

UNL center prepares teachers

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One of the first steps in deaf teacher preparation is learning sign language. All graduate students in the college are fluent in sign language, creating a good atmosphere for deaf students at the Barkley Center, Ramsey said.

But there aren't enough teachers to fulfill the demand for American sign language courses. Classes always fill up quickly, and all interested students can't enroll.

American sign language courses are also offered in the summer, but sometimes the class is canceled because not enough students sign up, Ramsey said.

Students gain valuable experience interacting with children, but they also learn to work with parents of deaf children, Ramsey said.

Parents often have difficulties dealing with hearing impaired children, and one of the goals of the program is to turn out teachers who are sympathetic to parents' needs, Ramsey said.

Students must fulfill all requirements for the Teachers College to obtain a degree in special education or deaf education.

UNL's teacher preparation program is approved by the Council on Education of the Deaf, a national accreditation organization, Ramsey said.

Most students involved in the clinic and preschool are graduate students, said John Bernthal, director of the Barkley Center.

Those students gain valuable experience through classes and hands-on experience, Bernthal said. Part of this hands-on experience includes research of children with communication disorders.

Cynthia Cress, assistant professor of Communication Disorders at UNL, is the head of a research group that studies early intervention of children at risk of having a communication disorder.

The early intervention program targets children as young as 1 year old. Students, under the supervision of a faculty member, go into the

“*Students follow communication development and learn the language process.*”

CYNTHIA CRESS
assistant professor
of Communication Disorders

child's home to work directly with the child, Cress said.

Students learn to recognize key behavior that would indicate a communication disorder, Cress said. The early intervention program prepares students for work in schools and health care, Cress said.

“Through early intervention, students follow communication development and learn the language process,” Cress said.

Nebraska, neighboring states involved in water rights case

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water use by requiring permits for wells.

“There is no control in Nebraska,” she said. “No permits are issued, no limits are in place, and there is no reporting of amounts pumped.”

Sitzman said there is no question that groundwater use has affected the flow of Frenchman Creek.

“In the '60s, there just weren't irrigation wells,” she said.

Now, individual farmers have drilled wells throughout the district.

Although the number of wells skyrocketed during the 1970s, Sitzman said the number of wells in her district is not above average for the region.

She said past drilling practices may have contributed to the present shortage of water but that current irrigation is much more conservation-conscious.

“There's not a whole lot you can do when you only have 5 inches of water,” Sitzman said. “When you go to these meetings, and they talk about conservation, you're like, ‘What are you talking about?’ When you only have 5 inches, you can't waste a drop.”

Sitzman said the well-water-supplied center-pivot irrigation systems farmers in her district use are much more efficient than traditional ditches.

Still, Sitzman said, groundwater pumping leaves her irrigators in a catch-22 situation.

The farmers can't get enough water from Enders Reservoir to warrant shutting off their irrigation

wells.

And they can't close off the ditches, which draw from Enders, because the farmers could overuse their wells.

So, farmers in her district pay twice for their water—for the maintenance of both the wells and ditches. Sitzman said the ditches cost the same amount of money whether one or 20 inches of water are delivered.

Norman Thorson, a University of Nebraska law professor, said the Supreme Court's opinion on whether groundwater was intended to be part of the Republican River Compact will largely decide the case.

In his opinion, though, groundwater was not part of the agreement.

“There is very little evidence of an intent to include groundwater or even adequate knowledge of the relationship between ground and surface water at the time of the agreement,” Thorson said.

“This may mean the states need to sit down and re-examine the agreement under modern understanding of hydrological relationships.”

Thorson said the case may go on for years before anything is decided.

He said Nebraska vs. Wyoming, another water rights case, has been in the courts for 10 years.

In the meantime, Sitzman will continue to do what she has for the past 33 years: the best she can.

Enders Reservoir continues to receive less and less water from Frenchman Creek.

Sitzman said Enders is largely spring-fed. This has protected her district from droughts in the past but now contributes to the district's woes.

“*There's not a whole lot you can do when you only have 5 inches of water.*”

NORMA SITZMAN
irrigation district manager

Less groundwater means less water from the natural springs.

Oaklund said the Republican River Compact is set up so a state is in violation of the compact if it uses too much water in any Republican River sub-basin, such as Frenchman Creek.

Ball named the Frenchman basin as one of the most depleted sub-basins of the Republican River.

Compact compliance is measured by calculating the available water and then calculating the amount of water used.

Oaklund said it was impossible to tell whether a state was in violation of the compact until after an irrigation season had been completed.

Ball said she did not know what the economic impact of the loss of water had on Kansas.

If the Supreme Court orders Nebraska farmers to reduce pumping, the economic impact will be immediate and measurable for farmers in Sitzman's district.

“We can't get by without both (groundwater and ditches),” she said. “It all works together.”

Senate takes on education funding

WASHINGTON (AP) — Priming for year-end budget battles, Senate Republicans and Democrats spent Monday in a highly partisan debate over the course and funding of national education programs.

Republicans, using their majority, prevailed in pushing through a non-binding resolution commending the GOP-led Congress for reforming the education system by giving states, local schools and parents more flexibility and authority over their children's education.

It passed on a party-line 51-42 vote.

Immediately afterward, a

Democratic resolution condemning Republican budget writers for cutting educational funding and stating that more money should be spent to hire and train new teachers went down, 52-41. A lone Democrat voted with the Republicans, Sen. Robert Byrd of West Virginia.

Democrats claim that the Republicans cut education funding to an unacceptable level while struggling to come up with a budget for the fiscal year 2000 that meets strict spending ceilings set in the 1997 balanced budget law.

The original GOP budget proposal for fiscal 2000, which begins

Friday, reduced education by 17 percent from 1999 levels. The House Appropriations subcommittee responsible for that bill last week agreed on a plan that would reduce education by only 1 percent.

Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., said President Clinton is seeking a 3 percent increase in education. “It's wrong to cut education at all,” Kennedy said. “We should be investing more in education, not less.”

But Sen. Judd Gregg, R-N.H., said Republicans believe the president's education spending initiatives only impose more federal mandates on how schools can spend their money.

N-Zone's license extended

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he said.

In a phone interview, Lori Seibel, director of the Community Health Endowment, said the board will meet at the state park Oct. 13 to choose funding priorities in a more relaxed environment.

“The public is welcome to attend, (but) we didn't feel there would be an overwhelming desire,” she said.

Seibel said the board will have a

comment line, an open forum and a Web site for Lincoln residents to talk about the Oct. 13 funding decisions.

“We know this is public funds, and we're very strongly attuned to that,” Seibel said.

The council also appointed Kathleen Sellman as the new City/County Planning director and James E. Main, University of Nebraska-Lincoln assistant vice chancellor for business and finance, to the StarTran Advisory Board.

Researchers: Enzyme could aid cancer fight

WASHINGTON (AP) — Researchers have found that blocking production of an enzyme interferes with the ability of many cancers to reproduce, a step that could one day lead to new treatments for the disease.

In laboratory experiments, the scientists prevented cancer cells from producing the enzyme telomerase, which helps the cells grow without limit. That resulted in the cells stopping their reproduction and dying.

“We haven't developed a chemical, a therapeutic drug,” stressed Dr. Robert Weinberg of the Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research in Cambridge, Mass., a member of the research group.

But, Weinberg said, the findings being published in the October issue of the journal *Nature Medicine* point the way for pharmaceutical companies to search for drugs that do the

same thing.

Dr. Jerry Shay of the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas called the report “very dramatic proof of the principle that inhibiting telomerase may in fact lead to the death of cancer cells.”

Shay, a leading cancer researcher, was not a member of Weinberg's research team.

In normal cells, structures called telomeres protect the ends of the DNA that codes the cell's purpose. Each time the cell reproduces, the telomeres shrink slightly, until they reach a critical length that stops the cell from reproducing, and it dies.

Scientists have learned that 80 percent to 90 percent of cancer cells have developed the ability to produce the enzyme telomerase, which protects the telomeres, allowing the cell to keep reproducing indefinitely, growing into a tumor.

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