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# Senators debate mail-in votes

By Erin Schulte  
Staff Reporter

As the campaign season inches toward November, the Nebraska Legislature continues to debate a measure that would allow voting by mail-in ballot.

The Legislature debated but took no action on the bill Thursday, and it passed an amendment that could make mail-in voting in special elections possible.

LB964, introduced by Sen. Jim Cudaback of Riverdale, would allow registered voters to mail in votes for special elections in communities with fewer than 5,000 residents. It is intended to resemble absentee voting.

An amendment to the bill, intro-

duced by Sen. DiAnna Schimek of Lincoln, would open mail-in voting to communities of any size.

This is an era of change, Cudaback told the Legislature, and change applies to voting procedures, too. Computer voting will be standard one day, he said, and the Legislature should not be afraid to move toward that change.

And Cudaback said more voters might participate in special elections if they had the convenience of mail-in voting.

Senators opposing the amendment said there were possible problems with allowing mail-in voting in any size city.

"We have no idea whether it's a good experiment or not," said Sen. David Bernard-Stevens of North Platte.

Another possible problem with mail-in votes was that people could be influenced by door-to-door campaigns that try to convince people how they should vote.

"If I have received a ballot at home, what's to keep people interested in the issue from coming to my door to tell me how to vote?" Bernard-Stevens said.

Schimek said this would not be a problem, citing voter apathy as a bigger issue.

"I think we're raising all kinds of ghosts and goblins, and it's not even Halloween," Schimek said.

Fraud was another concern to legislators. This could be in the form of name-forging or using someone else's ballot.

Cudaback said forging should be even less of an issue than with regular polling because handwriting samples would be compared on the mail-in votes, and this is not done using regular polls.

Special election ballots are not in danger of fraud as much as candidate-election ballots would be, he said.

Sixteen other states now use mail-in voting, Schimek said.

# Events celebrate black history

By Joy Ludwig  
Staff Reporter

A University of Nebraska-Lincoln committee has organized events to help the campus community honor African-American heritage during February for Black History Month.

## Black History Month



Gregory Williams, education specialist for African-American studies in the minority assistance program and a committee member, said students should get involved and recognize the great contributions that were made before them.

"Many people played an important role in laying down a foundation and going through some humility in order to make history," Williams said.

That line of thinking influenced Carter G. Woodson, who is the "Father of Black History," to start Negro History Week in 1926.

But it wasn't until 1976, during America's bicentennial celebration, that the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History helped expand the observance of Black History Week to the month of Febru-

ary.

The expansion provided more time for activities focusing on African-American contributions, Williams said.

"But one month cannot really hold everything we have done and the roles that we have played in building the United States," he said. "Black history is every month."

But Reshell Ray, coordinator of ethnic minority programs in Student Involvement, said the planned events still would give students an opportunity to "learn and grow by immersing oneself in another culture."

Ray said planned events would allow for discussion of different issues that cross racial lines. These events also should bring students together.

Besides attending the scheduled events, Bryant Farmer, president of the Afrikan People's Union, said students should read up on the history and culture written by African-American authors.

"I think it is important to make the younger generation aware of what their ancestors have done to benefit them and to keep that idea going," Farmer said.

And by keeping that idea alive, Williams said, America someday will be able to celebrate black history all the time.

## Up Coming Events



- On Monday, a video showing, "Black Issues," at the Culture Center, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.
- On Tuesday, video/discussion of "African-American Women's Contribution to History" at the Culture Center, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.
- On Thursday, "Linking the Campus and the Community" lecture at the Culture Center 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Caribbean jazz concert at UNL Crib 8 p.m. to 11 p.m.
- On Saturday, jazz concert at Kimball Hall, 8 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.
- On Sunday, Pre-Valentine's Day Dance at Huey's, 245 N. 13th St., 8 p.m.

# Computer helps victims spot criminals

By Chad Lorenz  
Senior Reporter

The days are gone in which a handful of possible suspects walk into a bright room and stand in a line facing a two-way mirror to be identified.

The Lincoln Police Department now uses a digital lineup to help witnesses and victims identify criminals, said Gene Rauscher, coordinator of the department's identification lab.

A computer keeps digital "mug"

photographs of all people taken into police custody, Rauscher said.

It can instantly retrieve photographs based on a person's physical features, such as approximate age, height, weight, race, hair color or eye color, he said.

A witness could use a vague description to narrow the set of pictures, Rauscher said, and then scan each mug, even at magnification, to find a perpetrator.

Officers used to scan 200,000 pho-

tographs on huge reels of film, Rauscher said.

The computer makes suspect-searching quicker and easier, and the money saved will pay for the system in five years, Rauscher said.

The state spends \$25,000 to \$30,000 each year on film and developing costs for the photograph mug system.

The system soon will be integrated with a new state computer to match fingerprints, Rauscher said.

## Powell

Continued from Page 1

On her campus visit, Powell said she was impressed with UNL and with Lincoln.

"It's a very comfortable and traditional campus, very excellent," she said. "The students here are like students I've been involved with in all my years."

But visiting the Midwest was nothing new to Powell.

Powell grew up in Illinois, and received her bachelor of science

degree from Western Illinois University. She also spent eight years at the University of Wyoming and lived in Kansas for four years.

She visited UNL two years ago for an affirmative action institute, and she said she liked what she saw.

"I was so impressed with UNL," Powell said. "After 20 years in affirmative action, I thought it was nice to work in an institute that had that high of a level."

If she is chosen, Powell will be joined in Lincoln by her husband, Merton. She has two sons who are now engineering professors.

UNL chancellor James Moeser

will choose the new director. The two candidates interviewed last month were Alan Comedy, special assistant to the vice president for university affairs at the University of Northern Colorado, and Herminia Gardner, affirmative action director and assistant to the president at Amherst College.

Powell said she was ready to return to the Midwest and make a difference at UNL.

"We need to work together, with minority students and student groups, to find concerns that need to be resolved."

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