

U.N. commission aims to kill death penalty

■ **The commission wants a worldwide moratorium on execution.**

GENEVA (AP) — The U.N. Commission on Human Rights appealed Wednesday for a worldwide moratorium on executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty.

The United States joined Japan, China, Indonesia and Rwanda in opposing the resolution put forward by the European Union.

It is the first time the EU as a body has taken a position on the subject, although the 53-nation U.N. commission has endorsed similar resolutions in previous years.

The EU motion urged countries that allow the death penalty not to carry out executions while any legal procedure is pending, not to execute anyone who was under 18 when the crime was committed and not to

execute pregnant women. The commission voted 30-11 in favor of the motion. Twelve countries abstained.

U.S. delegate Nancy Rubin said the United States would continue to permit the use of the death penalty as long as public opinion was in favor of it.

"We recognize that many Americans support abolishing it, but a noticeable majority of our citizens do support the death penalty," she told the commission.

The stand against the death penalty in Europe was led by Italy, which last year held out against Turkey's demands for the extradition of Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan because he faces execution if convicted of crimes of terrorism.

India, which abstained, predicted that countries that had abolished the death penalty would be seen as "safe havens" by criminals.



RICK TOWNLEY/DN
RONNIE ROTHE, a freshman at Nebraska Wesleyan University, laughs after falling out of a wrestling hold. Rothe and UNL freshmen Shaun Grantski and Matt Curtis are three wrestlers of about 30 in the Nebraska Extreme Wrestling Association. NEWA has a public access show that airs Monday nights at 7 and Thursday nights at 10:30.

Public access shows outlet for Lincolnites' expression

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called in tandem to abuse him. "I've had a lot of wonderful experiences and a lot of hateful ones," said Kurtenbach, who moved to Lincoln in 1969 and has been working on a doctorate degree since 1970. "I think I set the record for graduate hours taken."

Some of the other shows spawned from community activism as a way to address issues ignored by government and the mainstream media.

Mike Morosin said he and Rev. Andy Hind started one show four years ago, but split it into two last year to deal with different issues.

"Many people came up to me saying we need another voice in the community," Morosin said, so he started the public access show.

Morosin now is host for Citizen Watchdog, a panel discussion of government issues, and Hind is a host for Movement for Humanity, a current events-based discussion of humanitarian issues.

"We give citizens an outlet to address the issues," Morosin said. His show has tackled the Antelope Valley development plan, the sale of Lincoln General Hospital last year and paramedic contracts.

A mechanic by trade, Morosin also attends city council and other government meetings to watch and raise concerns with officials.

"A lot of times the issues we bring up put government officials on notice," Morosin said. Some city council members have thanked Morosin for his efforts.

"I get a lot of e-mails from people thanking me for watching their wallets."

Hind said he tries to make people

more aware of elitism and class discrimination.

"We need to relate to others on an equal footing," said Hind, who works with the All Souls Village of Hope and homeless people.

Free expression is an important part of public access television, Hind said.

"It is the only place where we really have freedom of speech and a chance not to be force-fed by those in power," Hind said.

On Monday nights, the channel features the Nebraska Extreme Wrestling Association, which consists of 30 college-aged men wrestling in someone's backyard.

Co-founder and UNL junior business management major Shaun Grantski said the show started as a parody of national wrestling shows, but it has turned serious.

Grantski said he and his friends used to watch wrestling at his house while they were students at Lincoln Northeast, and then wrestle in the backyard for fun.

The last year they got bored and put it on public access.

"We're not as extreme as some of the (amateur) leagues seen nationally," Grantski said. "We more just take a beating."

One of the deviations from average public access fare is Back to the Bible, an international ministry based in Lincoln.

Tom Schindler said the group, which broadcasts on 400 radio stations daily, uses public access to break into the Lincoln market.

The show is also featured on several satellite television systems and on two Omaha stations.

Amateur filmmakers such as UNL junior English major Ryan

Drapal also use public access to showcase their work.

"I'd like to make movies and this is the only way for people to see them," Drapal said. He and his brother have been making movies since he was a sophomore in high school.

And public access provides a forum for experimental work such as Tom Cabela's show featuring homemade music videos and film clips.

"It's all pretty conceptual and experimental," said Cabela, a freshman English major.

One show uses the forum to make fun of public access shows.

Aspiring filmmaker Allen Erickson, 16, said his show started when a bunch of friends were playing around in front of the camera, and they thought it was funny.

"(Public access) allows weird people like us to get on TV and have our own show," Erickson said.

Perhaps the most infamous public access show in Lincoln is Cosmic Comedy with Scott Harrold.

Harrold reviewed adult movies while dressed as several different clowns.

The show was pulled in 1995, and Harrold was prosecuted after a segment of Harrold masturbating was aired.

But the state Appeals Court said last fall that the show was sick and disgusting but not obscene. Now Harrold is back on the air with a show called The Clown.

With public access television, viewers must take the good with the bad to allow the freedom of expression.

"Public access is one of the best things Lincoln has going for it," Cabela said. "There is no other outlet for people who want to do this work."

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