



Declaration of war

The Lincoln Lightning, one of the eight teams in the new Indoor Football League, promises "wall-to-wall war." But will anybody care? PAGE 7



Soul singers

The Lincoln Community Gospel Choir is spreading the word with the voices of angels. The choir was founded 14 years ago. PAGE 9

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Death penalty opponents speak

Nearly 20 people voiced their support Wednesday for LB76, which would abolish the death penalty.

By JESSICA FARGEN
Senior staff writer

Even in the wake of the recent racially motivated murder of a black man by several white men in Jasper, Texas, Omaha Sen. Ernie Chambers said he would not support the death

Legislature



penalty. "Even in that case I don't think the state should take a life," said Nebraska's lone black lawmaker.

On his side were almost 20 people who testified Wednesday in support of Chamber's annual bill that would abolish the death penalty in Nebraska and replace it with life in prison without parole. No one testified in opposition to the bill.

LB76 was one of several bills the Judiciary Committee heard that addressed the death penalty. One bill

would change the method of execution from electrocution to lethal injection. Another would commute a death sentence if racial discrimination was proved a factor in that sentencing.

Chambers, along with Catholic representatives, defense attorneys and anti-death penalty advocates urged the committee to at least advance the bill to the floor of the Legislature for full debate.

"A vote to advance the bill to the floor is no more than that at this point," Chambers said.

Omaha Sen. John Hilgert, who is a death penalty supporter, showed signs of intending to vote to advance the bill to the floor.

"It may be time to give the entire state the opportunity to debate this," he said.

The last time the full Legislature debated the death penalty was 1992. More than a decade ago, a bill that would have abolished the death penalty actually passed, but was vetoed by then-Gov. Charles Thone.

Allegations of racial disparity in applying the death penalty and the absence of a philosophical basis for capital punishment dominated almost two hours of debate.

Distrust by the public that the state will not keep life-sentenced criminals

Please see DEATH on 2

"We are killing people in Nebraska because the issue can be used on a statewide level to further political careers. No one should die because someone is running for U.S. Senate."

PAT KNAPP
Lincoln attorney

Testimony continues in foster-home murder case

By JOSH FUNK
Senior staff writer

The murder trial of the second man accused of killing his foster home mate in 1995 continued Wednesday.

The jury of accused killer Tony Galligo's heard from the foster mother who gave him an alibi for two years.

Marilyn Beggs, the foster mother, testified that she remembered seeing Michael Schmader alive at 11 p.m. on Oct. 18, 1995, about 2½ hours after the time the coroner determined he had been murdered.

Beggs, with her husband, Robert, runs the Lincoln foster home where Galligo, Timothy Hopkins and Schmader all lived in 1995 when Schmader was murdered.

Galligo's attorney, Kirk Naylor, said that Beggs' statements slowed the police investigation.

Timothy Hopkins, 20, was arrested in September 1997 - almost two years after the crime was committed - after he confessed to the crime of manslaughter.

Schmader was reported missing from the state group home Oct. 18, 1995. His body was found buried in a shallow grave in the 48th Street Antelope Creek underpass on Dec. 22, 1995.

Prosecutors contend that Hopkins and Galligo stabbed Schmader more than a dozen times and beat him with a rock before burying his body in an Antelope Creek storm drainage ditch under 48th Street on Oct. 18, 1995.

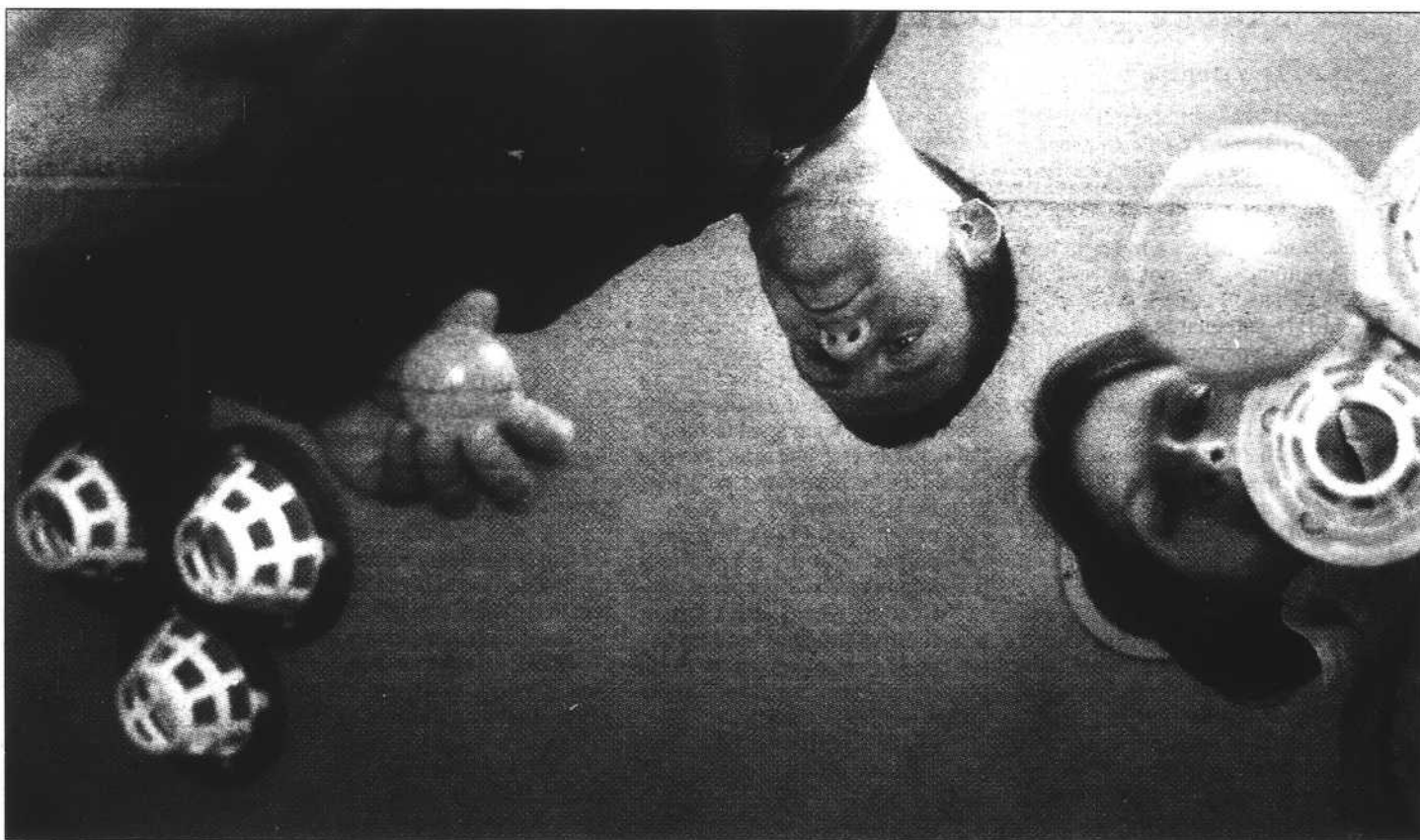
Police investigated the homicide for two years before arresting Hopkins for the crime.

Hopkins pled guilty to manslaughter and the use of a weapon to commit a felony last fall in exchange for his testimony against Galligo. In December, Hopkins was sentenced to 15 to 20 years in prison.

If the 19-year-old Galligo is convicted in the first-degree murder trial that started Tuesday, he could be sentenced to death.

Please see GALLIGO on 2

Wallaballa bing bang



HEATHER GLENBOSKI/DN

JUNIOR ACCOUNTING MAJOR Ryan Braasch and senior broadcasting major Angie Buescher play Wallaballa on Wednesday evening outside of the Cather-Pound-Neihardt dining hall. By jumping rope, hula-hooping and playing Wallaballa, students helped raise money for the American Heart Association. The event was sponsored by the Housing and Dining Service Nutrition Committee.

Teen's mother sued for pregnancy

By JOSH FUNK
Senior staff writer

The mother of a teen-age boy who impregnated his girlfriend should be liable for her medical costs because she knew they were having sex, lawyers argued Wednesday.

The civil suit, filed by the girl's father, could be the first of its kind in the country.

Doug Detmer, Leanne Detmer's father, is suing Dallas Mills' mother for the medical costs incurred after Leanne Detmer got pregnant in early 1997.

The Detmers are asking for \$11,371 to cover the cost of the abortion and counseling

that Leanne Detmer underwent.

The Detmers claim that Dawn Bixler, Dallas Mills' mother, had a responsibility to act after she found out that the two 16-year-olds were having sex.

Sharon Detmer testified that she and her husband did not know Leanne Detmer was having sex until after she told them she was pregnant in April 1997.

"We have fulfilled our responsibility," Sharon Detmer said. "Now we just want what is fair and right."

Bixler's lawyer, Susan Strong, questioned whether the Detmers knew the couple was sexually active based on statements Sharon Detmer made in interviews with the NBC morning

"Today" show and The Washington Post.

On "Today" Sharon Detmer said she had asked her daughter directly whether she was having sex, though she initially denied that in court Wednesday.

Bixler's lawyer tried to show that Leanne Detmer needed counseling because of conflicts with her parents.

"Leanne Detmer's damages were not caused by my client," Strong said.

Leanne Detmer testified that she had been taking medication for anxiety attacks and had experienced depression before she met Mills.

Detmer's parents knew she was dating Mills

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