

ASUN

Senate elects speaker, commends Russell

Naujokaitis receives praise from fellow senators

By KIM SWEET
Staff writer

The 1999-2000 student senate met on Wednesday night to fill out its executive ranks and recognize those who once filled them.

The Association of Students of the University of Nebraska elected Kevin Naujokaitis, a senator from the College of Engineering and Technology, as the new speaker of the senate for the next year.

Naujokaitis faced one challenger in the election for speaker of senate. Beth Lee, a senator in the College of Journalism and Mass Communications ran against Naujokaitis for the office that heads the Appointments Board and serves as a liaison between the senate and the executive offices.

In his pre-election speech, Naujokaitis said he thought he would be good for the job because he was friendly and upbeat.

These qualities would make it easy for students and senators to approach him about concerns, he said.

Naujokaitis said one of the things he wanted to accomplish was to enforce student organization visits by senators.

Each senator is assigned to a certain number of student organizations during the year to hear organizations' concerns.

By handing senators who don't accomplish this task an absence, Naujokaitis said, the student organization visits could be more strictly enforced. Senators are limited to three absences during their term.

In her speech, Lee said she desired to hold the office to carry out her goals of

increasing voter turnout during ASUN elections, filling the vacancies that exist on ASUN subcommittees and increasing ASUN's visibility on campus.

Lee said that with her communication skills, she could help the senate reach students - not just during elections.

"We can't only campaign during election time," Lee said. "We need to campaign every day."

While Lee wanted the position, she also said during her speech that Naujokaitis would do a good job as well.

Christy Hamilton, a senator from the College of Nursing, agreed.

"One important quality is that he does not need recognition," Hamilton said. "We're not always going to see or hear him, but we'll always see him getting things done."

Along with electing a speaker, the senate passed three bills by acclamation.

Former President Sara Russell was recognized with a bill of commendation by President Andy Schuerman for her work on forming the Master Plan committee, working to inform students on the negative effects of last fall's Initiative 413 and establishing the Laura Cockson Memorial Scholarship Fund.

In a separate commendation, former First Vice President Kelly Hoffschneider and Second Vice President Eddie Brown were recognized for their work in being liaisons for different campus committees, such as the Residence Hall Association, Academic Senate and the Student Athlete Advisory Board.

Commendation was also given to the outgoing speaker of the senate, Matt Boyd, for his work on the 1998-99 student senate.

Scarab beetle acquisition added to UNL's collection

By ERIC RINEER
Staff writer

Thanks to the efforts of two bug-crazed UNL professors the University of Nebraska State Museum now boasts one of the world's largest scarab beetle collections.

Brett Ratcliffe, a curator at the Nebraska State Museum, and Mary Liz Jameson, research assistant professor of entomology, recently hauled more than 250,000 scarab beetles from Washington, D.C., to Lincoln.

The scarab beetles, which were packed into 46 cabinets holding 1,100 drawers, were obtained by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln for 10 years from the U.S. National Museum of Natural History at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

With its beetle collection, the division of entomology and Nebraska State Museum now possess the world's fourth largest scarab beetle collection.

Scarab beetles, which range from the size of a pinhead to the size of a fist, are known for their unique colors and gigantic horns. Scarab shells can be as diverse-looking as green with gold or silver or metallic blue and velvet rust.

Scarabs are one of the most fascinating insects in the world because of their ability to take care of their young, Ratcliffe said.

Only bees, moths and termites were able to do the same, he said.

Ratcliffe said he and his partner, Jameson, had studied scarabs for years, flying all over Central America and South America to learn more about these insects.

Both professors said they were still puzzled as to why a number of male scarab beetles possessed two large horns on their outer skeleton.

"It's difficult for us to say what they are used for," Ratcliffe said, who said the horns, in some way, dealt with the beetles' sexual selection.

While the horns remain a mystery to scientists worldwide, Jameson said there was also a lot already known about the insect.

"They're a lot like a butterfly," she said. "The adult lays eggs inside a dung ball and then fertilizes and grows into a larva." After the pupa stage, she

"We are now an international magnet for bringing other scientists here to study the collection."

BRETT RATCLIFFE
Nebraska State Museum curator

said, the scarab grows into a full adult.

One of the more interesting aspects about the scarab's lifestyle, Ratcliffe said, was its ability to live in all different types of climates.

Ratcliffe said the insects could be found just about anywhere, including Nebraska, feeding mainly on leaves, but also on dung.

Another fascinating element about scarabs, Jameson said, was their cultural significance in ancient societies.

For example, she said, scarabs were once used in Egypt to replace the hearts of mummies as good luck charms for their afterlife.

They are also used in countries like Ecuador and Peru to make necklaces or headdresses, she said.

Other countries make scarab-shaped marijuana bowls or use the insects as part of their diets, she said.

Scarabs, like most insects, are a high source of fat and protein.

Jameson said cultural uses were just one example of the insect's contribution to society.

Scarabs alone combine for more than 35,000 different species of the 350,000 species of beetles in the world.

Only 4,000 species of mammals inhabit the planet.

Ratcliffe and Jameson said they were both grateful for the contribution invested by the National Science Foundation to study scarab beetles.

"We are now an international magnet for bringing other scientists here to study the collection," Ratcliffe said.

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