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### School vs. Legislature

The good side as well as the bad when it comes to schools and the law.

See page 8A, 9A



### In Her Shoes

Freshman Alyo Beasley mastered the art of dance before she learned how to ride a bike.

See page 11B

# the register

Central High School

11 TIME NSPA/JEA ... WINNER A HIGH SCHOOL NEWSPAPER PRACTICING PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM NATIONAL PACEMAKER AWARD WINNER

On the go...  
 news



PHOTO BY PATRICK BREEN/REGISTER

Students help save lives by participating in annual blood drive

Students participate in the annual blood drive held at Central. The event was highly publicised and students were urged to take action in saving lives. For more see 2A.

### College Corner

With college coming up for many juniors and seniors, details are important. Take a quick look at some facts on this issue's feature colleges. For more see 2A.

### Meet the candidates...

The Register offers quick facts on 2008's presidential candidates to better prepare America's youngest voters. For more see 3A.

### opinion

#### Schools adapt new policy unfair to students

With schools across the country adapting a new grading policy that sets a new standard as to what failing entails, students who put effort into their school work wonder how this is fair. See how this new idea is far from beneficial to students. For more see 7A.

### registration



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE 1993 O-BOOK

Former drama teacher recalls fond memories of teaching at Central

When she applied to work at Central, she wanted to teach ESL. However, she accepted the job as drama teacher just for the chance to teach at her high school. For more see 12B.

### Alumnus donates \$70,000 to Rose Theatre

Viewers at the ever-famous Rose Theatre can now enjoy the same dark, ornate ceiling thanks to a generation donation from a Central alumnus. For more see 14B.

### sports

#### Defense lifts Eagles past the T-Birds

The Eagles took on their rivals, the Bellevue T-Birds to avenge a loss in the Metro Holiday Tourney. For more see 17B.

PHOTO BY PATRICK BREEN/REGISTER

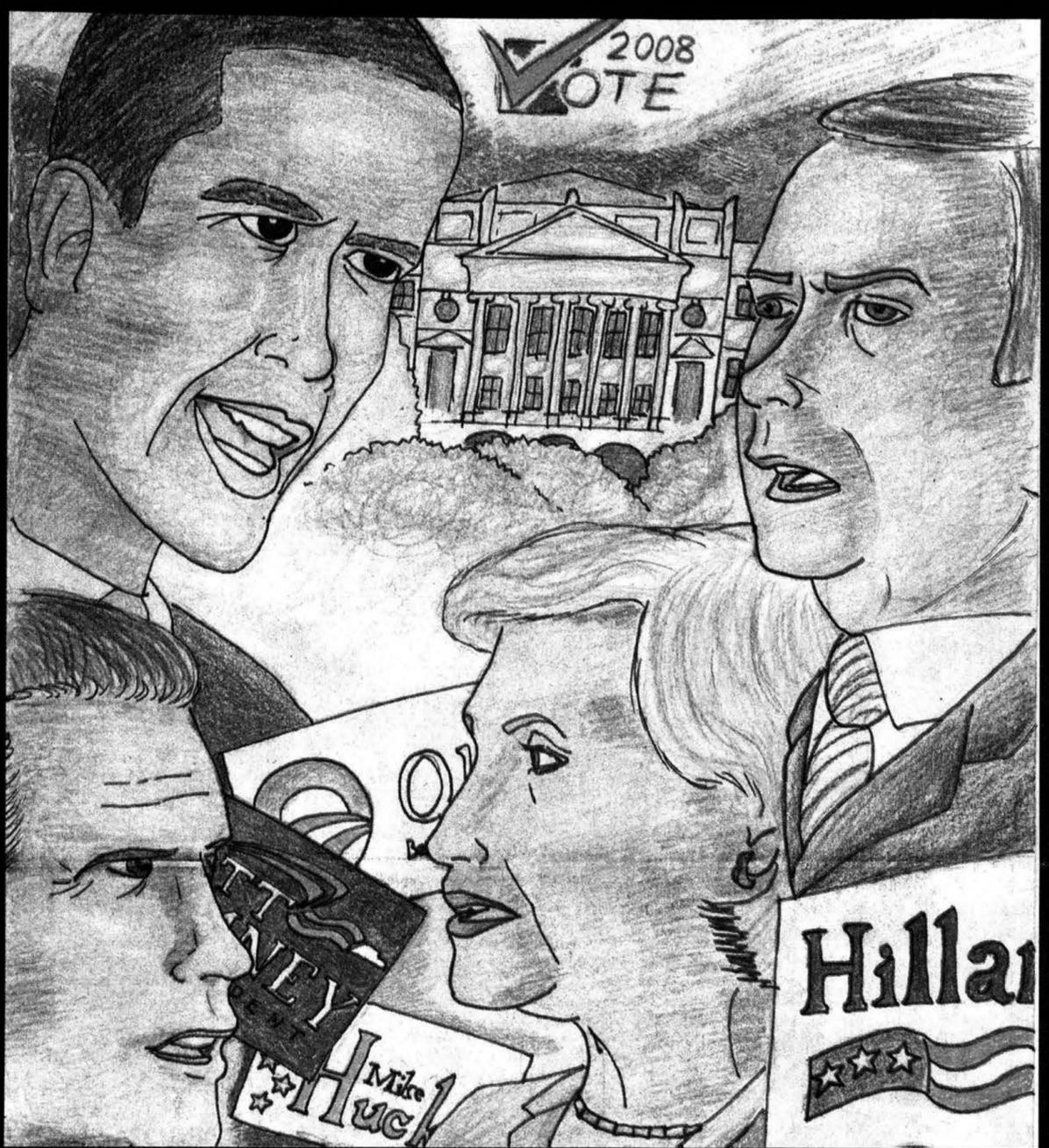


ILLUSTRATION BY KEVIN GIBBS/REGISTER

## Teens could tip scales in elections

With election season in full gear, politicians are realizing the impact that "Generation X" might have. How could these uncharted demographics change the way of the game?

BY PATRICK BREEN

By this time next year America will be under new leadership. And Americans are already deciding who they want to be their leader. But something new has changed the way the politicians are taking to the stage. In the first caucus of the year in Iowa, the nation watched as teens placed a pin on their chest and voiced their support. According to the United States Census Bureau (USCB) the last

presidential election in 2004 saw a 11-percent voting rate increase among those age 18-24.

And this year the politicians are taking note of this younger generation. Flip on the television, and see the ads that get straight to the point.

But go onto Facebook or Myspace and you'll see groups for or against certain candidates.

Barack Obama has seen large support from the under 30 year-old voters, and his techniques are obvious. Take the Facebook, Myspace and technological world to his campaign.

Political analysts like Tim Russert are saying that the younger

Continued to 'ELECTION' on Page 3A

## Students attend rally for Obama

BY KIM BUCKLEY

People from around the city and the state flocked to hear Illinois Sen. Barack Obama at a rally on Feb. 7, a couple of days before the Nebraska caucus on Feb. 9.

The doors opened fifteen minutes earlier than the scheduled time of 3:30 p.m. at the Civic Auditorium. Many supporters in the crowd were holding signs with Obama's campaign slogan "Change We Can Believe In", as well as American flags and clappers.

Before the rally, music played and chants of "Obama" were heard. The people in the crowded auditorium did the wave a few times.

Nebraska Sen. Ben Nelson, who came to endorse Obama, said he was surprised at the number of people that flocked to the Civic Auditorium. He added that whenever there are political rallies the hope is that the room is small.

While Nelson said the large auditorium initially worried him, he felt that supporters were enthusiastic, which made the large auditorium seem small.

The Nebraska senator said he endorsed Obama because he felt Obama was a candidate who reached across the aisle. He also said he liked Obama's speech after winning the Iowa caucus since it was about bringing people and the country together.

The crowd grew excited when the band "Bright Eyes" performed three songs before Obama spoke.

"Are you excited?" the lead singer Conor Oberst asked the crowd. "Saturday is the day when we nominate Barack Obama!"

After a song, Oberst asked the crowd if they were ready to watch Obama speak. He added he has seen it and hearing Obama speak was amazing.

While the doors opened early, the crowd had to wait over two hours before Obama came to speak. Both Omaha Mayor Mike Fahey and Iowan Governor Chet Culver spoke to crowd, both of who urged Nebraskans to caucus. Sen. Nelson then introduced Obama.

Obama first thanked Mayor Fahey for his hospitality as well as Nelson and Culver and called the crowd extraordinary.

He opened his speech by saying it has been a year since he announced his candidacy and there were some people who said he was relatively young and could afford to wait before running for president. He then said he was not running on a gambit.

"I am running because of what Dr.

Continued to 'RALLY' on Page 3A



PHOTO BY ALI HODGE/REGISTER  
 Hundreds of Omahans paid their respects to the nine killed in December's shooting at Von Maur by placing flowers, signs, candles and cards at the entrance of the building.

## Deadly shooting shocks teens

BY KIM BUCKLEY

Nine people dead and others wounded.

That was the terrible aftermath of a six-minute mass shooting in the Von Maur store of Westroads Mall.

The shooter was 19-year-old Robert Hawkins, who committed suicide after killing eight people and wounding others.

In a statement to the Associated Press, Hawkins' family wrote, "The Hawkins family extends its sincerest condolences to all those impacted by this senseless and horrible event. While no words can ease the pain and

grief, our family prays that at some time, in some way, our community can be healed in the aftermath of this terrible tragedy."

That afternoon left the citizens of Omaha and the entire state shocked and devastated that such a thing could ever happen.

The incident had the community wondering about gun control and the issue of depression.

For senior Elizabeth Erikson, the shooting at Von Maur happened on her birthday. Erikson, who works at the mall, was just getting into the mall between Dick's Sporting Goods and JC Penneys when the shooting

was happening. She walked into the door and saw 25 policemen lining up and yelling, "Get down! Get down!"

Erikson said she dropped to the ground scared because she believed there was a man with a rifle in JC Penneys. She said she just laid on the ground for about five minutes, bawling and hysterical, before looking out of motioning for a cop to come and get her.

The cop took Erikson outside, and drove her to her car. She said she had to wait about an hour and a half in the parking lot so the police could search the cars to ensure safety.

Senior Jarila Williams said

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**Another Big Win**  
 The Register takes a look back at Central's state football win.  
 See page 20B



# College Corner

## Sarah Lawrence College

**Location:** Bronxville, New York  
**Type:** Liberal arts four year  
**Undergrad enrollment:** 1,391 of the student population are undergrads.  
**Majors offered in:** Biology, writing, visual arts, foreign language, law, medicine, dance and business.  
**Application dates:** May 1

## Bates College

**Location:** Lewiston, Maine  
**Type:** Liberal arts four year  
**Enrollment:** 1,699 of the student population are full time students.  
**Majors offered in:** Biology, visual arts, foreign language, law, medicine, agriculture, economics, philosophy, history, Russian, Japanese, Chinese, dance and business.  
**Application dates:** January 1

## University of Florida

**Location:** Gainesville, Florida  
**Type:** Liberal arts four year  
**Enrollment:** 1,699 of the student population are full time students.  
**Majors offered in:** Biology, visual arts, foreign language, law, medicine, agriculture, economics, philosophy, history, Russian, Japanese, Chinese dance and business.  
**Application dates:** January 1

## Nebraska Wesleyan University

**Location:** Lincoln, Nebraska  
**Type:** Private Liberal Arts  
**Enrollment:** 1,864 of the student population are full time students.  
**Majors offered in:** Business, Education, Health Profession, Parks and Recreation, Psychology, Biology, English, Visual and Performing Arts  
**Application dates:** August 15

# CALENDAR

## January

- 21 Martin Luther King Jr. Day**  
No school for students and faculty.
- 26 Scrapbooking Day**  
Central High School will be hosting a scrapbooking event from 9am to 6pm. Cost is \$25 a person.
- 26 S.A.T.**  
Interested students may take the S.A.T. at several Omaha locations.
- 26 DECA Metro Conference**  
Metro Conference held in Lincoln, NE for all DECA members

## February

- 1-2 Roadshow**  
The 94th annual Roadshow will be held in the auditorium.
- 9 All City Music Festival**  
All Omaha Public Schools join in a city wide concert at the TAC building.
- 14-16 State Wrestling Tournament**  
High school wrestlers gather at Qwest Center for state wide tournament.
- 18 President's Day**  
No school for students or faculty.
- 19 Planning/Inservice Teacher Work Day**  
No school for students.
- 28-29 Girl's State Basketball**

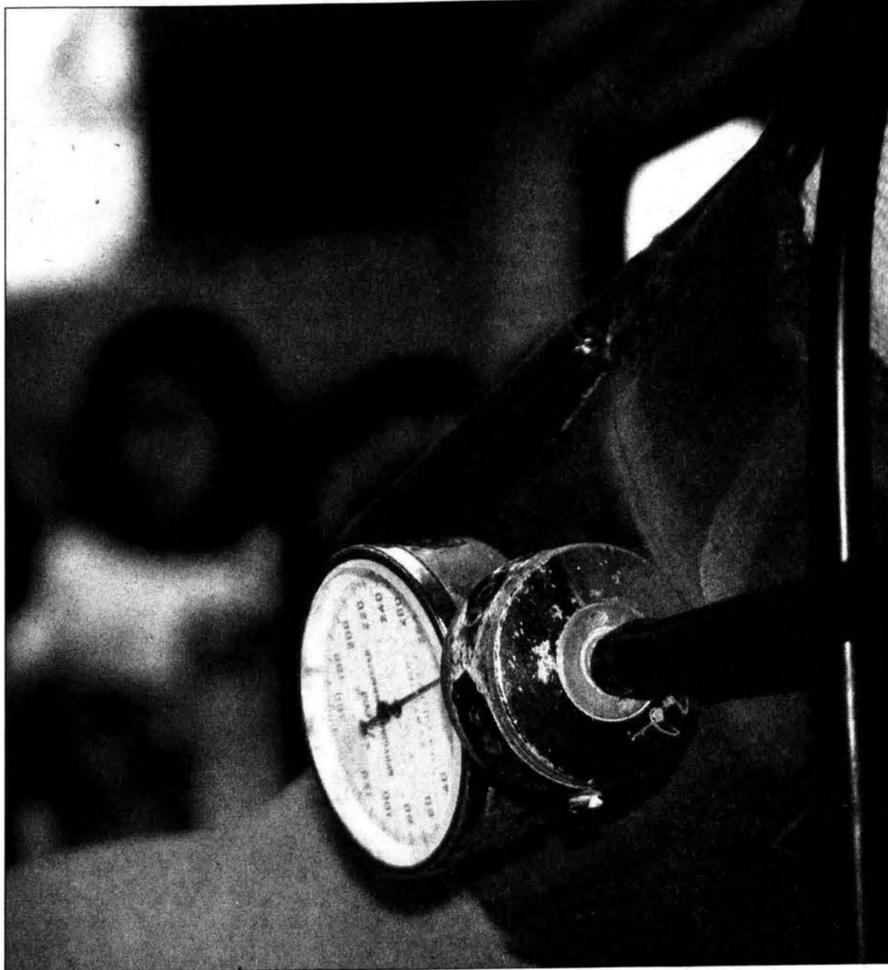


PHOTO BY PATRICK BREEN/REGISTER

A bus parked outside Seemann Stadium gave students a chance to make a difference just by giving some blood. Many students participated and saved lives.

# Blood drive: a success

BY ANGELICA GENOVESI

Blood is a vital tool in contemporary medicine. Everyone's body thrives on it and doctors are able to treat accidents or disease with accuracy and efficiency using new techniques dealing with the blood.

The American Red Cross gave the opportunity to high school students nation-wide to donate blood and make a difference by possibly saving a life.

Each person was allowed to donate a pint of blood every 56 days and that pint could save up to three lives. With around 100 students donating that day potentially 300 lives could be saved.

"It's a good thing for students to donate and become part of a bigger cause," said John Doe, the head nurse present at the blood drive held here at Central.

"The age requirements this year also allowed more students to actually donate who wanted to," said Doe.

Last year, the age requirement was 17, but this year it was lowered to 16, which in context didn't seem like a significant decrease, but allowed more students the opportunity to donate.

There were, however, some instances, which could have caused the donor to not be certified to donate their blood.

"The first thing that takes place before ever taking blood is a drop check of the iron levels of the patient we are dealing with, because if the hemoglobin levels are too low it can make them temporarily unusable," said Doe.

That was why it was recommended to not only keep a balanced diet before donating, but to consume foods high in iron. By doing this it makes someone more eligible and also prevents them from becoming weak after the process is complete.

"The actual process is quite simple and quick," said Doe. "The only difference between getting blood taken here and blood taken at the doctors is the size of the needle and the amount taken."

Students donated blood for several different reasons. Whether it was because they wanted to be part of the medical field later in life or because someone they have known had to have a blood transfusion or simply because they want to help out every donation counted.

Senior Monica Brown chose to donate because she wanted to help out the American Red Cross and the people connected to that organization. She had never donated before and was slightly nervous.

"Getting pricked in the finger hurt a little more than when it came time to actually draw the blood," said Brown. According to Doe, this is because there are more nerves at the tip of your finger so the pain stays longer and is more apparent.

There weren't any students who had a reaction after giving blood as there has been in previous years.

"A few students became weary and felt exhausted," said Doe, "but no one fainted or was seriously affected."

This was senior Will Robins' third time donating and the only time he didn't pass out afterwards.

"The first two years I had mistakenly forgot to eat anything before getting my blood drawn which wasn't a smart idea," said Robbins.

Because he didn't eat Robbins had a lack of fluid in his system when he went in.

"This causes the person to faint because since there is less fluid in your body, the blood pressure isn't strong enough to keep the blood going to your head."

"This year, I made sure to eat beforehand and it went perfectly fine," said Robins.

# Local disaster shocks teens

Continued from 'Shooting' on page 1A

when she found out about the Von Maur shootings she felt sympathy for the families because a lot of people died.

Westroads Mall reopened on Dec. 8, though the Von Maur store still remained closed.

Erikson worked the day the mall reopened, and said she felt very safe and comfortable at the mall because it had a lot of security.

A lot of support has been given to the victims of the families and their families, including a fund. The donations raised by the fund reached \$843,000. A memorial included eight wreaths was placed outside of the steps of the store to remember the victims.

Many prayer vigils took place, offering comfort and reassurance as well as support for the community. Many politicians sent their thoughts and sympathies, including the Mayor Mike Fahey, Gov. Dave Heineman and President Bush.

Erikson said the support the community gave after the shooting said a lot of good things about it. She said it showed the community had a positive attitude and she had a better outlook because of it.

She said it was sad that something so tragic had to happen for people to realize how supportive people are in the community.

Red Cross volunteers came to Westroads every day for a week and gave items. Erikson said people from the Red Cross would ask how they were doing.

Von Maur reopened on Dec.

20. Hundreds of people showed their support for the store. The night before Von Maur reopened, volunteers gathered to pick up the memorial on the steps of the store to be preserved.

There was a moment of silence to remember the victims before a prayer was said by Father Don Shane of St. Roberts Bellarmine. The crowd sang part of a verse of the song "Silent Night" before members of the historical society picked up the memorial.

For some, it will be a day that they will always remember. Erikson said something as big as the shooting will be remembered by the people of Omaha and Nebraska.

"It just won't be forgotten," she said.

Williams said in Omaha it was a day where people will remember where they were at when it happened.

# State schools tour each other

BY WYNTER DAVIS

Central High School Student Council members invited other York High Student Council members over to experience a day at Central High.

This was an opportunity for the members to visit, share, compare and contrast their school environment with another school in the state. Students were also able to see Central's leadership roles and quality around the school.

"The members were chosen by good attendance, participation in the student council sponsor activities," said Student Council sponsor Judy Storm.

The whole purpose was to show leadership and diversity here at Central. Each member had to pick from 19 York students to show around the school for four periods.

It was snowing in York and while driving, sponsor Dan Endorf had a minor accident.

Storm said it pushed the schedule back a bit.

Instead of the York High School Student Council members show at the end of fourth hour, they arrived at the beginning of fifth hour.

Storm said that she would like to keep the tradition with the Nebraska Association of Student Council (NASC).

The York High School members were very amazed to see the school.

In the near future, Central members will be attending a student exchange in York, Nebraska. This will

be an all day event.

The students will visit York High School and spend the day with a York student host.

Giving them the same respect has they need Central.

"I am excited about this opportunity and new experience for the members," said Storm.

Storm wanted Student Council members to see the different environment of a smaller school.

"The students at York were driven to get a good education," said Storm.

Even though York High is a much smaller school than Central, York students still have many opportunities.



STORM

# Contest allows students to express poetry

BY PETER BOCK

"The neat thing about the program is that it gives students the opportunity to speak poetry out loud and lets you experience poems you wouldn't see in class," said Deron Larson, an English teacher and a sponsor of the upcoming Poetry Our Loud contest.

"I really think students will become more interested if they have experienced [a poetry competition] once," he said.

The idea for the Poetry Our Loud event came in 2005 when a poetry slam at Ralston High School was successful.

Larson attended the event and decided to answer the emails he had been receiving for a National Poetry Competition sponsored by the Nebraska Arts Council.

The National Competition features smaller state competitions, in which schools from the midwest Nebraska are participating.

"I think Central has a strong reputation, and other schools want to participate with us in these kinds of events," Larson said.

The January 24th event was the preliminary competition where interested students who did not have the opportunity to try out in class could show off their poetry skills to advance to the final round on the 31st.

Classical poems were to be memorized and presented in an entertaining and oratorical manner that was judged.

The finals included the open house where students, which is anyone, and the students who tried out in class competing against one another in a school wide contest to determine the school's representative to the state finals.

"Last year Mrs. Devlin mentioned something where the finals [of Poetry Our Loud] would be held as an event at the roadshow, and that was a great idea but unfortunately didn't happen. I would like to see something like that, or even an open mic slam where students could read their own poems," Larson said.

Some of the poems expected to be read at the reading included Langston Hughes "Harlem," Robert Frost's "Desert" and Stephen Crane's "In the Desert" among other such classic poems.

# Martin Luther King, Jr. Day remembered

BY MARK VONDRASEK

The celebration of the birth of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was held at the Holland Performing Arts Center in downtown Omaha on Monday, Jan. 21, for Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Before the program began, smooth jazz from several local Omaha artists was played, and then Mayor Mike Fahey began the celebration by introducing the people who would be receiving the "Living the Dream" award, a local award presented to citizens of Omaha who have gone above and beyond the call of duty in the matters of helping their community.

Five citizens of Omaha were presented the "Living the Dream" award.

The program was a community event so anyone in Omaha or the surrounding area could have come. The event was also free admission to the public.

Other events were taking place during Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day. These other activities included community service in the form of painting houses for the Hope Center for Kids.

The event was sponsored and on by the University of Nebraska Omaha's Service Learning Academy, Student Organization and Leadership programs.

This was the twenty-fifth annual celebration for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day. The event has a long history and is considered a tradition to many who attended.

Many in attendance were community leaders and other involved citizens, including several councilmen.

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# Meet the candidates

Sometimes anxiety to voice one's opinion in the election year clouds the mind of a young voter. In the rush and excitement of the voting process, teens may overlook important information needed to cast an intelligent vote. The following is what each candidate plans to do when faced with some of the most difficult topics that threaten our country now.

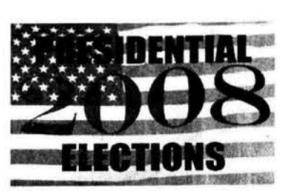


PHOTO COURTESY OF FOX NEWS

## Mike Huckabee

Party: Republican

**Education:** Huckabee would give bonuses to and erase all of the student loans for teachers working in low performing schools and are performing well.

**War in Iraq:** Supports current administration plan.

**Economy:** Huckabee would support the Fairtax and eliminate the Internal Revenue Service.

**Climate Change:** Huckabee would use his comprehensive plan to focus more on getting energy from alternative sources, such as wind power.

**Immigration:** Huckabee would eliminate the visa lottery system and the admission category for adult brothers and sisters of U.S. citizens.

Abortion: Pro-Life



PHOTO COURTESY OF FOX NEWS

## John McCain

Party: Republican

**Education:** McCain would change teachers' incomes get to be equal to lawyers' incomes and support tax-free saving accounts for education expenses.

**War in Iraq:** McCain supports the current administration plan as well as the troop surge.

**Economy:** McCain would reduce government spending by using his power to veto bills before Congress.

**Climate Change:** McCain and Joe Lieberman have been advocating for a mandatory limit or "cap" on greenhouse gas emissions.

**Immigration:** McCain would make allies with those in Latin America and Mexico and help their economy.

Abortion: Pro-Life



PHOTO COURTESY OF FOX NEWS

## Hillary Clinton

Party: Democrat

**Education:** Clinton would end No Child Left Behind and invest \$100 million in a new summer internship program for both public and private schools.

**War in Iraq:** Originally voted in favor of the war, but now opposes troop increases.

**Economy:** Clinton would create new jobs as well as ensure that trade policy and unions are strong.

**Climate Change:** Clinton would increase fuel standards and create a \$50 billion Strategic fund to invest in alternative energy research.

**Immigration:** Clinton would deploy technology to help and the use of an employee verification system.

Abortion: Pro-choice



PHOTO COURTESY OF FOX NEWS

## Barack Obama

Party: Democrat

**Education:** Obama would provide funding for schools to use for intervention strategies to lower the dropout rate.

**War in Iraq:** Obama has opposed the war from the start. He wants full withdraw of troops March 2008.

**Economy:** Obama's economic plan includes investing in U.S. Manufacturing and having a Credit Card Bill of Rights.

**Climate Change:** Obama would double funding for clean energy projects and create a new world energy forum that would focus on environmental issues.

**Immigration:** Obama would increase the number of legal immigrants allowed as well as promote economic development in Mexico.

Abortion: Pro-choice

## Teens look to make difference in upcoming election

Continued from 'Election' on page 1A

voters will play a bigger role, now more than ever. And Central's Student Democrat co-President said there are some major reasons to why more young voters are turning out. "Teens are voting more because of the political events," senior Elizabeth Rockwell said. "Since everything with the war and terrorism, (it provided) a wake-up call for everyone." The expected increase in voter participation ranges from 3 to 7 percent among those voters 18-24. Recently, the primaries and caucuses were held in several states, including Iowa and New Hampshire. Primaries and caucuses are used to determine which candidate will represent them, not pin opposing parties against each other. But that still doesn't ease the tension between opposing parties. According to the Washington Post, it was and still is a tight race between Democrats Hillary Rodham Clinton, Barack Obama. Republicans John McCain and Mike Huckabee are head to head in the 2008 Presidential Race also. According to Peter Levine of the University of Maryland's Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE), political professionals haven't liked dealing with the 'wild card,' someone who is either undecided or an Independent voter. CIRCLE also reported that the youth voter turnout rate in 2004 was up seven percent from 2000, for a total percent of 46 percent. There are new voters every four years and they are likely to take part in this vote for the president in 2008.

Michelle Rieger contributed to this story

# Students show support by attending Obama speech

Continued from 'Rally' on page 1A

Obama said he believed that this administration help was too late and mentioned schools leaving children behind. "In such an environment, we cannot afford to wait," he said. To the crowd he said he didn't believe in ideology, but in realism as well as selfishness from the president of the United States. "And I was convinced first of all that change doesn't come from the top down, but from the bottom up," Obama said. He mentioned while on the campaign trail he has had people tell him that the time for change has come, and has seen both young people, Independents and Republicans who have switched parties to vote for him. "Everywhere we go, we see these enormous crowds, this enormous energy," Obama said. The crowd erupted in cheers when he mentioned that no matter what happened in this election, President Bush and Vice-President Dick Cheney were not going to be on the ballot. The chants of "Yes We Can" were heard before the crowd quieted down and Obama could resume talking. "You're here because you don't want to just be against someone. You want to be for someone," Obama told his supporters. He told the crowd about the people he has met on the trail, including teachers, young people and veterans. He told the crowd these veterans have served honorable and have been let down by the system, calling them "magnificent." After mentioning the veterans, Obama mentioned having to hug parents who have had a son or daughter die in Iraq and patriots who want to know why America's standing in the world has fallen. He said he knows they want change and that he wants to bring the country together. "I want to be a president who listens every day to the struggles of the American people," he said. Obama covered a variety of topics during his speech, including fixing the health care system. Obama's mother died from cancer at the age of 53 and Obama said he remembers wanting to watch his mother deal with insurance papers. "I know what it's like to see people suffer because of a broken health care system," Obama said before outlining his plan, promising that it would take place during his first year as president. On the economy, Obama said he believes in capitalism and the free market, but it was wrong when CEOs make more money in 10 minutes than the average worker makes in a single year. "We've got to restore fairness and balance in the economy," he said. Obama promised that while he was president he would raise the minimum wage to keep pace with inflation as well as increase safety standards for imports so there wouldn't be problems with lead in toys. Switching topics to education, Obama said that Americans have an obligation to ensure that children would have a good education and make college affordable for every person in America. He said he would ensure that there would be a \$4,000 dollar tuition break for students, but warned that students who get that break would have to work in a national service, such as the peace corps. "We will invest in you, you will invest in America," he told the crowd. Other topics Obama spoke about included alternative energy, foreign policy and helping veterans. "We can grow our own fuel in Iowa and Nebraska," he said. During the rally Obama called the war in Iraq "unwise," and said it distracted the country from Afghanistan and the terrorist group Al-Qaeda. He said that the money spent on the war could have been better served in places such as Nebraska, being used for under funded schools and building hospitals. "It was an unwise war and that is why I will end it," he said, pledging to bring all troops back to America by 2009. Obama also pledged to be a world leader and help people in some of the poor countries as well as close Guantanamo Bay and restore habeas corpus. He said he would be a president who knows, teaches and obeys the Constitution.

We need to turn the page," he told his supporters. "The stakes are too high. That is why I am running for the president of the United States." During the rally Obama addressed some of the concerns his critics have. He said that people are able to disagree without being disagreeable as well as reach across the aisle and find common ground with the opposite party. He told the crowd that he was looking forward to debating Sen. John McCain, the GOP frontrunner. He mentioned that people have asked what change was, but said that at the end of the campaign it wasn't just a question about what change was, but what hope was as well. Obama said that the odds of him standing before this crowd were very slim since his mother and his grandparents raised him, and his family was poor. "And all they could give me was love, an education and hope," he said. "That is my inheritance." Obama said that hope was not blind optimism but was the opposite. He said he knew that it would not be easy to get farmers to be a force in the economy or to

alleviate poverty or to lift failing schools, mentioning he fought those things in the streets, courts and legislature. "I know how hard change is," he said. Obama told the crowd this was the country's opportunity to imagine a better America. He ended the rally urging the supporters to caucus. "Nebraska, this is our moment. This is our time," he said at the rally. He said with the help from Nebraskans they would not only help him win the nomination and the general election, but remake the country and the world. The senator stayed behind to talk with supporters after the rally. Seniors Connor Mayfield and Michael Lynch as well as junior Franny Jamroz attended the rally. They found out about this event over Facebook. Mayfield decided to attend the rally because of the all hype surrounding the event. Many teens don't think their vote will count in the election. The fact is that every single vote counts.

Michelle Rieger contributed to this story

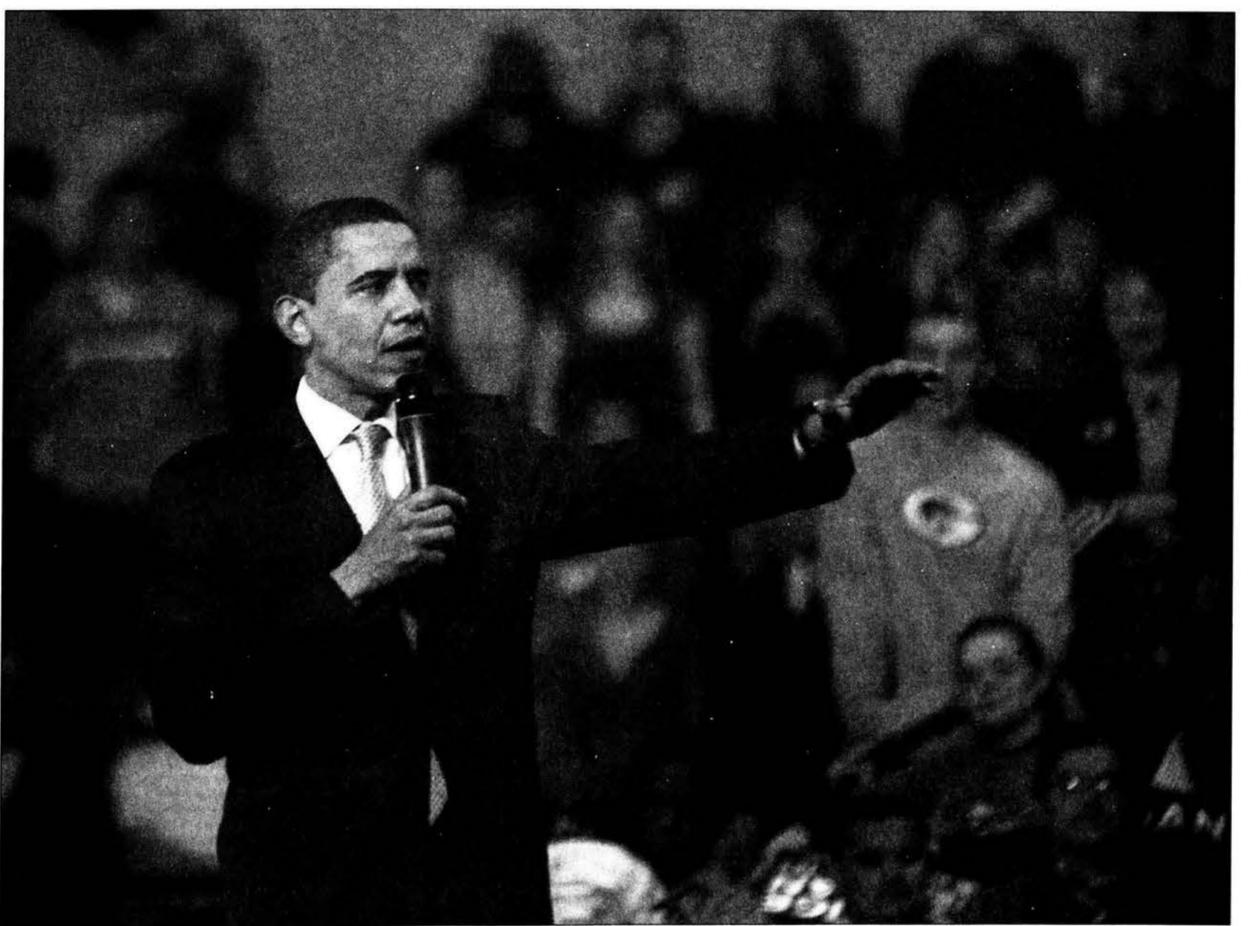


PHOTO BY PATRICK BREEN/ REGISTER

Presidential hopeful Barack Obama addresses the 10,000 Nebraskans at the Civic Center Thursday, February 7. The majority of the crowd Obama addressed was under the age of thirty. He said he thinks the nation will see a great deal from the younger generation this election year.

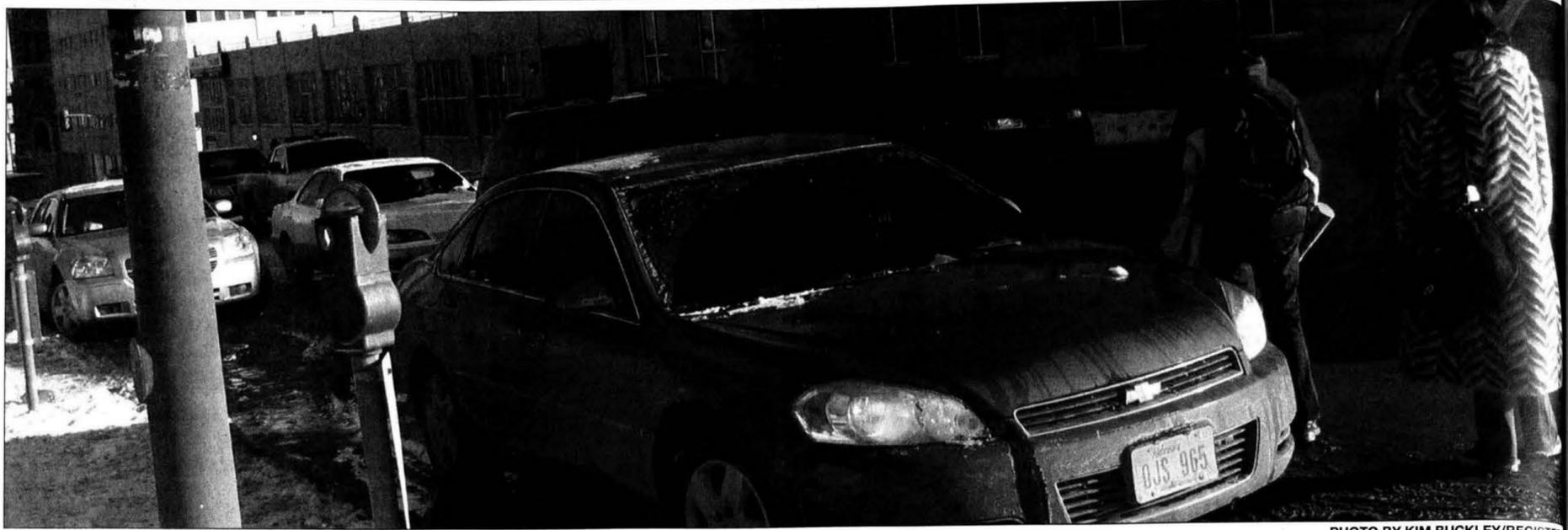


PHOTO BY KIM BUCKLEY/REGISTER

20th and Dodge known as one of the worst areas as far as traffic is concerned, which may be caused by the rush of students leaving school at 2:50. Assistant principal Ed Bennet working with security and administrators are working to make sure students are safe and to also make sure traffic is able to pass freely.

# Increased traffic causes more than slowdowns

BY KIM BUCKLEY

Known as one of the worst traffic spots downtown, 20th and Dodge lights up with traffic when the bell rings and students are released. When parents come to pick up students, they cause traffic to come to a standstill.

Administrator Ed Bennett said he believes that the administration has seen an increase in traffic on Dodge as well as on 22<sup>nd</sup> and Davenport.

School Resource Officer Matt Kelly said there is usually at least one other police cruiser, either a one-man or a two-man, to oversee the traffic on Dodge. However, any extra police help depends on the call load when school gets out.

The cause for all of the traffic is parents picking up kids and students leaving school at the same time.

"There are multiple transportation issues," Kelly said. "The amount of people leaving the school at the same time, Kelly said, leaves both the school grounds and the traffic on Dodge congested."

Junior Dominique Mitchell said the traffic is always causing problems because while there is only one lane people should technically stop in, drivers stop in three.

Kelly said the traffic on Dodge after school is very dangerous because of pedestrians and drivers not paying as close attention as they could have. He said part of the problem was some of the drivers had their view blocked because of other cars and pedestrians.

The traffic on Dodge doesn't bother freshman Miranda Conrad, who said she would be more worried about the traffic flow if it was darker outside.

Conrad said she believed the traffic on Dodge only presented a problem to teenage drivers if they don't know how

to drive well.

In the two years Kelly has been at the school, he said he knows of only two accidents that have taken place on Dodge. Mitchell said she wasn't worried about people getting hurt and thought they were safe against the traffic. She said she thinks the administration, security, police and teachers do a good job of ensuring student safety because they stand there every day making sure everything is okay.

Bennett said it was very important that the administration, police, security and teachers are out monitoring the traffic situation for two reasons. He said it is critical to student safety because it lets students know if something happens that it are people who are there to take care of it. He also said it also deter students from doing something they shouldn't.

Principal Greg Emmel has talked to a safety consultant at the Teacher Administrative Center (TAC) to take a look at the problem and come up with possible solutions. Bennett said Emmel has also contacted the Omaha Police Department (OPD) about possibly placing a crosswalk on Dodge. However, nothing is currently being planned.

Bennett said the administration reminds the students to be careful. In the winter, Bennett said, it wasn't too big of a problem. However, when the weather warms up there are more students outside and creates a bigger problem.

Bennett said he believed that Dodge is a busy street, general and when students get out it's the start of rush hour, there are a lot of cars traveling west. He also said for students Dodge can create a problem because there is not an easy way to cross unless pedestrians cross at 20<sup>th</sup> and Dodge.

Kelly said while monitoring traffic he tries to get parents to park in areas they're supposed to park in as well as looking for hazardous drivers and take appropriate action if there are any.

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PHOTO BY WYNTER DAVIS/REGISTER

Student Council members Kevin Mitchell and Phil Lomneth, both seniors, help a child enjoy his time at a "Holiday Helpers" activity such as face painting, decorating cookies for Santa and making ornaments for the Christmas tree. Kids found it fun, and the Student Council saw it as a great opportunity to help those teachers who help them so much.

# Student Council makes a difference

BY WYNTER DAVIS

"It was tiring, but I had a great time," said senior Antea Gatalica about her experience with Holiday Helpers. "I love little kids. They were not out of control and were very energetic."

Holiday Helpers is an activity Student Council hosts annually to encourage teachers and staff members to drop their children off in the courtyard for free babysitting.

"We first invited the kids of the staff members then we prepared ourselves for the kids," said Judy Storm, Student Council sponsor. "We decided on cookies for Santa, making decorations for the tree, watching children's movies and arts and crafts."

Storm said that Holiday Helpers was a good way for the members to do something for the teachers or staff during the winter break. Central's courtyard proved to be a great playground.

As this year's Student Council president, Gatalica helped organize and plan upcoming events with Storm. As senior officers, Maya Doghman and Adrian Monge took attendance and helped Gatalica set up the events.

Gatalica and Storm got together to plan and organize this activity, which

Gatalica said was fairly easy because they kept things the same as previous years.

On the day of the event, children checked in, met their Student Council buddy and participated in several activities including eating tasty snacks.

"I jokingly tell the parents we fill them with sugar and send them home," said Storm.

Though every year there was a large turnout of small children Student Council members were still eager to participate finding ways to make it fun.

"I basically planned as well as promoted," said Gatalica. "Myself and Maya Doghman went grocery shopping."

Holiday Helpers has been around for several years and has become a tradition at Central.

"The Holiday Helpers must have started five years ago. We did this as a way to do something nice for the staff," said Storm.

Storm said it was a great way for them to be able to shop for the holidays with their spouses or significant other and have time away from their kids.

The concept of the program is to offer teachers free babysitting that also costs little to Student Council.

"It didn't cost that much just peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, and games and movies the members brought from home," Storm said.

Gatalica participated in Holiday Helpers during her sophomore as well as senior years.

"I think it's a great idea," she said. "I would take this idea to my dance studio. We have a lot of girls in the studio. The parents need a break. So definitely I would take this elsewhere."

Throughout the event-filled day, there were many memorable moments but Gatalica has one she won't forget.

"The one thing I would have to say I will remember from that day is the face painting," she said. "One kid painted his whole face green. Another girl had a big fish on the side of her face. The kids painted (senior) Will Robbins's beard blue. Face painting was crazy!"

Storm said the most memorable moment for her was the year with her son Matthew Storm.

"My son Matthew dressed as Santa Claus that year and made a guest appearance," said Storm. "One of the kids told his dad he didn't think he was Santa because he had shoes just like Matt. We just laughed."

Storm said that one thing she wanted to teach the Student Council members was the spirit of giving at Christmas or the holidays.

Giving without expecting in return.

# Student wakes from coma, looks to recover after accident

BY KIM BUCKLEY

For junior Johnnesha Brown, it was an ordinary day coming home from a trying day at school.

On Nov. 2 she walked off the bus and that ordinary day was changed in one instance.

She was hit by a car.

According to police reports, Brown was getting off the bus at 30th and Binney when a car accidentally hit her. Initially Brown was in a coma.

Principal Greg Emmel said the staff was really worried about Brown when they found out about the accident.

Aerobics teacher Meredith Kinman, who had Brown in one of her classes, said she heard about the accident when she saw it on the news. The media did not release the name at that time, but released the name that night.

"I was scared for her," she said. "I knew it was bad."

Kinman immediately wanted to check up on her. She said she called the hospital since the paper gave that information, and talked to administrator Lyn Slobodnik about what room her student was in.

Kinman's aerobic class also expressed concern over their classmate, Kinman said. Brown's aerobics class spent an entire

period making her a big banner.

"They still ask about her," she said.

Kinman said the main thing she was worried about in the beginning was if Brown was even going to survive when she heard about the accident, because reports said it was bad. Kinman said when she first visited Brown she was still in a coma.

"It was heartbreaking," Kinman said.

She said it was very sad and difficult to see Brown with all of the tubes and machines surrounding her.

Brown woke up from that coma a few days later on Nov. 6th.

The head of the Guidance department, Cathy Andrus said the parents of Brown talk with the family regularly, and many members of the school have visited her several times.

Emmel said he remembered visiting Brown at Emanuel Hospital on the physical rehab floor before Brown regained the ability to speak. Emmel said one of the things he remembered was Brown's mother telling him that she was praying that Johnnesha would get her voice back.

To see and hear Johnnesha's mother with tears in her eyes, Emmel said, you could see how important it was to her for her daughter to speak and get better.

"Speaking was a very big step," Emmel said.

The parents contacted the counseling department and Emmel said it was clear that their daughter had to have long therapy, and needed help. The school raised funds to help offset the enormous medical bills.

Money raised from the Guidance department selling pizza went to buying clothes for Brown for the hospital and also for rehab. National Honor Society held a penny drive to help with the bills. A donation fund was started at American National Bank and the school wrote a grant for financial help.

"I think as a school we have big hearts and care for one another," Andrus said.

She said she believes that the school wants to help people who are dealing with a personal challenge, and everybody should be proud as a part of it.

"I think they could see here was one of our students involved in an accident, on the way from school, and it wasn't anybody's fault, it was just a tragic accident," Emmel said.

When the staff talked about fundraising, Emmel said Jen Statsny immediately volunteered National Honor Society. The staff talked about a couple of ideas of how they could help the family.

"I think the students wanted to help one of their own, so

they gave what they could," Statsny said.

She said another reason why many students participated in the penny drive was the competition, and a lot of students know Brown and are friends with her.

"I think it raised their (National Honor Society members) awareness that people like themselves can find themselves in need in a blink of an eye," Statsny said.

The penny drive took place for a week and a half, during the lunch periods, in the courtyard and cafeteria.

Statsny said the times National Honor Society ran the drive was subject to the availability of the members. She said this was because a lot of the members did not have a free lunch period due to the amount of classes they were taking.

After rehab, one of the biggest challenges for Johnnesha Brown will be her education. Andrus said the focus of Brown is getting healthy, but the school's staff will do everything in its power to help her catch-up after rehab.

"My hope is that Johnnesha will continue to get better and will be able to return to Central High School at some point in time," Emmel said.

Kinman said she was very happy for Brown when she heard that she got out of the coma. She was also happy when she heard that Brown is doing well now.

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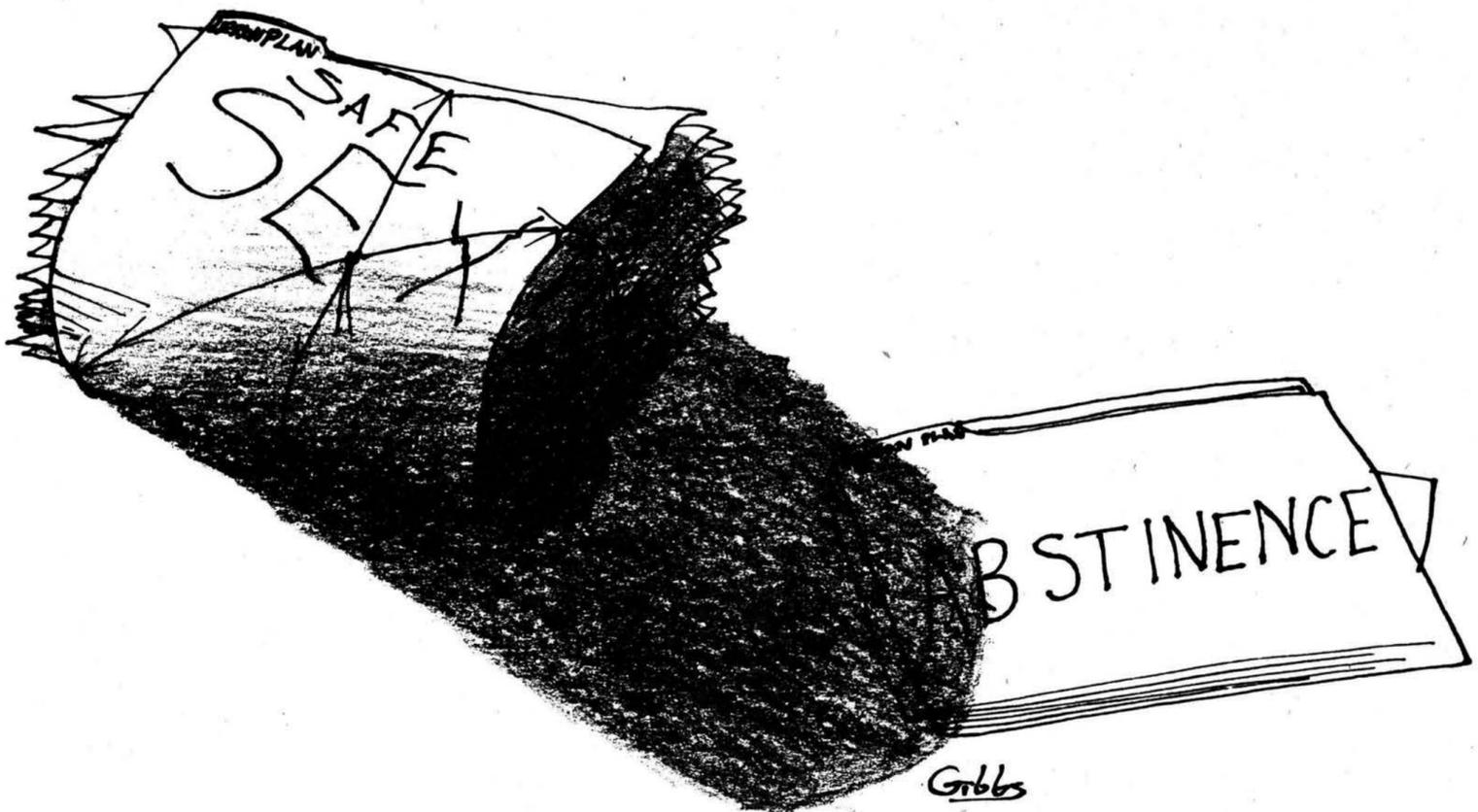
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CARTOON BY KEVIN GIBBS/REGISTER

# Lack of abstinence lessons at fault for problem

Every year three quarters of a million girls get pregnant. One fourth of people aged 15 to 24 contract a Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) each year. Both could have been prevented with one simple action. Abstinence. Yes, abstinence. That one little word human growth and development teachers seem to be scared of teaching. In Human Growth and Development classes the subject is barely mentioned in the class. The teachers throw abstinence in with the list of safe sex, but there is no discussion about abstinence. Protection is touched upon more than abstinence is, something that should be remedied. Human Growth and Development classes shouldn't be teaching that abstinence is the only option for students, but the subject should be stressed more than it is. The fact is, abstinence is the only thing that will keep students from getting pregnant or a STD. The fact it isn't stressed enough in public schools should be enough to cause worry for some parents. Douglas County has one of the highest rates of gonorrhea in the whole country. Obviously teaching students safe sex is not enough anymore or else Douglas County wouldn't have this problem. Yes, there are teenagers that will continue to have sex and there are those that will get an STD. However, teaching more about abstinence could significantly lower

those numbers. Studies have shown that teenagers who make vows to abstain until marriage that they have a slightly better chance of not getting an STD or pregnant. Those people also have less sexual partners than those who did not take such a vow. This helps lesson the chance of getting an STD. The studies have also shown that those who made abstinence vows delayed sexual intercourse about a year and a half than non-pledgers. That one year can make a big difference. These abstinence vows have at least done more than just talking about safe sex for teenagers. They need to be more stressed in Human Growth and Development classes, and teachers are just not doing that. Not everybody is comfortable with taking abstinence vows, and not everybody should take them. It is their own choice, but they should know that they shouldn't rely on safe sex too much because it is not reliable. Schools shouldn't be forcing students to take those vows, however, just reinforcing the concept of abstaining until marriage will benefit students who take health classes. If students were taught abstinence, there would be a lower rate of STD's as well as unwanted pregnancies. Consequently there would be fewer abortions as well. If students are having sex, they should do it safely, but the fact remains that condoms can break. This isn't about anything religious, but about the emotional well-being and safety of these students. Almost everybody in Nebraska knows that the state has an obscene rate of STD's,

some of the highest numbers in the entire country. If schools and health teachers concentrated a little bit more on teaching abstinence in human growth, those rates could be lowered. Both the state and the country would benefit from increased talks in schools promoting waiting until marriage to have sex. Students as young in the fifth and sixth grade are being taught about the human body. If teachers can stress abstinence, think of how those students might be influenced to abstain from sex in high school. Teaching abstinence would be a way for students to live healthier lives and not have to worry about pregnancy or a potential disease. Teaching students more about abstinence could persuade them to at least think about delaying sex until they are mature enough to deal with the consequences of getting pregnant or an STD. How to have safe sex is important, but teachers shouldn't forget to teach abstinence. Those classes are not giving students full information about all of their options, because the class mainly focuses on only a few of them. Think of all of the money that could be saved just by teaching more about abstinence in public schools. The government pays over a million dollars for teenaged parents and that's money that could be saved if abstinence was promoted more. For the safety of those teenagers, Human Growth and Development teachers need to stress abstinence, not just safe sex. For teenagers, maybe just hearing about abstinence will cause them to actually think before they engage in sex. And that can make all the difference.

**EDITORIAL**  
The OPINION of  
the Register staff

**EDITORIAL**  
The OPINION of  
the Register staff

# Electronics less time managing more time wasting

In a world where the Internet, cell phones, and even iPods would work correctly and efficiently, that would be the good life. A balance between yin and yang. That would be the day. Well this is reality and time and time again has the Internet and even cell phones make life a little harder for most. At one point technology was sent here to help with time management now these gadgets only waste too much time. The same tools that our age group are crossing through this new digital age are the same ones that have us staring into LCD (liquid crystal displays) screens like little kids staring into a candy shop, feeding on electronic waves. Just like the Internet when this brilliant yet additive machinery was invented, its creators probably didn't imagine so much endless mind-numbing Web sites that would take over. The whole purpose of the Internet is a main stream for information to expand or enhance your knowledge. Or just to do research on why Siddhartha Gautama is known as the "Enlighten One." Whatever the case, but why research when you can search for tonight's NBA prep games or go to an online shoe store for the latest shoes that haven't reached Omaha yet. Or even drown yourself with hundreds and hundreds of YouTube videos. When the world is just one click away, it's really easy to misplace your priorities. The best way for not allowing yourself to be a prisoner of the Internet is to get more self-control. Prioritize your time.

Sign out of Myspace when you are doing homework. Having your user open is like putting every one of your classmates on speakerphone. One conversation could lead to you finishing your homework at lunch. Now a device that keeps breaking people are cell phones. Even though parents might think that they are little more than a monthly bill. This simple product is really productive. Just like the Internet this also has media, music, and games. But once in a hand of a teenager it is lethal. The biggest craze is text, text and text. Not only can you say a whole conversation without talking to that person but it also comes with it's own language. The worst part with texting your time is cut in half. In the first five minutes you're doing your homework as planned, but then the next minute everything is dropped and your thumb is facing back and fourth with exciting new details of the days events. That's not even half of it. The Philippines alone sends on the average 400 million text messages a day. When one person is getting five texts composed. That means five more are rushing back with just has much speed. It's a never-ending cycle of messaging. So whenever a parent asks their child why the phone bill is high and your child replies " Idk my BFF Jill, or even lqtm...ldk my BF Jordan." Houston we have a problem.

So much commotion comes up with cell phones and losing train of thought. Either you're doing the ordinary task of talking or even downloading your favorite ringtones. Instead of finishing up that last project three days late. The technology has some kind of trace that humans can't fight the good fight yet. It's an on going battle. It's like setting yourself up to fail. In the business world it's very crucial that power points, computers and fax work correctly. Stock brokers, CEO's and Shareholder's lives work around computers and Internet. Shareholders need to know the share and balance of the stock. Making sure the company doesn't regret the stock they purchased. Without these essential devices it would be like the Stock Market Crash of 1929. Resulting in the fatal Great Depression. Chaos and havoc in the cities. Mothers and children crying in the middle of the streets. Making shelter out of old scraps and newspapers. OK maybe it won't get that bad, but expect the unexpected. Management with technology can be pursued, but it can't be fully mastered without the proper training. Sooner or later there might be a time where technology won't be a luxury and it will be right into your lap. One day you might have to go back to the Stone Age when you didn't know fire or the wheel. Only time will tell.

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

### Strict laws cause criminal behavior

Dear Editor,  
Parents just don't know that some teens misbehave because they don't have trust and are not allowed to do anything. The law is the same way. If it gave us just a little bit of freedom, we teens wouldn't have to sneak around to do things. That's all we need.  
Michelle Hines (9)

### Safe sex more useful than abstinence

Dear Editor,  
I think that students should be thoroughly educated about safe sex with less of an emphasis on abstinence, because whether or not a teenager will have sex is largely a personal decision, and no amount of dated anti-sex propaganda they are given will stop them if they make the decision to have sex. It is better for people to be educated and practice safe sex than to spread diseases and get pregnant.  
Elijah Skolfield (10)

### Online info is automatic public record

Dear Editor,  
If people publicly release information about themselves, they should know that anyone can look at it. Therefore, you should know that you shouldn't post any inappropriate information about yourself.  
Matt Vondrasek (9)

### Personal sites give an accurate view

Dear Editor,  
I feel that it can be a good idea for facebook to be used as a background check because sometimes you want to know how the person really is, not just how they appear to be.  
Megan Taylor (10)

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR WANTED

Letters to the editor are gladly accepted in room 030, via e-mail to Central.Journalism@ops.org or can be placed in Ms. Parker'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.

### Focus on safe sex far more important

Dear Editor,  
I think having a class focused on abstinence is a waste of time to me, I see something that you're going to do if you want to. A teacher telling you about wait will hardly influence you. If teachers are going to talk about sex, they should tell how to be safe, instead of completely ignoring the possibility of students having sex.  
Alexis Page (10)

### Adult problems have like punishment

Dear Editor,  
I believe if teens want the right to do whatever they want like adults then they should also get punished like adults when they get into trouble. In a lot of cases today, teens are taking it way out of hand and getting MIPs and walking away with nothing.  
Kaylee Hamilton (10)

### Old abstinence teachings don't stick

Dear Editor,  
I think that even if we teach more about abstinence it won't make a big difference. We are taught to stay abstinent until marriage from the age of nine or ten. As you can see, it didn't really help. If people want to have sex they are going to. There is nothing you can do to stop it. All you can do is teach them how to protect themselves.  
Haley Stoetzel (10)

### Teens rights consistently stepped on

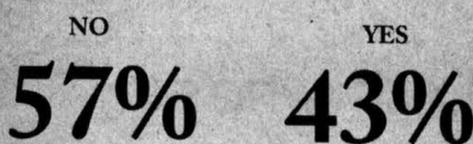
Dear Editor,  
Teen rights are just as important as any adults' or teachers' rights. Teens are tired of being treated like children, we should be treated as young, growing adults.  
Victory Davis (11)

### Abstinence sure cure for baby blues

Dear Editor,  
There are a lot of girls pregnant this year, more than any other year. I think abstinence is very important, and something all high school students should be doing. They need to really think if they emotionally and economically ready to raise a child. Most think they are, but living alone is harder than it seems.  
Elizabeth Vega (10)

### STUDENT POLL

Is abstinence taught through school enough?



220 polled

# Phones while driving not just teenage problem

Note to all teenage drivers in the state of Nebraska: lock up all cell phones when you get into your car and keep them there.

The Nebraska legislature passed a bill last April that bans teenagers from driving while using any electronic device until they are 18.

The new law took effect on Jan. 1, and Nebraska joined several other states in making it illegal for teenagers to drive and use their cell phones.

All of us have heard about the dangers of driving while talking on the phone or have heard stories about people getting into a car crash because of a cell phone.

While it's about time Nebraska passed a law about banning the use of cell phones while driving, simply put, it is an unfair law.

Some teenagers will doubtlessly protest this law, as they should. This was a good law to pass, but should be expanded to everybody in the state, not just drivers under the age of 18.

It's unfair for the ban just to target a certain age group since there are people in all age groups that drive while using an electronic device. One can make the case that 25 year olds are just as likely to talk or text on a cell as a 17 year old.

In a study by Harris Interactive, the results showed that almost three out of four adults talk on a cell phone or a hands-free device while driving. Compare that to only 61 percent of 16 and 17 year olds who were found use their cell phone while driving in a survey conducted by "Seventeen" magazine and the American Automobile Association.

Adults are just as likely to talk on their cell phone while driving as teenagers, yet there are no laws in Nebraska forbidding anyone over the age of 18 the use of a cell phone while driving.

It's like an adult telling a 15 or 16 year old not to wear red because of their age while the adult making the decision is dressed up in a red shirt.

Because adults are not included in the ban, teenagers have more incentive to ignore the ban. They see adults drive to work while talking on a cell phone and they wonder why they are not allowed to. The ban would have more credibility if it included adults.

While teenagers are more likely to get into an accident, when it comes down to cell phones it is not experience that matters the most. It is the conversation that provides the distraction.

While teenagers make up about 40 percent of car crashes due to cell phone use, the other age groups make up the remaining percent. Once again teenagers are being unfairly punished because of their age. All drivers using their cell phones can be dangerous to the other drivers, period, not just teenagers.

There are five states in the country that have banned all drivers from using cell phones while driving, and other states should follow their example if they choose to implement a cell phone ban. While the cell phone ban in Nebraska may lower the number of accidents teenagers are in, it will not solve the overall problem of cell phone use while driving.

While the ban has the potential to save thousands of lives a year, think of all the other lives that can be saved by expanding the bill to include all drivers. To make a truly significant impact in lowering the rate of car crashes due to cell phone use, adults need to be included in the law.

It would be very easy to make a provision in the law that would include everyone over the age of 18 in the ban. All the Nebraska legislature would have to do is

While the law has good intentions and will help keep drivers as safe as possible, this law specifically targets teenagers. The legislature should take another look at this law and amend it so anybody that drives follows the same rules.

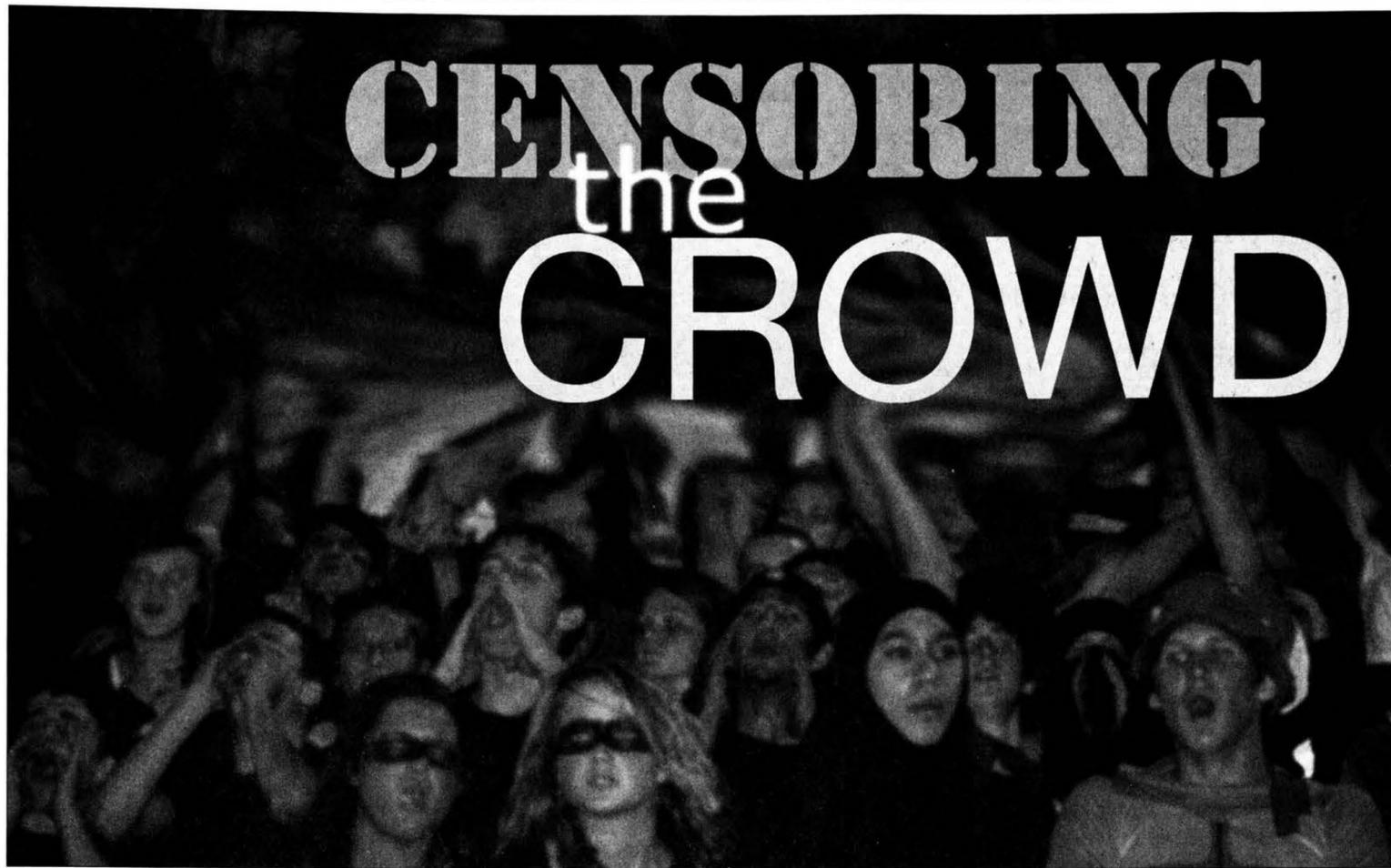
After all, an adult is just as likely to get into a crash because of cellphone use.

For the safety of everybody, the Nebraska legislature should create a new bill banning any cell phone use by all drivers.

A new legislature bill could restrict teens on whether or not they will be able to do such things as talk on the phone as they drive.

GRAPHIC BY KEVIN GIBBS/REGISTER

# CENSORING the CROWD



GRAPHIC BY KEVIN GIBBS/REGISTER

## Crowds cut down by administration

For some, there is no better place than a Central basketball game. The school unites to celebrate an age-old tradition of elite basketball. Students come together as one to support one of the best high school teams in Nebraska. There is no better example of school spirit.

Central's student section is one of the best in the state. Students make up one of the largest and most passionate sections possible. So passionate, that sometimes certain students may get carried away and use profanity.

This, of course, is unacceptable, and absolutely cannot be tolerated.

It began at the Central-Creighton Prep game on January 5<sup>th</sup>. Prep, being one of Central's fiercest rivals (along with having an extremely lively student section), tends to bring out the competitive drives in Central fans. With sloppy play and fouls abound, Central fans felt frustrated with their team's play and the referees' calls. This frustration led to frequent outbursts of profanity and inappropriateness.

Nathan Chonis, a sophomore at Central, is an avid basketball fan and attended the Prep game.

"Our student section got really angry at all the bad calls the refs were making. We started cussing and saying a lot of bad stuff," Chonis remarked.

The administrators decided to step in. Teachers yelled repeatedly at the students to knock it off. Central students were not at their finest.

But the outbursts continued. The students' rage now was directed more towards the administrators at the game than at the basketball court. Teachers threatened to kick anyone out who continued to retaliate.

"It didn't feel like you were at a basketball game," Chonis goes on to say. "It wasn't much fun." The teachers' close watch on the students' words continued onto the next game. During a climactic point in the game, Central's section began to chant "O-P-S! O-P-S!"

This chant is used as a way for Central fans to convey their passion for their district, which some students like to express when Central plays opponents that do not belong in the Omaha Public Schools District. At this point, an administrator angrily ran over and

demanding the cheer be stopped.

The fact that chanting "O-P-S" is viewed like chanting expletives is ridiculous. Ever since Central students wore "I heart OPS" shirts to a basketball game against Millard North in 2005, when OPS was beginning the plan to annex other districts and create one overall school district, the game was called a "political rally" by news stations covering the game. Administrators are trying to make sure that it doesn't happen again.

Students have freedom of speech and are allowed to show pride for their school and their district. There is a certain point where teachers must cease trying to control student cheers.

"I guess the teachers expect more because we're Central students, but I'm really angry that they're trying to stop us from doing stuff," Chonis said.

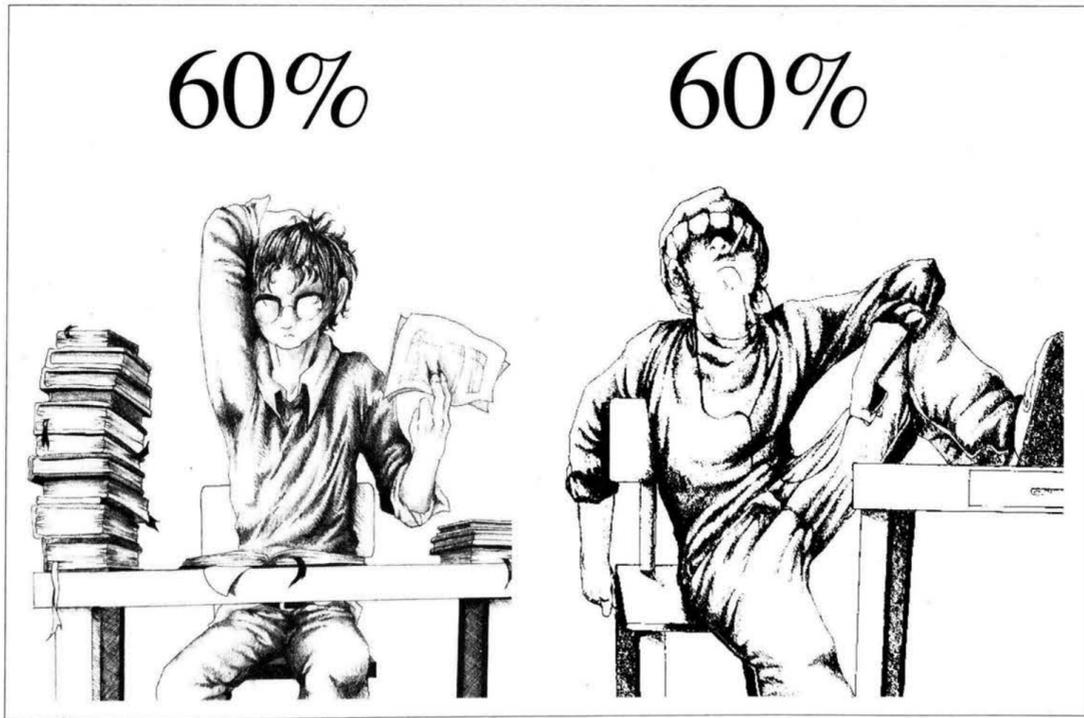
Cursing at basketball games is not acceptable. Teachers need to be on top of things like that because sometimes students' emotions can get out of hand.

But the fact of the matter is that a line must be drawn where teachers can determine whether or not students can say something. Profanity and district pride are two completely different things.

EDITORIAL  
The OPINION of  
the Register staff

EDITORIAL  
The OPINION of  
the Register staff

## New grading policy unfair to student body



CARTOONS BY ANITA HODGE

## Nebraska public education: Unsatisfactory

A recent study conducted by the Education Research Center shows the downside to attending an Omaha Public Schools, or any school in Nebraska. The Education Research Center released "report cards" for overall education quality in the United States. Nebraska didn't do so well.

The overall score for the state of Nebraska's education system is a D+ for K-12<sup>th</sup> grades. This fact is extremely embarrassing for Omaha Public Schools especially after an embarrassing national spotlight over legislative bill 1024.

The report looked over six categories and Nebraska was rated number forty-seven in State education. Some categories for the report included Academic Achievement, Rigor of Standards, and Flexibility in Policy.

And although the overall finding is that state education is slipping, many states are doing an excellent job of educating K-12<sup>th</sup> graders. Nebraska was among the bottom ten of states who needed to pick up the pace. The bottom five includes Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, California and Nevada. Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New Jersey made the top five on the United States Chamber of Commerce's list of state education.

Although Nebraska scored a D+ on the national level, the Omaha Public School's District received a D-. Academic achievement in studies such as math and science in the OPS district were lower than the state average.

The measures of our educational shortcomings are bad indeed; most 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders are not proficient in either reading or mathematics. Only about two-thirds of all 9<sup>th</sup> graders graduate from high school within four years. And those students who do receive diplomas are too often unprepared for college or the modern workplace.

And as if this news could get any worse, we find out that Nebraska ranks number thirty-fifth in state physical education programs. This study concluded that Nebraska's physical education program needs some major updating.

And even on top of that, there is expected to be a shortage of over two million teachers by the year 2010. This fact cannot mean good news for this education slump that the nation

is already going through. That means the student to teacher ratio will be almost thirty-to-one.

On January 9<sup>th</sup>, the Nebraska State Legislature met on a bill introduced to raise teacher salaries. The issue is that State Lawmakers are concerned that teachers will leave Nebraska to find better-paying jobs in other school districts. This is a serious problem considering that in the next ten years over two million new teachers will be needed due to teacher retirement in the state of Nebraska.

There is a new grading policy schools are showing interest in that may not be fair to their student body. In efforts to keep all kids on the same track and to eliminate some of the negative aspects of grading, schools are resorting to diminishing zeros in their scoring policy.

The student who sits in the back of a regular class, asleep while the teacher lectures, may appreciate this new idea. This means they can't fail.

And even if they fail, or rather don't feel the need to hand in their assignments, the lowest grade they can get is a D, or a 60 percent.

The student in the front of the honors or AP class with their hand raised, pencil poised and ready to write, listening intently certainly would not appreciate this. Despite their hard efforts, they get no benefit in this new grading policy, but the ones who don't do anything get an easier ride.

One can see the frustration from both sides. Except for the student of course who wants to guarantee they will pass, yet not do the work.

Why a school would even consider this option is painfully unclear. By creating an easy way out for students, the district is defeating the purpose of school. If the student knows they can goof off and still pass the class, how are they supposed to be motivated to learn?

Even though the program is supposed to help all students by eliminating harmful or negative aspects of school and ensuring a fair chance for every student to succeed, all it is really doing is giving an easy way out for the students who don't care.

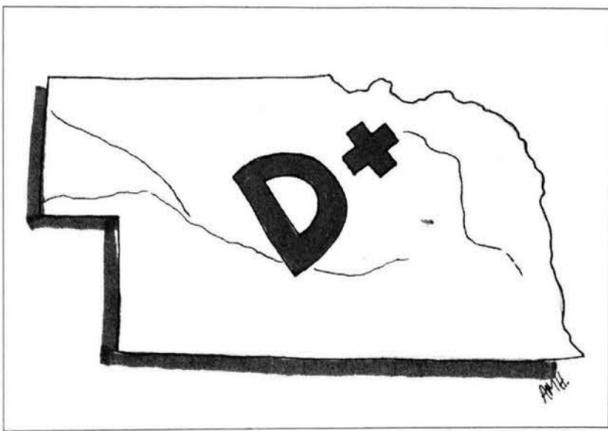


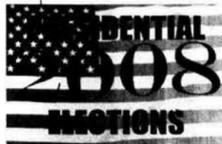
ILLUSTRATION BY ALI HODGE/REGISTER

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or of the right of the people to peaceably assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."

First Amendment of the United States, ratified Dec. 15, 1791

# EDITORIALS

## Political workings seen first-hand



POLITICALLY INCORRECT  
A column by Peter Bock

As I entered the Merrill Middle School in Des Moines, Iowa, home of precinct 71 of the Iowa Caucus, I could feel an intense buzz as I stepped into the school.

Camera crews, ranging from local news stations to CNN to a crew with a reporter reporting a story in Japanese, hovered around the school eager to extract any possible information.

People scurried around, rushing to their precincts, excited to be part of something so important. It was the Iowa Caucus.

The Iowa Caucuses are the first of many electoral events held in which voters get an up close and personal view of the presidential candidates. The caucuses overall are a prelude to the upcoming elections in November 2008.

But the Iowa Caucus is arguably the most important. With a win in Iowa, a presidential candidate can catapult themselves to the front of the race, gaining momentum to pull off wins in other caucuses down the road. Along with the win comes increased media attention and popularity. This increased responsibility given to the Iowa Caucuses captivated my interest. When my Aunt invited us over to her house in Des Moines to join her in the process, our family jumped at the opportunity.

Because we were from Omaha, we could not directly participate in the caucus. We received a name tag with the title "observer" and were told to move to the corner of the gym when the caucus began. The Democratic caucus is run differently from the Republican caucus. The Democrats' caucus features a more dynamic style, which includes people moving around and settling into groups, whereas the Republicans sit down and take a well-organized vote.

There were multiple sections in the gym, one for Barack Obama, John Edwards, Hilary Clinton, Bill Richardson, among others. People excitedly sat down and impatiently waited for an address from the caucus leader.

The observers sat in the corner of the gym, some watching intently while others lingered idly. "This is a first hand account of democracy in action," my dad said, and I shrugged, uninterested.

At first the caucus was extremely boring, especially before the man addressed the crowd, but when the counting began, things started getting interesting. For the candidate to be "viable", or seriously considered as a candidate in the caucus, they needed 15% of the total votes.

Joe Biden was the first to be inviable, and his voters were forced to join another candidate's group.

The disappointment on Biden's supporter's faces was extremely apparent, but it was accompanied by anxiety, as the abandoned voters looked for another candidate to choose.

This process continued until only three were left: Hilary Clinton, Barack Obama, and John Edwards. A final count was held, and Obama was determined the winner. As we left the school at the end of the caucus, I fully understood the meaning of the caucus. It was more than the publicity, the camera crews, and the media.

Everyone had their own opinion, and was showing it that night. It was truly democracy in action.

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# Long arm



CARTOON BY ANITA HODGE/REGISTER

## Jurisdiction good for school safety

Pro

A disagreement between students can result in fighting and unruly behavior, but if they save the actions to take place outside of school walls, is it really any less of a problem?

If any crime occurs outside of school property, ignoring it due to location does no good. If people pass drugs through the halls of school they get in trouble with both the school and police, but on the city streets, should the school system lose jurisdiction?

Overall it serves multiple causes. By carrying punishment over to the school district it not only keeps law abiding adolescents safe, but also keeps from serving a negative lesson.

If teens only get caught by school while on school property it teaches the lesson to stick to the streets instead of in school seeing as the punishment is greatly reduced based on your location.

If you get caught in school, you get both municipal and school district sanctions, whereas if the crime takes place on the street, you've only really got the Omaha Police Department to worry about. Only an idiot would stick around for school, which probably would increase the number of students skipping school.

A recent example of schools trying to extend their reach beyond school walls was when a teen in a Ralston area high school was recently threatened through a voice mail message, and on a social networking website.

The school staff had its hands tied, because the incident occurred outside of school, they could not suspend the student or take any other serious action because they didn't have the authority.

This simply makes the point, that while many worry too much punishment for a crime is just unfair to the student, you also must account for the students they are forced into contact with.

In all likelihood, the Ralston High teen isn't going to feel very secure at school, knowing that the threatening student can be removed from her classes. Also, if students commit murder, a serious drug crime, why on earth would letting them back into the school be a good idea?

If you want safety, and for OPS to cover all its bases in an unsafe situation, then jurisdiction outside of school property is only sure cure for the big problem.

EDITORIAL  
The OPINION of  
the Register staff

## Getting teachers mad, teens' new pastime

YouTube has become a phenomenon all over the world. What are now famous musicians have become famous because of it. But these videos posted on the web for all to see can also have the opposite effect. One can become infamous for what they do or say on a video.

Teacherbating has become a new trend in web videos. Students in class intentionally rile up their teachers, either by making constant jokes or something of equal annoyance, and then post them on websites such as YouTube. When the words 'mad teacher' were searched in YouTube, 110 results came up. When the words 'mad teacher videos' were searched in Google, more than 1,450,000 items came up in 31 seconds.

While these videos can be thoroughly entertaining, is it right?

Some teachers can get very out of control, as the videos

have shown. So in many cases these videos can help discard a teacher that is not cut out for the job.

On the other hand students' cell phones, cameras and recording devices aren't even supposed to be turned on during school hours.

Of course it's wrong to intentionally make their teachers upset.

But shouldn't there be a line drawn of how excessively the teachers react? They should know how to control themselves and call for security. Where should the line be drawn?

Some people say yelling is verbal abuse. Is it really? Or is it when teachers start yelling profanities? Is it when they destroy your personal belongings?

In one video on YouTube titled, "Angry Mobile Teacher", shows a college professor losing his temper after a student's cell phone rang three times.

The professor gets up, grabs the student's cell phone and smashes it out of pure frustration.

Maybe he was just having a bad day.

But could that even be an excuse that would hold up in legal case?

Probably not.

There are so many factors to consider when deciding whether or not this is right or wrong.

Obviously, intentionally provoking the teachers absolutely uncalled for and against the rules.

But what if it wasn't?

What if the students just happened to be in the classroom with a camera and or cell to record the instructor that started going ballistic?

Would that suffice as evidence? Or would students be punished for having their electronics out during school hours?

EDITORIAL  
The OPINION of  
the Register staff

## 07-08 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.

The Register is a member of the National Scholastic Press Association (NSPA), the Nebraska High School Press Association (NHSPA), the Journalism Education Association (JEA), Quill and Scroll and the Columbia Scholastic Press Association (CSPA).

The Register is a 11-time Best-in-Show winner for large newspapers at the JEA/NSPA national conventions in San Francisco, Boston, Phoenix, Dallas, Washington, D.C., Seattle and Chicago.

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.

Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the Register staff and do not necessarily represent the opinion of Central High School or its faculty.

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Central High School or the Register staff.

Letters to the editor are encouraged.

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

Letters must include the author's full name and grade.

The use of pen names is not permitted. Unsigned letters will not be printed. Letters will be edited for length, clarity, taste and accuracy.

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If there is no one available, please leave a message. A staff member will call you back as soon as possible.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR  
COLUMNS  
REGISTER YOUR OPINION  
POLITICAL CARTOONS

# OPINION

"Parents just don't know that some teens misbehave because they don't have trust and are not allowed to do anything. The law is the same way. If it gave us just a little bit of freedom, we teens wouldn't have to sneak around to do things. That's all we need."  
Michelle Hines (9)

# of the ~~law~~ *School District*

## Being different proves desirable trait



INNOCENCES  
A column by Wynter Davis

## Schools should butt out when it comes to crime

### Con

A school's mission is not to police students outside of school grounds. A school should serve as a safe place to get an education.

Education, socialization, and discipline are the responsibility of a school, not to encroach upon students' daily lives.

The subject of widening school systems' jurisdictions is now suggested often. Supporters of these changes think school intervention could solve some rare problems.

One issue is that of harassment over the Internet, or "cyber bullying." Whether bullying or harassment occurs inside or outside of a school, help can be sought.

Students can speak to guidance counselor or call an anonymous hot line if their problem needs attention.

These useful sources can help the student take action—even if the school can't.

In most cases, with the current jurisdiction "limits," the school can take action. If a conflict continues between two students, the school can discipline the bullies.

Other matters occurring outside school boundaries should be dealt with by outside authorities.

If it is a police matter, let the justice system handle it.

One issue is the drug trade, which carries a 'double consequence' when done in school. When done outside of school, it has nothing to do with school proceedings.

Proponents of widened jurisdictions say that this 'double consequence' in school only encourage drug deals outside of school.

If jurisdictions were widened, all drug deals between students would carry these consequences.

Dealing drugs in school would carry the same consequence as it would outside of school.

Wouldn't that just promote the drug trade at school? Allowing a school system to take action would only complicate the matter.

Allowing a school system to possess complete control over their students would not be ethical.

Widening a school system's jurisdiction would be a breach of students' rights as citizens. It would take away the students already limited freedom.

Their power would contradict the rights to privacy the students have by law.

Also, this power held by school officials would inevitably be abused, allowing school officials to delve into students' personal information.

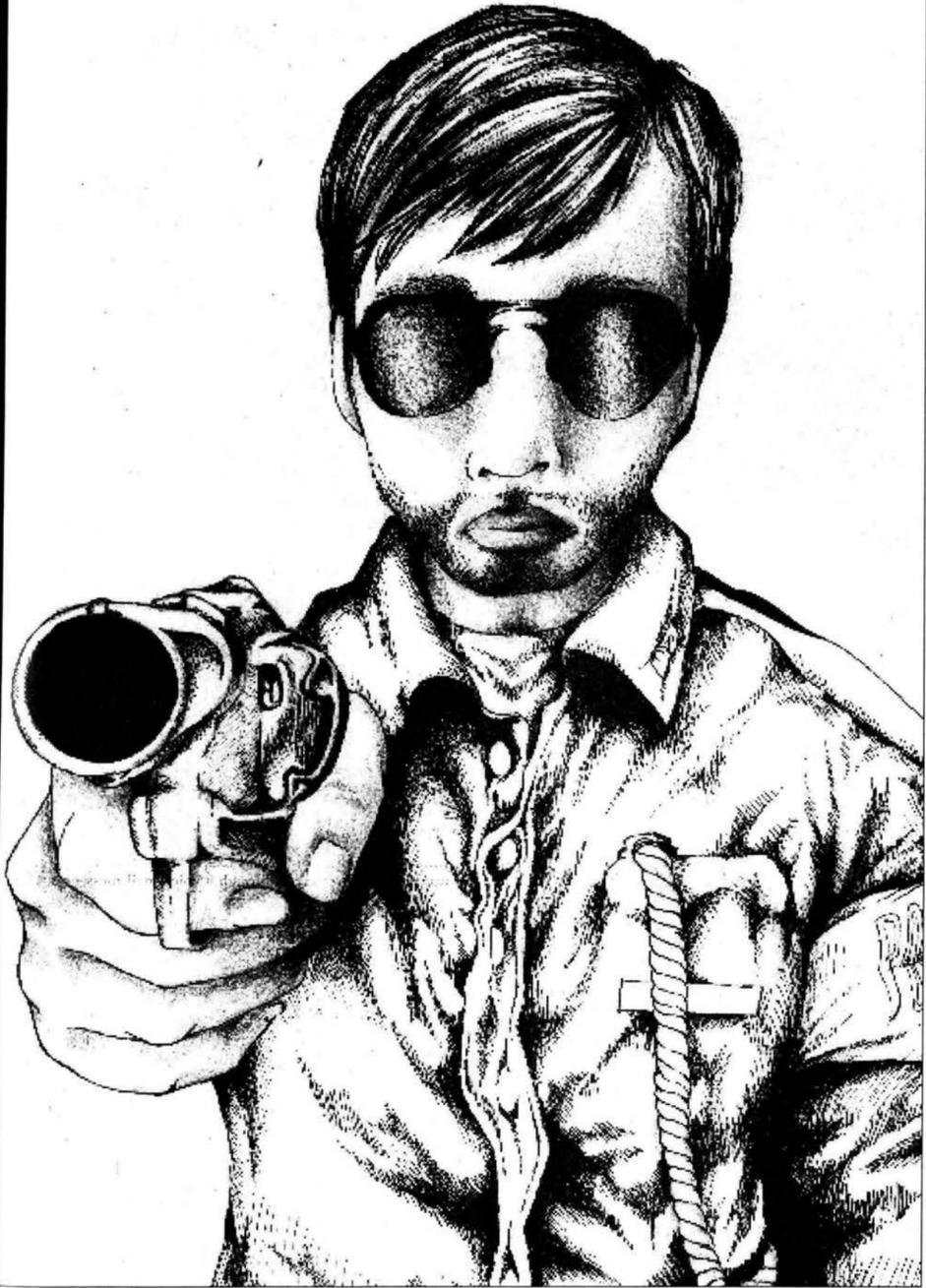
The control of this public jurisdiction should only be held by law enforcement and other outside agencies.

Schools have enough to handle within their education system.

Their counselors and administrators are already overburdened with troubled students. It seems too much to reach out into matters not happening within the school.

Allowing schools to have more power than they already do would cause problems for students and the already complicated school administrations.

EDITORIAL  
The OPINION of  
the Register staff



CARTOON BY ANITA HODGE/REGISTER

## Trip around the world shows big life experiences

"I just don't want to die without a few scars," wrote Chuck Palahniuk in his book *The Fight Club*. When I first read it, of course, I was thinking about the character as blood leaked through his lips and stitches hung broken on the inside of his cheek. I didn't read it for myself. But after this Christmas, I realized that I agree. To protect yourself against scars your entire life would be to live fairly dull, which is what I had done before in Omaha. I had lived thinking in Omaha, making friends just in Omaha, making a life in Omaha and all around living within the bubble that was for right now my home. To step outside the bubble and stand open and vulnerable before the world is amazing, but also opening yourself up to scars if you will. Scars that would not leave a mark on your skin, but rather on your conscience. Getting hurt. Not overcoming a language barrier. Relying only on yourself and failing. Getting lost. Missing home. All in the name of living. Was it worth it? Did I want to die with scars if scars meant putting myself in a situation that could potentially turn out terribly? Absolutely.

This is what I realized as I was standing on a rocky path in a forest in the middle of Harajuku, Tokyo pressed up against hundreds of other festively dressed Japanese people.

All my life I have been interested in Asian culture. For the last two years as I have been studying the Japanese language, my interest in Japan has, needless to say, flourished along side my conversational and writing skills. This Christmas I received the opportunity that was completely awe-inspiring; the chance to go to Ookayama, Tokyo with close friends for three weeks. But that also meant flying across the world by myself for the first time on a foreign airline, navigating Tokyo a little bit on my own and working with a language, money, and people that I knew nothing about. Potential scars.

the people had for one another. Smile. Bow. Hand you objects with two hands rather than one. Bow. Smile. *Domo arigato gozaimasu*.

When I say the experience was otherworldly for me it is completely an understatement. The truth is that there is not a word in the English dictionary to describe what the time spent in Japan meant to me. I drank, ate, even breathed in every detail of this stereotypical, yet oddly mysterious way of life. I learned that I was a much more independent person when it was needed of me, which gives me great comfort as I can see college on my horizon. I also cherished the time spent with my incredibly kind, rare friends and enjoyed meeting new ones. But above all, I realized the importance of culture in our world; which brings me back to why I was standing in a forest with a whole bunch of strangers.

For one, Tokyo is immensely crowded. And by this time of my trip I was so used to being touched by people I didn't know that someone could have put their arm around me and I would have hardly noticed. We all were on our way to the Togo shrine, one of the largest and most famous Shinto shrines in Tokyo. It was two days after the year 2008 had begun and in true Japanese tradition, we were going to welcome the new year and cast our wishes for what we would like to come in the following twelve months. There was a long walk through a neat forest to get to the shrine. The walk would not have taken so long if we had not been stopped by the massive crowd of people toward the end waiting to do exactly the same thing we were going to do. And there we waited.



REBIRTH  
A column by Ali Hodge

"Are you cold?" Asked the friend who I was accompanying, Shinji-san. I replied with a smile and a 'no.' Japan had not been cold the entire time I had been there. And even if it had been, it would have been nothing compared to the harsh winds and snow that swept across the mid western plain. Shinji-san was the husband of the woman who had been so kind as to teach me Japanese for the short while that she was my neighbor in Omaha. She and her son, Hibiki-chan were not with us that evening being as a four year old probably could not handle standing in a crowd like we did for what turned out to be nearly two hours. This family was a strong reason I was so eager to get to Japan as they are some of the most kind-hearted and loving people I know.

The Togo temple after we arrived was a sight that will be forever burned into my memory; it was so incredibly beautiful. As dusk drew near, so did we to the large pagoda style shrine in the heart of the woods. Walking underneath its large golden decorated entrances were foreigners from all over the world, whole families,

men with their arms around their girlfriends, many of which was dressed beautifully in a traditional kimono in celebration of the new year. I felt so different from these people who had a blood connection to this tradition, yet I can't say that I would have it any other way.

Now that I'm home, I look back on the scars. The fear of being on my own sometimes in a foreign city still makes my heart race. The language barrier I hardly penetrated still brings that feeling of hopeless rise in the pit of my stomach. But also the sight of Pokemon or stories of Japan on the news bring back an overpowering joyous feeling. Who knew that living openly and allowing myself to become so close to a family half way across the world would bring with it such a feeling of familiarity and a connection that will last a lifetime. Those are the scars I cherish. Those are the scars I don't want to die without.



PHOTO BY ALI HODGE/REGISTER  
People take their time as they shop in Ookayama, Tokyo.

I arrived to a dark, rainy version of Japan shortly after landing from a thirteen hour flight. Even just the arrival to Japan was amazing, as was every minute there after. It was the shock of the drastic unfamiliar.

Lights. City.

The smells of foreign food wafting from ramen shops.

*Konban-wa, bijamimashite.*

Large, impressive advertisements.

An incredible amount of people.

*Gomennasai. Watashi-wa Nebongo-o banasbimasen.*

The house in which I stayed was magnificent and just watching them, the family that is, in their own environment was enough for me. The local grocery store became one of my favorite places to go. I watched in awe at the genuine respect and kindness ninety percent of

I talk to everyone even if stereo typically they are from a different group. To each is own.

Like when I am in my different activities Volleyball, Pom Squad and Student Council. There's a mix up of diverse characters.

I'm like a chameleon I can adapt to any environment that time need be. But still have the same morals.

I fit in anywhere that's the one thing that I can't help to understand.

That I can get along with a lot of people. Even with our differences and issues. We find something in common or comparable.

One thing that I can say I am really different when it comes to music choice. I have a wide choice of music.

On my iTunes the sky is the limit. I will listen to anything that as a good melody and lyrics. I like people that think outside the box and look at music as a canvas rather than a label.

I am not ashamed to admit that I like Amy Winehouse, Nora Jones, Corrine Bailey Rae and even Gym Class Heroes.

When it's my best friend Ashley and I in the car I can relate to some of the rock songs that come on the radio. Or that I love Avril Lavigne way before her single *Girlfriend*.

With music you can call it what you want. Don't get me wrong I still listen to R&B music that's my favorite genre.

I love everything from Beyonce' Chris Brown, Alicia Keys, Ne-Yo and Trey Songz. I would have to say that my all time favorite rapper hands down is Kanye West. He is pure genius.

Everything he spits has depth. He would look at a glass half full rather than half empty. Whenever he raps I actually listen to what he says. It's poetry transformed into a song.

He is not your average rapper, as you would already know that. He reminds me of myself.

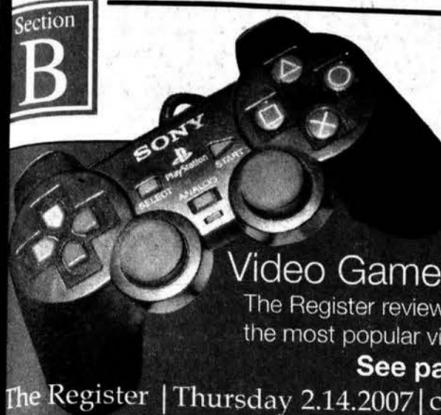
He doesn't wear baggy pants or jerseys like the next rapper in line would. More like sweaters, polo's and Louis Vuitton book bags. Pink for him is the new black.

His music has a different feeling in each song. He doesn't stay stuck on one sound. He goes from hip-hop, punk rock, to techno and back to classical.

If it's one person that would connect with me it's him. "Everything I'm not made me everything I am," said best by Kanye West.

I find that very interesting. I am not a typical girl, I relate to everyone.





### Video Games

The Register reviews some of the most popular video games.

See page 13B

The Register | Thursday 2.14.2007 | central.journalism@ops.org

11 TIME NSPA/JEA BEST-OF-SHOW WINNER

A HIGH SCHOOL NEWSPAPER PRACTICING PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

NATIONAL PACEMAKER AWARD WINNER

### A Musical Talent

Sophomore shares her vocal talents for local bands and realizes her passion for music.

See page 14B

### Teen Reads

The Register reviews some of the most popular teen literature.

See page 15B

# registration

## Young dancer performs in latest classic ballet recital at Orpheum

BY ASTRIKA WILHELM

Before she has learned to bike or even talk coherently freshman Alyc Beasley had mastered the art of dance.

Beasley was recently involved in the Nutcracker performance at the Orpheum, which started on Nov. 29 and lasted until Dec. 2. She's taken dance lessons since she was two years old, even though the dancers were supposed to be three.

"My sister used to do it (dance)," she said. "And when I was little, I watched her dance lessons and I would get up and try to dance."

Ever since those times, she has danced, a broad range of types, from traditional ballet to tap dance to hip-hop to jazz. Beasley practiced at least 20 hours per week before she started high school and even though high school brought more academic work for her to do she has still continued to work many hours, averaging ten hours per week.

The classes she attends are every week and some of them are private. One of those private classes is ballet point, where she practices on the various ballet poses simultaneously working on her pose as a dancer. She said she likes ballet the best, and is taking Ballet Intermediate Advanced as well as Ballet Intermediate.

"Ballet is the backbone for all other types of dance," she said. "But, it's really fun."

She said she likes her ballet classes because of the teacher, who she said knows how to connect to the dancers while being funny and nice throughout the entire experience. Beasley also said her tap dance instructor is a funny person, so she enjoys that class immensely as well.

"Ballet is the most stressful," she said. "It's so precise and if you don't get it perfect you get so frustrated."

Since starting her dance life when she was a toddler Beasley has participated in dance recitals yearly. At age six, she was part of the "Nutcracker" at the Orpheum. She played the part of a ginger, one of the dancers that came rushing out under another person's large dress costume. This year in the "Nutcracker" at the Orpheum she plays one of the ten mice.

She and the other dancers started to practice in the middle of September, mostly practicing on weekends for a couple of hours. In order to perfect the performance, the dancers watched each Act, and then, directly afterwards, they danced the scenes. At first Beasley didn't think she was going to be in the "Nutcracker." Her mother works at the Rose Theater, which is connected with the Omaha Theatre Ballet. When Beasley's mother found out when try-outs for the "Nutcracker" were, she made her daughter go.

"I didn't want to," she said. "I didn't think I would make it because before I hadn't made it because I was too tall for the costume."

This year was different though. They made the costumes after they had selected the dancers. As a result, there were a lot more tall people in the "Nutcracker" this year. To try out for a spot on the play, everyone had to learn a really simple dance routine and perform it in pairs of two. The person Beasley was paired with did not make the cut though. Beasley did though.

"I was excited," she said. "I did a good job. My parents were really proud of me and the couldn't stop smiling."

She loved performing in the "Nutcracker" because of all the new friends she made. She even met her new best friend at the "Nutcracker." Sometimes, she said, going to practice became a hardship. She had to watch the same dances as well as perform them repeatedly, creating a sense of boredom for her.

When the "Nutcracker" opened Beasley said she was really happy and excited because she was the first mouse on stage.

"It was a thrill," she said. "I love being on stage."

During the parts when she wasn't performing, she would sit in the dressing room with her friends and they would have a lot of fun.

Some mistakes did happen at the performance. A violin even broke and flew across the stage at one of the performances. Beasley's first performance provided a mistake which she quickly tried to remedy. She had started to perform the wrong version of the dance they were supposed to do.

Beasley, despite all of stress and competition that comes along with dancing, wants to continue in dance and acting. She wants to get even more involved in dance performances when she's in high school. After high school, she wants to go to a college that focuses on dance and acting and all of its arts.

GRAPHIC BY ALANA BRUNOW

Freshman Alyc Beasley, who was one of the mice in the Orpheum's "Nutcracker," said ballet is the backbone of all types of dances. She said while ballet is the most stressful type of dance to her, it is her favorite.

## Cliche-free film sends viewers on scary ride

BY KEVIN GIBBS

A monstrous roar echoes off the tall buildings, filling every one of the 28 million citizens of New York with fear.

Suddenly in the distance, a huge explosion peeks out over the night skyline of Manhattan.

Shortly after, the lights go out in the empire state building, as it drops to the ground below.

Absolute panic ensues as a dust cloud from the collapse barrels down the streets.

A feeling is mutual among untold numbers of people. The sense that something is out there.

In "Cloverfield," the audience got to view the tape from a camera recovered from Central Park after a major disaster.

The view never cuts from the camera's perspective, and most scenes seem to have been done in a single shot, making it quite the masterpiece.

At first the audience got a shot from one of the characters first using the camera, filming around an apartment and then finding his girlfriend sleeping in the bedroom.

After talking back and forth like people tend to do when they have a camera present, the camera cut to film of them going around New York.

Then it cut again to film another apartment as they prepared for a going away party for one of the main characters.

Soon the party began and the audience began hearing testimonials from different people wishing the man success before he arrived.

Then all hell broke loose.

The film was brilliantly made with the audience never finding themselves thinking, "That's corny" or "That wouldn't happen." Everything occurred pretty logically.

No one did anything or knew anything they wouldn't do or know.

The acting was phenomenal in a cast made of relatively unknown actors and actresses.

The entire film seemed to be done in only a few shots and the actors always came through with more than believable performances.

The lack of a famous face actually helped the film as one felt more connected to those characters during their moment of deadly peril.

The music score was relatively non-existent as the video was pretty much pure recording from the camera that was recovered, not leaving much room for any type of music.

An expert musical score was present once the credits rolled, however.

A lot of story was unexplained, which helped the realism. Anyone in the same situation as the main characters wouldn't receive an explanation if this occurred in real life.

The movie had a definite sense of reality which kept it simple and never threw the audience out of the story.

It also should be mentioned that the film veered away from most story cliches, keeping it unpredictable and fun.

For those who are easily queasy from shaky cameras, this movie may be too much for you.

The camera rarely stabilized.

For those people who are not affected by shaky cameras, the lack of still shots definitely added to the feeling of intensity and urgency.

From the very beginning "Cloverfield" pulled the audience along for the ride. The incredible excitement of non-stop action and believability made the adventure one to remember for years to come.

"Cloverfield" was definitely a strong film and was more than worth the price of admission to see. For definite chills down your spine, and a monster to remember for years to come, this film can't be recommended enough.

"Cloverfield"  
PG-13  
Produced by J.J. Abrams

## Video games provide source of entertainment for teenagers

BY KIM BUCKLEY

Ever since Pacman and the Atari system came out in the 1980s, teenagers have become hooked on video games.

The art of playing, and mastering, video games has become so popular that gaming has now become a profession.

Math teacher Kelly Murphy is the sponsor of video game club. The club was started last year through two students, John Handlos and senior James Pauley.

"It was just spontaneous," Murphy said. Pauley and Handlos decided to form the club because they thought it sounded like a good idea.

Murphy said he has been playing video games since he was five years old when he received an Atari game system. He became a gamer because it was a lot of fun and lots of people had them.

Game Club hosted video game tournaments to raise money to buy a Wii gaming system. On Dec. 5 the club held a Super Smash Brothers tournament with a Guitar Hero tournament on Dec. 12. There was a \$5 dollar entry fee, in which 20 percent of all money raised will go to the winners of the tournament. The rest of the proceeds will go to the video game club so they can buy a Wii system.

Because it's newer and more interactive as well as a four player system, Murphy said when the Wii is bought it will probably become the favorite. He also said since playing games on the Wii system involves more than just sitting, the players are getting some exercise.

The two systems used by Game Club is the Nintendo Game Cube and the Playstation 2 (PS2). Murphy said the popularity of both systems are pretty even and members of the club go back and forth between the two.

As a math teacher, Murphy said even though math is used to design video games, it would

be hard to relate the subject he teaches to video games. He said he would have to do research to relate it to math.

With all of the video games directed towards males, there is a major gap between the number of boys and girls that play video games on a regular basis. Game Club has more of a male population than female.

Sophomore Amanda Turner is one of those females who plays video games on a regular basis.

She said all of the guys she plays video games with are all outgoing, and since she's quiet, she doesn't get to play often, but when she does, she enjoys it.

"You want to win, you want to keep on going," Turner said.

She said the boys are very dominate and want to play each other, but when they want a change in pace, they play her. Even though Turner is the best video game player in her house, the boys in the club play a lot more than she does and playing video games in the club is tougher for her.

Turner is in video game club, which she joined because Handlos told her about it. Turner has been playing video games for eight years. She said the first game she played was Rumble Racing which was just a racing game. As more video games came out, she said she started playing more fighting games that were in the stores.

The purpose of the club, Murphy said, is to have fun. Playing video games, he said, relieves stress for students, and video game club is a place where they can come and have fun.

Turner said playing video games are a good way to release energy. It also helps with hand-eye coordination because she has to focus, she said.

Turner said Guitar Hero is her favorite video game because it's helped her hand-eye coord-



COURTESY OF PARAMOUNT

The Statue of Liberty is only one of many New York landmarks that were destroyed in the film. Cloverfield was completely shot with a handheld camcorder, giving the movie a shaky and realistic feeling

# Taking Center Stage

The productions in the building has always been a source of pride for the school, allowing students to showcase their acting abilities. This year's musical, "Carousel" is only the most recent musical in a long line of productions to grace the Central stage. From other departments performing to gaining new directors, to having fall plays, all has made the drama department rich in tradition and history.

## More than acting makes musical

BY KIM BUCKLEY

This year's fall musical, "Carousel," won the Omaha Entertainment Award (OEA) for Best High School musical on Jan. 8. The musical beat out three other high schools to win the award.

Senior Patrick Kilcoyne, one of the leads in the musical, said he wasn't surprised when "Carousel" won best high school musical, but was surprised that some of the other high schools were not nominated.

The musical was performed only two months prior to the awards, debuting on Nov. 1. "Carousel," told the story of Billy Bigalow, played by Kilcoyne, and his relationship with Julie Jordan, played by sophomore Chelsea Hill.

Kilcoyne said he thought this year's musical differed from the musicals done in the past few years as it was more tragic than the others, which were more light-hearted ones. He said the hardest part of the musical for him was the time commitment as well as some of the singing, since some of it was higher than he was used to singing.

For Kilcoyne, the role was a fun role, a very well-written character and left a lot of room for interpretation. He said he liked to create the character and he said he wanted to completely redo the character. To do that, Kilcoyne said he looked at a couple of actors in the movie version, and in some other musicals. He said he wanted to portray a terrible person without him being a caricature and make him a real person without being villainous.

The show hit the stage at 7:00 p.m. on Nov. 1 and 3, with a matinee showing at 2:00 p.m. on Nov. 3. Director John Gibson said "Carousel" was chosen as the musical this year because the school had the talent to do the production. He said he believed "Carousel" has remained popular from when it debuted on Broadway because of the music.

"It's very soothing and it's not right-in-your-face like some of the newer musicals are," Gibson said.

Auditions for "Carousel" took place the day after Labor Day, and rehearsals started the following week. Gibson said the cast spent about eight weeks rehearsing the music and eight weeks rehearsing the other scenes. Co-director Lyn Bouma said for music rehearsals they had to work around people's schedule and people wanting to use the auditorium for other things. Co-director Colin Brown said the pit orchestra started practicing around Sept. 18.

Bouma said vocally, the duets sung by the chorus were not that challenging. However, the solos and the songs were written for professionals, which meant there were long sustained lines that required advanced techniques as well as a wide range of singing. Bouma said this year there were exceptional vocalists who were up to the challenge. At chorus rehearsals Bouma stressed memorizing words so the cast could put them together with the movement on stage and making it look natural and in character. She said the soloists had private instruction, and most took private lessons and worked on their solos or duets.

As the assistant director, Junior Alyssa Rathbun helped a lot at rehearsals with blocking, which are the actions the actors had and how Gibson wanted the actors positioned and what they needed to be doing at certain parts. Rathbun said as rehearsals started, she worked with separate people on their specific blocking for about an hour or so. When the chorus and dancers started rehearsing, rehearsals were until around 5:30 p.m. Rathbun said the dancers still kept on rehearsing after regular rehearsals.

"I have to give them (the dancers) credit because they worked really hard," she said.

Because of her job, Rathbun had to be at every rehearsal, which she said she enjoyed. "I really didn't take it as a requirement," Rathbun said.

One of the hindrances in the musical this year was the cast only had one full dress rehearsal before the actual performances. Normally a few full dress rehearsals are given until the curtain rises.

"It hurt us a little bit, but it (the show) turned out really well," Rathbun said.

Because the show was large, fairly long and an older musical, Gibson said the cast and crew had a difficult time putting it all together. Because students were leaving the cast, the department had to rearrange things, Gibson said. There were also some younger cast members who have not learned acting techniques, which also presented a problem.

"It was getting right down to the wire with this one," Gibson said.

He said the most difficult part of organizing the musical were the five crowd scenes with every cast member on stage. In last year's musical, "My Fair Lady," there were only two such scenes. The hardest part of the musical, Bouma said, was the staging. The choreography was also challenging as well as a carnival scene that

opened up the show. Bouma said because the scene was in pantomime, it had to be timed with the music. For the carnival scene, specialty costumes were used in the musical for the first time in the fall musical. They included fat suits for a muscle man and a fat lady as well. A bear costume was also present.

"They were really cool and I liked them a lot," Rathbun said. She said the specialty costumes were different and definitely added something as well.

Gibson said the specialty costumes were more expensive. Out of a total of 115 costumes, the town people and chorus members were the cheapest, followed by the costumes worn by the leads, and then the specialty ones. Gibson said he felt that the specialty costumes were worth the more expensive cost. The total cost of the show ranged from around \$18,000 to \$20,000 dollars.

Rathbun said everyone in the musical did well and exceeded what she believed they were going to do. She said she had to give a lot of credit to everyone for pulling through.

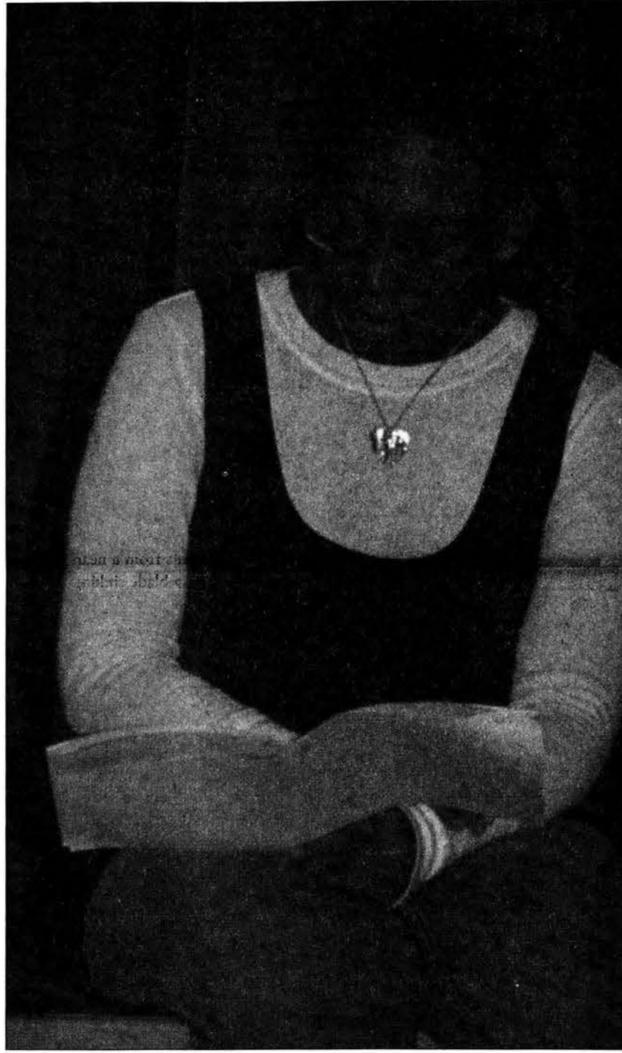


PHOTO BY KIM BUCKLEY/REGISTER  
Junior Chloe McPherson reads the sheet music during a chorus rehearsal. The cast won the Omaha Entertainment Award for Best High School musical.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE 1993 O-BOY  
Former drama teacher Pegi Georgeson smiles for the camera in 1993. That was the year when she shared the superlative of "Most Likely to be in the Big Screen" Georgeson taught at the school for 25 years and still substitute teaches.

## Former drama teacher enjoys fond memories of students, experiences

BY KIM BUCKLEY

Alumni of Central all have fond memories of the school. For one of them, almost like a second home.

Former drama teacher Pegi Georgeson had taught at the school for twenty years from the school, from 1976 to 2001. Georgeson also comes from a family that close ties to the building.

She is not only an alumnus of the class of 61, but has had other family members attend the school. Her father graduated as a part of the class of 1918, and her son and brothers both graduated from Central as well as her two daughters. Georgeson also met her current husband at Central as well.

Georgeson joined the staff when she started the English as a Second Language (ESL) program for Vietnamese students.

"I jumped at the chance to teach at my Alma Mater," Georgeson said.

When there was an opening to teach drama, Georgeson took it. She said she was trained in drama and jobs to teach drama in high school don't open up until after high school, she was glad to take the job.

The best part of teaching drama for Georgeson was working with the students. She said she has taught a lot of talented students, and they were all talented in their own way. She said she enjoyed teaching students and gain confidence as well as life-long friends from the drama classes and productions.

One of the difficulties she had as a director, Georgeson said, was finding a budget. While musicals to fit the talent in the school as well as maintaining a decent budget. And Gibson said all of the Road Shows, musicals and plays were challenging. The hardest for her was the fall play "Happy Daze," because of the students that made up the cast.

As a student at Central, Georgeson did not take any drama classes. Instead she joined Acapella, which produced the musical. Georgeson said she learned about staging from her teacher, and performed in the fall play or musical, and the spring play.

She took drama classes in college and majored in elementary education, although she'd like to act.

Georgeson said since she loved to perform as well, she used to be in a production in the fall while teaching.

One of the differences in the school that Georgeson has seen during her twenty five years teaching was there is much more diversity culturally.

Georgeson said being able to work with the talents and personalities of the students and being able to laugh a lot while she was teaching helped enhanced her life.

"It's hard to pick out one students or one thing that I enjoyed more than the other because I've enjoyed it all," she said.

Some of the things Georgeson was taught by being a drama teacher were to be organized as well as very flexible.

Georgeson said the school is familiar to her and she knows the traditions as well. This is one of the reasons why she now substitute teaches in the building.

"I'm really comfortable here, and love it here," she said.

Besides Central, Georgeson also substitute teaches Burke High School as well as Millard schools. Before starting the ESL program at Central, she also substituted at other schools, however Georgeson said she enjoys substituting more now.

She said she decided to retire after 2001 because it seemed like the right time. She was glad that current drama department head John Gibson applied for the job and eventually got it.

Georgeson said she has known Gibson for years as a friend, as well as being a couple of shows he has directed. She said one of the differences between her and her successor is Gibson can handle tech for the productions as well as direct. She said while she directed the productions, she needed to have help with the tech.

Georgeson still supports the drama department by seeing the fall musical or play as well as the Roadshow when she is in town. She said it was a relief to be sitting in the audience, because she could enjoy the show and not have to worry about things

## Story line, acting makes fall musical succeed

BY KIM BUCKLEY

The school's production of "Carousel" managed to dazzle the members of the audience right from the beginning of the musical.

The acting was good, especially during the opening scene of the musical, which was one of a carnival in pantomime. It was amazing how the actors were able to dramatize the expressions on their face and show the fantasy world of the carnival without talking.

While the acting wasn't the best the actors were able to show clear emotion, whether it was from how they said something to the expressions on their faces.

One of the few problems with the show was the

plot. At times it was hard to hear the singing as well as the talking.

The singing, while wasn't exceptional, was good. Chelsey Hill, who played Julie Jordan, the love interest of Bigalow, was particularly good. Senior Sarah Potts, who played Julie's cousin, Nellie, also stood out. While the singing was at times a little off-key, it told the story through poetic lyrics.

The storyline was one of the best parts of the play. "Carousel" told the story of Billy Bigalow, who was played by Patrick Kilcoyne, and his eventual path to redemption.

The plot was engaging and the songs were memorable, two ingredients needed for the success of a musical.

The only thing that hampered the plot was it unbelievable at times, especially during the second half of the musical.

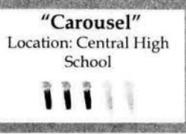
After hearing the songs one time, some of them are apt to get stuck in your head.

The only problem with the songs was the ending, "Finale Ultimo: You'll Never Walk Alone (reprise)." While the end song is supposed to be hopeful and melancholy, it seemed more tragic and depressing.

At the end of the performance, most of the audience probably felt sad.

Fortunately the show in its entirety had more high points than low, due to the actors allowing the audience to feel the emotions of the songs.

While the Thursday night performance on Nov. 1 was rough, it still managed to entertain the audience and retell a classic story.



## A Look Back In School Productions

1925



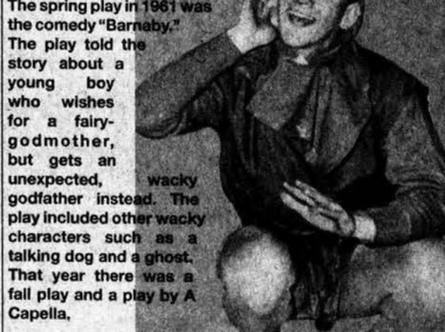
Actors in the play put on by Latin Club in 1925  
In 1925 the Latin department put on a play called "A Roman Wedding 63 B.C." It told the story about the arranged marriage of the daughter of Tullius Piso, Tullia. Other plays were presented by the Senior Glee Club and Senior class.

1944



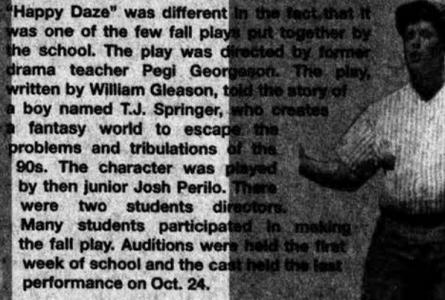
The National Thespians in their group shot taken in 1944.  
The National Thespians presented a play in the 1944 Road Show called "Rendezvous." The National Thespians have submitted plays at an annual National Thespian conference. In 1944, World War II disrupted any chance for the Thespians to send off a play to the conference. National Thespians was established in 1931 and members were able to subscribe to a magazine. To be inducted, members had to act in school productions.

1961



The spring play in 1961 was the comedy "Barnaby." The play told the story about a young boy who wishes for a fairy-godmother, but gets an unexpected, wacky godfather instead. The play included other wacky characters such as a talking dog and a ghost. That year there was a fall play and a play by A Capella.  
A student in "Barnaby" plays a leprechaun, one of the minor characters.

1993



"Happy Daze" was different in the fact that it was one of the few fall plays put together by the school. The play was directed by former drama teacher Pegi Georgeson. The play, written by William Gleason, told the story of a boy named T.J. Springer, who creates a fantasy world to escape the problems and tribulations of the 90s. The character was played by then junior Josh Perilo. There were two students directors. Many students participated in making the fall play. Auditions were held the first week of school and the cast held the first performance on Oct. 24.  
One of the students acts as a baseball player in the play.

# The Art of Gaming

As technology improves, so has the overall design and graphics of video games. Are superior graphics enough to make the game worthy of playing? One thing is clear: playing video games is more than just pushing buttons.



Lara Croft has become a video game icon and helped Angelina Jolie become one of the hottest movie stars. After more than a decade, she is still going strong and on adventures to find lost treasures. Two movies based on the plot of the video games has made over hundreds of millions of dollars world wide. However, fans of the video game insist that the game will always trump anything put out on the big screen.

## Video games affect teens in positive, negative ways

Continued from 'Video Games' on page 11B

Various studies have shown that video games have helped with forming strategies and hand-eye coordination. Other studies have shown that teamwork was encouraged through the use of multi-player games and spatial ability improved with playing videogames.

One of the things videogames are criticized for is getting gamers addicted. According to Griffiths and Hunt's study in 1998, 20 percent of adolescents spend a large amount of time playing videogames.

Psychologist Marleen Evans said like any addiction, it starts off as something people enjoy, but it can become compulsive. Because of more and the availability of the games and the growing amount, Evans said there are more people who are addicted to video games.

Palmer said there are certain situations there are people who cannot handle certain kinds of video games. For that reason, as well as to not violate school policy, video game club does not play any video game with a rating of M, for mature.

Video games have long been criticized for the level of violence in such M-rated games such as

Halo 3.

Evans said for those people who may not be as well adjusted, they may be more prone to the violence in the games and have a hard time distinguishing between reality and the fantasy in the game.

With the new Wii, Palmer said he is looking forward to seeing how the system works and what games can be played on it. He also said he's interested to see what it's really like to move with the control instead of just sitting and pushing buttons.

Palmer has been playing video games for 12 years. His mother brought home a Nintendo system and both of them played it, so he got hooked.

Palmer said his favorite video game is Tetris. This was the first videogame Palmer played.

"It's challenging and mind-boggling at the same time," he said.

Palmer said it was a game he could play with friends and it was a game he can always enjoy.

Palmer said him and Handlos were talking about video games with Mr. Murphy and decided to hold tournaments.

The tournaments were opened up to juniors and seniors. This year, Palmer said, the club spread the word so all grades could join the club.

Palmer said a benefit of video game club was it established a friendly environment. The club, he said, also explores new video games and different genres.



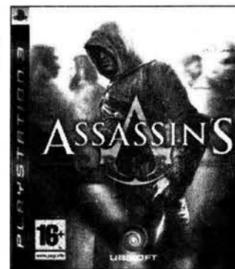
BY KEVIN GIBBS

The man stands triumphantly atop a platform, overlooking a crowd of onlookers. During his speech the crowd cries out and a figure falls from a nearby ledge, onto the man, a blade sinking into his head. The assassin calmly lays the body down, and quickly stands.

The assassin makes a break for it, pushing people aside as he makes his way swiftly through the cramped streets of mid-evil England. A chase pursues until the Guards finally give up the chase.

This entire scenario is a common occurrence in Assassin's Creed. In the game, the player is Altair, an assassin for an anti-crusade group in Europe.

The game took place in mid-evil Jerusalem, Damascus, and Acre. The cities were alive with all kinds of people winding about the streets. The ac-



Graphics	Sound	Gameplay	Overall
10/10	9/10	8/10	9/10

tual cities themselves also looked stunning and are graphically the centerpiece of the game, almost single-handedly making this game one of the best looking all year.

The player started the game by investigating potential targets until the player received enough information to attack the target, either by a stealthy or head-on approach, although the latter almost never ends well.

After the targets were eliminated it's either a mad dash from the guards, a giant sword fight, or some combination of the two to get to safety, and evade pursuers.

While this is exhilarating, it was almost the only point of the game. And after doing it over and over, it would feel repetitive if the game stretched on for much longer.

The musical score was beautifully done, but should have been implemented more often throughout the game.

In the end, Assassin's Creed had an innovative take on the free-roam genre, and did it incredibly well. For any true gamer, Assassin's Creed must be a part of one's collection.

BY KEVIN GIBBS

In 1996 a shapely young woman strutted into existence as one of the greatest gaming icons of all time.

She was one of the first games in 3-D and the first known female protagonist in a video game. Lara Croft, the Tomb Raider, has in the ten years after her debut, been the feature of many video games, at least three published books and two feature length films that all together made her a household name.

In early 2007 her adventures took her back to where she started, in a remake of her first game. "Tomb Raider: Anniversary" was the perfect game to cap off a ten year franchise, which remains popular.

In "Anniversary" the game was a redone version of the original, with many additions to make the story line more logical and the game more



Graph	Sound	Gameplay	Overall
8/10	7/10	9/10	8/10

enjoyable. It pulled an anniversary game off successfully, as the game not only had players reminiscing about the tombs of old, but also had them immersed in fun, fast, seamless game play.

Lara Croft was a cyber heroine in the form of a shapely British archeologist who plunders tombs and spelunker caves in her spare time.

In these tombs she had to deal with the local wildlife, as well as solve puzzles the locals have put in place to prevent grave robbers.

Once past those, if she's lucky, she had to go toe to toe with a restless spirit in the last room. All of this death defying action made for quite the experience, and Lara's appearance wasn't a strain on the eyes either.

The graphics in the game are phenomenal as players had a sense of scale in the larger rooms and more of a claustrophobic one in the smaller ones. Lara moved seamlessly in her acrobatics as well. However, her animal enemies don't move quite as seamlessly.

In the game there are several levels but they vary in size. There's never a point at which you don't want to progress. The game consistently draws you into the next segment, making it hard to put down.

By the end of the game it's not a brilliant story line, but it does have its fun, and it definitely pulls you along for the ride.

BY PATRICK BREEN

Okay, stay calm. Stay calm. It's all just a video game.

With the new and improved graphics, "Call of Duty 4: Modern Combat" far surpassed any first-person modern combat shooter. One traveled into a modern-day hell, armed only with a gun and one's wits.

A game hasn't been as revolutionary with its graphics, storyline and gameplay since the first first-person shooter took the market by storm.

Some gamers may remember. James Bond Golden Eye 007 debuted in 1997 and sold eight million copies to this date. It changed the face of gaming. And so will "COD4."

This game is a masterpiece of "ActiVision,"

a company that has always produced the extremely popular "Call of Duty 1-3," a series completely based on WWII. But the new setup of modern warfare wasn't yet conquered by this company.

Most notable competitors were the "Ghost Recon" and "Rainbow Six" franchises. But what ActiVision brought to the table was a game with better graphics than previous, and much more continuous and live gameplay.

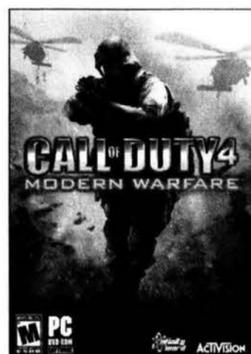
In the game, one was able to shoot from a riding helicopter. Bombs explode. And people die. Yes, a perfect game.

And one of the most important features of any new game was the online play. The online play kept people on edge and filled with curse words.

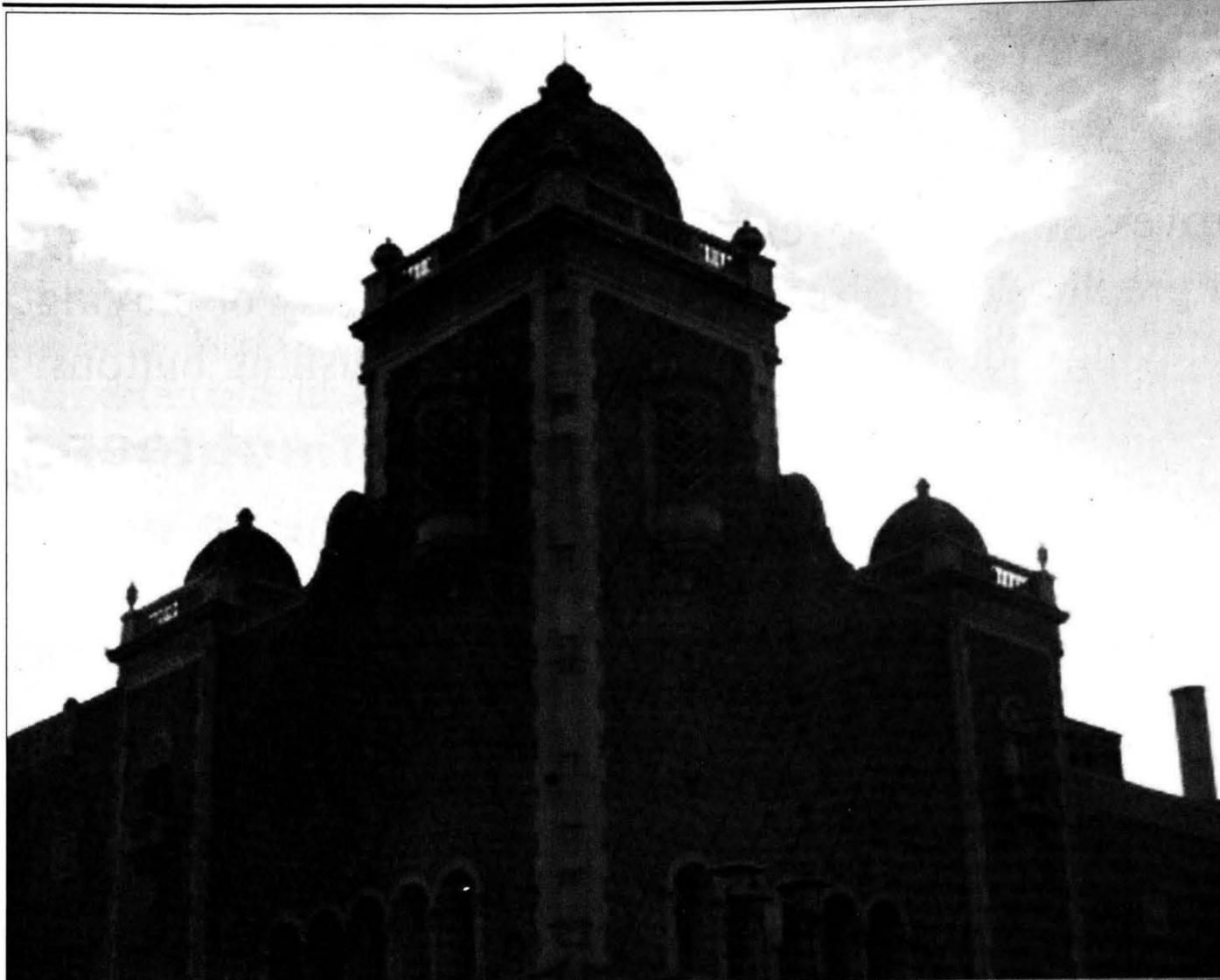
And with a wide range of systems to play on. ActiVision made some major strides in warfare.

With players from across the world joining in, there is only one thing to say.

Grab your guns Alpha Team. And don't look back.



Graphics	Sound	Gameplay	Over
10/10	10/10	9.5/10	10/10



## Alumnus gives to theater

BY MICHELLE RIEGER

The Rose Theater has gone through many stages since it opened as The Riviera in 1927. Bob Ahmanson, a Central High graduate, was the founder of The Ahmanson Foundation.

This foundation donated \$70,000 in order to restore The Rose Theater. This donation is the reason that spectators can once again enjoy the starry, dark blue ceiling they once knew when it first opened.

The donation also provides more opportunity.

The Rose Theater, celebrated its 80<sup>th</sup> birthday this year. The Riviera first opened in 1927 and went through many stages during the past 80 years. In 1929 it was sold and renamed the Paramount. Just 22 years later the Paramount closes after Creighton University purchases it. It then became home of the Omaha Packers, a professional bowling team. After a \$9.3 million restoration to the building, it became the Rose Blumkin Theater in 1995.

The Rose's Omaha Theater Company is now the third largest professional children's theater in America. Productions are performed year-round. The Sarah Spencer Artistic Achievement Award and Nebraska Governor's Outstanding Artistic Organization Award are a couple of awards that The Omaha Theater Company has received.

Audiences of A Little House Christmas were the first to see the spectacular lighting arrangement. Rose Theater offers many programs for teens.

Teens 'N' Theater, also known as TNT, is a free, after-school program. According to the Rose Theater's website, the program provides teens with an opportunity to develop positive

self-esteem, responsibility, and commitment by participating in the theatrical process. They also offer an internship project each season.

Senior Patrick Kilcoyne has been an intern at the Rose Theater since May of 2007.

"I remember going to the Rose on field trips when I was in elementary," recalls Kilcoyne.

He started to get involved in drama his freshman year. Some of his friends took the class at Central and he thought it would be interesting.

Since June of 2007, senior Kairy Rathman is also an intern at the Rose. She helps with leading acting classes for children grades Pre-K through seniors in high school.

"I've definitely learned a lot from the people working there," Rathman says about the after-school program.

For any person who loves theater and arts would have fond childhood memories of the Rose Theater. "When I was little I used to go on field trips and saw Frog and Toad and Little House on the Prairie. It (the theater) was really big and it was the coolest thing ever," recalls Rathman.

As listed on the Rose Theater's website, the responsibilities of being an intern at the Rose include assisting with Creative Drama classes, running the lights, create and implement a marketing plan for a Teens 'N' Theater or youth production.

They will also participate in workshops for teaching, marketing and technical theater.

Many students will have the opportunity to learn more about acting, experience what it is like to perform in an actual theater and gain a great deal of understanding for the theater lifestyle.

PHOTO BY KIM BUCKLEY/THE REGISTER

## No homecoming tickets still results in romantic evening



A column by Alana Brunow

This year, homecoming tickets sold out before everyone bought their tickets.

I had to rethink my entire homecoming night due to an abundance of people attending from schools other than Central.

While I waited in line, I grew nervous while the ticket pile got shorter and the line seemed to grow. There were many students in front of me still, as the school store announced the tickets were sold out.

Although many students were appalled by this, I was somewhat thrilled.

My homecoming experiences usually consist of going to dinner and then going to the dance to dance to mostly rap and r&b for the whole night.

Usually students are not permitted to leave, students must go upstairs to eat anything, and everyone with heels must change their shoes at the door with their coats. In the past, there have been problems with theft of shoes, cameras, phones, and so on toward the end of the dance.

Since my boyfriend, Jonathan, and I were unable to attend homecoming, we made the best of the tickets. We went downtown and used the money meant for the tickets for a night downtown.

First, we went out to dinner with three of our friends, Sam & Louis. After dinner, our friends went to homecoming while we walked around the old market all night.

We went on a horse carriage ride, which toured around the old market. I had only done this once or twice before, but I hardly remember because I was so young. Jonathan had never been on the carriages before. The view was gorgeous and I was privileged to do something like this with my boyfriend. In the state of New York, horse carriage rides have recently been banned and by law, they are no longer legal. Just in case the law spreads throughout the US, I wanted to get a chance to do it at least on more time.

Then we visited an art gallery based on nature, following a visit to all of the usual stores and shops we go to, such as Central, Linnits, Retro and Homer's.

When we walked into Homer's, Jon and I learned that our friend Ben works there. After we bought an R.E.M. album, we talked to Ben for a while, we left and walked around more.

I remember my heels began to cut into the sides of my feet so I took them off and walked around downtown barefoot in the rain. Even if it was not the safest idea, I felt much better.

As the night went by, we were tired of walking around, so we went back to my house for a while to hang out.

Later, our friends had dinner with earlier that night.

Jourdan and Kurt, picked us up and we all rode down to Mystery Manor's Haunted Attraction.

Although we waited in line for a long time, we finally made it through the house. Inside, there was an actual script that the house was based on, in which an axe murderer kills a young girl.

There were funny characters as well as frightening ones. The worst part though, I must admit was the black and white spinning tube.

As you walk through a tube of twisting black and white stripes. It completely throws off your coordination.

Everyone passes through it on a flat surface, but the tube still gives you the illusion of falling over or spinning.

It was extremely nauseating.

Even though the house was not as scary as I had hoped, we still had fun. After the haunted house, our friends drove me and I back to my house and then they went home.

After hanging out for a while and watching a couple of movies, it was time for Jon to go home.

Even though he had to leave, the night had turned out a million times better than it would have if we had we gone to homecoming.

Unfortunately, I can't say the same for others who did not get their tickets.

While students purchase homecoming tickets, they must give their name, but not the name of their date. Because of this, students were buying tickets for their friends that did not attend Central. I would be able to understand if it was not the date, but some of the individuals who purchased these tickets for students from multiple other schools, did not even attend the dance.

Central's gym has a certain "capacity level." Although it is a fire hazard to have a certain amount of students in the gym, there has never been a time in the past that I recall seeing everyone in the gym. Students are scattered from the cafeteria to the gym. Generally, everyone gets there at different times during the night and everyone leaves whenever they want to.

With that said, you would think more tickets would be sold to fit the capacity.

For those other students who did not get to go out because the tickets sold out, I think it was poorly set up. Students should be able to go to their own school dance. The one thing that upset me was the staff member I heard say, "You should have bought your tickets earlier."

I think that's unfair because then twenty different students would be in the same situation.

## Math teacher donates musical talent for musical

BY WYNTER DAVIS

"I started playing the trombone in middle school and I was really good at it. Erica Koenig's dad Mr. Koenig was actually my middle school teacher," said Kelly Murphy.

Murphy teaches Algebra 5-6 and Pre-Algebra 1-2 here at Central and when he is not giving tests or grading assignments he is playing the trombone in his spare time.

Murphy said that he has been playing since he was 10 and has been playing for 21 years.

"I started playing in the fifth grade and in high school for two years. I haven't played since tenth grade. Once in a while I get it out. I would say it's more of a hobby," said Murphy.

In the fifth grade his teacher told his class to play all the instruments available and his teacher would rate them. He did the best on the trombone. Murphy had a lot of issues with the band teacher so he chose to resign from playing the trombone.

"I don't want to sound like a follower, but a lot of us decided to quit. I chose to focus more on other classes. If my friends weren't going to be in band I didn't want to be in it," said Murphy.

Murphy said that he enjoys it more now than back in high school where he felt that he had to play. Currently for him it's just cool to know how to play an instrument.

He really enjoys playing for his family.

Murphy never has thought about really taking the trombone follower, when he was younger or in college.

"I have to say I really enjoyed band in seventh and eighth grade. All my friends were in it. We were pretty good too," said Murphy.

Murphy plays a variety of music like marching band, jazz band, pep band, concert band and orchestra. He even bought magazines with today's modern music.

"I enjoyed concert band music, the piece, in middle school. We did a lot of contest in high school. I liked solos because the pit crew had a lot of background parts," said Murphy.

Murphy was recently in the pit crew musical of "Carousel" in November along with talented

students in and outside of the drama department.

"I didn't have long at all to practice for the musical, only four weeks. There were 30 different pieces and the trombone played 24 out of the 30. It wasn't that bad," said Murphy.

This was the first musical Murphy has taken part in here at Central. He said that he was a little nervous since this was his first time but said he would do it again because the students were relaxed and it made him feel relaxed. He said that it wasn't really time consuming, because he was able to practice when he wanted to. He normally practices at home.

"I think everyone should play an instrument. I know it's weird but any music is good for your brain. It uses different parts of the brain that you normally wouldn't use. It's a good stress reliever and a way to bring people together," said Murphy.

Murphy's wife, Mindy Murphy said that she thinks it was a great way for Murphy to play the trombone since the last time he played was in high school and she knows he enjoys playing the trombone.

"I attended two of my husband's performances of the musical, one on the first night and another on the second night," she said.

Colin Brown, the Treble chorus and Man's Chorus teacher, helped with the musical as well. He helped prepare the orchestra and the singers and he put it all together as a co-director.

"This was my second play here at school. "My Fair Lady," I did the same in that play coaching singers," said Brown.

Brown started to prepare for the musical early May at the end of the school year. Co-director Lyn Bouma and director John Gibson decided to do "Carousel" and Brown looked over the musical last summer.

He said that he found out that Murphy played an instrument when drama department put an ad in the circular announcements asking if any of the staff members played any instrument or had any musical abilities. Murphy came forward and said that he would be interested since he was experienced with the trombone.

## Musician devotes time to separate bands, singing

BY MAX LARSON

"I don't know why I like to sing. I like music, but doesn't everyone? It's fun because maybe people like what I make. When people listen to it or ask you about it, it feels good," sophomore Catherine Carne said.

After recording one song, Carne has found herself singing in three different bands, all with varying levels of commitment and experience in the Omaha music scene.

Catherine Crown is the name of Carne's first step into the world of singing.

It is an informal musical venture she began about eight months ago. She said she was at sophomore Blair Emsick's house when it started.

"We (Blair and I) were bored and wanted to record something," she said.

She had written a song a long time ago and showed it to Blair's brothers, who own recording equipment and offered to let her record it. Catherine Carne has only recorded that one song, entitled "When You Were Young," but Carne said she plans to record more, as she has only recently begun to take the band seriously.

The music consists of Carne singing and playing

keyboard or guitar and Emsick helping out with various instruments, with music written by Carne and words by Emsick. Carne said there is no specific structure to her song writing. She just puts notes and words that sound good together.

"I got a keyboard for Christmas, and I played it when I was bored. It just started turning into songs, I guess," she said.

She said the music isn't easily described, but she would probably file it under "indie."

"I try to make it sound like the Animal Collective," she said. "Even though it doesn't sound like that, I like how weird they are."

Recording and distributing "When You Were Young" ended up being a ticket for Carne to find more singing opportunities. She said Emsick's brothers, who have all graduated from high school, are in a band called Hyannis.

She said she isn't a major part of their band, but she sings two songs at each of their concerts, and she is on their latest CD, "Off the Reels." Also interested by Carne's voice was sophomore Taylor Long, member of the band No Contempo.

"They heard my music on Catherine Crown and they

asked if I wanted to sing some songs with them," Carne said.

Long said No Contempo is pretty serious about their music. Carne said No Contempo is a little louder than Catherine Crown's more low-tempo style, but she still classified it under indie.

Long said he and Tillwick asked Carne to join their band when they decided they wanted to cover a song originally sung by Jenny Lewis, and they found her voice to be a better fit.

"Catherine's voice reminds me a lot of Cat Power and Jenny Lewis, but it is still distinctive in its own way," he said.

No Contempo's songs are written by Long and Tillwick, but they said they plan to add Carne into the process as they write more songs. At this time they only have six songs, and they play a few covers, including bands like The Strokes, The Yeah Yeah Yeahs, and Gnarl Barkley.

Their songs range from Marvin Gaye influences to subject matter that chronicles "The Life Aquatic," a Bill Murray movie.

Long said the band practices regularly, and although they have only had two shows, they have more coming up.



PHOTO BY MAX LARSON/THE REGISTER

Catherine Carne practices the keyboard after school. She plays for three different bands and performs under the name of Catherine Crown. Carne said it feels good when people listen to it or ask about it.

# Who Said Teens Don't Read?

Teenagers have been criticized for two things: not reading enough and for not reading well-written literature. However, since sales on some of the biggest named books have sky-rocketed, that can be easily argued. With engaging plots, interesting characters, and alluring writing, these books would top the best-seller charts and do what some parents consider impossible: getting their child to read.

BY KIM BUCKLEY

What can a pair of simple, plain, ordinary jeans hold? For some they can hold money, for others they can hold the latest cellphone and for others still, they can hold pieces of dried up lint that is collected inside the pockets.

For four best friends, they can hold precious memories of an unforgettable summer.

"The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants" told the story of four very different teenagers, Lena, Bridget, Tibby and Carmen.

When Carmen buys a pair of jeans that somehow fit all of the girls' different bodies, they decide those magical pants are going to be the one thing that connected them in the first summer they are going to spend apart.

The girls learn that anything can happen during the summer, from falling in love to dealing with death. While sharing the jeans, their lives are changed in ways the girls never thought possible.

The writing and themes of the book are very mature for teenage books. The writing, while simplistic, was able to pull the reader right into the story.



COURTESY OF LITTLE, BROWN

**"The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants"**  
Author: Ann Brashares

The emotions of the girls were very descriptive and one felt as if one was actually with the girls on their adventures.

A variety of topics were addressed from a parent getting remarried to a friend having cancer to finding love.

The writer, Ann Brashares, was able to connect the readers so closely to the girls that they were able to have the exact same emotions as the characters in the book. Brashares, through her writing, conveyed the girls as flawed, but all of them with open hearts and minds.

Any girl who reads the book is sure to relate to one of the four girls. The girls got themselves into situations many teenage girls find themselves getting into today.

The first in a series of four, it was easy to see why the book series is so popular. The girls are portrayed realistically, and all of them mess up and make mistakes.

The writing was particularly clever because while it didn't tell the character's direct thoughts, it managed to convey very realistically what each girl was feeling.

One of the literary devices Brashares used in her writing was parallel structure.

The beginning paralleled the ending, which brought the point

home that no matter what, those four girls would be there for each other, no matter what the situation was.

It also allowed the reader to realize how much growing up each of the four did over the summer. However, while the beginning paralleled the end of the book, the last chapter had a decidedly different tone than in the beginning.

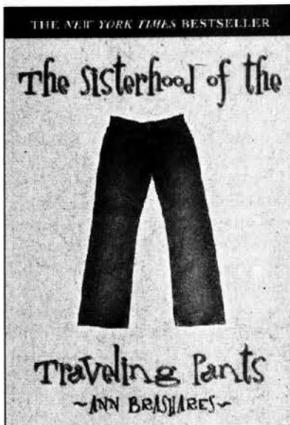
Each chapter was separated into four parts, each dealing with four of the girls, but driving home the fact of how apart they are, and how alone they could be.

The heart of the book was the deep bond of friendship the four girls shared. Keeping contact not only with the jeans but also through letters showed how the girls knew each other and how much the girls mean to each other.

From breaking into a permanently used gym to start off the summer to them returning after the summer to the same place, the reader showed how far the group goes back.

This is obviously a story aimed for girls, and the story is more than able to get straight to the heart of the intended audience. All four girls are without a doubt heroines who can teach the reader important lessons about friendship and life.

Brashares managed to write a book that show that even a simple piece of clothing can be magical, just like the book itself.



COURTESY OF DELACORTE BOOKS

BY ALI HODGE

If one thing can be said for Stephanie Meyer's books, perhaps it's that they came out of nowhere. Literally.

One day a person got the impression that nobody is reading, and the next... well, Bella Swan and Edward Cullen are the hottest couple around.

It certainly is easy to see why.

The plot was simple. (I can't believe it wasn't thought to be put in teen literature long before.) The characters were normal everyday people. (That is if you mentally omit the fact that they're vampires.) And it contained two key elements that easily made this book thrive: the fight for survival and teen love.

With Meyer's first installment into the nameless series, "Twilight," a low maintenance city girl from Phoenix flew across the country to a small rainy town called Forks in Washington. There she met the Cullens family, fell in love with the youngest son and her life spun out of control.

Edward was perfect. He was handsome, caring, and intelligent, and most of all, Bella loved him. To Edward, Bella was perfect with her imperfections and quirks. It was clear from the start that he was completely taken by her.

Yet there was a problem. Edward was a vampire and Bella was human. One can immediately see the problem.

Through out the story line of the following books, "New Moon" and "Eclipse," problems were thrown at the young struggling couple that threatened Bella's life and furthermore Edward's, since she is all he has.

Meyer did a phenomenal job of writing the series which is without a doubt one of the elements that makes the books so fantastic. They were simply written, yet the author had a particularly clear gift of successfully pulling the reader into the love-sick head of a teenage girl.

The emotions were as real as they would be if the reader was experiencing the emotions themselves and they range anywhere from horror to boredom and helplessness and love.

The life-like spirits of the characters were also due to Meyer's wit with the pen. One of the reasons the books did so well was because the two main characters were in love, if that word even does them justice, and Meyer made her audience believe it.

After reading the books it is not hard at all to understand why the teenage world is enthusiastically anticipating the release of the final installment in the series.

It was real, but it wasn't. It was sad, but it was joyous and it certainly put a new face to vampire lore.

BYASTRIKA WILHELM

Everyone, wait, I mean every girl at one point in time dreams about princes, white horses, and 'happily ever afters.'

They imagine that they were kidnapped by an evil witch, and that they are truly a princess from a far away kingdom.

Meg Cabot's "The Princess Diaries" novel series captured and held hostage the hearts of millions of girls around the country, diving them into the fairy tale world.

The plot was indubitably a simple and common tale.

A undiscovered beauty was hidden from the cruelty of the popular teenage girls, the mean girls, but suddenly she, and the rest of the world, discovered that she is a princess, the heir to the Genovian throne.

The unsuspecting teenager received a shock from her grandmother when the royal family learned that the girl's father, the present heir to the throne, could have no more children.

Her Royal Highness, Amelia Mignotte Grimaldi Thermopolis Renaldo, Crown Princess of Genovie had to not only deal with the usual teenage problems, such as dating, high school and friends but also with a whole different country, thousands of miles away from her firehouse-like home in San Francisco.

Talk about pressure. Mia's only condolence was her best friend Lilly, the outspoken, liberal activist. She was the

only one who did not fawn over Mia who was now a princess, and now probably one of the most influential individuals of the world.

Yes, the plot was a bit bland, but modern issues and quirky funny comments and scenes that permeate the novel helped the series become more than just a 'quick, easy read.'

Through the firm of a diary, the novel painted the life of Mia, and through various structural usages and sentence constructions, the reader felt Mia was right next to her. The reader was made to believe that 'Mia' lives next door to her, maybe in the same classroom.

Meg Cabot has had acclaimed international success since the book's release. Since then, the series have been made into two movies.

Cabot has given a sense of reality to all girls. Now, people are starting to put faith in the Prince Charmings of the world.

"The Princess Diaries" series is one of the most successful in the world for a very simple reason.

The ending. Everything and everyone should have a happy ending.

BY ALI HODGE

Just from picking up the book, a reader could tell that James Patterson's books "Maximum Ride" was not going to be boring.

And as silly as they may seem, one had to give them credit for being entertaining. The first book in the trilogy, "Maximum Ride: The Angel Experiment" started off with a teenage girl running for her life. Everything was at stake, her family was in danger, the enemy was right on her back.

Then the reader was taken back into the life of Max, a normal girl... with wings who was fighting an organization bent on destroying them. What can get more sci-fi than that?

As hoaky as the story line seemed, Patterson had a gift for pulling the audience into the moment and in light of it all, it didn't seem so bad.

Yet that didn't matter when the next-door neighbor asks what you are reading and you're left to explain the less than impressive story line.

"Maximum Ride" was Patterson's first series for teens, and like a dozens

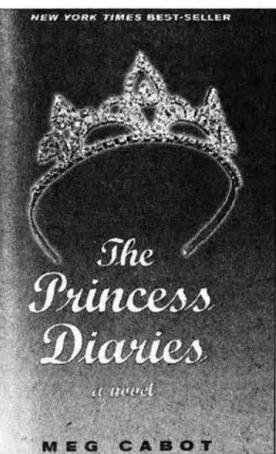
of his other books, they have become an international phenomenon.

And once the reader got past the slightly cliché storyline, one can understand why. The characters had amazing depth to them. They were caring, strong, humorous and intelligent. One could only complain about the lack of a love story.

In fact, it was slightly painful how poorly Patterson wrote his love scenes being that he is clearly an accomplished and talented writer.

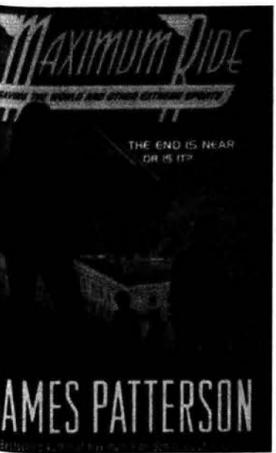
Still, the series has been highly recommended from one hard core reader to another.

Despite the questionable story line and lack of deep emotion other than anger and strength, the books were a good read nevertheless and excellent adventure.



COURTESY OF HARPERTROPHY

**"The Princess Diaries"**  
Author: Meg Cabot



COURTESY OF LITTLE, BROWN

**"Maximum Ride"**  
Author: James Patterson

COURTESY OF DELACORTE PRESS, RANDOM HOUSE

## Reading by the Numbers

26% say reading is boring.

25% of children aged 0-14 are active book borrowers.

70% of teenagers would rather watch tv than read.

14 the age where teenagers start losing interest in reading.

43% of teenagers would read a book if another teen recommended it.

360.7 million books are checked out of the public libraries each year.

20% of teenagers say if they knew what to read they would read more books.

83% of teenagers read in their spare time.

# Transfer strengthens team throughout winning season

BY BRITTNEY MILLER

The first time Donald Jones (better known as D Jones) picked a basketball was in the seventh grade. Most players who receive greatness in athletics begin very early. D Jones caught kind of late but is still unstoppable.

"Basically I grew up watching everyone around me playing basketball so I wanted to play too."

"I like the competitive edge in basketball, but what I love most, defense," says D Jones.

Donald thinks that defense is the best part of basketball because if you can shut down the offense with defense, you will make great steals and score points.

D Jones was asked who got him inspired in basketball, and he replied his older brother, Anthony Jones. Anthony was a great player at Omaha Northwest about 3 years ago. He always pushed D Jones to do the best he could at sports.

"I began to notice how talented he was in basketball and that pushed me the most."

"My brother inspired me," says Donald. He even inspired him so much to go further in basketball past high school. He wants to go far, "I just want to go as far as it will take me."

The first home game of the season was against North.

"I was nervous. I'm on a new team and a new system. It took me a while to adapt to my team."

"I knew I had to step my game up," said D Jones.

It didn't take to long though because Donald had a great game that night.

D Jones was asked what he thought about the comparison between CHS basketball and NWHS basketball, "Aw man! It's way more intense. It's more organized and way more competitive!"

Donald does miss Northwest a lot though. But he's very glad he made the change to central.

"I miss Northwest basketball, but I'm glad I'm here at Central with a great coach and a great team."

D Jones has an important role on the basketball team like anyone else there. He shows up to all practices and gives everybody his 100% all.

"My goal is to not only win state, but to go far with my career in basketball."

There is a high anticipation on the team to win state for the third time. Like everyone else, D Jones is very excited.

When he isn't working out, practicing and shooting jump shots, he just hangs out with his teammates. Most of the time he's with Ronnell Grixby or Josh Jones.

He is more determined then ever to do his very best. It's his last year of high school basketball then on to the next level.

"I just basically work hard on perfecting my craft, which is basketball."



Senior Chris Griffin draws contact creating a foul early in the game against North. Griffin and other seniors came through big late in the game making some major runs, and ended with a blowout.

PHOTO BY PATRICK BREEN/REGISTER

# State Title earned through hard work and determination

Continued from **State Champs** on Page 20

the players never gave up and left everything on the Memorial field.

"Playmakers make plays," Ball said. "These guys were big puzzle."

And with most of the offensive and defensive starters gone for next season, there will be a lot of wholes to fill in the line-ups. But Ball said that this team could be good again.

"We're going to miss those guys," Ball said, "they'll be a big loss, but that's high school football. We have some real good kids (returning), and now that they've had a taste of Memorial Stadium, I don't think it will be hard to motivate them."

Returning players will need to step up and play a major role to keep the State Title in Central's name.

To keep in shape

# SPORTS CARDS

At the beginning of this sports season, the Register asked various coaches to select a player who played a vital role on the team, or who was expected to play the most vital role on the team.

The coaches chose the following athletes based on their role of leading their teams to successful seasons. During the year, and as it continues, these players stepped up and helped each respective team on to victory.



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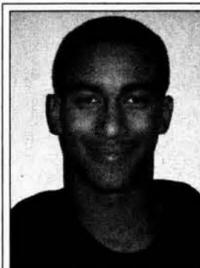
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**WINTER 2007**  
**GIRLS SWIMMING**  
Bonnie Comb  
**CHS**  
**STUDENT ATHLETE**

Grade: 11  
Coach: Meredith Kinman  
Position: Breast Stroke and free style  
Awards/Recognition:  
"Rather than breathing whenever like basketball and football, with swimming you have to factor in breathing," said Cobb.  
Other Key Players: Bailey Dilocker (11)



**FALL 2007**  
**BOYS FOOTBALL**  
Daryl Hawkins  
**CHS**  
**STUDENT ATHLETE**

Grade: 12  
Coach: Jay Ball  
Position: Quarterback/ Wide Receiver  
Awards/Recognition:  
"Team is a group serving one common goal, doing whatever it takes to get something," said Hawkins.  
Other Key Players: Shaun Prater (12)



**SPRING 2008**  
**GIRLS TRACK**  
Ellen Danford  
**CHS**  
**STUDENT ATHLETE**

Grade: 12  
Coach: Trent Lodge  
Events: Mile/ 4 x 8  
Awards/Recognition: Lettered and Metals  
Other Key Players: Denisha Seals (11)



**WINTER 2007**  
**BOYS WRESTLING**  
Sam Almazan  
**CHS**  
**STUDENT ATHLETE**

Grade: 11  
Coach: Jimmie Foster  
Weight Class: 215  
Awards/Recognition: Outstanding Weight of the Year, First freshmen to qualify for State at Central at 215 Weight class.  
"Just the challenge the feeling, and the glory," said Almazan.

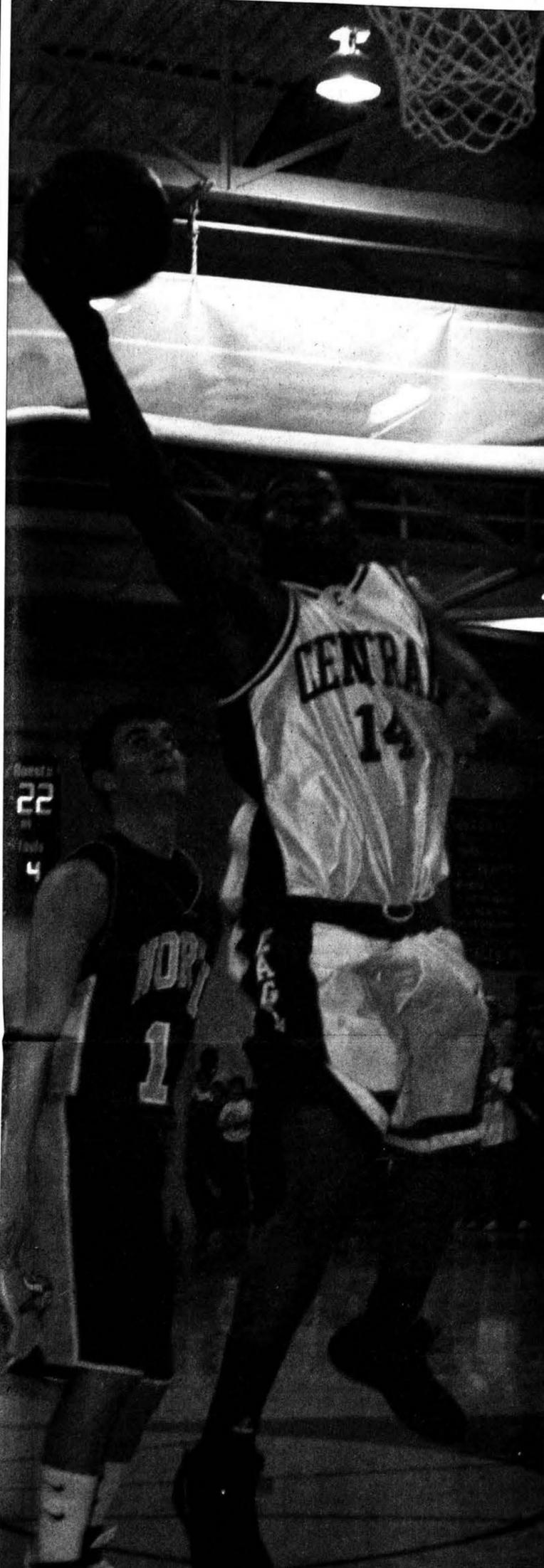


PHOTO BY PATRICK BREEN/REGISTER

Driving to the hoop against Omaha North, senior Lorenzo Wilson lays a bucket in to extend the Eagles lead in the second quarter. The Eagles went on to beat the Vikings and prolonged their winning streak until meeting Bellevue West in the Holiday Tournament.

# Eagles lead way with big wins

Continued from '3-peat' on page 20B

Important part as seen in the State Championship last year is the depth of your bench.

In a game so physical, a team needs players off the bench. Besides the Praters, returning role players Paul Simms, Josh Brunning and Deverell Biggs will keep the rotation fresh and the opposing teams tired.

Simms came up big last year with Jones fouled out and the Bellevue West Thunderbirds threatening victory.

### PRESEASON

Before the season began, the Eagles seemed to be in major jeopardy of not having the chance of repeating.

Most of the players found summer leagues, including Josh Jones, Wilson and T-Birds star Antione Young. The added play would benefit each of their games.

But sometime during the course of the summer season, Jones contracted a virus.

Josh Jones went down with a mysterious illness which ended up being bacteria in his blood.

He spent several months off the court recovery from a heart surgery that threatened not only his season, but his life.

Recovering quickly, he was able to start the first game.

But the team isn't without its fair share of injuries. Junior Doug Knickrehm won't be seen on the court for the majority of this season with a broken foot.

The junior forward is seen though supporting the team from the bench.

The hope is that Knickrehm will be able to rejoin the team towards the beginning of the District playoffs. Knickrehm would add some more depth and size to the team upon his return.

The Eagles began training even before the season started.

In early November the team began running. Preparing for what was sure to be another tough season.

### REMATCH

The past two seasons, the Eagles have met Bellevue West in the championship game. Each time they were underdogs, and each time they ended up victorious.

Two seasons ago, it was a sophomore powered team with leadership coming from Kline.

This year, the team has many seniors and a big bench, so one might think the team would be divided.

Will there be another rematch? Another Championship?

## Ranking the Eagles

- League record: 9-3
- Overall record: 15-3
- Win percentage: .833
- Home record: 6-0
- Away record: 2-2
- Neutral court record: 7-1
- Ranking: #4
- Two championships
- Three championships?

INFORMATION COURTESY OF <http://WWW.MAXPREPS.COM>

## Defense lifts Eagles past T-birds

BY PATRICK BREEN

The sign hung from the corner of Bellevue West's student section.

"Are you sure you want a rematch?"

Making reference to the first meeting of the two basketball powerhouses, the Eagles wanted to avenge their loss in the Metro Holiday tournament.

And strong offense and overpowering defense led the Eagles back to a win.

Guess they did, because in the rematch of the teams, the seats were packed and students were turned away due to lack of space nearly an hour and a half before the boys game tipped-off.

The 87-80 win continues the rivalry between the two teams. In the last two State Championship games, the Eagles have beat the T-birds in a hard-nose style.

This game wasn't defined on a large offense, as the teams combined to put up just above 20 points in the first quarter.

As if a rematch wasn't enough pressure on the Eagles, a plethora of interesting people were in the packed attendance.

Senior Josh Jones played in front of his next year coach, Creighton Dana Altman.

But as the game heated up, the Eagles saw large numbers out of several key players.

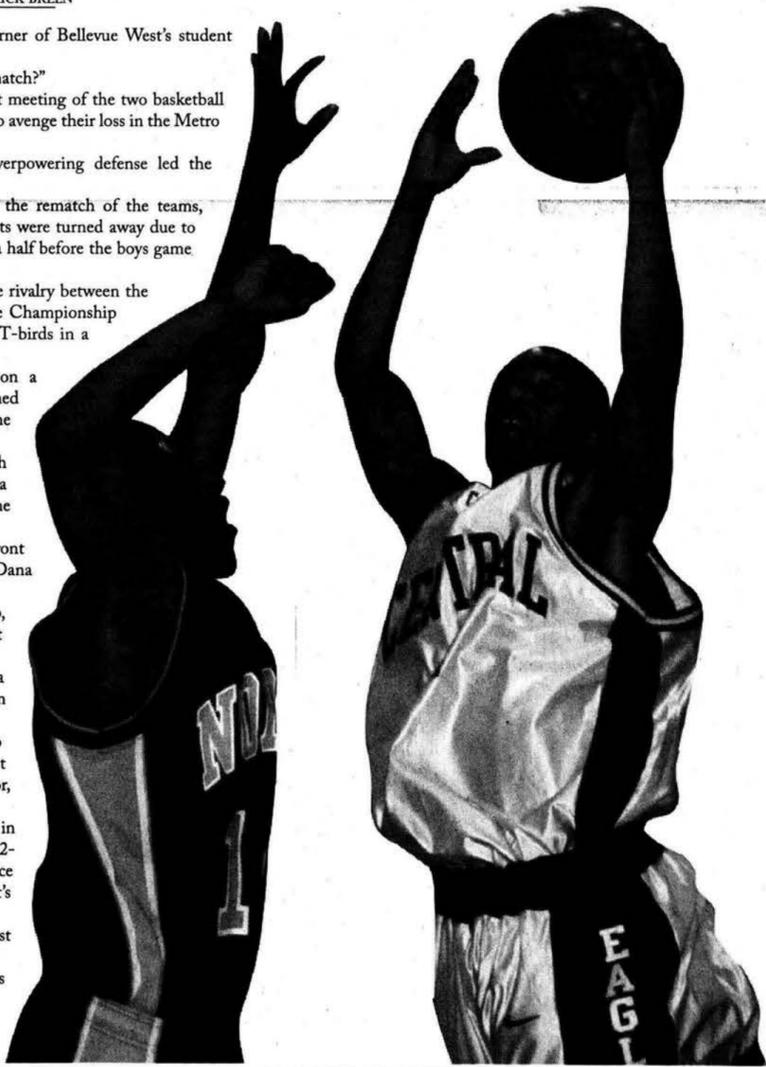
The starting seniors played a major role in maintaining the slim lead throughout the game.

With the chant, "He's no Courtney," the Bellevue West crowd tried to get into the senior, Ronnell Grixby's head.

With less than two minutes in the game, and the Eagles with a 2-point lead, Ronnell got the chance to put the nail in Bellevue West's coffin.

With two swishes, the West crowd went silent.

And the closing minutes would be defined by tough defense leading to the Eagles win.



BY MICHELLE RIEGER

## Q and A with Eric Behrens

Q: Did you play basketball? Where? How long?

A: Yeah, I played at Central my sophomore through senior year. My sophomore year I played JV and Varsity. My junior and senior year I was on Varsity.

Q: How long have you been coaching at Central?

A: This is my seventh year as head varsity coach and 10th year overall.

Q: How long did your father coach here?

A: He coached Varsity for 11 years and was assistant coach for seven years.

Q: Did playing basketball help you now as a coach?

A: It gives you better understanding of the game.

Q: What does it take to win a state championship?

A: A lot of hard work, time to develop team chemistry and a little luck.

Q: How about winning two state championships?

A: Each season is different. We benefitted from winning before and the experience helped.

Q: What will it take to win again this year?

A: Stay focused and practice hard.

Q: What's the best part of coaching?

A: The competitiveness. There are good players, but most of all they're good kids.



PHOTO BY PATRICK BREEN/REGISTER

Senior Josh Jones crosses over a Viking defender before making a bucket in the Eagles second win of the season, beating Omaha North 79-54. Jones put up 15 points

# Swim team looks to prepare for State run

BY BRITTNEY MILLER

Both of the school swimming teams at the school certainly knows how to make a splash.

The team officially started the season with a home meet against Omaha Burke.

Coach Meredith Kinman said her goal this year was to go to the State meet, which will take place during Feb. 21 through the 23.

"That goal has been accomplished as both members of the boys and girls swimming team will swim in State.

"Being a state swimmer is a huge honor," junior Michael Walsh said.

Walsh is a swimmer on the team here at central. The role he plays most is being a free style.

In swimming there are four different types of strokes: breast stroke, back stroke, butterfly and freestyle.

Our team is one of the top swimmers to participate in swimming teams among the Omaha Public School (OPS) district. Central ranks right under Burke High school.

The team got together every day for practice from 4p.m. to 6p.m. at Norris Middle school.

Because the school does not have a swimming pool Norris has always let the team use their pool for practicing and for meets.

Last year the team practiced Tuesdays and Thursday mornings one hour before school started.

"It's a great idea to practice early. If you take a look at all the

good swim teams out here, they're so good because of how much they practice," Walsh said.

He said to participate in swimming it required a lot of dedication. Swimmers have to give both time and patience into their daily practices.

Keeping a steady healthy diet plays a key role in swimming. Staying out of any trouble inside and outside of school is important as well. Different things one may do to get in trouble can cause the whole team a lose.

Kinman said the dedication level among the swimmers was one of the things that could be improved, as well as making the team and swimming one of their top priorities among extra-curricular activities.

The time commitment was the hardest part for Kinman as a coach. She said it was hard to want to be there when some of the swimmers don't want to.

Kinman said the boys team had a lot of swimmers that were competitive and liked to race each other. She said that difference between this year and the previous year were there were more swimmers that wanted to be there and not just there to hang out with friends.

The Metro meet starts 7th and lasts through the 9th. Kinman said the Metro meet will determine the number of swimmers that will go to State.

The team wrapped up the regular season against Omaha Northwest on Jan. 29.

Kim Buckley contributed to this story



ILLUSTRATION BY ANITA HODGE

# Lady Eagles look to rebound after tough start

BY PETER BOCK

"The girls that graduated last year, they had been together for four years, and we had people coming up from the reserve and junior varsity teams that hadn't played a lot," junior Kailah Bailey, a star forward on the Central Girls Varsity Basketball team, explained why the team has struggled this season.

The Lady Eagle's 2-12 record is a stark contrast from last year's 16-6 district qualifier.

"We're trying to improve our defense, our post-passing, and we're trying not to turn the ball over," Bailey continued.

Last year, the team was led by Jasmine Johnson, who is currently at the University of Houston on a basketball scholarship. They upset number one ranked Bellevue West in the regular season, and climbed as high as sixth in the state standings. A district loss to the same Bellevue West team ended one of the Eagle's best seasons in years.

The Eagles lost five seniors, including Johnson, and took a major hit this year, as most of the starters are underclassmen.

"They have some experience from sitting the bench at times on varsity last year, and that was a reason for some of our bad play, especially early in the year," Bailey said.

As of January 29th, they had compiled two wins, one of which came against previously winless Omaha Northwest. The win ended a seven game losing streak that began after the team's first victory over Lincoln North Star.

But even with the less than perfect record, the Eagles are showing signs of steady improvement.

The recent win over Northwest helped get back some of the confidence the team

was missing for most of the season, and helped the players appreciate the feeling of winning again.

"Winning feels really good, since last year we went 16-6, and I definitely took it for granted last year," Bailey said.

Senior Katie McCloskey scored 13 of her 17 points as Central scored 24 points in the first quarter, a season high, in the Eagles second victory for the season.

"We blundered really well, made a lot of good shots at the beginning, a lot of three pointers, and overall we started off really well, which gave us a good cushion to start the game," Bailey said.

The team felt relieved that another win finally came, and that they had a chance to avenge a loss at home against Northwest two years ago, Bailey said. She said the victory motivates the team in practice and gives hope to all the players.

Overall improvement has been a big goal for the team, said Bailey, who said she believes the Eagles are back on the right track.

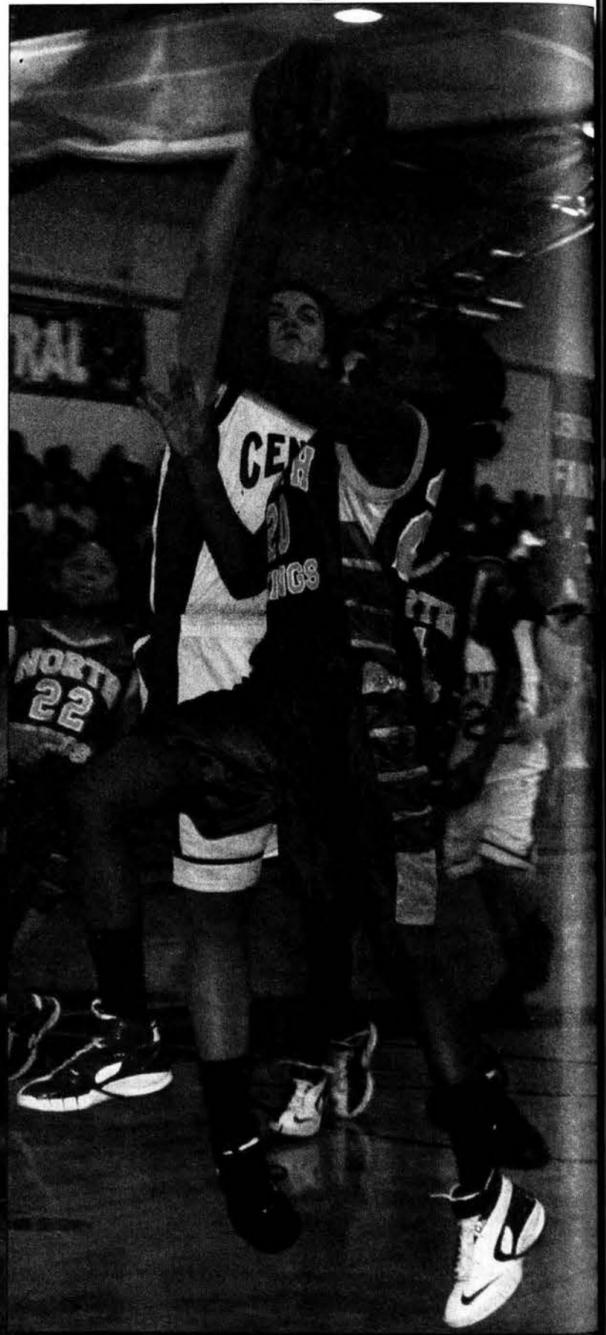
"We play better as a team, we're gelling, and we feel like one big family. I think we're going to get some more victories down the stretch."

Recently the girls have had tough games against Omaha Marian at Marian on January 31st, and Millard North and Papillion La-Vista in February. With a state tournament berth out of the picture, the pressure to make it to state isn't there, but the desire to win still is.

"Coming up, since we've been playing together for so long, I see more wins and expect us to continue to improve," Bailey says.

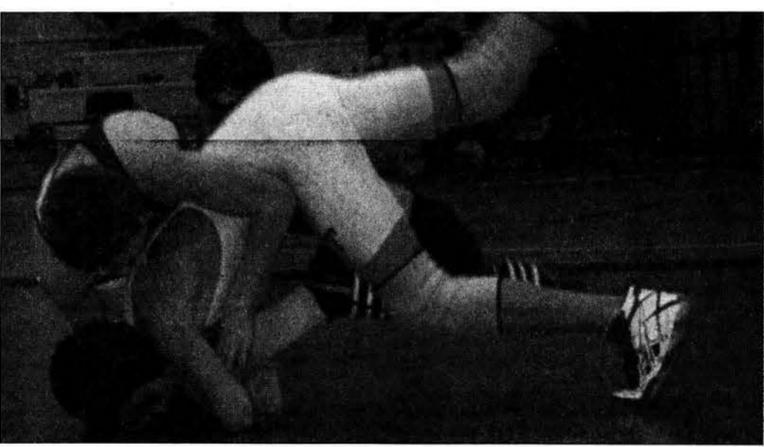
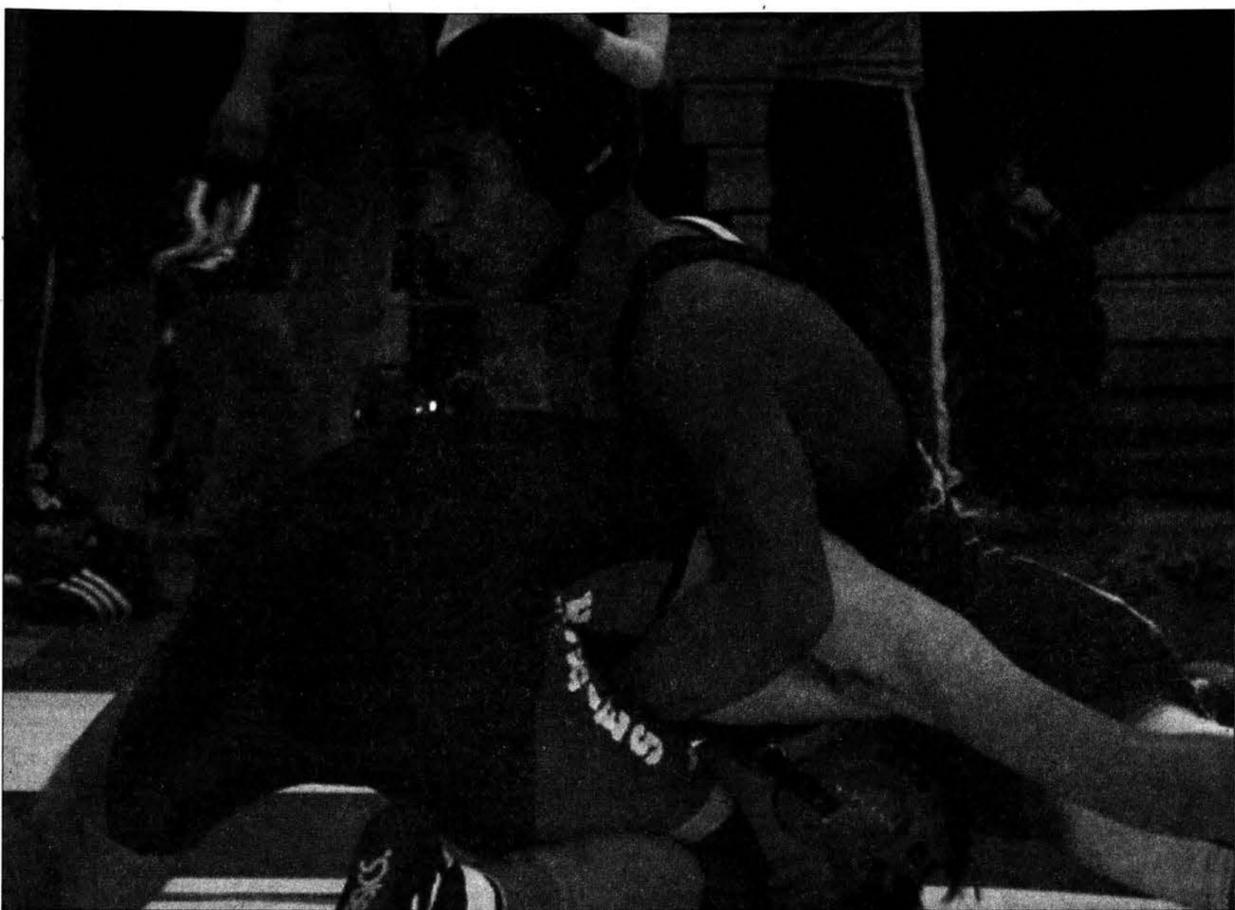
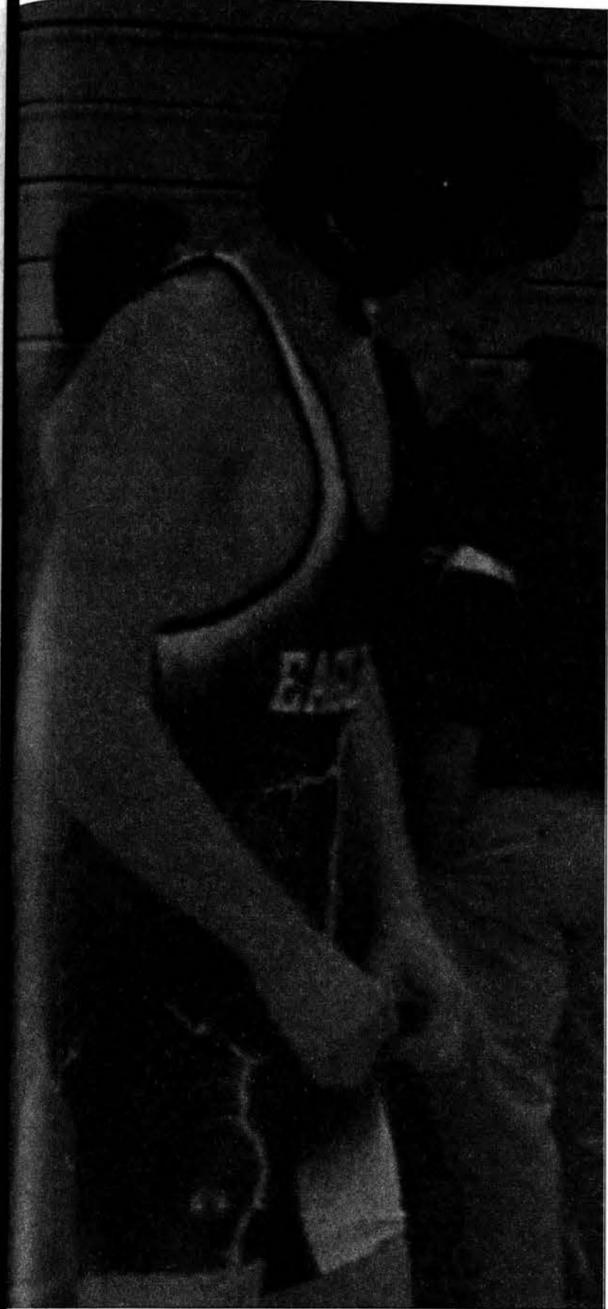
Even with a young team and an improving squad, the Lady Eagles are not looking to next season just yet. They want to finish the season the right way and learn from this year, Bailey said.

"We don't want to finish the year on a bad note. We want to win."



Above: Junior Kailah Bailey falls to the floor of exhaustion after a no-call foul during the North game. After a successful season last year, led by graduated senior Jasmine Johnson, the Lady Eagles are seeing. Right: Isabel Benjamin-Alvarado blocks a Omaha North defender from making a lay-up. Strong defense hopes to jump-start the end of the season.

PHOTOS BY PATRICK BREEN/REGISTER



PHOTOS BY KIM BUCKLEY/REGISTER

A powerful start gives the Eagles wrestling team a great chance to send some repeat performers back to the State Tournament. Coach Jimmie Foster is impressed with the start of the season. While the team had to deal with one of the co-captains, Sam Almazan, due to a shoulder injury and surgery, the team has managed to have a winning record of 7-1. Next year looks promising as several freshmen are stepping up and the team will not be losing any members as there are no seniors on the team.

# A force to wrestle with

As the wrestling team is in the middle of the season, the team is motivated with the hope to qualify for State. Hard work has led to a 7-1 season, and the team has many wrestlers that will be returning next year.

BY KIM BUCKLEY

Even during practice, the Varsity wrestling team takes everything they have to the mat. "To me, (wrestling is) one of the best things in the world," junior Sam Almazan said. Almazan started wrestling in middle school and attended wrestling summer camps before coming to Central. The team practices for two hours every day. Coach Jimmie Foster said the goal is to get the team better with every performance. He said the strongest part of the team is the work ethic the wrestlers have. Foster said his personal goal is to have a better showing at the State Tournament and he would like to have some state medalists and champions. "We've (the team) got to be more confident in ourselves and our abilities," he said. To prepare for the upcoming State Tournament, which will take place during Feb. 14-16, Foster said the team is just trying to continue doing what the team has been doing the entire season. Junior Zack Andre has been wrestling since the beginning of sophomore year. Andre got into wrestling because it was something to do and his father wanted him to do it. He said wrestling has taught him maturity because he's matured a lot since joining the team. Andre said wrestling also motivates and drives him. For Almazan, one of the co-captains of the team, the hardest part of the season was not being able to wrestle in the beginning part because of a shoulder injury, which needed surgery. Last year, when Almazan was wrestling, his shoulder popped out of its socket. While at wrestling camp in the summer, Almazan said the shoulder started getting worse, and would pop out and slide out of place. He said at it started getting to the point where it would slip out once every day, and got so bad that it would slip out four or five times a day.

He said not being able to wrestle was horrible because he wanted to wrestle with the team and he felt that he wasn't doing anything. The first match he was in this season, Almazan said, was tough because he had to get used to wrestling again. He said he felt he did well in his first match, and has been doing well ever since. Foster said at the beginning of the season the team was still trying to find its identity, but when Almazan returned to the team everything was able to fit together. The best part of the season for Andre was getting qualified for State. Almazan said the best part of the season was the fact that the team was doing well. Foster said for him the best part of this season was spending time with young men who look forward to working hard. Senior Carli Culijat is one of the varsity managers of the wrestling team. "I've wanted to do it for three years and this year I've been able to do it," Culijat said. Culijat's cousins are wrestlers and she didn't know all of the details of wrestling before becoming a manager. She said as she learns more about wrestling, she loves the sport. Her job consists of taking care of the mats and mopping them, keeping the scores and times of the matches, write down the statistics and filling out the brackets during matches. One of the things that builds the team chemistry are the nicknames given to the wrestlers. Foster said it helps with the team chemistry because once you get a nickname, pretty soon you try to live up to it. He also hosts video game tournaments at his house to build the team chemistry. During practice the team also does bonding activities. Andre credits coach Foster for giving the team chemistry. "He pushes us hard every day," Andre said. Foster said the biggest thing that bonds the team together is the wrestling itself. The hardest part of being a manager, Culijat said, was seeing the wrestlers go through their struggles and not having that opportunity to win. She said the wrestlers work hard and when it doesn't always result in a win, it's hard.

She said because the team is 7-1, it shows that the hard work the wrestlers have done has paid off. Foster said he believed the record was achieved through the leadership displayed by the three returning state qualifiers. Foster said the hardest part about coaching the wrestling team was reining in the work ethic of the team because the wrestlers would probably overwork themselves. Foster said that off of the mat, he wants the members of the team to be productive members of society. On the mats he said he wants the team to be aggressive because that is how matches are won. "We want constant, controlled aggression," Foster said. He said during the practice the wrestlers don't stop moving for two hours until the practice is over. Foster said he knew that ever since he was a wrestler at the age of 14, he wanted to coach it. One of the things that was different for Andre this year was he dropped a weight class. Last year he was in the 120 weight class and this year he is in the 103 class. Andre said this has made a difference in his performance and said he seems to be winning more matches. While none of the wrestlers on the team this year are seniors, Foster said it wasn't affected the team because the wrestlers are hard workers no matter what grade they're in. Almazan said that there are a couple of freshmen who he felt were competing at the Varsity level and doing well. He said there was a freshman that was leading on the stats board, and some that qualified for State. "They (the freshmen) will contribute leadership and they will continue to work hard to impress on the coming wrestlers the kind of work ethic needed to be successful," Foster said. Culijat said the hardest part of learning to be a manager for the team was learning the traditions, as well as all of the inside jokes and knowledge the wrestling team has.

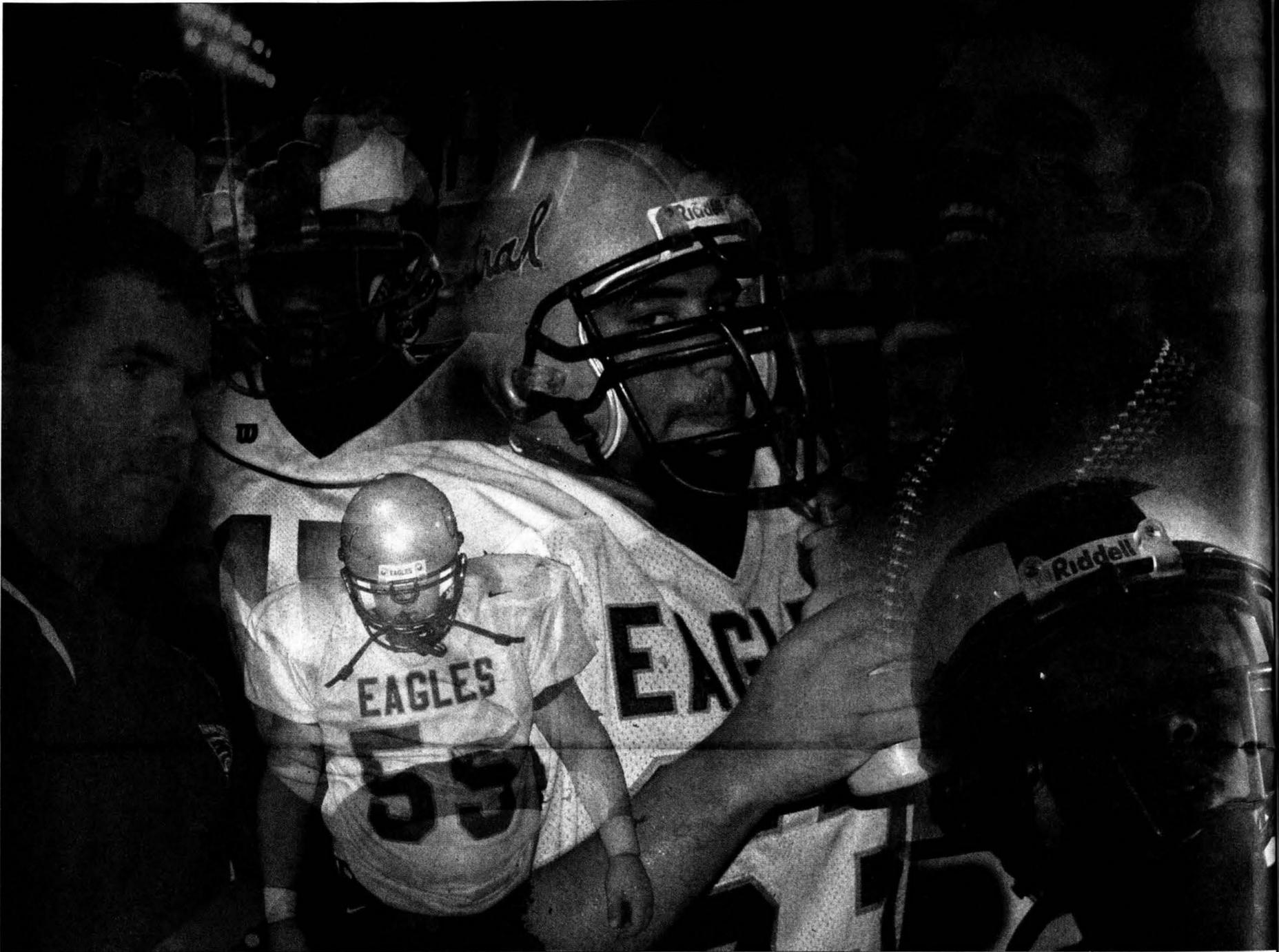


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY PATRICK BREEN/REGISTER

For the first time in 23 years, the Eagles football team took home the State Title. With it, Central is one of the first schools to hold three State Titles; track, basketball and football, at the same time. The Eagles finished the season 11-2, with a interception that ended the Millard North Mustangs quest for a title. The teams senior leadership led to the explosive wins in the State Tourney.

## State Football title creates a triple crown

BY PATRICK BREEN

"We are State Champions," head coach Jay Ball said, "and let me tell you, its a feeling you can't describe. That kind of feeling is only generated by hard work and commitment."

Capping off one of the best seasons in the last century, the Eagles followed senior leadership and strong coaching to the first State Title in football since 1984. The team held off a powerful Millard North offense to win with the moto, "Finish the Job."

"Our defense played well the whole playoffs," Ball said. "Our defense hung in there and hung in there and made the plays that they had to."

With less than a minute left in the game, senior cornerback Chris Griffin intercepted the ball that ended Millard North's chance at a comeback, securing the Eagles 26-21 lead and the State Title.

It was a big night for Griffin playing in his final high school football game. He threw for three touchdowns, and went without a vital error like an interception or a fumble.

One of the biggest plays was on a third-and-12 on the Eagles first drive. The plan was a crossing pattern to free up senior wideout Shane Prater.

"They were playing man-to-man and crossing routes work well on those," Ball said. "We were hoping to isolate Shane and maybe cross up their coverage."

But it wasn't the Iowa recruit that caught the ball, instead the route opened up senior tight-end Ryan Steffen.

"They left Ryan wide open," Ball said, "and he just took it to the endzone."

The quick 66-yard score gave initial momentum to the Eagles, and the lead would never be relinquished.

On the Mustangs following drive, a forced fumble recovered by the Eagles left them in great scoring position.

This time he would hook-up with Shane Prater.

For his second touchdown of the game, Griffin through a floater over a Mustang defender into the hands of Prater for a 28-yard score.

The play of three-year starting quarterback Griffin was quite evident. He played amazing, giving the Eagles a State Championship, Ball said.

"Chris is the best quarterback in the state," Ball said. "He makes plays with his feet and his arm."

The athleticism of the Eagles offense and defense was shown throughout the playoffs.

On a first half drive, senior tailback Ronnell Grixby caught a pass from Griffin and took it to the outside before breaking a tackle and flipping into the endzone.

Millard North didn't give up, scoring its points in the second half to close the gap.

"They're a great football team," Ball said.

The Mustangs were playing without their starting quarterback instead relying on back-up which the "Grape Crush" defense preyed on.

But the Nebraska recruit, Sean Fisher wasn't going to allow the Eagles beat them on the ground. As a running back, Fisher put up 198 rushing yards over the Eagles defense on 44 attempts.

Ball said that he showed his running power and why he was a strong Division recruit, but said that the defense played tough.

"We weren't giving up any easy yards," Ball said.

And the seniors made sure of that.

The nine offensive starting seniors included three linemen; Matt Woster, Sam Kincaid and Jonathon Butler, who played against a Millard North defensive line averaging 280lbs. The line held for enough time to see big plays come from their big-play offense.

And defensively, the Eagles seven seniors wore-down the Millard North offense. The second-half belonged to the Mustangs offense, who maintained possession of the ball for three-fourths of the time-of-possession (TOP) with 18 minutes.

Central's offense only held it for only seven minutes.

Even though the defense, led by the seniors couldn't stop a powerful offense.

Continued to '3-Peat' on Page 16B

## Eagles winning big, looking to three-peat

BY PATRICK BREEN

Its tough to win a State Championship. It took the football team 23 years to repeat the task.

The basketball team on the other hand, is looking for their first championship since 12 months before. And then 12 months before that.

Yes, its hard to win a championship. A team has to endure the tests of the other teams, the injuries and the hardships of transferred players and graduated seniors.

Now, imagine trying to do it consecutively.

That is the goal of this year's Boys Basketball team. Win a third championship in as many years.

But with a 15-3 start the Eagles, ranked sixth in the State, prepare for another run at glory.

Two months before the season started, the team wasn't so sure of its future.

Junior forward Doug Knickrehm broke his ankle, and a mysterious illness befell star Creighton recruit Josh Jones. The illness would later be discovered to be bacteria in his blood and a heart surgery was necessary.

The team brought in Northwest transfer Donald Jones and had lost graduated seniors Ben Kline and Alex Deleon.

So how could a team with so much adversity fair so well? Hard work and determination.

Jones wasn't expected to start the season. Well he did. And not only that, he started well. Returning to form, Jones put up a Central record 11 3-point field goals and 41-points.

Returning players lead this experienced team back to dominating on the court.

Seniors Josh Jones, Ronnell Grixby, Chris Griffin and Lorenzo Wilson all return from the championship team last year in hopes of bringing home another one.

Wilson plays center, and

The new addition of the other Jones (Donald Jones) has added speed and size to the team.

And the team starts to football stand-outs that are providing as big an impact on the court as they did on the field.

Seniors Grixby and Griffin both return this year to start at the guard position and add a State Championship Football Trophy to their resume.

Continued to '3-Peat' on Page 17B



PHOTO BY PATRICK BREEN/REGISTER

Senior Josh Jones crosses-over a North defender before driving to the basket. The Eagles varsity team eyes its third straight championship, with a 14-3 start.