

Speaker: U.S. violates human rights

By MICHELLE STARR
Staff writer

Though actively involved in policing human rights worldwide, the United States does not "walk the walk of human rights" in its own back yard, a former Amnesty International chairman said Thursday.

More than 70 students and Lincoln residents found any seat available, including the floor, in the Nebraska Union's Heritage Room for "U.S. Violations of Human Rights: Amnesty Accuses," presented by Morton Winston, former chairman of the U.S. board of directors of Amnesty International.

"Human rights are not protected equally or adequately in the U.S. in many areas," Winston said.

He explained how the United States has had a mixed record of human rights observance.

Winston led the audience through Amnesty International's six main violations committed by the United States.

Internationally, the United States has refused to sign human rights acts including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the Covenant on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Covenant on the Rights of the Child.

Somalia, absent of a government, was the only other country not to sign the Covenant on the Rights of the Child, he said.

Another violation occurs when the United States exports arms, Winston said. He said some of the 75 percent of arms exported, including

chemical weapons, firearms and stun guns, will be used against the purchasing country's own people.

The United States has also had an increasing problem with police brutality and prison violence, two other human rights violations, according to Winston.

Using tear gas and excessive force on peaceful protesters, as well as shooting unarmed suspects, has been reported, Winston said.

Winston's video presentation gave examples of sexual assault by inmates and guards, and guards provoking fights between inmates.

A fifth violation is when those seeking political asylum in the United States have a hard time finding the American dream because they are stuck in a holding cell, the video said. Some refugees have been left for years in limbo, while others have

experienced verbal abuse from guards.

A sixth concern pointed out by the video showed racial discrimination during sentencing and the possibility of the suspect's innocence as reasons against the use of the death penalty in the United States.

In a discussion following Winston's speech, Miguel Carranza, associate professor of sociology and ethnic studies, pointed out the treatment of immigrant workers within the United States.

"It's almost like once (workers) cross our borders, they lose their rights, their humanness," Carranza said.

Audience members asked Winston why Amnesty International hadn't helped with some specific cases.

"We do what we can. We have a

limited number of resources and have to prioritize," Winston said.

Amnesty International's work has had an impact, Winston said.

Virginia passed a bill making it a crime for male guards to have sexual relations with female prisoners.

In New York the use of stun belts to control prisoners has been outlawed.

But Susan Miller, assistant professor of history and ethnic studies, said she disagreed with how Amnesty International addressed problems.

"I have a problem with the way Amnesty International deals with problems from the point of view of indigenous people," Miller said.

"From the point of view of indigenous people, the environment has rights, the community has rights."

Beer-based benefit gives Lincolmites real variety

■ Ales, lagers and stouts from around the world are found at the Annual International Beer Festival.

By KELLI LACEY
Staff writer

Dressed in a green plaid kilt, white knee-high socks and a green shirt, and speaking in a British accent, Gordon Briggs offered a taste of his home country to dozens of beer-tasters Thursday night.

Briggs represented Scottish and Newcastle Brewers, which began in Edinburgh, Scotland, 250 years ago, and was in Lincoln, along with 31 different brewery representatives at the Fifth Annual International Beer Festival.

The festival allowed customers to sample more than 50 types of international and local beer at the Blue Heron Wine Bar and Bistro, at 48th Street and Highway 2 to benefit the Capital Humane Society.

Briggs left Scotland about five years ago to come to the United States to sell beer for his company, which, he said, is the largest brewer of ale in the world.

"Normally, Americans will say that they don't like that beer," he said. "This kind of thing gives me an opportunity to put that kind of beer in their hands, and then they change their mind."

Chad Pinger-Easton of Lincoln said he has attended the event for three years and enjoys the variety of beer offered.

"Instead of drinking Budweiser all night long, we can drink the heavy beers," he said. "You come here and get more of a quality."

Roger Obbink of Lincoln agreed. "This is not like your O Street bar. It's a little more upscale, which is one of the reasons why I came," he said.

Obbink came to eat dinner and sample beer. He said he didn't mind the \$21.30 fee.

Relaxing music set the mood for the mostly older crowd to walk around to the different tables and sample each type of beer while also learning about the beer from the many representatives at the festival.

Chris Piper, who co-owns the Blue Heron with Ken Meier, said a lot of the representatives had to fly into Lincoln for the event.

"We're very lucky that we get a lot of people in for this event. We're so grateful to the people who do that for us year after year," Piper said. "They really make the event fun for us."

One local brewer, Sam Spilker of Cortland, has been brewing his own beer for about three years in his home-

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CHRIS PIPER
Blue Heron co-owner

town of 400 people.

After graduating from Colorado State University in Fort Collins with a biochemistry degree, Spilker decided to start his brewing industry, Spilker Ales.

"He could be making big, big bucks, but instead he's doing what he loves at a microbrewery," said a friend of Spilker's, Roger Olson, who came to support him. "He could have done this anywhere, but he came back to small-town Cortland."

Located in a building on Main Street in Cortland, Spilker's beer is sold on tap at many Lincoln bars, including Duffy's, Buster's BBQ and Bleacher's. "He does a lot for the community," Olson said. "I admire him. He stuck his neck out."

Bob Downey, president of the Capital Humane Society, attended the event and said he received a call a couple of months ago from Piper, who

offered the Humane Society as the beneficiary.

"Being a nonprofit organization, the funds are always something we're looking for," Downey said. "But, to have events fall out of the sky like this, it's a little treat. It's a breather."

The bar wanted the beer festival to benefit the Capital Humane Society because it is an important service in the community, Piper said.

"They are a dynamic organization in that they are constantly trying to better their services," he said.

The beer festival had attracted about 80 people halfway through it, and about 150 were expected before the evening was over.

"We do the beer festival to spotlight the different good beers we have in this area and throughout the world," Piper said. "But, the most important thing we do tonight is to benefit the Capital Humane Society."

Pat Hazell The Wonder Bread Years



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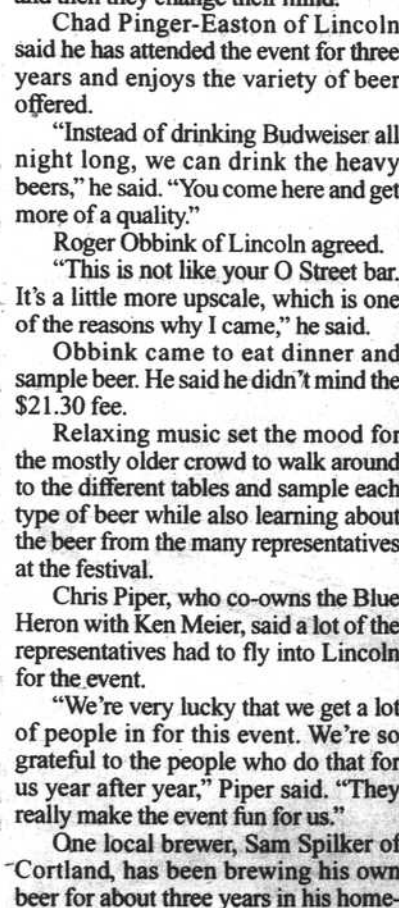
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