

Freshman fireballer

NU softball pitcher Jenny Voss has shown her ability this season with a 13-11 record. She has appeared in 28 games for the Huskers. PAGE 7

The Full moon

The Moon Seven Times, a five-piece band from Champaign, Ill., in the midst of a mini-tour, will stop in Omaha tonight for two shows. PAGE 8

April 9, 1997

WINTER REVISITED

Cloudy, light snow, high 34. Snow tonight, low 25.

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Climate OK'ed for female athletes

A consultant approves women's treatment in NU's Athletic Department.

By ERIN GIBSON
Senior Reporter

Women student-athletes do not face sexual harassment or a hostile environment in the University of Nebraska Athletic Department, a consultant said Tuesday.

Beverly Ledbetter, a consultant hired to study the climate for women athletes at UNL, revealed her finished study Tuesday and said a positive environment for women student-athletes now exists at UNL.

Her finding contradicts the accusations made by a 1996 university task force that women athletes were frequently harassed by men athletes in the Hewit Center and other Athletic Department facilities.

In 30 confidential interviews and by e-mail, UNL women athletes told Ledbetter the reported incidents of harassment were isolated, "not pervasive, hostile or threatening," she said.

NU athletes support each other like family, Ledbetter said, and the strength of their unity and respect for one another surprised her.

However, Ledbetter said the strength of ath-

letes' unity did not keep women athletes from reporting incidents of harassment to her.

Athletic Director Bill Byrne seemed pleased by Ledbetter's findings.

"It confirms what we knew all along," he said. "That we have a great program."

Both Byrne and Ledbetter acknowledged the Athletic Department was not free of problems.

Ledbetter said past reports of sexual harassment at UNL were not unfounded, but incidents were less common than reported. In interviews, women student-athletes said incidents were not a result of a poor climate at UNL, but were the result of atypical athletes who acted outside the realm of acceptable behavior.

Ledbetter said athletes felt past cases of sexual assault involving high-profile athletes at the university have tainted the public's opinion of the Athletic Department.

Both men and women NU athletes want this perception to change, she said. To help opinions change, the department should make reforms that will allow it to appear more sensitive to women athletes, she said.

Ledbetter recommended a series of such department reforms to correct negative perceptions and to further help women student-athletes feel comfortable at UNL.

Recommendations were:

- Make changes to the Hewit Center's dining center to make it more hospitable for women student-athletes.

Physical changes should be made to the hallway leading to the dining room, where some women athletes said they felt uncomfortable. Men athletes, who sit on hallway benches called "blocks," sometimes have heckled female passersby.

The price of an evening meal should also be lowered to allow women athletes, many whom are not on full scholarship, to afford the meal, Ledbetter said.

The evening meal at Hewit costs \$2 higher than elsewhere at UNL, she said, because of an upgraded meal made available to athletes.

A past report had said women athletes did not feel comfortable eating in the Hewit dining room for the evening meal because of male athletes.

Football players, who are on full scholarship and do not pay for their meals in Hewit, dominate the dining room in the evenings, the report said.

If prices were reduced to accommodate women athletes, the number of women who eat in Hewit in the evenings would increase, and they would feel more comfortable there, Ledbetter said.

• Hire more senior-level women staff members in the Athletic Department.

More women in administrative positions would send a message that women are qualified

Please see CLIMATE on 3

2 incumbents get most votes in election

City Council

By LORI ROBISON
Staff Reporter

Although the City Council primary election is over, for the six candidates chosen to advance to the May 6 general election the real campaign is just beginning.

Incumbents Jerry Shoecraft and Cindy Johnson led the race with 18.4 percent and 17.4 percent of the vote respectively, according to unofficial results Tuesday night.

Shoecraft said he probably won his share of votes because he followed through on campaign promises and worked hard during his term and the campaign.

"If you roll up your sleeves and work hard," he said, "many positive things can happen."

Johnson said the positive election results did not come as a surprise, partly because of her

Please see ELECTION on 3

Senators try amendments to resolve gay-union bill

By ERIN SCHULTE
Senior Reporter

Legislature

Legislators spent Tuesday morning debating an amendment that one senator said helped determine who was "worthy to marry."

Sen. Dave Landis of Lincoln said LB280, which was debated on select file for a second time Tuesday, was drafted to define who was worthy of marriage by outlawing recognition of gay or lesbian marriages.

Landis proposed an amendment that would prohibit obtaining a marriage license or recognizing a marriage if a person had been convicted of assault on a spouse three times. The amendment failed with 15 senators voting for the amendment and 17 senators voting against.

Landis said the Legislature should try to offset the unfairness of outlawing gay and lesbian marriages by offering an "olive branch," a symbol of peace.

Landis tried to do that in first-round debate by proposing a failed amendment that would have made workplace discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation illegal.

Landis said he was not a moral absolutist and gave an example of a time when Old Testament rules could be broken. If a Nazi came up to you during World War II, Landis said, and asked where Anne Frank was, and you knew, should you lie?

"I would lie with joy in my heart," Landis said. "The New Testament is a far more sensitive weighing of rights and wrongs."

“
They don't like the sanctity of marriage being ruined by this act.”

SEN. DON WESELY
Lincoln

Quoting the fourth chapter of John in the New Testament of the Bible, Landis said, "And everyone who loves is born of God and knows God."

"Sen. Jensen's bill really flies in the face of that language."

Landis said he would be willing to vote for the bill outlawing same-sex marriage if some fairness, such as one of his amendments, was tacked on.

Sen. Ernie Chambers of Omaha offered an amendment that would allow gays or lesbians to create a legal domestic partnership.

The partners would sign a statement under oath declaring their intent for a domestic partnership, which would provide legal recognition of an intimate, committed relationship, Chambers said.

No divorce would be required to dissolve the partnership. However, one partner would have to inform the state

Please see MARRIAGE on 6



JAY CALDERON/DN

ANTHONY COHEN, who spent six weeks retracing the steps of the Underground Railroad, speaks Tuesday night in the Union. Cohen was speaking on behalf of the Leadership Institute.

Historian retraces slaves' escape route Train ride, 800-mile hike still lead to freedom

By KASEY KERBER
Staff Reporter

For 26 hours, Anthony Cohen traveled in a box barely large enough to support his dimensions in an Amtrak freight car with temperatures well over 100 degrees.

And he did it to recreate exactly

what a slave would do to achieve freedom.

Cohen, a historian who walked more than 800 miles from Maryland to Canada to retrace the Underground Railroad, spoke to a crowd of more than 70 people Tuesday night in the Nebraska Union.

Cohen performed the "box" act last year to recreate what former

slave Henry "Box" Brown did in 1848 — shipping himself to freedom aboard a train.

At first, Cohen's friends were excited by the idea of trying to recreate a slave escape. But as possibilities of failure entered their minds, they became less sure, Cohen said.

Please see RAILROAD on 6