

Daily Nebraskan

ASUN passes a bylaw allowing it to lobby against the gay marriage amendment
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High-flyin' Robbie "The Ripper" Richard is not your typical NU athlete
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Abstract paintings displayed in the Rotunda Art Gallery mix beauty and Jewish spirituality
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More than pretty: Glass blowing is science

BY SHARON KOLBET

Transparent beakers and vials line the shelves of room 301 in Hamilton Hall. At a nearby workbench, a gas torch is aimed at a Pyrex tube causing the surface of the glass to glow first pink and then orange; all part of the daily business within the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's glass blowing shop.

The man in charge of this specialized glass studio is Hadrian Duke. Having spent the past four years as a scientific glass blower in the Netherlands, Duke was recruited to join the research support staff at UNL this fall. He arrived in Lincoln about three weeks ago.

Within the glass shop, Duke does repair work as well as custom orders for researchers in chemistry, biology and other laboratory sciences.

"Having a resident glass blower enables our research money to go further," said John Belot, assistant professor of chemistry and faculty member with the Center for Materials Research and Analysis.

"A glass shop on campus enables the department to make and repair glassware much cheaper than it would be to order or subcontract the work out," Belot said.



While blowing air into a plastic tube to keep a molten-glass cylinder from caving in, Hadrian Duke gives shape to laboratory glassware. Duke was hired this fall as UNL's scientific glass blower.

Sharon Kolbet/DN

Please see GLASS on 5

NU raises health premium

BY JILL ZEMAN

A raise in university employees' health insurance premiums could help NU find favor in the Legislature, but could also take a chunk out of faculty and staff raises the Board of Regents approved in July.

The premium costs, effective in January, could jump as much as 40 percent per month for some employees.

Despite the significant raise, Harvey Perlman, University of Nebraska-Lincoln interim chancellor, said the insurance hike was not only appropriate, but required.

"We have no choice," he said.

Faculty insurance premiums remained stable over the past few years because of a health-care reserve fund, Perlman said.

The reserve fund grew from money earmarked for employee health plans that wasn't used.

In the past, administrators faced a choice: raise premiums and maintain the reserve fund, or keep insurance costs the same and deplete the surplus, he said.

Senior administrators decided to maintain the premiums, which, over time, depleted reserve funds and created the need for next year's increase.

The premium increase will force employees to pay about 21 percent of their medical coverage said Joe Rowson, NU spokesman.

NU employees currently pay 15 percent of their medical insurance fees.

Perlman admitted rising insurance costs could turn prospective faculty and staff members away from UNL.

"Anytime you raise costs, it makes the university less attractive," he said.

"But we'd be less competitive if we couldn't pay for (faculty and staff) claims."

Rowson said the hike in insurance costs wasn't entirely the university's fault.

Instead, more NU employees are using their health benefits for treatments and prescription drugs, he said. Health costs are predicted to rise by 17 percent, according to the university.

The Legislature also plays a key role in the rising premiums, Rowson said.

Health care costs are included in the university's biennial budget submitted to state lawmakers.

Members of the Legislature like to see the university pitching in its fair share for health care costs and the premium increase brings NU employees in line with their state employee counterparts, Rowson said.

Originally the premium increase was to be spread out among four years, Rowson said.

Administrators decided to hike fees in just one step, though, to lower the university's budget request to the Legislature.

The more the university can show its contributing to its own health insurance funds, the more likely the Legislature will find favor on NU's budget, he said.

Please see INSURANCE on 5

Candidates begin negative blitz

Senate debates are expected to be heated because of Nelson and Stenberg's squabbling.

BY BRIAN CARLSON

As Ben Nelson and Don Stenberg head into their second Senate debate tonight in Omaha, the two campaigns' charges and counter-charges are well underway.

It's a game played out in campaign advertisements, press conferences, press releases and sound bites. Some of it is conducted by the actual campaign, some by the candidates' respective parties through campaign activities financed by unregulated "soft-money" donations.

Although it hasn't reached the point of outright mudslinging, the campaign is beginning to take on traces of a negative tone. One candidate attacks the other's record, and the other accuses the first of distorting the facts. And vice versa.

In the past week, for example, the Nebraska Republican Party has accused Nelson, the Democratic former governor, of misleading voters

Election 2000

about his record on taxes and Social Security.

Contrary to Nelson's claims, the party charges he did not cut taxes for the average Nebraskan. During his tenure as governor from 1991-99, the GOP alleges the overall tax burden on Nebraskans grew 50 percent, the per capita tax burden jumped 42 percent and the average household paid \$1,000 more in taxes.

"Under Ben Nelson, the tax burden on Nebraska families grew faster than personal income," Nebraska Republican Party chairman Chuck Sigerson said in a statement. "The Democrats claim their candidate is a tax-cutter, but the truth is very much the opposite. And the truth can stand for itself."

Marcia Cady, a spokeswoman for the Nelson campaign, said the accusation was based on faulty logic. Tax revenues grew because the economy expanded and incomes rose, she said, not because income tax rates went up.

"If you use the same logic, you could say Gov. (Mike) Johanns raised

"The Democrats claim their candidate is a tax-cutter but the truth is very much the opposite. And the truth can stand for itself"

Chuck Sigerson

Nebraska Republican Party chairman

income taxes by 13 percent last year," she said.

Cady said Nelson signed 39 tax-cutting measures into law, including income and sales tax cuts. He also slowed the growth of state spending, she said.

On Saturday, Stenberg, the Republican attorney general, criticized his opponent for a fund-raising letter Nelson sent to supporters on Sept. 8. Stenberg said he disagreed with two statements in the letter.

"On Social Security," the letter wrote, "my opponent offers a plan that will destabilize the Social Security system by withdrawing an estimated \$1 trillion from the Social Security system during the next 10 years. This can only lead to higher payroll taxes, lower benefits and higher retirement ages."

Stenberg said he supported none of those outcomes. He said his Social

Security proposal, which would allow younger workers to invest a portion of their payroll taxes in private investment accounts, would improve the system by raising beneficiaries' returns.

But whether he acknowledged it or not, Cady said, Stenberg's plan would force the government to adopt some combination of higher payroll taxes, lower benefits and higher retirement ages because the private investment accounts would remove money from the Social Security trust fund. The state GOP also noted Nelson, despite his firm opposition to the idea now, told the McCook Daily Gazette during his failed 1996 Senate campaign that using a portion of Social Security for private retirement accounts might be a way to expand the middle class.

Please see NEGATIVE on 5



ALLEY CAT: Sydney Graham walks through the alley at the corner of 7th and P street on her way home from Lazlo's on Wednesday afternoon. Cloudy skies kept the sun from overpowering the city with its intense heat.

Nate Wagner/DN

Weather chills student body

BY KRISTEN ELIAS

Students had a startling awakening Wednesday morning when the season's first major cold front moved in, causing temperatures to drop into the 60s.

"I went to class in shorts and a T-shirt and had to walk all the way home after class in the cold," sophomore business major Joe Agrimson said.

Agrimson and others were caught off guard after enduring muggy temperatures in the 80s during the past week.

But it didn't come as much of a surprise to National Weather Service forecaster David Skerritt who said the National Weather Service had been expecting the front.

"It's nothing unusual... our first cool air masses usually move down in late September," Skerritt said.

With normal average temperatures this time of year in the mid-70s, Skerritt said it was about time for a cold front to move through.

"It's really the first major pattern change from the summer weather we've enjoyed," Skerritt said. A threat of rain also looms over the weekend, he said.

"Rain takes a lot of the pollen and weeds out of the air," Skerritt said, which should help allergy sufferers, who, according to the University Health Center, have had to endure an unusually harsh allergy season this year.

Not all have enjoyed this change in the weather though, as it has meant a change in habits.

Lincoln:
For mid-September
Avg. High - mid 70s
Avg. Low - lower 50s
Today:
High - 67
Expected low - mid 30s
Source: National Weather Service,
Valley

Delan Lonowski/DN

"... Given that there are breaks of time between my classes, instead of spending that time outside, I have to find an indoor place to pass the time," sophomore journalism major Tim Pendrell said.

But some students appreciated the drop in temperature.

"The cold weather just put you in the mood for the start of school and football season. It's a good change," junior political science major Monique Carter said.

Whether a nice break from the heat or an unwelcome change, no one should pack away their summer clothes yet because it looks like this cold weather isn't here to stay, as temperatures should be back in the mid- to upper 70s as early as next week, Skerritt said.