

Homophobia still prevalent, several UNL students say

By JESSICA FARGEN
Staff writer

The hate-driven beating and subsequent death Monday of a gay University of Wyoming student has reacquainted several gay UNL students with the reality that it could happen to them.

Sherri Joyner, a member of the UNL group Spectrum, a gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered group, said the "hate-driven" beating death of Matt Shepard, a 21-year-old gay man, brought the same kind of fear that she experienced when anti-gay chalkings appeared on UNL sidewalks last year.

"Both incidents make me question my safety, and remind me that some people in the United States hate me because of who I love," Joyner said.

The reality of that ignorance could also turn into violence at UNL, she said.

"I think I've encountered enough homophobia at UNL that I think what happened to Matt Shepard could happen here," Joyner said. "There is that underlying homophobia here on campus."

Jill Matlock, president of the Allies Against Heterosexism, said she was fearful for her safety at UNL sometimes.

"(Shepard's death is) very scary, more than anything," Matlock said. "Just knowing that it is out there is scary enough."

Matthew Zwick, president of Spectrum, said hatred toward gay people is always out there.

"I am very saddened by (Shepard's death)," Zwick said. "And I am appalled, but it's something that happens just about every day, not to this extent, but it's something that we as gay people have to live with."

Zwick, a senior English major, said he was feeling more anger than fear about Shepard's death, but said it will not affect the way he acts on campus.

"It will make me a little more aware of possible fag bashing, but I am already used to doing that - I have been out for 12 years now," Zwick said.

"It may make me even more determined to increase gays' visibility on this campus."

Joyner said fear can hinder, but should not stop the effort to educate

people about homosexuality.

"It's real easy to be scared," Joyner said. "We just have to not let the fear stop you from being active."

Matlock, who is a junior English major, said although UNL could be more welcoming to gay students, the climate has gotten slightly better in the past few years.

An unwelcome environment is because of homophobic people's uncertainty, said Joyner, a senior English major.

"I think a lot of it has to do with people who commit these crimes are very insecure about their sexuality - this internalized homophobia," Joyner said. "They are not secure so they take it out on people who are out."

Matlock hoped UNL students would listen to the message that Shepard's death is sending to the nation, but also notice the things that go on every day.

"I think it opens up the eyes of some, of how pervasive gays and lesbians can be in the eyes of our society," Matlock said. "But in terms of making long-lasting changes, it's the everyday actions of groups such as Allies - I think those little differences."

Wesley announces mayoral candidacy

■ The former state senator, who graduated from UNL in 1978, will run on the Democratic ticket.

By TODD ANDERSON
Senior staff reporter

After stepping down from the Nebraska Legislature, former Lincoln Sen. Don Wesely wants to move into the mayor's office.

Wesely announced Tuesday on the east steps of the Capitol he will run for mayor in May's elections.

"It's just a wonderful opportunity for me to continue public service," he said.

Wesely, a Democrat, said he has been urged to run by his colleagues and voters for the past 12 years.

He said his role as mayor would be to make sure Lincoln continues to see the same level of growth in the future without risking its quality of life.

Wesely was elected to the Legislature in 1978 when he was a graduate student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Election '98

He served as chairman of the legislative Health and Human Services committee before announcing he would not seek re-election in April.

Lincoln City Councilwoman Cindy Johnson, a member of the Republican party, has said she will officially announce her candidacy in November.

Current Mayor Mike Johanns will vacate the job in May after serving the maximum two terms.

Nebraska Republican Party Chairman Chuck Sigerson said Tuesday in a statement that if Wesely were elected mayor, an era of conservative budgets and smaller government would come to an end.

Sigerson also said Wesely's early announcement was curious because it would divert attention from the state's gubernatorial race.

"One can only wonder if Don Wesely, by announcing he's running for Mayor just three weeks from the general election, has such disdain for his fellow Democrats that he's conceded the governor's race to Mike Johanns."

<http://www.unl.edu/DailyNeb>

Anti-smoking group calls for scrutiny from Stenberg

By TODD ANDERSON
Senior staff reporter

With rumors flying about what's inside a soon-to-be-released settlement with U.S. tobacco producers, members of a statewide anti-smoking organization recommended Tuesday the inclusion of certain health and regulation stipulations.

SmokeLess Nebraska, an association of more than 30 Nebraska health and community organizations, urged Attorney General Don Stenberg not to accept the group financial and restriction settlement if measures to protect the public health are not included.

Attorneys general representing eight states have been negotiating with U.S. tobacco companies since June, when a federal deal with tobacco manufacturers fell through at the last minute.

The new deal would cover an expected 46 states, including Nebraska, which all would receive part of a possible \$200 million.

Dave Holnquist, a government relations manager for the American Cancer Society-Heartland Division, said the settlement should not just be about how much money U.S. tobacco firms have to pay in fines.

He said the agreement should include restrictions on tobacco advertising and product promotion to prevent more people from developing the addictive habit.

"We have to make sure that Nebraska's kids, America's children, are saved from this addiction," he said.

SmokeLess Nebraska advocated limiting advertising campaigns of cigarette and chewing tobacco companies, particularly campaigns aimed at persuading teen-agers to start smoking.

Susie Dugan, executive director of Parent Resources and Information

"We have to make sure that Nebraska's kids, America's children, are saved from this addiction."

DAVE HOLNQUIST
government relations manager

on Drug Education-Omaha, said tobacco companies advertise with the intention of attracting children to ensure the existence of tomorrow's markets.

She said the attorneys general were really creating public policy on smoking that should hold tobacco companies responsible for present and future addictions.

Dugan and Holnquist said it is not clear what sort of requirements will be included in the law settlement expected to be released in one or two weeks.

In addition to placing restrictions on the sale and promotion of tobacco, Holnquist said, the money Nebraska receives should be channeled into areas related to public health.

Last year Nebraska's Legislature created the Nebraska Health Care Trust Fund, which will use funds from the national settlement.

Holnquist said the decision whether Nebraska should sue the tobacco firms individually if the agreement lacks recommended restrictions would have to be taken by Stenberg's office.

He said representatives from SmokeLess Nebraska met with Stenberg's office to present their concerns for the settlement's contents.

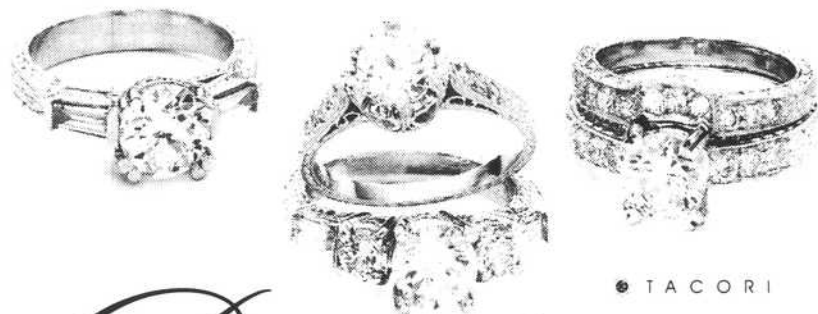
"If he feels it's not good enough, he needs to pursue it."

CORRECTION

In Tuesday's Homecoming Royalty guide, Angie King and Ben Aken were mistakenly identified as presidents of their greek chapters. King is a member of Alpha Omicron Pi Sorority. Aken's is a member of Farmhouse Fraternity.



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