

# Daily Nebraskan

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## Square Off

Lincoln band makes the big time and fights in the Battle of the Bands in L.A. A&E, PAGE 9

## DN Issues

Are the media public enemy No. 1 or have they been given a bad rap? OPINION, PAGE 5



## Death penalty choice delayed

■ Lawmakers don't have to rush to decide whether to switch to lethal injection.

By Jill Zeman

Staff writer

Lawmakers who feared Nebraska could be left without a legal method of execution could breathe a sigh of relief Monday.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled not to review a Florida case challenging the constitutionality of the use of the electric chair for execution.

The court dismissed the case because earlier this month the Florida Legislature passed a law that would make lethal injection the legal form of execution, unless the inmate prefers electrocution.

Nebraska legislators have been debating LB52, which proposed to change the state's legal form of execution from electrocution to lethal injection.

The bill was introduced Jan. 7 by Omaha Sen. Kermit Brashear and had received the support of Gov. Mike Johanns and Attorney General Don Stenberg.

Lawmakers may have felt pressure to pass LB52 because if the Supreme Court would have ruled the electric chair unconstitutional, Nebraska could have been left without a means of execution.

"The Supreme Court's decision certainly takes a lot of pressure off the governor," said Sen. Pam Redfield of Omaha.

Redfield, who co-sponsored the bill, said she didn't feel the panic that some senators may have experienced, but she was glad the Legislature didn't have to decide soon.

Redfield said she was happy the senators could take their time and evaluate the facts carefully before making a decision.

Sen. Dave Landis of Lincoln said the Supreme Court's decision could allow senators to focus on issues other than lethal injection.

"It may not become an issue the Legislature will sacrifice an entire session for," Landis said.

Redfield said she thought the bill probably wouldn't be voted on until next session, but Landis said he wouldn't be surprised if the senators voted this year.

"I don't think (the decision) changes any votes," Landis said.

A pre-session survey conducted by The Associated Press revealed that of the 45 senators who responded, 22 said they favored lethal injection as the legal mode of execution, and 13 said they were leaning in that direction. Twenty-five votes are needed to advance the measure.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.



A LINCOLN firefighter shovels ashes out of a house, 1440 N. 14th St., to keep them from flaring up and to investigate the fire's cause.

FLAMES QUICKLY engulfed the house soon after fire trucks arrived.

## Flames ruin home

By Michelle Starr

Staff writer

A near-campus house went up in flames early Tuesday evening.

A call came in at 5:31 p.m. after Matt Smithmier, 25, from Michigan, noticed black smoke coming from a house at 1440 N. 14th St., across the street from where he was visiting a friend.

No one was hurt in the fire. The house was rented by James

Bryant, 55, who left the home 45 minutes before the fire broke out.

Fire Inspector Chuck Schweitzer said the fire started at an overstuffed chair Bryant usually sat in when he smoked. The fire was caused by an unattended cigarette, Schweitzer said.

It took fire inspectors until 11:30 Tuesday night to determine the cause.

"Because there was so much

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IN NEBRASKA  
A LOOK AT THE  
CORNHUSKER  
EMPIRE

## Classroom Coaches

## Hewitt programs ensure learning is part of game

By Eric Rineer

Staff writer

Ask any coach, academic counselor or athlete at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln about the pressures student athletes face during college.

You'd get a long and involved answer.

Nebraska Football Coach Frank Solich, like other coaches at UNL, would tell you one of the keys to a student athlete's success is the tutoring system at the Hewitt Center. Solich said the transition from high school to college can be overwhelming for recruits brought into the Husker program.

"I think there's a big adjustment when you come in from high school as a true freshman, playing big-time college football, going from high school to

college," Solich said. "There's a big change in your studies."

Like other college teams that travel frequently, football players are swamped with schedules that consist of road games, practices and daily studies.

The system helps student athletes learn better and enables them to adjust to busy schedules.

Each freshman athlete is required to participate in study halls Monday through Thursday from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.

Athletes who maintain a grade point average of 2.5 or higher after freshman year are not required to attend study halls.

After freshman year, about 25 percent of athletes utilize the Hewitt

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