



Misty in the air

Nebraska junior gymnast Misty Oxford is looking to go down as one of the top gymnasts in Cornhusker history. PAGE 7



Hup, two, three, four

The UNL Symphonic Band will pay tribute this weekend to John Philip Sousa, the composer and conductor who taught millions to march. PAGE 9

Is It Spring Yet?

Chance of snow, high 32. Windy tonight, low 29.

# Daily Nebraskan

VOL. 97

COVERING THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN SINCE 1901

NO. 117

## Study shows accuracy of meters has improved

By JOSH FUNK  
Senior Reporter

Compared to last year, more drivers using parking meters on R Street are getting the time they pay for.

A second annual Daily Nebraskan investigation into the accuracy of some city parking meters has determined the meters, commonly used by students, have improved since April 1997.

"If people don't get an hour for their quarter, it's not fair, and it is confusing," said Larry Brage, a city traffic engineer.

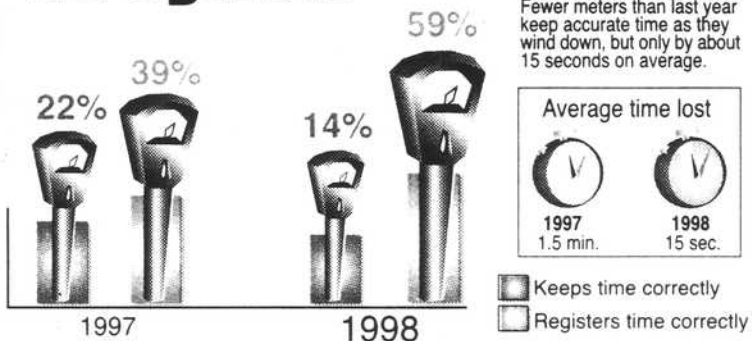
In the investigation, all 102 parking meters along R Street between 12<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> streets were plugged with quarters. The registered and elapsed times were recorded to check their accuracy.

Fifty-nine percent of the meters registered exactly 60 minutes when a quarter was deposited, while 22 percent of the meters registered more than 60 minutes.

Nineteen percent of the meters registered less than 60 minutes. On average, these meters registered 1.07 minutes less than an hour.

This compares favorably with last

### In synch



Now, more meters than last year register the correct time when a quarter is deposited. Fewer meters than last year keep accurate time as they wind down, but only by about 15 seconds on average.

year's investigation of the same meters, which showed that only 39 percent of the meters registered time accurately and 30 percent registered more than 60 minutes.

Last year, 31 percent of the meters were shortchanging students by an average of two minutes as time elapsed.

This year, the meters also improved in the amount of time purchased with 25 cents.

Only 14 percent of the meters expired in exactly 60 minutes, while 41 percent of them took more than 60

minutes from start to finish. Forty-five percent expired early, shortchanging drivers.

On average, the meters expired less than 15 seconds under an hour. Last year, the meters expired an average of 1.5 minutes under an hour.

Obviously, these numbers only apply to those meters that actually worked or were present.

R Street has 19 broken meters — almost one in five — compared to last year's 11.

Please see METERS on 3



LANE HICKENBOTTOM/DN

CHAI LING, a two-time Nobel Peace Prize nominee and a leader in the Tiananmen Square Protest in China, spoke in the Nebraska Union on Thursday night.

## Victim's friend perseveres

By JOSH FUNK  
Senior Reporter

Since the summer of 1995, the legal system has been slowly working toward a conviction for the murder of UNL student Martina McMenamin.

But the prospect of a trial may be postponed indefinitely because the Lincoln Regional Center has concluded that Gregory Gabel, the man accused of her murder, is unfit to stand trial.

Although the court has the final say in determining Gabel's competency, the Regional Center's findings usually are upheld. The court has followed the center's recommendations all 18 times it was consulted last year.

Regardless of the court's findings, the competency hearing will require an additional two to three months to proceed while another doctor evaluates Gabel's state of mind.

In the meantime, McMenamin's friends and family must continue the waiting game that began more than a year and a half ago when Gabel was arrested for the crime.

"There's a void that can't be filled without a trial," said McMenamin's former roommate and best friend, Sarah Bognich. "There's no closure."

Every time the case is in the news or a lawyer calls her with questions, Bognich said, she must remember the most difficult day of her life — the day

she came home from work and found McMenamin lying in a pool of blood in their south Lincoln apartment.

Bognich said the prospect of the murder trial has changed her life.

When it looked as if Gabel would soon face a jury of his peers, Bognich dropped out of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln so she would be ready to testify.

But that trial has not yet come.

Bognich, 21, took a full-time job at a real estate agency. She said she was unsure of how to continue with her life until after the trial.

"I never thought it would take this long," Bognich said. "It seems like the criminal has more rights than the victim."

And it may be some time before Bognich is needed for testimony.

Before the case moves forward in the legal system, the Regional Center's evaluation will be taken into consideration, and Lancaster County Attorney Gary Lacey said he would ask for a second opinion.

"After we get all the Regional Center documents, there will be a competency hearing where we will ask the court for another evaluation," Lacey said.

Once the court has both evaluations, the judge will determine if Gabel is competent enough to stand trial.

"This is just a pretrial motion that must be cleared up," Lacey said.

"It seems like the criminal has more rights than the victim."

SARAH BOGNICH  
friend of McMenamin

Meanwhile, Bognich has learned to cope with losing such a close friend.

"It affects me every day — the anger and sadness are still there, but I've learned to deal with it," Bognich said.

They had been friends for six years, attending different high schools in Omaha before living together in Smith Hall and then Amberwood Apartments.

McMenamin was an only child, and Bognich's family had moved to Texas when she was a senior in high school.

After McMenamin was gone, Bognich had to learn to face the world without her closest friend.

"The hardest thing was going out again," Bognich said, "because everything reminded me of her."

And now Bognich realizes everything that is happening with the case is out of her hands.

"I wish I could do more than wait."

## Tiananmen survivor enjoys new freedoms

By LINDSAY YOUNG  
Assignment Reporter

One of Chai Ling's dreams was to finish her education in the United States.

But she never dreamed she would arrive the way she did.

Ling, the commander in chief of the 1989 Tiananmen Square student protest for freedom and democracy in China, is still on China's most-wanted list after escaping the protest's last-hour massacre by the Chinese military.

Ling spent 10 months running from Chinese authorities and eventually found a home in Boston. During her escape, she survived 105 hours in a crate with rats and with only two slices of bread and a bottle of water.

Ling brought her message to about 300 people at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln on Thursday night when she kicked off Women's Week in the Nebraska Union.

Before the speech, Ling chatted during dinner in the Selleck Residence Hall Continental Dining Room with students in UNL's Multicultural Affairs programs.

Sitting at a table with Multicultural Affairs and Women's Center representatives, Ling dis-

"I was torn and couldn't really believe that (the massacre) was happening."

CHAI LING  
Tiananmen Square survivor

cussed everything from life at Harvard University to her experiences with the incident at Tiananmen Square.

Women's Center organizers hoped the message Ling brought showed the university that one person could make a change. The theme of Women's Week is "The Power of One, Women Making Change."

"She is an individual but she was able to make a change in her country," said Soledad Quiñonez, the program's coordinator.

Tolandra Coleman, Women's Center resources coordinator, said Ling's presentation was something most people would not otherwise have the opportunity to hear and

Please see LING on 6