

York students react to tension

By BRIAN CARLSON
Staff writer

University of Nebraska-Lincoln students from York say they are surprised at recent allegedly racist incidents in their hometown and want the public to reserve judgment until more facts emerge.

Several students contacted over the weekend said the tensions that resulted in a mob march on a black man's house were unlike anything they could remember in York, a town of 7,723 that is 40 miles west of Lincoln.

"I'm embarrassed for I'm from there now," said Katie Braasch, a sophomore psychology major. "When I tell people I'm from York, they say, 'Oh, you're from the town with the problems with racism.'"

Braasch did not hesitate to characterize as "ignorant and stupid" the group of 40 men, mostly in their teens and 20s, that marched toward the house of a black man and his white girlfriend, hoisting Confederate flags and vandalizing the man's property.

The mid-September incident was apparently the culmination of a series of incidents that led to escalating tensions between the two groups.

The incidents, which have drawn extensive state and national media cov-

erage, are being investigated by the FBI. Local and state government leaders, including state Sen. Ernie Chambers of Omaha, the only black representative in the Nebraska Legislature, have confronted the issue in recent weeks.

Braasch said that although members of her hometown tend to be close-minded at times, she could not remember past incidents motivated by racism.

Mark Bartek, a junior communications major, also said the incidents were unexpected.

"Yeah, I was pretty surprised," he said. "But I guess it can happen anywhere - a small town like York isn't ruled out."

But David Barr, a sophomore political science and English major, said the public has acted too quickly in characterizing the incidents exclusively in terms of racism.

"Obviously it brings to light possible issues of racism that were not apparent before," he said. "But I think it's getting blown out of proportion."

Barr said the incident began with the actions of local troublemakers before taking a racial turn. The majority of the population of York doesn't condone racism, he said.

Holly Bristol, a junior interior design major, agreed that race may have been a tangential issue.

"I'm sure it is partly racist, but I'm

sure mostly it's a 'who's-better-than-who' type of thing," she said.

Lisa Wieting, a sophomore broadcasting major, said that while "it's highly probable that racial issues are still out there," she believes the September incidents were not originally touched off by racism.

Tara Bellows, a sophomore nursing major, said she couldn't remember any time when York had racial problems. But the town has faced its share of social ills, especially in dealing with the growing drug trade in Nebraska, she said.

Several students agreed that the recent incidents should alert the community of York to the problems that could surface because of underlying racist attitudes or other problems.

Bartek said some good could come of the situation if it encouraged people in York to examine their own attitudes and exhibit racial sensitivity.

"Everyone can learn from something like this if it's handled right," he said.

Bristol said the situation could encourage the community to take greater responsibility for its youth.

"People should learn that there are a lot of hidden things going on they didn't know about, and they should get involved early and get kids interested in something other than sitting on the streets and fighting."

Campus organizations offer alcohol alternatives

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and student involvement activities. Thirty random students found wearing the buttons on specific days received \$5. All other students who were seen wearing the buttons received a raffle ticket for tonight.

"The buttons help increase alcohol awareness," Chanda Miller, Project CARE student adviser, said. "We hope students will continue to wear the buttons."

ASUN members will have eight collection sites at Do It Sober for the Laura Cockson Memorial Scholarship Fund. Cockson was a junior pre-occupational therapy major and member of Gamma Phi Beta Sorority who was

killed in a drunken driving accident last year.

Other activities this week include a party at P.O. Pears, 322 S. 9th St., 5-9 p.m. Thursday, featuring local band Lie Awake.

Major said admission is free and there will be food discounts, as well as prizes. No alcohol will be served.

Project CARE, Party SMART, Innocepts Society and ASUN are sponsoring booths in the Nebraska Union this week where tickets for Thursday's party are available.

"There is a misconception that when you get to college you have to drink," said Miller, of Project CARE. "During this week all of us hope to change that stereotype."

Husker spirit migrates to Kansas City

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the Bud Light man always received a warm welcome and drew a crowd.

At half time, the aisles filled with crowds of people suddenly reunited with friends who had been sitting a few rows away.

The fluorescent green coats of Arrowhead Stadium's ushers seemed a constant presence in the Nebraska student section as they fought a losing battle to clear the aisles and get people to their assigned seats.

Despite security's continual presence, one usher said, "the crowd was pretty well-behaved."

The game's tight score helped keep Husker fans focused on making enough noise to distract the Cowboys.

Through much of the second half, the Cowboys fans seemed to await cues from the scoreboard to cheer.

As fans filed out of Arrowhead Stadium, cries of "Gooo Biiig Reeed, Go Big Red" echoed through the walkways under the stands.

Cowboy fans passed quietly through the crowd with their orange pompoms held down at their sides. At gate C they were outnumbered 10 to one by Husker fans. Outside at the RVs, the post-game party already had begun.

One group from Stuart, about 230 miles northwest of Lincoln, was setting up a satellite dish outside an RV to watch the ESPN highlights of the game.

At another RV surrounded by a college-aged crowd, a small dance party had assembled to celebrate the win.

Despite getting lost on the way to the game, sophomore UNL architecture and business marketing major Carissa Van deWalle said she would go to the next migration game.


About 20 people danced outside the RV to the sounds of a home stereo system someone had rigged inside.

The 3-foot-tall speakers set outside the RV pumped out "Tootsie Roll," "Backstreet's Back," and other dance songs powering the revelers.

"It's a blast," Van deWalle yelled over the music.

While the cars filed out of the lots, the RVs were content to stay behind and savor the Husker win into the night, making use of glowing coals left in the grills.

And as one group literally circled up RVs and charter buses, one last cry of "Go Big Red" could be heard echoing into the cool Kansas City night.



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