

## Long leaper

NU's Angee Henry is a defending NCAA indoor and outdoor long jump champion. She may be the first to win four titles since Carl Lewis. PAGE 9



## Ferocious failure

The new comedy "Fierce Creatures" has the same cast and jokes that made "A Fish Called Wanda" a classic, but it doesn't measure up. PAGE 12

January 28, 1997

## Movin' On Up

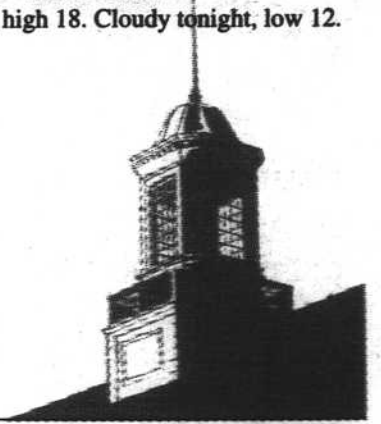
Mostly sunny, high 18. Cloudy tonight, low 12.

# Daily Nebraskan

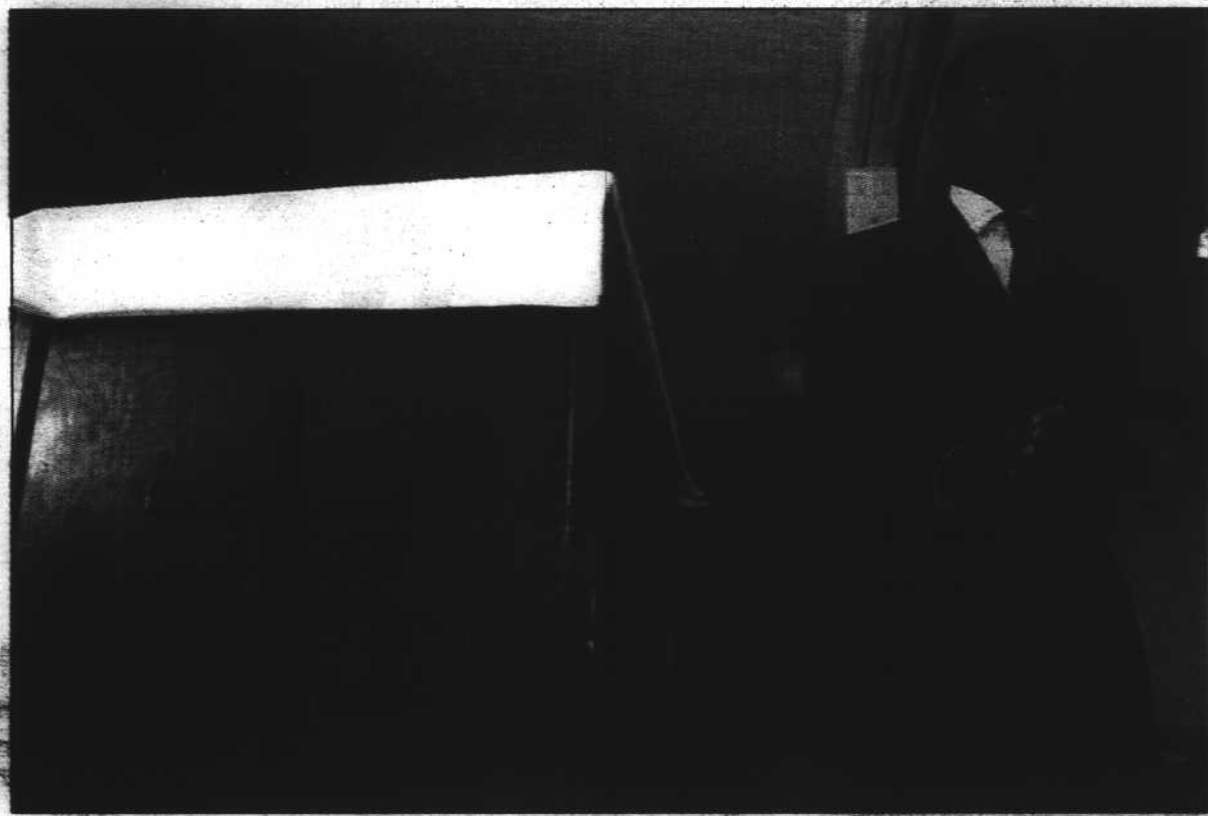
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## Racial tensions surround fraternity



REV. JOHN CARTER speaks to about 40 members of the Lincoln community Monday night at St. John's Baptist Church, 701 N. 24th St. The recent ritual burning of a cross by members of Sigma Chi fraternity has sparked racial tension in Lincoln.

JAY CALDERON/DN

### Clergy, leaders call ritual racist

BY ERIN GIBSON  
Senior Reporter

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln has failed to correct morally unacceptable, racist behavior in dealing with a UNL fraternity, Lincoln community leaders said Monday.

About 40 Lincoln clergymen, citizens and students gathered at the St. John's Baptist Church, 701 N. 24th St., to demand the university correct racism at UNL.

Rev. Jessie Myles of Mt. Hermon Baptist Church said the university has been unacceptably passive when dealing with matters of racial tension.

"We will committee this to death."

We will research this to death," Myles said. "It's time for something to happen."

Myles joined others at St. John's church who said a weekend incident involving Sigma Chi fraternity is evidence racism is prevalent in Lincoln.

Lancaster County Sheriff's deputies reported that fraternity members were found last Thursday night conducting a ritual that involved Confederate uniforms, sabers, rifles and the burning of a 6-foot-tall cross.

No arrests were made regarding the ritual.

The university released a statement that said Sigma Chi did not violate university policy and would not face university sanctions.

But Rev. John Carter of St. John's church said the university must take a strong stand against such racism as expressed by Sigma Chi.

"If you can't say that it's wrong, then you're condoning the conduct," Carter said.

"It is wrong," he said. "That's the bottom line. It is wrong."

Myles spoke forcefully of Sigma Chi's justification of the ritual. Fraternity spokesmen have said the ritual is an important re-enactment of fraternity history. Myles said the event had clearly racist undertones.

"There just comes a point where you get tired of this crap," Myles said.

Please see FORUM on 6

### UNL won't penalize Sigma Chi for ritual

BY ERIN GIBSON  
Senior Reporter

An apologetic Sigma Chi fraternity will not face university sanctions for a weekend ritual that included burning a cross, a university spokesperson announced Monday.

Linda Schwartzkopf, acting director of Greek Affairs at UNL, said the fraternity did not violate the University Student Code of Conduct during the pre-initiation ritual.

Sigma Chi members' actions were protected by the First Amendment guaranteeing freedom of speech, she said, but the university will use the incident to raise cultural awareness and understanding on campus.

"We must help sensitize people to the fact that while no negative intent may have been present, use of Confederate memorabilia and a burning cross in close proximity will almost certainly be misinterpreted as having racist connotations," she said in a statement.

Lancaster County Sheriff's deputies said they discovered about 30 Sigma Chi fraternity members engaged in a historical fraternity ceremony last Thursday night, a half mile south of Highway 33 and SW 58th Street.

No arrests were made regarding the ritual, which apparently included Confederate uniforms, sabers, rifles and the burning of a 6-foot cross, deputies said.

Sigma Chi President Craig Vacek said the ceremony was not racially motivated, but a ritual to re-enact the founding of Sigma Chi by soldiers during the Civil War.

"Our fault lies in the fact that we created the potential for this misunderstanding and for that we are extremely apologetic," Vacek said.

"But the meaning of what we did remains the same, and is no way based

"Our fault lies in the fact that we created the potential for this misunderstanding and for that we are extremely apologetic."

CRAIG VACEK  
Sigma Chi president

in racism in any way, shape or form," he said.

According to a Sigma Chi ritual manual, the burning cross came from a Roman legend. Emperor Constantine envisioned a flaming cross the night before his army invaded Rome in A.D. 371.

John Harris, special assistant to the vice chancellor for student affairs, said the symbolism of a burned cross cannot be ignored by the campus community.

"I don't think it has any small meaning at all," Harris said. "For fraternity members to not understand the reality of this symbolism troubles me."

Harris said he thought the fraternity members would say they did not intend to hurt anyone with the ritual.

"But how can we be sure?" Harris said. "They were willing to take a very strong stand in this ceremony with a 6-foot cross."

"What's next? Is somebody going to be up on this cross?"

Harris said racism was a problem both in Lincoln and at UNL, and the fraternity should not bear the brunt of all backlash against racism.

But the fraternity should be held

Please see SIGMA CHI on 6

### Classes vs. jury duty: Senators hear testimony

BY ERIN SCHULTE  
Senior Reporter

The civic responsibility of jury duty clashed with the reality of student life at a judiciary committee hearing Friday.

Public testimony was heard on LB73, which would exempt full-time college students from jury duty.

The bill was proposed by Sen.

## Legislature

Elaine Stuhr of Bradshaw after the family of one of her constituents told her about how their son, a UNL student, endured a two-month hassle trying to get out of jury duty so he could attend classes.

Robert Dane testified that his son was called for jury duty five

Please see JURY on 8

### Witness reconstructs shooting

BY MATTHEW WAITE  
Senior Reporter

The prosecution's case against former NU wingback Riley Washington started to come to a close Monday afternoon with a series of chain-of-evidence witnesses designed to introduce physical parts of the case.

The six evidential witnesses came after four long days filled with lengthy cross-examinations from defense attorneys of three prosecution witnesses — including one on Monday — who said Washington was the shooter.

Defense attorneys were quick to

point out that all three witnesses once said under oath they could not identify Washington as the shooter, then changed their stories.

Washington is on trial for the Aug. 2, 1995 shooting of Jermaine Cole outside the Kwik Shop at 27th and W streets. He is charged with second-degree attempted murder and use of a firearm to commit a felony.

The chain-of-evidence witnesses introduced by Special Prosecutor Ronald Lahners included three police officers — the first officer to respond, and two who handled different pieces of evidence.

Lincoln Police Officer Timothy

Kennett was the first dispatched to the Kwik Shop, but was quickly diverted to 835 N. 26th St., the apartment of Clarence Williams. Williams reported that a man who had been shot showed up at his door.

Williams testified that Cole was lying on his doorstep when he opened the door.

"He asked me to 'call the man,'" Williams said. "That's the way he put it."

"I said, 'I don't allow drunks in my house.' He said, 'I'm not drunk, I've been shot.'"

Please see TRIAL on 3