



## Coliseum crazies

The NU Coliseum is a key element of the Nebraska volleyball team's success in the NCAA Tournament. **PAGE 9**



## Chile Christmas

Andean folk artists are playing a special Christmas concert for Lincoln residents tonight in the state capitol rotunda. **PAGE 12**

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T-MINUS 58 AND COUNTING

Light rain, high 58. Mild tonight, low 50.

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## Ireland pleads guilty to death of Cockson

By **JOSH FUNK**  
Senior staff writer



Cockson

As part of an agreement with prosecutors, Jeffrey Ireland pleaded guilty Thursday to the crime that devastated the Cockson family.

On March 14, Ireland was driving the car that ran a red light and slammed into a car carrying Laura, Sarah and Erin Cockson.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln junior Laura Cockson, 21, was killed instantly. Sarah, a 20-year-old UNL freshman, and Erin, a 16-year-old high school junior from Friend were both critically injured and remained in intensive care for weeks following the wreck.

"We were devastated as a family," said their father Bob Cockson quietly, with his voice wavering.

Ireland pleaded guilty to manslaughter, which carries a penalty of one to 20 years and/or a \$25,000 fine. In exchange, prosecutors dropped the three counts of second-degree assault.

The night of the accident, Ireland and two friends had been drinking at a bar in west Lincoln.

Around 11:30 p.m. they decided to take one of their friends home, and Ireland was driving,

though his license had been suspended since 1993.

On their way north on Sun Valley Boulevard, a Lincoln Police officer driving behind them noticed that the car had in-transit plates, which appeared altered.

Near Northwest First Street on Charleston Street, the officer tried to pull them over. Ireland accelerated to 50 mph, went around traffic and drove through the red light, slamming into the Cockson car.

Laura, Sarah and Erin Cockson had been at the Lied Center for Performing Arts for a sorority Mom's Day event and were on their way to meet their parents. Laura was a member of Gamma Phi Beta, as is her sister, Sarah.

"The traumatic death of a child is right at the

top of the grief scale," Bob Cockson said. "You can't imagine what we went through that night."

When Bob and Eva Cockson arrived at the scene a few minutes after the wreck, they were told that one of their daughters was dead and the other two may not live.

After two hours of waiting at the hospital with older brother and UNL senior Steve Cockson, the family found out which daughter died in the wreck.

"Laura was a person you couldn't help but love," Eva Cockson said.

Sarah and Erin Cockson could not go to Laura's funeral because they were hospitalized in intensive care.

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## Screamin' seamen



**MIDSHIPMAN LUKE WHITMORE CHEERS** ON the Navy/Marine ROTC team Thursday night at Memorial Stadium. The Air Force ROTC lost the game 19-20, as the Navy/Marine ROTC team continued its recent dominance over Army and Air Force. They have won for seven straight years. **MATT MILLER/DN**

## Rutgers group holds vendetta against NU's athletic teams

By **DANE STICKNEY**  
Staff writer

A faction of the Scarlet Knights of Rutgers University is waging an athletic battle against the scarlet and cream of Nebraska.

However, this battle is not about field position or first downs; it is about the emphasis given to big-time college athletics.

A group called Rutgers 1000, consisting of faculty members, students and alumni from Rutgers University in New Brunswick, N.J., has taken many steps to make people aware of the dangers of "professionalized" college athletics.

One of those steps has been taking shots at the University of Nebraska Athletic Department.

Rutgers English Professor William Dowling, a member of the group, argues that athletics at the university have become more important than academics.

"I don't believe that the University of Nebraska still exists," Dowling said. "The athletic program is like a cancer that has taken over and turned the university into one big throbbing tumor."

The group's Web page defines its stance: "Rutgers 1000 is against institutions of higher learning operating as sports franchises with trademarks used in connection with products, promotions and advertising."

The site can be found at <http://members.aol.com/rutg1000/herbhusk.htm>.

Dowling said he believed the University of Nebraska-Lincoln had been damaged by its athletic prominence.

"Nebraska places no emphasis on academics," Dowling said. "The whole attention of the state is on 40 steroid-pumped non-students."

Athletic Director Bill Byrne said Rutgers 1000 is incorrect in some of its assumptions about UNL.

"We recruit good athletes that are good students," Byrne said. "The graduation rate for the athletic program is very high, and we lead the nation in Academic All-Americans."

Byrne said the Athletic Department contributes positively to UNL.

Dowling said the group's main goal is to per-

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## University's state funding on downward trend

By **LINDSAY YOUNG**  
Senior staff writer

University, state college and community college officials met Thursday with state lawmakers to talk about what slice of the pie their institutions will get in the next two years.

Lawmakers, fiscal authorities and education officials pored over budget trends and allocation predictions.

The discussion came about a month before lawmakers will decide on the state budget for the next biennium, which could get interesting with a new governor and taxpayers who have become

antsy about state spending.

Gov.-elect Mike Johanns said he has been looking at what priorities he will set in working with the state budget.

"Education is a value in this state," Johanns said.

Hastings Sen. Ardyce Bohlke and Sen. Roger Wehrbein of Plattsmouth organized the daylong meeting, coined the "Postsecondary Education Summit."

The meeting was meant to provide budget information to state senators, senators-elect, legislative staff and higher education professionals.

The amount of money the University of Nebraska has received and will receive has been

a top concern for university officials in the past year.

In the 1998-99 fiscal year, which will end June 30, 1999, 17.3 percent of state general fund appropriations went to the University of Nebraska.

That percentage has decreased in recent years, and university officials have predicted the trend will continue.

In 1984, NU received 21.2 percent of the total state budget. The university predicts that by 2010, NU will receive 15.2 percent of total state allocations.