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# 13-year-old 'can't wait' to visit Austria

By Wendy Thomas  
Staff Reporter

Nicole Jones, 13, cannot walk. But that won't stop her from putting on her traveling shoes July 3.

The Park Middle School student, who lost her father and the use of her legs in a car accident 10 years ago, will pack her bags and travel to Austria for two weeks.

Last year, the mayor of Vienna invited a young person with a disability from every state to visit the city this summer as a symbolic gesture of gratitude to the United States for helping to restore freedom in Austria 50 years ago.

Gov. Ben Nelson chose Nicole to represent Nebraska.

"I guess it's just a thank you for us helping them [Austria] out during the war," Nicole said. "I can't wait to go."

Nicole will be accompanied by her mother, stepfather and sister.

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**NICOLE JONES**

Park Middle School student

The trip will allow Nicole and her family to see the sights of Austria, attend operas, tour the zoo and take an excursion to the Austrian countryside on an old-fashioned steam locomotive.

They will also be welcomed by a Viennese host family, who will show them the ropes and answer any questions they might have about the country.

Nicole said she was most looking forward to visiting the palaces and doing some Austrian-

style shopping.

She said she hoped the dollar was strong so she could afford an Austrian Barbie to add to her international Barbie collection.

When Nicole spoke of seeing Austria and possibly traveling to Italy on one of her "leisure days," her lips opened into a smile and her eyes shone with excitement.

She said she knew the trip was an experience not many 13-year-olds have.

But exciting experiences are certainly not foreign to Nicole.

In the past few years, the girl has been on television, posed for an Easter Seals poster, became friends with the governor and met Billy Ray Cyrus of country music fame.

She met Cyrus backstage at one of his concerts. The other three events came with her role as 1993-94 Easter Seals Ambassador.

Every year, Camp Easter Seals in Milford chooses one camper to be its "poster child." Nicole was chosen out of hundreds of young people to appear on telethons, speak to various organizations and clubs and shadow Gov. Ben Nelson for a day.

In fact, her day with Nelson is what got her the opportunity to visit Austria.

"She was just at the right place at the right time," Nicole's stepfather, Dick Piper, said.

Nicole was in the room when Nelson and the Austrian Consulate General were discussing a trade mission. The Consulate reminded Nelson of the Vienna mayor's invitation.

"Nicole is a very impressive young woman," Nelson said in a press release, "and it occurred to me that our delegate was right there in the room."

Nelson, who held a Bon Voyage reception at the Capitol for Nicole, said the trip would be a wonderful experience for her.

"I'm sure she will do a great job as an ambassador of Nebraska," he said.



Tanna Kinnaman/DN

**Nicole Jones, Nebraska Easter Seals Ambassador, discusses her upcoming two-week trip to Vienna, Austria, with her mother, stepfather and sister.**

# Surfing 'smut' net may be harder for kids as bill advances

By Erin Schulte  
Staff Reporter

A bill (S-314) introduced by Sen. Jim Exon known as the communications bill has passed in the Senate and will continue on for House approval during July.

The bill includes legislation concerning telephone company prices, cable TV, and most controversial, obscenity on the Internet (section 402).

Families appear to be cheering the "no smut" bill onward, but questions remain about enforcing the Internet portion of the bill.

The government will prosecute those who transmit obscene, lewd, filthy or indecent material over the computer network, including e-mail accounts and all sections of the Internet, such as the World Wide Web.

Steve Rowe, the public relations director for International Discount Telecommunications, a national Internet provider, said the bill would be impossible to enforce and would cripple the Internet and invade individual rights to free

speech.

"We think that the Internet should be equal to other forms of communication. People can say whatever they want on the phone, and the government is saying it shouldn't be the same on the Internet," Rowe said.

The Internet is so multifaceted, Rowe said, there is no way that Internet providers can be aware of every bit of information or every graphic that people choose to put on the 'net.'

And, if people choose to sue an Internet provider for obscene material they have encountered while on the Internet, servers will soon go out of business because they can't monitor what is on the world-wide computer network and will shy away from taking the risk.

"It's like an unfunded mandate," Rowe said. "The government makes a law and says, 'You enforce it or we'll fine you.'"

Rowe said he does not believe the bill will pass as is. He said if the bill was changed to include the condition of the company's knowledge of obscene material on their service to make them responsible for it, it would make the

bill more reasonable.

But even that condition would be hard to prove, he said.

Russ Rader, spokesman for Sen. Exon, said many people misunderstood the bill and that many changes have been made since it was introduced.

In no way, Rader said, would private conversations between consenting adults through e-mail be eavesdropped on, unless there was a complaint.

Careful wording changes have been made, Rader said, to make the bill totally constitutional and in adherence to standing court decisions. Rader said the government doesn't want to be a censor.

"As long as pornography is located in an 'adults only' section, that's OK. As long as children don't have access to it," Rader said.

Companies are in the process of developing lock-out software to protect children from sexual images on the Internet, Rader said. Credit cards or passwords can also be used to monitor who has access to adult material.

Exon's office said the bill would prosecute people who use the Internet for the equivalent of obscene telephone calls, to prosecute electronic stalkers, clamp down on obscene materials and and prosecute those who provide pornography to children.

Rader said the bill has been changed so that Internet providers will not be held responsible for material that goes through their service unless they are aware that it is being distributed to children.

"Services should take reasonable steps to make sure only adults have access to adult material, similar to dial-a-porn companies," Rader said, referring to popular TV 900 numbers.

John Bender, communications law professor at UNL, said the bill may face judicial protests because indecent material is protected by the Constitution (although obscenity is not).

"I have strong reservations about the bill," Bender said. "If the bill is passed as-is, it could reduce all material on the Internet to the level that's appropriate for children."