

Daily Nebraskan

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Concealed guns bill debated

BY GEORGE GREEN

Shots weren't fired, but opinions collided when the Judiciary Committee heard testimony about concealed weapons Wednesday.

The committee tackled LB496, which would allow citizens to carry concealed firearms if they obtain a permit from the state.

Sen. Gene Tyson of Norfolk introduced the bill and said it would create safer neighborhoods in Nebraska cities because citizens would be able to adequately protect themselves and their families.

Moreover, he said the bill would affect only citizens who legitimately want to carry a firearm. Deviants who use weapons to commit crimes will skip over the application process and head straight to the fire power, he said.

"People who take out permits are very law abiding," he said.

Rich Boucher, a spokesman for the Nebraska Sheriff's Association, said Tyson's assumption about increased safety isn't true.

Handing deadly weapons

Please see **HANDGUNS** on 2

No smoking bill may advance today

Committee hears discussion of two bills, LB 227 and LB 423, which target cigarette usage.

BY GWEN TIETGEN

People who support or oppose smoking agree on one thing: The bill that would ban smoking in restaurants is a question of accommodation.

But the answer of whether legislators will vote to accommodate nonsmokers or smokers has to wait. The bill was held in committee Wednesday and could be advanced out of committee as early as today.

One bill from Sen. Nancy Thompson of Papillion, LB227, would ban smoking in most restaurants by changing provisions in the Nebraska Clean Indoor Air Act.

Another bill from Thompson, LB423, takes what is already included in the 20-year-old act and puts it into statute - making it state law - by modernizing the language.

The bills heard testimony in a joint hearing Wednesday of the Health and Human Services Committee.

Nonsmokers and asthma sufferers like Omahans Jennifer Taute and her 4-year-old son, Jared, argue that their families can't go near a restaurant that allows smoking.

Taute said when her son was 3

"I see it as a victory of life over death when patients stop smoking,"

Dr. Dan Noble
Nebraska Medical Association

years old she took him into a restaurant that had separate smoking and nonsmoking sections.

Even after sitting in the nonsmoking section, one day later, Jared ended up in the hospital for three days, Taute said.

"He knows exactly what to do when he sees or smells smoke," Taute said, as Jared cupped his hand over his nose and mouth.

But if smoking in restaurants is banned, Mark Lutz, who represents the Nebraska Restaurant Association, said the bans won't stop there.

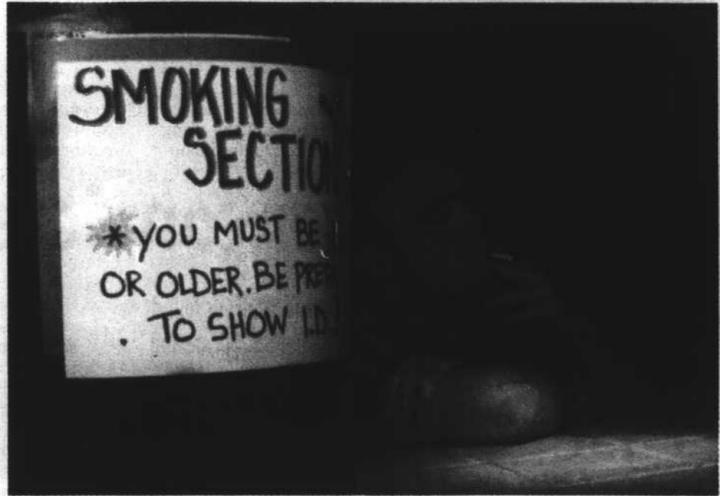
Eventually, Lutz said, anti-smoking groups will want to ban all tobacco use - everywhere.

"The one thing we firmly believe as Americans is that we have the right to operate in a free market economy," Lutz said.

Free markets or not, many health professionals say the health benefits gained by banning smoking outweigh the possible loss of freedom.

Dr. Dan Noble from the

Please see **SMOKERS** on 3



Nate Wagner/DN

University pushes smoking away

BY JILL ZEMAN

When ashtrays on campus were moved further from the buildings, smokers at Avery Hall had to make do.

During finals week, when snow covered everything on campus, smokers built a makeshift ashtray out of snow to put their cigarettes out in.

The result? When the snow melted, a pile of cigarette butts lay on the ground.

This isn't an uncommon sight on campus. Kirby Baird, Landscape Services City Campus supervisor, said since the ashtrays were moved away

from the entrances of campus buildings, workers on campus have had to do a lot more cleaning up.

"It's presented a lot of problems," Baird said. "There's always been a few (cigarette butts), but nothing like this before."

In November, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Tobacco Free Campus Policy was reiterated by an e-mail sent out by Vice Chancellor for Business and Finance Christine Jackson.

The policy says smoking cannot occur within a

Please see **ASHTRAY** on 3



Sharon Kolbet/DN

BIRD WATCHER: Canada geese gather on a frozen pond in Pioneers Park, 3201 S. Coddington Ave. Jennifer Malfait, an employee at the Pioneers Park Nature Center, said the road to the feeding area has been plowed, and people are welcome to come and view the wildfowl.

ASUN

New licenses supported as curb on fakes

BY MARGARET BEHM

Student government might look like it's contradicting itself.

It decided at its Wednesday meeting to support one anti-drinking bill while lobbying against another Minor in Possession of Alcohol bill.

The Association of Students of the University of Nebraska voted to lobby for the passage of LB574, a bill that calls for a new digital driver's license.

Mike Echnacht, Committee for Technology Fees Allocation chairman, said ASUN supports the bill because it would implement a new license that's not as easy to reproduce - reducing the number of minors using fakes.

ASUN is backing this bill because it's focusing on not giving minors access to alcohol instead of punishing minors.

Student government last week voted to lobby against LB114, a bill that would make it easier to arrest minors for possession of alcohol while also stiffening the penalties for alcohol violations.

"This bill targets the system instead of the students," he said.

Lobbying for the driver's license bill proves ASUN doesn't approve of minors getting sloshed on weekends, he said.

"This shows that we do consider underage drinking a problem," he said.

Please see **ASUN** on 7

Not just child's play: Toys aid studies on language, speech

Young children who are at risk for being nonspeaking are taught to improve their ability to speak and to improve on their vocabularies.

BY SHARON KOLBET

These researchers have toys - lots of toys. Just down the hall from the door labeled "Infant Communications Lab," there is a room housing a bouncing Tigger, a vibrating Cookie Monster and dozens of other brightly colored objects that shake, rattle or roll.

For University of Nebraska-Lincoln student Megan Magnuson, the toys aren't just for play, they are essential for her research.

Magnuson is a senior speech-language pathology and audiology major working under Special Education Professor Cynthia Cress. As an undergraduate student, Magnuson is assisting Cress in

her research with young children who are at risk for being nonspeaking.

"The research is focused on children who have physical or congenital impairments which may hinder language development," Magnuson said.

Complications from cerebral palsy, hearing loss or tracheotomy tubes are often the cause of delayed language skills. Cress' research incorporates interactive toys to encourage the children to express themselves orally.

Many of the toys Cress has in her lab make sounds when you touch them. Others will bounce,

walk or sit down.

Because some of the children are too young to operate the toys themselves, Cress has the children make oral indications when they want her to activate the toys. These early exercises help children improve their speaking ability, while other sessions are designed to improve their vocabulary.

Cress' sessions are recorded on video tape, and it is Magnuson's job to watch the tapes and record the relevant data on computer spreadsheets.

"The tapes are made in three-month increments, so I get to see their progress," Magnuson said.

As a participant in the Undergraduate Creative Activities and Research Experiences program, UCARE, Magnuson received funding for her research with Cress.

Next year, she plans to continue in this field with help from the UCARE program while doing more in-depth analysis.

"Since it is a two-year program the students have a longer period of time to learn what to look for."

Cynthia Cress
special education professor

Magnuson said the UCARE program has been helped her plan her future.

"Speech pathology is such a wide field, but the project has helped me narrow my focus," she said. Cress said she also appreciated the design of the UCARE program.

"Since it is a two-year program, the students have a longer period of time to learn what to look

Please see **UCARE** on 3