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FRIDAY

WEATHER:

Today - Cloudy with light snow. Breezy and cold. North wind 15 to 25 mph.

Tonight - Flurries. Low near 0 to 5 above.



January 26, 1996



THE CHALLENGER ACCIDENT 10 years later



Distant memory

*A decade after catastrophe,
day vivid in students' minds*

By Ted Taylor
Senior Reporter

On Jan. 28, 1986, school children all across the nation gathered to watch the first "regular person" orbit the earth.

The space shuttle Challenger had a special passenger for this trip—a teacher named Christa McAuliffe.

Only 73 seconds into the flight, seconds after mission control said, "Go with throttle up," Challenger disappeared into a ball of smoke and fire.

Ten years later, the school children that gathered that day are grown up.

Sara Buda, a freshman biology major, said Jan. 28, 1986, started on a sour note for her third grade class.

"Our classroom gerbil had been missing for three days," she said. "The janitor came in, and we thought he was going to tell us he was dead. Then the teacher came in and told us the shuttle exploded."

Buda, a third-grader at Omaha's Abbott Elementary at the time, said her classmates then gathered to watch news broadcasts of

the event.

"Then we went out to recess," she said. "It was just a weird day. We were all really sad."

"You can watch it over and over and every time you feel bad for the people there because they didn't know what was about to happen."

Aaron Klaasmeyer, a senior history major, said he wasn't with classmates when he heard the news.

"I was home from school sick," he said. "So I watched it on TV by myself."

Klaasmeyer said the anniversary of the date usually escaped him, but seeing shuttles lift off brought the Challenger tragedy to the front of his mind.

"Every time you see another shuttle go up, you think back to the time it blew up," he said.

Jennifer Hayduska, a freshman advertising major, said the Challenger had been a big deal around her house because her mother was a teacher.

"My mom cried after seeing pictures of

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House passes bill to avoid shutdown

By Alan Fram

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — With Republicans bruised by two government shutdowns, the House overwhelmingly approved legislation Thursday to keep federal agencies running through March 15. The White House said President Clinton would sign it as the year-long budget fires cooled on all fronts.

After settling an impasse with the White House over abortion restrictions and spending levels, the House voted 371-42 for a stopgap measure that would temporarily finance dozens of federal agencies, though at lower levels than 1995. The Senate was expected to approve the legislation Friday.

"Let's quit wasting the taxpayers' money," said House Appropriations Committee Chairman Bob Livingston, R-La., the GOP's rallying cry all year. But reflecting his party's new, less confrontational mode, he added, "Let's keep the government open."

"We're satisfied that a lot of give-and-take has produced an agreement the president can live with," White House spokesman Mike McCurry said.

Lawmakers had faced a Friday night dead-

line that if breached would have seen civil servants furloughed for an embarrassing third time since November.

After taking a drubbing in public opinion polls for their confrontational tactics, Republicans were no longer vowing to halt government's most basic functions unless their demands for a balanced budget in seven years were met.

With this fall's elections on their minds, both sides seemed to feel the best path, for now, was to settle immediate differences and save their most stubborn disputes over Medicare, Medicaid and welfare until next year.

But all the embers from the budget inferno were not dead. Despite an apparent truce over extending the debt limit and pressure from Wall Street to do so, the two sides fenced over how it would be accomplished.

"Since I gave the State of the Union address, there have been some encouraging things said by the congressional leaders," Clinton told mayors visiting the White House, continuing the positive tone he took in that speech.

"But I would remind you that we still have some roadblocks in the way that I think need to

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Expert focuses on Caribbean

By John Rupprecht

Staff Reporter

Caribbean nations need to get their houses in order and come together as a region before they can become part of a global community, an expert on the region said Thursday.

Anthony T. Bryan returned to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, his doctoral alma mater, to challenge Nebraskans to learn more about the challenges facing the Caribbean.

"Get to know that region very well," he said. "The Caribbean is in Miami, Atlanta, Austin and even here in Lincoln."

Bryan, the director of the Caribbean Program at the University of Miami's North-South Center, spoke at the Lied Center for Performing Arts as the latest installment of the 1995-96 E.N. Thompson Forum on World Issues.

A native of Trinidad, Bryan was previously

the director of the Institute of International Relations at the University of the West Indies in Trinidad.

The United States must get involved in the Caribbean to help the struggling nations become part of the global community, Bryan said.

Economic liberalization and increasingly free markets have shifted power in Caribbean and Central American countries away from traditionally strong governments to private business and a small rising middle class, he said.

Many nations in the area are vulnerable economically because of a dependence on the travel industry and a lack of diversified exports, Bryan said.

Poverty and an uncertain future are consequences for many people who are not keeping up with rapid change in the region, he said.

Similar trends in the United States and the Caribbean—rising homelessness, poverty and social discord—are consequences of government privatization, Bryan said.

For the Caribbean to fully recover, Cuba will

See BRYAN on 2

Tougher penalties foreseen for convicted sex offenders

By Ted Taylor

Senior Reporter

John Wray of Lincoln said he felt like a sheep in front of a pack of wolves while testifying Thursday to the Legislature's Judiciary Committee.

Legislature '96



"Which is appropriate," the once-convicted sex offender said, because "I was the wolf before."

Wray testified Thursday supporting LB1206, the Sexual Predator Act, introduced by Sen. Don Wesely of Lincoln. The bill proposes stiffer penalties for sex offenders.

Wesely said an enhanced sentencing point system would help keep sex offenders off the streets.

"The concept is for various crimes, points are given," he said. "And when they accumulate to a certain level, you have the chance to give them a life sentence."

Wesely said the bill, backed by 21 other senators, would pass if it gets through committee.

"But some of the judiciary committee aren't

co-signers," he said. "And they are tough on anti-crime legislation."

Wesely told the committee that something needed to be done to stop the problem.

"We will have much tougher sentences, with longer terms," he said, "with the potential in extreme cases to put people in jail for life."

But Wray, who spent 7 1/2 years in the Lincoln Regional Center for the first degree sexual assault of his stepdaughter, said rehabilitation still should be the focus.

"Treatment is absolutely the only answer," he said.

Wesely agreed, but didn't believe most sex offenders were as eager to rehabilitate as Wray.

"I'm convinced there are some sex offenders out there who will never be safe in public again," he said.

But he said the point system allowed appropriate individuals to get treatment and control the problem.

"Some are just not interested in changing themselves," Wesely said. "For those folks, we just put them away and don't let them out. For those who want to change, we'll work with them."

Wray agreed that repeat offenders should be

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