commerce."

The settlement, signed by all parties between March 24 and March 28, earmarked the money to the Consumer Protection Division of the Nebraska Attorney General's office. Blue added that the Nebraska Department of Justice should pay \$800 in investigative costs to the Lincoln Police Department's Technical Investigations Unit.

The resulting settlement, including the state contribution, totals \$3,800.

# Homeless

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They have entered service areas and harassed union staff, he said. Last week, a vagrant walked into a private event in the upper level of the union, Swanson said.

"There was a private reception there. The people were in the room having refreshments, and he just came in and joined them," Swanson said.

Not all the non-university people who frequent the union are homeless, Swanson said. Some have homes but feel more comfortable spending their days in the union.

Swanson said most of the homeless in the union were harmless; they lounged and watched television.

But if students and staff feel in

danger, the union has a security issue, he said.

"Our worst concern is that the students who are affected stay away," Swanson said.

Diana Hafermann, an assistant night manager at the union, said the staff found it hard to deal with vagrant problems because the union was state property.

Hafermann said she handled an incident a few weeks ago where a vagrant violently accosted a student. The man grabbed and shoved a student who told him to go away, she said.

No state law prohibits panhandling, she said, and police can only ban the vagrants for one night.

The police can only arrest vagrants if they physically accost some-

one or if someone files a complaint for disturbance of the peace.

The person would then have to appear in court. Hafermann said most students were unwilling to follow up on such charges.

Swanson said to deal with problems better, he wanted the courts to ban the offenders from inhabiting the union. Swanson said he still wanted to prevent discriminating against the union visitors who didn't cause problems.

The union board was split between those who wanted to evict the vagrants and those who wanted to help them, he said.

Swanson said whatever action they take, he wanted to be sure it was legal.