

GOOD MORNING
Omaha-Council Bluffs - A 30 percent chance of thunderstorms today. High: 90. Partly cloudy skies tonight. Low 71.

Omaha World-Herald

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35¢
OUR 131ST YEAR
52 PAGES
AN INDEPENDENT
NEWSPAPER OWNED
BY EMPLOYEES

Joubert Dies for Boys' Murders

Crowd at Prison Smaller, Calmer Than for Otey

BY CHRISTOPHER BURBACH
WORLD-HERALD BUREAU

Lincoln — Death-penalty backers chanted, "Jolt him," and opponents lit candles and prayed Tuesday outside the Nebraska State Penitentiary as John Joubert's execution neared.

The pro-capital-punishment crowd cheered loudly when prison officials announced at about 12:30 a.m. today that Joubert had been executed. A few minutes later, Joubert's friends were escorted from the penitentiary to their cars as some in the crowd jeered them.

Gov. Nelson said that two people had been arrested as of 12:30 a.m.

The Nebraska State Patrol estimated the crowd at 600. There were about twice as many death-penalty proponents as opponents present.

About 12:15 a.m., a death-penalty proponent rushed into the anti-death penalty group. State troopers ran in before anything could happen and took the death-penalty proponent into a pick-up truck and drove him away.

Earlier, a large cup of ice and a plastic jug with water in it were thrown from the proponents' side into the opponents' side. No one apparently was injured.

The crowd was smaller and quieter than the gathering of more than 1,000 demonstrators outside the penitentiary for the execution of Harold LaMont Otey in 1994.

Authorities had expected a smaller, calmer crowd but prepared for a group as large and as raucous.

The State Patrol built a buffer zone about 20 yards wide — more than twice



EXECUTION VIGIL: John Joubert's girlfriend, Theresa O'Brien of Ireland, right, is consoled by Effie Johnson of Lincoln late Tuesday as they and others gathered outside the Nebraska State Penitentiary, awaiting Joubert's execution.

Last of Appeals Rejected Hours Before Execution

BY JOY POWELL
WORLD-HERALD BUREAU

Lincoln — John Joubert was electrocuted at 12:14 a.m. today for the murders of two Sarpy County boys. He was pronounced dead at 12:22 a.m.

Joubert, dead at 33, confessed to murdering Danny Joe Eberle, 13, and Christopher Walden, 12, while carrying out sadistic fantasies in 1983.

The former Offutt airman was electrocuted at the Nebraska State Penitentiary.

His final statement at 10:45 p.m. was: "I just want to say that again I am sorry for what I have done. I do not know if my death will change anything or if it will bring anyone any peace, and I just ask the families of Danny Eberle and Christopher Walden and Richard Stetson to please try to find some peace and ask the people of Nebraska to forgive me. That's all."

Joubert also killed 11-year-old Richard Stetson in Portland, Maine, on Aug. 22, 1982. Maine does not have the death penalty.

Gov. Nelson received a call at 12:18 a.m. informing him that the sentence had been carried out by 12:15 a.m.

"Hopefully, the finality that this represents will let us close the Joubert case," Nelson said. "Hopefully, he will rest in peace and those of us who have been affected by this will also find peace."

In a later call, Nelson was told that Joubert was pronounced dead at 12:22 a.m.

Attorney General Don Stenberg said, "This morning one less monster walks the face of the Earth to threaten our children. May his name soon be forgot-

Joubert Execution

REGIMENTED: John Joubert said a domineering mother, parochial school and the military fed his longing for control over another. Page 8.



John Joubert

DARK HOURS: Susan Walden, whose son was killed by Joubert, recalls that gestures of kindness from strangers sustained her. Page 8.

WAITING: A list of those imprisoned on Nebraska's death row, their crimes and dates of sentencing. Page 8.

ten and may his victims be long remembered."

Joubert was the second person to be executed in Nebraska in 37 years. Harold LaMont Otey was executed in 1994.

Joubert's last appeals to the U.S. Supreme Court were denied about 1:30 p.m. Tuesday.

His death walk began 10 minutes before the electrocution. Witnesses and prison officials gave this account:

A team of four corrections officers escorted Joubert as he left his "death

Views on Daub's Budget Run the Gamut

BY JENA JANOVY
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Mayor Daub and his proposed 1997 spending package drew high praise and harsh criticism from Omaha City Council members who got their first glimpse of the mayor's budget Tuesday.

Moments after hearing the mayor's budget speech and receiving a copy of the municipal spending plan, Councilman Lormong Lo said he was encouraged that Daub had made public safety one of his spending priorities for next year, including funding for a new

A council vote opens the door for the placement of manufactured homes on lots within the city's zoning jurisdiction. Midlands, Page 17.

police helicopter unit, police dogs and new firefighting equipment.

Councilman Paul Koneck was skeptical. As Daub handed out budget books to council members, Koneck told the mayor: "This is your last budget. This is your last budget." Daub faces re-election in 1997.

Koneck then told a group of reporters

that Daub was "hiding behind the state-imposed 2 percent lid to promote himself and continue to be anti-working-class family." Koneck said Daub's budget would cut basic city services.

Jim Cleary, executive assistant to Daub, later called Koneck's remarks "childish, immature and unprofessional."

"It's a pity that Paul has made it his mission to be the council's resident naysayer," Cleary said.

Council members Brenda Council and Lee Terry were on vacation and did not attend the council meeting.

Daub's proposed 1997 city budget would trim the property-tax rate, eliminate some jobs and reduce residential street repairs while providing money for police helicopters, pay raises and the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce.

Daub also would give money to some outside agencies, such as the Humane Society and Women Against Violence, while eliminating funding for others, such as the Omaha Housing Authority's LaFern Williams Center.

Daub's budget, his second since taking office in January 1995, would increase

What's Next

The next steps for Mayor Daub's proposed 1997 city budget:

■ The City Council can amend the budget proposal. The council will hold a public hearing on the budget at 7:30 p.m. Aug. 6 in the legislative chambers of the City-County Building.

■ The council will vote on the budget Aug. 27.

■ Mayor Daub then can veto changes that the council makes.

■ The seven-member council would need five votes to override vetoes. Any override vote would come Sept. 10.

Clinton Says He'll Order Welfare Cutoff

THE KNIGHT-RIDDER WASHINGTON BUREAU

Fajardo, Puerto Rico — President Clinton pledged Tuesday to issue an executive order that would permit the cutoff of welfare recipients after two years if the current effort by Congress to pass a welfare overhaul bill fails.

"We'll say to welfare recipients, within two years you will be expected to work and earn a paycheck, not draw a welfare check," the president said by satellite to the National Governors' Association meeting here.

Clinton's comments to the governors, which followed an address by his GOP challenger Bob Dole, reflected the growing intensity of the debate as Congress prepares to vote on welfare overhaul this week.

Dole, who also spoke by satellite, called for quick passage of welfare legislation and challenged Clinton and fellow Democrats to return responsibility for welfare to the states.

The waivers from federal welfare rules that the Clinton administration now grants to states fall far short of what's needed, he said.

"I hope the Congress will pass a tough welfare-reform bill, not just any welfare-reform bill," Dole said. "And I challenge the president to finally sign a welfare bill and make these waivers a thing of the past."

Clinton and Dole both were responding to governors eager to be given welfare power. Votes are scheduled this week in the House and Senate on bills that would end current federal welfare guarantees and provide states with block grants to fund their own programs.

The president said his order would require welfare recipients to accept any job offered after two years, or they would lose their benefits. The president said 28 states already impose work requirements and time limits on welfare.

The proposal, announced just four months before the presidential election, appears calculated to protect Clinton politically if Congress fails to pass welfare legislation or if he decides to veto what it does pass.

"I far prefer a bill passed by Congress and I know you do, too," Clinton said. But "one way or another, we will make work and responsibility the law of the land, but we want a good welfare-reform bill."

Clinton's pledge drew fire from Republicans who have been angered by what they see as the president's continuing attempts to take credit for their

Cost to Make Pennies Is More Than Worth, Congress Told

THE WASHINGTON POST

Washington — The penny is starting to burn a hole in Uncle Sam's pocket.

It is now costing the government more to make and distribute 13.5 billion pennies a year than the coins are worth, the General Accounting Office told Congress Tuesday.

That's a reversal of what previous studies have shown and it was enough to prompt Rep. Michael Castle, R-Del., to predict that "this coin's days are numbered."

But Castle, chairman of the House banking subcommittee which oversees the nation's coinage, wasn't willing to advocate an end to the coins that have carried Abraham Lincoln's image for the past 87 years. Indeed, no member of Congress has been willing to offer legislation that would end the coin venerated by Ben Franklin as the cornerstone of American thrift. "A penny saved is a penny earned," Franklin declared when

the penny was new.

Tuesday, Castle proclaimed: "The penny lives for another day; another hearing." The 50-minute hearing by his House banking subcommittee on domestic and international monetary policy was designed more to alert the public that their cheapest coin is becoming increasingly expensive to produce than to begin its funeral.

Thanks to inflation, the penny has become "more a symbol than a measure of purchasing power," Castle declared. Many people consider the coin a nuisance, leaving pennies on the ground or tossing them into penny dishes found beside many cash registers, the chairman said.

The GAO said it costs the government about .8 of a cent to make a penny, but when production and distribution costs are factored in, the total overall costs amounted to a deficit of between \$8.5 million and \$9.2 million in 1994.



NEW USE: Roy Spalding, director of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Water Sciences Laboratory, demonstrates Tuesday near Hastings how a common center-pivot irrigation rig can be used to cleanse groundwater.

Center Pivots Tackle Water Cleanup

BY JULIE ANDERSON
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Hastings, Neb. — The sight of a center-pivot irrigation system misting rows of thirsty corn plants is a common one in Nebraska.

But University of Nebraska-Lincoln researchers showed Tuesday that the long-armed contraptions that water more than half of the state's 8.1 million acres of irrigated crops also could take on a new role — cleaning up chemically tainted groundwater.

About 55 regulators, consultants

and others from as far away as South Carolina gathered at the edge of a 60-acre seed corn plot east of town to watch the system in action.

Tests indicate that well over 90 percent of the chemicals in the water dissipate into the air when the water is sprayed by a center pivot equipped with off-the-shelf parts that produce a fine mist. Studies indicate that the airborne chemicals are so diluted that they could not hurt either people or crops.

And the treated water would go for a beneficial purpose — watering crops

— instead of draining into a stream or sewer systems as commonly happens with conventional water-treatment systems.

When it comes to costs, a center pivot with a price tag of about \$50,000 would be considerably less expensive than those conventional systems, which run about \$1 million to build and \$1 million a year to operate.

"This is not rocket science," said Roy Spalding, one of three researchers leading the work and director of

Inside Today

Analysis Suggests Columnist Wrote 'Primary Colors'
A handwriting analysis suggests that Newsweek columnist and CBS commentator Joe Klein wrote the novel "Primary Colors." Nation, Page 3.

| INDEX | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| Advice..... 46 | McMorris..... 15 |
| Business..... 20-23 | Midlands..... 15-26 |
| Classifieds..... 31-41 | Movies..... 49 |
| Comics..... 50 | People..... 48 |
| Deaths..... 16 | Sports..... 27-31 |
| Editorials..... 24-25 | TV Listings..... 51 |
| Living..... 43-52 | Weather..... 52 |

MIDDLE EAST: Egypt leads the campaign to slow the Arab world's normalization of relations with Israel. World, Page 4.

ABORTION: South Africa is poised to adopt one of the most permissive abortion-on-demand laws of any nation. Page 7.

John Joubert Execution

Killer Said Regimented Life Fed a Longing for Control

BY JOY POWELL
WORLD-HERALD BUREAU

Lincoln — In his fantasies, John Joubert said, he saw himself as an all-powerful slayer of the innocent.

In the real world, Joubert said, he felt little mastery over his own life.

The man who was executed today for the murders of two Sarpy County boys had been a lifelong pushover — until he killed.

As far back as grade school, when he was the smallest in his classes, Joubert refused to fight back when bullies tormented him.

"I've always been afraid of confrontation," Joubert said in a prison interview last month.

His existence seemed regimented from start to finish. He lived under the rules of a domineering mother, parochial schools, military college and the Air Force. His last 12 years were spent in the highly structured confines of death row at the Nebraska State Penitentiary.

It was the lack of control that he had over his own life, Joubert said, that led him to fantasize about cannibalism as early as age 4 and, later, of torturing, stabbing and strangling women and children.

"Most of the fantasies were about the infliction of pain and discomfort," Joubert said. "They stopped just short of death."

In August 1982, when Joubert was 19, he strangled 11-year-old Richard Stetson in Portland, Maine. Both lived in Portland, but they did not know each other.



On Sept. 18, 1983, when Joubert was an airman stationed at Offutt Air Force Base near Bellevue, he kidnapped and murdered Danny Joe Eberle, 13.

On Dec. 2, 1983 — the one-year anniversary of his entry into the Air Force — Joubert kidnapped and murdered a third victim, Christopher Walden, 12, of north Sarpy County.

Joubert was not charged with the

Maine killing until after his arrest in the Nebraska slayings. Bite marks on the Stetson boy were then linked to Joubert.

He said he mentally rehearsed the knife killings, masturbating before them in anticipation and afterward while reliving them.

"It makes no sense now," Joubert said, "and it didn't then."

He was a paradoxical man, methodical yet impulsive. Intellectually developed yet emotionally immature. Though he was of superior intelligence with an IQ of 123, he was an underachiever who flunked out of college at Norwich University in Northfield, Vt. Joubert had been studying engineering in an ROTC program there in 1981-82.

He was the firstborn of Beverly and Jack Joubert of Lawrence, Mass., a city of about 70,000, is 28 miles northwest of Boston.

Joubert could read by age 3. He became an altar boy and Eagle Scout. Nicknamed Jackie — pronounced Jackie — he spent much of his life as a loner who avidly read science fiction, fantasy and adventure books. As an adult, he began reading true crime magazines, attracted most to pictures of terrified women.

Psychiatrists who evaluated Joubert after his arrest found that his dangerous nature was shaped early and that he was remarkably detached from emotions. They diagnosed Joubert as a sexual sadist with obsessive-compulsive and schizoid traits. He was self-centered, highly defensive and had unconscious homosexual tendencies, they said.

Dr. Bruce Gutnik, an Omaha psychiatrist who evaluated Joubert, found him to be "very sick and extremely complex."

"He had a lot of confusion between the issues of violence and sex, and he had obsessions driving him to try to act out some of these fantasies in order to get sexual gratification," Dr. Gutnik said.

He said the sexual sadism that drove Joubert to violence is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to treat.

In the weeks before his execution, Joubert changed his story about the nature and origin of his violent thoughts.

In interviews with The World-Herald from May 28 through June 10, Joubert said he continued to have violent fanta-

Psychiatrists who evaluated Joubert after his arrest found that his dangerous nature was shaped early and that he was remarkably detached from emotions. They diagnosed Joubert as a sexual sadist with obsessive-compulsive and schizoid traits.

sies and believed he always would. He said he prayed every morning that he would not have murderous thoughts that day.

In subsequent television interviews, Joubert said that he no longer had the violent thoughts.

He also changed his story about the causes of his violence. From 1984 through June 10, 1996, Joubert said there was no domestic abuse in his background that he could recall and that nothing in his childhood justified the killings.

Later in June, Joubert said that his father's "abusive" behavior toward his mother caused Joubert to become a killer.

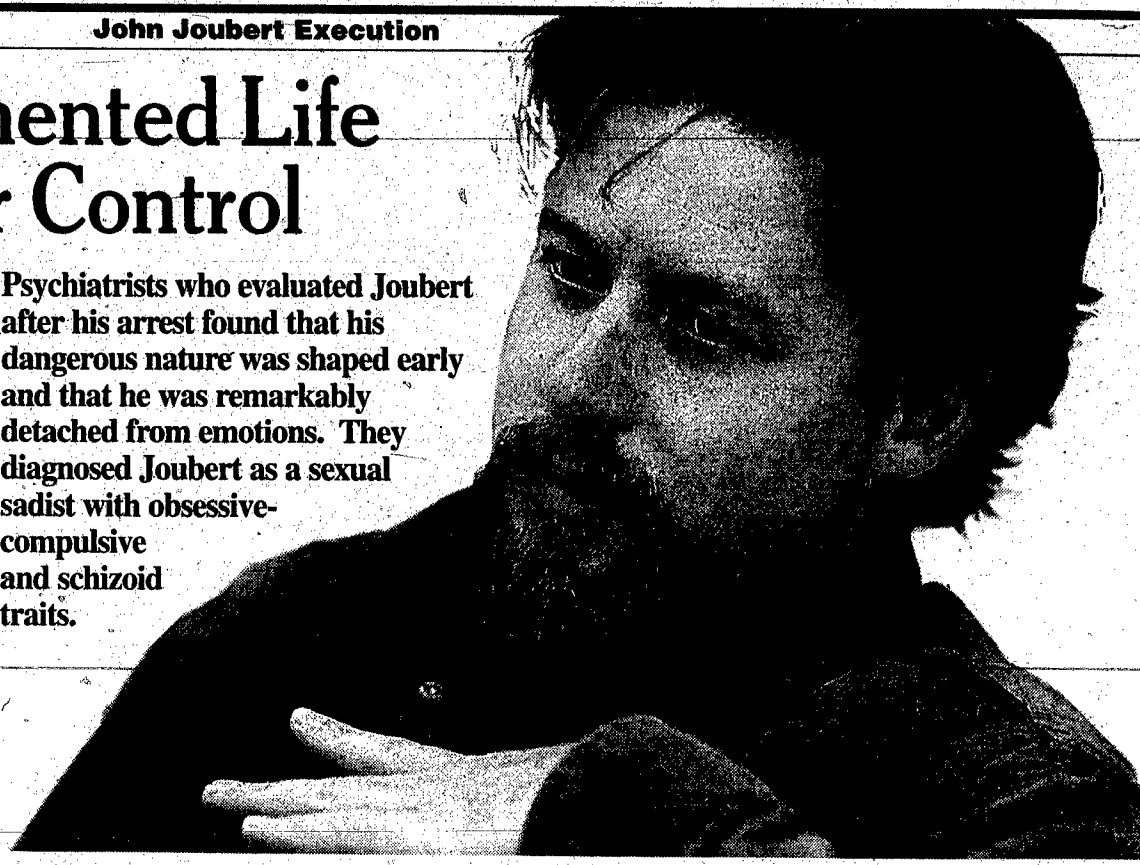
Joubert's parents divorced when he was 8. He, his mother and his younger sister, Jane, moved to Portland, Maine, when Joubert was 11. Joubert felt he was in a custody "tug of war," he said.

After Joubert was arrested for murder, his father suffered a nervous breakdown and was hospitalized several times for depression, said Joubert's stepmother, Kathy Joubert of Lawrence.

Family members would have gotten the younger Joubert psychiatric help long ago if they had known he needed it, the stepmother said. "I never saw any inkling of strange behavior," she said. "He acted as normal as could be."

Joubert's mother now lives in Alaska, where she is an accountant. His sister is married and lives in New Ulm, Minn. She works for a delivery service.

Joubert's girlfriend, Theresa O'Brien, 37, of County Meath, Ireland, has traveled to Lincoln to see Joubert. She and Joubert, 33, met through a computerized network of death-penalty opponents in the spring of 1992. They became pen pals and eventually fell in love, Joubert said.



Danny Joe Eberle



Christopher Walden

Mrs. Walden Tells Of Darkest Hours, Strangers' Kindness

BY JOY POWELL
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Susan Walden needed a winter dress to wear to the services for her murdered son, Christopher.

Three days later, hunters found Christopher's body in a plum grove near La Vista.

"Chris was real innocent," his mother said. "He had a sweet disposition, a sweet spirit. He fought hard, but he didn't have a chance."

Joubert was on death row at the Nebraska Penitentiary in Lincoln for about as long as his victims lived.

Mrs. Walden refuses to call Joubert by name, saying it "humanizes" him. She refers to Joubert as "the guy who killed Chris" or "the perpetrator" and tries not to think of him.

Both families chose not to witness the execution.

"To be honest, I feel bad that somebody else had to die," Mrs. Walden said. "But God gave us all choices, and he (Joubert) crossed the line."

Walden, 52, has retired from the Air Force and works on computers at a private company. Mrs. Walden, 47, has not worked recently; she plays a lot of tennis and is taking pottery courses.

The Walden and Eberle families say they have a void in their lives that will never be filled.

Shortly before Christopher was killed he had begun having whispery phone conversations with his first girlfriend. More than girls, he liked the "Star Wars" movies, computers and video games.

Mrs. Walden said she and Christopher had become extremely close in the summer of 1983, their last together. Walden, then an Air Force officer, had been reassigned to Offutt that July, and Christopher had not yet met many children. He spent his days helping his mother shop and decorate their new home in the Faulkland Heights subdivision of northern Sarpy County.

The community's benevolence during those painful times after Christopher's abduction and death was "the light in the midst of the evil darkness," Mrs. Walden said.

She remembers wanting to give away some of Christopher's toys but finding the task too painful. Agent Hammer and investigators took time to pack the toys, fighting their own tears.

The Air Force community helped, too, sending a chaplain to notify Mrs. Walden's ailing mother in Florida that her only grandchild had been slain.

In the Midlands, sympathetic friends and strangers filled the Walden and Eberle mailboxes with letters and cards. Neighbors brought food.

The Waldens' neighbors and even FBI agents ran errands for them, Mrs. Walden said.

"Words aren't adequate to thank them," she said of the many who offered help. "It just shows there are more good people than bad. It gives you faith in humanity."

Joubert: Murder Lives in Hearts of Rejoicers in Death Penalty

BY JOY POWELL
WORLD-HERALD BUREAU

Lincoln — When John Joubert's death-row buddy, Harold LaMont Otey, was executed Sept. 2, 1994, the carnival-like atmosphere outside the prison angered Joubert.

Joubert, 33, today followed his friend's footsteps and took a seat in the electric chair. Joubert was put to death for killing two Sarpy County boys in late 1983.

In recent interviews at the Nebraska State Penitentiary, Joubert talked about the death penalty and its advocates.

"It's barbaric, the crowds out front," Joubert said, recalling those who carried signs saying "Fry Willie" (Otey's nickname) and "Nebraska State Pen First Annual BBQ."

Those who take pleasure in criminals being put to death have murder in their own hearts, Joubert said.

"Jesus says that the sin in the heart is

just as bad as the sin in the body," Joubert said. "Well, the people who hate me and really want me dead are going to have to come to terms with that."

Joubert said those who have chosen to kill him will become no different from him.

In June 1993, he wrote a fictional story about a reporter who covers an execution. As the ending in his story, he wrote how the fictional reporter would begin his article:

"In order to take the life of another, we

must first put that person on a level beneath us. We must shut ourselves off from the feelings of compassion and love to which we are all heirs. We must convert, in our minds, a human being, a living creature, another one of us, to an inanimate object.

"This truism holds for the convicted murderer's actions as well as those who kill in the name of God or the State. It is a fatal illusion, however, because when we believe this illusion there is something within us that dies."

Sentenced to Death in Nebraska

| | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| | Robert E. Williams | For killing Catherine Brooks and Patricia McGarry, both 25, of Lincoln in 1977. SENTENCED JUNE 30, 1978 (A federal appeals court has ordered that he be resentenced in Mrs. McGarry's murder) | |
| | C. Michael Anderson* | For the hired killing of Omaha real estate man Ron Abboud in October 1975. SENTENCED AUG. 24, 1978 | |
| | Peter Lynn Hochstein* | For the killing of Omaha real estate man Ron Abboud in October 1975. SENTENCED AUG. 24, 1978 | |
| | Carey Dean Moore | For killing two Omaha cabdrivers four days apart in August 1979. SENTENCED JUNE 20, 1980 | |
| | Randolph Reeves* | For stabbing to death two Lincoln women in March 1980, one of whom was raped. SENTENCED SEPT. 11, 1981 | NO PHOTO AVAILABLE |
| | Michael Ryan | For killing Grand Island coin dealer Eugene Zimmermann in 1979. SENTENCED SEPT. 6, 1984 (Two earlier death sentences, 1960 and 1982, were set aside) | |
| | Charles Jess Palmer | For killing Grand Island coin dealer Eugene Zimmermann in 1979. SENTENCED SEPT. 6, 1984 (Two earlier death sentences, 1960 and 1982, were set aside) | |
| | Michael Ryan | For torture killing of James Thimm at a farm near Rulo in 1985. SENTENCED OCT. 16, 1986 | |
| | Clarence Victor | For beating death of Alyce Singleton, 82, in her Omaha home in December 1987. SENTENCED NOV. 21, 1988 | |
| | Roger Bjorklund | For the kidnapping, rape and shooting death of Candice Harms, 18, of Lincoln in September 1992. SENTENCED SEPT. 20, 1994 | |
| | John Lotter | For killing Teena Brandon, 21, Lisa Lambert, 24, and Philip DeVine, 22, in a farmhouse near Humboldt, Neb., on New Year's Eve 1993. SENTENCED FEB. 21, 1996 | |
| | Jerry Simpson | For drug-related stabbing death of prisoner Kevin Goodenow of North Platte in 1993 at the Lincoln Correctional Center. SENTENCED APRIL 30, 1996 | |

* Federal judges have ruled that Hochstein, Anderson and Reeves get new sentencing hearings. The state has appealed those rulings, and the three continue to live on death row.

Continued from watch" call it... Joubert was hospital room by the guard... the second prison's front... Out of the to the death... There, in a block room... his final se... leather strap... arms, legs an... in the oak ele... Harvest go... as Joubert's... he could see... his closest... witnesses to... through a wi... Joubert's... eyebrows w... faint smile a... the front r... KFAB Rad... witnesses... Witnesses... Theresa O'Brien from Ireland... assistant pub... ally opponen... for six year... clarinet to... School in... recently had... and Laurel V... ogist who co... Joubert's... attorney, M... witness the... day that he... would not w... State Sen... a staunch de... the Rev. D... were the st... Five new... warden were... Chambers... Cro... Continued from as large as between are... ty supporte... Nebraska St... Demonstrat... from enterin... 10 p.m. Tues... Col. Ron... the State Pa... plan also... demonstrat... flicts... "I think v... of what ca... pared," Tuss... zone, we're... move in bet... Some - de... Tuesday eve... state ground... Among th... Sgt. Kenny H... non Jackso... lived in Belle... two boys, sal... ally and felt... see him off... "People s... human being... not a human... and like any... beings, he st... killed... Jackson, 2... when the mu... did not beli... was an appr... "It doesn't... for the crime... said. "It seem... a system that... that it's dou... God... The scene... sometimes re... times border... Cen... Continued from UNL's Wat... "This is a v... readily avail... should be use... The dem... by the Environ... as part of... Technology... seeks more c... ways of clean... If final te... favorable, th... available for... larly in the M... irrigation an... ter-coexist... "We think... beneficial te... said Diane... manager for... Kansas City... That might... like the one... vents from... mingled in... chemicals us... at an old ele... Or the tec... use by the v... culture in so... ties in Nebr... where a grain... bon tetrachlo... age facilities... The facilitie... 1970s... The work... several other... es - as part... Association... technologies... chairman of t... After final... week, the E...

Joubert Executed for '83 Slayings of Boys

Continued from Page 1

Joubert walked 20 paces from the hospital room to the elevator. Flanked by the guards, Joubert descended from the second floor to the first floor of the prison's front building.

Out of the elevator, it was eight paces to the death chamber.

There, in a 10-foot-by-10-foot cinder-block room painted white, Joubert took his final seat. Guards tightened tan leather straps across Joubert's chest, arms, legs and ankles, strapping Joubert in the oak electric chair.

Harvest gold drapes — the same color as Joubert's boyhood home — opened so he could see for the last time some of his closest friends. They and official witnesses to the execution saw Joubert through a window.

Joubert's head, beard, mustache and eyebrows were shaved off. He wore a faint smile as he scanned the witnesses in the front row, said Chuck Ashby of KFAB Radio in Omaha, one of the witnesses.

Witnesses selected by Joubert were Theresa O'Brien, his beloved pen pal from Ireland; Dale Baich, an Ohio assistant public defender and death-penalty opponent who has known Joubert for six years; Rich Pitrie, who taught clarinet to Joubert at Chevus High School in Portland, Maine, and who recently had been his spiritual adviser; and Laurel Van Ham, a Lincoln psychologist who counseled Joubert.

Joubert also selected his longtime attorney, Mark Weber of Omaha, to witness the execution. Weber said Tuesday that he planned to visit Joubert but would not watch the electrocution.

State Sen. Ernie Chambers of Omaha, a staunch death-penalty opponent, and the Rev. Donald Coleman of Lincoln were the state's authorized witnesses. Five news reporters and an associate warden were the other witnesses.

Chambers, who visited Joubert Monday

and Tuesday, said his role was to make sure Joubert was treated humanely during his final hours of life. His presence during the execution should not be interpreted as acceptance of Nebraska's death penalty, Chambers said.

Joubert focused his attention on his girlfriend, Ms. O'Brien.

"I love you," he mouthed to her. She appeared to mouth the same words back, news media witnesses said.

After a 30-second glimpse at Joubert, a prison official who was standing to Joubert's left drew the drapes shut.

One electrode was attached to Joubert's scalp and another to his left calf, where his pants were cut along the seam. Guards placed a leather mask over his face, leaving only his forehead and nose visible.

Two or three minutes after the witnesses last saw Joubert's face, the drapes again swept open to reveal the condemned man.

A traveling executioner, whose identity is kept secret, flipped the switch from an adjoining control room.

The first charge was 2,450 volts, followed by a second charge of 490 volts, then the cycle repeated. The electrical surges flowed for one minute.

Witnesses said they heard a thud each time a charge was administered. Joubert's right forefinger had been extended but as the first charge was applied, he clenched his left hand in a fist and his right hand in a partial fist.

Smoke or steam rose from Joubert's left calf where the electrode was attached, said Ed Howard of the Associated Press, another witness.

Five weeks before his death, Joubert had said that capital punishment was never a deterrent for him. When he was murdering, Joubert said, he never thought that he would be caught or about the death penalty.

Joubert said he believes God will be fairer than those who have judged him on Earth.

The former Eagle Scout and assistant scoutmaster is remembered in the Midlands as a man who showed no mercy when he slashed, stabbed and tormented innocent boys.

He kidnapped and murdered Danny Joe on Sept. 18, 1983, and Christopher on Dec. 2, 1983. The boys each were missing for three days before their bodies were found in rural areas of Sarpy County.

Joubert was sentenced in October 1984 after pleading guilty in the Nebraska killings, and his appeals began almost immediately. Joubert lost post-conviction hearings and appeals before the Sarpy County District Court, Nebraska Supreme Court, U.S. District Court, the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals and the U.S. Supreme Court.

He also was denied clemency by the Nebraska Board of Pardons, which is made up of Nelson, Stenberg and Secretary of State Scott Moore.

Joubert's final two appeals before the U.S. Supreme Court concerned whether electrocution was cruel and unusual punishment and whether the makeup of the Nebraska Board of Pardons was prejudicial to Joubert.

Joubert has said his family did not want to witness the execution. His mother, Beverly, of Alaska, and his sister, Jane Huffman, of New Ulm, Minn., have visited him in recent weeks. Since the killings, Joubert has been estranged from his father, Jack, who lives in Lawrence, Mass.

Joubert said that what he has learned in life is that he should not hurt anyone and that he should have feelings for people. "If there is a next life, if there's anything to the theory of reincarnation, we're learning for that life," he said.

In Joubert's unsuccessful clemency request last month, his supporters argued that he should be studied, not killed, in hopes of preventing future serial murderers.

State officials denied Joubert's request that he be taken to Omaha Tuesday for a brain scan at Creighton University Medical School. State officials said the security risks were too great.

A former altar boy, Joubert attended his last Mass Tuesday-morning. He was anointed Tuesday evening as death approached.

His last meal seemed like party fare: pizza with green peppers, mushrooms, black olives, onions and mozzarella cheese, a salad and strawberry cheesecake.

In his last hours, Joubert met with Pitrie, Ms. O'Brien, Baich and others.

At 10:45 p.m., Joubert appeared before the witnesses to read his final statement. Witnesses said that Joubert looked at a deputy warden, took a couple of deep breaths and appeared to have difficulty getting the words out.

Pitrie and Ms. Van Ham sat on either side of Ms. O'Brien as the execution was carried out. They whispered softly to each other, held hands and hugged, witnesses said.

Other friends said that Joubert had hoped his remains would be shipped far from the prison walls, overseas to a final resting place in Ireland.

World-Herald staff writers Bill Horv, Lealle Boellstorff and Paul Hammel contributed to this report.

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Crowd Smaller, Calmer Than for Otey

Continued from Page 1

as large as when Otey was executed — between areas fenced off for death penalty supporters and opponents in the Nebraska State Penitentiary parking lot.

Demonstrators also were forbidden from entering the parking lot until after 10 p.m. Tuesday.

Col. Ron Tussing, superintendent of the State Patrol, said the crowd-control plan also called for monitoring the demonstrators closely to head off conflicts.

"I think we're just a little more aware of what can happen and better prepared," Tussing said. "Besides the buffer zone, we're going to have better access to move in between what's developing."

Some demonstrators arrived early Tuesday evening and waited to get on state grounds.

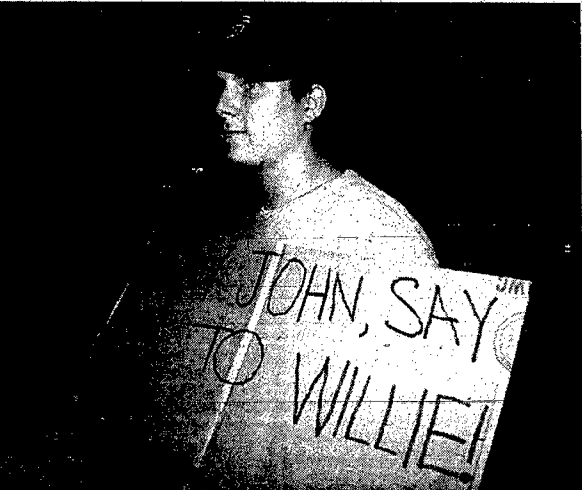
Among them were Air Force Master Sgt. Kenny Harris of Bellevue and Shannon Jackson of Lincoln. Harris, who lived in Bellevue when Joubert murdered two boys, said he took the crime personally and felt a need to be in Lincoln "to see him off."

"People say, 'How can you kill a human being?'" Harris said. "Well, he's not a human being. He's a human beast, and like anybody who preys on human beings, he should be tracked down and killed."

Jackson, 21, said he was frightened when the murders happened but said he did not believe that executing Joubert was an appropriate punishment.

"It doesn't seem like it's a punishment for the crime that's happening," Jackson said. "It seems like it is a show of force by a system that is trying to show people that it's doing its job. They're playing God."

The scene outside the Otey execution sometimes resembled a party, and other times bordered on a brawl.



DEATH PENALTY PROPONENT: Ben Zilelinski, 17, of Elkhorn was among the estimated 600 people outside the State Penitentiary early today during the execution of John Joubert.

At that time, an anti-death penalty demonstrator burned a U.S. flag. Some pro-death penalty demonstrators crowded, and others chanted "Na-na-na, goodbye." There were yelling and even spitting matches between some people on the opposing sides.

Tuesday night, the clashes were mostly verbal. As arguments heated up about a half-hour before the execution, state troopers stepped into the buffer zone between the two groups and cleared the only area where the two sides could have met.

Tussing cited three reasons that authorities expected a smaller, less rowdy crowd for Joubert's execution: the University of Nebraska-Lincoln was out of session, unlike when Otey was executed; Joubert is the second person put to death in recent history, while Otey was the first since 1959; and Joubert seemed to have generated less sympathy among death-penalty opponents.

Center Pivots Tackle Water Cleanup

Continued from Page 1

UNL's Water Sciences Laboratory. "This is a very simple, cost-effective, readily available technique. And it should be used more widely."

The demonstration was sponsored by the Environmental Protection Agency as part of its Superfund Innovative Technology Evaluation project, which seeks more efficient and cost-effective ways of cleaning up contaminated sites.

If final test results at Hastings are favorable, the technique could become available for use in other places, particularly in the Midwest and the West, where irrigation and contaminated groundwater coexist.

"We think it certainly can serve as a beneficial technology for certain sites," said Diane Eassey, remedial project manager for the EPA's regional office in Kansas City, Kan.

That might include Superfund sites like the one in Hastings, where solvents from an old municipal landfill mingled in underground water with chemicals used to control grain fungus at an old elevator.

Or the technology might be put to use by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in some of the 280 communities in Nebraska and 260 in Kansas where a grain fumigant containing carbon tetrachloride was used at grain-storage facilities. The department operated the facilities from the 1940s through the 1970s.

The work also has been reviewed by several other state and federal agencies as part of Western Governors' Association initiative for innovative technologies. Gov. Nelson is a past chairman of the association.

After final tests are completed this week, the EPA will prepare a final

report on the technology. Paul de Percin, a chemical engineer with the EPA in Cincinnati, said the final report will be used by state and federal regulators and those responsible for contamination in selecting the right technology to clean up a site.

The center-pivot research began in 1994. The irrigation well the researchers used draws groundwater containing the solvents trichloroethylene, or TCE, and trichloroethane, or TCA. Carbon tetrachloride and ethylene dibromide, another grain fumigant, also are present.

The landfill and the elevator are among seven sub-sites rolled into what is known as the Hastings Superfund site. The City of Hastings has estimated that cleaning up the sites it is associated with would cost about \$75 million with traditional technology.

For the tests, the researchers used a center-pivot system equipped with standard fine-spray nozzles. The system was provided by Morrison Enterprises, a Hastings firm that also is potentially responsible for area cleanup.

As the water sprays up from the nozzles, it hits impact pads and forms a thin film. Water droplets form from the film and fly through the air. The chemicals vaporize and disperse into the air.

The sprinkled water is collected as it falls from the 11-foot-high nozzles by samplers set at varying heights from 10.5 feet to 1.5 feet above the ground. The samplers, stainless steel poles that hold large glass funnels and collection vials, cost \$900 each and were provided by Dutton-Lainson Co., which also is involved in the Superfund cleanup.

Spalding said the water in the well started at more than 700 parts per

billion of TCE, the most abundant chemical. After going through the system, the TCE concentrations had dropped by 98 percent or more. Similar reductions were seen in the other chemicals.

De Percin said the early tests on the irrigation system indicate that the technique shouldn't have any impact on people in the area or on crops.

Adi Pour, Nebraska state toxicologist, said calculations indicated that the risk to people from the dissipated airborne chemicals "seems to be very minimal."

Dr. Pour's office calculated potential risks based on air models prepared by the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality. The calculations considered that a system would be operating 24 hours a day, three months a year.

Spalding said the researchers' studies of the chemicals' breakdown, which are ongoing, indicate that sunlight breaks down the chemicals within a couple of weeks.

The other lead researchers in the work are Mary Exner, a research chemist with UNL's Conservation and Survey Division, and Dennis Alexander, an electrical engineer and director of the Center for Electro-Optics. The U.S. Agriculture Department provided about \$130,000 in funding for the project.

Dean Howard, director of project engineering for Valmont Industries in Valley, Neb., said he's not surprised to see center pivots put to cleanup use.

The systems have been used since the 1960s to apply treated wastewater from agricultural operations such as feedlots and from industrial and municipal plants to crops, he said.

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