

Daily Nebraskan

Have you heard the word?
In Opinion/4



After a shaky first half, the Huskers push forward to the next step to the Big 12 championship In Sports Thursday/12



Sunny Day Real Estate brings its cult-like following to Knickerbocker's tonight In Arts/10



David Casen/DN

Tom Osborne signs autographs in late August at a campaign stop in Columbus. Osborne is running for Congress in the 3rd Congressional District.

Osborne weaves life, politics

Editor's note: This is the first of two stories on the 3rd Congressional District candidates. Rollie Reynolds will be profiled Friday.

BY BRIAN CARLSON

GREELEY — A boisterous crowd of about 40 has jammed Finns Bar-Froggers, a small tavern in this town of 562, to hear the candidate discuss the important issues of the day.

It's mid-September, one week after Nebraska squeaked out a 27-24 overtime victory over Notre Dame, seven weeks before residents of this rural farm community and self-proclaimed Irish capital of Nebraska help choose their next congressman.

Tom Osborne, ex-king of college football and current Washington wannabe, mingles at the bar and the dining booths, presses flesh at the pool tables and grants umpteen autograph requests to the admiring throng.

Then he gets up to speak, delivering a detailed, 15-minute sermon on agricultural policy. Crop insurance. Ethanol. The need for more unity in agriculture.

"Now I'd be glad to answer any questions you might have," says the 63-year-old Osborne, chief architect of a 255-49-3 record during 25 seasons at Nebraska and winner of three national championships.

From the back of the room, a bearded, middle-aged man wearing overalls and a ballcap pipes up.

"Hey, Coach, why don't ya talk a little football? What did ya think of that game on

Saturday?"

Osborne didn't watch the Notre Dame game. Too busy campaigning. The first half, he marched in a Fairbury parade as people yelled the score to him. The second half, he drove to his next campaign stop, listening to the game on the radio.

The competitive fire still burns for Osborne, the College Football Hall of Fame coach who says he misses the sidelines. When it looked like the game might slip away, he couldn't take it anymore.

"I had to pull over to the side of the road a couple of times," he said.

The Greatest Challenge

That was the only question the Republican candidate for the 3rd District received that evening in Greeley. It's not to suggest 3rd District voters don't care deeply about the issues. Given the district's dismal agricultural economy, they certainly do.

It's just Osborne probably wrapped up his victory against Democrat Rollie Reynolds before ever uttering his first policy pronouncement.

The reason: Osborne the candidate seems very much the person Nebraskans got to know during his 25 seasons on the sidelines as a coach. He is stoic and reserved, deeply religious, disciplined and meticulous — qualities that play well in the sprawling, rural, reliably Republican 3rd District.

He is also willing to defend unpopular decisions and beliefs.

"This is where the greatest challenge in the state of Nebraska is."

Tom Osborne

3rd District Republican candidate

His district overwhelmingly supports the death penalty; Osborne opposes it. His constituents raise and eat tons of beef, but he has avoided it since having heart surgery in the mid-1980s.

And he continues to receive criticism for his response to actual or alleged criminal activity by several of his former players, especially running back Lawrence Phillips, who dragged his former girlfriend by the hair down the stairs of a Lincoln apartment complex.

Osborne said he ran for Congress not to stroke his ego, but to use his stature to help the struggling district in which he grew up.

"This is where the greatest challenge in the state of Nebraska is," he said.

But to some, especially his opponent, Osborne is too inexperienced in agriculture and politics to capably represent the 3rd District.

"It's the death knell for agriculture," said Reynolds, who gave up farming to become a Grand Island real estate investor. "We're going to lose most of our farmers shortly, and he's just going to wave them good-bye."

Please see OSBORNE on 2

They're off to flaunt their Big Red spirit

BY LINDSEY BAKER

This week, the State Capitol won't be the only building near campus surrounded by scaffolding.

With Homecoming this weekend, university fraternities and sororities, as well as Neihardt Residence Hall and ROTC members, have teamed to build lawn displays for Friday's annual day-long homecoming lawn display contest to be held on 16th and R streets.

Most fraternities and sororities began their floats last weekend. Sophomore Sigma Nu Fraternity member Dustin Hogzett said his house began its display Sunday.

"We planned it out for about three weeks," he said. "It's going to be the new front of the stadium."

Delta Upsilon Fraternity member Dave Drew said his house began constructing a large foot kicking a Jayhawk-adorned football on Monday.

"We just wanted something big," Drew said.

Several houses have had problems with display construction because of the heavy rain this

week.

"It rained a lot (Wednesday morning)," junior Beta Theta Pi member Nick Dolphens said. "The plywood was warped."

Drew said the fraternity had to change its original construction plans calling for plaster of Paris to create Wizard of Oz-style scenes — one for each game the Huskers have remaining — to chicken wire covered with cloth.

"We're working out the kinks," he said.

Construction and finishing touches on the displays will be in order for the next few days.

"We'll have long nights tonight and tomorrow," Alpha Tau Omega Fraternity member Mark Russell



Scott McClurg/DN

Members of Theta Xi, Phi Kappa Alpha and Alpha Omicron Phi, from left, Nick Corcoran, Steve Mattern, Brian Freeouf, Katy Whitman and Erin Bader work on their homecoming float Wednesday evening. Greek houses and residence halls began constructing their floats Monday for Homecoming week.

said. According to Russell, the members of Delta Gamma Sorority are going to paint the display, which consists of a train running over a Jayhawk on a red brick road.

"We basically just put the frame together," Alpha Tau Omega Fraternity member Andy

Please see FLOATS on 5

Company recalls model of truck in fatal crash

Investigators are still asking why the dump truck's brakes failed in the Burger King wreck.

BY JOSH FUNK

Freightliner LLC has announced it will voluntarily recall the model of dump truck that smashed into a Lincoln Burger King on Oct. 19 because of a problem with the brake system.

About 133,000 of the Portland, Ore., manufacturer's business-class trucks built since 1991 will be recalled to replace a brake pushrod that broke in the Lincoln wreck, Freightliner spokeswoman Debi Nicholson said.

Two women died as a result of injuries sustained in the Oct. 19 accident. The dump truck ran over 18-year-old Melissa Holton's car on its way to the restaurant at 27th and Superior streets, where it hit another car, killing Shirley Carlson, 67.

Brandt Excavating owns the 1996 FL80-model dump truck involved in the wreck. Witnesses said the truck looked like it could not stop as it drove south on 27th Street.

In the weeks since the accident, Lincoln Police, Nebraska State Patrol Carrier Enforcement, Freightliner and National Transportation Safety Board investigators have pored over the truck in search of a cause.

NTSB spokeswoman Lauren Peduzzi said her agency's investigation is ongoing, and there are still agents in Nebraska.

"We are looking at the issue of the pushrod and its significance in this accident and in general," Peduzzi said.

Nicholson said the initial investigation found that the Brandt truck's brake pedal pushrod that triggers the service

brakes was severed.

There have been several other reports of problematic pushrods in Freightliner's business-class trucks, Nicholson said, but they have not caused any other accidents. Those problems were discovered during maintenance checks. The affected trucks may or may not be outfitted as dump trucks.

Freightliner is the world's leading commercial vehicle manufacturer, according to company materials, and is a unit of the Daimler-Chrysler Co.

Nicholson said the recall notices will be sent out next week, and then owners of the affected trucks will be able to take them to dealers where a larger diameter pushrod will be installed.

"We're acting as quickly as we can," Nicholson said.

In spite of these problems, Nicholson said the pushrod still passes company tests.

"All the testing shows that the part meets the design criteria," Nicholson said. "We're not sure why this happened, but we're going to replace them all and be safe."

Peduzzi said the pushrod concerns were identified shortly after NTSB investigators arrived here.

Originally, the federal agency came to Lincoln because the accident appeared to fit the criteria for a report on interstate trucking issues the NTSB is writing, Peduzzi said, but after the agency's representatives arrived, it became clear this situation was different.

Peduzzi said the NTSB pushrod investigation is focusing on this accident. There is no timeline for the completion of this investigation, Peduzzi said, because investigators are waiting on test results that could prompt additional probing.

New dean: Future of college is open road

BY VERONICA DAEHN

When Marjorie Kostelnik left her job at Michigan State University to come to Nebraska, she didn't have specific changes in mind for UNL's College of Human Resources and Family Sciences.

Now that she's been at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln for a day, she still doesn't.

Kostelnik took over as dean of the UNL college Wednesday. She replaces Karen Craig, who retired last year. Rita Kean had been serving as interim dean.

Kostelnik said she didn't need to have specific plans in mind.

"It's a wonderful thing to come into a unit that's already strong," she said. "My goal is to continue to build on the program."

Kostelnik spent 22 years at Michigan State University in East Lansing, first as a professor and then as chairwoman of the family and child ecology department.

The dean position at UNL gives her the chance to work with more disciplines and fields of study, she said.

At Michigan State, Kostelnik dealt largely with children and families. At UNL, she will deal with those areas along with textiles, dietetics and nutrition.

"This is a way to expand my horizons and an opportunity to work with a broad group of disciplines," she said. "That's exciting."

Kostelnik said she wouldn't be like a dictator. She wants to hear the ideas of others and then build on those.

UNL's College of Human Resources and Family Sciences is full of ideas, she said.

"Everyone's got dreams," she said. "I want to find ways to help nurture the ideas that are here and nurture those dreams."

"It's a wonderful thing to come into a unit that's already strong."

Marjorie Kostelnik

Human Resources dean

So far, the college seems open to trying new things and is focused on excellence, Kostelnik said.

Research seems to be important to the college and students are emphasized, she said.

"It will be fun to work and help the college move forward," she said.

While Kostelnik is settling in at UNL, her colleagues at Michigan State are already missing their friend.

Anne Soderman, acting chairwoman of the family and child ecology department at Michigan State, said she'd been e-mailing Kostelnik all week and had recently sent her flowers.

"We surely will miss her," Soderman said. "She has made so many dear friends here."

Kostelnik enhances the success of every person she works with, Soderman said.

"She finds out people's strengths and positions them to be successful," Soderman said. Kostelnik has other attributes as well. She is a prolific writer, who has helped write nine books and 14 book chapters. She has also edited and written for professional journals.

Soderman calls her friend patient and easy to work with.

"She doesn't overreact," Soderman said. "When everyone else sees gloom and doom, she

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