

**BENSON**

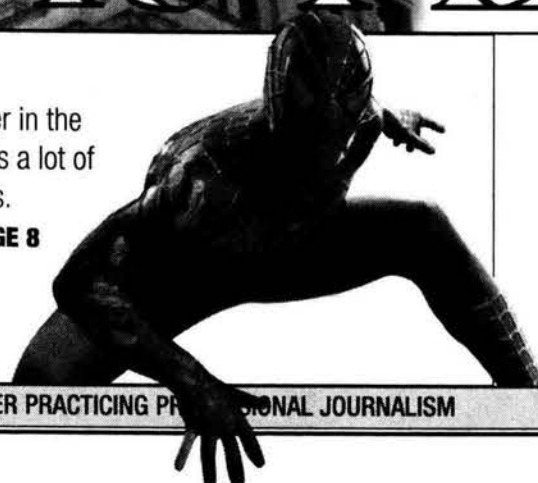
The staff of Benson's paper tried to handle a tough topic. Did they succeed, or did it flop?

OPINION, PAGE 6

**'SPIDER-MAN 3'**

The third and final chapter in the 'Spider-Man' series packs a lot of action into over two hours.

ARTS, PAGE 8



**TRACK**

Senior Stanley Smith and the rest of the boys track team look to win big at State for the first time in 18 years.

SPORTS, PAGE 11



11 TIME NSPA/JEA BEST-OF-SHOW WINNER

A HIGH SCHOOL NEWSPAPER PRACTICING PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

NATIONAL PACEMAKER AWARD WINNER

# THE ABSENT MAJORITY

Just over 20 percent of students attended classes on April 25. The cause was a bomb threat spray-painted on the school and stadium which turned out to be a prank. How did the administration's handling of the problem influence the students?

BY BOB AL-GREENE

On Tues. April 24, students at Ralston Middle School were alerted of two threatening notes which were found. Two hundred students stayed home.

On the morning of Wed. April 25, Central students arriving by way of the staff parking lot walked by the stadium and garage where the night before someone had spray-painted a definite threat of a bomb to go off at 9 in the morning.

Two thousand students stayed home.

Principal Greg Emmel said Central had a 78 percent absent rate that day thanks to the threat, which was very clear about its meaning.

"Boom," Emmel said. "We're going to blow you up." That kind of thing.

Emmel said at 5 that morning he was awakened by a call from Howard Smith, the operation manager at TAC.

Apparently the first custodian to arrive that day had seen the graffiti.

Emmel said his first thought was that he had to get to school.

"Fortunately, the police were on the scene very early," he said.

Once the few staff members who were in the building were evacuated, Emmel said, police entered and searched the building, checking security and doing a visual check of the first floor and the basement for any sign of a break-in. There was no such sign.

"I felt, 'Okay, we know the inside of the building is safe,'" Emmel said.

He said the only way then that the bomb threat could be carried out would be if a student brought in a device, so the next step would be to do quick bag searches at the door.

All doors except those at the west entrance were locked and students' bags were checked at the doors.

He said the searches were entirely his idea and were only of purses and bags. He said students weren't patted down or told to empty their pockets.

"It was more like a check," he said. "Not as much of a thorough search."

Sophomore Jose Cardenas said he heard about the bomb threat before he arrived at school from one of his friends, and thought his friend was just joking around.

He said though he was planning to go home, he had still gone through the security check. He said the pockets of his hoodie were searched along with his bag.

"It's a safety precaution," Cardenas said. "It's what they have to do. Doesn't hurt to be safe."

Emmel said among others, Vice Principal Ed Bennett, counselor Ron Moore and security aides Herb Welling and Russ Lane helped with the checks.

Bennett said he didn't hear about the threat until he was on his way to school and got a call from another staff member.

He said as always, his first thought was only for the safety of the students and wondered about the security of the school.

"Is it real?" he said he wondered. "Has anyone checked it out?"

He said Emmel asked him to assist with the bag checks at the door.

"I thought it was an excellent idea," he said.

He said it was of course a good way to keep people from bringing things in.

"We had no choice," he said.

Bennett said no students whose bags he checked appeared upset by it, and a few of them even said thank you.

He said other staff members had students thank them as well.

"They wanted to be safe, too," Bennett said. "They were going to be safer."

"Once I got here," Emmel said, "Once I talked with everybody, it

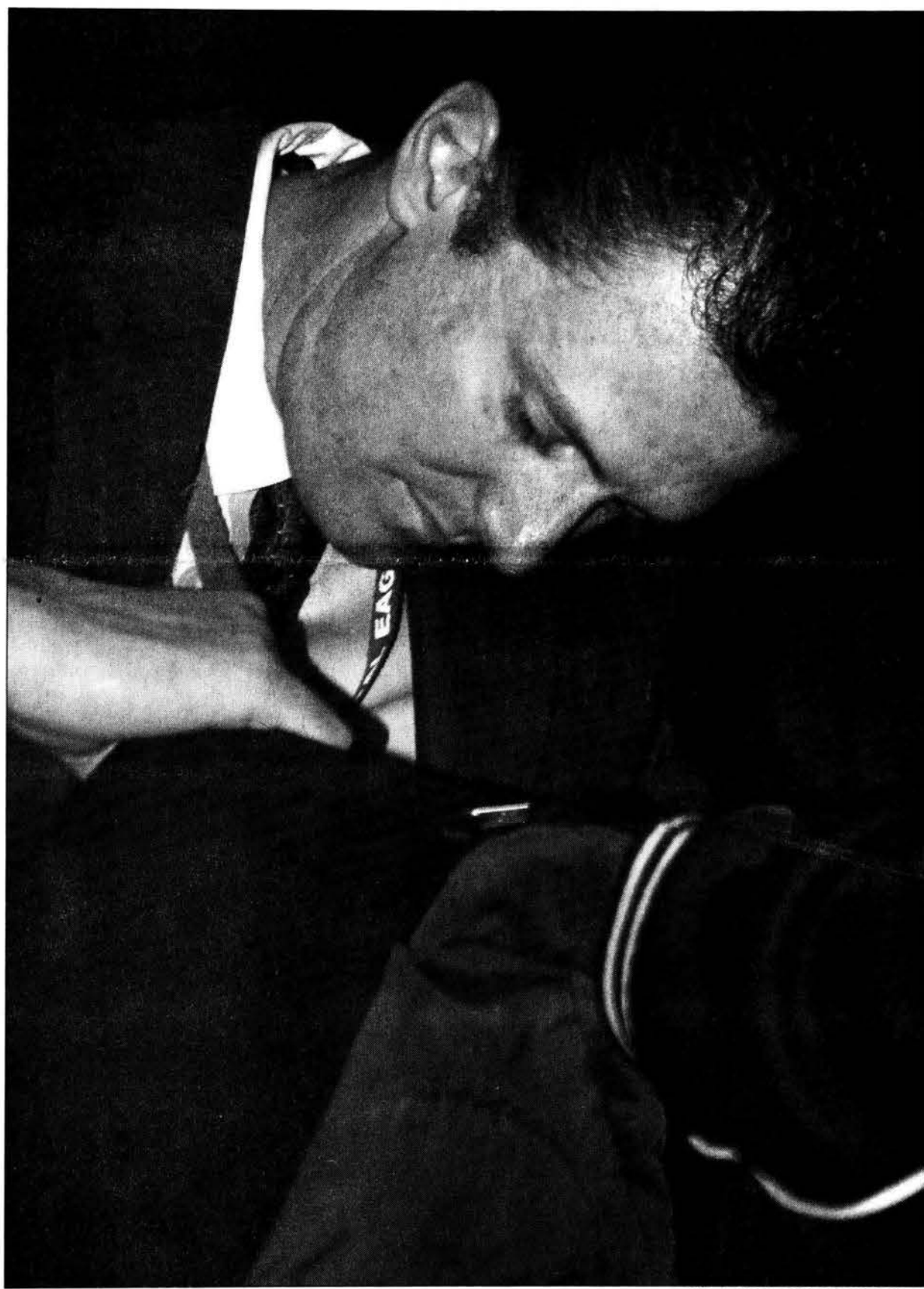


PHOTO BY PATRICK BREEN/REGISTER

Vice Principal Ed Bennett looks in the bag of a student at the West Entrance, the only open doors in the building on the morning of the threat. Principal Greg Emmel said he knew almost right away the bomb threat, which came just nine days after the shooting at Virginia Tech, was a prank, but most of the students in the school were absent anyway.

## FEELING THREATENED: STUDENTS ON THE LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL CONFRONT SAFETY CONCERNS

■ April 16.

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and University student Seugh-Hui Cho goes on a rampage across his campus, killing college students and teachers alike by locking them into rooms and shooting them. The activities of Cho, an English major, closed the school for a week while authorities investigated and students returned home to be with their families. With a total of 33 dead, including the perpetrator, this was the worst shooting in American history.

■ April 24.

After two troubling notes are found, 40 percent of the students at Ralston Middle School go home for the day, roughly 200 out of 511 students. A day later, roughly 10 times as many students will disappear from the halls of Central.

■ April 25.

Papillion-LaVista High Schools report four different threats of violence in the days after the shootings at Virginia Tech. One student is arrested for making terroristic threats to students and teachers, allegedly claiming he would create another Virginia Tech incident. Another student is arrested for responding angrily to other students' harassment. In both cases, students denied meaning what they said.

■ April 25.

Seventy-eight percent of Central students do not attend classes today after bomb threats are discovered on Seemann Stadium, a van and on the garage doors of the school.

■ April 27.

Graffiti and violent rumors push officials to take strong precautions at Chilliwack Middle School in British Columbia. Officials called off school and took even more security precautions. A week and a half passed after the Virginia Tech shooting.

■ April 27.

In Zephyr Hills, Fla., a teenager is arrested on an unrelated outstanding warrant when he threatens to mimic the Virginia Tech shooting at the school prom. The dance is delayed while officials investigate. The principal of the school says the student did not even attend the school. His ex-girlfriend, however, was a senior there.

■ May 4.

Aaron Steele, 17, is arrested at a Charlotte, N.C. high school after threatening to "stalk from classroom to classroom" with a gun. Steele had previously sent violent and troubled e-mails to his friend at another high school. That friend reported Steele to the authorities, and Steele was charged with illegal possession of a gun.

■ May 4.

A high school student in Silverdale, Wash. is expelled after threatening one of his teachers with a Virginia Tech-like event. After an investigation, it is discovered the student was simply angry because he was failing his math class. He is expelled nonetheless.

INFOGRAPHIC BY ALI HODGE/REGISTER

INFORMATION COURTESY OF KETV.COM

Continued to **Bomb Threat** on Page 4

# Professor shares experiences, knowledge of Cuban dictator Castro

BY ALI HODGE

"To me, it (Cuba) is an endless source of fascination," said University of Nebraska-Lincoln professor Jonathan Benjamin-Alvarado. "I just marvel at how resilient the Cuban people have been through this. To get a sense of how they live and how they are is fascinating."

Benjamin-Alvarado is one of only a few individuals in the United States who has contact and has spent time with Cuba's long-time leader, Fidel Castro, because of his research concerning Cuba's electricity and power supply.

He has visited the country, which is closed to Americans, many times for research and has developed a strong love for the people, the country and his work there.

Benjamin-Alvarado spoke to Michelle Pliess' honors geography classes in early May. He shared with the classes general information on Cuba as well as political and cultural knowledge.

He also spoke about the time when he and his team of researchers from Washington were guests in the home of Fidel Castro.

Benjamin-Alvarado's daughter, Isabel, who is a sophomore, said she thinks her dad's presentation to the students was a good opportunity for them to learn more about a Latino culture.

"I think they're really fortunate to hear my dad and share his knowledge," she said. She's glad that this information about Cuba can be told to students other than those who attend the university.

Isabel said she feels the students will get a lot from her father's presentation, especially since he is only one of about 10 Americans who are allowed to visit Castro.

Her father has traveled to Cuba many times, putting himself in a potentially dangerous position each time now that he has contact with the man so many have grown to hate.

"I've never worried about him," she said. "I went down there the summer before sixth grade and I felt completely safe."

Her father has written two books about Cuba and its power supply and has stayed in Cuba many times, at longest a month.

His books, "Power to the People" and "Cuba's Energy Future" deal strictly with

Cuba developing nuclear and other forms of energy. Both of which, he said deal with issues the United States is dealing with.

The books and the research have gotten her father nation-wide attention. "I'm known as one of the top experts in this area," he said. "I think it (energy) is the most important issue we have as humans."

He has received funding for research from both the Ford Foundation and the McArthur Foundation, money with which he is free to do anything relating to his work.

In 1996, Cuba gave him permission to access any information in the country he wanted.

With the help of both governments, he can now commute directly between the two countries, something any other American cannot do since borders are supposed to be closed.

Benjamin-Alvarado became interested in Cuba when he was in his 30s and

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INSIDE



**Flight Simulator**

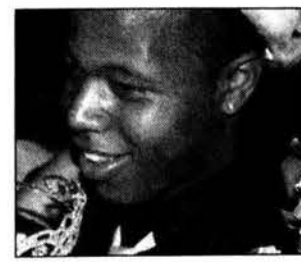
Students get a chance to experience what it would be like to fly with the Blue Angels.

PAGE 2

**Prom**

Teachers, as well as students helped in making this year's prom a safe and fun environment.

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## School groups come together to clean city

BY MAX LARSON

Downtown Cleanup featured a slightly larger number of students than last year, around 160 in total, and included several of the school's various organizations, coordinator Vicki Deniston Reed said.

Deniston Reed, who has been involved with the cleanup for 10 years, said this was her first year as its coordinator.

She said the cleanup has been working with Downtown Omaha Inc. for 14 years. It began as a volunteer morning to help demonstrate an interest in the neighborhood.

The cleanup spanned an area from 24th to 10th streets, and from Burt to Leavenworth.

Deniston Reed said it was definitely a Central community effort, and she was very happy with that. Groups that participated included National Honors Society, Jean Whitten's honors biology classes, Art Club, French Club, ROTC, AcaDeca, Minority Scholars, Fine Lines and Science Club.

"National Honors Society is always the biggest group," she said.

She said the cleanup also involved other aspects of the community. Downtown Omaha, Inc. provided trolley cars to transport students to the cleanup destinations and back to Central afterwards and sacks to place the garbage into.

The local carpenter's union provided trucks and labor to pick up the trash sacks.

She said Parents Educators Pupils (PEP) also treated the students to free donuts and juice beforehand and pizza and soda afterwards.

Deniston Reed said being a part of the cleanup was a good idea because many Central students catch buses and patronize downtown businesses after school.

Helping to clean the downtown area offers an outlet for contribution to these services.

She said the cleanup promoted good relations with the neighborhood.

"It's a nice gesture back to the community," Deniston Reed said.

## FEA helps out at activity on Creighton field

BY CLAIRE LANGDON

Future Educators of America (FEA) took a field trip down to the Creighton University soccer field.

Sponsor Robin Hanus said there were 10 Central students who helped in several different activities.

She said around 9:30 buses filled with Pre-K through grade six children from Kellom Academy unloaded.

Each Central student was paired up with a class to assist the teachers.

Hanus said there were at least 200 kids there.

"But there could have been 500 for all I know," she said.

She said 22 different stations were set up on the field.

Each station was a fun game, whether it be tug-of-war or relay races, that the kids would travel around and play.

She said one of her girls became soaking wet after a pre-planned water fight.

Hanus said the Central students stuck with the class they were assigned to in the beginning of the day as they went to every station.

She said they grilled out on the field and the Central students were served a free lunch and given a chance to reminisce on their old field days when they were in elementary school.

She said by the end of the day all of the students were exhausted.

In fact, next year Hanus said she plans to bring lemonade and cookies for her students for all the hard work they put in.

"It was a nice thing to do in the spring time," Hanus said.

She said opportunities like this give students a chance to recognize if working with younger children is what they want to do.

Some students realized they would much rather teach at an older grade level because of this field trip.

She also said some students also realized they just do not want to work with kids in any capacity.

Next year, Hanus said, she would like to get many more students involved so that FEA can help out with different kindergarten round-ups.

# CALENDAR



PHOTO BY PATRICK O'MALLEY/ REGISTER

Eric Smith takes down the flight simulator the Navy had set up for physical education, physics and JROTC classes after it had been up in front of Seemann Stadium May 1. The Navy recruiters came to Central as part of Omaha's Navy week.

## NAVY recruiters bring flight simulator

BY PATRICK O'MALLEY

Being jostled and thrown around in a Navy flight simulator was how many students and faculty members spent their day in early May.

The ride was a five minute flight simulating what it would be like to fly with a the Navy Blue Angels.

At some points in the demonstration, the wings of your neighboring pilot would only be a couple feet away.

Mayor Mike Fahey declared the first week in May Navy week in Omaha. "My job is to bring Navy into the Heartland," Navy Officer of Community Outreach Robin Nelson said.

Nelson said many activities at schools around town hosted activities during Navy week.

Along with that, the Navy band performed at an Omaha Royals game and an annual air show was held at Offutt Air Force Base.

The Defenders of Freedom air show was cancelled this year. "We had such a warm welcome in Omaha last year we thought we'd come back," Nelson said.

Gary Mason, a Navy recruiter for Central, said he thought the week truly did create more Navy awareness in the community.

He said the reaction he received from the school was very positive as well.

"Mason was giving a presentation to one of my classes and he mentioned it," Lt. Col. Mike Melvin said.

He said the JROTC department does not let recruiters into the schools to pitch their service and the JROTC department did not have a part in any Navy activities outside of the school.

"They are allowed to talk about opportunity and college," Melvin said. "They are not allowed to recruit."

They were not allowed to take down any names and numbers of students unless they were interested and contacted them.

"They don't really get the opportunity so it gives them more of an introduction,"

Melvin said.

Melvin said principal Greg Emmel did not have any problems with having the simulator in the parking lot.

"It was a real surprise," Melvin said.

He said he did not expect Mason to show up with it on Monday. He said they planned it for a later date, but he showed up with it early.

He said he wanted all of his classes to have the opportunity to ride it as well as physical education and physics classes, but was not able to because of its unexpected arrival.

The ride was also opened to any faculty members who were interested.

In the middle of the afternoon, the flight simulator overheated and never worked the same.

The maintenance had not been kept up over the past few years.

"I'm fascinated with flight," senior Zach Pope said. "I really liked the recruiter."

Pope said he has wanted to fly ever since he was a toddler and considered the Navy, but ended up joining the Marines.

He said he was considering flying jets with the Marines and leaves for training June 25.

He said he helped a family friend fly a Cessna 185 jet to Plattsmouth and enjoyed the experience of being in the air.

He said he felt the take-off and the landing were the most accurate parts of the video because the ride was not able to realistically re-enact the intensity of flying in the air with a Blue Angel.

There were two rows of seating and bars to hold onto while being rocked back and forth.

The jets flipped over and went in circles and the simulator was only able to jolt and rock the rider side to side and up and down.

He said he had to wait in a big line for about 20 minutes during his sixth period lunch hour. They were waiting because they were looking at what was wrong with the simulator after it overheated.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

May

### 17 Seniors' last day of school

Seniors, be sure to check the final exam schedule and make sure you have all your requirements to graduate. Check in with the counselors if you have any questions.

### 23 Graduation

Graduation will be held for seniors, their families and friends at the Civic Auditorium at 7 p.m. Seniors, be sure to buy the tickets for your guests ahead of time, as seats run out quickly.

### 23-25 Finals for freshmen, sophomores, juniors

Finals will be held the last three days of school for all underclassmen. Check with teachers for the schedule of exams.

### 25 Last day of school for underclassmen

Fourth quarter and second semester end today. Students will be out for the summer and will resume school again in September.

June

### 6 Summer school begins

Summer school begins for those students, both underclassmen and seniors, who need to make up credits in order to graduate. If any student is interested in taking summer school and wants more information, see an administrator.

August

### 23 Freshmen's first day of school

To make the freshmen feel more comfortable in a school much larger than their middle school, freshmen are required to attend school a day earlier to familiarize themselves with the building before the upperclassmen arrive the next day.

### 24 Upperclassmen's first day of school

Welcome to the 2007-2008 school year. Upperclassmen, come your first day prepared, awake and ready to listen to instructions in order to receive your schedule. The first day falls on the 24th and students are expected to be at school at 7:45 in the morning as usual.

### 25 First home football game

Students look forward to this game for months. Especially since it's against North. The game will be the day after school starts and will be held at Central's Seemann Stadium.

## CHEETA Club raises attention and awareness

BY PATRICK BREEN

"Whatever love you give to the sponsor Cat Kennedy said. "You get a hundred-fold in return."

Central's Education for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (CHEETA) club

sponsor knows the meaning of animals in her life as she has seven living in her house.

"I have four cats and three dogs," she said.

And she and her club are trying to share that love for animals with the school.

Two weeks after traveling to making donations to the "No Kill Shelter" the CHEETA members sponsored "Be Kind to Animal Week," which lasted from Tuesday, May 8 through Friday, May 12.

The goal of the week was to raise awareness about animals.

"We wanted to... show people how much they (animals) enrich your life," she said.

Kennedy started the club and has been active for six years ago, and has decided to keep it going because of student involvement.

"I'm a life-long animal lover," she said.

Members hope by raising awareness people will treat animals with a little more love and respect.

After the "Be Kind to Animals Week" the CHEETA club will be spending an overnight trip at the Henry Doorly Zoo.



KENNEDY

## Seniors earn national honors through work

BY PATRICK BREEN

Hard work, determination and effort can lead to some great things.

This year Central has seen that more of its students become National Merit Semi-finalists.

Even more impressive and a credit to those students is the fact that three have become finalists in one of the nation's most prestigious awards.

"It was pretty cool," said senior Karima Al-Absy, who qualified for the award.

Four years of hard work at Central paid off for the students.

When looking into their schedules during their senior years, one will see a diverse amount of classes, but a common thread in all.

They all have honors and advanced placement classes throughout the day.

Al-Absy and fellow seniors Keri Kennedy and Aimee Koenig became the most recent in a long list of students who had achieved this honor.

The students had to accomplish several things even before being considered for this honor.

Besides the obvious fact that the students have to be seniors, Al-Absy said seniors must have scored well on the preliminary test.

"First you have to get a good score on the PSAT," she said. "Then if you score well enough, you fill out an application."

From there, the students had to write a personal essay, and the principal had to write a letter of recommendation.

Al-Absy said they found out in October they were semi-finalists and took over two more months before the students found out all three qualified for the finalist in the national competition.

All three received Reagent Scholarships to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL), or University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO).

Although Al-Absy said she is going to either UNL or UNO, choosing to go to Creighton instead, she liked the recognition.

"Hard work," she said, "and believe me, you take the test (PSAT), take some prep from a review book."

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# Sophomore gains honors for WWII film at History Day

BY ALI HODGE

Going into a state history competition humbly, not expecting anything, sophomore Michael Walsh was honored for his award-winning documentary about the World War II battle of Iwo Jima.

The documentary, "Courage, Carnage, and Conquest: The Bloody Battle of Iwo Jima," won second place at the Nebraska History Day Competition and now has qualified to go on to Nationals in Washington, D.C. this summer.

"It's fun to put something together that will challenge others and be entertaining as well," Walsh said.

Walsh said he decided to make a documentary because he has done them in the past and he enjoys projects dealing with film making.

This was not the first time he had been recognized for his hard work at research and film making.

He qualified to go to Nationals in the same competition in his middle school years.

In seventh grade, Walsh made a documentary on the evolution of technology and in eighth grade he did another on John F. Kennedy and his communications. Both documentaries placed in the competitions.

"He's an excellent student. He's hard working," said Walsh's advanced placement (AP) U.S. History teacher, Scott Wilson. "And he has a real interest in film making."

Wilson said normally he wouldn't let sophomores take AP U.S. History.

"Usually we like the students to have more experience in social studies and English," he said.

However, he made an exception for Walsh and a few other sophomores who have shown exemplary skills in both subjects and as students all together.

The documentary that won second place at the competition was a companion to a project Walsh had already been working on for Wilson's class, the big end of the year project in which each student would do a lengthy presentation on a Central graduate who had died in World War II.

In Walsh's case, his veteran had died during the island battle of Iwo Jima.

So Walsh worked off of information he had already gathered and after a year, he managed to create an award-winning documentary.

Wilson and others who have seen the documentary said it is very thorough, professional and impressive.

They said it demonstrates a talent in the art of film production and uses many different medias to recreate the battle.

Walsh said he used photos from professional sources on the Internet and film clippings from History Channel specials on Iwo Jima.

As sources in the documentary, Walsh tracked down two experts on the battle of Iwo Jima through publishers of books they had written on the subject and schools they had attended.

Walsh interviewed Major Robert Burell, a marine and a student of this specific battle.

Walsh said he found out about him because he was one of the only people who has published a very detailed account of the battle, complete with the most detailed bibliography said to exist on this topic.

Burell was also an active Marine, something Walsh said made his opinions of the battle different from another person in another branch of the military.

Walsh followed Burell through the Internet and contacts at Annapolis through e-mail, only to find out he was living on duty in Okinawa, Japan.

Walsh contacted Burell and set up a phone interview, which proved to be harder than it sounded due to the extreme time difference.

"I was really nervous," Walsh said.

But Burell turned out to be very interesting, kind and obviously had a lot to say about the topic.

For the interview, Walsh called Burell overseas in Okinawa. However, for the documentary, he asked Burell to videotape himself.

The entire process took Walsh his sophomore year to construct with the information, the photos, the video clips, the interviews and finally putting it together. Wilson said Walsh entered his documentary into the senior (high school-age students) individual documentary category.

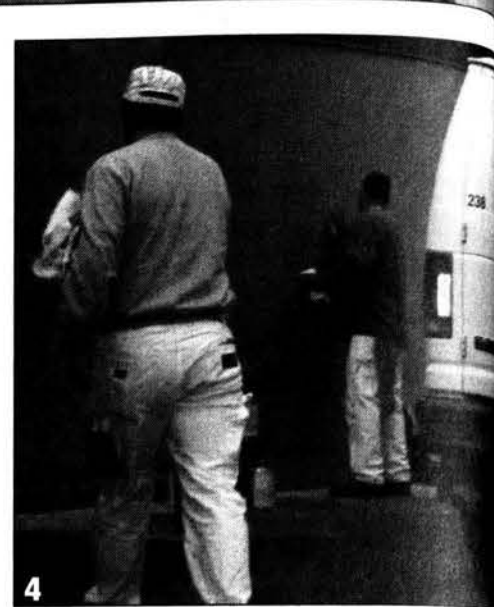
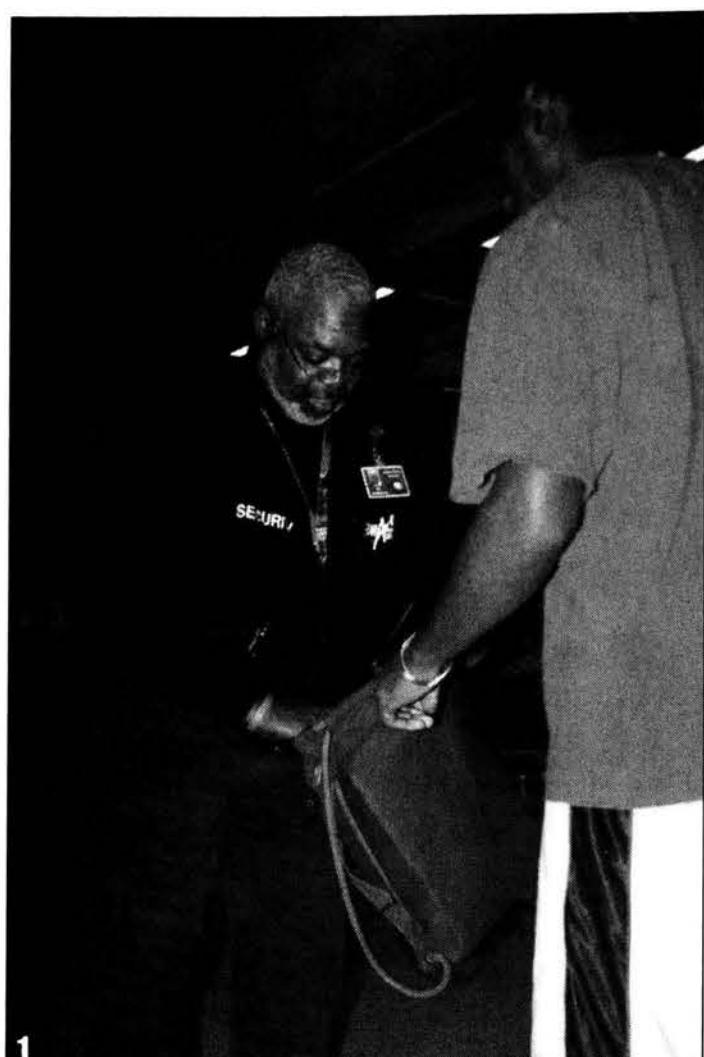
Walsh said he had to present his documentary at the state competition and found out later that day around 3:30 he had won second place.

He said during the competition, he was in constant contact with Wilson through text messaging. Wilson was out of town at the time, but Walsh attended nevertheless and gave his presentation as well.

When he finally learned he had won second place, he said he was shocked.

"I was very happy," he said. "I went into it not expecting anything."

Walsh said he can't wait to go to Washington, D.C.



PHOTOS BY PATRICK BREEN/REGISTER

1. Security aide Mike McWhorter checks the bag of a student entering the building that morning after the bomb threat was found. 2. Sophomore Bailey Dilocker, freshman Lindy Dilocker and sophomore Haleigh Tomasek allow a camera man from News Channel 7 to film them for that morning's news. 3. The word "BOOM" as well as other vulgar and threatening messages were written on the walls of Seemann stadium, garage doors and other school property. 4. OPS painters work to paint over the bomb threat a few hours after it had been discovered. 5. Freshman Amanda Byers uses her cell phone as she sits outside school late that morning. Almost 80 percent of the student body, like Byers, decided to go home for fear that something may happen or used the day as an excuse for time off.

# Prank causes students to abandon school

■ CONTINUED FROM 'BOMB THREAT' ON PAGE 1

basically was my decision to open the building or close it."

The decision to keep the building open was made when Emmel was certain there was no real threat.

He said he didn't want to send a message that the threat, which by then he knew was a prank, could shut down the building. He said he made announcements to keep the staff members and students in the building informed. He said he also talked to news crews, which had arrived by the time students were walking up to school, in an effort to get rid of rumors which were circling.

"There was some misinformation," he said. "I wanted to get the truth out. I was like, 'I want to get the media to let them know.'"

Freshman Qusai Nowwara said when he came into the building, he didn't know why he was searched at the doors. He said he feels safe at Central because of the security.

The first announcement over the PA system came at 7:10, and Emmel informed the students and staff that all the exterior doors were locked.

"We're open for business," he said.

Senior Elden Rowlett said he thought the threat was fake, but he said he didn't think it was a violation of his rights to be searched at the door.

"It's for public safety, I guess," Rowlett said.

Senior Nick Almazan said when he arrived at school and parked his car, people told him there was a bomb threat. He said he saw the covered-up spray paint on the stadium and then when he got to the doors saw backpacks were being searched. He said he planned to leave without even entering the building.

"Didn't want to get caught up in that mess," he said.

He said a lot of people were probably scared because of the Virginia Tech shootings which had occurred just the Monday before.

In possibly the deadliest shooting in modern U.S. history, Korean-born Seung-Hui Cho was able to cause 33 deaths on the Virginia Tech campus, including his own on the morning of April 16.

He injured an additional 25 people before he took his own

life that day.

This sudden act of violence recalled the numerous shootings which took place around the country and in Canada in the fall of last year. Some people were concerned at the outburst because it meant someone was, in fact, capable of committing such shocking acts.

If it could happen there, perhaps it could happen anywhere.

There had been numerous threats around the Metro area to schools in that week, including the Ralston scare.

There were four threats at Papillion-LaVista High School in the days after the Virginia Tech massacre. One 16-year-old was charged with making verbal terroristic threats in his classes.

One of the things Emmel said he wanted to clear up confusion about was the attendance policy for the day. Some students didn't know whether they were excused or not or if the school was even officially open, he said.

The official policy for that day, Emmel said, was if a parent called to excuse a senior, the absence would not count towards the five absences allotted to seniors in the second semester who wanted to avoid taking final exams. If a senior was simply absent, on the other hand, that absence would go towards the five.

As for the resultant high absence rate, Emmel said he attributed it to three reasons.

"There were honestly some students and parents who were afraid," he said. "I completely respect those families. I completely understand."

On the other hand, the rumors and false information circling around caused some students not even to make it into the building before leaving without knowing the entire situation.

"A lot of misinformation was getting around," Emmel said.

Thirdly, he said, some students just took the opportunity to have a free day, like Senior Skip Day. He said they were then unsupervised for the rest of the day.

Bennett agreed.

"Some students were legitimately concerned," he said.

"Others saw it as a chance to take a day off."

It was their decision to make, Emmel said.

"If you took a comparison," he said, "the ones who stay here were far safer."

Emmel said if he would have done anything different he might have tried to station staff members on Dodge and Davenport to talk to parents who were arriving.

"Let people know what's going on," he said. "Invite them in."

Bennett said he thought the administration did a good job and said he could not think of anything off-hand which could have necessarily done better or would choose to change in future handlings of similar events. He said he had talked with other staff members about security at the building since the threat occurred.

"Every situation is different," he said.

Though Emmel too said every situation is unique, this was not the first time Emmel has seen a bomb threat take place. He said this is the first time he has seen one in graffiti form, but he said he has seen them at other schools in the district.

"I've witnessed a phoned-in bomb threat before," he said. Of all the phone calls and e-mails Emmel said he received, only one e-mail said he should have closed the building in the face of the threat. He said by the time he received the message though, the day had already begun.

"We weren't going to shut things down after we opened them up," he said.

Bennett said many of the calls the school received that day were positive. Many were parents, he said, who were frustrated that the prank had occurred.

"We got a number of phone calls from parents saying 'thank you,'" he said. "Based on parent and student reaction, it went well."

Supervisor of Operations for OPS Jim Morgan said the problem went to Operations because it was graffiti. He said Operations takes care of upkeep of school buildings, keeping them clean and well maintained. Morgan said Operations does everything from custodial work and cutting grass or clearing snow to preparing for events such as track meets. He said the department was in charge of renovations at Central in past years as well, and runs the security systems.

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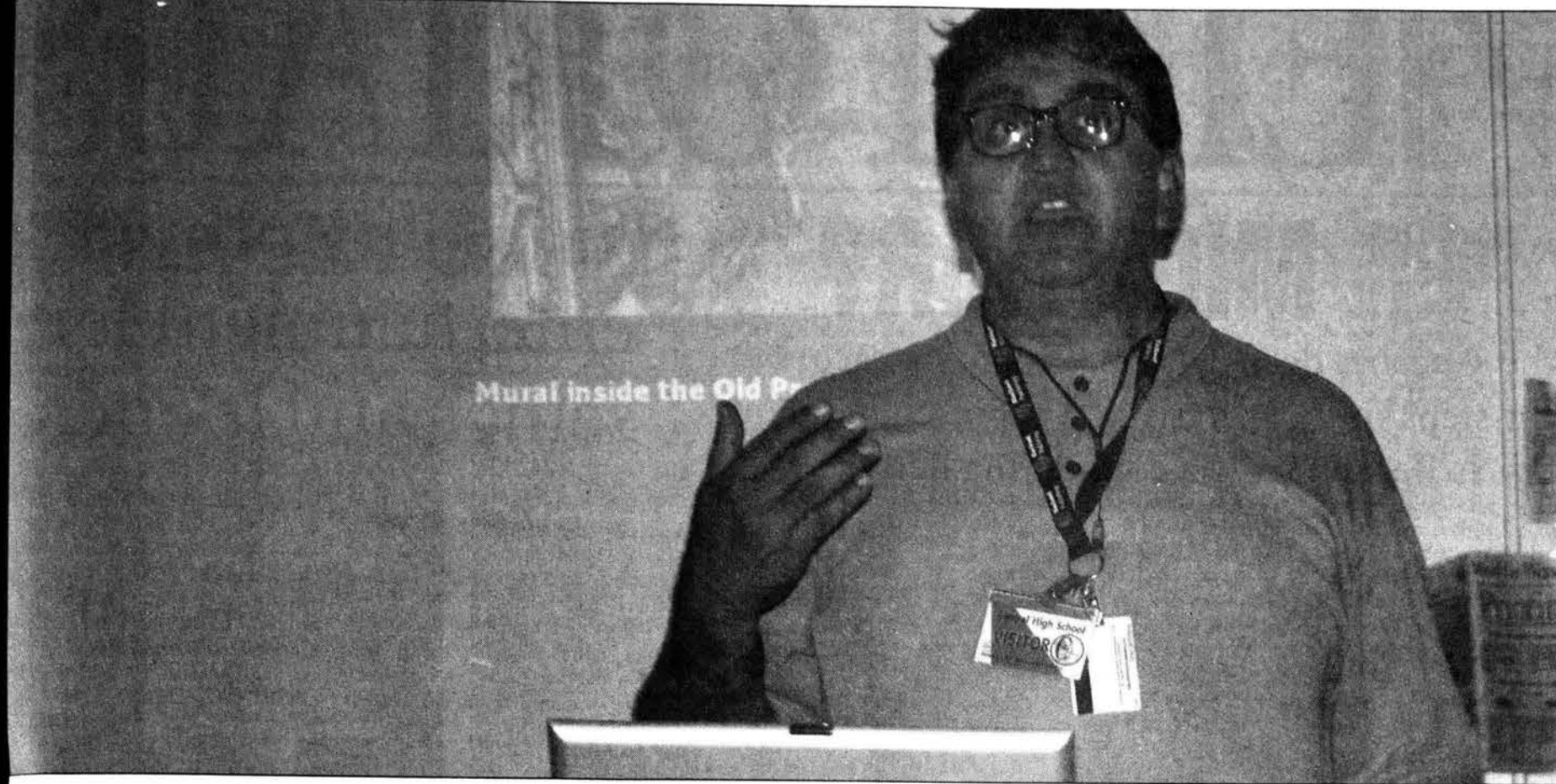


PHOTO BY ALI HODGE/REGISTER

Professor Jonathan Benjamin-Alvarado talks to geography classes about his trips to Cuba and the dinner he had with Fidel Castro. Benjamin-Alvarado has dedicated his life to working with the people and information in Cuba and sharing his knowledge with America.

# Sophomore's father represents Cuba

CONTINUED FROM 'SPEAKER' ON PAGE 1

oyed it.

His fascination with Cuba came from a session when the members of his think tank were sitting together discussing the politics and lives of citizens in the small country.

His boss said as they were in the middle of the discussion that Benjamin-Alvarado should research and write an essay on the country since he spoke, wrote and understood Spanish.

Therefore, he started reading and researching more and more on Cuba's people, history and politics. He composed a paper which was immediately published in a number of academic journals.

"It took my whole life over from there," he said. "I wanted to work in the CIA. That's what I was preparing myself to do. It has changed my entire life."

From researching Cuba, he went on to study subjects directly and indirectly related to forms of energy. Taking an interest in that, he combined the two and wrote his books. One of his trips to Cuba with his research team, he was called the manager of the trip and told to be in the lobby of his hotel in 45 minutes to go to dinner with Fidel Castro.

"It was nerve-wracking at first," he said. "To see him face to face and shake his hand and have dinner with him, it was amazing."

Benjamin-Alvarado said to be able to meet the man he had read and heard so much about over the years was like meeting a superstar.

Dinner lasted around eight hours. They arrived to see Castro at around 7 that night and didn't even order until midnight. Castro started talking and joking immediately and did not tire the length of the evening, even at 80 years old.

Benjamin-Alvarado said Castro was fascinating, extremely intelligent, sharp minded, eloquent, and self-possessed. He was waited on hand and foot by servants everywhere from pulling out his chair when he sat down to wiping his mouth as he was eating.

Nevertheless, he was spirited and showed a high level of intelligence when he talked, even as he joked. Benjamin-Alvarado said as the evening went on, he took 32 pages of notes on notebook paper, documenting what Castro had said relating to his research and other things.

"It didn't even feel like I was writing," he said.

He arrived back to his hotel room early that morning to find his hand was in pain and his head was spinning from the excitement of being able to have dinner with Castro.

"It was an affirmation of my research," he said. "It gave me energy to continue."

Benjamin-Alvarado said he and his crew will be working on completing a new job soon, which should cause waves

across the nation.

For the first time in 45 years, Benjamin-Alvarado will bring to America the voices and opinions of the Cuban people.

The Gallup Administration in Omaha, which takes public opinion polls all over the world, took a poll in Cuba concerning a number of different issues. For the first time in over four decades, the information will be allowed to be used by Benjamin-Alvarado and his research team and be distributed to the public either in the form of a book or academic articles or a series of assemblies hosted by Benjamin-Alvarado himself.

To gain more information for the project, he plans to return to Cuba in February.

Anything Benjamin-Alvarado writes can be expected to be published and praised because of his reputation as a representative of both Cuba and the United States. He gets nationwide recognition for his work and has been interviewed for a large number of publications, been on television many times and even had a 10 minute interview aired on CNN.

"It's not as important that I'm the one that's doing it," he said. "Just so that it gets done."

Benjamin-Alvarado said 3 million more people would go to Cuba from the United States if the doors were open to them. That means the economic change in Cuba would be huge. He said he hopes after President Bush's second term ends, the travel laws will be lifted as well.

# Students get opportunity to look at Guard

BY KIM BUCKLEY

Five students from the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) department were able to see what it is like to be in the National Guard.

School resource officer Matthew Kelly said Guard for Life was an exercise that medical units put on at Camp Ashland which simulated the response for evacuating and treating casualties.

"It gives them more information to view first-hand on what the guard does," he said.

Kelly said Guard for Life wasn't necessarily just for the JROTC department. He said it was the first group he asked and there were enough students who were interested to fill the requirement.

"I knew some of them (JROTC students) had an interest in the military," he said.

Kelly said he knew about Guard for Life because he is a lieutenant colonel in the guard and a recruiter told him.

Junior Renee Wilder was one of those who participated in Guard for Life.

"I'm interested in the military as a career," she said.

Kelly said he thought it was good for the JROTC students to see what training the guard does on the weekend. He said he also thought the helicopter ride would be fun for the students.

Wilder said during Guard for Life, she was able to talk to people in the National Guard and do activities such as go on a training convoy with soldiers, a shooting simulator and ride in a Humvee and helicopter.

She said during the training convoy, there were make-up artists who helped simulate injuries. She said as part of the training, they had to call the injury into the location and a helicopter came down and carried that person away.

Wilder said it was a fun experience that let her see some differences of the National Guard.

She said seeing the simulated injury hasn't stopped her from thinking about a military career.

Wilder said even though she knows the risks of the military, having a career in it is still something she would like to do.

Like Wilder, junior James Palmer said he was interested in participating in Guard for Life because he was interested in the military and law enforcement area.

Palmer also said he wasn't deterred from looking at the military and law enforcement as a career from seeing the possible danger. He said it was because everybody is injured sometime in their life.

"It's not when it will happen, but how it will happen," Palmer said.

He said his favorite part of Guard for Life was a ride over the Elkhorn River in a Chinook.

# Department holds annual awards ceremony night to honor cadets

BY KIM BUCKLEY

It was a chance for the cadets to shine.

The Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) held its recognition ceremony in the auditorium in March.

Lt. Col. Mike Melvin said he suspects the tradition goes back to when JROTC started, whether in the form of a ball or a dinner.

"I can't imagine JROTC not having a recognition ceremony," he said.

He said being one of the people to present his cadets awards made him extremely happy and proud. He said he and Sgt. Maj. Dwaine Sutter put in a lot of work guiding people to do better.

"It's nice to see when your efforts have been successful," Melvin said.

Junior Elvis Servellon said this was his third time attending the awards ceremony.

"It gives the cadets the opportunity to be rewarded for what they've done

throughout the year," he said.

Servellon said the ceremony brings up everybody's spirits and motivates them to work toward more awards. He said his favorite part of the ceremony was the refreshments afterwards, where people talked and hung out.

Cadet Capt. Briana Armendariz, a junior, was the master of ceremonies (MC) for the recognition night. Melvin said it fell into her duties as the S1. He said at next year's recognition ceremony it will be sophomore Drew Roberts. Melvin said it is a pre-determined duty.

Armendariz said she wasn't really nervous about being the MC of the night because it was nothing new for her. She said she was the MC of the Brigade review last year, she spoke in the brief for the BFI and has done speeches in her classes.

Melvin said there was no rehearsal for the recognition night and cards were used. He said the cards were updated as needed. He said Armendariz received the names of the recipients around 4 p.m. the day of the ceremony.

"We want it to be a surprise when their name is announced," he said.

Melvin said even though he and Sutter knew the names of the recipients weeks in advance, the cadets didn't.

Armendariz said because she wanted to familiarize herself with the names and had to set up, getting the names at the last minute added to the thought process of things.

She said the only thing she was nervous about was her voice, because she had been sick and kept losing her voice during the day. She said she was worried it wouldn't be as strong as it should have been.

Armendariz said water helped her voice come back for the ceremony and she thinks she did fine.

Melvin said there are three school awards that can be given to cadets. He said there was the Roark Award, the Fous Award and the Frank Gulgard Award, which he said wasn't awarded to a cadet this year. Armendariz said it was mandatory for all of the cadets to attend the recognition night. She said more cadets showed up at this year's ceremony than in the years she has attended previously.

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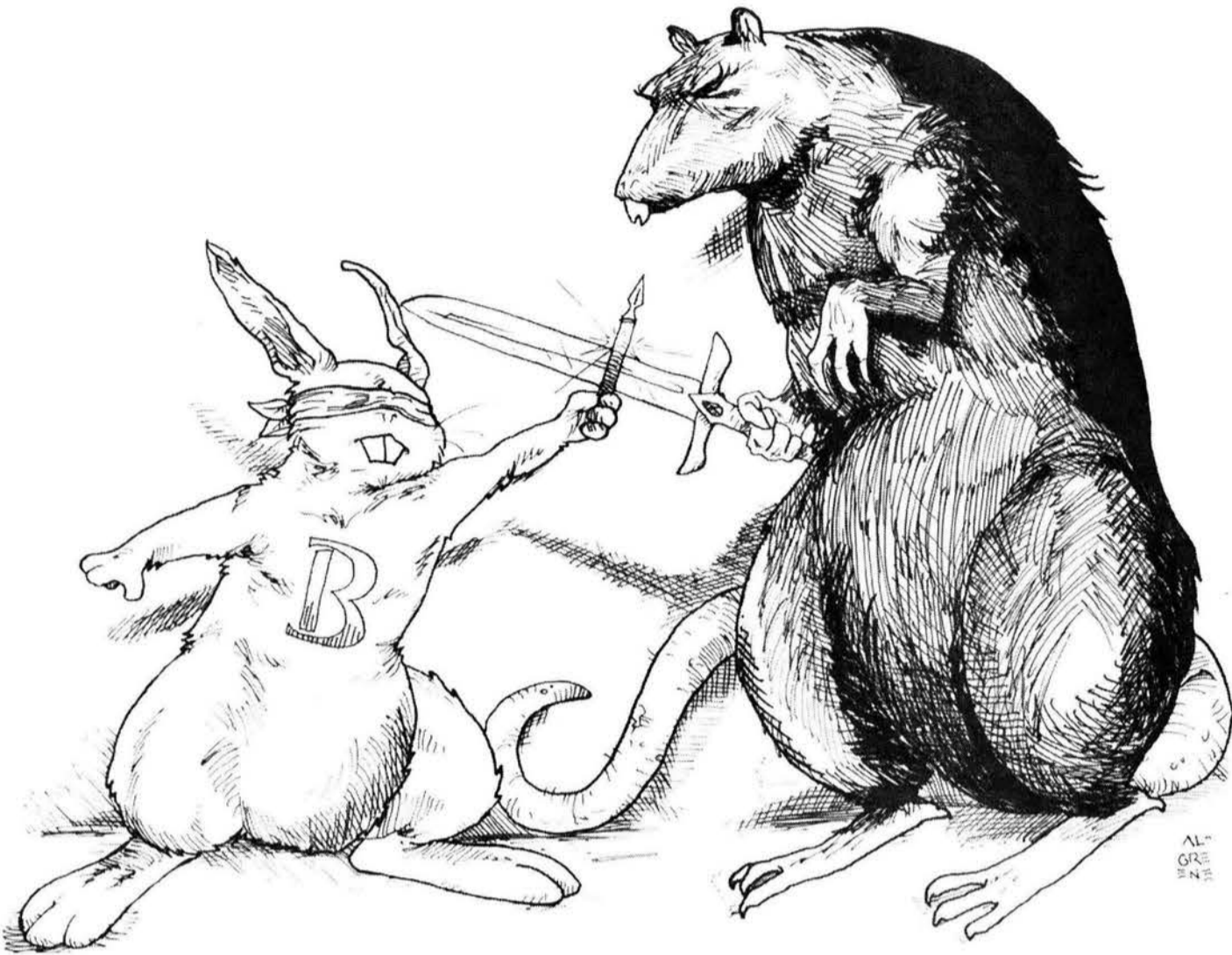
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# EDITORIALS

## IS THE PEN MIGHTIER?

Benson's school paper, the *Gazette*, dealt with the topic of race, but did the staff take the right steps in its analysis and represent student journalists properly? Is Benson truly a conquering hero?



Greg Emmel  
PRINCIPAL  
Matt Deabler  
ADVISER  
Bob Al-Greene  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

On the front of the March issue of the *Benson Gazette*, a somber letter from the editor, Sarah Swift, read: "We use language that may make people uncomfortable, but we feel that the use of language is justified in our mission to inform our readers of issues important to them." Quite a noble declaration.

The topic at hand, for those not aware, was the "N" word, that mysterious noun which, from humble beginnings as a symbol of everything wrong with America, has somehow become a term of endearment within the community it was once used to demean. This shift is a worthy topic to discuss, especially in high schools, where tomorrow's leaders hear or use the word countless times on a daily basis.

After its publication, Benson's principal, Lisa Dale, was put on administrative leave. It seems she let a topic slip by her which she should have nixed. Her superiors, obviously, did not feel as supportive of the discussion in a high school climate.

There is a widespread mistrust of journalists in this country, and even more so a lack of support for student journalists, who can be effectively censored by administrations due to legal precedent and actual guidelines. It's impossible for a high school journalist to be taken seriously or tackle a real subject so long as administrations hold tight to a view that such topics are "too real" for immature students.

Dale got pulled because this was exactly the kind of topic she should have nipped right in the bud (in their point of view). That's how these things work - there's a lot of panic right after even a slightly controversial paper hits, and people react from the gut, often not for the good of the journalists at hand.

What Swift said in her letter on the front page was exactly right - high school students are mature enough to read discussions of a word with such deep history, confusing meaning and everyday usage, and they had a right to see it in a high school newspaper, handled effectively with care, ethics and responsibility. So did the *Gazette* do that?

Unfortunately, that's not as crystal clear.

Before the four-page feature section even began, on the second page, in the middle of the news part of the *Gazette*, a nearly half-page editorial cartoon ran which dealt with the racial issues at hand. In the simplistic drawings, a white kid was beaten up by a black student after referring to him with the friendly usage of the word. Later, in court, he was sentenced to 50 hours of community service by "Judge Negro," an apparently racially biased judge who used the word in every sentence.

Even ignoring the rule of thumb that editorial cartoons should never run beside news content (especially news content which has nothing to do with the cartoon), this was a poor choice. The staff of the *Gazette* is not Dave Chappelle. If they truly wanted to discuss the topic seriously, they should not have begun by treating it like a joke.

Then, on page nine, the actual section began, with a powerfully simple cover page which quoted students at the school and then Tupac Shakur, who if memory serves, wasn't a Benson grad.

The second page contained a point-counterpoint between a black student who tentatively believed it was not OK to use the word and a white student who couldn't understand why people would get so upset over his usage of the word and so indignant after listening to a speaker who urged them against using it.

The students made good points, and the case was built further by the story "Rules of a word," (the only actual story in the section) in which a staff writer deconstructed the word with the help of sources such as a dean and students. This story worked well to open up the section by establishing the issue, but it didn't develop much.

The third page of the section was a transcript of a discussion in a class between students and the teacher. They made interesting points about what's allowed in school and what synonyms for the word are. Interestingly, the "N" word was dashed out in this section as if it was a curse word, though everywhere else in the paper it was explicitly used. This caused some confusion, especially since it wasn't obvious which variation of the word the speaker had actually used.

The fourth and final page was by far the most objectionable, both in terms of quality and risque material. A vast majority of the page was taken up by another bad cartoon, based once again on the idea of a white person using the word. Once again, the punch-line was an act of black-on-white violence, and one can't help but wonder if the two strips were meant to go together. If so, and if the strips were originally meant to be one and were only split up to fill space, then that shows an incredible lack of concept of layout on the part of the staff.

Underneath the enormous cartoon ran the last written piece in the paper, a column or editorial (hard to tell) entitled "For all my honkies and homies." In it, the Opinion editor took it upon himself to throw as many racial slurs into a few paragraphs as he could. The point (if it had a point) of the editorial/column/embarrassment was that the proliferation of such slurs could somehow put an end to discrimination. It single-handedly put a black eye on the entire paper with his one short addition. It was emblematic of what seemed to be the paper's jocular handling of around half of all the racial subject matter in the paper. When you have three pages of content and a third of it is a cartoon, that should be a sign.

So what is there to learn from the in-depth? There was a little promise - the editor obviously knew the topic was tough, but some of her staffers didn't represent teens or journalists well. Throughout the section, the style alternated between a serious tone and complete immaturity. Nothing was resolved, and the paper ended on a low, low note.

The editorial staff showed a sign of professionalism, though, simply in their decision to take on what is ultimately a very worthy topic.

So worthy, in fact, that in the November issue of the *Register* there was planned to be a section similar to Benson's (in concept). The idea was sparked after an unknown person spray-painted the word "N" word on the satellite dish outside Central. This presented an interesting question - why, when ended with the suffix "-ers" was the word so much more threatening than when with "-a"? If the graffiti had ended with "-a," it might not have been as noteworthy - as it was, the writing seemed like some sort of accusation.

So the question arose: What are race relations really like at the biggest, most diverse school in Nebraska? An entire 12-page specialty section (broadsheet) would've focused on this question, and the debate over that word would've figured heavily into the section, which would have been composed of news or feature stories. Not cartoons.

The section never got off the ground. Administrators took issue with the photos which would have run of the vandalism. In OPS, the ultimate decision is up to the principal, as a representative of the school whose name runs in the masthead of a student paper. Student papers, at least in OPS, are not open forums. They can be and are often censored.

But now, one can only wonder what the effect would have been had it run. The topic would've been handled much more professionally, but that wouldn't matter to anyone at the top.

The future of censorship will be up to the current generation to decide. It can only be a safe decision if it's an informed one. Be wise when looking at the material you read.

## Tunneling provides entertainment for senior and friends

You could fill this paper (and especially the column section) with tales of adolescent idiocy. They jump on trains, they drive like maniacs... and they go tunnelling.

That's right, tunnelling. And by this, I don't mean splunking, though that word is more fun to say out loud. No, I don't pack a stupid hat with a light on it... I just have to unpack my brain first.

From what thankfully limited knowledge I have of the subject at hand, I can say there is a network of drainage pipes in, around and under Elmwood and Memorial Parks. They're accessible

by way of the small creeks which run throughout the parks, surrounded by dense tree growth, hidden to the average jogger or molester patrolling the park.

Most of the pipes I've seen are round and made of nondescript concrete. They are about eight or 10 feet wide and down the center of them run small rivers of water that smells like a backed-up kitchen sink. The path is long and for the most part straight, and every few meters there's a round hole in the wall dripping that same water. I'm not sure where it comes from. I try not to care. You only see these other features if you bring a flashlight though, because inside the tunnels it's pitch black. There aren't any lights because (and I can't stress this enough) random people aren't supposed to go walking around down there!

But even so, for a while I'd been hearing from some of my best friends about their tunnelling exploits. I nodded along, hoping to God the day would never come when I'd be called upon to fulfill my own tunnelling duties.

Then that day came. My friend, we'll call him Bert, brought it up, which didn't surprise me. When he suggested it, my other friend (Dill) and I were... unreceptive. I just wasn't thrilled at the prospect of trudging through a foreboding, cavernous drainage pipe, so dark I couldn't see the stream of repulsive swamp water I had to straddle, rocking back and forth, never completely off balance, never in control of my own momentum, knowing that at the slightest slip-up on the slick concrete below me, I would go careening, face-first, into the muck.

And yet, there we stood, poised at the entrance to one of these massive pipes. A rope hung from an overhead branch, which would allow us to swing into the pipe from above since the entry way was suspended 10 feet above a pool of equally repulsive water.

Yeah, I'm about to grab the rope so I can swing into a sewer like Indiana Jones with a death wish. "Tally-ho!" No, instead we trundled through the trees down to the opposite end of the creek.

Bert pulled out his flashlight, but I think I could've produced more light by flipping open my cell phone and holding it out in front of me. Overhead were the thundering roars of cars passing over the busy street right above us.

In my head I walked miles... I was going to come up in some distant town where they'd never heard of Omaha.

We came out on the other side of Dodge, and we were back to reality. We kept going, traversing the rough, uneven landscape, branches scraping our bear forearms, dirt sliding under our feet down the slope.

Another entrance loomed before us, eminently open to entrance. But how far did it go? We followed Bert as he cranked the flashlight, resuscitating it from the edge of death.

Before long, we had reached the end of the tunnel. But instead of an opening and a breath of fresh air, we met a ledge in

the dark and a tight fit into a new tunnel of this vast underground network. The tunnel had shrunk considerably. I'm almost six-foot-four. Both of my compatriots had little problem moving forward. I, on the other hand, felt like one of the parents in that scene from *Chinatown* and the Chocolate Factory, where the hallway keeps shrinking. The walls had changed from smooth concrete to harsh, jagged bricks. It was not only my balance, also to hold onto the walls, proximity to fetid water

also increased as I moved, and my gait dangled from my sweat-soaked face. I found myself stopping every few steps, it seemed. I moved in short bursts of speed, then pressed my back against the side of the tunnel and took a breather. Then I would barrel forward again, shoulders and back scraping the bricks. To my friends, they later said, I looked like some monster charging out of the abyss at them. Ahead, there was dull light. Were we nearing the end?

No. As I closed in on my friend, I saw there was a manhole cover. They were up was dirty (surprise) and ragged, a few slick metal bars for foot holds. I hopped up to the cover and out. I followed. I stayed behind and surveyed my surroundings. If I was lucky, I could grab onto the walls and pull myself up, stepping on one of the bars and pushing with my leg. I tried it, and I was able to balance there, foot against the bar, back pressed against the brick wall. I brought my second foot up to the next bar. My hands scraped painfully against the bricks.

Fully extended, my fingers could barely reach the rim of the manhole. The only way to get out would be to bring my leg up and push off the sides, but my legs were too long; I could barely bring my legs up perpendicular with my body. My knee wedged against the sides and I stopped. And so I sat, back firm against the bricks, feet on the rungs. Stuck.

You can picture me as a champagne bottle, wedged like a cork in a champagne bottle, torso above ground and kicking futilely underneath. Well, it wasn't quite like that. I could move. I couldn't go up any further. I could back down into the pit, and that option became more and more appealing. I sat, so close to freedom and yet so far from it. I just clung to the wall and sat, entertaining some notion that I could build up enough strength to propel myself out.

The cherry on top came when Bert and friends meandered by. Boy, was that relief. Eventually I dropped back down and Bert came with me. Then I got stuck up and stuck again and he pushed me below (he later told me I had stepped on his face a few times) while my friends grabbed my arms and lifted me like a limp survivor out of the rubble of some natural disaster. I was free.

I rolled over onto the grass and heaved a huge sigh of relief. When I regained the courage I sat up and looked to see how far I had come in that terrifying ordeal.

Less than 100 yards. It seemed like days since I'd seen the sunlight. I stood and found myself in the middle of the vast field known as the Sunks and knew this place would hold a special, dark place in my heart. We pushed the heavy metal cover back into place and left.

And now we reach the point where I reveal some great moral. I bring it all together in some eye-opening conclusion where I tell you what I learned about myself and the human spirit.

But I'm out of room.



### EAT YOUR SARCASM

A Column by Bob Al-Greene

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## 06-07 Register

The Omaha Central High School *Register* seeks to inform its readers accurately as to items of interest and importance.

The staff strives to uphold the principles of journalism in all its proceedings.

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The *Register* staff is also responsible for the

publication of the *EDGE* feature magazine, which has also won a first place Best-in-Show award for specialty publications.

The *Register* has won multiple NSPA Pacemakers.

The Pacemaker is considered the Pulitzer Prize of high school journalism.

It has also won many Cornhusker awards from NHSPA.

It has been awarded Gold and Silver Crowns from CSPA for its overall work.

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They can be sent to the *Register* at 124 N. 20th St., Omaha, NE 68102 or via e-mail to Central.Journalism@ops.org.

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## Absent students trivialize threat, administration

Who's afraid of a big bad bomb threat? Well, if the behavior of students is any indication, about 80 percent of the largest high school in the state is terrified into evacuation. Yeah, right. Central students had plenty of reasons to walk away from school that fateful morning with the thought of not coming back for another 24 hours. Some probably were gripped by that legitimate fear. Some had terrified parents on the phone. Some just didn't want to subject themselves to what they saw as an invasion of privacy as their bags allegedly sometimes pockets were searched at the only open entrance of the school. Some, no doubt, found it ominous enough with a matter of days and weeks separating them from the tragedy at Virginia Tech. And then there were the students who saw the threat a matter not of life and death, but an opportunity. A vacation. Similar threats at schools around the metro had yielded much lower absence counts for the day of their threats. What does that say about the supposed leadership school of the district? Everyone felt the slight edge as 9 o'clock edged nearer, but only a select few were feeling that edge from inside the actual building. And even fewer students were actually willing

to admit they thought the threat could be legitimate - including many of the students who took that opportunity and checked out for the day. As we approach the end of the year, school might feel more like a drudgery to some than to others. And a single day off might not be of any major consequence in the long run. But walking out of school, leaving in droves even as other students still arrived, laughing it off and leaving classes desolate is, in a word, irresponsible. It is even more disrespectful when so much work went in to making sure the building was, in fact, secure. Early that morning the first custodian to arrive reported the threat, which relayed to Principal Greg Emmel and the securing process was put into motion. As early as 6, some students had to wait at the near corner of the staff parking lot as the police scanned the building and made sure there was no visible danger. Those students were allowed entrance at around 6:30, and searches began shortly afterwards at the doors. As more students trickled into the building, Emmel began making announcements which kept

the students and staff apprised of the situation, which otherwise could have been hectic. There was no mass confusion, no major friction between students and the searchers. The only students who seemed to have a major problem were those who chose to ignore the information at hand. Throughout the morning, Emmel obviously did his best not only to coordinate with the police, but to make official statements to the press and on top of that keep the students informed. Not an easy moment for a first-year (in a high school) principal, and he and the entire staff handled it well. Some students just didn't care, though, how much had been done to keep them safe. Many didn't even make it into the building or hear any announcements other than hearsay before leaving. So soon after the Virginia Tech incident, no doubt there were a few students who were utterly frightened at the prospect of a repeat at Central or any kind of act of school violence occurring. In the face of that legitimate safety concern, still other students were ready and willing to invoke such a tragedy, which touched hearts across the country... in the name of skipping school? Please. The average student's concern for safety within this school is obviously minimal. At the point at

which a possibly legitimate threat to the lives of 2,500 teenagers can be laughed at and abandoned, there is a mix-up of priorities. An administration makes rules which it sees as beneficial to the well-being of the student body and is taken as less than a joke. ID badges, for instance, have failed again, simply because of the inertia of an apathetic population. There is no discussion of these topics, no positive student action regarding issues which affect our daily lives. What student support have you seen in the past year - or two years - for these ID badges which are supposed to keep us secure in a supposedly potentially dangerous part of town? That is not to say there is no mention of them at all; the reaction has just been overwhelmingly and disproportionately negative to a trifle. Students reacted the same way to the searches - bag checks, not the possibility of exploding, turned some of them away from school on the day of the bomb threat. So were the school officials right to check bags in the name of a legitimate, tangible threat to safety? Yes. They were doing their best to protect the very people who show at every turn how much contempt they have for the administration. What sense does that make?

EDITORIAL  
The OPINION of the Register staff

## Degrading word for homosexuals used too frequently by students

In the eyes of a homosexual, high school must be hell. There are nooks and patches of safety and acceptance, woven in between groups of friends and Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) meetings, but overall the whole situation must weigh pretty hard on whoever goes through it. Walk down the halls and count how many times students say "that's so gay," or "faggot." When questioned, most of them say, "Oh, I don't really hate gay people. I mean, saying it is just a habit. Come on, my uncle is gay, so I can't hate gay people." And they probably don't hate gay people. But they certainly aren't doing anything to help them out. By throwing around the phrase "that's gay" to show dissatisfaction, students continue a trend of both hate and ignorance, no matter how good-natured or well informed the student may be. Nothing positive comes out of it. No good images arise. The only effect, intended or not, is negative. Don't say "fag" and back it up by claiming empathy for homosexuals because homosexuals don't want sympathy, and that's all they might get from anyone who says "fag." Mostly what homosexuals want is understanding and rights. Anyone who belittles gays doesn't demonstrate much of an understanding and doesn't assist in attaining any sort of rights. When counting the majority, teens aren't accepting. There may be a group of students who support their GLBT classmates, but teens for the most part are intolerant of homosexuals. It's hard to acknowledge, but it's true. Maybe it's to be expected because most people in general aren't tolerant of them. Recently people have

been viewing homosexuality as a disease. In some ways it adds legitimacy to the lifestyle, but in most ways it gives it an entirely inappropriate title and warps the perception. A disease is never a good thing to have. By telling people it is a disease they get the impression it is wrong or that it would be unfortunate to be that way. So then there are the gay students, walking the halls and viewed as carriers or victims of an illness. Perhaps they feel forced to hide their true selves and feelings or they don't allow themselves to explore the idea of being in love with a person as a person, not as a male or a female. It isn't hard to realize why someone would try to hide their sexual preference, because if deemed irregular, in many areas of the school they become outcasts. There's so much gray territory. What's safe and who might be hostile are questions almost unanswerable. People are free to have their own opinion. Students who think homosexuality is wrong should not be punished or even mentioned as thinking that way. In the same respect, gay students and straight allies should not be ridiculed or negatively commented upon. Yet there is a standard that being gay is the supreme sin, especially as a teenager. The "N" word? Unacceptable. The "F" word? Unheard of. That is, unless the "F" word in question is "fag." Punishment for vocal and executed acts of intolerance has always been standard, but it needs to be stronger in protection of gay students. Although their circumstance is viewed as a choice, and whether it is a choice or not is dependent and debatable, they should not be overlooked.

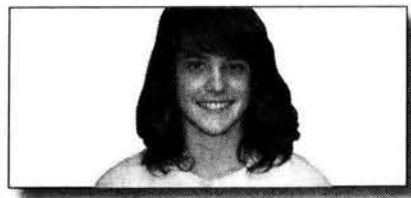
EDITORIAL  
The OPINION of the Register staff

## Senior learns from experiences, people met in Uganda

My heart belongs in Africa. In June of 2006 I spent 14 days traveling around the country of Uganda with five students and two adults. We went to Africa to meet the people who we had been working hard to supply with refurbished computers and to experience Uganda as a whole. In a rural village I visited 10 homes. On my walk from house to house a little boy with his shoes clenched on to my hand, gazing into my eyes. He loved me without knowing me and I loved him back. I stopped at a house where an old woman crawled around on dirt in front of her beloved home. She had no energy to stand and give me what is known to be a proper greeting, but she smiled, looked me in the eye, said hello, and gave away some of her fruit as a gift. That was the best greeting I have ever received in my life. Staring into the wide view of green and scattered fruits I spoke to a woman of how beautiful her country is. She said I was wrong, she argued America must be much more beautiful.

I couldn't win. She would never dare to compare her lovely country to America and I was disgusted by American pride. Meeting Patrick, a refugee who was once a human rights lawyer in the Congo, restored faith in my country. Corruption devastates Africa. A truthful man has no power. While in America, I feel as every person has more of a voice. I stayed three days at an all-girls school and found some of my best friends. We exchanged pictures, or what they called "snaps," wrote each other notes, and promised to e-mail as soon as possible. When I returned home I had already received 20 e-mails from my pals. A little girl rushed to give me a letter from her before I left. She told me of herself and asked me to write to her, to love her. I complied for I could not deny her spirit. Arriving at a slum I saw a tiny casket freshly made for a baby. I stared at it for 10 minutes wondering if it was empty or occupied. The casket seemed to have no importance to anyone. My heart broke; I was ready to dig a grave right there and give that poor baby a

proper burial. The day was to continue, I left the casket, entering into the slum. Trash was everywhere. Torn apart clothes lay out on the ground for drying. Huts were packed together. The sewer line was overflowing. The sight of poverty cannot be ignored. After my tour I visited a patient in an AIDS hospital. A boy with fluid emptying out of his kidney into a plastic grocery sack motioned his hand as thanks for the food I brought him. That day, eyes bearing true pain stared into me, wondering what I was doing, why I was there, how come I have it so easy in comparison to them. I wondered the same thing. I felt out of place. The difference between myself and Ugandans cut me deep. I questioned if I could ever really tough it out, if I could see beauty amongst all the suffering. I can though, I can get past dirt, ignorance, frustration, death, disease, pain, discontentment, all the horror. People opened up to me. Asked me to write. Took the pictures that I brought. Begged me to stay longer. Loved without question, and didn't expect my love back. My heart is set, and I feel accepted. One day, I will live in Africa.



**FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT**  
A Column by Claire Langdon

### LETTERS, E-MAILS, FAXES, POLLS, CARTOONS

#### Fear of bomb leaves day wasted

Dear Editor,  
Something that I feel strongly about is the whole bomb thing. None of the teachers knew what was going on. They should have gotten e-mails about this. Again, school should have been called off. Nobody was even here at school. That whole day was useless. There should've been more police there. I was scared all day.  
Emily Angelloz (9)

#### Junior learns from Virginia Tech

Dear Editor,  
The shootings at Virginia Tech were horrendous for everyone. The incident should cause students to consider their actions and words toward one another very carefully. If it's not uplifting and encouraging, don't do or say it! What possible good could it do for the offended or the offender? No one knows how it may affect them.  
Rachel Woolard (11)

#### Senior appreciates diversity

Dear Editor,  
As a senior about to leave Central behind, my years spent at this high school are all but boring. Yeah, the food is kind of lame, but the diversity between the people truly helped me understand how the real world is. Not everyone at a job or an internship is the same race.  
Christina Kepler (12)

#### Public led astray by media

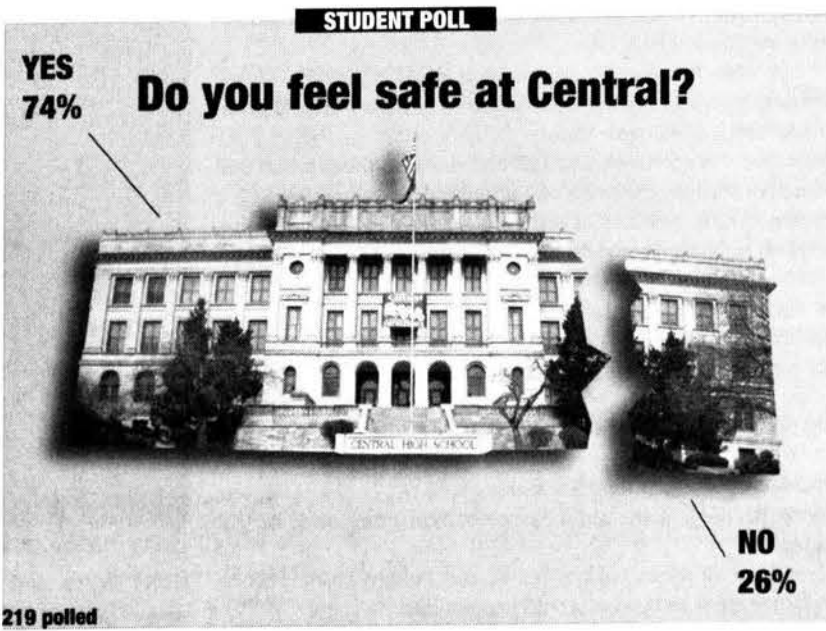
Dear Editor,  
I don't think school safety at Central needs improvement. The media tries to make it look like we are all in danger at school and that's not how it is at Central. I for one feel very safe at school.  
Perry Miller (9)

#### 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.

#### Freshmen thinks principal did best he could

Dear Editor,  
I think Principal Emmel handled the bomb threat as best as he could. It was a weird situation, but what more could he have done? The bag check did what it was meant to do - make students feel safer about staying at school.  
Clara Kincaid (9)



#### Janitors appreciated for work

Dear Editor,  
I just thought that I should say that janitors cleaning up throw up is the most depressing thing ever, because it's such a crappy job to do. But most of the janitors are still really friendly even though if I had to clean up throw up I would be really mean and mad at the world. I guess what I'm trying to say is that the janitors at this school are the best people ever.  
Alex Hotchkiss (9)

#### Junior sees threats as ignorance

Dear Editor,  
This school year has been great... but yet moronic. The moronic part is the fact we have copycats that are so pathetic that they have the nerve to do such a stupid thing as a bomb threat. The other part that makes up for it is that students used it as an excuse to skip school. Just because a threat is made does not mean it's not real. But to all due respect of safety, there is a fine line between threats and plain ignorance.  
James Palmer (11)

#### Staff handled bomb threat well

Dear Editor,  
School safety is dealt with fairly well at Central. I think the bomb threat, for example, was handled in an acceptable manner by the school administration. They received a threat, and they made certain precautions to make sure such a threat was not made a reality, but school was still held as usual. So some kid wrote "Boom" on the side of a wall. There is nothing terrifying about that. Students often do idiotic stunts and regret them the next morning. I think the students who were worried about the bomb threat should do just that. No one who actually plans to carry out a mission is going to warn someone in a case like a bomb threat. Students should not have felt like their lives were in danger. But, I can't blame them if they wanted to take an extra day off of school.  
Tania Kasperovich (11)

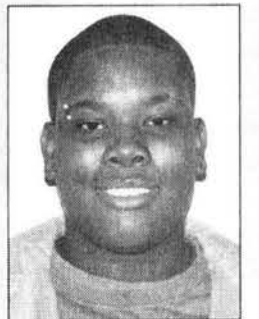


#### REGISTER YOUR OPINION

#### What do you think Central should do to protect its students?



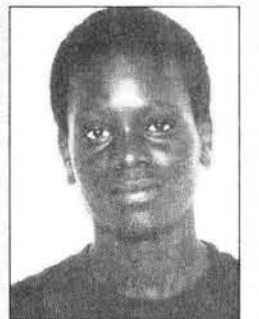
"I think we should have security cameras in the hallways to prevent fights."  
Hannah Niebaum (10)



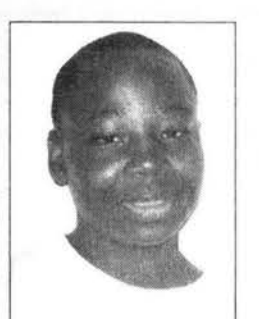
"By putting locks on the outside of the doors, people can't just walk in."  
Jerome Matthews (11)



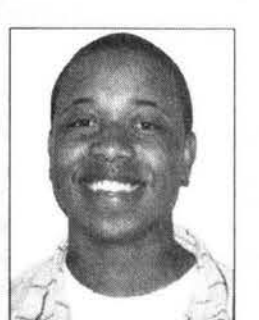
"Central security can make sure all the doors are watched and they could make better safety cameras."  
Katie Venditte (11)



"I think more teachers should be in the hallways and at the end of the stairways because a lot of fights go on there."  
Sam Philip (9)



"I think the school would benefit with more, younger security guards because people come into school that don't even go here."  
Brian Turner (9)



"We need a police officer on every floor, more security, and all teachers need to monitor the students better because right now the security isn't efficient."  
Randall Willis (9)



COLUMBIA PICTURES

Spider-Man, played by Tobey Maguire, defends New York City as he fights two villains, Sandman, played by Thomas Haden Church, and Venom, played by Topher Grace, in the final battle. The movie, unlike the previous two, had a larger number of villains and more fight sequences.

## Action-packed third film caps series

BY BOB AL-GREENE

It used to be that when comic book enthusiasts (nerds) wanted to see all-out action involving their favorite characters in motion, the only resource was animation. The realm of cartoons was the only place where superheroes could fight each other full steam without looking overly fake.

Even in some of the most recent comic book films, fights (which are really the only reason to go see a comic book film) often looked stiff and choreographed when using real actors and franchises in recent years have under-utilized their CGI abilities. Superman's most recent crashing finale involved the boy in blue throwing... a big... rock.

Then along came a spider. The "Spider-Man" franchise has been far and away the most successful and popular comic movie franchise in recent years.

The first two flicks in the series are the standard by which other superhero movies should be judged, with interesting characters, believable plot lines and of course special effects.

But they both lacked one thing in the end - an all-out brawl. Sure, the first film had Spidey and the Green Goblin smacking each other around, and "2" had the visually thrilling Doc Ock, but there was no earth-shattering conclusion to either film. No knock-down, drag-out brawl.

### MOVIE REVIEW

★★★★★  
"Spider-man 3"  
Starring: Tobey Maguire

Well, "Spider-Man 3" changed all that.

From the beginning of the film, it was apparent the newest (and allegedly final) film in the trilogy would be chock-full of sucker punches. The introduction of three antagonists, for instance, made it instantly clear how much would have to be resolved, and not through a long, heart-felt discussion.

At the beginning of the film, Peter Parker, played by Tobey Maguire, was content with his life as a superhero and boyfriend of the beautiful Mary Jane Watson, played by Kirsten Dunst.

Soon, however, his life was interrupted by the vengeful tampering of old friend Harry Osborn, the appearance of new super-powered bank robber the Sandman and the endangering of his job by flashy photographer Eddie Brock.

And as his life descended into a storm of flying fists, Parker was suddenly greeted by a new, all-black uniform courtesy of some aggressive, symbiotic outer-space goo. Don't ask.

As he embraced this new, darker image and the violent behavior it encouraged, he could only slip further away from the woman he had been so sure he wanted to marry.

There was a lot to pack in to the movie in terms of emotional involvement, but it seemed there also needed to be a fist fight every few minutes.

He had to fight Harry. He had to fight Sandman. He had to fight Harry again. And Sandman again. Heck, he even slapped

Mary Jane around a little bit.

Reviewers have complained about these multiple plot lines, claiming they made it a tangled web of a movie, but that's a little ridiculous. It's "Spider-Man 3." Not "Syrina."

Maguire shined once again as the wide-eyed Parker, this time with a smug edge which often came off as comedic.

For instance, to show he had become dangerous, the hero started wearing black in everyday life, swooping his hair over Oberst-style and... dancing a lot. I mean, a lot.

But the hook of the film wasn't a jazz club scene. It was the extended final fight, in which Spidey faced up against all his enemies at once, including a darker, beefier, toothier version of himself, and a super-sized Sandman... with Mary Jane's life hanging in the balance.

It's hard to describe in words the sheer explosive excitement this final scene brought with it.

The sequence blended elements of fights from the first and second movies - two enemies in free-fall beating each other senseless, high-speed swinging and the drumbeat impact of fist-on-jaw action - with a monster movie aura whenever Sandman lumbered onto the screen.

The filmmakers went all-out in this scene, throwing around the weight of the movie's hefty price tag.

It was the very final shot, however, after the end of the fight, which deviated from the usual ending from the previous films and put the true cap on the series.

## Senior expresses feelings of tragedy through music

BY KIM BUCKLEY

Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans, but one student is using his experiences during that time and putting them down in song.

Senior Obadiah Davis said the music he wrote about Hurricane Katrina was reminiscent about the old towns and going back home to New Orleans.

"Just really wanting to be back home has made me really want to write about it (Hurricane Katrina)," he said.

Davis said even though the music talks about the mistakes that the government made in the aftermath of the hurricane, it's more about how he felt during that time, and how the people of New Orleans are still going to stand their ground.

He said the biggest mistake that meteorologists made during Hurricane Katrina was not letting the citizens of New Orleans know ahead of time.

He also said the government's biggest mistake was not evacuating people on time.

Davis said it was sort of like a speech in a rhyming way, and he wrote down however he was feeling at the moment.

"It's (the music) not at all political, it's just lyrics from my heart," he said.

Davis said everyone should know how he felt during that time and how he still feels about Katrina today.

He said writing music about the hurricane wasn't really hard for him.

Davis said even though he has written over 20 songs, only two are about the disaster: "Katrina Did It" and "Mama Don't Cry."

He said a lot of people from the south side that he knew were amazed at the type of songs he wrote because he was more of an athlete than a writer/musician.

Davis said the more people react to his songs, the more he is encouraged to make better music.

He said writing the songs about Hurricane Katrina has made him stress-free.

"It was a load off of my shoulders," Davis said.

He said he just decided to get the experiences he's had off of his chest and put them on paper and into music.

Davis said he just puts a couple of songs at a time on his MySpace page. Not all of them are on his page at one time.

He said a lot of people can relate to what happened during the hurricane.

Davis said he just expressed the situation he's been through with Katrina and a lot of people went through the same thing,

like the other people who have been isolated in the shelters.

He said he was one of the lucky ones.

"Every verse in that song, everybody can relate to it," Davis said.

He said he would be interested in working with a producer with his music, but said he would like to work with one who was well-known, even if it is a local one.

However, he said he would also work with an up-and-coming producer because he's beginning to get into the music industry himself.

"I'm just very cautious in who I work with," Davis said.

He said there have been a lot of comments by producers on his MySpace page who want to mess with his songs.

Davis said he wants to show music isn't all about gang banging or hard-core music.

"I just try to touch people with my music," he said.

Davis said he has had a couple of comments about his music from the South, and he has talked with a lot of friends that he didn't know he would see again.

"It's (MySpace) a good way of regrouping with someone you haven't seen in a while," he said.

Davis said he would call himself a colorful and poetic lyricist.



### NOT A STEREOTYPE

A Column by Kim Buckley

## Popular web site offers hours of fun for junior

YouTube has revolutionized the Internet and it entertains people.

Millions of videos are uploaded and watched the popular web site and it shows no signs of stopping or slowing down.

In fact, it's only getting bigger.

With YouTube being sold to Google, it has become a business giant as well as one of the most popular sites in the country.

I remember the first time I ever logged on YouTube.

It was last summer and I wanted to see a clip of a Broadway show.

It was that first day that I fully realized the power of YouTube.

It wasn't that I could just see a clip, or even a scene from a play, but the whole performance. It was the first time that I didn't have to wait to see the show on stage because I could watch it right there and then.

It was that moment that I got hooked on YouTube.

I spent two hours on YouTube until my parents kicked me off of the computer.

I know I would have spent even more time on the site that day if I had been allowed to.

Just being on the site gave me a huge rush and I wanted to do was just watch more of the uploaded videos.

Almost every day in the summer I would go to the site and search for more videos, trying to find as many as possible. It was an insane obsession.

Now, every time I go onto the Internet I go to YouTube without fail.

Nothing is easier for me than to type the name of a song I can listen to while doing my homework or to watch a very bad movie in segments when I'm bored. I remember watching the movie "Aquaman" on YouTube and just laughing at the cheesiness of it.

It has become almost a continuous struggle for my parents to get me off of YouTube at night.

One could spend hours watching videos on YouTube and not all of the videos uploaded to the site would have been watched.

After all, where else can a person go and watch videos with people doing stupid stunts, singing poorly or both at the same time?

YouTube is like all of the reality shows rolled into one, without commercials.

It's also a great way to listen to songs without spending a lot of money buying an album.

It's pure entertainment.

The best part of YouTube is that it's free.

I don't have to spend any money going to a theater to rent a movie or downloading a song to an iPod.

I don't even have to spend gas money going to places to buy or rent movies.

Sometimes I don't even watch the video, I just read the comments posted about it.

Sometimes the comments can be funnier than the video itself.

I remember listening to a Nick Lachey music video, and some of the comments about his ex-girlfriend Jessica's relationship made me laugh.

Whether I agree with the comments or not, they're irrelevant, it's just as entertaining.

And YouTube isn't all about entertaining people on the site.

Videos put on the site of Michael J. Fox and other political figures helped shape the recent mid-term elections. They were seen across the country by millions of voters.

It was one of the main reasons that Time magazine named every person who has blogged, uploaded a video to YouTube or has a MySpace page the person of the year.

It is no wonder that politicians are beginning to fear the web site.

The power of YouTube lies in the fact that it can capture a single moment and send it out to millions of people in the world.

Never mind a person's privacy.

There are times when I cannot imagine there was a time when YouTube wasn't a part of the Internet, it seems so long ago that it was created, when in reality it has only been a few years.

This one web site has integrated itself completely into society.

## Psychological thriller uses suspense to keep audience on edge of seat

BY ALI HODGE

Those secrets, those we share, those we use, and those we'd die to keep, are what the movie "Perfect Stranger" was all about. The lengths people will go to keep the darkest parts of their lives hidden from those around them is what this movie is all about.

The movie had an element of suspense and mystery from the moment it began. From the first scene, there was a feeling that someone wasn't telling the truth.

It had the audience on the edge of their seats through the entire two hours and left viewers with their mouths hanging open. This movie is a perfect psychological thriller.

The story was about a young, driven, brave, investigative journalist who, after quitting her job, began investigating the murder of her childhood acquaintance, Grace.

Her personal friend took Rowena Price, played by Halle Berry, and her friend Miles, played by Giovanni Ribisi, right into the offices of the alleged killer, big-shot business man Harrison Hills, played by Bruce Willis.

With the use of seduction and mystery, the two managed to pin enough evidence on Hills to put him behind bars.

But was he really guilty?

The entire movie presented questions like this. In other words, it was a deep insight into the mind of a killer.

As the movie progressed, the characters portrayed as trustworthy started to turn on one another, putting them in a different light, leaving the audience constantly questioning if these people are good or bad.

The movie started out with Rowena meeting with a senator, pretending to conduct an interview and later pinning him on his homosexual criticism when he was having an affair with a male intern at the same time.

When her paper pulled the story from her, she quit and was then thrown into the complicated web of lies that was behind the death of her childhood enemy.

The film used a number of different techniques that kept the audience guessing as to what really happened with the death of Grace and the past of Rowena.

The film, directed by James Foley, used different flashback memories from the childhood of Rowena, memories she had about her father who used to molest her.

The memories were loud, with bright lights and artistic filming. They gave a feeling of childishness, yet were horrifying for the viewers at the same time.

It gave an extra level of creepiness to the film, making it all the better. Also, the use of flashbacks gave a deeper look at the main character, explaining some of the ways she thought and acted.

The film used an arrangement of dramatic music as well as light-hearted tunes that always made the audience guess as to what would happen next.

### MOVIE REVIEW

★★★★★  
"Perfect Stranger"  
Starring: Halle Berry



Halle Berry and Bruce Willis star in "Perfect Stranger." The movie was about secrets the characters had and what they would do to keep them.

COLUMBIA PICTURES



# Students, teachers contribute to prom night

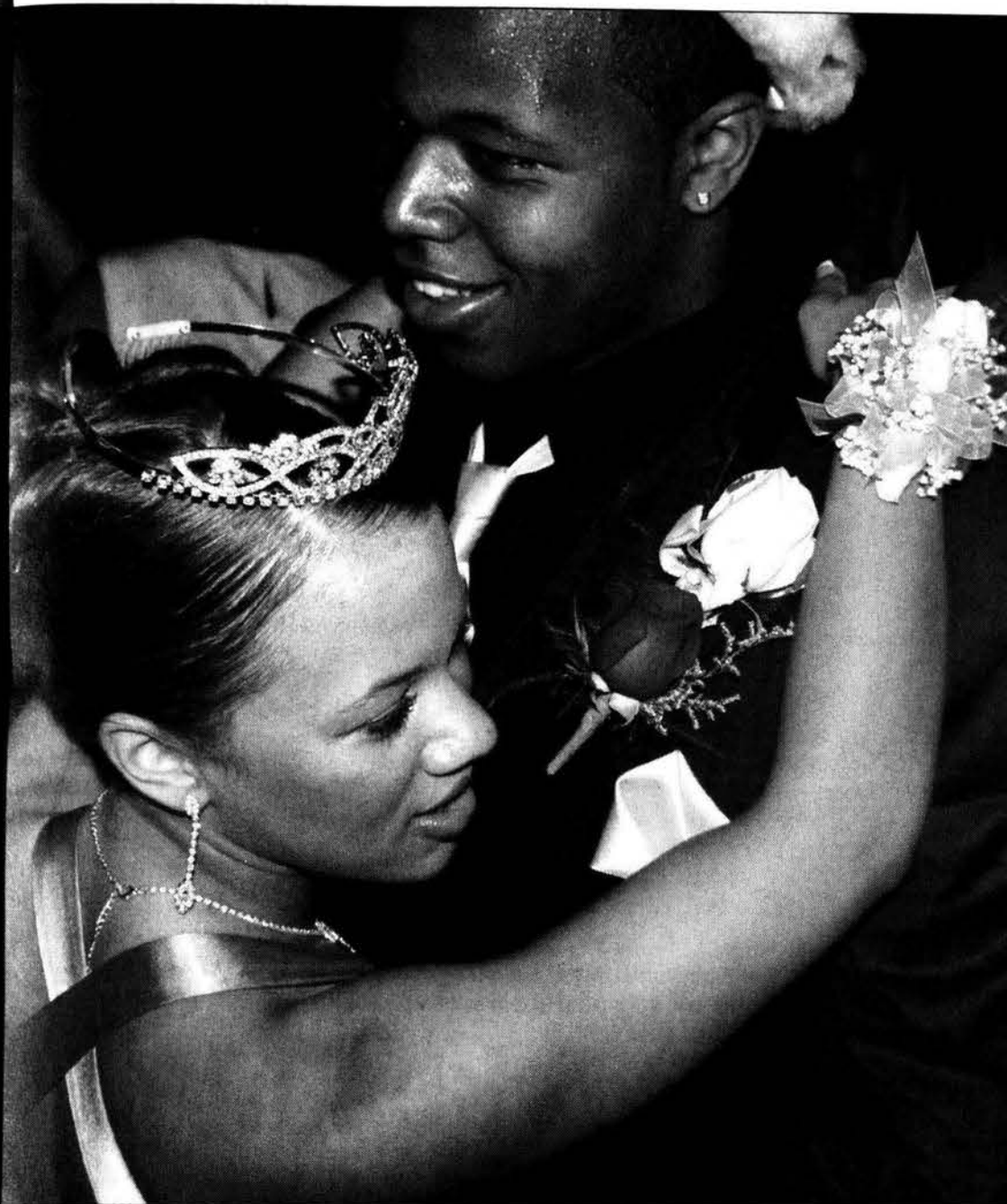


PHOTO BY PATRICK O'MALLEY/ REGISTER

Seniors Brittney Ruffin and Harland Gunn dance after being announced prom king and queen. The theme for this year's prom was "A Stroll Through Central Park."

BY ALI HODGE

Senior Maggie Baumann, president of the student council, said the prom is the council's one big event of the year and members plan for it months in advance.

"I'd say it's the number one thing juniors and seniors look forward to," she said. "It doesn't matter what social class you're in. Prom is something everyone can go to. It's welcoming for all."

At student council's prom planning meetings, the committee broke off into a few groups and each group spent approximately an hour looking through prom magazines and brainstorming ideas. Once the groups had all chosen their own themes, they presented them to the rest of the council.

At the end, the entire committee voted, and the winning idea was named the theme for this year's prom. Themes are usually kept a secret right up until students walk in the door that night, but this year, the theme, "A Walk Through Central Park," was known by students long before.

Baumann said the student council tries to keep prom a secret. The small mystery is a part of what makes the evening so much fun.

All members of student council spent two days before the big night setting up tables, decorations and music.

Then they took the entire day afterward cleaning up, even though many of them had been up late the previous night.

Baumann said the entire event was planned by the council and part of that planning included their responsibility to the school as sponsors to set up and cleaned.

Prom, to the student council, is not only an opportunity for the juniors and seniors to have fun, it's also an opportunity for all members of the organization, even underclassmen, to help out.

As the juniors and seniors were attending prom, the underclassmen on the student council helped to pass out drinks and did other small chores to be certain they were involved.

Baumann said the profits made off prom go directly to student council and in return, it turns around and uses the money to buy things needed for the school.

Other than student council, a number of adults helped with the event, one of the most active being the student council's sponsor, Judy Storm.

"The students do most of the work," Storm said, "but we as teachers try to help as much as we can. I work mostly as an adviser. The students are the workers."

Some of Storm's jobs included guiding students in decision making when choosing the theme, color and design for the decorations of the evening.

Once the decisions were made, she helped them order all the material and separated the students into groups and committees for the night of prom.

The planning began about two months before the event, but the

real work didn't begin until the day before the big night.

On the Friday night before prom, the decorating began.

"Putting the decorations together takes a lot of time and construction," Storm said. "We are sometimes there until almost midnight."

Storm said her goal was to transform the school into something beautiful that the students and adults could both appreciate.

"I like to see all of the kids come together and work hard on one common goal and it feels good to do something nice for your peers," she said.

Besides Storm and the student council members, there was a staff of about 10-15 teachers who were either previously assigned or volunteered to come and be chaperones for the evening.

"The teachers enjoy seeing all of the kids dressed up, on their best behavior and having fun," Storm said.

There was one specific teacher who the student council chose to be the master of ceremonies.

The master of ceremonies is cordially invited by the student council and announces the royalty court and the king and queen. This year's master of ceremonies was social studies teacher Eric Behrens.

U.S. History teacher Scott Wilson was chosen in previous years to fill this special role.

"It was a great experience to see the kids all dressed up and to honor the students and parents of the royalty court," Wilson said.

He also said he enjoyed reading about each nominated student and it added a special touch to the evening.

Cindy Newberg is another teacher who was really involved. Her job was not only to assist Storm and the student council, but also to help chaperone and take tickets.

"Prom is such a good time and I love getting the opportunity to interact with all of the other people in the school and help out," Newberg said.

Newberg arrived at Central the morning of prom and assisted with the last minute decorations and problems and then waited for students to start arriving.

Once people begin to enter, they were simply advised to take their coats and things to their lockers because the school was open.

This required the need for more security to patrol the halls.

"Most teachers are assigned to jobs, but sometimes it is difficult to get teachers involved and they need to be invited," Newberg said.

She also said the need for a lot of security and chaperones wasn't really necessary because the kids are on such good behavior.

The teachers were there to make sure that everything flowed smoothly and to help with the little emergencies.

"We usually go through almost a whole container of safety pins repairing broken straps on dresses," Newberg said.

Angelica Genovesi contributed to this story.

# Smaller cast, crew engage in humorous, spring play

BY ALI HODGE

Unlike the fall musical, the spring play, "Fools," didn't have singers, it didn't have dancers, it didn't have singers, or musicians. It didn't even have a stage crew.

But what it did have was a colorful, juvenile set, a clever, black-witted story line, an annoyed school teacher and a myriad of unintelligent Russians.

"It (the play) is a comic fable by Neil Simon about a town whose residents are convinced of their own superiority," drama teacher John Gibson said.

Gibson was the director of the play, as he always is for Central's productions.

The story took place in a small Russian town of Kulyenchikov, where the residents are apparently cursed. Every man, woman and child born in this small town were, for lack of better words, stupid.

The play followed the journey of a Leon Tolchinsky, played by junior Patrick Breen, a Russian school teacher looking to make his place in the world by educating the seemingly hopeless residents of Kulyenchikov.

"I think it's a great show," Gibson said. "They (the students) love it. They're absolutely doing a phenomenal job."

Unlike some of the previous productions, especially the fall musical, "Fools" was not as well known by the student body and not nearly as advertised. However, it still seemed to draw a large audience.

Even though the cast was small for the play, only consisting of about 10 people, it was still loaded with talent and those students still presented to the audience a completely entertaining two hours.

Also because the play was much smaller than the earlier production of "My Fair Lady," the playbill was much smaller as well.

Unlike the spring play, which ended up totaling way up to the thousands, this one cost significantly less with scripts around \$250, set costing around \$600 and costumes at nearly \$100.

The play was in the works for only six weeks, while the fall production had been planned for months and required a very large cast.

Gibson said the entire set was built by students in the drama classes and some of the actors in the play were not in the drama department at all.

So there was a wide variety of people involved.

In this production as well, there was only one person,

senior Jan Baker, who was in charge of sound and lighting, and senior Emily Wall was in charge of backstage as opposed to the many people who were involved in costumes, make up and stage crew for the fall musical.

Senior Amanda Pintore, one of the leads in "Fools," agreed that the fall musical receives much more publicity than the spring play, which she said was unfortunate because this play presented no less talent and entertainment than the previous musicals.

She said she believes a complete play was actually very good for the department and its members.

"We have not done a full scale play in all the four years I have been here," she said. "The fact that we actually are doing this is a good morale booster for those who can't sing, such as myself."

Pintore, a dedicated member of the drama department who is always, in some way, actively involved in the school's productions, found out a few days before the play that she had appendicitis. Determined to get back to school, she had the surgery soon after and returned to play practice the next Tuesday.

She said she really enjoyed the play and being a part of the process as she does every production.

She said it had interesting humor and being in front of an audience on Thursday and Friday night, the nights the casts performed, brought it to life.

Pintore said the crew had a habit of picking out everything that was wrong with the performance and Gibson was constantly telling the crew that it was not ready to perform.

This, however, was only in efforts of making the production better than before, every time striving for a more complete performance.

Pintore said she believes when they performed in front of the audience, the kinks went unnoticed.

"I definitely think it (the play) is good for the drama department," Pintore said. "We can all come together."

In the past, Pintore said the drama department poured its money, time and effort into the fall musical. Then, at the end of the year, there was not much unity among the staff.

Even though the fall musical is important, she said, it was good that the students, especially the seniors, engaged in one last production of the year.

It provided a good ending for the seniors and good practice for the underclassmen who intend on taking over next year.

"It really showcased our acting ability rather than our singing and dancing abilities," Baker said.

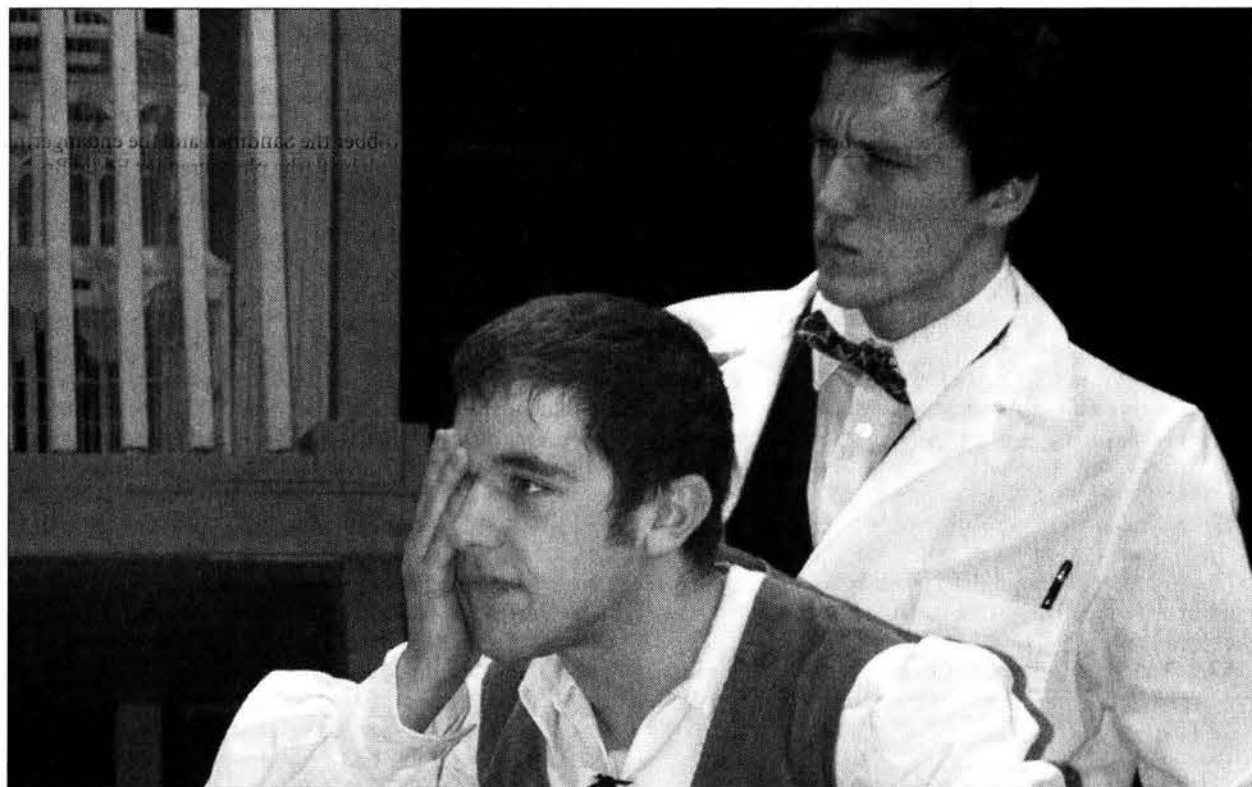


PHOTO BY ALI HODGE/ REGISTER

Junior Andrew Kroeger and senior Matt Cronin perform a scene from "Fools," this year's spring play. The entire play demonstrated a form of dry humor which kept the audience laughing.

Baker said the entire event went really well even though it was seriously down played.

Baker said she believes that the reason the play was not as big of a hit was because there were fewer people involved and the students' priorities were in different places since it was nearing the end of the year.

One of the main goals of the production was to create a good end for the year and give a little extra practice for the individuals who would end up taking over next year.

"The cast was really close this year, so it went well," junior Amy Wall said. "Everyone feeds off each other's energy on stage."

Wall played a small part as a flower vendor in the play and

has been involved in the drama department since her freshman year.

"It's definitely a passion," Wall said. "But it's mainly just something I do for fun."

Wall said the smaller play, though still very stressful, took a lot of the pressure off the actors, the director and everyone else involved in the production.

She said they weren't thinking about messing up a play that cost so much money and they weren't worried about upsetting such a large audience if they made a mistake.

It also was a lot easier since the set didn't need changing between scenes, so there was no need for a backstage crew. The actors did their own makeup and Ibsen's provided costumes.

# Junior uses process to record, distribute unique music to fans

BY MAX LARSON

Junior Alek Erickson is the lead singer of his band. He's also the drummer, the keyboardist, the bass player and the cellist.

He records it all himself and then meshes it together. To date he has recorded over 50 songs, compiling a total of six albums.

"I say, 'I have a whole bunch of songs here. It would be good to put them on a CD and share them with people,'" Erickson said.

He began his musical career in the sixth grade, playing the flute, but took to playing bass the next summer, and he said bass is his preferred instrument.

Picking up more instruments, he began recording albums in the summer before his sophomore year. The process he uses is solely his own.

Before anything is put together, planned or recorded, he said he begins the process of making an album by actually writing the songs.

He makes an "A" part and then a "B" part of the song, and maybe a "C" part. These parts might consist of different chord progressions.

"I like to jam on the guitar a lot," he said, "that's usually when I come up with stuff."

Then he writes lyrics. He said sometimes he tries to tell a story or an opinion, but most of the time he just wants something audibly pleasing.

"A whole bunch of things just sound cool together," he said. "Even though they don't make sense in the song, they sound cool to me. Maybe sometimes I'm trying to write a poem and it turns into a song, when I'm walking or thinking or something."

Once he has written the song, he said he records each part separately using his

father's recording equipment, using one of any number of instruments.

His father doesn't let him use all of his best equipment, and at first Erickson used a very poor quality microphone, like one made for a computer.

He said although he can't use all of his father's equipment, his father helps him improve what he does have.

At one point, they even had to go to Radio Shack and weld parts together so he could record.

"I'm upgrading as I go along," Erickson said.

After recording, he mixes the parts on his computer into one final product.

If he's in the right mood, the process from writing to recording a song can take Erickson as little as an hour, which he said is very fast. Usually, however, he writes something and lets it sit on his mind or his computer for a much longer time before finalizing it.

When he has enough material, he compiles the songs into an album. Then he burns them and passes them out at school.

"I buy a bunch of blank CDs and just do it," he said.

His second to last CD, "Crunch," has around 40 copies Erickson made himself floating around Central, and more made by others.

He said he shows up at school with a few CDs and distributes them to his friends or anyone he wants to impress or he thinks might like it. Then, once word gets around, people start coming up to him and asking for copies.

Making albums is OK for recognition within Central, but Erickson wants to move beyond.

Although he doesn't intend to make a living out of his musical career, he said he

would like to find other people to play music so he could start having live performances showcasing his work.

He said he'd also like selling his CDs, but he is worried about the professional integrity of his product.

"It could sound professional," he said, "but the CD itself doesn't look professional."

He said he wants to perform and sell the music he has now, using the money to continue, and then hopefully become signed by a record label.

Junior Zach Cutler said he has been listening to Erickson's music since his beginning.

"To tell the truth," Cutler said, "his first CD was barely listenable."

Erickson admitted there has been a broad spectrum of change in his style since he started making music.

"The first CD that I made was all computerized, just computers and voice," he said.

He said his singing was terrible and now he is much more confident in his skills. "I guess I'm in tune now," he said.

Of the six albums he has released, he said four have merit.

Cutler said Erickson has come a long way, and he actually enjoys the music now. He said Erickson is very creative, and his music style fits in with what might be heard from professional musicians.

"He's working on some new stuff, and I'm really just jealous," he said.

Erickson said he most likely will be showing off his next CD sometime soon, and that he is sitting on a bank of good material.

## Ambidextrous pitcher earns national honor

BY MAX LARSON

Central alumnus Pat Venditte warms up to pitch by rearing back and firing, just like any other pitcher.

Then he takes off his glove, puts it on his other hand and does it again.

Venditte, the only known ambidextrous pitcher in the NCAA, has recently been garnering quite a bit of attention while pitching for the Creighton Bluejays.

A few weeks ago he landed himself on the front page of the *New York Times*.

"It was kind of crazy," Venditte said.

Several major league teams have also contacted him through the mail, showing interest in his abilities.

"I don't know how serious that is," he said. "We'll see."

It all makes a pretty impressive résumé for someone who had to walk on at Creighton and work his way to the top.

He said there were initially some doubters in the Creighton program because he didn't throw very hard, but he has a prominent spot now.

He said for the time being he wants to focus on performing well where he is, at Creighton. He's contributed so far with a 2.62 earned run average and 62 strikeouts.

Being ambidextrous gives a pitcher an edge on the competition because a right-handed pitcher has an advantage against a right-handed batter, and a left-handed pitcher has one against a left-handed batter.

Unless he's facing a switch hitter, one who can bat from both sides of the plate, he always creates the advantage for himself.

Venditte said he has to commit to a side before each batter, and the batter has to commit before each pitch up until two strikes, so a switch hitter can make the final decision on the match up.

He said his team has scouting reports for those hitters and he pitches from whichever side they are least effective against.

His pitching delivery varies with each arm. He uses an overhand approach with his right and a sidearm with his left.

His fastball reaches the upper 70s with his left arm and the upper 80s with his right arm, which is his natural side.

The speed difference evens out slightly because he said his breaking ball is probably more effective from his left hand.

Although he has had to put in additional effort to perfect techniques from both of these sides, he said it's worth it. He's also been doing it since the age of 3, so it's not incredibly difficult.

"You have to work hard, but when you start young it's a big advantage," he said.

The glove Venditte wears is another interesting facet of his switch pitching abilities, a custom-made product from Louisville Slugger.

He said it has two pockets of webbing and two spots for thumbs, so he can slip it on and switch hands with ease.

He said the lessons learned while playing for the Eagles were definitely ones he took with him to the next level.

He said former varsity coach Scott Hodges taught him quite a bit about competing in tough situations and rising to the occasion.

Assistant varsity baseball coach Joe Shimerdla said he was coaching during the time when Venditte came on with the Eagles in the summer before his freshman year.

He said Venditte came to Central because he was initially cut from Creighton Prep's team.

"He's one of the hardest workers we ever had," Shimerdla said.

He said since Venditte had to focus on making two arms strong, practice would end and he would stay after to play long toss with whoever would stay with him.

The dedication earned him a spot in second team All-State, and Shimerdla said the recognition he's earning now is well deserved.

"He's a great representative for Central," Shimerdla said. "And back then he was everything the program stood for."

Shimerdla said Venditte would make an ideal middle-relief pitcher, which is currently an expanding slot on major league teams' rosters.

His ability to throw often would make him stand out among other pitchers.

"He can throw pretty much every day if he wanted to," he said.



PHOTO BY PATRICK BREEN/REGISTER

The 400 meter relay team practices at Seemann Stadium one day before the District Tournament. The team consisting of junior Shaun Prater and seniors Bobby Clay, Taylor Cook and Ramel Thompson, had already set a State record posting a 41.74 seconds. The team hopes to continue improving and break their own record, while capturing State.

## Team breaks records, takes Metro

BY PATRICK BREEN

For the first time since 1989, the boys track team has won Metro. The last time the Eagles won Metro, they went on to be State Champions.

Eighteen years later, these Eagles' fate could be very similar. "To break a record, be number 1 in the nation and then win the State Championship," senior triple jumper Stanely Smith said, "would be the icing on the cake."

Smith is familiar with first place. For the last few tournaments, it and him have become very close. Smith already is a State Champion. Last year he won State for the triple jump. And now as a senior he works to repeat his individual success and help his team to become champions.

At 48' 3/4", he set the Central record, and now looks to 50 feet to set the state record. But Smith isn't the only player making waves on the track.

The team consists of a lot of seniors determined to be the State Champion. And drawing the most attention isn't one individual player, but a team of four.

Seniors Bobby Clay, Taylor Cook and Ramel Thompson, along with junior Shaun Prater, set the 400-meter relay record for the whole state at 41.74 seconds. And that was with two weeks remaining in the season.

The 400-meter relay consists of four runners running 100 meters each, handing off the baton at each change.

"It goes from Shaun to me," Clay said, "and then I hand it off to Ramel and he (hands it to) Cook for the final sprint. I usually win the race, though."

Prater said it was true that Clay would take the lead in the second part of the race, but every member was vitally important.

"We're like a locomotive," Cook said. "Once we get started, you can't stop us."

The team competed in Districts, placed well and now looks toward State. Practices in the season ranged from cold at the beginning, where players were wearing sweaters and jogging pants, to the overbearing heat a week before the tournament ranging into the upper 80s.

To cope, the players took off their shirts, determined to run as fast as they could. The players have practiced hard and said they looked forward to the State Tournament. After not taking home the trophy last year due to injuries, they hope to get redemption.

"We're motivated," Clay said, "this is our goal."

The handoff is the most important event of the relay, Prater said. To set records and take home a gold at State, the team will have to strive for perfection.

"When we set the record," Prater said, "we had perfect handoffs. That's what we have to do."

The talent at Central might not only be the top in the state, but in the entire Midwest. "We traveled down to the Kansas relays," Cook said, "and won there, too."

As the season has progressed, the team has grown together, specifically the relay athletes. Prater said team chemistry played a major part in the way they run and especially the handoffs.

"We got better," Prater said, "because of that binding strength. We know each other."

When discussing the arrangements for the ride to Burke stadium to compete, the coaches knew the relay players wouldn't need rides.

Clay drives the players to the meets. "We all are friends," Cook said. "We support each other."

From the corner Clay chimed in, "Yeah, but I drive." They laughed. The friendship was easily seen through their joking and peer competitiveness.

The team would travel together and win together. The team's talent, they said is in part due to head coach Elliot Evans. The team attributes hard work and motivation to the coach.

"He's good," Smith said. "He can get you to play hard."

The players hope to take State, something that all four would mean redemption after the disappointing ending of the football season. The team lost its final game of the season in the District Tournament by a missed extra point.

"I think that motivated us to do better," Cook said. "Work harder."

Even owning the state record, the relay team strives to do better. "Our goal is 41 flat," Thompson said. "Last time we beat it by .05 seconds. This time we need to break our own record."

Also planning to break a record in the final week of the season is Smith. All the broken records give the Eagles one of the most notable teams heading to State.

"Our toughest competition at State is Fremont and Elkhorn," Cook said.

Thompson said, though, he thought they could beat the competition. Central is ranked extremely high in almost every category and position.

Even the players who aren't breaking records are setting up the team to play well. The top positions get placed from District to State.

The higher a runner ranks, the better spot he gets during the State Tournament. Finding medals can be earned in State, but the highest honor is the team gold. Every person's heat count that. The higher the finish and the better the score, the more points go to a team.

At Metro the Eagles posted a 108-81 victory, but as each level increases, so does competition.

"This is what we run for," Prater said. "A State Championship."

Another player receiving recognition is considerably younger than the seniors and making a name for himself. Sophomore Daryl Hawkins is running for a gold too, ranking number one in the state for the first time.

The make-ups of the teams from '89 and '07 are considerably similar. Both teams come from strong relays, and a former State Champion.

"We want our record up on a banner," Cook said. "Next to a State Championship one."

The players said they had each greatly improved since their freshman years when they also set a freshman record.

"Freshman year," Clay said, "I was all about power. I've gained technique to help my power my running style."

The team competed at Districts and saw several players advance to the next level. The toughest competition they see coming up at State is from one of the inner-city rivals - Omaha North.

"North is tough," Thompson said. "But we have to go in with confidence."

And that is what the team plans to do. Take home State for the first time in 18 years.



PHOTO BY PATRICK BREEN/REGISTER

Senior Stanley Smith knows the feeling of being a State Champion. Last year, he won State in the triple jump, and Smith said he felt he could take it again. He's set the Central triple jump record, but he has bigger goal, like setting the state record.

## Junior believes everyone should have deep-rooted love of sports

Don't get me wrong, I'm not the everyday high school jock you can't stand, but secretly wish was your boyfriend. I am, however, a sports fanatic.

Anything from football to croquet, Pee Wee League to the professionals, I'm interested in it. My tube is locked on ESPN, and I'm not about to change that.

I cannot stand people who hate sports. You know who they are - the ones who hang out towards the back in PE, and watch the ball fly by. Those are the people I love to hurl a ball at during a game of dodgeball.

Really though, I can't understand how someone can hate all sports. If you don't like football or wrestling, I get it as those sports are difficult to understand.

But what is wrong with a game like baseball? One doesn't even have to be athletic to star in that sport - David Wells is an overweight 40-year-old with an alcohol problem, for example.

And if not America's game, then how about gymnastics? Fit girls in skimpy outfits doing insane stunts - who doesn't like that?

Sports are easy to relate to. People from all ethnicities compete in one sport or another.

Men and women alike participate at all levels of athletics. There are hundreds of different types of sports out there.

I have never met a fun, outgoing person who hates sports. They're always the quiet, dull type, and usually they have some hidden emotional problems.

America's most famous people are sports stars. There isn't a single person in this nation who has never heard of Michael Jordan or Babe Ruth.

They're household names. Like him or not, even the President of our nation is

crazy about sports.

He used to own the Texas Rangers, and he still throws out the ceremonial first pitch at different stadiums throughout America.

How can you honestly go through life and not find a single sport that interests you? How can you watch the Olympics and not feel the sudden urge to stand up and cheer after America captures another gold medal?

The Olympics are the time when all sports fans can come together and cheer for the same team.

It will never cease to amaze me the number of people out there who have never been to a single sporting event.

As a wrestler, I can't help but laugh when people ask me what the difference between high school wrestling and the WWE is. I won't go too in-depth on that subject, but for starters we wear more clothes and get deemed ineligible for using steroids.

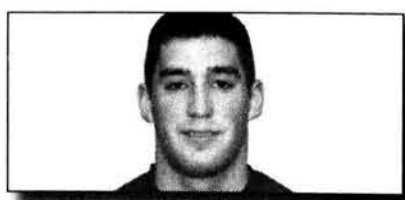
How can you live in Omaha and not be a sports fan? Omaha is home to professional hockey teams, as well as a Triple A baseball team in the Royals.

The College World Series will be played at Johnny Rosenblatt Stadium this summer, as it has for nearly six decades. Still, I'm sure that some people don't even know what sport I'm talking about when I say College World Series.

And how can you not catch "Husker Fever?" Nebraska is full of crazy "Reds," and yet some still don't care a thing about it.

Eric Crouch doesn't even ring a bell for some.

A sad fact is that I asked a girl at lunch if she knew who Ahman Green was, and she responded with, "What grade is he in?" Central has one of the best backs in the



DOWN FOR THE COUNT

A Column by James Owen

# Track star breaks record, earns honors

BY JAMES OWENS

She has the state's fastest 400-meter time at 56.85 seconds. No other girl in America can claim to be faster.

Senior Jasmine Johnson's remarkable times have been making heads at every meet.

Head Coach Trent Lodge said he is grateful to have such an athlete as Johnson.

"Jasmine is a great role model for the younger runners. She has an unparalleled work ethic," Lodge said.

But things didn't come easy for the track star.

Coming into the 2007 season, Johnson's times were not anywhere near as fast as they are now.

Her previous best was 57.9, set during her sophomore year. That year she won the State Championship in the 400.

Now she has shaved a second off that time, and she has her sights set on bringing home the gold once again.

The University of Houston basketball recruit said playing in the winter prepares her for the spring track season.

But she wasn't sure if she would consider track as a second sport in college.

"Basketball is really going to take a lot of my time and energy," Johnson said. "I like track, but not enough to compete in college."

The State Track and Field Meet is slated for May 18 and 19 at the CenturyLink Field in Omaha.

Johnson is the favorite in the 400-meter dash heading into the meet.

"I'm just going to go out there and run my hardest," Johnson said. "I know I'm going to be running with a target on my back. I just hope to leave Central a winner."

Winning the gold isn't anything new for the senior runner.

As a freshman she was a member of the State Championship 400-meter relay.

As a sophomore she entered the individual charts by winning the 400-meter title.

However, a hamstring injury as a junior put an abrupt end to her promising season.

Johnson also has the state's fastest time in the 100-meter dash.

She ran the race for the first time at the Metro Relays, and came out on top of the state charts.

The senior star will compete in four events at the upcoming State Meet.

She'll run the 4 x 100 and 4 x 400, along with the open 100-meter and 400-meter dashes.

"I hate to lose," Johnson said. "I am going to give it my best shot at State."

Lodge said Johnson will be greatly missed by the team after graduation.

"She is definitely one of the fastest and most talented athletes that I have ever coached," he said.

The future looks bright for the graduating senior.

As her days at Central are winding down, Johnson looks forward to her upcoming collegiate experience with high hopes for the future.

She said she knows how far she wants to go.

"And I know how hard I am going to have to work to get there," she said.

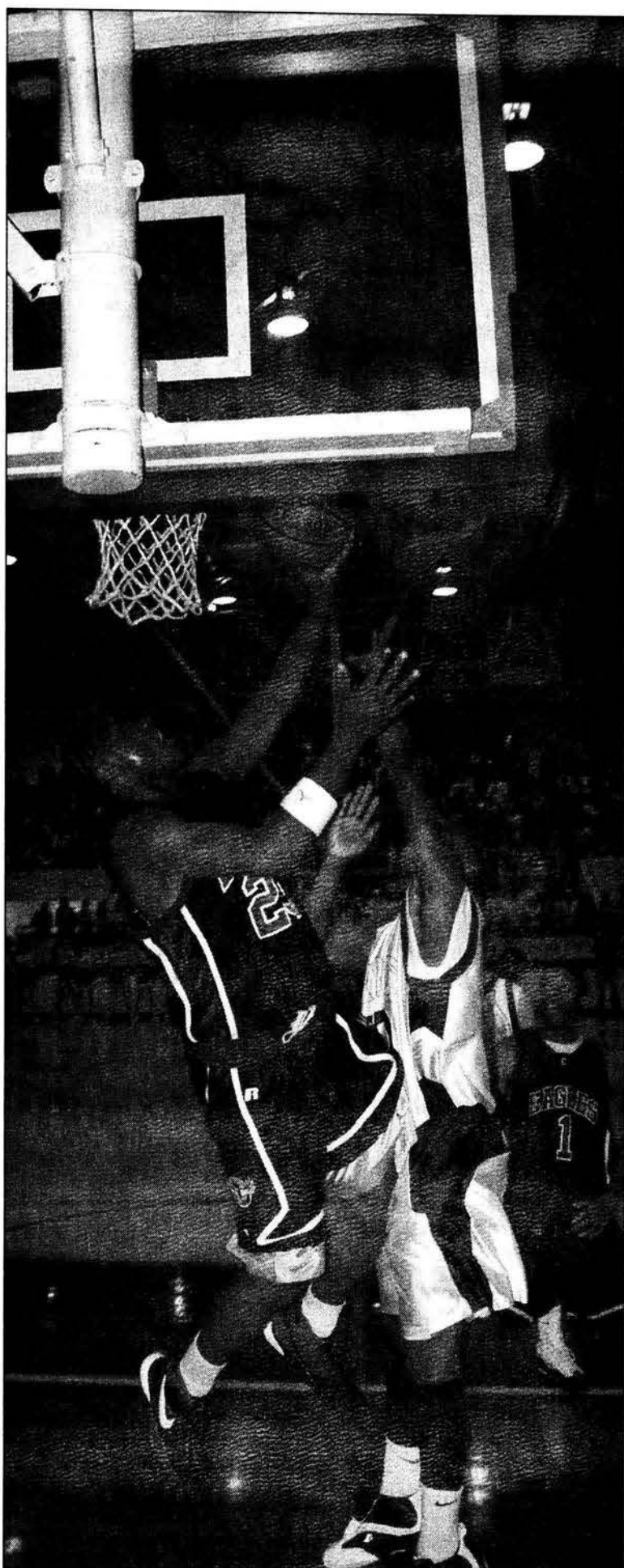


PHOTO BY PATRICK BREEN/REGISTER  
**Junior Josh Jones charges in for a lay-up against the T-birds in a mid-season loss. Jones will now be playing along side T-birds' junior Antione Young at Creighton in the 2008-2009 season.**

# Junior commits to Bluejays, joins rival

BY PATRICK BREEN

The last time they met on the court, Young drew a charge sending Jones to the bench in the final period of overtime.

But now the two will meet again. This time on the same side in 2008.

Juniors Joshua Jones and Antione Young have both played in clutch situations.

They've both won State Championships.

They've both been named to the All-Nebraska team.

They've both received multiple scholarship offers.

And now, the two will be playing for the Creighton University Bluejays in the 2008-09 season.

"I'm excited," Jones said. "I've grown-up wanting to be a Bluejay."

Initially, Jones said, his plan was to attend the feeder schools. He went to a Jesuit school that would feed Creighton Prep. From there he would go to Prep, and then to Creighton.

"I was tired of going to an all-boys school," he said. "All my friends were going here (Central)."

So instead of following the laid-out plan, he went to Central.

And everything has seemingly worked out. He has won two State Championships, earning honors each year with the Eagles, playing varsity every time. And he's received interest from colleges both in the Midwest and on the coast.

Jones said he decided on Creighton for several reasons.

First, he said, the situation was right for him and he had wanted to play for them since he was a kid. Then, he talked about the role of his family in the decision.

"My family can watch me play," Jones said. "Altman and the leaders of the team were welcoming."

He said Altman's brief departure as head coach didn't affect his decision, but he was glad Altman came back.

"I haven't talked to him that much," Jones said, "but I heard he had high words of me."

Jones said he was recruited by Derrin DeVrise, the recruiting director at Creighton, and said he kept him well informed on the team and the interest in his play.

"He tells me what is going on," Jones said, "and how they feel."

Jones said this attention helped sway his decision, and DeVrise made the university, only a few blocks from Central, feel like home.

This isn't the first time Young and Jones will be playing together.

The two played on "The Premier," a select basketball team before high school.

And currently they are playing on the Omaha Crusaders together, another select basketball team in which players from around the Metro join forces.

They are the captains of the team, which includes fellow Eagle, junior Lorenzo Wilson.

"It's good," Jones said. "We get a chance to play together."

The team traveled to Houston, Texas to play in a tournament.

Jones said playing with Young could help them for their years at Creighton.

Coach Eric Behrens said the two were some of the best players in the State, which was evident in their play at the State Tournament.

Behrens said he couldn't compare the two star athletes to each other, however.

"They're different players," Behrens said. "They each have their own skills."

One of the main differences was that Jones would be a shooting guard, while Young would be a point guard.

They each averaged over 16 points a game in the regular season, but Jones posted more rebounds and Young more assists.

They will each play an impact on a Missouri Valley Conference team that needs players to replace graduated seniors Nate Funk, Anthony Toliver and 2008 senior Dane Watts.

To make a larger impact on the team, Jones said he will practice and continue to play over the summer. The extra playing and workouts will improve his skills, he said.

"I hope to improve the strength in my right hand," Jones said.

Through summer workouts and practice, Jones said he believes he can make an immediate impact as a freshman for Creighton.

This isn't Eagle head coach Eric Behrens' first time seeing one of his players raise his game to the collegiate level. Carl White signed with Illinois Chicago, BJ Valentine went with a junior-college then worked his way to Texas Tech and Skylar Thomas was able to walk on at Kansas State.

In Antione Young's freshman year at Bellevue West, the T-birds won the title. In his second year they suffered a narrow overtime defeat to the Eagles. And in his third year he saw a replay, losing to the Eagles once again.

"I want to change the style of play," Jones said. "Have a run-and-gun offense."

Behrens has coached him for three years and has seen his style of play. He said he's seen him mature and become more experienced.

"He has a real high-skill level," Behrens said. "He's strong, quick, can rebound and is a real good shooter."

Both players still have one year to rack up more stats and more college offers.

Neither of the two is obligated to play for Creighton. Verbal commitments are just a way of colleges knowing that players are interested in their college.

Even though he is not held to the Bluejays by a signature, Jones said he is quite sure that he will be playing for the Bluejays in the 2008 season.

# Seniors play their way together, earning scholarship to same school

BY PATRICK BREEN

A room crowded with teammates, parents and laughter was seen at the signing of seniors Ashley Rose and Kelsie Maslo.

The two, who have played along side each other for their complete Central careers, will be joining each other at Dana College in Blair, Neb.

"I'm excited," Maslo said. "Since we know each other, it will make it (the transition) not so awkward."

The two have played with each other on the Eagle softball team for four years, three on varsity. They have each seen their skills and abilities improve throughout the seasons. Each became stronger, smarter and more experienced, Dana softball coach Jody Roff said.

"They're the type of players that are good students, good kids and good athletes," Roff said. "We've (the college) watched these two players and they're very good fits."

Roff said they had watched the girls play in several games. She said she and her assistants chose the two players not only for their on-the-field skills, but the leadership in the clubhouse.

"They have good personalities," Roff said. "That makes them some of the stand-out players they are."

Rose agreed Dana was the best fit for them. She said she decided on the school because of the small classes, close teacher-student relationship and the softball program.

Maslo said Roff approached her and told her about the program at Dana.

"The students were friendly and welcoming," she said.

Roff said she felt the two were strong players that would make an impact on the improving softball program. She said the two are

joining a team that went from 26-27 two seasons ago to 43-10 last year, capturing the Great Plains Athletic Conference title.

A definite improvement.

"Their upcoming season," Roff said, "the girls will push our returning starters to play harder to keep their spots. (There is) a good possibility of playing time."

Although Ashley and Kelsie are playing together again, they each have their own attributes and positions to make them unique.

"Ashley is an utility," Roff said. "She can play infield and outfield. Kelsie is a strong and quick outfielder."

The differences give the team options to play them.

"They saw attributes and hard work when they described how they got to where they are."

The two played over the summer improving all aspects of the game.

"I'm a strong leader," Rose said. "Real vocal and I never give up."

Maslo said she has become stronger, mentally and physically. She said she has become more serious about athletics and school.

"The years at Central," she said, "have definitely taught me teamwork."

The teamwork of the two will now be seen on the Dana field, rather than the Dill field they have been playing at this past season. Ashley and Kelsie said they look to keep improving themselves and the rising Dana softball program, and perhaps even take home a National Title.

"We have a strong team," Roff said. "We're improving and that's an attribute to the play of the girls."

At the end of the event, the two passed out cake, talked and laughed with the players and coach Jodi Reeder who made so much of a difference in their past few years at Central.



PHOTO BY PATRICK BREEN/REGISTER  
**Seniors Kelsie Maslo and Ashley signed a letter of intent to play softball at Dana College. The two have played four years for Central.**

# Senior represents Central on trapshooting team

BY CLAIRE LANGDON



Using the second amendment, right to bear arms, Senior Andrew Frenking holds together the one-man trap team and is now looking to represent Central at state.

"It is so rare to see a one-man team for such a large school," Frenking said, "but I am still able to meet a lot of people who I never usually encounter in everyday life."

Frenking said he first shot a gun after finding his dad's old hunting gun and worn-down pellet gun in his grandpa's closet.

Frenking was going into his freshman year of high school and had just moved in with his grandparents in Omaha from his previous home in St. Louis.

At first, he paid more attention to the pellet gun so he could go outside and shoot rabbits, Frenking said.

After hunting down the animals, Frenking shot for bigger fish by moving onto his dad's 12-gauge Springfield.

Frenking said repairing the gun was hard work, but after replacing the firing pin and refinishing the stock, he was in possession of a fine firearm.

Frenking said he started to get serious with shooting once on the Creighton Prep trapshooting team his freshman year. He said he practiced outside of the season though, and trapshooting has become his main hobby.

Frenking transferred to Central his junior year. Having personal difficulties, Frenking said he did not even think being on a trap team his junior year, but he still continued to shoot when he could.

"Not being able to do the sport I love was incredibly depressing," said Frenking, "the second I got off probation I started shooting."

Still wanting to continue shooting, Frenking said, he had to go through some trails before he could compete.

Frenking said first he talked to the coach at Prep to find out if he could practice with Prep's team,

maybe even compete.

In order to represent Central, Frenking said he look towards athletic director, Darin Williams, for help. Williams said he had Frenking find another team to work with.

Williams said he signed Frenking to a co-op with Prep. He said Frenking practices with Prep but represents Central in meets.

Frenking said he practices with Prep once a week, but the coach is more concerned with his own team therefore, he practices on his own every week down at Seymour Smith to stay on top of his game.

"I love being my team though, I don't have to focus on any teammates," Frenking said.

Trapshooting involves shooting flying clay disk, which Frenking said is sometimes nick-named "pigeons," in mid-air.

In a meet, five shooters take turns, as they stand at the poles 16 yards away from the trap house, shooting at flying clay disks launching from a machine in the trap house.

Each shooter takes 10 individual shots at one pole and then moves to the next pole. Once every shooter has taken 50 shots the round is over.

A little microphone is placed inside the poles. Once ready, the shooter says "pull" into the mic and a pigeon is thrown out of the trap house.

A score keeper is stationed behind the shooters and closely watches each shot. After all teams and shooters have gone threw a round, the scores and handicaps are posted.

Each shooter than shoots from their handicap.

A handicap is taken by dividing the shooters score in half. The shooter moves back to the correct yard line according to their handicap score.

Frenking said there are usually around 200 shooters, both male and female, and 15 to 20 teams at the meets.

After the handicap rounds are done, there is a trophy ceremony to close the meet.


Trophies and medals are given to the highest team, highest shooter and other shooters for their different accomplishments.

Frenking said he received a medal for first in his handicap in April.

He said his average from the 16 yard line is 45 out of 50. He said he usually shoots handicap at the 22 yard line. He said his overall average is 87 out of 100.

PHOTO BY CLAIRE LANGDON/REGISTER

**Senior Andrew Frenking is the only Central student on the Trapshooting team, practicing with Prep for State.**



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