Vets receive ROTC visit

By Iara Luchiari
Staff writer

Despite the snowy weather on Friday, veterans at the VA Hospital in Omaha got a special visit.

On Friday, Johanna Ollerich and Mike Loos, representing the cadets in the Arnold Air Force Society, went to the VA Hospital in Omaha and gave valentines to 15 veterans.

The veterans appreciated the valentines and thanked the group with big smiles on their faces, Ollerich said.

After receiving the valentines, the veterans talked about the time they served in the military and their jobs.

The personalized valentines were made by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Air Force ROTC cadets in the Arnold Air Force Society, which is a national organization, said Kerry Sheridan, a member of the group and a UNL freshman pre-medicine major.

The group's members decided to make valentines for the veterans because they considered it important to thank them for what they did for the nation, Ollerich said.

The valentines also help show the veterans that society won't forget them or their honorable gestures, Ollerich said.

In the past, the Air Force ROTC cadets in the Arnold Air Force Society have also helped children and cleaned snowy highways for the community.

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Campus activism less visible

ACTIVISM from page 1

It also sparked activism.

Nearly 2,000 UNL students spent the night in the Military and Naval Science building in May 1970, protesting the war in Vietnam.

Another 5,000 students and faculty members appeared before the university administration a day later, urging administration to approve a three-day strike of classes so students could "work constructively toward peace," said then-ASUN president Steve Tiwald.

The mood around the country was tense, said Daryl Swanson, an assistant manager of the Nebraska Unions during that time.

Activism around the nation and at UNL was sparked by the assassination of Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr., he said. People were up in arms over the civil rights movement, as well as over Vietnam.

Today, large displays of activism like these seem out of place on what many student activists say is an apathetic campus.

While students on campuses around the country protest a variety of causes – from sweatshop labor to how money is spent at their own universities – many UNL students are too uninformed or too busy to engage in these types of activities, they say.

Ben Knauss, a part-time student who spends his time working for Nebraskans for Peace, passing out flyers to educate people on different causes and as host of a KZUM radio show focusing on issues, said students today don't care about issues that don't affect them.

"I think there's a lot of students that are really apathetic and don't pay attention to the news and what is going on around them," Knauss said.

The current lack of activism on campus compared to the 1960s is disappointing, said Elizabeth Goodbrake, a UNL student also involved in Nebraskans for Peace.

"Youth are supposed to be active and progressive people who effect change," she said.

UNL's shortage of activism was apparent to both Goodbrake and Knauss last November when the two traveled to Seattle to join the thousands of protesters at the World Trade Organization negotiations there.

A campus of 4,000 students had half its student body show up. Other campuses had thousands appear from their schools.

As far as Goodbrake and Knauss knew, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln had two students.

"That was real embarrassing," Goodbrake said.

Paul Olson, a professor in the English department, said there's a reason UNL students today don't engage in the type of activism they did in the 1960s – and it's not because they don't care.

"I think they care, they just don't have enough time to study the news," said Olson, who was also a professor in the 1960s.

Students also don't feel as powerful in effecting change today, he said.

"Between working 40 hours a week and not having a clear sense of what to do, activism is not as visible today," he said.

Courtesy Photo

ELIZABETH GOODBRAKE, a junior international affairs major, and Ben Knauss, a freshman undeclared major, went to Seattle, Wash., during the protest against the World Trade Organization in November. Goodbrake said she was embarrassed the University of Nebraska-Lincoln had significantly fewer students at the WTO than other campuses, which brought thousands.

Olson said the state of world events makes a difference, too. The threat of seeing a friend come home in a body bag forced students to take a stand 30 years ago.

Today, the issues are farther away and more complicated.

But students are even apathetic about issues that affect the university, said ASUN President Andy Schuerman.

Last year, a group of students worked to speak out and educate the public about the potential consequences of Proposition 413 – a state constitutional amendment that would have limited the amount of money the university would take in from taxes.

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>
> **Ben Knauss**
> freshman undeclared major

The amendment would have hurt students, but Schuerman said few took action.

"Getting students to lobby against it was impossible," he said.

James Griesen, vice chancellor for student affairs, said that just because students aren't promoting issues considered liberal by some doesn't mean they aren't active.

UNL's student government is more active than many campuses across the nation, he said.

Students have an opportunity to be involved, and they also have a way to voice disagreement with university policy, he said.

"We offer so much participation that the need for activism in a rallying and protesting sense isn't needed," he said.

Goodbrake said she feels differently and wishes UNL students would take an active stance on issues they feel strongly about.

"It can be under any umbrella – gay rights, women's rights or animal rights," she said.

If she could, Goodbrake said she would go to a school where activism was part of the curriculum.

Schuerman, who is applying for a national scholarship, said he is at a disadvantage when competing against other students who are part of a more active student body.

While many at other schools simply join activist organizations, Schuerman said UNL students had to start their own movements.

If they don't, they won't be competitive, he said.

"People (from other colleges) have been involved in protests and movements," he said. "Had I been happier to be part of the mainstream culture, that could have hurt me.

"I chose to be more active."

Olson said that teaching UNL students to be activists should begin in the classroom.

There should be courses where students analyze issues and engage in activism. Those issues could be of a conservative or liberal nature, he said.

"I think it's just an important part to learn about being a citizen," he said.

Goodbrake said she wants to bring the activism she observed in Seattle back to UNL.

Instead of watching the university let students be apathetic, she wants to show them the other option.

"I hope to be part of a new movement," she said. "We need to shake things up."

Online encounter turns dangerous

BOSTON (AP) – A chance Internet encounter between a Wisconsin man and a Boston woman ended with police rushing to the woman's apartment after she declared in cyberspace that she was trying to kill herself.

Jeff Erlanger, 29, of Madison, Wis., had three vital pieces of data about the woman: her first name, her online screen name and that she lived in Boston.

When he first signed on to the public America Online chat board and noticed a woman named Sarah, Erlanger decided to start a private conversation. He learned that she was from Boston and was a dentist. But Sarah also said she was manic-depressive, that she had been hospitalized and that she had previously attempted suicide.

"Then the next thing she told me was that she had cut herself, and blood was going down her arms," he told The Boston Globe. "I tried to get her to tell me her last name, and she wouldn't."

Erlanger wasn't sure if the suicide attempt was real. When he decided to call authorities, he realized his modem was occupying his phone line.

Without telling Sarah he was leaving his computer, Erlanger rushed to a phone in the lobby of his building. But the 911 operator in Boston told Erlanger police could do little to help Sarah without her last name or address.

When Sarah abruptly signed off, he called Boston police once again.

They told him federal law allowed online companies to reveal a person's full name in emergencies. Erlanger gave police an America Online phone number and the woman's screen name.

When Boston police arrived at Sarah's apartment they found her with fresh cuts on her wrists, refusing to seek help. She was taken to a Boston hospital where she was treated, police spokesman Kevin Jones said.