

# Bike trail hub planned

■ The proposed bike trail will connect Lincoln's network of trails.

By Cara Pesck  
Staff writer

Bike trails abound in Lincoln. The MoPac, Billy Wolff, Rock Island and John Dietrich trails, among others, run from the center of Lincoln outward, like spokes on a bicycle. However, there is something missing from the network of trails in Lincoln — a hub to link the spokes together. But within two or three years, the Great Plains Trails Network anticipates that a new trail will become that link. The Husker Link Trail will run from 19th to 30th streets, joining four existing trails, said Nancy Loftis, co-chair of the Husker Link Trail project. In addition, Loftis said, the proposed trail will link the existing trails to downtown Lincoln and to the UNL city campus. Loftis said the dream to link the trails together is not a new one. "It has always kind of been there as an idea," she said. There was simply no place to build

the link. But then, Loftis said, the Network found that a stretch of Union Pacific railroad track will come up for sale this summer. The Network is planning to buy the stretch of land as soon as possible, Loftis said. Before the land can be purchased or any construction can begin, the Network needs money. Loftis said the Network estimates it will cost about \$2 million to build the trail. Of that figure, \$1 million is estimated to go toward building a bridge over 27th Street. Although much of the money needed for the project will come from grants and other public sources, the Network needs to raise \$400,000 through donations and fund-raisers. So far, about \$50,000 has been raised. But Loftis would like to see that figure double before the land for the new trail is purchased this summer. "We want to be in a position to say there is strong support for the project," Loftis said. In order to raise the money, Loftis and other members of the Husker Link Trail committee have been mailing out

letters and talking to different community groups about the trail. She said she has met with support nearly everywhere she has gone. "Everyone that we approach likes this project," Loftis said. Among the organizations and institutions supporting the trail is UNL. Andy Schuerman, president of the Association of Students at the University of Nebraska, said ASUN has voiced its support for the trail. Schuerman said the ASUN Campus Safety and Advisory Council is planning an event near the end of the semester to increase campus awareness of the project. Tom Cosenza, president of the Campus Safety and Advisory Council, said the council also will be active in lobbying for City Council support of the trail. Loftis said she is pleased with the university's support and said students will benefit from the new trail. Right now, she said, there are "bits and pieces" of the Billy Wolff trail near the Beadle Center and east of Sandoz and Abel residence halls. "It's not real well-connected, and it's kind of hard to find," Loftis said. "Husker Link Trail will be better connected."

# UNMC publishes liver cell study

■ Cultured cells may help those waiting for a liver transplant.

By John Hejkal  
Staff writer

The University of Nebraska Medical Center is continuing to be prominent in the field of transplant research. Ira Fox, associate professor of surgery and liver transplant surgeon at UNMC, has helped develop a way to culture liver cells in the lab. The research may help develop techniques for the transplantation of cultured cells into the livers of people who are in danger of suffering liver failure. "I've gotten phone calls and e-mails from people all over the world who want to use these cells," Fox said. If successful, the transplanted cells could prevent liver failure so patients could survive long enough to obtain a suitable organ for transplantation. "One of the problems for organ transplantation is that there have not been enough donors," Fox said. The research uses techniques to manipulate genetically the hepatocytes, or liver cells, in cultures. The cells have oncogenes inserted into them, which make the cells grow like cancerous cells. The "immortalized"

cells are then able to grow well outside the body. Fox said the oncogene makes a temperature-sensitive mutation occur in the cells. The gene "is turned on" at 33 degrees Celsius, and it "turns off" at 37 to 39 degrees Celsius. Normal human body temperature is in the 37 to 39-degree range, he said. Even though a person's body heat would prevent the cancerous effect from occurring inside the body, it still was not considered a viable option to transplant such cells into people, Fox said. Along with colleagues from Brigham Women's Hospital and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Fox found a way to remove the cancerous gene from the cells in a process called Reversible Immortalization. Genetic sites, known as lox P sites, act as markers on the ends of the oncogene. Using an enzyme taken from bacteria, the researchers were able to cut the genes at the lox P sites, splicing out the cancer gene, Fox said. Without the oncogene, the cells may be safe for transplantation, he said. Being able to cut out the cancerous gene was what made the study important enough to get published in the Feb. 18 issue of Science. The eventual uses of the findings are not determined, Fox said. "It's probably going to be a fair amount of time before we know how

effective this is going to be," he said. He said it may be 10 to 15 years before the FDA approves transplantation of such cells as a way to hold off liver failure. Dr. Dan Schafer, associate professor of internal medicine and hepatologist at UNMC, said Fox's work will have benefits for both in-lab research and patient care. "It is very impressive the way you as a person can grow adult, functioning hepatocytes," Schafer said. "You can't grow adult hepatocytes in culture." Because the immortalized cells can grow in culture, there will be many applications for them, he said. "There are a lot of uses for these, not just in in-vitro studies but in people," Schafer said. The findings in the study may be used in other areas, Fox said. "The technology is applicable to lots of other forms of cell transplants," he said. Inserting oncogenes into insulin-producing cells and nerve cells may one day bring about help for people with diseases such as diabetes and Parkinson's, Fox said. Schafer said he was pleased the research was at a level that could be published in a journal as prestigious as Science. "I think it's good for science worldwide because progress is being made, and it's good for the university because it's being made here," he said.

# 'Wheels in motion' for a third honors residence hall

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cerns with the construction of a new honors hall. "The new hall will probably bring the same amount of controversy," he said. "But it's something that if it's going to be built, it should be privately funded." The hall would be the second built for honors students. The Esther L. Kauffman Academic Residence Center, currently under construction, is being built to house students in the J.D. Edwards Honors Program in Computer Science. Butterfield said the growing size of the honors program necessitates more housing. Griesen said the addition of a new residence hall will help all students.

With more rooms on campus, more requests for single rooms will be filled. But steps exist before the construction of a new hall will become a reality, said Howard Parker, director of Facilities, Planning and Construction. The first step in the project was to draft a program initiation request. The request has been passed on to Griesen and will have to receive approval by the Academic Planning Committee, Parker said. If it passes the committee and the other channels of authority, the university must get donations to fund it. Even if everything goes on schedule, construction is not slated to begin until April 2002. It would be complete in January 2004, Parker said. "It's a ways off," Parker said. "The wheels are in motion."

# A-Team's Schafer: 'Shake things up'

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When Schafer began college at Creighton, he arrived on campus a few days before classes started and was placed in a group of 10 people led by two upper-class students. Schafer started at Creighton in a program where students earn both an undergraduate and a law degree in six years, rather than the traditional seven. When Schafer realized this offered him little flexibility in choosing his courses, he transferred to UNL. It was a difficult decision for him because he said he had many friends at Creighton because of its orientation program. During orientation, students need to learn their way around campus and fill out forms and, more importantly, to build the sense of community they need to get to know each other, Schafer said. "When students feel like they are part of a community, they will be more inclined to help out with that community," Schafer said. Schafer said he wants to change ASUN from being "a dynasty ... dominated by a small group of people who come up through organizations like the Chancellor's Leadership Class ... who have lost touch with normal students." As students who have not been involved with ASUN, members of A-Team offer "fresh ideas and fresh motivation," Schafer said. Schafer wants to stop ASUN's low voter turnout, low visibility and low interest among students, he said. To increase voter turnout, A-Team proposes to implement an online voting system to make it easier for off-campus students to vote. Andy Schuerman, ASUN president, said he was advised by Neal Erickson, election commissioner in the Secretary of State's Office, against an online voting system in part because of security issues. In response to this, Schafer said he would stress the differences between an ASUN election and other elections regulated by the commission. Schafer said he understands the security concerns. Under A-Team's proposal, students voting online would enter their names, student ID numbers and N-Roll pin numbers. "If you can pay your taxes online, you should be able to vote in a student election online," he said. Schafer also spoke of A-Team's

*"If you can pay your taxes online, you should be able to vote in a student election online."*

Joel Schafer  
A-Team presidential candidate

shadow senator program that would better involve international students with ASUN. An international student, appointed by UNL's International Students Organization, would serve as a "shadow senator" with all the rights of a senator but without a vote, Schafer said. Other parties "pay lip-service" to involving international students, but A-Team has specific ideas, Schafer said. The A-Team election group was borne out of conversations among friends, said Riley Peterson. A-Team's first vice presidential candidate and a junior political science major. The candidates, along with their campaign manager, Hal Hansen, would share stories their parents told them about activism in college. Social movements should originate in universities, Peterson said. "We should be on the cutting edge of what's happening in the world," he said. Members of the A-Team are disgusted that the opposite is happening on UNL's campus. The university sells students out to "traveling bands of commercialism," Peterson said. He referred to the credit-card solicitors and advertising promotions in the greenspace. "I have full faith in (Schafer's) ability to run ASUN as a president, otherwise I wouldn't be here," Peterson said. In previous years, ASUN election groups have made empty statements that do not inspire students, Schafer said. A-Team thought a third election group would "shake things up," Schafer said. Webber commented on the increase in choices students have in this year's elections. "I don't think ASUN elections will be the same for a while."

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