

Daily Nebraskan

A photographer
in News/3



Lone senior gymnast
Amy Ringo leads the
team by example
In SportsWeekend/10



New Latin American art
shows off at Sheldon
In Arts/8



Fetal tissue research debate on hold

BY GEORGE GREEN

A deadlocked legislative committee put debate on fetal tissue research on hold Tuesday.

The Judiciary Committee voted 4-4 not to advance a bill aimed at banning the use of the tissue in research.

It also shot down a motion to kill the bill. But Sen. Dwite Pedersen of Elkhorn, who introduced the bill, vowed to jump start debate again soon.

"(The vote) was no big surprise," he said. Pedersen said he made a motion to advance the bill as a 'last hope' that one of the bill's opponents had changed his or her mind.

The vote quickly revealed committee members' opinions hadn't shifted.

To get the ball rolling again, Pedersen said he would file a motion to have the bill pulled from the committee by a vote of the entire 49-member Legislature.

JUST KICKIN' IT: Many Lincolinites took advantage of increasing temperatures and brightening skies during the past week — a good number venturing outside, like this pair did — Wednesday, to enjoy the good weather. Forecasters say to enjoy it while you can, though, because cooler temperatures and stormy skies are on tap for the weekend.



David Clasen/DN

'Unintelligible' merger bill may get ax

BY GEORGE GREEN

They try to dodge redundant discussions to maximize every debating moment.

But Thursday afternoon the Legislature found its legal legs weak and its sneakers full of heavy amendments.

Lawmakers began stumbling along at a snail-like pace when they started debating the session's first committee priority bill, LB142.

The bill would breathe life into a constitutional amendment passed in 1988 allowing cities and counties to merge.

Four bills aimed at enacting the amendment have failed, and sena-

tors have heard testimony on the proposal during six separate hearings.

Not to mention that lawmakers passed a bill a few years ago that formed a task force to study the plan.

Despite its past failures, Sen. DiAnna Schimek of Lincoln led the charge Thursday to get the bill passed.

Over the years, she said, she and other senators have worked out kinks in the plan to assure that small rural communities don't get muscled into joining bigger cities.

Some communities have experimented with merging governments hoping to streamline services and improve efficiency.

Many law enforcement officials

Legislature

and clerks on both the city and county levels perform duplicative services.

But some members of small communities fear that larger cities and counties would usurp them and force them to pay unfair taxes.

These concerns prompted a slew of amendments to the bill that Sen. Ernie Chambers said made the proposal "unintelligible."

When complicated legal and government jargon began rippling across the floor, several senators turned their attention away from the complicated bill prompting Chambers to laud Schimek and Sen. Bob

Wickersham for trying to lead the debate.

"They're (Schimek and Wickersham) dreamers," he said.

Chambers eventually labeled the amendment-ridden bill a "scabby amoeba" and urged senators to ditch the idea.

Even though laughter followed the Omaha senator's comments, several senators said they weren't ready to abandon the plan despite the dwindling amount of time left in the session to cover important issues like fetal research, redistricting and teacher pay.

Sen. Pam Brown of Omaha said

Please see AMENDMENTS on page 6

McGill paved the way for female officers

■ The first woman to tote a gun for the UNL P.D. still works to keep campus safe.

BY JILL CONNER

In 1972, Barb McGill — then Barb Hoyt — needed a job.

McGill chose an unconventional job for women at the time: a police officer at the University Police Department.

"The pay was quite good compared to, say, if I was a clerk in a department store," she said.

She had just finished her degree in history and education

from then-Kearney State College in 1971 when she went job hunting.

McGill said she chose UNL because it offered her the opportunity to be an actual officer.

"I know from a friend who was at the Lincoln Police Department, and at that time, ladies didn't wear uniforms, and it was like more of a social service type work," she said.

But before McGill could be an actual officer allowed to ride in a police cruiser, she had to pay her dues.

McGill first started as a residence hall officer but was only allowed to carry Mace, she said.

"In the spring before I started, there were several sexual assaults, so they thought having a female officer would be a good thing," she said.

Although there were other female officers working for UNL at the time, they were only parking officers, she said.

"They had no desire to take reports. They were, at the time, perfectly content," she said.

Parking tickets and residence hall walk-throughs didn't satisfy McGill, though.

In July 1973, at the Nebraska Law Enforcement Training Center in Grand Island, McGill

finished the range course, which allowed her to carry a gun.

But she still had a long road before her.

By 1974, although she was able to carry a gun and able to drive around in the cruisers instead of traipsing the residence halls on patrol, McGill said she still faced some criticism.

While her family didn't find her new job unreasonable — McGill's grandfather was a justice of the peace and her father worked security for different organizations — other officers

Please see MCGILL on page 5

Research sees setbacks

BY LINDSEY BAKER

Despite recent reports detailing failures of fetal cell implants in Parkinson's disease patients, UNMC officials say fetal cell research should continue.

The reports were published in the New England Journal of Medicine.

The implants are intended to replace dead cells in Parkinson's disease patients' brains with new cells from aborted fetuses, said Sam Cohen, chairman of the University of Nebraska Medical Center pathology and microbiology department.

The new cells would ideally

produce dopamine, a chemical that reduces the disease's symptoms, he said.

In a New York Times article published March 9, scientists reported recent implants failed because the implanted cells released too much of a chemical that controls movement, causing patients to writhe and jerk uncontrollably.

The article also said scientists had no way to remove or deactivate the over-productive cells.

Symptoms of Parkinson's, according to the Society for Neuroscience's Web site, normal-

Please see FETAL CELL on page 5

Small sports could lose under cuts

BY JILL ZEMAN

Fueled by the NU Board of Regents' call to cut expenditures in sports, the NU Athletic Department could be forced to cut some of its smaller programs.

Earlier this month, the Chronicle of Higher Education reported the University of Kansas in Lawrence announced it would drop men's teams in swimming and tennis at the end of this academic year.

Robert Frederick, KU's athletics director, couldn't be reached for comment Thursday.

But in The Chronicle, Frederick said the cuts would save \$3.6 million in the next five years.

UNL's athletic budget is about \$41.2 million — compared to KU's \$22.4 million budget.

The regents' request to cap expenditures comes after the NU Athletic Department ended up about \$250 million in the red last fiscal year.

And because NU's Athletic Department costs continue to rise, Regent Chuck Hassebrook of Lyons said the university would be forced to look at cutting some of its athletic programs.

Hassebrook said the programs that bring in the most money — football and basketball — would be the last ones to face budget cuts.

"You've got to keep them strong because if you lose them, everything is in trouble," he said.

If the Athletic Department's costs aren't kept in check, ticket prices could also go up, he said.

Right now the department is entirely self-funded, but if it continued to operate in the red, it could draw money from academics, he said.

"If we don't change the rules (of the Athletic Department's spending), we could drive modest-income people out of the stadium or take money from academics," he said.

"I don't think many people want ei. er of those."

If programs need to be cut, Hassebrook said he thought the Athletic Department should determine what to cut, not the regents.

University of Nebraska Athletic Director Bill

Please see ATHLETICS on page 5



Jennifer Lund/DN

Barb McGill is the most senior woman police officer in the UNL Police Department. She often handles campus investigations.