

S U M M E R  
Daily  
NEBRASKAN

JULY 20,  
1995  
VOL. 94  
NO. 160  
UNIVERSITY  
OF  
NEBRASKA-  
LINCOLN

**Inside:**  
"Bolt" up your bike — Page 3  
There's a bug in my food — Page 6  
Coffee makes the art grow fonder — Page 7

## Omaha, Lincoln look at security after inmates escape from jail

By Catherine Blalock  
Staff Reporter

After security measures in Omaha failed to keep inmates confined, officials evaluate security measures in Omaha and Lincoln jails.

On July 13, five inmates escaped from the Douglas County Jail, currently all but one are back in police custody.

Officials are still looking for Rodney Freeman, who was awaiting sentencing after being convicted on May 26 of robbing an Omaha restaurant and using a weapon to commit a felony.

He has been named the "backdoor bandit" because he entered through the back doors of restaurants to commit these crimes.

In a telephone interview Monday afternoon, Douglas County Sheriff Tim Dunning, gave the following account of what happened.

Inmates were in the recreational area when a fight broke out between two inmates, a fight that is now believed to have been staged.

One of the inmates took a metal mop handle off and pried open the fence. Inmates then jumped down 12 to 13 feet and escaped.

Due to this distance to the ground several of them received injuries. Freeman is believed to have broken either an ankle, foot, or leg.

The public has helped in recapturing the individuals, Dunning said.

Edward Goodwin turned himself in after hearing his mother's plea on local news stations for him to do so.

The inmates who escaped are Tim Claussen, 31 who was awaiting retrial in a 1992 killing; Goodwin 23, who was awaiting trial on a murder charge in a May 15 shooting; James Coleman III, 35, who was being held on sexual assault, weapon and robbery charges; Freeman and Johnathan Lessley, who was being held on robbery and weapons charges.

In the 16 years the correction facility has been open nothing like this has ever happened before; and to ensure that it does not again, officials are reevaluating security measures, Dunning said.

Officials in Lincoln believe they have taken all precautionary measures to keep this from happening here.

Director Mike Thurber of the Lancaster County Jail, where individuals awaiting trial or sentencing are kept, said one of the most impor-

tant things for any type of correctional facility is to know everything they can about an inmate.

To ensure that they stay put, jail officials have computerized surveillance equipment, guards and a classifying system for inmates.

Inmates are classified on the basis of whether or not they are an escape danger. Inmates are also moved around from one cell to the next to keep them from conspiring ways out with others.

In addition, jail officials do random searches of the cells to find anything that looks suspicious, Turber said.

Even when officials do all of this — "If there's a way, they'll figure it out," he said.

No one has broken out of the Lancaster County Jail.

The most recent attempt was made in Sept. 93 when inmates took an officer hostage. Inmates gave up after breaking out a window and discovering they had no place to go, Thurber said.

The Lincoln Correctional Center, which houses individuals nearing the end of their sentencing, has experienced a more recent escape attempt.

On June 29, at around 7:15 a.m. two inmates who were dropped off for work release at the Department of Roads located on Hwy 2, never reported for work.

The two individuals were taken to their place of employment. After being dropped off they shed their green prison clothes leaving the civilian clothes they had worn underneath, Dave Avery, superintendent of the correctional center, said.

The two inmates were not seen again until afternoon when State Troopers spotted them at the McDonald's located near the airport, Bill Hobbs, with the State Patrol said.

It is believed these individuals walked to their destination, he said.

Currently, individuals do not have to be escorted to their work release employment, only dropped off, Avery said.

Each morning the corrections facility is responsible for dropping off 75 to 100 inmates who have been charged with burglary to first degree murder, he said.

Each year an average of four to five inmates walk off from their assigned job site, Avery said.

"It happens a lot, but not that not often," he said.



Tanna Kinnaman/DN

### EN GARDE!

Cassidy Kovanda, (left) University of Nebraska-Lincoln arts and science major, lunges at Tim Cherry, Lincoln High School student, in the Cornhusker State Games fencing event at Whittier School Sunday. Cherry upset Kovanda 15-14.

# MATA unites Hispanic inmates, community

By Doug Kerns  
Staff Reporter

The Mexican Awareness Through Association cultural organization met in the Nebraska State Prison on Tuesday, July 11.

MATA President Rudy Rosales stated that the purpose of the organization is to "try to make us aware of what's happening. We're in tune with the same spirit."

"Due to the political climate," Rosales said, "it is time for people, us and college students to be Chicano all year, not just during Chicano Week."

*"We need each other for support. We're going to live by what is in our hearts."*

**RUDY ROSALES**  
MATA President

Present among the guests and volunteers from outside the prison were Chandra Diaz, President of the Mexican American Student

Association at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln; Ed Munoz, teacher of criminology, race and ethnicity, and UNL psychologist Dr. Marty Ramirez.

Ramirez addressed the group of approximately 50 inmates and warned against the harm that can be caused by gossip and lack of information.

"It pains us to hear the things going on between the groups. We are not immune," Ramirez said.

"We need each other for support. We're going to live by what is in our hearts."

An upcoming event for MATA is the Mexi-

can Independence Day Cultural Symposium on Sept. 9, at the Nebraska State Penitentiary. Planned speakers are activist, writer and teacher Elizabeth "Betita" Martinez, and poet, journalist and author Luis J. Rodriguez.

MATA also has a video loan program with films donated by film director and Public Broadcasting producer Jesus Salvador Trevino.

MATA was created in 1973 as a non-profit organization focusing on preparing inmates to return to mainstream society.

For more information on MATA, write P.O. Box 2500, Lincoln NE 68542-2500, or call 471-3161 ext. 3379.