

Oldfather Hall break-ins raise questions of motive

By **MATTHEW WAITE**
Senior Reporter

A bizarre string of break-ins early Sunday morning in Oldfather Hall left footprints on walls, 19 doors kicked in and only theories as to what went on.

Twenty-one offices were broken into, from professors to teaching assistants to department offices for math and statistics, political science and philosophy.

What makes the break-ins so strange is what the vandals took — nothing. So far, only a can of peaches was moved, opened and dumped out on the floor. And one teaching assistant said he is missing a can of refried beans, but he isn't sure it was stolen.

"I feel violated," joked Anthony Caskey, a political science teaching assistant.

No tests were swiped, no grade books changed, no computers stolen, no audio-visual equipment removed and no personnel files were tampered with.

The vandals did \$1,225 damage to doors, locks and ceiling tiles. Two offices were broken into by crawling through the ceiling.

Brian Foster, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, said there were any number of valuable or sensitive documents that could have been taken.

"There are all kinds of possibilities that arise," he said. "It is a problem. It's something that needs real serious attention."

Foster said there was some talk about a review of building security, but no action has been taken yet.

University Police were called to the building on Sunday by a political science professor who came to her office that morning to finish some work. When she got there, she found evidence of a break-in.

For the rest of the day Sunday and Monday morning, more and more offices were found broken into. Even more odd is that vandals tried gluing some of the doors they broke back together again.

And, Sgt. Mylo Bushing said, there was no pattern at all.

"We thought maybe if it was just one department, maybe it was someone flunking out, but they hit three different departments," he said.

Political Science Department Chairman David Forsythe, whose office was broken into, said the incident, however strange, appeared to be just random vandalism.

"There didn't seem to be much rhyme or reason or pattern to the destruction," he said.

Jan Edwards, a word processing specialist in the political science department office, said seven political science offices were broken into, including the offices of the department chairman, the staff assistants and several professors. And she said she was as confused as anyone about the incident.

"I'm just coming up with random things and wondering," Edwards said. "None of it makes sense."

Debate begins on aid bill

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much of the aid.

"Omaha and Lincoln receive 25 percent of the funds," Sen. Ardyce Bohlke of Hastings, chairwoman of the Education Committee, said, "but they also have 25 percent of the state's students."

Bohlke said although the bill had received criticism from rural schools, it would not force all small schools to consolidate.

The bill saves schools that must be small, Bohlke said. Schools that are small by choice can choose at the local level whether to merge.

"(This bill) solves the greatest number of problems from 1114. We can't avoid it ... 1114 never promised us a rose garden."

The bill saves schools that have to be small, Bohlke said. Schools that are small by choice

can choose at the local level whether to merge, she said.

On the options of closing vs. consolidation, Sen. Floyd Vrtiska of Table Rock said, "It reminds me of the convict sentenced to death who could either be shot or hung. It's not really much of a choice at all."

Vrtiska said parents would spend extra money driving to and from schools or possibly contributing money to keep rural schools afloat.

Two amendments proposed by Sen. Bob Wickersham of Harrison were added to the bill. One would allow subdistricts to retain ownership of their property after a merger with a high school. The other would prohibit the high school boards from taking any action that would adversely affect the subdistrict until after elections were held for board seats.

State may incur charges for records from Internet

By **ERIN SCHULTE**
Senior Reporter

Legislature

A bill that would empower a state records board to establish charges for accessing public records on the Internet advanced 29-1 Tuesday.

Opponents of LB590 say the bill will allow one company to monopolize the distribution of public records. Right now, Nebraska Online operates the state government information and records web site. Their contract will be terminated in 1998, at which time the board will begin taking bids for another contract.

Sen. Joyce Hillman of Gering said the company would not have a monopoly because it would compete for the job of putting information on the web at the time of bidding.

Most of the information on the web site is available free of charge, but certain records, like Department of Motor Vehicles records, require a charge. Insurance companies frequently access those records to determine insurance rates and to whom the companies will give coverage.

Sen. Curt Bromm of Wahoo proposed an unsuccessful amendment that would require that the board charge "fair" fees. But Sen. Kermit Brashear of Omaha said the charge should be "entrepreneurial" and bring in some profit for the public.

"We don't know when we've got something that's worth selling and we don't know how to price it," Brashear said. "LB590 is better than the Neanderthalic methodology we've used in the past."

Brashear said the information, which is gathered and organized with tax money, was valuable to insurance companies because it saves their clients money; therefore, they should be charged to access the information.

Other senators felt that approach left the common citizen out in the cold.

"That's who I'm representing is John Q. Public," Sen. Kate Witek of Omaha said. "You are forcing us to pay for the project, taking money from the same taxpayer who put the project together."

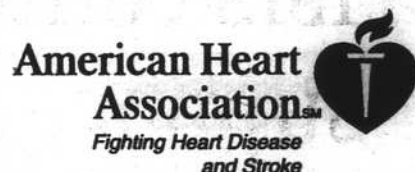
"We can't get information on state or county level, and you have to go through a private monopoly (to get the records) even though the state paid for collection of the information."

Sen. Ron Withem said the Legislature had taken adequate steps in protecting the public from unreasonable fees, but that the public hadn't responded to the bill.

"I'm a little frustrated we haven't heard from John Q. Citizen, who accesses this information by computer," Withem said. "The people who are driving opposition to this bill are those who profit from public records ... insurance companies."

Bromm said that during second-round debate legislators would have to deal with a problem that has come up frequently during first-round debate: whether or not records should be accessible solely by Internet, or should be available at the government agency and through the mail.

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