



SKETCHING AWAY: Austin Arnold, an undecorated freshman, sits and draws in his free time in Morrill Hall.

Jerome Montalto/DN

Top teacher gives advice

BY MARC SALEME

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln was graced by a visit this week from the national teacher of the year, Marilyn Jachetti Whirry.

Whirry, who teaches English to high school and college students, came to Nebraska as part of her tour, which has so far included the United States, Japan and Canada.

After speaking to two assemblies at Lincoln High School, she came to UNL.

Although her job is to stand in front of a class of high schoolers, Whirry said she wasn't used to the attention of hundreds of students on her alone.

"It was interesting - speaking to a room full of high school students," she said.

Tuesday she held an informal discussion with professors from the English department, she said, and answered questions about teaching writing and literature.

Wednesday, Whirry spoke to the students at the Teachers College about excellence in teaching - a topic her recent award affirmed her expertise in.

"I spoke about what makes a great teacher - the difference between a good teacher and a mediocre one," she said.

Since winning the national teacher of the year award, Whirry has taken a sabbatical from her teaching position in

California and is touring and giving lectures wherever she is summoned.

She has been on the road since May and has spoken at 71 different locations, including 26 universities. She's even gone overseas to the Universities of Tokyo and Kyoto in Japan.

Japan was the only stop that required a translator, she said.

The school at which she teaches is paying her teacher's salary during her time out and about, and whoever wants her to come and speak will pay for travel expenses.

"I just do what I'm told," Whirry said.

Next, she'll be off to Georgia, Texas and Louisiana. And in a few weeks, she'll go to Ontario, Canada.

Whirry is a teacher of English at Mira Costa High School and at Loyola University in Los Angeles. She was first nominated to be considered for teacher of the year for the school district, and she won for the state of California.

"Then I sent my resumes and essays to Washington, and I made it as one of four finalists," she said.

Soon after, the vote was in to make her the national teacher of the year.

Whirry said she's happy she was able to visit UNL.

"I was very impressed with the quality of professors and even the students here," she said.

Law & Order

Man arrested for rape already had warrant

Lincoln police arrested Tyrone Hall, 23, on Tuesday for first-degree sexual assault.

Hall is accused of raping an unconscious 23-year-old woman three times early Monday morning at the woman's home. Police say the incident may be considered date rape because the two had met at a bar earlier in the evening.

A friend of the woman was present in the house where the incident occurred. She observed Hall and the woman having sex in three separate rooms before realizing the woman was unconscious.

After the friend discovered the woman was unconscious, she ordered Hall to leave and took the woman to the hospital.

Hall also had an outstanding county bench warrant for his arrest.

Fire in basement leads to arrest for meth lab

Lincoln police arrested a man Tuesday suspected of building a methamphetamine lab in his parents' basement.

Benjamin A. Schwab, 21, was arrested for manufacturing

a controlled substance. Police say the meth lab in the basement his parents' 4833 S. 66th St. home caught fire Jan. 7. Firemen said they found several components commonly used in meth production, as well as what they suspected to be actual methamphetamine in various stages of production.

Schwab suffered burns on the tops of his feet and was taken to the hospital. While Schwab was hospitalized, police made contact with him and found 60 tablets of pseudoephedrine, commonly known as Sudafed, which is used in meth production.

In Schwab's father's pickup police found two garbage bags and a propane tank with corroded brass fittings - objects used in meth production. The bags contained Sudafed containers and seven cans of ether-based starting fluid, both of which are common meth ingredients.

Police said the cans were punctured on the bottom so the product could be obtained in a liquid form.

Marvin Schwab, Schwab's father, said his son gave him the items to dispose of. He said he didn't know what the propane tank or the contents of the bags were for.

Compiled by Charlie Kauffman

Ashcroft criticizes Clinton's pardon

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON - John Ashcroft used his first interview as attorney general to take out after Bill Clinton over the war on drugs and his pardon of fugitive financier Marc Rich.

In a television interview Wednesday night, the new attorney general said his top three goals were to increase gun prosecutions, reinvent the war on drugs and to stamp out racial discrimination.

But he also looked back at some of former President Clinton's most controversial moves, including his pardon of Rich on his last day in office.

"A pardon should be reserved for a situation where there is a manifest sense of injustice," Ashcroft said Wednesday night on

CNN's "Larry King Live" program. "The American people are troubled whenever they think a pardon would be associated with political support or financial support."

Although expressing "surprise" with the pardon, Ashcroft nevertheless said the Constitution gives a president a "pretty unfettered right" to pardon anyone.

Clinton's pardon has been criticized because Rich has stayed in Switzerland rather than returning to face 51 counts of tax evasion and fraud filed against him in 1983.

In addition, the pardon was requested by his ex-wife, Denise, who has given Democrats about \$1 million since 1993. Clinton has denied any political or financial motivation.

The new attorney general also

blamed Clinton in part for a rise in marijuana use during the 1990s. In the 1992 campaign, Clinton said he once had smoked marijuana, but didn't inhale. He later told an MTV town forum that if he had to do it again, he would inhale "if I could; I tried before."

"I think that sends the wrong signal," Ashcroft said. "It's so important you have a president who will speak forcefully against drug use, rather than wink and give the nod in some sense, saying 'I didn't inhale, but I wish I had.'"

Ashcroft said he and President Bush want to "concentrate on educating children away from drugs."

Listing his three top priorities, Ashcroft said, "I want to stop gun violence, to reinvent the war on drugs, to end discrimination wherever I find it."

He particularly mentioned enforcing voting rights, fair housing laws and putting a stop to racial profiling by police.

"It's wrong for police to stop people based on race."

After his civil rights record was bitterly attacked during a stormy Senate confirmation battle, Ashcroft is inviting Justice Department's civil rights division officials to a brown bag lunch in his private department dining room next week, chief spokeswoman Mindy Tucker said. Civil rights will be first, but he plans to hold these lunches with each division.

With every news organization clamoring to talk to him, Ashcroft unveiled his priorities in an interview with King, known for polite questioning rather than hostile cross-examination.

Koreas hold talks to establish railroad

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SEOUL, South Korea - Officials of North and South Korea met in two separate talks on Thursday, hoping to wrap up deals to build a cross-border railway and ease the impoverished North's acute energy shortages.

The talks, one on the border and the other on the North's territory, came as the two once-hostile countries pledged to step up efforts to promote reconciliation.

The meeting at the border village of Panmunjom, which involved the militaries of the two sides, sought agreement on safeguards and other protective arrangements to build a railway across their heavily armed border.

The project, one of the most significant symbols of thawing inter-Korea relations, requires the militaries of both sides to clear thousands of mines inside the 2 1/2-mile-wide demilitarized zone that separates them.

Both Koreas already completed clearing all mines outside a corridor of the buffer zone where the railway and a parallel highway will be built. Mine-clearing inside the buffer zone

has yet to start.

At four previous talks, the two Korean militaries agreed to clear mines inside the demilitarized zone but failed to resolve details aimed at preventing disputes or accidental clashes, Seoul officials said.

Before starting Thursday's meeting, South Korean defense officials said they were hopeful that a full agreement could be reached.

If reconnected, the railway will become the first direct land transport link between the two Koreas since their 1950-53 war, which ended in an uneasy truce, not in a peace treaty. It will connect Seoul and Pyongyang, the two Korean capitals, and continue to Shinuiju, a major city on the North's border with China.

In Pyongyang, the North's capital, officials of both sides opened three days of talks on measures to help ease North Korea's chronic energy shortages.

In December, North Korea requested that South Korea provide it 500,000 kilowatts of electricity. South Korea insisted that it consider the request only after both sides conduct a joint survey of the North's energy shortages.

At Thursday's meeting, South Korean officials proposed that both sides jointly survey the entire peninsula's energy situation. South Korean delegates specifically offered to visit one hydraulic and two thermal North Korean power plants during their stay in the North, which ends Saturday, pool reports said.

The reports did not say how North Korea responded to the South's suggestion.

According to South Korean figures, North Korea has dozens of power plants capable of generating 7.3 million kilowatts of electricity but can produce only 2 million kilowatts because of outdated facilities and fuel shortages.

South Korea has the capacity to produce 43 million kilowatts of power but does not have enough reserves to help North Korea, officials said.

Relations between the two Koreas improved significantly following a historic summit of their leaders in June, when they agreed to work together for reconciliation.

The Korean peninsula was partitioned into the communist North and pro-Western South in 1945.

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