



Bring out the brooms

It was a clean sweep for the Nebraska baseball team as the Cornhuskers beat No. 9 Texas in three games. PAGE 6



Tut, Tut, Tut

King Tut and his ancient culture appears this week at Omaha's Joslyn Museum. It features 138 artifacts and runs through July. PAGE 12

March 29, 1999

Movin' On Up

Mostly sunny, high 63. Clear tonight, low 40.

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## Gays join forces for equal rights, community

By VERONICA DAEHN  
Staff writer

An unprecedented week of action for gay rights wrapped up Friday with a rally at the State Capitol.

A crowd of women, men, students and children stood among an assortment of hand-held signs on the west steps of the Capitol on Friday afternoon to support national Equality Begins at Home Week.

Coordinated by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, it was designed to draw attention to local gay, bisexual and transgender concerns.

The week was the first of its kind, and the national event marked the first time there has ever been a coordinated political campaign of action in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

A myriad of speakers all voiced the same goal: to change the values many Nebraskans hold, and acquire equal rights for gay, lesbian and transgendered individuals.

"We are the face of Nebraska's family values," said Barbara DiBernard, an English and women's studies professor.

More than 10 percent of Nebraska citizens are gay, rally facilitator Perri Ann Johnson said.

"If we removed our taxes, skills and lives from this state, Nebraska would suffer," Johnson said.

An abundance of cheers followed nearly everything the eight speakers said on Friday afternoon.

Kerry Lobel, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, said Nebraska was the sixth state she had visited in six days.

"In all too many states, (our personal lives) are criminalized," she said. "We will no longer accept second-class citizenship in this land. We will no longer stand by in silence."

Brad-Matthew Fuglei, a 16-year-old who attends Lincoln Northeast High School, said he has been openly gay for the last three years.

"I'm here today because it's not easy to deal with

Please see RALLY on 8



RICK TOWNLEY/DN  
EIGHT-YEAR-OLD STUART KUJATH displays a sign at a gay and lesbian rights rally on the west steps of the Capitol on Friday afternoon. His grandmother, Pam Leak of Lincoln, props him up. "I came here to support my daughter," Leak said. "It's her life, and I'm OK with it."

## Prisoners' release sought

■ Several groups say Mondo we Langa and Ed Poindexter were unjustly imprisoned.

By JOSH KNAUB  
Staff writer

Representatives from several Lincoln groups called for the state of Nebraska to reconsider the sentences of Mondo we Langa and Ed Poindexter during a news conference in the Capitol Rotunda on Friday.

Poindexter and we Langa, then known as David Rice, were convicted in the 1969 bombing death of an Omaha police officer.

The conference was sponsored by the Jericho Network, a human rights group that works for the release of political prisoners.

Representatives from Amnesty International, Nebraskans for Peace, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Jericho Network supported Poindexter and we Langa.

Andrew Ascherl, state events coordinator for Jericho, opened the conference by calling Poindexter and we Langa political prisoners. He said they weren't murderers, but were convicted of the crime through the "manipulation and subterfuge" of the Omaha Police Department and the FBI.

Ascherl, a freshman women's studies major at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, said that there were between 150 and 200 political prisoners in the United States, and she demanded that all of them, especially Poindexter and we Langa, be released.

Albert Maxey Jr., president of the Lincoln branch of the NAACP, said Poindexter and we Langa had already served too much time.

"These men have been unjustly imprisoned for crimes they did not commit," he said.

Christy Hargeshiemer, a representative of the Nebraska chapter of Amnesty International, said that the imprisonment of we Langa and Poindexter had "come to the attention of people internationally."

Hargeshiemer refrained from calling the two political prisoners, though, because of Amnesty's position on the case.

"Amnesty does not use the term 'political prisoners' in this case because we cannot prove innocence," she said. But she said further investigation was necessary.

Lennox Hinds, we Langa's attorney, was not able to make a statement. Hinds was in Lincoln to work on an appeal for we Langa but could not be at the news conference.

Ascherl also read statements from the Black Guardians, an association of Omaha police officers, and Rob Benford, a UNL associate professor of sociology.

While the Black Guardians did not take a position on the guilt or innocence of Poindexter and we Langa, they called on the state Pardons Board to hear we Langa's upcoming appeal.

Benford called for Poindexter and we Langa's release when contacted later Friday.

"If anyone actually looks at the facts of this case objectively," he said, "they will see that justice was not served."



RICK TOWNLEY/DN  
KALANI KAAHAHUI, 32, embraces her 2-year-old daughter, Olivia Visger, during a moment of silence for gays and lesbians killed in hate crimes at Friday's rally. "We came together today to ensure that when (Olivia) grows up, we all have equal rights," Kaahahui said. The rally was held on the west steps of the Capitol on Friday afternoon to support Equality Begins at Home week.

## Visibility key, speaker says

By VERONICA DAEHN  
Staff writer

A national figure in the gay rights movement took to the steps of the Nebraska State Capitol on Friday afternoon.

Kerry Lobel, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, was in Nebraska to speak at the first ever Pride Rally, held in conjunction with the end of Equality Begins at Home week.

The week, designed to push state lawmakers to support a platform of equality, marked the first time a national event like this has been held.

"Equality Begins at Home is not an end point, but a beginning point," Lobel said. "We are going to make our statewide organizations stronger, mobilize more people and demand greater

accountability from our state legislators and policymakers."

As executive director of the NGLTF, Lobel works in Washington, D.C.

She was away from her office last week, however, as Nebraska was the sixth state she had been to in six days.

Lobel helped to promote the Equality Begins at Home week and wanted to be there to see how things went.

She said she was pleased with what she saw.

Organizers in Connecticut managed to raise a rainbow flag at their State Capitol. An AIDS quilt was displayed in the Rotunda of the Kansas State Capitol.

In Kentucky, organizers went on a weeklong

Please see LOBEL on 8