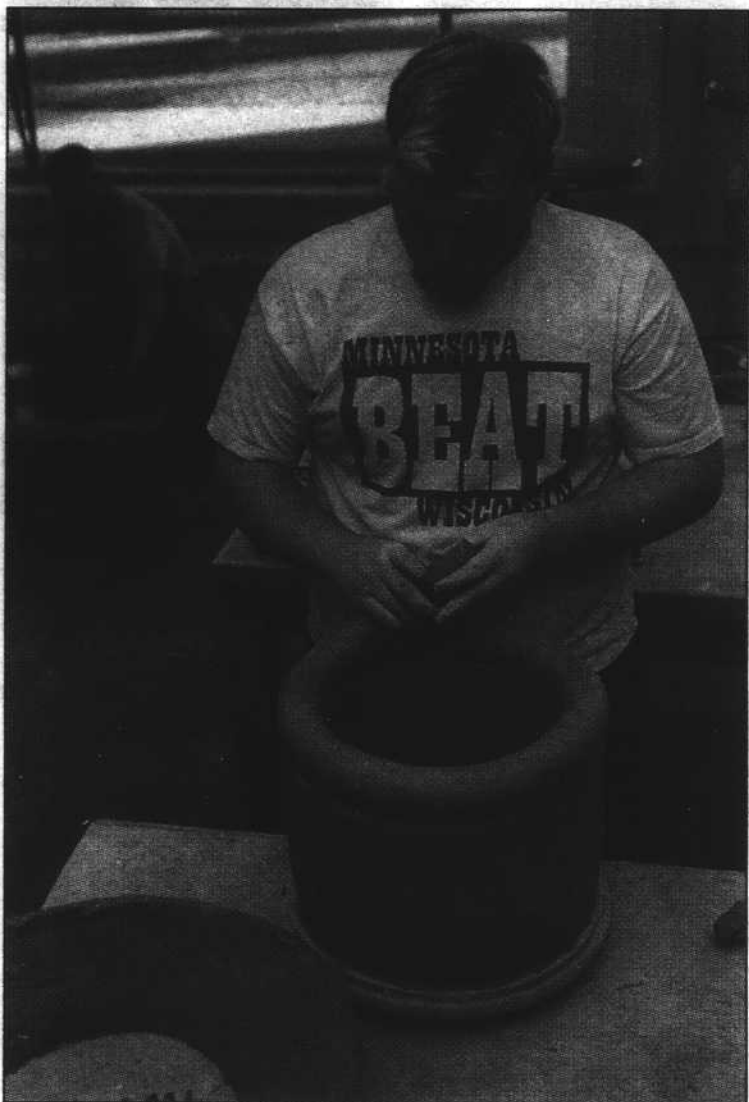


A crafty break



MARK ANDERSON, a junior fine arts major, takes advantage of the four-day fall break to work on a large clay project. Anderson said he spent most of the weekend in the ceramics studio.

SHARON KOLBET/DN

At least 79 die after India cyclone

NEW DELHI, India (AP) — Residents in eastern India searched for the dead and gathered food packets dropped from helicopters Tuesday, while officials totaled the damage inflicted by a cyclone that has killed at least 79 people according to news reports.

At least 1,000 others were injured and hundreds left homeless, reports said.

Ganjam district in Orissa state bore the brunt of the 125-mph winds that tore down electrical and telephone poles, disrupted train and road services and smashed huts, Indian news agencies reported. At least 71 people were killed in Ganjam and five

others died in other parts of Orissa.

Thirty-three deaths were reported from the town of Berhampur alone, United News of India reported.

The town was marooned and awash in 5 feet of water, the Press Trust of India said.

The death toll was expected to rise as communications are restored in Orissa and rescuers search collapsed buildings.

Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee ordered federal and state officials to make an aerial survey of Ganjam, United News reported.

Air force helicopters have been placed under state control for rescue operations and food drops.

U.N. officials, Lincolmites examine laws on refugees

BY GWEN TIETGEN
Staff writer

Several organizations in Lincoln are doing their part to make sure refugees won't be sent back to the countries where they were persecuted.

Community members who work with refugees had an opportunity to listen Tuesday to officials from the office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees talk about the history of the office.

Officials also discussed the exact definition of a refugee, the consequences of the 1996 laws affecting refugees and asylum-seekers and the practical ways the UNHCR is protecting and assisting refugees.

Community members asked the officials questions about refugee issues and could attend one of two seminars presented by the officials.

One of the seminars focused on how refugees are granted asylum. The other looked at how countries determine the status of refugees.

Regina Germain, senior legal counselor for the UNHCR in Washington, said that 80 percent of refugees are women and children, and only one in 200 refugees has resettled.

The UNHCR creates solutions for refugee problems such as voluntary repatriation, when refugees return to their country, as well as resettlement, when refugees go to a different country.

UNHCR also assists refugees with basic needs such as medical care, food, shelter and education.

Most refugees are from countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Somalia and Burundi, according to the UNHCR.

Most refugees who are resettled in the United States are from Eastern Europe, including Bosnia and Kosovo, and from the Soviet Union, Africa and Southeast Asia, with most of those refugees being from Vietnam.

There are 20 million refugees in the world according to the UNHCR.

Out of that 20 million refugees, 11.5 million are outside their countries and cannot return because of a well-founded fear, and 1.9 million want to return to their countries.

About 1.3 million are asylum-seekers, people who have left their native countries and applied for recognition as refugees in other countries, and 6.7 million are displaced within their countries.

Lincoln resettled about 450 individuals through Catholic Social Services and 161 individuals through Church

World Services.

Julie Skonard, executive director for Church World Services, said it takes one to five years to adjust to living in Nebraska, with language being the biggest challenge.

New refugees go through a two-week orientation class and are given aid until they find jobs.

Volunteers, who were once new refugees themselves, might meet them at the airport or help them find an apartment.

Maria Diaz, the state refugee resettlement coordinator, said the number of refugees that are allowed into Nebraska is decided by the national office at the beginning of the year.

Diaz said Lincoln has begun to diversify services, such as offering books in different languages in the city library and offering translators through the phone system.

Larry Yungk, senior resettlement counselor for the UNHCR in Washington, said the workshop was a good chance for people who work with refugees locally to learn more about the situation of refugees internationally.

"And it's an opportunity for us who work internationally to see what's happening at the local level with refugees," he said.

Officials call for more child care

WASHINGTON (AP) — Just 15 percent of low- and moderate-income children eligible for government-financed child care are getting the subsidies, the government reported Tuesday.

Almost 9.9 million kids qualify, but just over 1.5 million actually got the help last year, said the report released by Donna Shalala, secretary of Health and Human Services, who used the findings to urge more spending on child care.

"The clock is ticking for Congress to act," she said. "For working parents and their children, there's not a moment to lose."

Participation rates varied considerably across the country, from West Virginia, where 45 percent of eligible children were enrolled, to Mississippi, with just 5 percent.

Under the programs, states offer child-care subsidies on a sliding scale, with the aid phasing out as a family's income grows.

States were slow to begin spending extra money allocated for child care in the 1996 welfare overhaul. Now they have spent virtually every dollar available, and then some, the HHS report said.

Last year, states spent \$3.5 billion in federal and state money. Much of the state spending was required to qualify for federal dollars, but states spent \$686 million more in welfare money in order to help more children.

In his budget proposal for 2000,

"Children are priceless, and we shouldn't nickel and dime them when it comes to providing safe and affordable child care,"

CHRISTOPHER DODD
U.S. senator

President Clinton asked Congress for \$19 billion over five years in increased child-care money. That included more for subsidies and more in tax credits for working parents and for parents who forgo a second income to stay home with children.

"Children are priceless, and we shouldn't nickel and dime them when it comes to providing safe and affordable child care," said Sen. Christopher Dodd, D-Conn., who joined with Sen. James Jeffords, R-Vt., to push for more spending.

Congressional Republicans have shown interest in the tax credits but are wary of increased subsidies, noting that subsidies already were increased in 1996. They note that many states have excess welfare money that can be used for child care.

"States have plenty of money to spend on child care in the coming years as more and more welfare beneficiaries return to work, and I'm working on ways to provide even more flexibility to states so they can meet this growing

need," said a statement from Rep. Nancy Johnson, R-Conn., chairwoman of the House Ways and Means welfare subcommittee.

Clinton pushed for major new child-care spending last year too, but none was included in the deal he negotiated with the GOP at the end of the year.

This year it will be a priority, said Melissa Skolfield, HHS spokeswoman. She said since prospects for a significant overhaul of Medicare have fallen, child care will rise as a priority for the department and the White House.

In its HHS spending bill, the Senate approved \$1 billion in increased child-care subsidies, although how to pay for it was unclear. The House bill included no new money, and the two bills are being reconciled.

Under federal law, any family earning 85 percent of the state's median income qualifies for the child-care subsidy, meaning about four in 10 families qualify. States can impose tighter requirements, and all but nine have.

Aid office says it's Y2K-compliant

Y2K from page 1

and they would have to pay double tuition out of their own pockets."

Craig Munier, scholarships and financial aid director, said the test was an important step in the prevention of Y2K problems.

"All our communications with the U.S. Department of Education are electronic," Munier said. "So (the test) is pretty fundamental with what we do."

For the test, employees created phony names for financial aid applications and plugged those into a software program that used the year 2000.

The test, completed in June, is one of several ways the office is trying to make sure records won't be lost when 2000 hits.

Along with the U.S. Department of

Education test, the office has also taken several other steps to ensure Y2K compatibility.

Work was completed in January to make the Student Information System mainframe software compliant. The software keeps records such as students' schedules and grades. Munier said the work in January was more important than the test in June.

"If we would have had to choose between working on the Student Information System mainframe or taking the government test, we would have definitely chosen the Student Information System," Munier said. "It is much bigger."

The office has also replaced several older computers with Y2K-compliant ones, installed Y2K-compliant versions of personal software, made Windows 95 Y2K-compliant and test-

ed the Y2K compatibility of electronic products such as fax machines and copy machines.

Munier said that although the office has taken every step to prevent Y2K problems, the millennium could still bring a chance malfunction.

"There's always that element of chance," Munier said. "But we've worked very hard to make sure the Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid is ready."

Munier said the worst part of Y2K may be the hype and misconceptions surrounding it.

"I think the biggest problem with the year 2000 is fear," Munier said. "I think we are more at risk to that than the actual symptomatic problems. But we have taken all the appropriate actions, nonetheless, to ensure that we are ready."

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