

NHS cleans in winter months, repair gardens

BY ANDREW REINWALD

On Dec. 18, students from the National Honor Society (NHS) helped clean up The Omaha Botanical Gardens for the winter.

The garden clean-up sponsor, Jean Whitten, said she and the NHS students go to the gardens every fall and help clean up.

"We've been working at the botanical garden on and off since I came here in '96," Whitten said.

Whitten and the students usually go on Saturday mornings from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

The students participated in this for their required community service projects.

They will also help out in the spring, cleaning up after the debris of autumn and winter.

One of the biggest events at the botanical gardens in the spring is the Spring Fling.

"It's a fund-raiser for the garden," Whitten said. "They sell plants, have tours and have kid's activities."

She said this volunteering opportunity used to be available to her freshman biology class, but she eventually offered it to the NHS students only because many of the freshmen did not have access to cars.

She said the NHS students already do a lot of community service in the area as it is.

On the 18th Whitten and the NHS students will be helping the botanical gardens with its rose bushes and preparing them for the winter.

"Working outdoors is fun," she said. "Some people like it and some don't; it's not mandatory."

JROTC finds different way to raise cash

BY YASMINE NUWWARAH

JROTC took a different approach to fund-raising this year by selling dog tags to its cadets.

"Everybody does candy," Lieutenant Colonel Mike Melvin, head of the JROTC department, said.

He said dog tags were something different that last forever.

As far as fund-raising, JROTC had only done car washes in the past, which were fairly successful. However, Melvin said there was more potential for the dog tag sales.

After receiving a flyer in the mail from JROTC Dog tags, a company that does work nationwide, Melvin said he presented the idea to the students.

The JROTC sold approximately 70 dog tags to over half its members, Melvin said.

Each dog tag cost \$5 and cadets had the option of two different styles for the tags.

For their money, buyers received the dog tag, a silencer, and a chain. For another \$1, many cadets had their names or a nicknames engraved on the back of the tag.

Profits from the sale will go to funds for the JROTC's drill team, color guard and marksmanship team.

Melvin said because of the success of the sales, he hopes to sell the dog tags school-wide second semester.



MELVIN

CALENDAR



PHOTO BY MOLLY MULLEN/REGISTER

Vickie Anderson grades papers for her Spanish 3 class. It will be her last year grading papers because she will either become president of the Nebraska State Education Association or retire and stay a smaller part of the organization.

Teacher runs for association president

BY MOLLY MULLEN

After 36 years of teaching, Spanish teacher Vickie Anderson is planning to move on to a new career.

"As much as I still love teaching, it is time to do other things in my life," Anderson said.

She is running for the president of the Nebraska State Education Association (NSEA).

She said she was president of the local chapter and is now the vice president.

"(The NSEA) promotes public education in the state of Nebraska, provides professional growth, helps in negotiations, protects contract rights, does lobbying efforts in the state Legislature and in the local school board,"

Anderson said.

She said she has been a part of the NSEA for 32 years as well as the president of the Omaha Education Association.

"You name it, I've done it," she said.

She said if she loses the election in spring to Carol Grice, one of the National Education Association directors, she will retire from teaching.

If she wins she will be taking a leave of absence, but will not be teaching again.

"I'll be just as busy next year as I am this year," she said.

She said she will run for a three-year term as president and can run twice.

If she becomes president she will get a government salary as opposed to the volunteer position of vice president.

She said being president of the NSEA had always been her goal.

It all starts now.

"I have always thoroughly enjoyed the education employees I've worked with throughout the state," she said. "I want to share my commitment and expertise with them."

Reading teacher Donna Noll said Anderson had always been active in association politics, but it wasn't until they worked on congressional candidate Peter Hoagland's campaign 12 years ago that she actually got involved in the process.

She said even after Anderson leaves, she will stay a part of Central.

"Central High has been a big part of her life," she said. "She has a huge commitment to Central."

Junior Tim Bertino said he can see her 36 years of experience every day in class.

"She's been teaching for so long she knows what students will and will not learn," Bertino said.

He said she can control her classes very well and that comes from experience.

"It will be very hard for anyone to fill her shoes," he said.

He said she has a good personal relationship with her Spanish National Honors Society students.

Club members learn techniques to rock climbing

BY YASMINE NUWWARAH

Rock Climbing Club began its fourth year at Central with a strong climb uphill.

The club, sponsored by head of the school department

Jean Whitten meets twice a month on Thursdays to rock climb at the Southwestern YMCA.



WHITTEN

club focuses solely on teaching its members the rock climbing technique.

Members are taught how to work with the ropes and practice different methods for climbing different rock walls.

"It's not just running up a wall," Whitten said.

The club attracts about 10 to 15 students at each meeting and there are approximately 20 to 25 students who actively participate.

Members pay \$1.50 every time they go rock climbing with the club in order to provide for the money needed to rent the wall.

Whitten said the club was recently offered the opportunity to use the rock climbing wall at University of Nebraska at Omaha.

She said although the price was relatively the same, it offered a new way for the club to practice on.

'Coats for Cold' donated to help winter charities

BY CLAY LOMNETH

Starting Dec. 1, the Student Democrats Club organized a coat drive that lasted two weeks.

The Student Democrats have done a coat drive every year since 1998, sponsor Donna Noll said.

She said because of the cold weather, this year's coat drive was called "Coats for the Cold."

"The main reason (for the coat drive) is so that everyone can have a warm coat for the winter," she said.

Every year, Noll said, the coats, hats, scarves and mittens are collected in a bog box at the 'C'.

Each year they go to a different place. She said last year the coats were given to the Open Door Mission.

"We do different places every year," Noll said. "Whoever needs the coats the most."

Freshman Anne Newman is a member of Student Democrats. She said the reaction from students has usually been indifferent.

Newman said she made signs promoting the coat drive and spoke to homerooms about it to get the word out.

"It's getting really cold out there," Newman said. "It'd be really nice if people who couldn't afford coats could get one for free."

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Upcoming Events

December

20-31 (MON.- FRI.) Winter Recess

No school for students.

January

4-6 (TUE.-THUR.) Road Show Auditions

11-13 (TUE.-THUR.) Final Exams

The exams begin at 7:45 p.m. Students should bring all the appropriate materials.

13 (THUR.) First Semester ends

Report cards get sent home today.

14 (FRI.) Semester Break

No school for students.

17 (MON.) Martin Luther King Jr. Day

No school.

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CHS helps World War II vet become most decorated

'STADIUM' CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1
 high school before joining the army.

"You had to go back then. No matter what you had to do," he said. "In World War II, we had four million Americans in the war."

He said he excelled at ROTC at Central and decided to go to college. In 1937 when Seemann was a junior, he and the drill team, then called the crack squad, went to Kansas City for national competitions.

"We were all juniors and we won national championships in military ROTC in 1937," he said.

He said Central beat teams above high school like West Virginia.

"What a thrill. 20,000 people in this stadium standing and clapping for five minutes," Seemann said. "When you're in that's pretty good."

He said along with the crack squad, the football team was pretty good as well.

Seemann said Central only lost one game all year to Lincoln school by one point and still harbors old feelings about the game.

"We should have won," he said. "We were the better team."

He went from captain of the best crack squad in the nation and the best center football player in the city to the most decorate World War II veteran in the Midwest in a matter of years.

Seemann said he didn't even know he was the most decorated until the 1990s.

After graduating from Santa Clara, he said he went directly into the military as a bomber.

"I was excited," he said "I had a lot of ROTC training."

Seemann said fighting the war from a bomber jet was an important aspect.

He said gaining air superiority over Germany was what turned the war against Hitler and it was so close in the other direction that without the air power America may have lost.

"If you don't have air superiority you might as well go home," he said.

He said fighting the war was scary. It was different from the war in Iraq because of the casualties.



Seemann holds a replica of his old B17 bomber he flew over England from 1942 to 1945 during WWII.

"We (the America Armed Forces in England) lost 30,000 men like me," he said. "We used to lose thousands everyday and you can imagine how many were injured."

Seemann said his war experience along with the medals might also be a reason he was approached about the stadium.

Seemann and his wife, Willa (class of 1943), have been donating since the early '80s. He said he liked giving to different organizations that live off of donations.

"It is a good feeling to have enough money to do what you want to do and have enough left over to help other organizations like Central," Seemann said. "When you can't spend it and your family has enough what are you going to do with it? You're going to give it away."

He said it is nice to have things like air conditioning and a stadium at Central and thanks to donations from people like Susan Buffett, students will soon get to enjoy it. He said the

Buffett family had been instrumental in projects such as the stadium as well as various improvements in the building.

"If Susan Buffett didn't give money to Central, things wouldn't be the same at all," he said.

Athletic director Paul Pennington said naming the stadium for a hero like Seemann was a good idea.

"I think obviously it was a good choice," he said.

He said it was amazing all of the great people who had come out of Central such as Seemann.

"I have been here 34 years and there have been heroes, business giants, Nobel Prize winners and philanthropists," Pennington said. "He (Seemann) was a graduate of '38. I wasn't even born until '49. I have only seen a small portion of Central's rich history."

Principal Jerry Bexten said naming the stadium for Seemann was part of the fund-raising effort and he liked the fact it was named for him.

"He is a pretty remarkable man," Bexten said.

He said technically the stadium belongs to Heritage Services right now and won't belong to Central until all the land is exchanged in the fall.

The area the portables are on now will go to Joslyn Art Museum and the stadium will belong to Central.

Freshman Teneko Penn said he liked the fact that Central could honor an alumnus who served in World War II.

He said he respected people who served in the military and felt great Seemann was chosen to represent the stadium.

"It's good to acknowledge people who serve," Penn said.

He said he liked the fact it is named after an alumnus instead of a random donor.

Junior Paige Kendrick said she thought it was cool to see someone so successful come from Central.

"He did something good for the country," she said. "He represented Central well."

She said she hoped people would also remember and acknowledge all the people from Central who served in World War II, as well as the other wars and especially those who died.

Substitute counselor tries to affect teens in short amount of time



Substitute James Abbott works on the computer in guidance counselor Angela Meyer's office.

BY CLAY LOMNETH

Long-term substitute James Abbott was contacted by Central to take over for guidance counselor Angela Meyer while she was on maternity leave.

Abbott has had experience as a long-term substitute, substituting at Burke two years ago.

"They called me up and asked me if I could do what I did at Burke," Abbott said. "I said yes. It's a way of getting myself out into the community."

Abbott said he got the chance to speak with Meyer briefly, and she gave him schedules, notes and other suggestions for the job.

He said during his stay here, he would help students make strategies for their futures.

Abbott said he did not expect to affect many students, rather he would prefer helping out a few greatly.

"What I'm trying to focus on now is to find a number of individuals I can affect in the six weeks I'm here," Abbott said.

Abbott, a retired lawyer, had experience even before that, he said, when he taught as a guidance counselor in a New York school for around three years.

He stopped teaching there, he said, because he was tired of what teaching had to offer for him.

"Doing what I was doing was too easy for me," Abbott said.

Principal Jerry Bexten said Abbott's experience would help him on the job.

"He wouldn't be here if that wasn't the case," Bexten said.

Bexten said it was the guidance counselors who lined up Abbott's subbing schedule.

After working at the school for three years, he went on to study and practice law for 20 years.

He retired from that to work for a company making sports games for the Internet.

After a while, he said, he gave up on that to work on photography and print making.

Guidance counselor Jodi Petersen is Meyer's co-worker.

She said she had gotten to know Abbott briefly.

"He has the credibility and the experience to qualify for the position," Petersen said.

Sophomore Skyler Houston talked to Abbott regarding his grades, he said.

He said Abbott's advice would help him.

Houston said he thought most counselors were the same, but Abbott seemed like he cared a little more, because he asked more questions.

"He gives you straight forward information," he said.

Abbott said he kind of enjoyed being a guidance counselor again, because he was able to get in touch with students. But, he said, he would not start the job again.

Abbott said that some of the differences between now and 30 years ago are were the way students dress, and said that when he was a counselor, students would never wear low pants.

"(I like it) only to the degree that it's interesting to see kids 30 years later," he said. "It's not a career I'm starting again."



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First lockdown practices security, safety

■ 'LOCK' CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

teachers and staff.
"First of all, we're downtown where a lot of stuff can happen," Mitchell said. "Omaha could have the next 9/11. Look how close we are to Offutt (Air Force Base)."

Mitchell said he felt more prepared in case of a lockdown since the students knew the procedure, but he felt locking the doors and turning off lights wasn't enough.

"People are going to do what they decide to do and a locked door won't stop them," Mitchell said.

Security personnel Dale Wuster said during the lockdown he checked the first, second and third sides of the fourth floor. His job was to see if all the rooms had green cards outside the door and to make sure there were no students in the hallways.

He said one of the biggest issues that would concern a lockdown was students constantly letting strangers into the building.

"We (security) do a pretty good job of catching them quickly," Wuster said.

He said even though students think they're doing the right thing by letting someone in, it could be someone unwelcome in the building. The time between the intruder entering and security catching them could be long enough for damage to occur.

"We only have one controlled entrance and that is the three side," Wuster said.

After Wuster saw it was all clear in his area, he radioed back to base. In this drill, base was Bexten's office, but it could potentially be a police officer.

"This is the first time we've ever done this. It is a drill; we need to practice," Wuster said.

Bexten said Central should have started practicing lockdowns a long time ago.

"It's been in our crisis plan for some time," Bexten said. "It seems like a pretty simple thing to do."

Bexten said he planned on having more lockdown drills.

"Not as often as fire drills," he said. "When you practice things you get more comfortable with them and they become more automatic."

He said as long as he has been at Central, there had not been a problem calling for a lockdown and had not heard of one in the past either.

Student resource officer Jesse Stokes said over the Thanksgiving weekend teachers and faculty were trained on subjects such as bullying and lockdown procedures.

He said the drill went really well. The idea of the green and red cards was thought up by the administration, but was used in many districts across the country.

Stokes said the length of the drill depends on the situation.

"It could be for anything from a gas leak to an intruder," Stokes said.

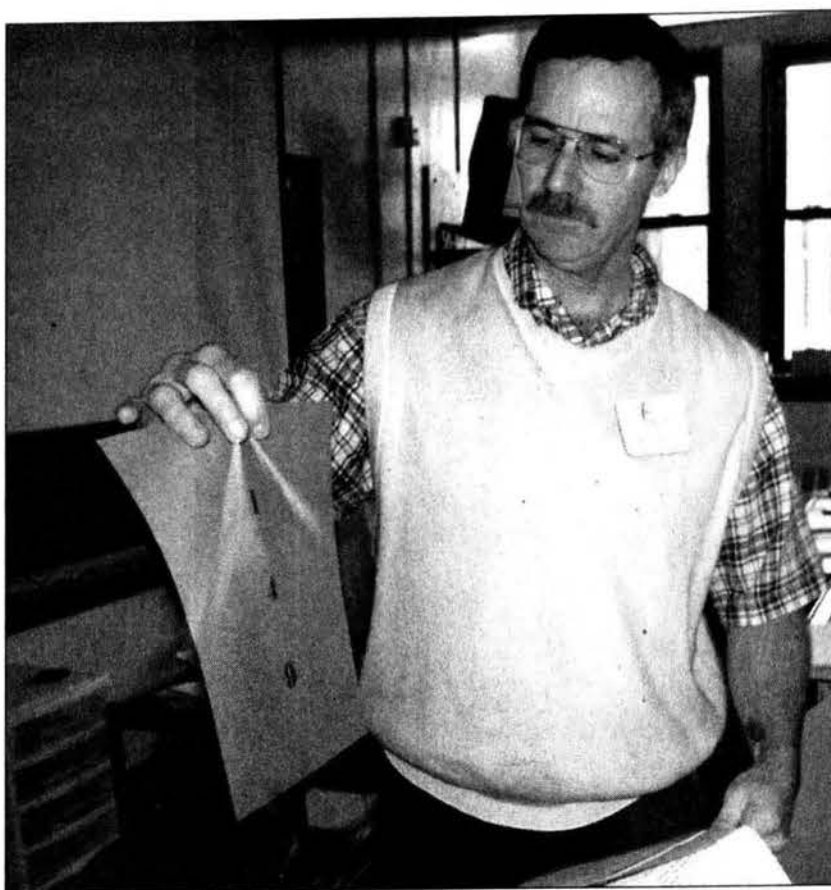


PHOTO BY MOLLY MULLEN/REGISTER
Social Studies teacher Rick Behrens chooses the green card from the folder to slide under his door. This signals all-clear to security.

Owner says limits prevent stealing

■ 'DOWNTOWN' CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

received anymore.
If he did receive any more complaints, he said he would then have to take action, making statements to the student body about how they should behave and represent Central off campus. Bexten said he thought the restrictions downtown were not necessarily fair, but he said, it was like school, where rules were made because of a few students, not the ones who followed the rules.

"It may not be fair because it restricts everybody, but I can understand why a business owner would make a decision like that," he said.

Proski said students who come in the store before and after the restriction times give the employees no problems at all.

"After 4 p.m. we don't have a problem," she said. Proski also said there were students who cooperated with the restrictions, as opposed to fighting or still trying to get in the store.

"We had some kids that were very polite that get their stuff and leave," she said.

Proski said that the problem with students lessened when the downtown bus routes changed. Still, she said, she will keep the restrictions because she is not losing a profit.

"Between all of those kids that came in, they're probably not even spending \$10," Proski said.

Also, she said, her employees feel safer. Proski said that before the sign was put out, employees were often threatened by students and were "stressing out."

"We don't have any problems with them (anymore)," she said. "They don't argue with us."

Manager of the Homer's Music Store downtown Eric Ziegler said he had set no restrictions on his store regarding ages let in.

"Any age is welcome as long as they are not visibly intoxicated," he said.

Ziegler said that he only makes customers leave their bags at the desk if the alarms go off when they walk in. He said his restrictions are for all of his customers, not just teenagers.

Shoplifting, he said, was an ongoing problem that all retailers need to deal with.

"I've caught more adults stealing than kids," he said. Ziegler said he would never set restrictions on who is let inside the store, except those who are disturbances and those who have already be caught shoplifting.

Henderson said she thought instead of restriction teenagers, the businesses should hire more people to watch customers.

"They wouldn't have those problems anyway if they had more people to work there," Henderson said.

Teacher spreads messages of tolerance in classes

BY LAUREN CRIST

Pathways teacher Pat Wallington remembers sitting down at a small lowan diner, feeling hungry after completing part of her 22 hour bus ride. However no one came to take her order as the servers flocked to the other customers.

"They didn't say anything, they just completely ignored me," she said.

She was still waiting for someone to take her order as others had all ready received their meals and eaten them. She said she began to realize the disregard as everyone else who had traveled with her got back on the bus.

"I realized then that they didn't

intend to serve me," she said. "After that, I developed an aversion towards anything lowan for awhile."

Wallington told of her experience with racism to her Pathways class every year. She usually begins the story talking about her life in Tennessee before being offered a job at Central from Dr. Eugene Skinner. On the way to Omaha over 30 years ago from Memphis, Wallington took this bus ride.

She said she told former Pathways teacher Matt Schaffer who in turn told the students in the class while they were teaching it.

"We used the illustration to show how unfair it was to develop a bias against Iowa for this one time in a diner,"

she said.

she said she uses this story to demonstrate tolerance, and explain to students that a grudge should not become an ongoing escalation. She said that many can relate to a story similar to this.

"We all have a story of that sort," she said. "We have to recognize it for what it is and move on."

She said that has been some improvement across the country since her experience on the bus.

"We have improved, but we're certainly not where we need to be. A lot of changes need to still occur," she said. "There will always be that nucleus of haters who would drag us back to those years or before."

She said she thought prejudice still lingered in Omaha.

"It exists here, I know that for a fact,"



WALLINGTON

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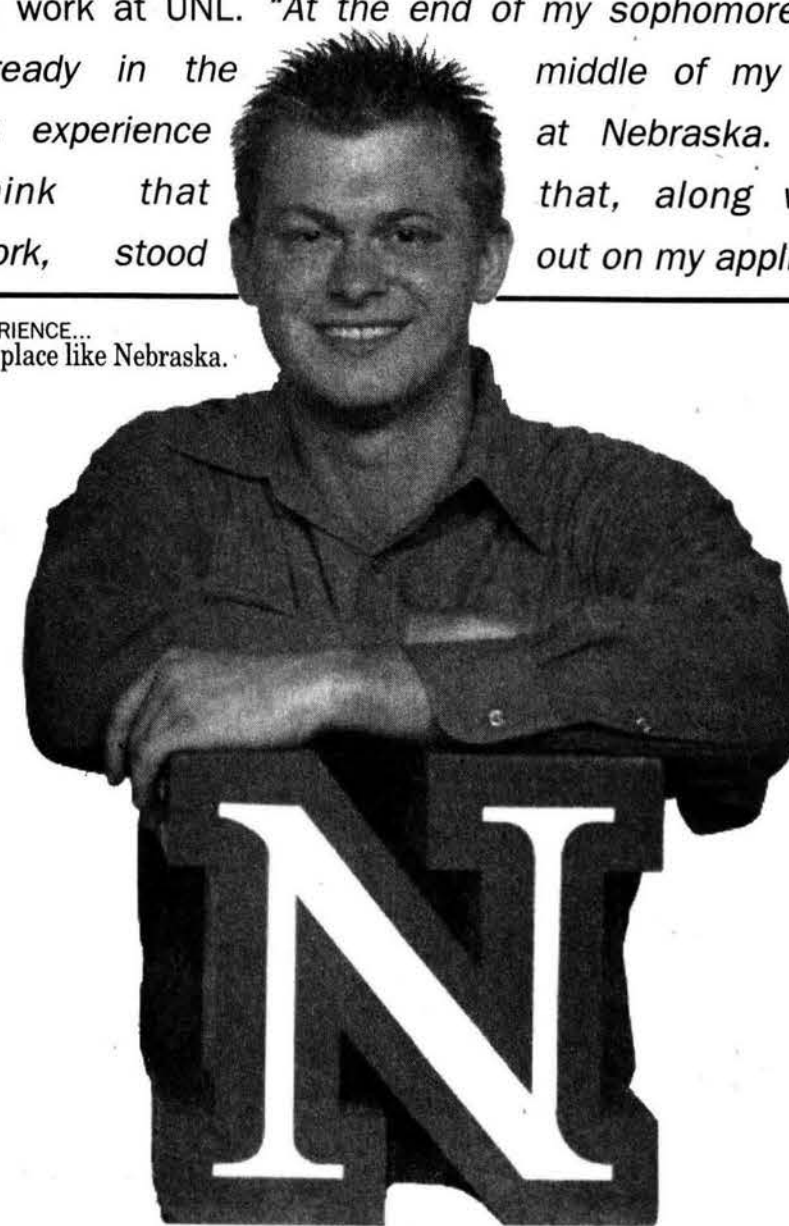
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JROTC tested by National Guard for knowledge, skill

BY ZACH PLUHACEK

The Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) completed a yearly inspection in hopes of keeping the same level of results that gave it its yellow star last year. The yellow star is the highest possible award for JROTC.

Before the inspection, senior Erik Servellon, the commander of the Eagle Battalion, said he expected nothing but perfection, and expressed his faith in the abilities of the other cadets.

"(We were) looking to maintain the level of excellence that last year's staff set forth," Servellon said. "It will show that we are very dedicated with our tradition of excellence."

The dedication paid off. The cadets were informed at the end of their inspection that they had done exceptionally well, and that they would be retaining the yellow-star status.

Servellon said he was pleased with the results of the inspection, congratulating the cadets on their hard work.

"I'm happy, very ecstatic," he said.

Servellon said he was especially impressed by the drill team and BFI briefings, two parts of the inspections that took months of work.

In order to prepare for the BFI briefings, many junior and senior officers were required to make Powerpoint presentations on their duties and responsibilities.

Junior Jeremy Smith, a secondary staff member of JROTC, said the test required a great deal of preparation, especially for the junior and senior cadets.

"As an upperclassman, it's a lot more stressful than as a lower-classman," he said.

Servellon said not only was preparedness an important factor in the inspections, but professionalism was as well.

"We have military bearing in all these tests," he said.

Servellon said he also took personal responsibility for the actions of the other cadets.

"The Battalion CO (commanding officer) is responsible for all the battalion does or fails to do," Servellon said.

Members of the National Guard carried out the student inspections on Dec. 9, following an earlier inspection of the school's JROTC program as a whole.

The overall outcome of the assessment was based on the results from both inspections.

Senior Kyle Kenkle said the inspections were based on every cadet's knowledge of his-or-her badges, the overall appearance of their uniform, and their ability to carry out specific tasks.

"I think it's pretty cool," Kenkle said.

Kenkle works as a record keeper, keeping a training schedule and recording physical fitness information for other cadets.

The majority of the students who were tested missed only a period of class, but officers and those in leadership positions were gone for the majority of the day, arriving at 7 a.m. and finishing 8th period.

Teachers' abilities were also reflected in the tests, said Sergeant Major Dwaine Sutter, who has been teaching JROTC at Central for five years.

"They will verify whether or not we are

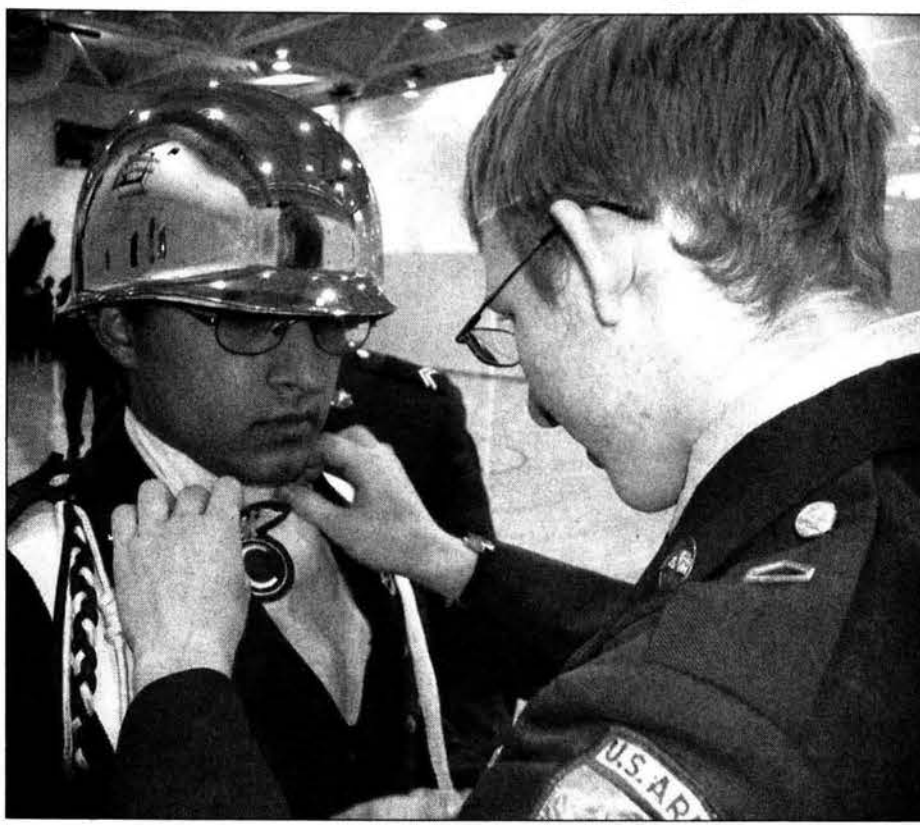


PHOTO BY ZACH PLUHACEK/REGISTER
Junior Sopnil Battaral (left) and sophomore Mark Wilder prepare for Color Guard practice before inspection by the National Guard.

teaching them what we are supposed to be teaching," he said.

Sutter said the format of the inspections had changed recently, giving inspectors the ability to change the star and ranking of the battalions involved.

Sutter also said the effort put forth by the

cadets had improved greatly since the change.

"I've seen a greater improvement overall in their enthusiasm," Sutter said. "A lot of it comes down to our senior staff members."

Servellon said he agreed with Sutter, noting that the cadets had exceeded their expectations.

Foreman plans early completion despite setbacks

BY MOLLY MULLEN

Out of his eight years of experience, Gene Neemann, foreman for Total Fire Protection, said installing the fire sprinklers in Central was the hardest work he had ever done.

"When they made this school, they made it to last," he said. "They made it very thick and hard and we've drilled through all of it."

He said he'd been working on Central for a year and ten months and commuted with much of his staff from Tecumseh daily.

Neemann said the work he did for Central and other schools such as Millard Elementary was very important.

"No one has ever died in a building that has been sprinkled," Neemann said.

He said he liked the work he did for places in Omaha like Wal-Mart and Sam's Club as well as hospitals and schools.

He said he worked with all the other subcontractors renovating

the school because everything had to be done in a certain order to work.

"We follow the pathway of the other trades," he said. "They have to run the heating and steam lines before I can run the pipe."

First year fire sprinkler apprentice Alan Schmeigelow said learning how to install pipe was not difficult.

"Gene is a very good teacher," Schmeigelow said.

He said Neemann knew he would work well with Total Fire Protection and he didn't need much direction.

"He just tells me what to do and I can go and do it," he said.

Fire sprinkler apprentice Jonas Larson said Neemann's biggest job was setting everything up so they could do their work.

"He deals with all the office people and talks with the other trades," Larsen said.

He said he made most everything run smoothly and on schedule. Neemann said he hoped the project would be completed in early December instead of Dec. 24.



PHOTO BY MOLLY MULLEN/REGISTER
Gene Neemann of Total Fire Protection has been working on Central's sprinklers for almost two years

Decorated Vietnam soldier named Veteran of the Year

'HEART' CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

could acknowledge the flag in passing with a wave or a salute. Most important, he said, was to say the Pledge of Allegiance with respect.

"Patriotism has built up this country," Kemper said. "If we didn't have patriotism, we wouldn't have unity."

Principal Jerry Bexten said he received a call from Jeanne Kulm. She told him her husband had been selected for the Purple Heart Veteran of the year.

Bexten said it was important for students to be patriotic, because, he said, they need to support the armed forces.

"We owe a lot to the men and women who have fought in our armed services," he said. "Part of what these men and women fought for is the freedoms we enjoy."

The way to show patriotism, he said, was respect for the American flag. Bexten said students do not necessarily need to participate in the Pledge of Allegiance, but should at least be respectful.

Bexten said it was important for people to learn about their country's history. By studying history, he said, people can find out more about the present. Bexten said he had experience with history because he was a former history teacher.

"People have an obligation to know our history," he said.

Public affairs officer for JROTC Will Stacy was also present for the ceremony. He said that despite the wet and cold weather, many cadets showed up.

"We actually had a lot more cadets than we thought there would be," Stacy said.

Stacy said he thought it was important students see the plaque.

"It's part of the school's heritage," he said. "It's a good memorial towards him (Kulm)."

Both Greg Kulm and Jeanne Kulm are Central alumni from the class of 1968. Jeanne Kulm said it was very important students were patriotic.

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COLLEGE CORNER



INFORMATION COURTESY OF THE COLLEGE BOARD

Gordon College

Where: Wenham, Massachusetts
Admission: 76% of applicants admitted
Type: Private four year liberal arts college
Undergraduate Enrollment: 1,481
Popular Majors: Theology, Biology and Performing Arts
Application Deadlines: Priority Date February 1

Brown University

Where: Providence, Rhode Island
Admission: 17% of applicants admitted
Type: Private four year university and liberal arts college
Undergraduate Enrollment: 5,868
Popular Majors: Engineering Technologies, Interdisciplinary Studies and Social Sciences
Application Deadlines: January 1

University of South Dakota

Where: Vermillion, South Dakota
Admission: 83% of applicants admitted
Type: Public four year university
Undergraduate Enrollment: 4,811
Popular Majors: Computer Sciences, Business and English
Application Deadlines: N/A

University of South Carolina at Spartanburg

Where: Spartanburg, South Carolina
Admission: 64% of applicants admitted
Type: Public four year university
Undergraduate Enrollment: 3,387
Popular Majors: Psychology, Health Sciences and Communications
Application Deadlines: August 15

Creighton University

Where: Omaha, Nebraska
Admission: 91% of applicants admitted
Type: Private four year university
Undergraduate Enrollment: 3,554
Popular Majors: Protective Services, History and Health Sciences
Application Deadlines: Priority Date February 15

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
COLUMNS
REGISTER YOUR OPINION
POLITICAL CARTOONS

OPINION

"I think the addition of air conditioning to our school was nice, but not needed. The money could have been put to better use."
Mark Arehart (10)

Winter traditions keep family close

Even though I have hay fever and couldn't stop itching, the hay bails were always the best part. Thanksgiving vacation with my family always seemed kind of Norman Rockwell, but the day after is unique to us. Thursday, Thanksgiving day, my grandparents, mothers and their wives, my sister, my parents and I sat at the dining room table with candles and a big turkey with stuffing and potatoes.

Every year someone gets to choose the tree. I have cheated my way into getting my tree nearly every year. I always want the Charlie-Brown-looking tree. The uneven, half-dead, small gangly one that no one wants to buy. I always tell them that's the one I want and they laugh and walk by. I follow telling them how attached I am to it and how I've named it already. I sound like a kid at the pound



NOT GONNA LIE TO YOU
A Column by Molly Mullen

Friday, my parents, sister and I all go to Santa's Woods tree farm out in Blair. It looks the same every year. We drive for 45 minutes out to this little farm. We pass the reindeer cages and the cabin. We are first greeted by the woman in the parking lot with the reindeer puppet and are waved into a parking spot. Whenever I get out of the car, I change to step in the pot hole full of murky water and freeze my foot off all afternoon. My sister and I run to the gate of the farm and grab large poles used to measure trees. We pick up one each, take them in both hands, get a running start, dig the pole in the ground and go flying in the air. I can't remember how long we've been doing it, but as long as I can remember we play with those poles all day. One end is painted red so when someone finds a tree the people working there can drive by and saw it down. I can only imagine how many times we tricked those guys when they saw the red poles bobbing up and down from behind the trees. While the men cut down the trees, my sister and I run to the giant hay bails across the farm and play make believe. I don't remember doing this when I was younger so I think it is a newer tradition. One of us always ends up falling through the cracks between bails, getting itchy and scratchy. Since I have all the bad luck, it's usually me. I have had hay fever and I scratch for days afterwards. We go inside and drink hot chocolate that is way too hot and spill half it walking up the stairs to look at the kids making stupid ornaments with crayons and construction paper.

I always tell them that's the one I want and they laugh and walk by. I follow telling them how attached I am to it and how I've named it already. I sound like a kid at the pound attached to a puppy. Last year I picked a short fat tree that my parents hated. It had nettles that droop instead of hold ornaments. I named it Emilio and had my sister take my photo hugging it to show my parents how much I loved it. It worked and we took it home. I think out of all the trees I pick out most of them fall down in the middle of the night and break some ornaments because they are so lopsided. We took Emilio home and set it up, adding ornaments and multicolored lights. Each person puts up the ornaments that belong to them. Every year my sister has more than me and I have less and less. Mine always seem to break. My parents let me put on some of theirs so we can all finish at the same time. I think my sister is just claiming all the ornaments that don't have a name on them as hers. My parents tried to put it in the corner of the room so the giant gap in the back-side was more concealed. My mom put her angel on top she made ten years ago while "The Chipmunk's Christmas" and "Manheim Steamroller" played in the background. Then she went up and got all the Christmas decorations from the closet. They aren't the gaudy type like those giant light-up Santas and sleighs people put in their yards. Most of them are homemade. Like my mother's door wreaths that she adds to every year. The one that primarily goes on the front door is the sock reindeer wreath. It's an old ratty sock with a red ball glued to the nose and googly eyes. It looks very arts and crafts.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY LAUREN CRIST/REGISTER

Holiday shopping out of control

A whopping \$176 billion will be spent this winter on holiday gifts, according to recent estimates from a credit card company. And that's only the teenagers. A conservative average for Christmas shoppers is a \$100 per student.

Cheech and Darth Vader. They are doing everything to get teens out and buy. Students flocked to the stores in herds to get all their shopping done for the sale. They think they're saving money with these sales and when they walk out of Westroads with a \$400 receipt they feel somehow accomplished.

EDITORIAL The OPINION of the Register staff

Buying presents for Christmas and Hanukkah and all the other holidays has gotten completely out of hand. At Central alone over 50 percent of people polled said they spend more than \$100 every holiday season, many saying they spend a lot more. The holidays have become way too commercial, but that's not the issue. It's fun to buy and receive gifts from friends and family, but it is almost ridiculous spending \$25-\$50 on every present. Generation Y has the most money for any young generation. Marketers and big businesses recognize the fact that teens have more money than ever before and unlike many adults don't plan on saving it or investing it in the stock markets. Nearly everything is marketed to students. Even some car commercials blatantly advertise to the youngest audiences hoping that they can manipulate their parents into buying a brand new Hummer for their 16th birthday. And its working. Sales are going up, especially during the holidays. Everyone gets conned into all the early morning specials the day after Thanksgiving. Target even gave free famous character wake up calls for their two-day sale from people like

It is a disgusting amount that people are spending, especially in the winter. During the Christmas season the rate of shoplifting goes up so after those two days of supposed sales, the prices are jacked to make up for all the stolen stuff and the majority of the country pays amazing amounts until February. The entire idea of making gifts must have died for most of this generation after making Christmas cards out of construction paper did in the second grade, because it seems that most people just go out and blow their paycheck in 20 minutes at Village Point instead of using the money on anything meaningful. The hottest gift this holiday season is gift cards. That is the worst gift anyone can dream of. It is a quick way to give money, but it has no thought and no meaning. It is so easy to spend loads of money these days and especially with the Internet and Ebay, every single present is at the majority of the population's fingertips. Spending is out of control for teenagers with all the manipulation of the business world. Teens can do better. Think before you buy. Put your money to better use.

REGISTER YOUR OPINION

Do you think downtown businesses should restrict teenagers?



"I think they should only let a certain number of teenagers in. They shouldn't ban them."
Jamar Triplett (12)



"No, because all teens aren't the same."
Dekaye Stanfield (11)



"No. It should depend on how good or bad you are."
Jessika Williams (9)



"Yeah, but I think they should be able to get a second chance."
Chaz Walters (9)



"It should depend on the age group and how mature the person is."
Deontae Williams (9)



"No, because they're denying service."
Trisha Latenser (11)

LETTERS, E-MAILS, FAXES, POLLS, CARTOONS

5.0 scale harms GPA

Dear Editor,
When I was a freshman, I took Honors U.S. History. This put me on the 5.0 scale for GPA. Because of this I have had to take mostly honors and AP classes even though realistically my GPA could only be a 3.4. I know many colleges cut off the GPA after 4.0. I think somebody should have told me freshman year about the 5.0 scale.
Tormil Lee Ripton (11)

School food needs to be changed

Dear Editor,
Central needs Burger King. Today I sold my meatball sandwich for a \$1. I didn't like it, so I sold it. I think Central instead of remodeling the school, should add a Burger King.
Justin Honke (9)

Courtesy not shown at 'C'

Dear Editor,
I don't understand what people don't get. You do not stand where you please, then get an attitude when you get asked nicely to move. And there's so many people standing by the "C" that it's making other people late. It's called common courtesy, so move.
Allaha Lamb (12)

Off-campus lunch preferred

Dear Editor,
I want to know why we can't go off campus for lunch. Some people don't like school lunch and would rather eat at Burger King or Subway. Other high schools get to eat off campus, so why can't we?
Dominique Johnson (10)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR WANTED

Letters to the editor are gladly accepted in room 030, via e-mail to Central. Journalism@OPS.org or can be placed in Mr. Deabler's mailbox in the main office. Letters must be factual and contain the author's full name and grade. Incorrect or unsigned letters will not be printed. The use of pen names is not allowed.

Restrictions on downtown needless

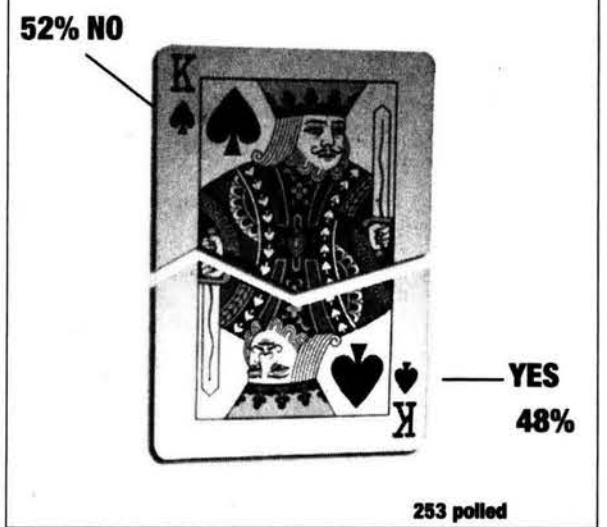
Dear Editor,
I think it's very stupid to put restrictions on how many students can come into downtown businesses. I don't think it should matter. They are bringing them business so why be picky on how you get money? Do they think all kids are troublemakers?
Paul Ciochowski (10)

Stadium name should be considered

Dear Editor,
I think that the stadium should be called The Eagle's Nest. I mean, it's only appropriate, since we're the Central Eagles. I'm sure others share my opinion.
Tony Byers (10)

STUDENT POLL

Do you play casino games (poker, craps etc.) during the school day (free periods or during class)?



STUDENT POLL

Do you spend over \$100 for holiday gifts?



Portables should be gone

Dear Editor,
Portables, that God-awful word. I hear it and cringe. I think they are a very stupid idea because we have to go outside through the rain, snow, hail, etc. I think they should have done more construction over the summer rather than making us go through that.
Allison Denton (11)

Money could be used better

Dear Editor,
I think the addition of air conditioning to our school was nice, but not needed. The money could have been put to better use, like remodeled restrooms, new carpet in the classrooms, and maybe even laptop computers for every student.
Mark Arehart (10)

Second 'Bridget Jones' offers only old laughs, disconnected plot



PHOTO COURTESY OF MIRIMAX PICTURES

Renée Zellweger returns in a repetitive sequel of "Bridget Jones' Diary."

BY MOLLY MULLEN

"Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason" was even worse than "Bridget Jones' Diary," and considering the first movie wasn't worth seeing, this film was terrible.

The jokes weren't even new. The show opens with Renée Zellweger who plays Jones standing in an airplane. The scene ends with her flashing her backside to the camera.

This is the exact same shtick as the first movie when she slid down the fire pole giving the video camera a view up her skirt.

Why pay the ridiculous price for a ticket to see the same movie twice? It wasn't funny or edgy the first time and it wasn't funny or edgy the second.

"The Edge of Reason" takes place four weeks after the first film, but short of a new location it is the same middle-aged fat girl who complains about love

and getting older.

The tag line is "Same Bridget, new diary." They don't even try to hide the fact there is nothing new to the movie other than a new journal.

Who cares? Why sit for two hours to hear someone more annoying and depressing than people in real life?

The only interesting part of the film is the ending.

Although it follows the same formula as "Bridget Jones' Diary" in having a twisted ending, it still is

shocking.

Still, the last two minutes can't save the first hour and a half.

It almost seemed like the writers ran out of all material for the first film and were trying way too

hard to find a new angle.

They tried so hard that Jones ended up in an Asian prison on drug smuggling charges.

It was so out of left field and didn't seem to fit all with the rest of the movie.

It was supposedly the funniest part of the movie but it made the plot unnecessarily dramatic.

It isn't like the story line exactly sparked philosophical questioning.

Jones is in love with a rich guy, but thinks cheating and dumps him.

She spends the next hour and a half trying to get him back and moping around her apartment eating Ben and Jerry's because she's depressed for leaving him.

Not only is this an exact replica of the first movie but it is copying every chick flick made in the past years.

The only decent quality of the movie was its sound track.

MOVIE REVIEW

'BRIDGET JONES: THE EDGE OF REASON'

Starring: Renée Zellweger



PHOTO COURTESY OF FILM COLONY PRODUCTIONS

J.M. Barrie (Johnny Depp) meets the family that eventually becomes the characters in "Peter Pan."

MOVIE REVIEW

'FINDING NEVERLAND'

Starring: Jonny Depp

Depp offers insight, truth to fairy tales

BY MOLLY MULLEN

Anyone who wants to dislike Johnny Depp because of the fad he's created since "Pirates of the Caribbean" will fail to hate him playing creator of "Peter Pan."

"Finding Neverland" is more magical than the play it depicts. It is amazing enough to make the entire audience cry.

The drama and sad parts don't come from the actual plot and dialogue, but the characters.

Depp portrays J.M. Barrie. He is a playwright with an imagination that everyone in the film and watching it envies.

Barrie is seen on of those silent geniuses that find a way to be happy when everyone at the time was surrounded by sadness.

The movie has a constant childlike feel to it.

There are plenty of dramatic parts in it to turn the film into a biography rather than a story. There is death, illness and the suggestion that Barrie's imagination took him in the direction of Oscar Wilde.

"Finding Neverland" was the first charming and unique film to come out of Hollywood in a long time.

It is definitely worth seeing twice. Go once to watch the movie for the story and go again to examine the character. It seems like two different movies.



PHOTO COURTESY OF WARNER BROS. PICTURES

The engineer of the "Polar Express" nearly falls off when the train skids off the track on ice. This was only one of the animated action scenes.

New film mirrors classic book

BY ANDREW REINWALD

Imagine waking up Christmas morning and realizing all of your dreams have come true. This is the reality for the main character of "Polar Express."

It will not disappoint the fans of the popular Christmas book by Chris Van Allsburg.

Aided by spectacular special effects, an excellent plot line and a wonderful cast this movie truly captures the real emotion of Christmas.

The adventure begins on Christmas Eve when the main character, played by Tom Hanks struggles to re-ignite his belief in Santa Claus.

After he realizes that there would be many physical limitations to Santa if he existed, he almost decided that Santa is not real.

And as he lies down in bed, disappointed with the whole notion of a Santa a huge steam engine pulls in front of his house.

The main character is unaware of the great adventure before him and before long he meets the persnickety train conductor, also played by Tom Hanks.

Hank's voice matches the conductor character so well, it's almost perfect. Hanks does very well in all the roles he plays in this movie.

Soon enough the main character finds himself in trouble, but that doesn't matter because the danger factor in this movie is only an illusion; you can even sense during the movie that no one will actually get hurt.

There's always a feeling of security, you know that nothing bad will really happen.

Maybe that's a good thing, this movie is aimed at younger children, but it's enjoyable for the entire family, not just one age group.

Throughout this entire escapade, the main character finds new friends, voiced by Jimmy Bennett, Eddie Dreezen and Nona M. Gaye.

After passing through all the perils of the Arctic Circle, frozen lakes, caribou etc. Sabara's character and his friends find themselves on the way to the North Pole.

Through this whole movie you will be amazed at the beauty of the special effects, many times you will forget that the movie is entirely computer animated. The train, the mountains, the children, everything looks very realistic.

According to The Polar Express official web site, the production staff

tried as hard as they could to make the scenery like Van Allsburg's oil painting illustrations in the book.

Most of this movie was created by a process known as motion capture in which an actor's live performance is captured digitally by special computerized cameras.

The actor basically becomes a human blueprint for creating virtual characters.

The Polar Express is the first film to be entirely shot in motion capture. This technique has been used in other movies such as Forrest Gump.

One of the most enjoyable scenes in the movie is when the singing waiters are pouring hot chocolate for the children and doing dance routines at the same time.

The whimsy of this movie will make any child and many adults fall in love with it.

MOVIE REVIEW

'POLAR EXPRESS'

Starring: Tom Hanks

The sound track is remarkable, making the movie flow smoothly.

No matter what part of this movie you see, you will be able to tell that this is a story about Christmas.

The music in The Polar Express evokes feeling from the very beginning even until the end.

Everything about this movie is inherently Christmas, right down to the musical score.

In fact, the only problem with this movie is that it can be very child-oriented at times.

Some of the scenes including the main character and his friends almost seem mechanical they are so picturesque.

To some people the characters seem to have an inhuman "shine." But besides some of the cheesiness, this is a great family movie without question.

Kids will enjoy this movie; some of the movie's comic relief is aimed toward children. This is one of those movies that everyone can enjoy; it doesn't matter how old you are.

Good Christmas movies like this are rare. Many Christmas movies fall short of what they actually intend to portray, relying on cliché and outdated themes.

The new style of animation and colorful casting made "Polar Express" one of the rare instances where the movie was much better than the book it was based on.

This is the best Christmas movie of the year.



PHOTO COURTESY OF WARNER BROS. PICTURES

Colin Farrell plays Alexander the Great in this all-star laden movie.

MOVIE REVIEW

'ALEXANDER'

Starring: Colin Farrell

Action maker 'Alexander' this year's epic

BY MALISA MILITZER

Not only did the Macedonian conquer hundreds of people during the sweep across Eurasia, but now he is conquering the box offices across the States. Nothing could compare to the spectacular history of the Great Alexander the Great.

The newest action epic "Alexander," written by Oliver Stone and Christopher Kyle, is the tale narrated by Ptolmey played by Anthony Hopkins, of the life, love and death of Alexander the Great. For history-lovers everywhere it serves three hours of ultimate awe.

Ireland's finest male star, Colin Farrell, played the lead role of Alexander magnificently. He never missed a chance to show the power of the emotions Alexander felt, both before and during his time as king and emperor of Rome.

By watching the movie, one gains respect for the real heroes portrayed by the actors. There is a huge amount of sadness, happiness, lust, love and anger pressed into the viewer.

The movie and the plot in which it was based on was truly moving and definitely worth seeing many times after and again.

Central High Alumni

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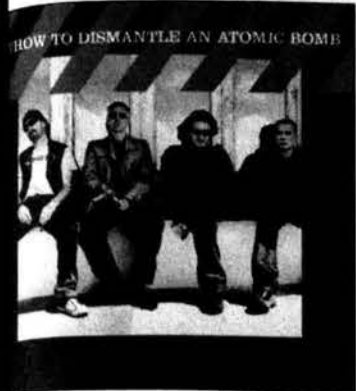


PHOTO COURTESY OF INTERSCOPE RECORDS

ALBUM REVIEW

'HOW TO DISMANTLE AN ATOMIC BOMB' By: U2

U2's new album mixes love with classic sounds

BY CLAY LOMNETH

For those who doubt U2 still has the ability to still put out a great album...

The album is classic U2 style. The songs are about peace, love and faith, as usual.

One would think U2 would run out of ideas on these subjects, but the new record proves it won't anytime soon.

For longtime U2 fans, "How to Dismantle an Atomic Bomb" is not a major leap in a new direction. U2 has obviously found the formula for an excellent album, and it stuck to it.

The songs are touching and sad at times, other times rocking and uplifting. The first single from this album was "Vertigo," an incredibly catchy song that is sure to become one of their classics, based on the radio years from now.

The album may disappoint if the listener is expecting an album of songs like "Vertigo."

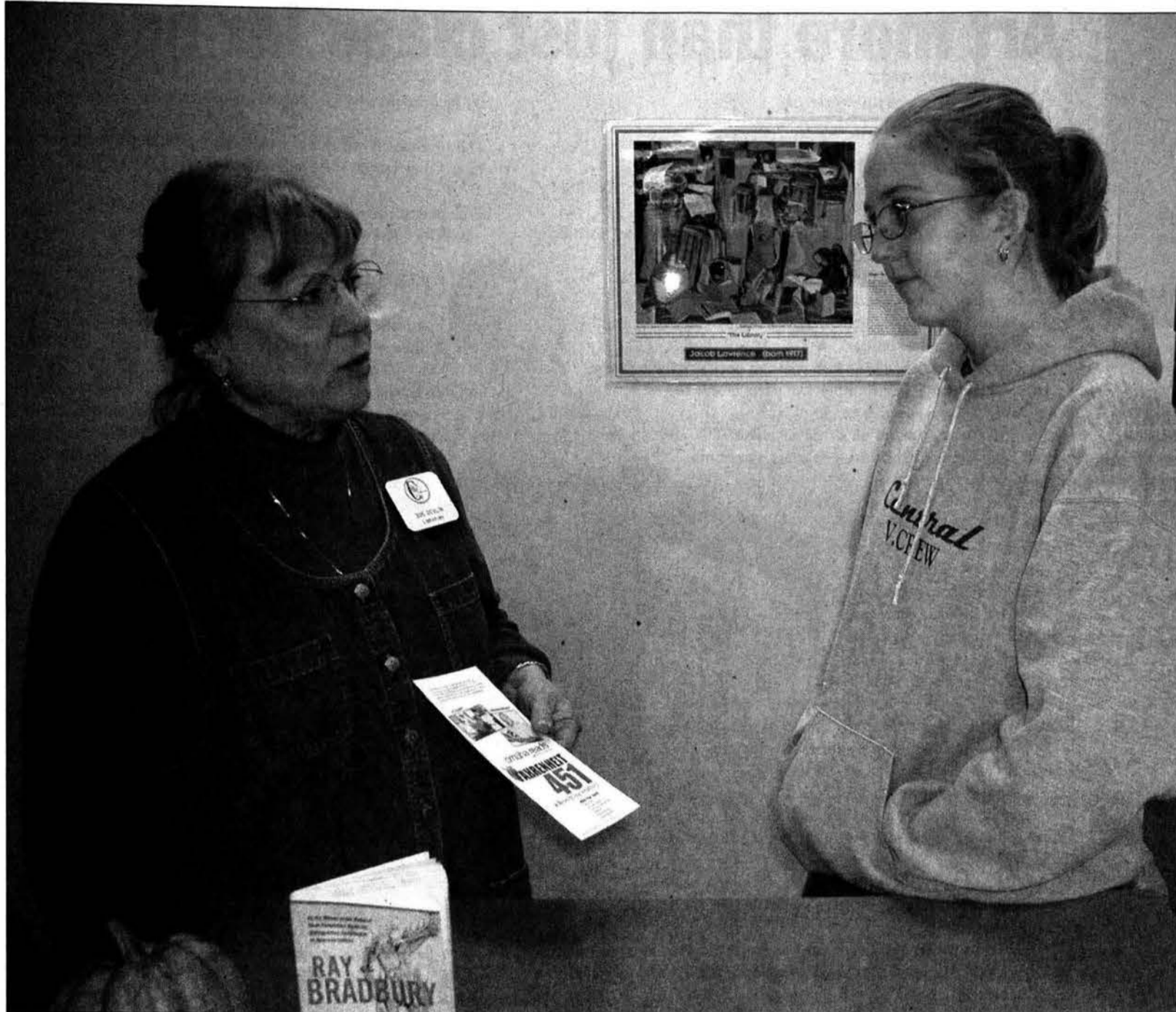
After that first track, the rest of the album calms down a bit, and the slower songs carry the album the rest of the way.

The very last song, "Yahweh" is a perfect ending of an incredible album.

With lyrics such as "dark before dawn" and "pain before a child born", the song is uplifting and leaves the listener with an urge either to listen to the album again or find another U2 album. Nothing can top U2 except for more U2.

"How to Dismantle an Atomic Bomb" shows U2 can still put out a great album these days, one of the very best bands that still have the ability to do it.

It has the ability to sell millions of records and fill seats at concerts, and the songs U2 puts out every single year, its abilities make it obvious why.



Librarian Sue Devlin (left) explains to senior Amanda Stastny the effort to get everyone in the city to read Ray Bradbury's "Fahrenheit 451."

PHOTO BY TARRYN KELLER/REGISTER

'Fahrenheit' gets big CHS reaction

BY MOLLY MULLEN

Junior Navonna Johnson said a world without books and banned knowledge isn't impossible with the lack of students who read outside of school.

In the book "Fahrenheit 451" the author Ray Bradbury envisioned such a world.

The Omaha Public Library began in effort in October to try and get as many Omahans as possible to read and discuss the book.

Johnson said it is important book to read. "It has a good lesson and good morals," she said.

She said whether or not people like reading outside of school, there is always a book that everyone can enjoy.

"It just goes to show that books are really a big part of America," she said. Johnson said it really stressed the importance of reading and thinking for oneself.

"I really liked it. It was just different than a lot of books," she said. Johnson said she passed on her copy to a friend and would like to see other students reading it.

CHS librarian and book club sponsor Sue Devlin said all but one copy of the book was checked out.

"I bought five or six for the event," Devlin said. She not only members of book club are reading it, but English teachers who bring classes to the library have students check it out.

"I think people enjoy it because it's so much like today," she said. She said people draw analogies from the book to find its importance in today's society.

She said the "Fahrenheit 451" program has encourage more people to read and is helping the problem of low readership. Peggy Freislinger, the community relations manager from Barnes and

Nobles bookstore, said it is completely sold out of copies of the book.

She said there has been a positive response to the book.

She had the books out on display and had posters advertising Ray Bradbury since October, but had to take the book off display since they are temporarily sold out.

"We'll be keeping it (the posters) up as long as Omaha is reading "Fahrenheit 451" she said.

She said Barnes and Nobles has also been sponsoring group discussions at their Oak View and Crossroads Mall locations.

"We have are holding teen and adult events," Freislinger said.

She said librarians held a book discussion for teens.

Linda Trout, the special projects coordinator from Omaha Public Libraries, said there has been a wide variety of responses to the book.

"Some read it and disliked it," Trout said. "We also had a lot of people who thought we were pushing the film "Fahrenheit 9/11'."

She said a lot of people liked the book as well as the discussions and special events such as the celebration of Ray Bradbury's birthday and World War II prisoners of war.

"The book is important," she said. "The whole concept of not having books and new ideas presented to us shows the importance of them."

She said the idea of getting an entire city to read one book started in 1998 in Washington and since then over 200 cities have joined the effort.

She said Omaha decided to read "Fahrenheit 451" by voting.

"We asked the public to submit recommendations, and then a committee chose six out of 120," Trout said. "Around 2,000 people voted and chose this book."

She said this spring all libraries in Nebraska will join together to try and get the entire state to read "My Antonia."

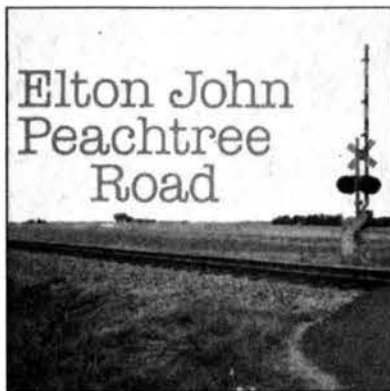


PHOTO COURTESY OF UNIVERSAL RECORDS

ALBUM REVIEW

'PEACHTREE ROAD' By: Elton John

'Peachtree Road' fails to compare to old EJ styles

BY MOLLY MULLEN

It is difficult to finish listening to Elton John's new album, "Peachtree Road" because it nearly ruins the image of the old Elton.

There isn't a single rock and roll song. He doesn't take any chances anymore.

The only difference between songs are the lyrics and he didn't even write them. If anyone expects to hear a hit off this album, they will be let down.

The piano in the first three songs sounds similar to his stuff from the '70s.

It starts out with an almost trickling sound and then he pounds on the keys to turn the feeling of the song before he starts to sing.

Although it sounds a little like his old stuff, it isn't remotely like "Tiny Dancer" or "Daniel."

The music sounded like the few songs that were on the album "Goodbye Yellow Brick Road" that no one ever listened to and never materialized into a single.

Although the piano was obviously well played and sounded like classic Elton, he definitely seemed to play it safe with each song, like it was formulated.

All the songs started the same. He may have changed keys or tempo, but they had that light rock sound he had been falling into since the '80s. All the time anyone listens to this they will be begging for him to bring back some of his old rock and roll.

The energetic sound of "Crocodile Rock" will be missed when every single one of 12 songs has the same drab sounds.

The only change he did seem to take is producing his own album. It didn't seem to do him much good because there was very little publicity for it.

There's a good reason not many people have heard that Elton John has a new album out.

Violent video games steal hours from student's daily life

As the words "Game Over" flash across the screen, I snap out of my trance. It was just a game?

Video games have been marveled at as far back as the release of the first arcade game, "Pong" in 1958. From Atari to Sega to Nintendo to PlayStation, it is clear video games have been and are to this day a dominant element of entertainment in society. With many consoles and the subcategory of video games to choose from, it is hard to believe boredom still exists.

I received my first console, a Nintendo Entertainment System (NES), at the age of six. I remember playing it for the first time and thinking I was a god with the supreme power to control the movements on the television screen.

I was immediately addicted. I would spend hours in my room in front of the television, pounding away at the buttons on the controllers. Passing the video game section at the store, I would practically drool as I walked by.

The joy of video games is mainly from the wide range of game play one can find. There's fighting games, role-playing games (RPGs), shooters, action/

adventure games, and puzzle games. There is such a variety that if one game gets old, it's so simple to find a completely different game to play.

My favorite game is probably "Perfect Dark" on the Nintendo 64. First person shooters have a certain attraction for me. Maybe it's the fact that I get to kill hundreds of people with no repercussions in real life, but then that's part of the fun in any video game.



MUSIC FOR THE MIND

A Column by Yasmine Nuwwarah

For the time you play video games, you get the infinitely entertaining opportunity to be a vampire or a boy chosen to save the world or a plumber fighting Satan reincarnated as a turtle with devil horns.

Not to mention if you find a really good game, you can spend plenty of time playing it after you've beaten it, maybe restarting and beating it all over again. Take for example, "Perfect Dark," a game in which every level has a piece of cheese hidden somewhere for you to find, which, needless to say, can take up a lot of time if you're motivated enough.

There are always the video games that provoke a few laughs as well. It is pretty funny when you spend half an hour looking for holey cheese in a video game only

to find it was in the second stall toilet the whole time.

Then there's "Cats," the horribly translated Japanese game and a classic inside joke for gamers. The conversations are hilariously incomprehensible, with characters saying things like, "someone set up us the bomb" and "all your base are belong to us."

One of the first video games I owned was "Mario is Missing," a video game in which Mario's brother, Luigi, visits cities all across the world in search of Mario. In each city, the player has to learn about famous sites and artifacts in the city, such as the Bolshoi Ballet Theater in Moscow or the Sistine Chapel in Vatican City.

Granted, there are a fair number of "mature" games, if you will, like the Grand Theft Auto series which is probably not the kind of game you want to be giving your 10 year old for Christmas. However, with the number of games out there, you could play for more than five years and never run across anything that might be deemed inappropriate.

Gaming is not limited to consoles, however. Arcades attract plenty of nerds and other socially inept characters like myself. So while my brain is rotting on caffeine at the arcade, I can take comfort in the fact that I am making friends, which is yet another positive aspect of video games.

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PHOTO BY ANDREW REINWALD/REGISTER

Social studies teacher Michelle Pleiss became the new girls varsity soccer coach. Players say her experience playing soccer helps her coaching.

New coach teaches by example

BY ANDREW REINWALD

Honors Geography and sociology teacher Michelle Pleiss just got some good news. As of Nov. 9, Pleiss was the new girls varsity soccer coach. The former varsity coach White resigned from the position to take more time with the club soccer team he coaches.

Pleiss said the application process was fairly simple and didn't take too long. "I acknowledged to Mr. Pennington that I wanted the job, and then I had to talk to Dick Lohmeier, the head of OPS athletics. From there it was just a bunch of interviews," she said.

But Pleiss was no stranger to the game or the athletes. She had been the assistant coach under White for three years, and she said knew many of the girls since freshman and sophomore year.

"I've played it for 18 years, and since I was five years old, I've been drawn to it," she said. "It's a wonderful sport; a very competitive sport in which teamwork is a necessity," Pleiss said.

And many of the players agreed that Pleiss was the right person for the job. Last year's varsity captain, senior Amber Berzins, said even as assistant coach she was on a par with the girls than White was.

"She did really well," she said. "She incorporated her playing ability in Mr. White's drills. It was nice to see the actual drill and not have him verbalize them."

Pleiss said she believed her energy and knowledge of the game would raise team morale and build unity. Berzins said Pleiss had more playing experience and was much closer to the team than White was. She said when the team was learning the fundamentals, Pleiss was always a lot easier to talk to on a personal level.

"I think I know it (soccer) very well because I've played it for so long and because I love it, I hope to pass my enthusiasm on," Pleiss said.

She said there wasn't going to be many drastic changes between White's and her coaching techniques. Pleiss said that she planned to focus more on improving during the season and having a good time with the team.

She said their practices would be different, but that was to be expected and their fitness techniques would be different as well.

"I believe that we might have some different ways of approaching the game, however our goals of achieving success through winning, teamwork and having fun are the same," Pleiss said.

She said she's extremely excited for conditioning and the beginning of the soccer season, which begins in late

February. Pleiss said she was looking forward to a lot of things, but especially practices, improving fundamentals, games and the state tournament.

"My favorite thing about this upcoming season is being able to work with such a great group of girls," she said.

Berzins and the other teammates said they were looking forward to the season as well, but they were also aware of things that were going to change during the season.

Junior Jenny Rue said Pleiss was less likely to yell and focus more on playing as a team and trying their best.

"She (Pleiss) knows what she wants and she can do what it takes to get it done," Rue said. "It's very easy to work with her."

Both Berzins and Rue said the team setting will be a lot more positive without the fear of being yelled at.

"I think it'll be tough at first because we kind of thought of her as a big sister, and now she'll have to be more disciplined and make tough calls," Berzins said.

Pleiss said she did not want the girls to change their opinions of her, but hoped they would still respect her and understand that she's in a different position and had to make different decisions now.

"I hope they still know it's me," she said.

Basketball

Girls lose to East in opener

BY TESS MANDELL

He said he was expecting an up-tempo game.

That is exactly what girls varsity head coach Chad Townsend received in the Eagles' 77-47 loss against Bellevue East on Dec. 3.

In the first game of the season, the Eagles struggled on passing, Townsend said.

"Our passing was horrendous," Townsend said. "They intercepted pass after pass."

Statistics showed that the Eagles produced 33 turnovers.

"Turnovers killed us," Townsend said.

Central didn't see its first points until Bellevue East was already up by six.

Senior Allison Rutherford hit the first shot for Central about two and a half minutes into the game.

In the first quarter, with the score at 11-4, senior Casey Bigsby committed a foul sending Bellevue East's standout senior Cheville Herring permanently out of the game with an ankle injury.

Bellevue East's junior Becky Marsh produced a three pointer at about the 4:30 mark in the first to give the Chieftains a dominating 10-point lead.

Central never took the lead, and the chieftains ended the first quarter with a strong 27-13 advantage.

Although Bellevue East outscored Central in every quarter, the Chieftains produced the most points in this first quarter of play.

"It was tough," Townsend said. "They had a lot of weapons, and we didn't help ourselves for some reason."

Central's sophomore Jasmine Johnson uplifted the Eagles with a three-pointer in the third quarter to make the score 47-31.

Johnson added the final points for Central at 2:25 with a three-pointer. She finished with 16 points (more than 33 percent of Central's points), including

three three-pointers.

"We knew they were a good team, but we had to play hard," Johnson said.

Townsend said the team needed to improve on rebounding and passing.

Bellevue East's head coach Scott Jensen said the key in his team's win was "depth more than anything."

Chieftain junior Yvonne Turner agreed.

"We worked together as a team and slowed them all down," Turner said.

Yvonne Turner said that another key in the team's win was defense and pressure.

"We knew that they liked to run, and we had to play tough," Townsend said.

However, Townsend said Bellevue East did not do anything that surprised them.

"With a team that good and when we give them three or four chances, they're going to score," Townsend said.

The Eagles knew Bellevue East had a good team.

"We knew about Yvonne (Turner) and Cheville (Herring) and that they reached a lot and took passes in the air," sophomore Central guard Jasmine Johnson said.

Townsend said he thought Johnson, senior Amber Hamilton and junior Brianna Tapley were the key players throughout the game.

"We also had some young players that had to step in early," Townsend said.

Behind Johnson, senior Anadrian Booker (10 points), senior Brittany Arvin (8 points) and junior Cherylle Leffall (6 points) were the next three-point leaders.

Unlike Central, Turner said the Chieftains concentrated on offense.

"We need to work on our defense more than our offense," Turner said.

Jensen said his team had been preparing for Central's style of play in practice.

Russell, Valentine help boys defeat Chieftains in first game

BY TESS MANDELL

With a 25-point fourth quarter, the varsity boys basketball team clinched a demanding 69-36 home win over Bellevue East on Dec. 3.

"We all played as a team for our first game," senior forward Derrick Russell said. "And that helped us out a lot."

Russell, who had 18 points and produced 9 rebounds, said Bellevue East only had one "big man," senior Chad Simon.

Head coach Eric Behrens said going into the game he knew about Simon and senior teammate Jeremy Walker.

The team watched Bellevue East beat Benson the night before Central played them.

Behrens said Simon received 23 points from that game.

"We saw them play Benson," Russell said. "And we felt we had a good chance to beat them (Bellevue East)."

Behrens said the team had been working hard all week for the opening game.

"We practiced hard like any other team," Behrens said. "And at the game, we had to compete and rebound

well and play hard."

Although the Eagles hadn't played a game yet, Bellevue East's head coach Jason Ryan said he knew what he was getting into.

"We knew that Central was extremely talented and one of the best in the state," Ryan said. "We battled and fought hard."

Statistics showed that Bellevue East produced 21 turnovers making it difficult to make any type of comeback.

"We just struggled with their (the Eagles') pressure," Ryan said.

Ryan said that Central rebounded very well also.

"We're just trying to improve every game and improve every week," Ryan said. "By February, we can be a very good team."

Behrens said that Russell led the team with nine rebounds, and Valentine had 11 assists.

"BJ is one of the best in the state," Ryan said.

Behrens said that the game wasn't just about the points.

"The non-scoring stats were the best," he said. Behrens also acknowledged senior John Skanes and junior Rodney Grace.

"They (the Eagles) were very talented, quick and

athletic," Ryan said. "Especially when we turned the ball over that many times."

The Bellevue East Chieftains didn't make their first basket until Central made it to the 10-point mark.

Although the Chieftains tried to catch up, they never got closer than a 3-point deficit after Simon made the score 14-11 with about 10 seconds left in the first quarter.

However, Valentine hit a 3-point basket when the buzzer sounded to help the Eagles finish out the first quarter strong 17-11.

Central doubled its opponent's points by the second half, and by the end of the third, it led by 14.

Valentine and Behrens said they both agreed that despite the win, the team needed to work on transition defense, taking better shots and talking more on defense.

That's the plan.

"We just need to keep it up and work hard in practice," Russell said. "Working as a team during practice feels like it helped during the game."

He said he hoped to keep up the good work and to continue winning all the way to state this year as a team.

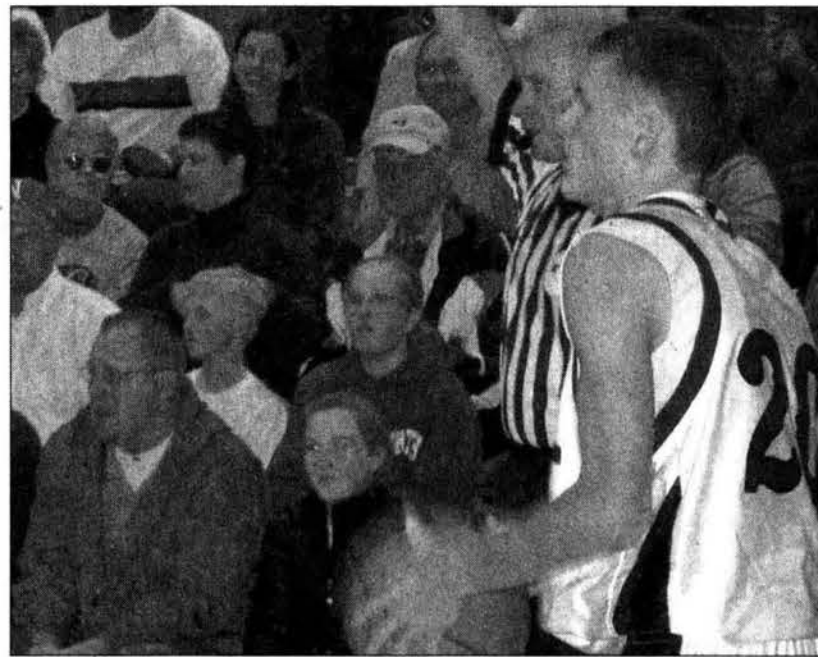


PHOTO BY TESS MANDELL/REGISTER

Sophomore Ben Kline takes the ball at Central's win over Bellevue East. Central nearly doubled the Chieftains in points.

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