



Final homestand

It's the final game at home for four seniors of the Nebraska women's basketball team as it takes on Kansas State. PAGE 9



Directly from the top

Risa Bramon Garcia, director of the upcoming '80s-centric "200 Cigarettes," speaks about what the film means to students in the '90s. PAGE 11

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BREAKING THE ICE

Partly sunny, high 45. Partly cloudy tonight, low 24.

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Legislature



Legislature kills birth control bill in committee

■ The debate, which followed gender lines, spanned sexism issues, Viagra, moral judgments and economics.

BY JESSICA FARGEN
Senior staff writer

A bill that would have made insurance companies cover birth control prescriptions for women at the same level they cover Viagra for men was killed in legislative committee Tuesday.

The inequality of coverage between the two prescription drugs opened debate along gender lines on LB845, which would have mandated that insurance companies cover contraceptives for women such as birth control pills and diaphragms.

"Generally there have been very few mandated benefits that have been successful in the committee," said Lincoln Sen. David Landis after the

Banking, Commerce and Insurance hearing.

Landis, who is chairman of the all-male committee, said many insurance companies already offer birth control coverage.

"There are insurance policies in the marketplace that have (contraceptive coverage) in them that people could buy if they wanted," Landis said.

Opponents of the bill, who were all men, said this type of mandated coverage made employers force a moral judgment upon their employees and would hike up insurance premiums for everyone.

But the all-female proponents of the bill, sponsored by Omaha Sen. Deb Suttle, said equality, along with ensuring women's long-term health, should be a concern of all insurance companies.

On top of that, women suffer financially when they have to dip into their purses each month for the \$20 to \$30 to pay for birth control. At the

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Teachers want policy clarified

BY SHANE ANTHONY
Staff writer

Kathy Cure did not expect to start searching for a new job after 19 years of teaching in Bertrand.

But only a few days after the school board said it would cut activities such as field trips before full-time jobs, she learned the board would cut her position to half time — something she did not expect after years of involvement with several school activities, she said.

"I think that if they had considered different criteria, I would still be teaching there," she said.

Now, with less pay, she is in her first year as a media specialist in the Grand Island school system.

"The impact on myself and my family has been pretty severe," she said.

Cure was one of three teachers who testified before the Education Committee in support of LB169 on Tuesday. The bill, introduced by Harrison Sen. Bob Wickersham, would require school boards to estab-

“ I don't think board policy was ever supposed to be this static.”

JOHN BONAIUTO
school boards executive director

lish reduction-in-force policies that list objective criteria in order of priority, and prohibit schools from looking only at the programs to be eliminated or altered. The bill would also require any changes to the policy be made annually and before the start of the employees' contract year.

Wickersham said the bill was intended to protect school employees covered by a reduction-in-force policy and provide more predictability

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Ready to rumble



LANE HICKENBOTTOM/DN

SCOTT JOHNSON OF LINCOLN wrestles in the snow with his daughters Amy, 15, left, and Amber, 12, Tuesday at Arnold Heights Park. The girls were also accompanied by their mother Susan Johnson. The family took advantage of school being canceled for the day to go sledding, something they said they try to do one day each year.

Man dies after standoff

Grand jury to investigate death of suicidal man, 64

BY JOSH FUNK
AND DANE STICKNEY
Staff writers

After a standoff with the Lincoln Police SWAT team Monday morning, a Lincoln man died at a hospital Tuesday.

As required by Nebraska law, a grand jury will investigate the death, but Lincoln Police Chief Tom Casady said his officers did nothing wrong.

"Obviously, we did nothing that would have caused his death," Casady said. "All we did was go into the house and bring him out."

Police were called to 64-year-old Lee Towle Sr.'s house on the 5100 block of West McGuire Road after gunshots were reported, Lincoln Police Officer Kathy Finnell said.

The SWAT team was called because Towle, who had threatened to kill himself, would not respond to police, and also to ensure the safety

of children walking to Arnold Elementary School, 5300 W. Knight Drive, which is a few blocks from Towle's house.

Casady said police worked to get all the schoolchildren through the area safely.

Towle's wife had called police and reported that he was threatening to hurt himself and may have overdosed on medication, Finnell said.

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