

Daily Nebraskan

COVERING THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA SINCE 1901

VOL. 95 NO. 144

TUESDAY

WEATHER:

Today - Mostly sunny & warmer. Northwest wind 15 to 25 mph.

Tonight - Partly cloudy, low in the lower 40s.



April 16, 1996

Leakage endangers artifacts

Researchers fight to protect collection at Nebraska Hall

By Erin Schulte
Staff Reporter

More than \$140 million in irreplaceable historical artifacts are in danger of being ruined by rainwater coming through the ceiling at Nebraska Hall.

All that is protecting the artifacts are sheets of plastic and some duct tape.

Employees have been trading research duties to mop and empty buckets full of water.

Huge trash cans are filling up in various parts of the fifth floor every two hours, said Brett Ratcliffe, a professor and curator of insects.

Pumps have been installed, and professors came in on the weekend to rig up huge plastic sheets to the ceiling bars with duct tape.

"This is what we got a Ph.D. for?" Ratcliffe said as he adjusted a dripping piece of plastic.

The efforts are to protect artifacts used by scientists all around the world, Ratcliffe said.

The 14 million specimens held in Nebraska Hall function as a library of history. Researchers can request to check out and study specimens, and some come to Nebraska to study them.

The west side of the building, built in the '50s, has had constant leakage problems since September 1994. Three weeks ago, the roof literally began collapsing around them from water, said Peg Bolick, curator of botany.

Not only are ceiling panels falling into the protective plastic, the plaster in the roof is falling down in huge chunks. During an interview, a section of ceiling collapsed.

"One fell that hit so loud you could hear it a block away," Ratcliffe said. "It was like a bomb went off."

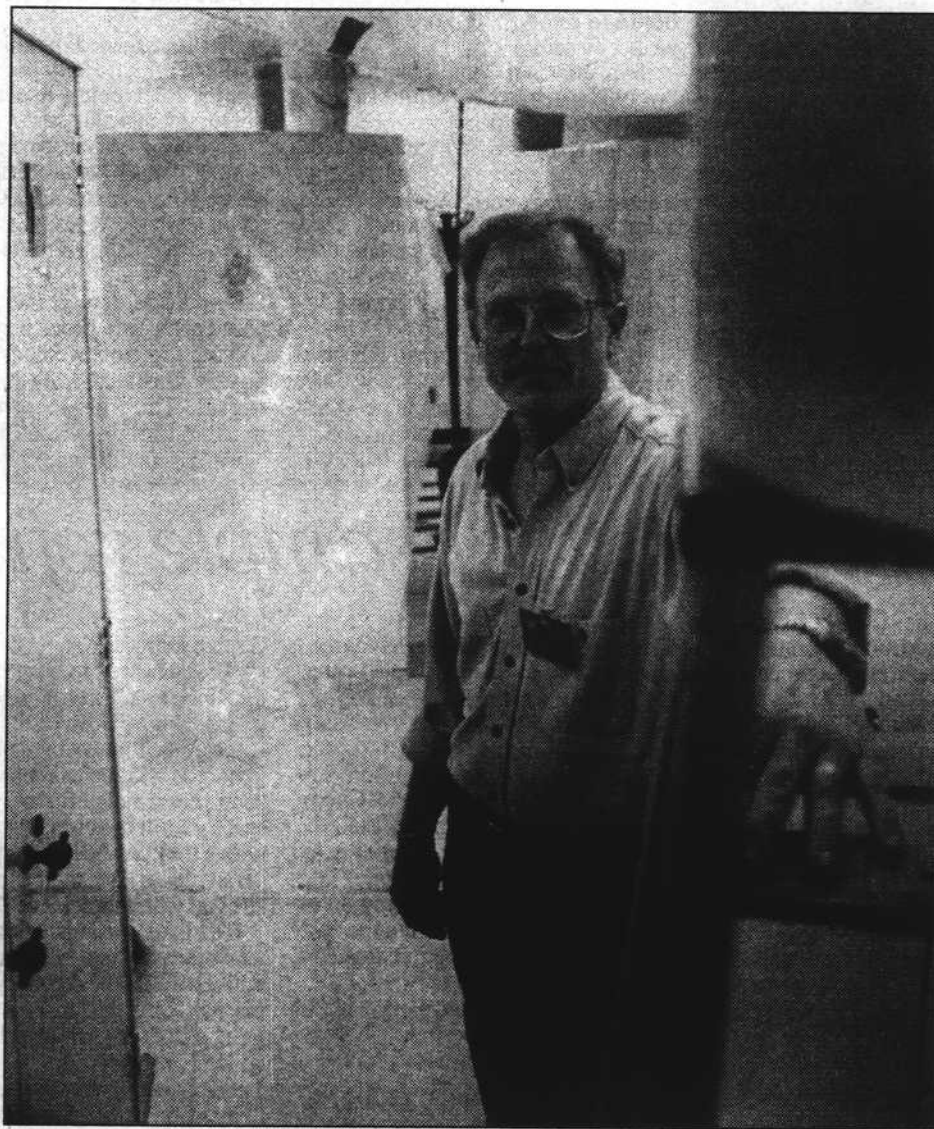
The building was scheduled to be re-roofed this spring, Ratcliffe said. But a new plastic membrane recently developed for roofing delayed the project until July, he said.

Funding for deferred maintenance is also a problem, he said, with lots of buildings on campus needing repairs.

"Something always has to give," Ratcliffe said. "And right now, it's our ceiling."

Maintenance and custodial workers have been doing their best to keep up with the leaks, Ratcliffe said, but it might not be enough.

If water seeps under the huge metal cabi-



Scott Bruhn/DN

Brett Ratcliffe, a professor and curator of insects, is part of an effort to save more than \$140 million in historical artifacts and insect specimens in Nebraska Hall.

nets used to store insects, botanical specimens and historical artifacts, the bottoms could begin to rust out. If they do, air, pests and light could get into the cabinets and destroy specimens, Ratcliffe said.

So far, no specimens have been lost. Some have been damaged, Ratcliffe said, and if they cannot be properly dried, they will be gone forever.

"We have a slice of time represented with those specimens that you can't go back and recapture," Ratcliffe said.

Some of the collections are unique to Nebraska, Ratcliffe said. The prairie plant and animal specimens are unmatched by any other collection in the country, Ratcliffe said.

Professors said they are not angry with the university, and they understand that it takes time to re-roof a building.

"We're frustrated with the system," Ratcliffe said. "The university is doing all it can, but the wheels of bureaucracy grind slowly."

The problem is not limited to Nebraska Hall, Bolick said. She said maintenance workers told her that Andrews Hall and the College of Law also kept them busy after recent rainfalls.

Repairing damage to Nebraska Hall's roof should take priority, research assistant Mary Jameson said.

"It seems like they could have placed a priority on preserving Nebraska heritage."

Veto could bring small tuition rise

By Ted Taylor
Senior Reporter

The University of Nebraska was again the target of Gov. Ben Nelson's red pen Monday, as \$2 million of the general funds provided to the university was vetoed from LB1189.

The Legislature presented Nelson with its main budget bill Thursday, calling for \$5 million to cover the difference between a 3 percent and 4 percent salary increase for NU employees.

Last year, Nelson vetoed the funds that asked for the 4 percent salary requirements — allowing only an increase of 3 percent.

But Nelson said the remaining funds for the university would be enough.

"The remaining \$3 million should be sufficient to allow the university to meet its most pressing financial needs," Nelson said during a late-afternoon press conference.

Nelson would not call the vetoed funds a cut, and he said that with the \$37.6 million of additional general funds the state already had appropriated, the university should be able to manage its budget and see no significant increase in tuition.

NU Vice President for External Affairs James B. Milliken agreed.

"I think we've been treated quite fairly," he said. "Everybody at the university recognizes the need to keep tuition at a reasonable level. I don't expect any dramatic consequences in terms of tuition."

March revenue figures for the university, Milliken said, made him believe the governor did "what he thought was fair and reasonable."

"Under the circumstances, we find ourselves in April 1996, we are not disappointed with the outcome," Milliken said. "It is less than we had hoped for, and we'll do everything we can to minimize the impact."

ASUN President Eric Marintzer, however, said any increase in tuition would be detrimental to students, and he said Nelson's actions put NU in a debt situation to make up the funds for the salaries.

"If we are going to have to have a tuition increase, I would like to see it go to facility improvement," he said.

A 1 percent increase in tuition would result in only \$800,000 — and the funds needed to match the salary requirements would have the university looking elsewhere.

Marintzer said to make up for those funds, the money would have to come from the students, "instead of something we should have got from Gov. Nelson."

NU President Dennis Smith was out of town and unavailable for comment Monday.

Nelson announced all of the spending reductions Monday before he signed and sent LB1189 back to the Legislature.

Some of the other institutions that were affected by Nelson's vetoes included Nebraska's state and community colleges. General funding for state colleges was reduced by \$15,529, while community colleges will see a \$27,787 decrease.

Nelson also vetoed \$200,000 of the \$350,000 the Legislature set aside for prison planning.

That money was for the Department of Correctional Facilities to prepare preliminary designs for a new 480-bed prison.

Senators will attempt to override any vetoes Thursday during the final day of the 1996 session.

"I think we've been treated quite fairly. Everybody at the university recognizes the need to keep tuition at a reasonable level."

JAMES B. MILLIKEN

NU vice president for external affairs

Art shows victims' lives in Nazi camps

By Chad Lorenz
Senior Reporter

Norbert Troller was a privileged victim of the Holocaust.

Nazi officials permitted him to go outside the fences of concentration camps to paint the beauty of surrounding countrysides.

His paintings, which were used as covers for reports sent to Gestapo headquarters, kept the Nazis from killing him.

"But it gave him the chance to show the contrast between the inside and the outside," said Sybil Milton, senior historian of the United States Holocaust Museum.

Milton spoke at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Bessey Hall Monday night about the few art pieces that survived the concentration camps and ghettos of WWII. Milton was sponsored by the Harris Center for Judaic Studies.

The 17,000 works preserved around the world are only one-fourth of all the works created, Milton said.

● **Dr. Sybil Milton will speak again tonight at the annual Holocaust Memorial Observance at 7:30 p.m. at the Nebraska State Capitol.**

Milton showed slides of several works that survived WWII as she commented on the history of each.

Holocaust prisoners used scant materials they smuggled or stole to depict their hardships with rough, simple images, she said.

"They're not social critics... They're victims and observers."

Many of the works showed thin, sickly prisoners — standing in food lines, laboring, crowded into barracks and gazing forlornly into the distance.

One work vividly showed a man passing a loaf of bread over a mangled mass of barbed wire to a woman and child. The artist left the concentration camp's background a blur to emphasize the separated family and food shortage, Milton said.

Karl Schevesik sketched his images on mock-postage stamps, one-inch by one and a half. He depicted the French ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity as they applied to concentration camps:

- Prisoners were liberated, within the confines of the barbed fences of work camps.
- Men, women and children suffered equally.
- Fraternity was strong, among the French police.

See HOLOCAUST on 6