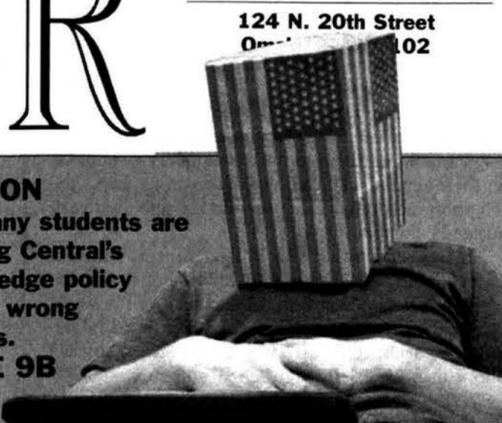




REVIEW
Starring the late pop queen Aaliyah, "Queen of the Damned" lives up to the hype.
PAGE 21C

ON A HOT STREAK
For the first time in recent history, both the boys and girls basketball ended the regular season with impressive records and are heading into state on fire.
PAGE 13C

OPINION
Too many students are ignoring Central's new Pledge policy for the wrong reasons.
PAGE 9B



2001 Back-to-Back NSPA Best in Show

Oldest High School Newspaper West of the Mississippi

National Pacemaker Award Winner



Photo by JOE MEYER/THE REGISTER

Senior KerriBeth Bahr holds the flag while two other cadets raise it outside school. The state's Americanism law mandates "the development of reverence for the flag and instruction as to proper conduct in its presentation."

— Fighting the rising tide of —
DROPOUTS

Last year, one out of ten Central students decided to quit school



Single pledge,
many attitudes

By Joe Meyer

High school students around the Omaha metropolitan area are reciting the "Pledge of Allegiance" like never before.

At Millard South, students recite the pledge once a week, usually on Mondays. Here at Central, students recite the pledge daily as a ROTC cadet recites it over the intercom.

And at Benson, students recite the Pledge everyday, but classroom teachers lead the recitation.

Each school recites the pledge a little differently, OPS social studies supervisor Susan Toohy said.

On Dec. 7, the state Department of Education voted

unanimously to provide exact language of Nebraska's Americanism law into Rule 10.

There's nothing new about the law.

It's been on the books for decades, but now school districts have to comply with it to receive state accreditation.

And because of that, Toohy audited the district last December to see if it complied with the state requirements.

During the audit, she found that most of the district's middle schools and all the high schools had stopped reciting the Pledge.

Amy Friedman, communication director for the Millard School District, found the same

See PLEDGE, page 8

By Matt Wynn

First semester of junior year doesn't exist on senior Ryan Watson's transcripts.

He had no teachers. He had no classes. He received no grades.

He dropped out.

The choice came easily for Watson. He had been skipping classes occasionally since the beginning of the year. Then, in early November, he got in a car accident that kept him out of school for two weeks.

"When I came back to school I had, I think, 23 absences," he said.

Realizing how serious the situation was, Watson's mother called a meeting with her son's administrator to discuss if it was even possible for Watson to pass his classes.

He was informed that he would not be passing any.

"At that point I just said I was going to withdraw for the semester," he said.

In doing so, Watson became one of the 241 students to drop out of Central last year.

Next to South High School, that was the highest number of dropouts for any OPS high school, accounting for more than 10 percent of the school's population.

Last year, he was one of over 1,000 students who dropped out of high school in OPS alone, a number that has been steadily increasing over the past five years.

To fight the rising dropout statistics, Central's counseling center is tak-

ing steps to try to help students make the decision to stay in school.

Counselor Cathy Hanrahan said Central currently has several programs in effect to try to encourage students to accomplish this.

For instance, the Positively Affecting Student's Success (PASS) classes are specially designed for students who do not qualify for Special Education, but need extra help anyway, Hanrahan said.

In these classes, students are given extra help in classes from both teachers and peers. They receive tutoring in core classes, and get help on their day-to-day homework.

By doing this, the school hopes to revitalize an interest in school for some

See DROPOUTS, page 5

Graphic by LUENINGHOENER/THE REGISTER

Attack in parking lot
raises safety awareness

By Danielle Rollins

It was 6:56 a.m., according to senior Sara Shirk's wristwatch.

The parking lot was dark. No one was around, at least no one that she could easily see.

She had just gotten out of her car and started to walk toward the school, when she was approached by someone she didn't recognize.

African American, blue ski jacket—maybe green. She said she couldn't tell because it was dark. She said she thought he looked like he may be homeless and thought for a moment that she wanted some spare change.

He had his hand inside his jacket, as though he were carrying a gun. He approached her and told her to get back into her car. She said no.

"The only thing I knew was

to not get back into the car," she said.

Shirk knew that if she got back into her car it was likely the man would harm her more than if she resisted. He asked her again. He said that if she didn't get into her car in five seconds he would hurt her.

Shirk tried to walk away. She said she was really upset and started to cry. When the man realized how frightened she was, he told her it was a joke. He said some of his friends thought it would be funny if he approached her. Shirk said this remark upset her, but she was relieved that he was no longer trying to hurt her. She wanted to get inside and tell someone what had happened.

He started to walk away. She

See SAFETY, page 7

Tickets for disturbing peace meant to deter fighters, principal says

By Paula Salhany

Tickets will be issued to everyone who fights or causes a disruption, asst. principal Dionne Kirksey said.

In the past, administrators were taking each case separately, looking it over and then having the police come in to issue a ticket. But now the policy applies to everyone, she said.

Principal Gary Thompson said he was under the impression that everyone was getting ticketed all along, but once he realized that wasn't being done, he started to make tickets

mandatory after a student is involved in a fight.

Kirksey said the administration decided to ticket everyone in order to stop students from fighting in the first place.

"For some reason, if students know they are going to get in trouble with the law as well as with administration, they think twice before they fight," she said. "But in many of the cases, students are going to fight anyway,"

Sophomore Nicole Niebur said she was not aware of the policy before she got into a fight with another Central student.

But she said she probably would have fought her even if she had known. She fought for no reason except she didn't like the other girl.

"We used to run into each other in the hallway," she said. "I guess we just didn't like each other, but I don't really remember why."

The morning before the fight, Niebur was told that the other girl was calling her names and they asked her if they were going to fight.

She said she didn't know they were supposed to fight, but

during fifth hour she and the girl had a confrontation. At that point they decided to take care of things after school.

Niebur went to the west porch after school where a large group of students had gathered in anticipation of the fight.

She said she pushed through the crowd until she found the other girl and began to fight.

"I know Charles pulled me off her," she said. "She was still on the ground and I don't know who took her in."

Niebur was taken directly to

See FIGHTING, page 7

INSIDE



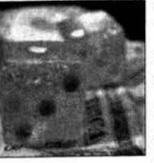
Central's Picks

Students pick their favorite video rentals in several genres, ranging from comedy to science fiction.
A & E, 18C



Swimming

Coach and teammates talk about the difficulties of putting together a first-class team.
SPORTS, 13C



Gambling

Though the infraction carries a stiff penalty, some students still feel compelled to gamble away money at school.
NEWS, 8A

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Cell phone scam alarms students

The Omaha Police Department issued an alert on Feb. 1 to cell phone users about a possible scam, Principal Gary Thompson said.

The report indicated that a mobile phone company, claiming to be checking cell phones, called cell phone users and asked them to hit the numbers #90 or 09# on their keypad. This allows a person to access the cell phone account of that user and use it to their various ends, the report said.

However, neither the Police Information and Phone Fraud branches of the Omaha Police Department (OPD) could confirm the existence of the scam.

Student Resource Officer Jerry Paul said he believes the scam could be a potential threat to any cell phone user, especially high school students.

"This scam is a threat to high school students, teachers or just anybody who uses a cell phone," he said. "It's a threat to all (of them)."

Account numbers, much like any other identification number, PINs, credit card and social security numbers can be used to manipulate and exploit a stolen account. Money can be withdrawn, accounts can be shut down or criminals can use them for their own purposes, he said.

Although Paul couldn't confirm that the scam existed, he still insisted that all cell phone users be careful.

Seniors expected to break record mark

College scholarships are about to start pouring into the hands of Central seniors as the scholarship season is about to start.

Last year at this time, approximately \$4.1 million in college scholarships were offered to graduating seniors, guidance counselor Richard Servis said.

This total was offered in both 2000 and 2001. That was fairly close to the largest amount ever given to Central students, Servis said.

"These last two years have been record-breaking years," Servis said.

Before 2000, the previous record had been \$2.4 million, but due to student excellence, the numbers have increased, Servis said.

On average, around \$50,000 will be given out to graduating seniors from the Central High School Foundation and even more scholarships are offered by the Omaha Public Schools Foundation.

The CHS and OPS foundations offer scholarships that range anywhere from \$400 to \$5,000.

Monthly bulletins printed by the guidance department help students learn about what is available.

These bulletins includes scholastic information on who gives the scholarship, how many and how much is offered, criteria for entry and when applications are due.

In order to become eligible for an OPS scholarships, seniors need to fill out an application available in the Guidance Office.

Three types of scholarships are awarded to seniors based on academics, talent and financial need.

The academic scholarships are based primarily on GPA and ACT scores and are relatively common.

Talent scholarships are offered to students who display athletic, musical, theatrical and leadership abilities. They are given on a more selective basis.

Finally, financial need scholarships are also given through school foundations.

Servis said juniors will start being informed of scholarship opportunities next fall, and continue to be informed throughout the year with the help of tools like the bulletins.

Servis also said one of the most important things to remember is that this is the time for students to shine, because it's when the student's hard work starts to pay off, literally.

Grant funds storyteller for Central students

Teenaged parents received a helping hand earlier this month.

A grant from the Omaha Schools Foundation, co-sponsored by the 21st Century Community Learning Centers, made the StoryPartners program possible at Central from Feb. 19-26.

"The stories of where we come from and who we are are important stories to tell," after-school liaison Patti Gatzke said. "The adults obviously have many more stories to tell, but we're going on the basis that if one person tells a story, everybody will be a little wiser."

Professional storyteller Joy Slater of Kansas City presided over the storytelling, encouraging the members to tell their own stories about their identities over a two-week period in the school's teen-parenting class.

The students met and listened to stories with Slater six times and then with voluntary adult members for one-on-one talks.

The adults had no credentials, Gatzke said. They were just the regular adults who lived in Omaha and wanted to talk.

Attendance was the highest Feb. 23 when Slater, Gatzke, other adult mentors and the students met to exchange introductions of their babies at a luncheon.

Follow-up meetings will occur periodically through May.

"I think the girls made connections with other women there and got some encouragement," Gatzke said. "I don't know that it will take pressure off of them, but I think it will empower them with resources and confidence. It's pretty tough having a baby in high school."

News Calendar

Compiled by Aaron Maurice and Steve Packard



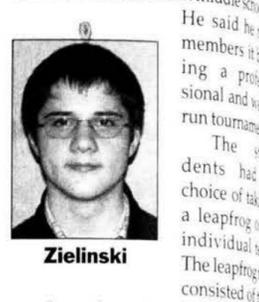
Photo by ANNIE WALDEN/THE REGISTER
Central basketball player Carl White shoots a basket during the Bryan victory. The boys team will compete in the state tournament to try to win its first state title in 25 years.

Math Club hosts annual competition

The Central Math Club hosted its annual Middle School Math Competition Feb. 20.

Fourteen public and private schools brought 112 seventh and eighth grade students to compete in three tests, math team sponsor Amanda Beery said.

Junior Nick Zielinski said he was a member when he came to Central for the tournament in middle school.



Zielinski

He said he was a member in middle school and enjoyed the competition. He said he was a member in middle school and enjoyed the competition. He said he was a member in middle school and enjoyed the competition.

The final event of the day was the Math Bowl, where each school had its best team of students answer twenty questions at one question every thirty seconds.

After the Math Bowl, the middle school students had pizza and party while the Math Club raffled off Central hats, sweatshirts and other clothing and accessories.

St. Margaret Mary had the best showing at the competition, taking first place and winning many individual awards.

Awards were given for the top three individuals, leaping frog and leaping owl teams. The top three schools received trophies.

Other local area high schools host similar competitions for middle school students.

The schools also have the opportunity to participate in Math competitions with the top scorers having the opportunity to attend the national competition.

Zielinski said Math Club members wrote all the questions for the competition and helped it run smoothly.

Central math students have hosted the competition for middle schools for many years.

The event was very successful this year because of the past experience students had, Beery said.

New volunteer group to help with disasters

The Red Cross is opening a volunteer effort to Central high school students: the disaster team.

"This is something not every body would be able to handle," guidance counselor Carol Hanrahan said.

"You'd have to be a special person to do something like this," Training volunteer Hanrahan said.

Volunteers are needed at a training camp for an entire weekend, from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m.

Even though the training is tough, Hanrahan still ran out of applications, but she ordered more.

"Central students are wonderful when it comes to volunteer work," Hanrahan said.

She cited the enormous Central student support after Sept. 11.

"Even though Sept. 11 didn't happen, you know, this is the world and I think it touched us somehow," Hanrahan said.

"Every student should volunteer in some way, large or small. I think they'll get much out of it as they put into it."

The response to the request was great, Hanrahan said.

The disaster team can be employed for scenarios like tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes and other natural disasters.

The response to the request was great, Hanrahan said.

The disaster team can be employed for scenarios like tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes and other natural disasters.

March

05 Winter Sport Banquet

All winter sports athletes will have a banquet celebrating a season of accomplishment. Winter sports include swimming, wrestling and basketball.

07 Boys State Basketball

The boys will be competing in state basketball in an attempt to bring home the state title. The team was ranked as high as second in the state this year.

11 P.E.P. Meeting

Parents are encouraged to attend the monthly P.E.P. meeting. The meetings discuss topics of importance to all Central students.

11 Mid-term exams begin

The last mid-terms of the year begin on the 11th. Students can expect a cumulative test in all of their classes.

14 State DECA Competition

Marketing students will compete for a chance to represent the state of Nebraska at DECA Nationals. The state competition, which is held in Lincoln, lasts through Saturday.

16 SAT Exam

Students who registered for the SAT Exam should show up to Central to take the college entrance exam. The test takes approximately three hours.

16 All-City Music Festival

Students from Central, as well as others from all other schools in the district, will showcase their talent on the 16th. The show features singing, band and orchestra presentations.

17 National Honor Society Induction

A selected group of juniors and seniors will be inducted into National Honor Society. These students were chosen by a board of teachers based on GPA, volunteer work and other criteria.

21 Fourth Quarter Begins

The final quarter of the year begins on the 21st. The last nine weeks of school will be a joyous event for seniors who will be set to graduate in May.

22 State Debate

Members of the Central Debate team will attend state competitions to test their ability against the best. The contest will be held on the campus of the University of Nebraska-Kearney.

23 P.E.P. Telephone Auction

The P.E.P. organization will host its annual scholarship auction, but with a little twist. Bidders will phone-in instead of holding a live auction.

National test may replace local versions

By Joe Meyer

President Bush's educational package passed by Congress last month may change the way Nebraska evaluates its students, deputy commissioner of state education Polly Feis said.

Bush's plan calls for state testing to evaluate student achievement.

Feis said she is worried about this policy because Nebraska does not have a testing program in place now.

Instead, the state uses an assessment program. This program is a better fit for the state because it works from the classroom up, instead of working from the state down, Feis said.

"It (a testing program) does not fit Nebraska," she said. "We've just had some problems with it."

"We've centered it more on the classroom instead of the test." State testing would not help teachers in the classroom, Feis said.

Administering a test in the middle of the school year is useless if the teachers receive the results in May.

"What good does it do to do assessments if it takes until May to find out your class doesn't know the constitution?" she said. "It doesn't work."

The Nebraska system is easier for teachers to use, Feis said.

For example, if a teacher notices that a student is not performing well enough to meet the state's requirements, he or she can help that student along.

English department head Terrie Saunders said the current state assessment has some of the same problems as testing, though.

The assessments, which are administered in areas like reading, writing and listening, sometimes don't get used to their full potential.

Each year, Saunders said teachers receive copies of their students' assessments from the previous year.

But with having to develop lesson plans and teach all their students, these results are rarely used to help individual students succeed.

Also, the presence of some tests like the listening and writing assessments sometimes makes it

hard to use the data once it is collected.

"Frankly, all we are doing is testing," Saunders said. "There is no time to do anything with the tests."

Sophomore Elizabeth Atwater said she prefers the current assessment program over being tested every year.

She said a test would only determine how well a student could take a test. Instead, the state should determine what students have learned in the class over the course of the year by using some other means, she said.

There are other reasons why other Nebraska lawmakers are worried by Bush's plan.

Sen. Ben Nelson voted against the measure last month because he said he thought the program produces "costly, burdensome and duplicative annual testing requirements on Nebraska."

In a statement released last month, Nelson said Bush's plan requires state governments to do something without giving adequate funding for the state to accomplish it.

Nelson said the plan does al-

low for more flexible federal funding, but the lack of funding for the testing is the biggest flaw in the program and that was the main reason he voted against Bush's plan.

The state department of education is currently waiting to see if its current evaluation system will fit the Bush plan's credentials, Feis said.

The department will not know if its plan will work until the department receives the rules and regulations.

She said she doesn't completely understand the 1,184 page law quite yet.

"I've read it once, but I don't know what some of them (the details) mean," Feis said. "We think we can work within it right now."

Feis said she is remaining optimistic that Nebraska's current program will comply with the Bush program's rules and regulations.

She said the state department has to develop a state plan before a May deadline.

"Hopefully we can make the Nebraska system fit the Bush administration's," Feis said.



College Corner

California Polytechnic State University

Location: San Luis Obispo, California

Admission: 45 percent of applicants admitted

Type: Four-year public university, coed

Undergraduate enrollment: 15,757

Additional facts: Coed housing is available. All dorms are wired for campus wide network. The most popular majors are Engineering and Business.

Freshman admissions: 22-27 on ACT, recommended courses are 4 years of English, 3 of Math, and 3 of Science

Colorado State University

Location: Fort Collins, Colorado

Admission: 78 percent of applicants admitted

Type: Four-year public university, coed

Undergraduate enrollment: 18,817

Additional facts: Freshmen are guaranteed on-campus housing. Campus is only forty minutes from Denver. The most popular majors are business marketing and social sciences.

Freshman admissions: 22-26 on ACT, recommended courses are 4 years of English, 3 of Math, and 2 of Social Studies

Tulane University

Location: New Orleans, Louisiana

Admission: 73 percent of applicants admitted

Type: Four-year private university, coed

Undergraduate enrollment: 7,382

Additional facts: Each student gets personal e-mail accounts. Workstations are located in dorms. The most popular majors are law and business.

Freshman admissions: 1130-1340 on SAT, recommended courses are 4 years of English, 3 of Math, and 3 of Science

Wake Forest University

Location: Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Admission: 49 percent of applicants admitted

Type: Four-year private university, coed

Undergraduate enrollment: 3,950 full-time

Additional facts: Coed housing is available. All students are required to own or lease a computer. The most popular majors are business marketing and social sciences.

Freshman admissions: 1220-1380 on SAT, recommended courses are 4 years of English, 3 of History Language, and 3 of Math

Bill would help pay tuition for teachers, senator says

By Paula Salhany

In order for teachers to get a higher salary, they must have a higher education.

In order for them to get the higher education, they must pay tuition for classes.

And, because of low teacher salaries, it has been difficult for some teachers to accomplish this.

But now there is a bill in the legislature that would reimburse teachers who take classes towards their master's degree.

LB 880, introduced by Omaha Sen. Deborah Suttle, would allow teachers in the public education system to get reimbursed for up to nine credit hours each year.

Teachers would be reimbursed after teaching one extra hour in the Nebraska Public

School system.

"It helps everyone if teachers are more educated," Suttle said. "Teachers with masters or doctorate degrees are invaluable to the education system."

The only problem with the bill is the lack of funding, she said.

"Right now we are looking to see if we can get lottery money to fund this," she said. "With the state with a \$50 to \$70 million deficit, we need to find another way to fund this bill."

Central Spanish teacher Vickie Anderson, who is also vice president of the Nebraska State Education Association (NSEA) said the Legislature is also toying with the idea of using money from a service tax.

"That would make more than

enough money to fund this," she said.

Central social studies teacher Carol Krejci said that while she is in favor of the bill, she hopes the state can find another place to get the funding.

"Lottery money is supposed to be used for innovative educational projects and environmental needs and I would like to see the money stay where it was originally intended to go. But no matter what, I am for this bill," she said.

If passed, this bill would help younger teachers who are not able to afford classes the most, she said.

It would raise the quality of teaching and help keep teachers in the business.

"We don't want to penalize

teachers," Suttle said. "Teachers deserve the help."

Out of the five bills in favor of teachers in the Legislature right now, this one has the best chance, Anderson said.

"Everyone, including the governor is backing us on this one. He hasn't been on our side in the past," she said.

Krejci said right now, the NSEA is working very hard to get the bill passed and things look fairly good.

Their lobbyists are working actively to get members to write letters and e-mails of support to senators.

Currently, no action has been taken and there is opposition to the bill. This is because it has not left committee.

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The numbers behind

Where dropouts come from, why they leave

Individual scenarios blur topic

By Matt Wynn

As far as dropouts are concerned, the Millard Public School district differs from OPS in just about every conceivable way.

Central had 92 freshmen drop out last year, but only three freshmen in all of the Millard schools put together made the decision to end their formal schooling.

Dr. Roger Farr, the director of Pupil Services for Millard Public Schools, said he thinks the difference in dropout rates might be related to the stance Millard takes on dropping out.

"We absolutely try to reach the students before they make that decision," Farr said. "We try to take a pro-active stance. But I think we can probably do more of that as opposed to OPS because we don't have the large number of dropouts other districts do."

Not only can Millard spend more time trying to divert students from dropping out, it can attempt to convince them to go back to school after they make their decision.

Farr said doing this not only helps the district statistically, but it helps give a better understanding of what the school can do to prevent further dropouts.

In fact, a report put together by the Millard Educational Services Division lists the reason dropouts chose to leave school. Counselors who called former students after they decided to drop out gathered the information included in the report.

Using the information gathered in that report, the district put together some programs to help keep kids in school.

For instance, Millard South High School has a program called New Frontiers that, while not specifically designed to help curb dropout numbers, may certainly have that side effect, Farr said.

The program is designed to lower the pupil-to-teacher ratio, making it easier for students to receive individualized attention.

This helps in several areas. First, students can build stronger relationships with teachers, which may lead to a strong affinity to the school.

"Everyone knows that to lower the dropout rates, it is absolutely imperative to give students a reason to stay in school," Farr said. "You have to give them something they like. And that seems to be one of the side-effects of this program."

But despite the vast difference between the numbers and percentages of dropouts in OPS and Millard, even Farr admitted that comparing the two districts is not an exact science.

"It depends on what you define a dropout as," Farr said.

For instance, in OPS there are four different classifications of students. They can be defined as transfers, withdrawals, graduates or completers.

Those classifications can sometimes lead to confusion when comparing statistics.

If a person drops out of high school and begins taking courses at a community college, should they be considered a dropout?

If a student were to die, should he be labeled as a withdrawal? Or should he be given his own classification?

Peter Smith, the information director for OPS, said problems like that are commonplace in categorizing students.

And even more bizarre problems arise when the district's numbers are sent to the state Department of Education, he said.

The state says students who are home-schooled are dropouts.

The district claims that home-schooled students are simply transfers.

"These numbers are sometimes less reliable because they are constantly changing. It is simply a snapshot in time, and that moment in time could be at the beginning of the year, at the end of the year or during the middle.

"You have to ask, when you took this snapshot, what point in time was it?" Farr said.

For those reasons and others, it is sometimes difficult and inaccurate to compare two different school districts.

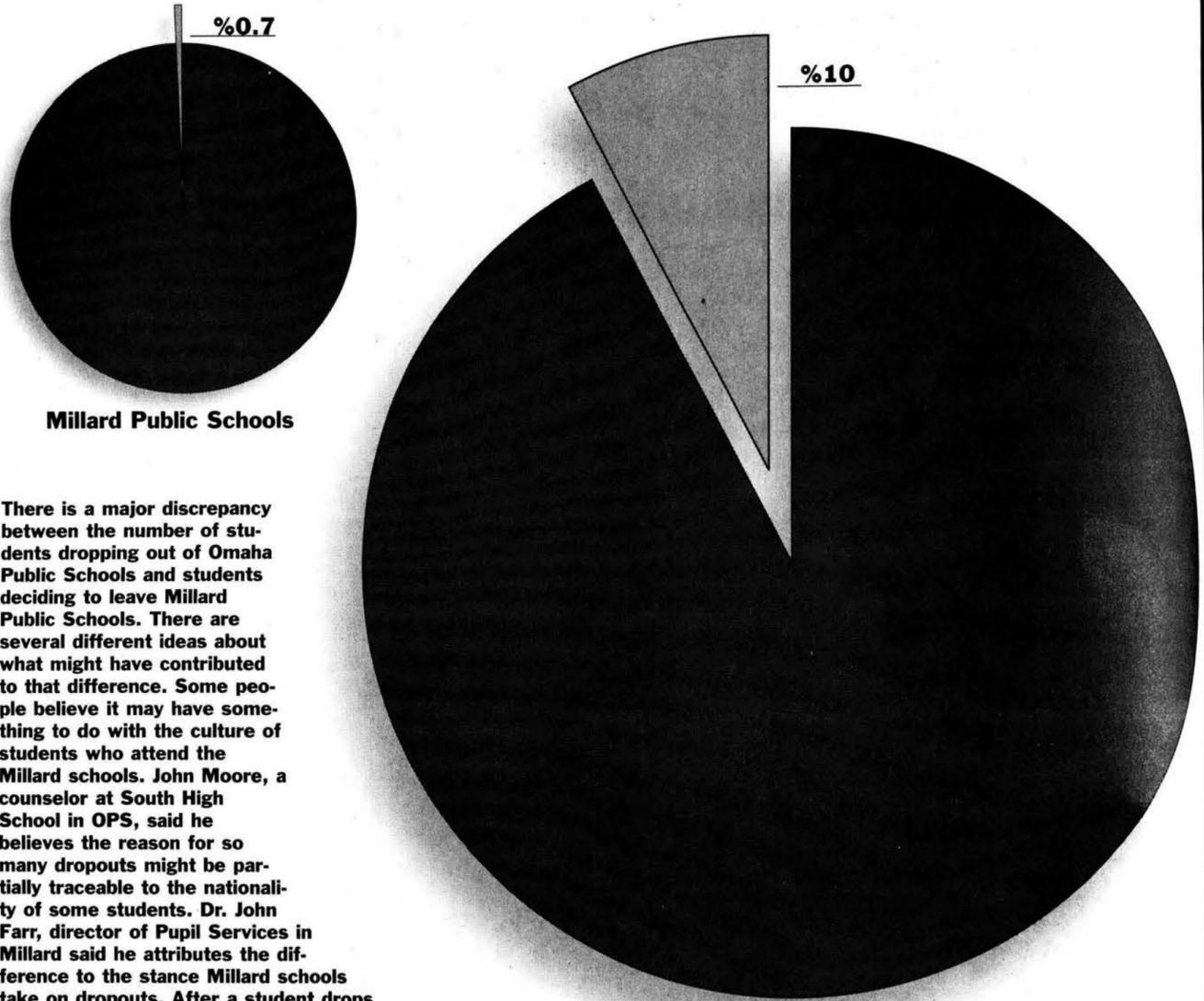
Regardless, the fact remains that the number and percentage of dropouts in the districts varies greatly.

Despite his district's low dropout rate, Farr said he would like to see even fewer students drop out of school.

"It's always something to shoot for," he said.

Dropouts have always been a problem for OPS. Students who decide to leave school give the image that the district is failing at doing its job, so it is regarded as imperative to keep kids in school and on the road to graduation. But in past years, the number of students dropping out of OPS has grown to immense proportions. The district now has the highest number of dropouts in the state, and it shows no signs of slowing up. Only 62 percent of freshmen who entered the district's high schools in 1995 graduated on time. Counselors, administrators, district officials and teachers are all trying to lower the statistics through different programs. But some people wonder if that is enough.

Percentage of high school population who drop out



Millard Public Schools

Omaha Public Schools

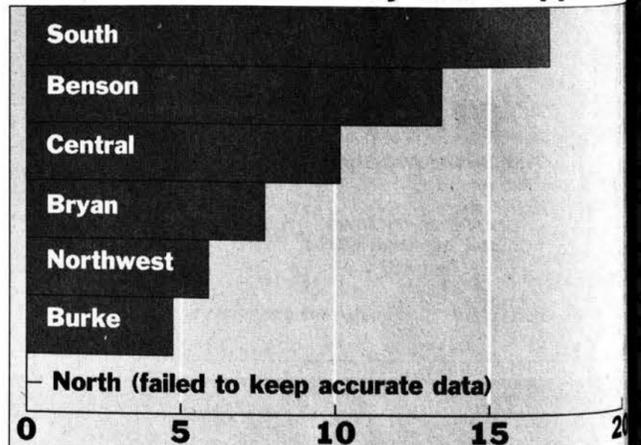
There is a major discrepancy between the number of students dropping out of Omaha Public Schools and students deciding to leave Millard Public Schools. There are several different ideas about what might have contributed to that difference. Some people believe it may have something to do with the culture of students who attend the Millard schools. John Moore, a counselor at South High School in OPS, said he believes the reason for so many dropouts might be partially traceable to the nationality of some students. Dr. John Farr, director of Pupil Services in Millard said he attributes the difference to the stance Millard schools take on dropouts. After a student drops out, he said, the schools actively try to recruit them back.

The class of 1999 and those who decided to quit

3,526	Freshmen who entered OPS high schools in 1995.
312	Dropped out before they started their sophomore year.
566	Quit school after they turned 16, and didn't make it to be juniors.
282	Dropped out during the course of the 1997-1998 school year.
2,366	Started their senior year of high school on time.
180	Decided to drop out during the course of their senior year.
62%	Enrolled in 1995 and graduated on time from the district.

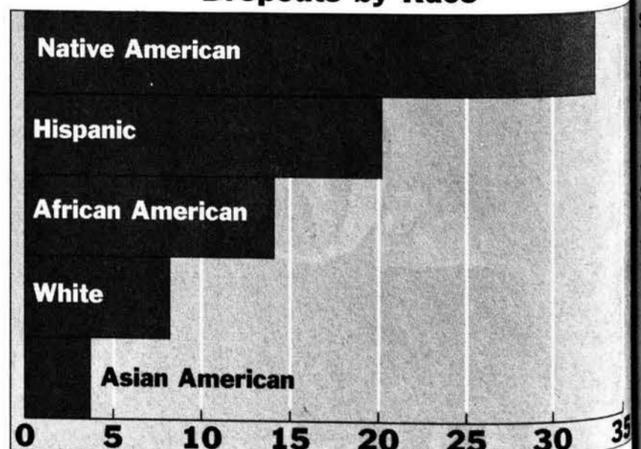
Information from OPS dropout reports, 1995-1999

Percent of student body who dropped out



From school to school, the percentage of students who dropped out last year varied. South High School had the highest percentage with 17 percent of students dropping out.

Dropouts by Race

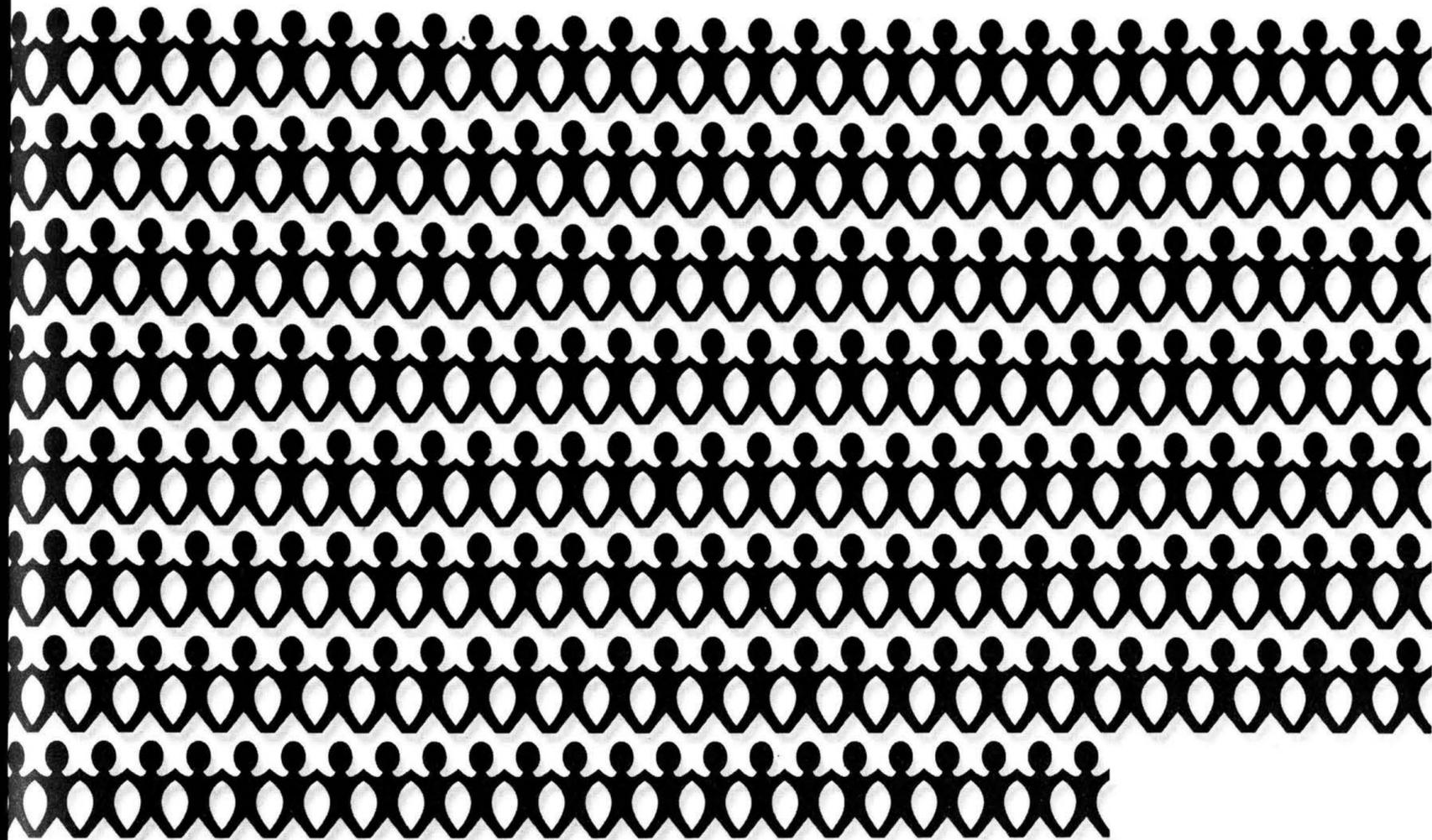


This graph shows the percentage of students of each race who chose to drop out of OPS high schools last year. Native Americans were most likely to drop out, at 32.6 percent.

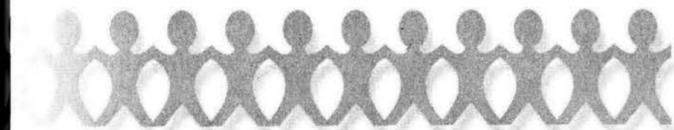
the dropout epidemic

and what is being done to keep them.

241 Central students decided to quit school last year



2 Millard West students dropped out last year



All graphics LUENINGHOENER/THE REGISTER
All information from 2000-2001 unless otherwise noted
All information courtesy of Peter Smith, director of public information for OPS

Special program aims to keep students in school

from DROPOUTS, page 1

students who might otherwise feel compelled to drop out, Hanrahan said. Many of the school's programs are designed with this goal in mind.

An after school opportunity program handled by Patti Gatzke has the same objective.

"If a kid is involved, if they're connected to the school outside of the regular day, then that can carry over and they may be more successful in other things," Hanrahan said.

Though counselors try to convince students it is in their best interest to stay in school, sometimes it simply doesn't work. At that point, it simply becomes a matter of making sure the transition goes as smoothly as possible.

That's when counselor Doug Stansberry steps in.

He said by the time students have decided to go see him, they have usually already made up their mind about dropping out.

"At that point, the issue is that are you dropping into?" Stansberry said.

There are several options, he said. Students can go into the work force, where they can have an opportunity to make an income by working full-time.

They can also attempt to get a General Equivalency Degree (GED), which will help make the student eligible for some careers.

Some students even go to a community college, Stansberry said. Then they can have the option of attending a four-year

university.

"But then the question becomes where do we go from here?" Stansberry said. "So it's our job to try to give you the information you need to make the best choice."

One of the major criticisms leveled at public schools over dropouts is that the schools do not try to divert students before the decision is made.

But both Stansberry and Hanrahan said that Central is trying to work harder on that.

Stansberry said educators are starting to play a larger role in making sure students who should be prevented from dropping out are given attention.

For instance, students who fall asleep in class, don't turn in assignments or just generally seem to have a poor attitude about school are sometimes referred to the guidance department if they are believed to be at risk of dropping out.

"Educators that see the signs of it well in advance, I think that's a big part of it," Stansberry said.

Watson said he received hardly any counseling when he made the decision to drop out.

"The door was open for me to come back. It wasn't like I just decided I was done with school," he said.

Watson said he thinks Central's varied student population might have something to do with the large number of dropouts. He said he came in contact with other dropouts

while he was away from school, which gives him a bit of insight into why many students may choose to dropout.

"Most of them are from low social backgrounds," he said.

He said because most dropouts come from families with low incomes the idea of dropping out of school seems like a great idea.

"When you're not in school, you can work a lot more, and earn a lot of money," he said. "I think that plays a big part."

In fact, even though he dropped out of school for attendance reasons, he said the idea of staying out of school permanently certainly appealed to him.

"If I was left up to my own devices back then, I probably would have stayed dropped out," Watson said.

Pat Wallington started a program at Central last year that is particularly innovative.

Though the program does not yet have a name, it is specifically designed to help students who may have a problem adapting to high school, Wallington said. This is important because, according to a study conducted by Millard Public Schools, most students who dropped out said they did so simply because they did not like the school atmosphere.

Wallington's program is run out of the Pathways 21 classes, which are required for freshmen. That much has remained similar to last year. In almost every other way it has changed.

Before the 2000-2001 school year, Wallington was given the grades of all incoming freshmen.

She then sorted through the numbers to find students who might require some extra help.

She went through pile after pile of report cards, looking for students who had not really passed middle school.

These students were "socially promoted," or moved to high school simply to get them through the educational system as quickly as possible, Wallington said.

Her total: 213 students.

She then made it a point to help those students get through the first of the tumultuous high school years.

"I basically kind of held their hand throughout freshman year," she said.

She did this in a variety of ways. Occasionally she would pull students out of Pathways classes to give them extra help or extra counseling.

"Many of those students, I think, were able to get through that year just because the extra help they received through this program," she said.

This year, however, Wallington wanted to be able to help more students than she had before. She wanted to become more involved with all of the students, she said.

And so far it is going well. She and the Pathways teachers have a basic understanding as to the point of Wallington's program, and the Pathways teachers

allow her a lot of freedom in the classroom, she said.

This year she has led Pathways classes while teaching skills like asking for help, study skills, listening, following directions, taking notes and preparing for finals, she said.

She also helped students prepare for the WorkKeys tests, and once the results were delivered, she told students how to interpret the results.

But the dropout rate is a district-wide epidemic, LuAnn Nelson, the public information director for OPS said.

And nowhere is it more prevalent than at South High School, where there are more dropouts than at any other high school in the district.

John Moore, a counselor at South, said it is not actually a single program, but a conglomerate of different curriculums that all have a similar goal.

South is currently putting together a partnership with the Boys and Girls Club.

The purpose of this union would be to give students something to do after school is out, and possibly give them a relationship with the school environment.

It would be similar to the one Gatzke offers at Central.

The school also has a collaborative effort with Upward Bound at Creighton to try to encourage students to stay in school.

It's the same as the program Central has, too.

To cater to OPS' growing Hispanic population, the district has also worked out an agreement with the Chicano Awareness Center give representative a permanent office at a few high schools.

Central is one of those schools.

Moore said he thinks the background of some students might have to do with the schools disproportionately high number of dropouts.

"A lot of these families are new to our country, and so a lot of them are not so in tune with our system... they don't see school as being worth very much," Moore said.

But despite the efforts of schools to curb rising dropout numbers, the statistics keep getting worse.

Still, some students manage to find their way back.

Watson did.

At the end of the 2000 winter break, Watson came back to school for yet another meeting with his administrator.

Then, after a short discussion, he signed some papers and was a Central student again.

He will graduate after summer school, and he has to take night school two nights a week.

But he said he wouldn't change anything.

"It just got to be worth it more for me to work full-time and make some money than to go to school and still fail everything," Watson said.

"I don't really regret it at all."

Renovation set to begin

By Joe Meyer

After March 21, almost everything will be ready for the second phase of Central's renovation project to begin.

That's the day the district has set to be the deadline for all general contractors to submit their bids for the work, construction manager at Jacobs Facilities Terry Page said.

The phase is estimated to cost the district \$12.5 million.

Workers will start the phase by constructing a new full-size, hardwood floor gym off the northeast corner of the existing building and a kitchen addition on the northwest corner.

During the 2003-2004 school year, crews will move into the building to finish installing the air-conditioning system.

The entire project is scheduled to be completed before the start of the 2004 school year.

Page said Jacobs Facilities, the company managing the project, has made 125 sets of the plans and has distributed them to many contractors around the city.



Page said he has no idea how many companies will submit bids for the job.

"It's hard to determine who will pick it up and bid it," he said. "You don't know until bid date how many will show up."

Page said contractors have started touring the school to draft their bids. Many will continue to circle through the building throughout March.

After all the bids are received, the district will choose the lowest one that fits within the district's \$12.5 million budget.

Once a general contractor is hired for the project, that company will hire subcontractors to work on the job. Page said he expects there to be somewhere between 10 to 15 subcontractors.

These subcontractors will work on individual aspects of the project and the general contractor will look over the entire job's progress.

"You will see some construction on the site before the end of school," he said.

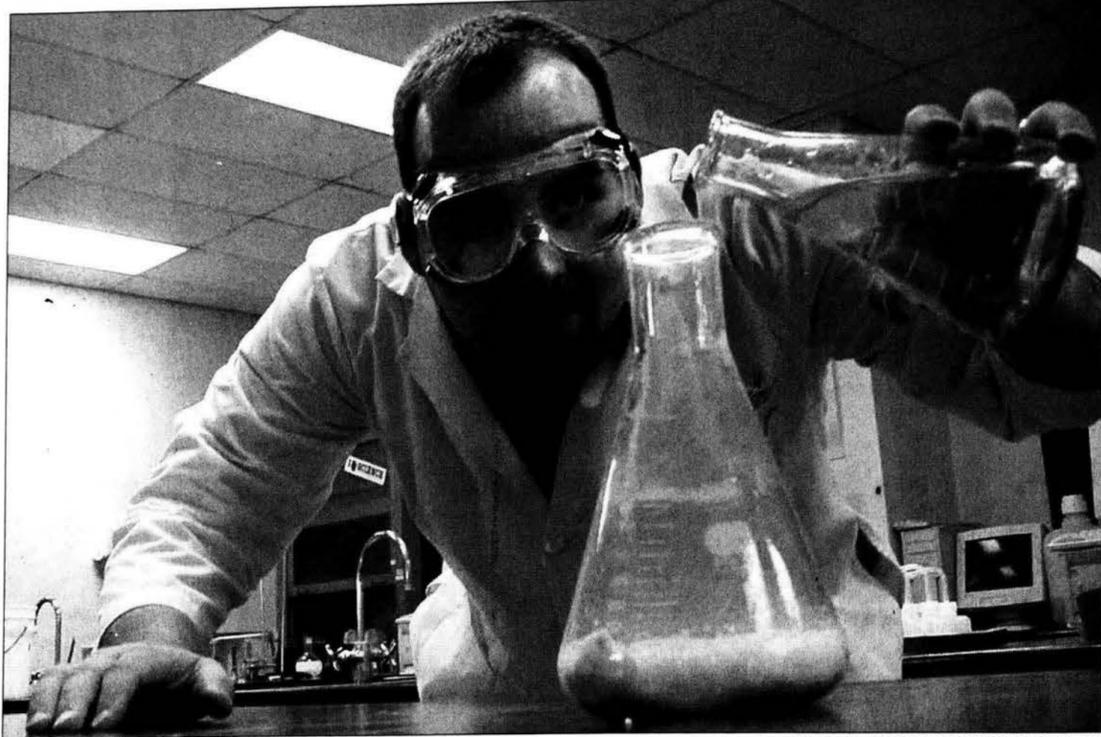


Photo by JOE MEYER/THE REGISTER

In the past, science teachers like Mark Smith have charged student fees to pay for materials used in science classes. The Unicameral is expected to debate the issue later this month.

Unicameral to debate school fees

By Joe Meyer

State senators will start debating the issue of school fees in the Unicameral soon if state Sen. Ron Raikes gets his way.

The education committee, which Raikes is the chairman for, is expected to release a bill that will probably move into floor debate this month.

This bill will be one of the first ever debated regarding the topic, Raikes said.

The Unicameral has set no precedent in the area of student fees, Raikes said. Besides what is included in the state constitution that outlines that schools need to offer free instruction and legislation that requires school districts to furnish students with textbooks and supplies, the area is fairly vague.

The exact wording of the bill will not be known until the bill is released, but Raikes said he expects the bill to clarify the issue while still leaving some authority to local school districts.

Raikes said he expects a few things to be included in the bill that the education committee will release. They are:

- A provision that will require school districts to hold public sessions open to students and parents regarding student fees. These meetings will address what fees the district will charge and what the collection of these fees will be used for.

- A requirement that school districts establish fee waivers for students who cannot afford to pay them.

- Wording that will require school boards in local districts to approve official rules and regulations regarding student fees that they want to charge.

- A requirement that school districts report the amount of money they collect from these fees to the state Department of Education.

- A precedent dealing with student fee lawsuits filed against school districts in the state. Currently, if a parent sues a school district and wins a settlement for a special education lawsuit, the district is required to pay the parent's legal expenses. This student fee bill could require

the same sort of action concerning lawsuits won because of school fees.

None of this is currently required under state law, Raikes said.

Whatever the bill will contain, it will not be an itemized list saying what a school district can and cannot charge for. Instead, it will be guidelines that will leave the particular details up to the state Department of Education, Raikes said.

"We (the education committee and the Unicameral) are not going to go to the extreme that you cannot charge fees no matter what," he said, "or that you can charge all the fees you want."

"We're not going to take any of those two stances."

After the education committee releases its bill, it will move onto floor debate where the entire senate will discuss whether it should be passed into law or not. That is when Raikes will find out if there is enough support for his bill.

"That is what makes this process interesting," Raikes said.

Effects of licenses positive

By Paula Salhany

It seems that the provision operator's permit (POP) program has worked, John Ways, a traffic safety specialist, said.

Ways said officials are gathering statistics and they will not be finished for months. But he said he thinks students would rather not have to get the POP.

The POP is the driver's license that 16 year olds are eligible to obtain.

In order to get the POP, teens must either have 50 hours behind the wheel experience with an adult, or have taken a drivers safety class, said Leanne Kinnison, a drivers license manager.

There is not much of a difference between a normal license and a POP, Kinnison said.

One difference the POP makes is that holders are not allowed to drive between midnight and 5 a.m., unless it is because of school or work.

Junior A.J. Schumacher said that he doesn't think much of the curfew, but it sometimes causes inconveniences when he is out with his friends past midnight.

He said he doesn't worry about getting caught out past the curfew, though.

"If anything I would support the curfew to make it more convenient," he said.

Junior Chris Rabiola said he sees the curfew as more of a necessary evil for younger, less-experienced drivers. He said because many bars and clubs close at 2 a.m., the curfew might actually help save lives.

If a holder is caught violating the POP, a judge will determine the teenager's punishment, Kinnison said.

The POP is valid until the holder turns 18 years old.

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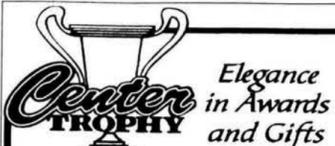
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FIGHTING Police ticket students for school fights

From FIGHTING, page 1
Principal Paul Semrad's of-

Immediately after a fight
breaks out, the students involved
taken to their administrators
Resource Officer Jerry Paul is
led to write a ticket.

That's the way it's going to be
now on.

Paul is able to write tickets for
orderly conduct if any person
purposely or knowingly causes
inconvenience, annoyance or
harm or creates the risk thereof to
another person by engaging in fight-
ing, threatening or violent con-
duct or is using abusive, threaten-
ing or other fighting language."

This means students can get
ticketed for cussing and yelling,
just for throwing a punch dur-
ing a fight.

Paul said he treats fights in
school the same way he would on
the street.

"This (having kids get tick-
eted as well as get suspended) will
help kids realize that you can't just
get suspended from the street," he
said.

In Niebur's case, Paul was not
the officer who wrote her ticket.

"Mr. Semrad asked me what
happened and why we
fought. Then the officer came in
and gave me the ticket, telling me
I had to appear in court on Feb.
10," Niebur said.

Kirksey said students are not
usually given a ticket, they are also
given a five-day suspension.

"It's kind of a double
message," she said. "But we are
trying to get the message to these
kids that fighting is never the best
way to solve a problem."

She said she doesn't expect
people to be "lovey-dovey" and
hold hands all the time, but does
think students should have mu-
tual respect for each other, at least
enough to stay out of fights.

Attack brings safety to forefront

From SAFETY, page 1

said he was a few feet in front
of her when he picked up a
crowbar and started to hit her.

"The whole part about
where he said his friends told
him to do it until he started hit-
ting me was a blur," Shirk said.

Under the watchful eyes of
school administration and secu-
rity guards, Central doesn't
seem like a dangerous place.

But once outside, in a dark
and isolated parking lot early
in the morning, the situation
changes a little.

Resource officer Jerry Paul
said students might be able to
avoid confrontations if they use
their instincts and observe their
surroundings.

"Follow your gut instinct,"
Paul said, "If you see someone
you don't know...I'd call 911,
that's what we are paid to do."

Paul said that after Shirk's
attack, more security guards
and police officers are going to
be watching the area. Police of-
ficers won't be in uniform.

"They are putting extra
guys out there you might not
even notice," Paul said.

Although there are security
precautions already in place,
Paul said there are many ways
students can avoid these situa-
tions. He said students should
always be aware of who is
around before they leave their
vehicle.

"If you see someone lurk-
ing in the parking lot, pull your
car back out of that lot," Paul
said, "Don't get out of your
car."

Once out of the car, a quick
getaway is harder. Paul said
that whenever a student en-
counters a suspicious-looking
person, running back to the car
is a lot safer than trying to use
self-defense techniques.

He said that while self-de-
fense is a helpful technique to
learn, it gives the person a false
sense of security, perhaps even
making them less aware of
their surroundings.

Self-defense relies a lot on
people with a certain build. While
some people could handle an-
other person of their same size,
when the perpetrator is much
larger or faster, they may be
harder to fight.

Paul also said self-defense
does not always prepare people if
the attacker is using a weapon.

He said running is always the
best option and, if running is not
possible, self-defense techniques
are a good backup.

Paul said that the best defense
would be to find a phone and call
the police. He said this tactic
would normally scare away the
perpetrator.

Shirk said she tried to go for
her cell phone, but could not. She
said after the man hit her once she
was in so much pain that she fell
to the ground.

He hit her five or six more
times, mainly on her legs and
shins. When another car pulled
into the parking lot, the man took
off. Shirk said he didn't try to rob
her, take her purse or steal her car.

When the man ran off, Shirk
was able to get out her cell phone
and call her parents immediately.

She tried to stand, but her legs
were too battered to support her
body and she needed a friend to
help her into the school.

Paul said the man who at-
tacked Shirk has not been found
yet.

He tried to steal a woman's
car from a parking garage not far
from school on the same day he
attacked Shirk and confronted an-
other Central student when she
was trying to get into her car later
that week.

Paul said the student saw the
man looking in her car when she
was leaving after school. Paul said
the girl was suspicious of the man
and didn't approach the car right
away.

Instead, Paul said she hung
back until the man looked as
though he might break in.

He said that this was where
the girl made her mistake. Instead
of contacting an authority figure

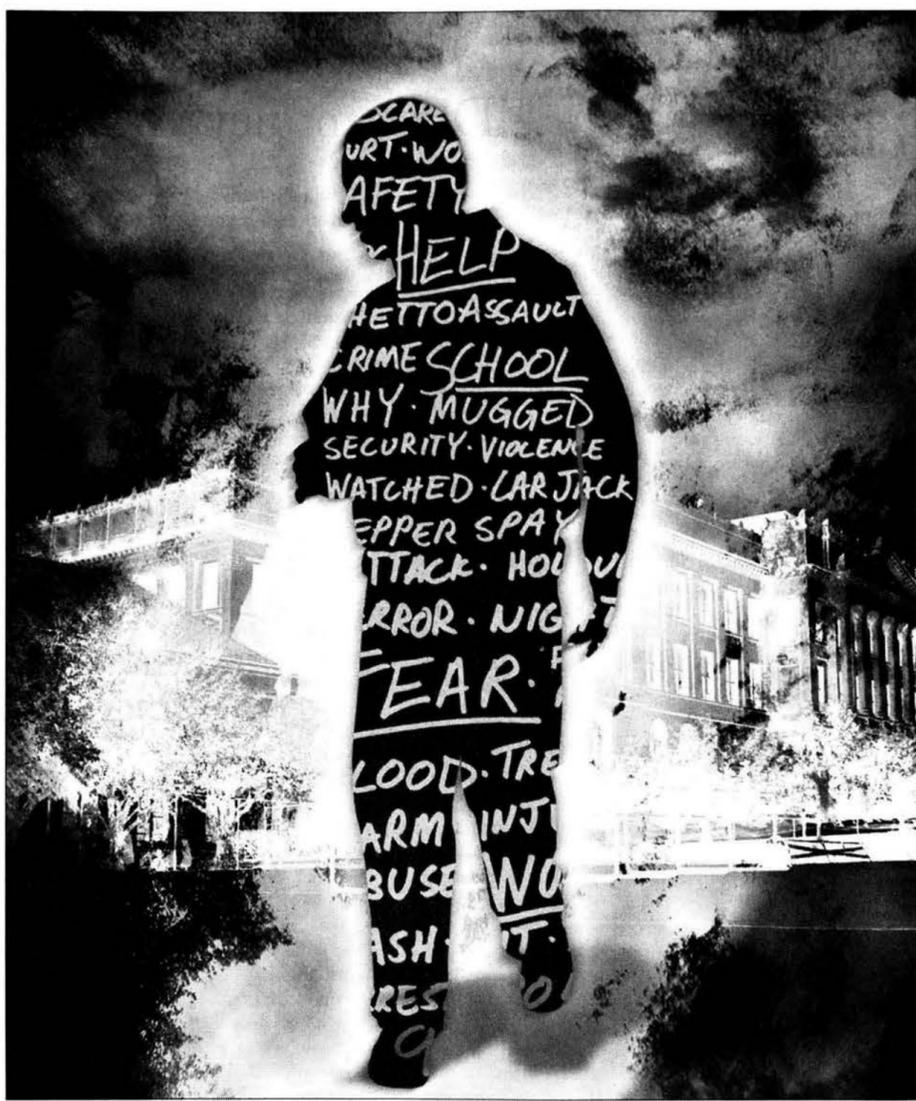


Photo illustration by LUENINGHOENER/THE REGISTER

This photo illustration shows some dangers at school and how some people perceive them. After a student was recently attacked, some people might be tempted to say that the school is not safe and run away. Others think the school simply fell victim to a city-wide problem.

right away, she approached the
vehicle. Paul said that the man
then became angry and started to
stream something.

When she pulled away from
the school, he jumped in front of
the car.

Fortunately, the girl was able

to escape the situation without
any injury.

Because of these two in-
stances, the school is urging stu-
dents to be careful when leaving
school.

In this situation, Paul said the
girl may have put herself in seri-

ous danger and in the end, she
was just lucky that she could reach
the car in time.

Paul said that no matter what
the situation, the safest way to
avoid confrontation, attack or in-
jury is to call the police immedi-
ately.

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Angela Clements is a senior political science and history major
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wide to be awarded a Truman
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public service. "It's for idealistic, I-want-to-
save-the-world types of people," says Angela,
and she'll be taking that spirit from the
campus to the nation in the years ahead.

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New York school drops AP classes

By Paula Salhany

Fieldston School in Riverdale, New York recently dropped all Advanced Placement (AP) courses, but no one seems to mind, Ginger Curwen in the school's Communications and Media office, said.

For some students it's even helping out, Curwen said.

The idea came from the students.

One student was preparing to enroll in classes for the next year and was faced with the decision of whether or not to take an AP History class or a more in-depth history class that was not AP.

He wanted to take the more in-depth class, but wanted to take the AP course because it looked better on his transcript.

"He felt he was choosing the AP class for the wrong reasons," Curwen said.

To voice his displeasure with his predicament, he wrote an essay about it, which got around to the faculty.

The teachers toyed with the idea, and finally decided it would be a good idea to drop them completely.

They spent about a year lobbying the rest of the faculty to accept this plan. Soon, all the teachers were in favor of dropping the program.

AP History teachers at Fieldston were especially pleased with the idea. Some times while teaching, students would ask questions, wanting to go more in-depth on certain topics, Curwen said.

But because there were certain things that needed to be discussed before the end of the year, teachers were unable to discuss certain aspects of history that students were particularly interested in.

The next task was to ask the colleges what their opinion on the matter was and finally to convince the parents that this was in the best interest of the students.

"We got a great response from the colleges," she said. "Stanford, Yale, even Harvard told us all they are looking for is the rigor of the class not necessarily what initials (AP) precede the course name."

Junior Jessica Richart said she would rather take AP classes because the regular classes aren't challenging enough.

She said she is able to communicate more to the students in AP classes because they all want to be there.

"I think it's better for me to take the AP classes because it's going to help me more in college than a regular class," she said.

AP history teacher Carol Hipp said she has never known a student to get into a prestigious school without AP classes.

She said all the history classes students take at the high school and early college levels are survey classes anyway.

She said she believes it is more beneficial for students to take an AP class that will help them into college rather than an in-depth class.

"The in-depth history classes don't even really exist at the high school level," she said.

Colleges are looking for rigor, and the AP classes are very rigorous, she said.

Curwen said one of the major motivations for eliminating AP classes was to give the students the option of taking more in-depth classes.

Students are still able to take the AP class at the end of the year if they wish.

"It's a small, but growing trend to not take AP classes," she said. "You just have to know what is best for you and take the classes you are interested in."

GAMBLING

Dice, money and the problem of teenage gambling in school

By Paula Salhany

If you win, it's easy money. If you lose you have to hand it all over.

Junior Ben Shaddy said gambling at Central has gone up since he was a freshman.

Shaddy doesn't gamble often but when he does it is never for more than \$5. He said he sees students betting upwards of \$100-150.

"I've seen kids lose their watches, necklaces, even their shoes," he said.

The game is simple. Using two dice, if a player throws a seven or 11 on the first throw he wins, if he throws a two, three or 12 he loses. But if he throws any other number on the first toss, he has to roll again till he gets that number again. After the first throw, if the player throws a seven, he loses.

Principal Gary Thompson said he is sure kids are gambling in the school, but that sort of thing has been going on for a long time.

"I remember kids betting on things when I was in high school," he said. "It's gone on for as long as I can remember."

But according to the National Council on Problem Gambling, statistics report in 2000 that 80 percent of youth age 12-17 have gambled in the past 12 months. It reported that in the past 10 years, the number of teenagers reported with serious gambling problems had increased 50 percent.

Thompson said it has been brought to his attention that more kids have been caught with dice in the past few weeks and that he and administrators are going to talk about the issue.

Shaddy said gambling happens all over the school and there isn't one specific place they meet.

"It goes on in the courtyard, in the stairwells, bathrooms, halls, lunchrooms and it's all right under the teachers' noses," he said.

Much of the gambling goes unnoticed because students are put on look-out to watch for any authority that might see them playing, he said.

There is a reason for secrecy about gambling at Central. It is illegal to gamble in Nebraska and it is against school policy.

The student handbook states that students may not play games requiring the use of playing cards or dice anywhere on property at any time.

For a first offense, students only get a warning and a phone call home. But the second and third offenses carry heavier consequences, including after-school and short-term suspension.

Julie Johnson, dean of students, said there is no further punishment if the student is caught with a large amount of money on them.

"The only thing we can do is inform the parents that the student is carrying around a big 'wad' of money," she said.

Shaddy said many of the gamblers do not fear the consequences of being caught.

Johnson said the administration knows the general areas where students gamble and teachers are put in those areas before and after school and during lunch. Because security guards are at the 'C' and outside before and after school, administration relies on teachers to keep an eye on things.

Security guard Russ Lane said it is sometimes hard to catch students gambling, and for that reason he has not dealt with them too often.

"It's like catching someone smoking," he said. "You have to see them actually take a puff otherwise it's not smoking. It's the same way with gambling."

Freshman Chance Rykes said he has been caught only once with dice, and that it wasn't a very big deal.

He was caught in the courtyard by a teacher on lunch duty. The teacher proceeded to take the dice away. Rykes' parents were called and he was given a warning, just like the handbook says.

Nicole Regan, dean of students, said she hasn't had much of a problem with gambling this year, but that she can hear the students snapping to cover up the sound of the dice.

"You know they're doing it," she said. "It's just a matter of catching them."

Shaddy said the snapping isn't done to cover up the sound of the dice. It's more of a good luck charm.

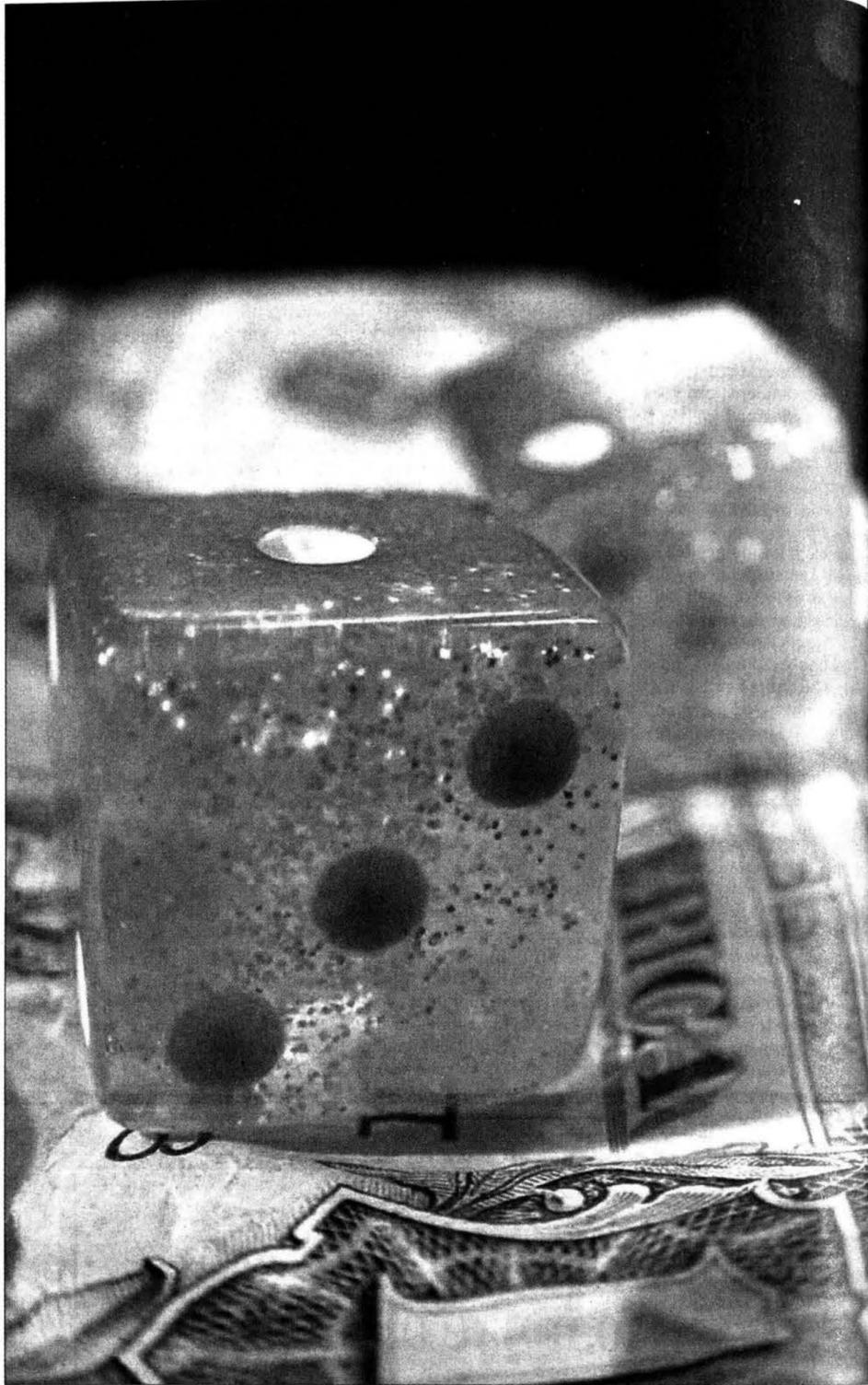


Photo by EMILY NEUMANN/THE REGIS

The majority of gambling at Central is done through dice games, a gambler said. They are easy and more discrete than cards and even quarter games, since the dice make hardly any noise when they hit the floor. Some people bring colorful dice to school specifically to gamble.

He said instead of using dice, some students flip quarters. That way when a teacher asks them what's going on there is no real gambling paraphernalia.

Shaddy said the reason he doesn't bet more than \$5 is because much more is too serious.

He admits that gambling is an addiction and there are many students at Central who may never stop.

"I don't think I'm addicted," he said. "I would like to think I have more logic than to get addicted to it. I don't know, I could be."

Charlie O., from Gamblers Anonymous, said he doesn't usually see teenagers come to the meetings.

Because of the nature of Gamblers Anonymous, Charlie was only able to give that as his name.

Gambler's Anonymous is a program that tries to help gamblers get over their addiction.

The program parallels Alcoholics Anonymous because it is a twelve-step program and has been in

Omaha for more than 60 years.

Charlie said people are able to call the hotline and talk to volunteers like himself at any time. It sometimes calls him he tries to get the person to come to a meeting where they can hear other people's problems and they want they can share their problems.

He said they see all different types of gambling problems, from the extreme case where someone gambled away everything they have to someone who just has a mild problem.

Shaddy said he tries to be very careful about gambling. One of the main reasons is because gambling is no longer a fun game when \$50 or \$500 of money is at stake.

Shaddy said gambling will only get more popular. "These guys would gamble on frog races if they could find some frogs," he said. "There will always be gambling at Central."

PLEDGE

Adaptations of Americanism legislation vary

From PLEDGE, page 1

decided to recommend that the OPS Board of Education reinstate the Pledge in all district schools because it would be the best way to comply with the Americanism law.

The Board approved the measure and every OPS school, from elementary to high school has been reciting the Pledge ever since, Luanne Nelson, public information director for the district said.

Toohy said she does not believe the Pledge forces students to be patriotic. All the schools are required to do is present students with adequate information about American democracy.

Just reciting the Pledge does not make someone a patriot," she said. "We (the school district) are just doing our part to present what a well-rounded citizenry should know and understand about our democracy."

The student has the role to process that knowledge and interpret that into their own patriotism.

Freshman Annie Boyd disagrees. She said it is not the school's job to make its students good citizens. Boyd said many students have religious objections to reciting the Pledge and the district needs to be aware of that.

She also said it is wrong that some teachers insist on every student standing for the recitation of the "Pledge of Allegiance" in homeroom.

Nelson said the district encourages schools to recite the it at least once everyday, ideally during the beginning of the school day.

Nelson and Toohy both said they have not heard of any schools having problems meeting the recommendations.

Principal Gary Thompson said he is happy with the way Central students have handled the recitation of the Pledge.

He said he agrees with reciting it and he believes high

schools should have stopped saying it.

Along with reciting the Pledge, Toohy said elementary and middle school students will be reading novels about American history.

Also, it is now required that every student in the district be able to memorize the verse from "The Star Spangled Banner" and "America" fourth grade.

Friedman said reciting it in high schools is more important now than it has been before.

"Sept. 11 has made us aware of how lucky we are to live in this country," she said.



READ BETWEEN THE
LINES

Matt Wynn

Wussy form of rock nears its pathetic end

I defy you to find a sub-genre of rock more disgusting than emo—that sappy, little pop-punk goober embraced by only the wussiest of high school rejects.

Emo? Come on. You cut your hair in some sort of closet-case reject from the "different Strokes," dress like a twelve-year-old, grow sideburns that would embarrass Engelbert Humperdink and wear glasses left over from shop class.

And for what? To appear "sensitive" and "non-threatening" yet "rebellious" enough to impress indie girls?

It's pathetic. Listening to bands like the Promise Ring, Bright Eyes and so on means you're too much of a wussy even for punk rock.

Not only are you a sheep, but you're a petulant, whiny brat to boot.

The fact that most emo bands don't even like to be labeled as such should tell you something. When faced with the question of musical categorization, most emo bands try to make excuses using the lines of, "Oh, we're not emo, we're just a rock band."

Why? Because emo bands themselves are even embarrassed by their own existence.

So then what do followers of this small movement have to say in their own defense?

Nothing.
Yet somehow, despite the attempts of a watchdog level of Omaha punk rockers, this wholly-repulsive genre has been allowed to infiltrate the ranks of our fair city.

The time has come for the great rock backlash. K-Tel's recent release of "Nowcore!," un-ironically subtitled, "The Punk Rock Evolution," will be the music's deathblow.

Who would ever have guessed that one day, a compendium of safe, melodic post-hardcore would be released by a company known for using late night television commercials to market fifth-rate disco collections?

K-Tel's mediocre anthology of boy bands features such bed-wetters as the Smemberment Plan, Modest Mouse and Texas is the Reason, alongside any of the aforementioned dorks.

Why they couldn't get the licensing rights to Sunny Day Real Estate blows my mind.

But even more disturbing than the obtuseness of this entire entity is the unnerving sense of devotion these kids have for their collective idols.

For instance, a friend of mine once made the mistake of attending a very early Jets to Brazil show.

It was the group's first appearance in the metro area. Nobody even knew what the band sounded like, but the venue was totally packed with fools who were gullible enough to attend the function because of the mere presence of Blake Schwarzenbach, their emo hero.

If Schwarzenbach had an ounce of sense, he'd form a satanic black-metal band and just test their loyalty and make them feel stupid for spending their money so freely. They'd fall for it, too.

Five years from now, the entire emo posse will have wisely forgotten everything it once stood for.

The basis of these chumps' current existence is just too insubstantial, wholly transient and completely temporal to survive.

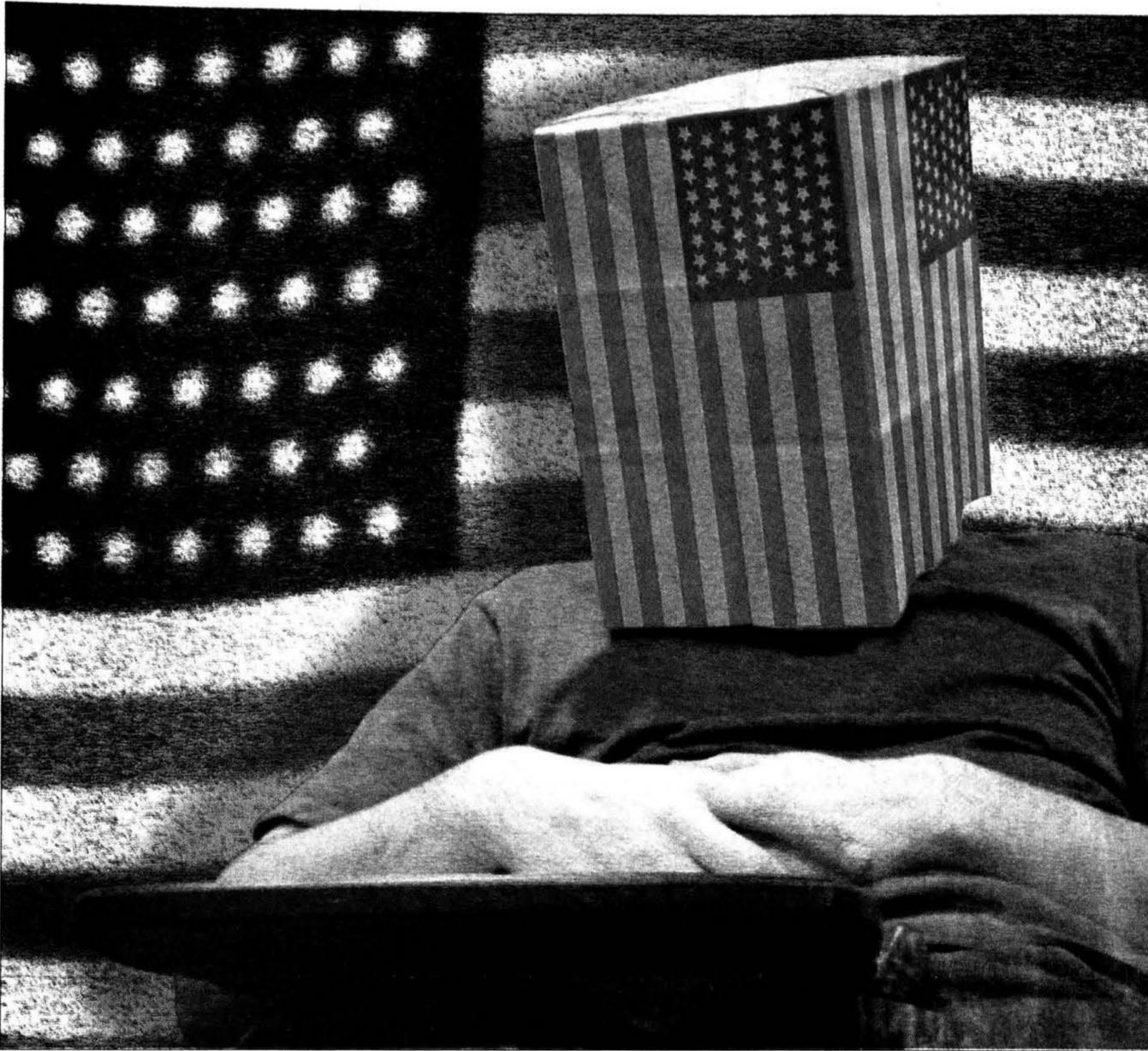
The record is called "Nowcore" with emphasis on the "Now."

In the future, former emo advocates will be seen resting their grown-up heads of hair in their hands, wondering what they were thinking.

The answer, my emo friends, is quite simple actually.

You weren't thinking at all.

ACTING BLIND



Graphic by LUENINGHOENER/THE REGISTER

Students ignore Pledge for wrong reasons

Hey you, three rows back next to the window, why are you sitting there while the rest of the students in your class stand and recite the "Pledge of Allegiance"?

Why do you reject this new policy that the state department of education established last month?

Are you sitting just because you have to be against something? Do you think "The Man" is trying to make you stand? Or are you just too lazy to stand up?

Anyone who is guilty of any of the above is making a fool of himself. Everyone has the right not to stand and recite the pledge, but this should not be mistaken for an excuse to be ignorant.

In 1943, the Supreme Court ruled that schools cannot make it mandatory for students to stand and recite the pledge. Schools cannot make students salute the American flag, either. Making these things mandatory and punishing students for not participating violates the First and Fourteenth Amendments.

This decision is useful for some Central students, like those who are not American citizens and declare allegiance to other countries.

Also, many students who believe that pledging allegiance to a country contradicts their religious views should know that they have the right to not participate if they choose to do so.

But whatever students choose to do, they should do it for the right reasons.

Too often, high school students feel that it is almost their obligation to defy social norms like saying the Pledge. Too often, high school students make too big of a deal out of little things. Too often, high school students make decisions for the wrong reasons.

If you are not an American citizen, you have the right to sit in your seat while the rest of the class recites the Pledge. The same applies to students who believe reciting the Pledge contradicts with their religious views and for those who think the words "under God" violate the separation of church and state.

In fact, every student has the right to choose not to stand for the Pledge. But along with that right comes a responsibility. A responsibility to know what you're doing and why you're doing it.

Simply sitting because you want to go against the grain is an embarrassment to yourself, this school and this country. While some students have serious reasons to not participate, others are just being apathetic and trivializing the entire event.

It is also imperative that students respect their peers' decisions. If someone in the desk next to you decides not to stand and recite the Pledge, don't make a big deal out of it. Don't give them a bad look. Don't say any rude comments. Just don't question it. The fact that they are not participating in the Pledge does not affect you in any way.

Whether you sit or stand, whether you recite the Pledge or not, whether you care or not, you should know what you are doing and why it is important to you.

Otherwise, the whole meaning is lost.

EDITORIAL

.....
The opinion of
the Register staff

Falling off building alters speech pattern, outlook on life

It's been two years, 22 days, 14 hours and some odd minutes since I became known as the kid who fell off the school.

A war has been started, a recession has allegedly hit the country, a new president is in office and the Arizona

Diamondbacks have risen from the new team in the league to World Series Champions since then.

I've had a couple surgeries to repair seven broken bones in my face and I've even survived one successful root canal.

It seems like it was almost yesterday. But now, as I approach graduation ever so quickly, it is time to move on and leave that memory here at Central.

The two-year anniversary just passed and the event doesn't mean as much as it once did.

At the time, it was a big deal. An



WELCOME TO THE BAHAMAS

Joe Meyer

Maybe you remember when I came back to school. I was the kid who looked like Bub from "Day of the Dead."

You've heard of "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat." I was Joseph with the Technicolor face.

It was the usual white tone with several different shades of green and it was swollen beyond belief. My eyes were bloodshot and I looked like I was dead.

When I came home from the hospital, my four-year-old brother was so scared of me that he wouldn't look at

me for weeks.

And now, less than half of the school's current students remember what happened. I should have celebrated while I had the chance.

"Celebrate" is probably the wrong word to use. "Remember" would be a better one.

I should have at least gone out to drink a malt for old time's sake. After my jaw was wired shut, I had to go on an all-liquid diet for four weeks, which called for drinking a lot of malts.

Or, I could have sent little thank you cards to my doctors thanking them for not allowing me to look like Two Face for the rest of my life.

I wonder if they still remember me. I also thought of holding a vigil to remember my fall. It would have been down in the janitor's pit at 6 p.m. on Feb. 5. Everyone would have had candles, providing that they brought their own. You see, it was supposed to be a

B.Y.O.C vigil.

But then it hit me: I'm still alive. I survived. I'm not trying to be dark and twisted, but the vigil would have been a lot better if I had died.

And again, nobody probably would have showed up. I mean, it scared a lot of people and I don't think they would want to remember it.

Then there was another problem. Thanks to a very strange speech pattern I have developed since I knocked out one of my front teeth, I can't actually pronounce vigil. It came out like "vigual." I decided that since I couldn't pronounce the word, I couldn't hold one for myself.

So instead of drinking a malt or holding a vigil, I worked. I flipped pizzas, made lasagna and forgot all about the time when I fell 20 feet off the side of the building.

Maybe it's all for the best. I need to grow up anyway.

EDITORIALS

"Congress shall make no laws 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 peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."

FIRST AMENDMENT OF THE UNITED STATES, RATIFIED DEC. 15, 1791



Dr. Gary Thompson
Principal
Matt Deabler
Adviser
Matt Wynn
Editor in chief
Joe Meyer
Insight editor

Change displays mixed priorities

For a school that prides itself on academics, Central made a terrible mistake.

The school recently decided to move parent-teacher conferences back a day because there was a conflict with the original date.

The conflict was the girls state basketball tournament.

It's great that the team is having a good season, but there is no reason to rearrange the entire school schedule for it.

Conferences were originally scheduled for Feb. 28, but were moved to the day earlier so students and faculty could make the trek down to Lincoln to cheer on the team.

An announcement in the school newsletter said the change in dates would allow for faculty members to serve as coaches or supervisors at the tournament.

This last minute change caused widespread problems for some parents and teachers.

Teachers had to rearrange lesson plans to make up for the newly elongated weekend and get ready to have all of their conference materials organized a day earlier than expected.

Meanwhile, parents who planned in advance to take off work were left struggling to figure out how to manage to make the rescheduled conferences.

This action by the school

sends a clear message attending athletic events is more important than attending conferences about student academic performance.

Central uses its academic reputation as a hook to recruit new students, yet once they are enrolled, they are told to forget about school when it comes

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The opinion of
the Register

with athletics. To students, moving the date of conferences is a big deal. In fact, it seems like a game-changer. Not only will this allow students to attend the game but it will also give them an extra day off of school.

There was no reason to move conferences because the tournament, affecting every single student, parent and faculty member.

Central's sports record is somewhat spotty. It has good years and it has bad years.

But the school's academic history has always been strong. Rhodes Scholars, National Merit Scholars and future League graduates have walked these halls.

All of that does not seem to matter now that there was a conflict with athletics.

Congratulations, ladies. We wish you the best in your tournament. We really do.

It is just too bad that your success is more important to school officials than academics.

Bush's plan comes close needs work to improve

The U.S. Congress and President Bush made the right decision for all the wrong reasons last month as they passed Bush's national education testing plan.

Bush's plan will test all students every year from third through 12th grades, but it will not eliminate testing already in place at the state level. This creates a testing epidemic.

When looking at Bush's test plan, a second problem arises.

It is very obvious that in order to help fix the disparities in education today, there needs to be an accurate study to find out what the problems are.

Unfortunately, Bush's plan goes beyond testing for information's sake.

Under this new plan, schools receive federal aid based on their test scores. When schools do well, they will receive rewards, while schools that fail to reach set standards will lose valuable

government funding.

Unfortunately, if schools must do well to receive federal money, the schools that are already failing would lose money and get worse while achieving schools would get money and do better.

Although this type of "accountability," as President Bush calls it, sounds like a good idea, this plan will not work.

The country should not abandon children who fail to achieve. If any funding should

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be given out, it should go to the most struggling schools, not the first ones in line.

President Bush's plan correctly diagnoses the

inadequacies, but this plan does nothing to solve the problems that Bush has aptly found.

Instead, Bush's new plan only creates a longer list of problems that the country's leaders will have to iron out in the future.

Good try Mr. President. No cigar.

OUT OF CONTROL

School administrators need to establish an enrollment cap to control Central's growing population or else...

The time has come for school administrators to cap the enrollment at Central.

Every year, the school considers this issue and it has always decided that it can handle more students.

This year is different.

This year, the school already has almost 2500 students inside the building. This year, the hallways are even more crowded than they have ever been before.

The school seems like it is about to burst.

And a \$13 million renovation project is on the horizon that will push students out of normal classroom space.

Something has to be done.

When OPS decided to establish its open enrollment policy a few years ago, it was widely praised. Now, students are able to decide where they want to go to school no matter where they live in the city.

To Central administrators, capping enrollment is about as popular as the plague.

The school would close the door to many students from around the city. These students would help to continue to enhance Central's great reputation.

Possible Honor Roll students and superb athletes may go to other schools if a cap is instated, but none of this really matters.

The only thing that matters is that the size of the school's student body is getting out of control. It has been growing for six years and shows no sign of slowing down. To put this increase in perspective, during the 1996-97 school year, there were less than 2000 students attending Central.

Limiting freshmen enrollment would solve overcrowding. That way, students who currently attend the school would stay

here and the population would be controlled.

But other problems arise when deciding how to cap enrollment. Should some students be allowed to attend Central automatically or should everyone be placed in a lottery and selected at random?

A mix of both options would be the best for the school. Students who live in the school's attendance area should be given precedence when deciding who can come to Central and who cannot. The students who wish to "opt-in" should then be placed in a pool to receive the open positions.

This way, students who would normally expect to attend Central would be allowed to. These students would not have to think about how they were going to get to school everyday because it would already be decided.

Some might think that a better way would be to give everyone an equal chance, but that could cause many problems.

If the school only drew names from a lottery and did not consider where a student lives, a student who lives only blocks away from Central might be bused out to another school.

This would create a lot of hassle for the student. It would be a lot easier if these students were automatically allowed to attend Central.

Capping the school's enrollment for next year is something no one wants to do. But by using a little common sense, the school should be able to get through these tough few years without major problems.

And who knows? Maybe Central will be able to handle more students once the renovations are complete in 2004.

But enough is enough for now.

EDITORIAL
The opinion of
the Register

HEROES & ZEROS

- Omaha City Council

Earlier this month, the council approved a grant that will place police officers in middle schools across the city. The money will come from a federal grant and the officers will serve the same roles that they do at the city's high schools. Most importantly, these officers will develop a positive relationship with the students. They will also help keep the schools safe. Officers will be able to break up fights and help administrators with daily occurrences at schools. Good job. The board realized that after instating officers at high schools, putting them in middle schools would be another great move.

- Planners of Central renovations

The decision to move the starting date for air conditioning the school back a year was a great move on the parts of the parties involved in the Central renovations. Because the school was unable to receive portables from the district to hold classes for next year, it would have been a huge mess if they started the plan when first scheduled. Now, the school will have an extra year to plan out how to move the students who will be displaced by the construction crews. But what happened in the last few months should be a lesson for them. They cannot afford to rely on the fact that they may receive portables anytime in the near future. There are a lot of other schools that need them, too. School administrators should take the initiative and start to think about what they can do in "the worst case scenario." Areas in the basement that only serve as storage space should be cleared out in case the school needs to hold classes there. This is not to say that portables will not be available, it's just that the school cannot keep postponing the date to start the project.

- Smokers in the bathrooms

Smoking in the bathrooms at Central has always been a problem the school has had to deal with, but a new twist has been added this last month. Two fires have started in two separate bathrooms, leading to an announcement by principal Gary Thompson. Now, not only are teachers having to be concerned about what they will teach in their classes for the day, but they also have to brush up on some fire-fighting techniques. This action is despicable and cannot be tolerated. Not only is smoking in school illegal, but it is now starting to result in the destruction of school property and setting off false fire alarms that confuse students. It is only a matter of time before one of these smoking students causes a major problem.

- Writing tickets to fighters at school

After the amount of fights that have occurred at Central this school year, including one this month that attracted a crowd of hundreds, the school has started to have students involved in fights ticketed for disturbing the peace. Although this is a step in the right direction, it leaves a lot to be desired. Students do not care about being ticketed when they fight at school. A simple fine will not deter a lot of fights from happening. Instead, the school should crack down on fights in another way. Students should be immediately suspended and expelled. Especially now, as the population of Central continues to grow to unheard of numbers, the school needs to send the message that it will not tolerate this juvenile behavior any longer.

Movies mold kids into gullible youth

Watching movies made me stupid. Over the past 16 years, I have wasted hours of my precious time mindlessly staring at some glowing screen that is showing cinematic drivel, and what I have to show for it? Nothing, except for the fact that I am now



LONG STORY SHORT
Kaitlin Butz

I'm not stupid in a traditional way, my dad did not marry his sister. The way stupid is probably worse. I'm as gullible as can be. I believe in the Disney style tripe and have no initiative to do anything whatsoever. I've been trained to think that if I just sit back and wait, everything will come to me, in less than two hours and with a stylized happy ending. Look at Cinderella and Sleeping Beauty, two of my many childhood heroes. Their lives were horrible at first, but the gallant prince on the white horse came in and made everything all better. So it would seem perfectly logical to

me that when my life sucks, some dashing nobleman would sweep in and make things all better, right?

Obviously I'm wrong. That sort of thing just doesn't happen, at least not to me. But it took me long enough to realize that. If I wanted to take the easy way out, I would blame my mother for all of this. With her feminist beliefs and fully stocked bookshelves of Gloria Steinem and Betty Frieden, it should have been her prerogative not to let me fall into this trap of "The Man."

My other childhood film favorites are just as bad. My Little Ponies could just fly away when they had problems. She-ra could wield the Sword of Power. The Ninja Turtles could fling pizzas and go to their rat guru guy.

I don't have a rat guru guy. Other movies made me think that if a situation is ever really bad, you will come out the winner in the end. Not only that, but there will be this huge scene where you show up your enemy and then

everyone cheers and lifts you up on their shoulders or something.

What happens after that, I do not know. Apparently in real life, the screen doesn't fade to black and the credits don't roll.

This belief made me non-confrontational. I have no spine at all, any type of confrontation or confession petrifies me. So I just avoid them at all costs, which isn't a whole lot better. But in the back of my mind, there is always a little voice saying, "Just give it a little more time and you'll show them all the truth and then everything will be great." And no it's not Tony the Tiger.

As I got older, teen movies began damaging me, potentially worse than childhood ones.

It took me forever to realize, I won't find a Lloyd Dobler, at least not around here. If you are not familiar with the movie "Say Anything" and John Cusack's role of Lloyd Dobler, then you have not truly

lived.

No one's going to sit below my window with a boom box playing "In Your Eyes" to try and win me over, even though I've been ignoring him for weeks.

This makes me sad, even though "In Your Eyes" is one of the cheesiest songs ever, it's the thought that counts.

But I don't get "In Your Eyes," though I had a guy sing a Backstreet Boys song to me once. Sadly this was fairly recently, it might have been cute for 13 year olds.

I guess it is sort of like that line in "High Fidelity" (another genius John Cusack movie), where Rob Gordon asks, "Do I listen to pop music because I'm miserable? Or I am I miserable because I listen to pop music?"

In my case, it's "Do I watch bad movies because I'm stupid? Or I am stupid because I watch bad movies?"

I would answer that question, but I've got to go meet someone for a 9 p.m. movie out at AMC.



Top ten worst rejected Disney movies

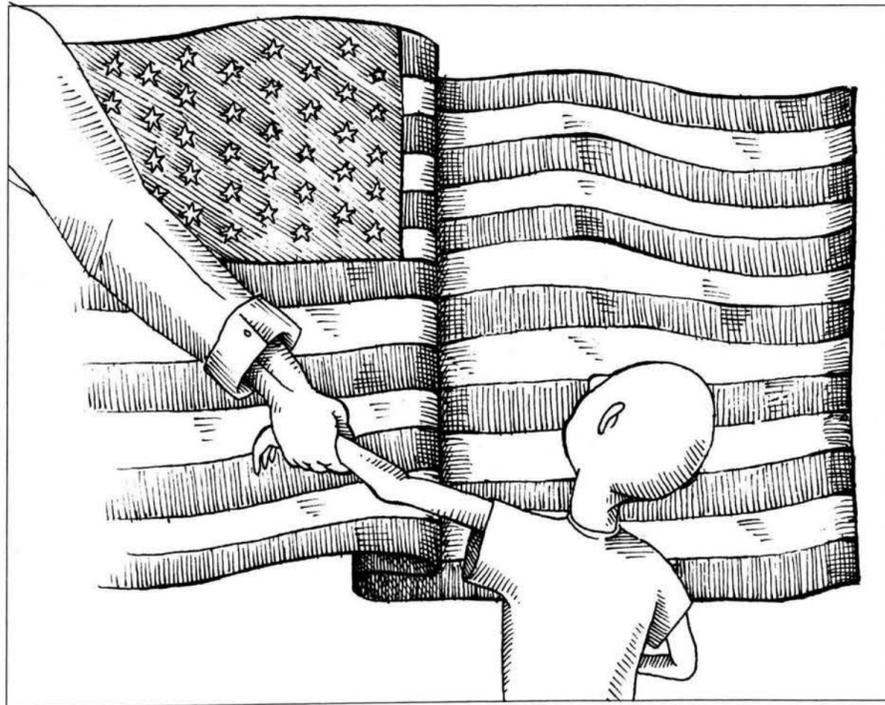
1. Sleeping Beauty Joins the Taliban. You've seen her in one of your favorite fairy tales, now see her in the Middle East.
2. Beauty and the Yeast. See how the hottest girl in all of France makes the best bread in all the Rhineland.
3. Pinocchio: the Boy Behind the Nose
4. George Dubbya and His Seven Dwarfs
5. Simba vs. King Kong: The Battle for New York
6. Pee Wee Herman in Fantasia 2002. He's back and in fine form in this 18-hour special with lights and a better soundtrack.
7. Minnie Mouse Gone Wild. Just call 1-800-4MINNIE and this great video could be yours for only three payments of only \$19.99.
8. Pocahontas takes on Daytona
9. Cinderella: The Unedited and Uncensored Version
10. When Disney Characters Attack

LETTERS, E-MAILS, FAXES AND CARTOONS

Drawn & Quartered

After the Board of Education started to require high school students to recite the Pledge of Allegiance, some Central students commented about whether it was a good policy for the school to practice. Some refuse to recite because of various personal reasons while others wish all students could stand up and respect the country during homeroom.

By Connor Meigs



Pledge stands for wrong things

In response to Doug Meig's article "OPS makes pledge mandatory," I found it to be unjustified, unresearched and accusational.

I am a student in Mr. Larson's class who refuses to stand and recite the Pledge. People would like to think I just want to be different, but they are sorely mistaken.

First, I refuse to pledge to something I don't believe is the truth. This country was founded on imperialism for economic reasons. The foundation has not changed and I find it disgusting.

We speak this pledge to remind ourselves of freedom and justice our country is supposed to provide, but I see little of either in our society. Our liberties are chosen by political moneygrubbers who care none of my ideals, morals or beliefs.

I can't help but chuckle at my peers who rise to pledge to a piece of cloth and wonder if they truly believe in what they are saying.

I am thankful for my life, but practices here in America need to change before the people of this country can be free and have justice for all, not just those with deep pockets.

John Lueth, 12

the REGISTER Letters wanted

Letters to the editor can be dropped off in room 315 or the mailbox in the courtyard. All letters must be signed and include the author's grade. Unsigned letters will not be printed. Letters may be edited for clarity, length and accuracy.

Complaints about pledge weak

When we were attacked on Sept. 11, many of us were shocked to say the least.

But now, when students are asked to stand for the Pledge every morning, I hear complaints.

Throughout the day, I hear about "forced patriotism" and how "unfair" it is to have to stand while the Pledge is being recited.

I feel that not everyone should have to say it, but the least you could do is stand and keep your mouth closed while the rest of us do.

Danielle Howsden, 11

Fires in bathrooms disappoint

I would just like to thank those people who started the fires in the bath-

rooms. It was comforting to know that people are that stupid.

Thank you for that loud fire alarm that sounded. I congratulate you on your success of smoking illegally in school and how you can tell all your friends how cool you are and laugh about how funny it would be if something really serious happened and a real fire started.

It would be so cool to see your friends, teachers and peers all die in a fire that you started because you know, that is so cool.

Alannah Keleyhers, 11

Diversity story covers school well

As one of the sponsors of Minority Scholars, I would like to thank the staff of the Register for including Minority Scholars in your article on diversity.

Just to clarify a point in the article, Mrs. Kathy Maloney and I worked together to develop the program six years ago. It was certainly a team effort then as it continues to be now—with the addition of Mr. Jimmie Foster.

Our organization continues to grow and develop. Once again, we appreciate the work of the Register staff in covering our progress.

Terrie Saunders, English teacher

the REGISTER

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

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).

Recently, the Register won a National Pacemaker from NSPA and a Cornhusker Award from NHSPA.

This year, the Register has won two consecutive Best-of-Show competitions at JEA/NSPA's national journalism conventions.

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

Signed editorials are the opinion of the author alone and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of Central High School or the Register staff. Readers are encouraged to send letters to the editor to room 315.

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

The use of pen names is not permitted. Unsigned letters are not printed.

Letters may be edited for length, clarity, accuracy and taste. Letters containing substantial misrepresentation of fact are not considered.

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REGISTER YOUR OPINION

What do you think about the reinstatement of the "Pledge of Allegiance" into Central by the Board of Education? Do you recite it? Do you think anything should be changed about how the school handles the policy?



"I think it (the Pledge) is good. It should be incorporated back into classrooms."

Pascha Fountain, 10



"I think it is good because we need to know about our country and what it stands for."

LeToya Bass, 12



"It is good that they can't force us to say it, but we still get in trouble in my class if we don't stand up with our hands on our hearts."

Andrew Clark, 9



"It's respectable toward the United States. I think we should have always done it, not just because of the terrorist attacks"

Angie Medina, 11



"I think the Pledge is not necessary. People don't say it anyway."

Robbie Millatmal, 10



"I agree with saying it. It (the Pledge) is only ten seconds out of your day."

Pat Venditte, 10



"I think it's all right for the people who say it, but the Pledge is elementary."

Sarah Stowell, 9



DIMESTORE HOOD
 Chris Aponick

Hockey dad ruins youth competition

America used to love winning, but that has all changed. The lumbering, hug-happy, fluffy bear of political correctness shot the concept of triumph right between the eyes.

Now the whole world likes to live in a happy place where everybody is special and nobody ever has a problem. This is the suburban mindset. The same thought process that says moving out into a little cluster of identical houses on streets that never go straight is going to make all the world's problems float away is strangling the life out of youth sports.

Instead of teaching children that losing is a part of life, many youth sports leagues have switched to a more PC format. Nobody wins. Parents are not allowed to cheer and everybody receives a medal.

Well, isn't that special?

The kids probably love this, too. A seven year old can go onto the field, score nine points (which are just for play) and receive the same award as the kid who can't put his Velcro strap shoes on the right feet gets.

This will really help America retain its superpower status.

Imagine one of these non-competitive suburbanite kids in the White House.

Army general: "Mr. President, we need to cripple New Zealand's airstrike capability if we are to win the war."

President: "Ah, shucks. We can't. I don't want to destroy New Zealand's sense of self-worth. How about we all just say the United States is good and New Zealand is good and all go out for some low-fat tofu pizza with a side of Nutra-Grain bars."

Is this how America should be? If we keep on encouraging this sort of passiveness in our kids, we might as well entrust our economy to MC Hammer and redesign our flag to resemble a doormat.

This move to kill the spirit of the next generation isn't something that just happened on a whim. It's a vast overreaction to a rarely occurring problem.

Parents in the stands were getting into arguments and fights, just like what has happened for decades.

Then finally, one father kills another at a hockey game. Now parents have to attend classes to teach them how to act appropriately at games, taking the competition out of the games altogether. Thanks for ruining it for us, hockey dad.

This must be sickening to some older people. Grandfathers who watched their brothers die on Normandy now have to stomach an America that is becoming soft and non-confrontational.

These men dealt with the same sports arguments. They would exchange words, drink a few beers, get in their trucks and go home. Now they have to watch a generation that is afraid to even sip a beer and get into a car within the next three weeks.

The whole concept of youth leagues is dying and so is the competitive edge of a generation.

Which brings me back to my main question. What's so bad about winning? If you can answer this without talking about feelings and how parents kill each other, I'd like to hear about it. Chances are you can't.

WORLDS APART?

Even after other districts changed their vacation schedules, OPS still dismisses its students depending on Easter. This obvious religious favoritism isolates non-Christian students.

Omaha Public School administrators need to take notes from Millard.

Recently, Millard School District officials decided to revise the district's schedule for next school year. The biggest change affects when the district will dismiss its students for spring break.

Now the vacation will come during a week in

March and not during April, like it has been for years.

The break will come in between third and fourth quarters, instead of immediately after Easter. This changes when the objectivity of the school vacations is being questioned by many.

And now, spring breaks actually serves a practical purpose. Well, at least in Millard they do.

But OPS has not caught on.

Even though the district has recently revised its spring break policy for next school year, the break still surrounds the Christian holiday.

It's a little shorter, but it still serves the same purpose: to give Christian students a chance to celebrate Easter without worrying about making it to school the next day.

And it's the same with Christmas and winter break. But other holidays, like Hanukkah and Passover, don't get such special consideration.

Why does the district dismiss students for some holidays but not for others? More specifically, why does the district dismiss students for important Christian holidays but ignore others?

School officials can always hide behind the political correctness of these dismissals. To the school's defense, they are officially called winter and spring breaks.

But to say that Christian holidays do not affect when students are dismissed is to completely ignore the writing on the wall. Every year, the date of Easter Sunday changes and spring break changes to compensate for it, too.

Without fail, spring break always begins or ends on Easter weekend. Whether the break is three days long or lasts an entire week, the same scheduling trick always exists.

This special consideration is not given to any other holidays.

Whether they are Jewish, Muslim or Shinto, the district does not make it a big priority to change the schedule in order to allow students to observe them.

It is obvious that the district is not maintaining a proper balance.

Especially for a school that cherishes diversity like Central, this policy is extremely harmful and controversial.

The way the school has scheduled vacations for many years is hurting some students' learning opportunities.

Students are allowed to miss school for a religious holiday, but only with parental permission.

But if a student wants to observe a religious holiday that the school district does not dismiss school for, he or she has to miss an entire day of valuable instruction.

Why should a Jewish student have to miss a valuable day of school while Christian

students don't have to worry about it at all?

This religious indifference does not stop with vacations, though.

Last year, the school's prom was originally scheduled to be held on Passover. It was later bumped back a week once students notified school officials of the conflict.

Would this have ever happened on a Christian holiday? No way.

If school officials scheduled a dance to be held on Ash Wednesday or Palm Sunday, angry students and parents would have ran the school officials out of town. They would have never been able to have a second chance.

School officials need to realize that all OPS students and their families are not practicing Christians.

More importantly, the district's students and families are changing and becoming more diverse.

The school district needs to re-examine its vacation policy. If a significant amount of parents dismiss their children for a religious holiday, the district should consider dismissing all students for the day.

That way, students who observe the holiday will be able to stay on track with their studies. And for the rest of the students, they will just have a very valuable day off.

Also, by dismissing kids for other holidays, it will illustrate the importance of being tolerant of other religions.

An obvious problem arises when trying to change vacation days, though.

The state mandates that students stay in school for a determined amount of days each year, so the district can't go around granting vacations for every holiday. But the policy can still be revised.

For example, the district might be able to move "winter" break up a week so that it allows students to celebrate both Hanukkah and Christmas.

But even with this solution, a problem would arise with students who celebrate Kwanza. Or then, the district could shorten spring break and have a longer winter break like universities do.

And with the upcoming addition of air conditioning to Central, the district could lengthen the high school calendar and hold classes further into the summer.

Or, the district could leave it as it has been for years. The district could continue to cater to Christian students and their families.

But if the district truly wants to be politically correct, it should take another look at its school calendar and change it to make sure that every student has the same opportunity.

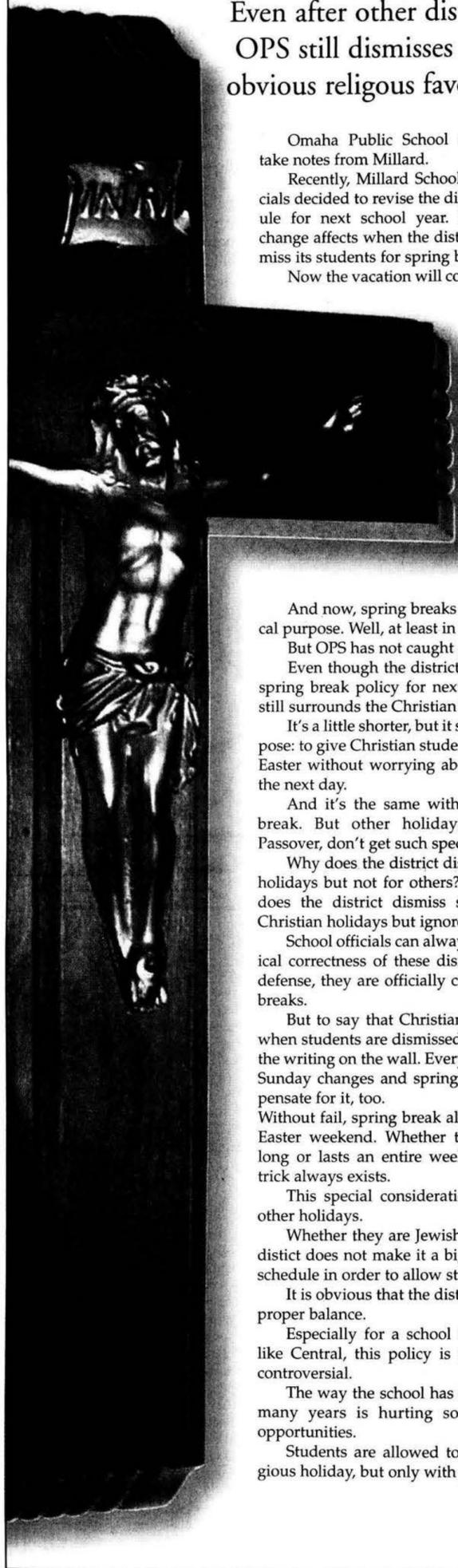
The district has the chance every year.

Maybe this will be the one when it happens.

EDITORIAL

.....
 The opinion of the Register staff

Graphics by LUENINGHOENER/THE REGISTER



Solution for saving time eludes stressed-out teenagers

Long ago, in a land far, far away, there were days when time and space were all relative.

These were the days when I was six and I could spend hours staring at the little white dots on the ceiling.

Things haven't changed much, except I am now staring at the little white dots on the ceiling of my math room. I can only stare at them for a few minutes at a time because if I stay in that position for too long, I fall asleep.

Like most other high school students, I am often confronted with the problem of having more things to do and no time to do it. I never really get anything done.

Sure I do the fun Trig homework and I read the chapter in history about the



THEY'LL ALL LAUGH AT YOU
 Danielle Rollins

Civil War in Russia, but it seems that the really important obligations I have always get put on the back burner.

Take, for example, college applications. These usually get started the night before the deadline and I finish them by dawn.

Why, you ask?

Because I had an important project due this week and had to spend hours upon hours reconstructing the Eiffel Tower out of dry macaroni noodles. And they say we don't learn useful skills in school!

So, I have decided that I have had enough. I am going to discover a way to use time efficiently and break the chain of procrastination.

I am convinced that there is a secret to getting your schoolwork, college applications, family obligations, social life and nightly Flintstones reruns to fit together in a nice, happy little package.

Instead of trying to do all my work by myself, wouldn't it be easier if my brother did my nightly chores, and I got the math-nerd to finish my Trig?

Unfortunately, everyone wants in on this scheme. No one actually wants to be responsible for their obligations.

Which brings me to my next plan of attack: a helpful twelve-step plan designed to keep myself (as well as the rest of the student population) from being distracted by life's obligations.

Step one: Television strike.

Step two: No eating and sleeping.

Step three: Forget about other things in the world.

Step four: Ignore the telephone.

Step five: Sloppiness.

Steps six through twelve: Who cares? Time loss goes hand-in-hand with needing money.

This is probably because making money takes time. When I was six years old and thought that \$3 was a lot of money, I wasn't at all concerned with the whole job thing. I could find \$3 in pennies in the cushions of my couch. And \$3 buys lots of candy.

Now, three dollars doesn't exactly cover the car payments. A job is in order.

In order to keep my job and get money, I actually have to go to work.

So to keep my schedule clear for the new obligation, I have to start cutting my workload a bit.

Let me begin by not actually finishing this column.



CHARGING THE MOUND
Troy Schulte

Childhood ambitions unrealized

A year ago this week I finally realized how horrible of an athlete I truly am. Last year I stepped onto the floor of Central's old gym to start a week long try-out for the basketball team. On the last day everyone circled around head coach Scott Edges as he read off numbers of those who made the team. I don't remember what my number was, but I do remember I wasn't called. That was the end of my sports career. (At least on the playing field.) I was eight years old when I picked up a baseball. After a year of tee-ball and two years of coach-pitch, I began minor league. Then, at the tender age of 10 my pitching career began. I pitched on a pretty pathetic team for a year. We won our first two games but then got on a losing streak that never ended. But I did make the first All-Star team. Then came 1995, which turned out to be my most successful year as an athlete. I know, I know. That's pathetic. But it's all I have. I was the opening day starter for my team one day and turned out a career performance. After four innings I had 10 strikeouts and had yet to allow a run. Then my coach did something that to this day I have not forgiven him for—he pulled me. That's right, though I had only allowed two players to reach first base (both on walks) and struck out 10 of 16 batters I pitched, I was benched. After that I was selected to the All-City team and we finished third in the city tournament. In 1995 I expanded my horizons: I took up a little football. I played on the Cowboys in L'il Pee Wee football where I played tight end and safety—for a little while. Towards the end of the season, I was moved to quarterback. Yes, I was a quarterback. Can you imagine me dropping back to pass or running the play? Neither can I. But for two games that's where I played. I put up some impressive numbers, too. I completed zero passes on three attempts and was sacked twice. After that year, it all went down the tubes. I didn't know it at the time, but at the age of 11 I had reached my athletic peak. I continued to play both sports up until high school. My freshman year I played third base for the reserve baseball team and defensive tackle for the freshman football team. Well, sort of. I saw action for exactly four plays in exactly one game at the tail end of a 40-0 blowout against South. My sophomore year I played reserve baseball in the spring and JV in the summer. Little did I know that JV team would be my last team ever. It's a little pathetic that I will remember just about every detail of just about every athletic event I ever participated in even if it was only for a few days? Probably, but oh well. It's wash-ups have to live for.

RUNNING HOT

Both girls and boys basketball teams boast impressive records after regular season



Graphic by LUENINGHOENER/THE REGISTER

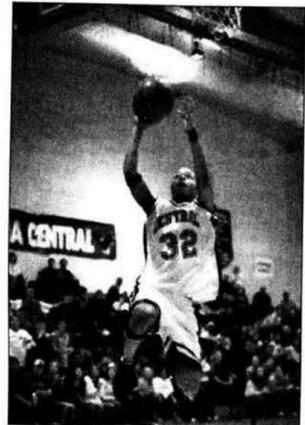
By Troy Schulte

After a loss in the first round of the district A-3 tournament to end a the 2000-01 season a disappointing 11-8, senior Kris Kuhn couldn't have been more let down. He knew his team had talent, but in his three seasons at the school, the team had yet to reach the state tournament. But once he heard then JV head coach Eric Behrens was taking over, he knew the days of lackluster records were over. "Once I heard that [Behrens was hired] I already knew," Kuhn said. "And when I heard who he put on his coaching staff, I knew it was possible." Kuhn knew that reaching the state tournament was not a far-fetched goal. The entire team thought they could accomplish even more. "Our goal was to go undefeated. We wanted to go 20-0, I'm actually a little disappointed," Kuhn said. The team didn't finish undefeated, but 17-3 is a vast improvement from its 11-8 mark a year ago. Kuhn said he can't really pinpoint the exact reason for the turnaround, he just knows they are finally playing up to their ability. Heading into the district A-3 tournament at North, the Eagles have won their last six games by an average of 15.6 points. Their only losses came on

opening night to Burke, a two-point loss to Papillion/La Vista following a nine game winning streak and a 21-point blowout suffered at the hands of Lincoln High. But Central avenged the Burke loss, beating the Bulldogs 60-40 in the first round of the Metro Holiday Tournament and the Papio loss came after they had racked up nine straight wins. Nobody knows what happened on Jan. 26, the night Lincoln High blew the Eagles out, 61-40. Prior to that game, the Eagles were rated No. 2 in the state, after the loss they dropped to No. 8 and have been fighting all season to move back up. After a 79-68 win over Bellevue West to wrap up the regular season, Central was rated No. 4 heading into district play. And Kuhn said he doesn't see anyone in the district, or in the rest of the state that they can't beat. "If we play as good as we can play we can beat anybody," Kuhn said. "If we have an off night we could get beat by a team like Northwest." A 17-3 record may bring high rankings and confidence to the basketball team, but it brings much more than that. The ranking puts fans in the seats. The number of fans who attend the boys basketball games are up from last year and Kuhn said he can tell. "When I was a freshman, nobody came to the game," he said. "Now almost every game we play we're play-

ing to sell-out crowds," he said. Kuhn isn't the only player who has noticed an increase in game attendance. Seniors Holly Greenamyre and Lauren Pauba said they notice more people going to the girls games as well. Pauba said it used to be that fans would show up at the end of games just to get a good seat for the boys game that followed, but not anymore. "I definitely notice an increase in the crowds earlier in the game," Pauba said. Other than an increase in attendance Pauba has noticed an overall talent increase in the players. She said the credit for that has to go to head coach Michelle Roberts. Roberts' first season at the helm of the Eagles was 1998-99, which means this year is the first year every player on the team has played only under Roberts' system—and that system is producing results. Last year despite having a losing regular season record, the Eagles won their district tournament and made the school's first state tournament appearance since 1985. After an early exit from the tournament last year, Central was rated high at the beginning of the season. But at times this season both Pauba and fellow senior Holly Greenamyre said they have been a little inconsistent. Central ended the regular season this year with a 13-6 record. Most of

the six losses however, have come in groups. After starting the season 4-0, the Eagles dropped four of their next five games, but two of those losses came to hands of the No. 1 rated team in the state, Bellevue East and another to the defending state champion, Marian. Pauba agrees with Greenamyre in that they are at times inconsistent, but said most of the teams they have lost to were highly ranked. "We've beat the teams we were supposed to beat," Pauba said. "We played the No. 1 team in the state (Bellevue East) twice and lost both times. Most of the games we lost we were the underdogs going in." Despite the streaky season, the Eagles won districts and will make a second consecutive trip to the state tournament, something Greenamyre said could be an annual occurrence. "I think it could be because we have a lot of young players coming in that could keep it going," Greenamyre said. Kuhn agrees with Greenamyre that both teams could quickly establish a tradition of playing in the state tournament, and said that maybe in the future when people think of Central athletics they'll think of basketball instead of what its commonly known for—football. "I think so, maybe someday," Kuhn said. "We have good freshmen and sophomores and good coaches. We could start our own little dynasty."



Sophomore Crystal Howard puts up two points for the Eagles during the regular season. The girls team ended with a 13-6 record, one of the best in recent years.

ANNIE WALDEN/THE REGISTER

Senior's 41st pin at districts earns spot in record book

By Chris Aponick

Add senior Lonnie Long to the list of accomplished Central athletes. At districts, Long broke the Central pin record with his 41st and 42nd pins. However, it would have been hard to tell that from his attitude after the match. His record-breaking pin was just that, another pin. "It's not that big of a deal," he said. Despite his cool demeanor after the match, coach Jimmie Foster said breaking the record is very impressive, especially considering how Long started out. Athletic director Paul

Pennington said he is very surprised that it is Long who ended up snapping the record. He struggled in his first year on the team and did not win many matches. "Honestly, when he started out he was not very good," he said. But maybe it was the slow start that whipped him into shape. Long has worked harder than average athlete to break the record, Foster said. Wrestling is one of the toughest sports, Pennington said. He said Long's presence in the record book is a testament to the time he put in to get better. It

shows that a kid who puts forth the effort will be rewarded. Foster said Long's success is due to his love for being out on the mat. "Lonnie just loves to wrestle," he said. Through his first year, he did not get any pins. He had learned how to look for the cradle and he needed to develop a good style to fit his body, Foster said. Although he is a senior his commitment has helped him get to the record in a fairly short time. "He basically broke the record in two-and-a-half years," he said. Long finished the season

with 43 pins after qualifying for state. The record Long broke was previously held by Will Garcia at 40 pins. Foster said this accomplishment will help place Long among some of Central's better wrestlers. He said that some people are making comparisons between Long and past Central greats like Herb Reese. In the time Lonnie Long has been here he has had almost as many pins as Reese had matches in his entire four years, he said. However, Long said he thinks his name will be at the top of the pin record list for a short period of time. Freshman Cavin Cooper already has set a new pin

record for freshmen and Long said he has a good shot at breaking the school record before he graduates. Pennington said if Cooper does not gain weight that places him in a weight class that is too difficult for him, he will continue to be very successful. Foster said Cooper's success this season could give him a realistic shot at breaking the mark soon. If Cooper keeps on going like he has, he could catch Long by the middle of his junior year. Devlon Webb also has a shot at the record, Pennington said. "Records are made to be broken," he said.

EAGLE REWIND

A look back at the past month in Central sports

Now is the time for Central to make its state title runs.

Wrestling has already finished its season, swimming is just finishing state and the basketball teams are currently trying to qualify for state competition.

The wrestling team won a fourth and sixth place at state, while the swimmers will have five individuals in state events in addition to relay teams.

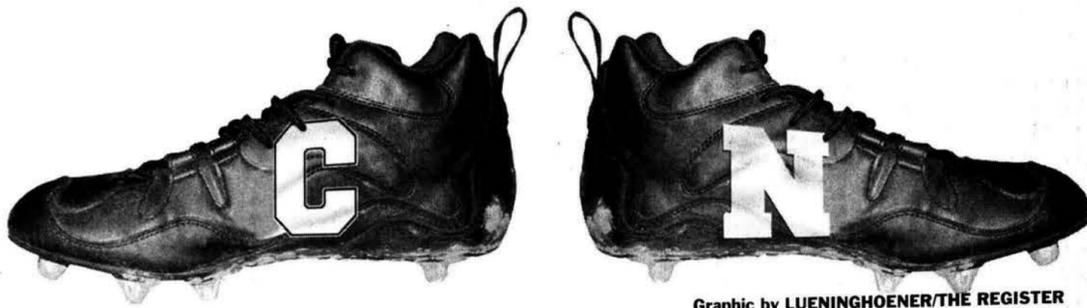
The basketball teams continue to win, especially the boys who once again sit near the top of the state title contenders.

This month's basketball contests featured series against Benson, Burke and Bellevue West.

All information as of Feb. 22

Boys Basketball			
2/4 Freshman A	LOSS	Prep	46-70
2/4 Freshman B	LOSS	Prep	39-47
2/5 Freshman A	LOSS	Millard North	29-45
2/5 Freshman B	LOSS	Millard North	25-29
2/7 Junior Varsity	WIN	North	72-67
2/8 Varsity	WIN	North	76-67
2/8 Freshman A	LOSS	Benson	40-57
2/8 Freshman B	WIN	Benson	59-35
2/11 Varsity	WIN	Lincoln East	76-35
2/12 Reserve	LOSS	Benson	47-64
2/14 Junior Varsity	LOSS	Benson	48-57
2/15 Varsity	WIN	Benson	65-59
2/15 Freshman A	LOSS	Burke	51-70
2/16 Varsity	WIN	Bellevue West	79-68
2/16 Junior Varsity	WIN	Bellevue West	90-78
2/16 Reserve	LOSS	Bellevue West	50-59
Girls Basketball			
2/4 Freshman A	WIN	Westside	39-28
2/4 Freshman B	WIN	Westside	14-5
2/7 Junior Varsity	WIN	North	54-30
2/8 Varsity	WIN	North	50-47
2/8 Freshman A	WIN	Millard South	57-53
2/8 Freshman B	WIN	Millard South	30-26
2/11 Varsity	WIN	Lincoln East	67-53
2/11 Reserve	WIN	Millard West	30-26
2/14 Junior Varsity	LOSS	Benson	49-50
2/15 Varsity	WIN	Benson	52-34
2/15 Freshman A	WIN	Burke	33-30
2/15 Freshman B	WIN	Burke	35-26
2/16 Varsity	LOSS	Bellevue West	44-55
2/16 Junior Varsity	WIN	Bellevue West	43-29
2/19 Varsity	WIN	Bryan	60-32
2/21 Varsity	WIN	Burke	59-39
Wrestling			
2/9 Districts at Fremont			
103. Cavin Cooper	SECOND		
112. Devlon Webb	THIRD		
119. Blake Gayer	FOURTH		
130. Nick Wright	SECOND		
160. Nick Jacobson	FOURTH		
189. Lonnie Long	THIRD		
215. Rafiq Kamal	FOURTH		
275. Tom Bischoff	THIRD		
2/14-16 State tournament in Lincoln			
112. Devlon Webb	FOURTH		
130. Nick Wright	SIXTH		

The Nebraska Path



Graphic by LUENINGHOENER/THE REGISTER

Next fall, David Horne will put on his cleats where several Central graduates have before him, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln

By Troy Schulte

When Joe Orduna signed his letter of intent to play running back at the University of Nebraska more than 40 years ago, he never got his own press conference, nobody even really knew it happened.

"I got up one morning and there was an assistant coach outside my house sitting in his car," Orduna, 53, who is now a junior high science teacher in Inglewood, Calif., said. "He woke me up at about 8 a.m., walked into my house and I signed the papers. That was that."

Flash-forward 40 years to how current Central senior David Horne announced his commitment to Nebraska. First there was a press conference containing virtually ever member of the local media on Jan. 23 just to announce his commitment to the school.

Then, just over a week later, there was another press conference so he and fellow Eagle Mark LeFlore, could sign their letters-of-intent to play at Nebraska next year.

Though the recruiting process has changed quite a bit over the years, the string of running backs funneling from Central to Nebraska has continued. After Orduna came Keith Jones in 1984, Leodis

Flowers in 1987, Calvin Jones in 1989, Ahman Green in 1995 and now, David Horne in 2002. Following a group of people who have accomplished so much could be intimidating for some people. All of them had at least one season in which they were the team's leading rusher and all of them except Flowers were named first team All-Conference at one time or another. Calvin Jones and Green were All-Americans.

But the list of name isn't intimidating to Horne. He said he is just proud to be able to say he played at one of the most prestigious positions in high school football.

"Hopefully I'll be able to live up to it," he said.

Not many people, including Horne, need to be reminded of the tradition of Central running backs continuing their careers at Nebraska, but few realize who started it. Orduna started four years at Central before going down to Nebraska. He was an All-Big-Eight-Conference selection who helped the Cornhuskers win their first ever national championship.

After college, Orduna played four years in the NFL before retiring from the game. He said he wasn't aware of

Horne's signing with Nebraska and doesn't know much about him, but what he does know is that he'll be under a great deal of pressure.

Not because he is a Central running back going to Nebraska, but just being a Cornhusker in general.

"I think just because he's playing at a major university he'll feel pressure," he said. "I just hope he'll be able to handle it."

But Horne said he doesn't feel type of anxiety, at least not yet.

"I just want to play my game when I get there," he said.

Orduna said if he could give Horne one piece of advice to help him during his career at Nebraska, it would be to prioritize and not dedicate his entire life to football.

"I hope he's not too impressed with himself because it doesn't matter who he has been," Orduna said. "I hope the young man realizes that people will forget who you are. Football is just a game. I just hope he realizes that and gets an education."

Horne said individual accolades are far from the top of the list.

"I want to get a degree and win a national championship," Horne said.

Defensive play lands sophomore starting spot

By Troy Schulte

Just prior to the opening tip-off of the boys basketball game against Millard South on Jan. 18, sophomore Rico Washington had a few butterflies in his stomach.

At opening tip-off, Washington wasn't in his normal place, which the first 11 games was on the bench.

Prior to the game, head coach E Behrens came to him and told him was going to start his first game as Eagle.

"I just tried to give them a spark from the start instead of coming in late and doing it," he said.

After a sluggish first quarter which the Eagles managed just two points, Washington's defense helped the team eventually win, running away 78-47. Statistically, he said didn't have a stellar game, scoring just five points.

But that's not what his team saw of him. Nevertheless, Washington remained in the starting lineup for next five games.

The average fan sitting in the stands wouldn't be able to notice Washington. You won't see him put big numbers. In fact, until the Bellevue West game, he had yet to score double figures. But he is still one of the most important players on the team because of his defense.

He said he just has to improve his jump shots and his game will be complete.

"I've been working on that and trying to get better," he said.

He said good teams won't stay Central after this year, or at least while he's there.

"I just want to keep winning," Washington said of his goals for next two seasons. "And also get some good recruiters to see me. I have potential to play Division I."

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YOUNKERS

Boy swimmers becoming scarce, coach says

By Chris Aponick

A practice pool three miles away, five trips a week, no early morning practices and very few boy competitors.

The difficulties of running a swim team have not stopped coach Lynne Braddock from doing her job.

Despite traveling to a middle school practice and the dwindling number of boys in the sport, Braddock has succeeded in averaging five or more qualifiers for state each year, including three boys and two girls this year.

Still she said the lack of high school swimming facilities and the small number of boy swimmers are problems that need to be solved.

Senior Tim Tompsett said Central has a small team and would like to see some work on changing this.

"I don't know what should be done, but OPS should do something," he said.

Braddock said using the pool at Norris Middle School has caused transportation problems as well as restrictions on how often the team can practice.

Even though a bus takes the swimmers over to Norris, some swimmers have trouble getting transportation back, she said.

Senior Doug Ekberg said transportation difficulties may deter some swimmers from participating and may make them quit the team.

The team practices at Norris because South and Burke have pools on site. OPS director of athletics Susan Mehaffey said since six middle schools do have pools, all the teams have a place to practice.

Braddock said a big disadvantage of using Norris' pool is that the team cannot practice more than a few hours after school.

She would like to practice in the morning starting at 5:30 a.m., but Norris would not open the pool until 6 a.m. That would take the time they could actually practice before leaving for school to under one hour.

Mehaffey said the afternoon practice times between the middle school and high school teams work out well together.

The middle schools are out 30 minutes earlier than the high school students. While the middle school swimmers are in the pool, high school swimmers can do warm ups and land drills.

"They have to try to cooperate," she said. "They have to because holes (for pools) aren't dug everywhere."

However, Tompsett said when middle schools have meets later than expected, Central has to wait to practice.

The biggest problem for OPS swim teams is the drop in the number of boys participating on a team, Mehaffey said.

Across the state there are fewer boys competing than girls, Braddock said. Even though Central has 2400 kids, only eight boys are on the swim team.

"There have got to be more boys that swim than that," she said.

Mehaffey said swimmers have to compete year-round to be good. It is hard for a swimmer to just go into a season and be successful.

"I don't know why there are so few boys, maybe they're afraid of Speedos," Ekberg said.



Senior Luke Keilion is one of three boy swimmers on the team who qualified for a state event this year. However, head coach Lynne Braddock is worried what will happen next year when these three boys graduate.

Photo by FAITH LYNN/THE REGISTER

Both coaches and swimmers have tried to get more members, but they have not been very successful. Even individual coaches have to walk the halls to find boys to swim, Mehaffey said.

Tompsett said Braddock tells them to talk to people, but most guys don't take swimming as a serious sport.

Ekberg said he has also tried to get people to come out and swim, but has not been very successful.

"Most people take it as a joke when I ask them," he said. "They don't realize how much fun it is."

Braddock said she has talked to kids at Norris.

This year, three boys will graduate, so she is hoping five or six new swimmers come in to replace them.

More kids are interested in basketball and wrestling. Kids on club teams are choosing not to swim.

"You have to work with what you have," Braddock said.

REGISTER PICKS

The sports staff calls 'em like they see 'em

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Central Winter Sports State Titles

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Girls Soccer

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Kris Kuhn

 Troy Schulte
Assistant Sports Editor

Duke Blue Devils

Boys Soccer

One

Crystal Howard

 Quentin Lueninghoener
Executive Editor

Missouri Tigers

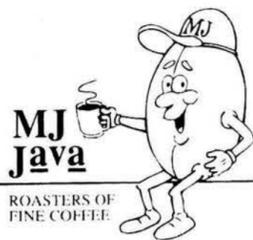
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Hittin' the slopes



To get into the spirit of the Winter Olympics assistant sports editor Troy Schulte spent a day at Mt. Crescent. After attending a beginner ski lesson with young children and putting up with a feisty ski instructor, Schulte took to the slopes himself.



All photos by EMILY NEUMANN/THE REGISTER



LEFT: Schulte learns how to stand on his skis with two of his new friends, Matthew, 9 and Sarah, 11, who eventually allowed him to ski with them down some of the less steep hills. ABOVE LEFT: Schulte creeps down the beginner's slope at Mt. Crescent before deciding to go for the big hill. ABOVE RIGHT: Schulte gets ready to head back home after a long day on the slopes.

Ski instructors are lunatics. That's what I learned after spending a day skiing at nearby Mt. Crescent.

Considering the Winter Olympics were taking place in Salt Lake City, this month I decided to try out my ski legs. So I called Jacqueline Ericson, the head of the Mt. Crescent ski school, to give skiing a shot.

That's when the confusion set in. First of all, she told me there was a chance there might be beginner lessons, and considering I've never skied before I figured that was the class for me, between nine and ten in the morning. So I take the 30-minute drive out to classy Crescent, IA, and when I arrived just wee-bit after 10 a.m. she flipped out.

"Well, a lesson has been out there for 20 minutes," she said in a British accent. "You're just going to have to sit around and wait to see if any more lessons will come in."

I don't know if you've ever been to the ski lodge at Mt. Crescent, but let me just say it isn't pushy by any means. A few tables, some chairs, a concession stand and a Pac-Man machine that doesn't work is the lowa version of a ski lodge.

Luckily, I wasn't sitting there very long. After about 10 minutes a few young kids waltzed in and I planned to join their group. Jacqueline asked the little girl's

mother if it was all right if I joined their group, but she had other plans.

"You know I don't really think that would be a good idea. I just don't want there to be any other distractions," the Mother said in her best force-my-kid-to-be-an-Olympic-skier-even-if-she-totally-hates-the-sport voice.

So I had to find a new group. And Sarah, 11, and her younger brother Matthew, 9, were more than happy to let me join their group. Once I found a group to ski with it was time to pay—and pay I did. It cost \$15 for a 90 minute lesson, \$12 for the skis and \$25 for a lift ticket, which was a total rip-off because I ended up riding the ski lift only twice. Jacqueline told me after I got my equipment to go down stairs and wait. But after a while she stormed into the equipment rental room where I was waiting.

"What are you doing? The lesson started 20 minutes ago, you're missing the instruction," she yelled at me.

That's why I say ski instructors are psychos, she didn't tell me where to go and she yelled at me for not knowing.

So I trekked outside to meet my instructor, his name was Cody and he was 14 years old. The kid is barely in high school and he's trying to teach me how to ski. The first thing he told me to do was ski down a slight hill about 20 feet

away. I tried, but about halfway there I lost my balance and hit the ground. Instead of being the "nice" instructor and helping me up he decided to be the "drill sergeant" and when I tried to grab on to him to help me up, he pushed me over.

"I'm not going to be out there on that hill to help you up am I? You are going to be all alone," he said.

Luckily Central sophomore Alex Bloom, a snowboarding instructor at Mt. Crescent, came along and gave me a hand.

After learning the basics my group combined with two other groups taught by a guy named Jason and Mr. Jerry and I'm-the-one-whose-Mom-forces-me-to-be-an-Olympic-skier-even-though-I-totally-hate-the-sport kid was in my group.

I was going to tell her that her daughter was distracting me, but I figured why ruffle feathers. There were about six other kids when the three groups combined forces and none of them were older than 11. Mr. Jerry made me fell that old.

"Okay. When you want to go faster, make the french fries, let me see the french fries. If you want to slow down, make a pizza," he said. He was to tell us to keep our skies straight if we wanted to go fast and if we wanted to go slower to make a

wedge with your skies.

After about a half an hour of that we took our first ride to the top of the mountain. The goal was to start at the top of the hill and to make it to the bottom without falling over.

I did that, but considering I weighed roughly 33 times more than anyone else in my class, I got going pretty fast. I couldn't remember how to stop without falling over and I was closing in on the ski lift, so I fell over.

After that Cody thought I had learned enough and he turned me loose. I had heard talk earlier about the biggest hill at Mt. Crescent, they called it "Jaws." They said if it was my first day I shouldn't go down it.

I took that as a challenge. While I was standing atop the hill, I started having second thoughts. But I said "forget it" and I went.

After about a second and a half I lost a pole and I found my face buried deep in the snow. I got back up, started again and about three seconds later, the same thing happened. I finally got to the bottom of the hill and decided my day was done.

So with that I turned in my equipment and walked out of the ski lodge thinking it was a pretty good experience. Except for the lunatics.

Wrestling team sends eight to state tournament, places only two

By Chris Aponick

Central almost won a state title in wrestling.

Sophomore Corey Ashburn took the 112 pound title this year. The only thing that prevented it from being Central's first wrestling state title since 1999 is the fact that Ashburn transferred to North High School.

However sophomore Devlon Webb took fourth in the 112-pound weight class and sophomore Nick Wright finished sixth

in the 130-pound division.

Central took one of the largest groups down to state in 30 years, Foster said.

Eight wrestlers qualified for the tournament.

Foster said the team's effort at districts garnered a third place finish out of eight teams.

The team's success at districts only started after a first round where they posted only one victory.

After that they turned it

around to qualify over half the district competitors for state. He said their success at districts showed the talent the team was capable of.

"We had ability to do this all year long, but we rarely have," Foster said.

Going in to state he said the team had the chance to get four medals.

His primary concern was that the team would be complacent with just going to state.

He said he wanted them to go to Lincoln to wrestle, not just hang out. If the team got consistent at once he said they could have done well.

However, a combination of problems caused Central to only get two wrestler into position to medal.

"With what we took down, we could have done better," Foster said.

The team had the potential to finish in the top ten and placed at

least five wrestlers at state if they would have kept several wrestlers from the end of last year.

However Ashburn's transfer and Mike Barnett dropping out hurt the team's overall strength, Foster said. Senior Lonnie Long was also bumped up to the 189-pound weight class, minimizing his state title chances.

He said the team performed about as well as it could considering how the year started.

The loss of Ashburn did give

freshman Cavin Cooper a chance to wrestle at 103.

Cooper, who finished second at 103 during districts will be one of the main title contenders at state next year.

The season has shown potential the wrestler have gone into next year, he said.

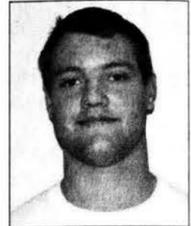
"We're trying to get back to being competitive," Foster said.

The team finished 2-2 in districts and could have been 4-3. Metros had not been cancelled

Signing On

Everyone heard about Central seniors Mark LeFlore and David H... signing their national letters of intent to play football for the University of Nebraska. However, few noticed when other Central athletes signed letters of intent as well.

Below are six other athletes who signed with a school, and their reasons why. Not pictured are Hill Greenamyre who will play volleyball for Northern Michigan and Calvin Sherman who will play football at Grambling.



Nick Lemek
UNK
Football
"I really like the atmosphere. Kearney dishes out the money."



Natalie Lubbert
Western Illinois
Volleyball
"They offered me the most money."



Michelle Lubbert
Western Illinois
Volleyball
"The team was pretty fun and was the school when I visited."



Angela Capeluppo
Hutchinson CC
Volleyball
"They offered a good deal and the campus is small and homey."



Kris Kuhn
Robert Morris
Basketball
"That's the school that my mom thought was best for me and hasn't steered me wrong yet."



Jamar Dorsey
Grambling St.
Football
"I'm happy to go over and that's a full-ride."

-Compiled by Jon Lathan

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THE ONLY TIME

Layne Gabriel

War movies shock, numb perceptions

Death, destruction, gunshots and the death.

We all know it happens, but there's a point where we don't need to see all of it.

War is a part of society for as long as man has existed. Now, it's the basis of so many modern films.

The whole recent war movie phenomena began with "Forrest Gump," which actually was a good movie, and when we got brutally dismembered by Pearl Harbor."

After audiences got to witness all of this destruction, movies like "Black Hawk Down" and "Hart's War" were released. I can understand the educational background of most war films, but interestingly, how many movies can you make about Vietnam before you keep repeating the same story over and over?

Some of the war movies were true breakthroughs or just brought to light a different circumstance. "Forrest Gump's" character development comes to mind, as does the unique story behind "Black Hawk Down."

I'm not saying all war movies are terrible, but most of them are done with many clichés that they are actually painful to watch.

Picture: the crunching of feet across wet streets, a sergeant yelling "Go Go Go!" and massive explosions.

Now multiply this by two hours and you have a war movie.

Not only that, but then you can multiply that by about 80 percent of the "action" section at any movie rental store, and that puts everything into perspective.

There are just too many of them.

Then the directors try and use their artistic licenses and throw in some bunk story that is impossible to believe and totally takes away from the film, except for the fact that one of them dies and then the entire audience bursts into tears.

No matter how hard they try, the war movies will never really show how horrible war is. We always think of the mad scientist that saves the day, but what about all of the civilians who die? What about the other side?

Viewers always root for the home team, but has anyone ever thought that the home team may be wrong?

Don't misunderstand me, I think that war in general is wrong, whoever is involved, but to use a film to glorify it and make it some huge patriotic movement is absolutely disgusting.

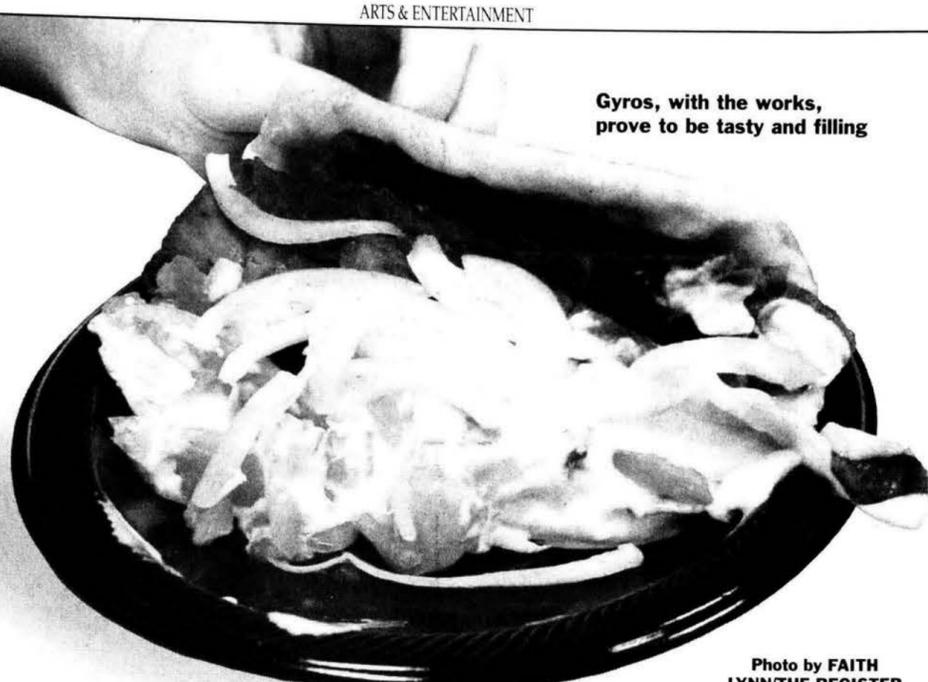
So few war movies actually focus on what happens to the spouse of the deceased or their children.

I think that war films have made Americans numb to the actual horrors of what happens during a war. All we see are enemies dying and a few guys on "our side," but it rarely teaches that war is stupid.

Of course, there are films with no moral content whatsoever ("American Beauty"), but there is a fine line between basic stupidity and something that can change the life of millions of people in the time it takes to light a match.

I'm not expecting change, but I expect everyone to put things like war into perspective.

Every time I see a war movie, I am disgusted that "humane" people would do such horrible things to other people, and I'm hoping that others can see where it's coming from.



Gyros, with the works, prove to be tasty and filling

Photo by FAITH LYNN/THE REGISTER

Greek grub grabs greedy tastebuds

By Kaitlin Butz

Traditional Greek and Mediterranean food, like gyros, lentil soup and Greek salads, can be some of the best food you will ever eat if prepared well.

If not, Greek food can be absolutely terrible. Luckily, Omaha is home to some great Greek restaurants that mix fabulous food with affordable prices.

King Kong

King Kong is an old favorite for quick Greek food.

It's located right off Dodge, which makes access easy, if traffic is not heavy. There is also a drive-through if one desires a gyro on the go.

There is a fairly wide variety on the menu.

Besides offering typical gyros, fries and burgers are also available.

King Kong is a fitting name for the restaurant, all of the portions are huge. A child-sized gyro may be enough for a person who is not extremely hungry.

The burgers are famously large and quite a feat for one to finish.

The food is pretty good, especially since it is prepared so quickly.

The gyros are good, but the meat can be a little dry.

However, the cucumber sauce is tasty enough to make up for most of that.

Though portions are plentiful, prices are still fairly reasonable.

They are slightly higher than regular fast food prices, but much below the prices of a formal Greek restaurant.

The setting is very casual, but slightly nicer than your average burger joint, which is a nice effect.

The tables are fairly small and cramped, so be prepared to spread out if accompanied by a large group.

King Kong proves to be the perfect medium between a fast food and a nice restaurant.

If you want a place to get pretty good Greek food, then this is the place for you.

Victor's Gyros, Falafel, & Mediterranean Food

It would be extremely easy to overlook Victor's, but that would be a huge mistake.

It is a fairly tucked away on a strip of Farnam street storefronts, but it is well worth the extra effort.

The restaurant has a cool Mediterranean décor, which gives the restaurant a nice atmosphere to enjoy a meal.

It is fairly small, but take out orders are also available and are prepared freshly within minutes.

The food at Victor's is exceptional. The lentil soup is amazing; it has a tomato base that really sets it apart.

The gyros are great. The cook heats up the meat and flat bread right when the order is placed so a hot meal is guaranteed.

Some may find meat's marinade a little salty, but overall the gyros are excellent.

Greek food at glance

King Kong

4409 Dodge St.

Great all around place with fairly low prices

RATING: of 5

Victor's Gyros, Falafel, & Mediterranean Food-

4007 Farnam St.

Excellent lentil soup and very fresh gyros

RATING: of 5

The Greek Islands

3821 Center St.

Slightly more formal than most other Greek places

Vegetarian menu offered

RATING: of 5

'Crossroads' showcases pop star Spears, little else

By Kaitlin Butz

"Crossroads" is the cinematic version of cotton candy: sweet, pretty and pink, but ultimately empty.

This is the first film role for pop star Britney Spears, who also came up with the plot line. It tells the story of three long-lost childhood friends who team up for a post graduation road trip.

All of them have grown in different directions since they were kids. Spears plays Lucy, the straight-A valedictorian who longs to escape from her dad's domineering rule. He has her all set up to live out the dream he has planned for her, which is to become a doctor.

Kit (Zoe Saldana) is the perfect popular girl who has her future all lined up. She has a seemingly perfect fiancée in California and cannot wait to get married.

Mimi (Taryn Manning) is the

stereotypical burnout, five months pregnant on graduation day.

The three reunite, somewhat reluctantly, and Mimi shares her plan of going out to California to audition for a record label. She eventually convinces the other two to come with her and her friend Ben (Anson Mount), who has a somewhat shady past.

Lucy only agrees to go if she can be dropped off in Arizona to reunite with her estranged mom.

The four take off on the road, with various mishaps along the way. They are low on cash to begin with, and when the car breaks down and they cannot afford

repairs, they have to resort to some interesting measures.

MOVIE REVIEW

"Crossroads" - PG-13

of 5

Directed by: Tamra Davis
Starring: Britney Spears, Taryn Manning, Zoe Saldana

As the three girls travel on, they reform their childhood bond. Secrets are revealed that strengthen the relationship between the trio. By the time Lucy reaches Arizona, she is reluctant to leave the trip, but she does anyway.

Her meeting with her mom is anything but ideal and Lucy rejoins her friends on the road.

Everything seems fine a when they reach LA, but events soon take a downward turn. Lucy almost goes home with her father, but at the last minute remains in California to live her dream of being a musician.

The movie is sappy and overdone and none of the performances are particularly strong. But Spears' main strength is showmanship and this movie displays it. Every aspect of the film is polished to present a seemingly flawless package.

This movie is not meant for everyone. Fans of Spears and those who have a soft spot for mindless sugary drivel will absolutely love this. All others will be able to see the cracks in the façade of this unoriginal coming-of-age film.

Latest Pinback release 'Blue Screen Life' builds on previous album's quality

By Matt Wynn

The dreamy voices of Pinback's Armistead Burwell Smith IV and Rob Crow sound like falling in love. They know how to turn minor chords into gravity rather than grimness and they produce their records like little buckets of paint splashed together gracefully.

Needless to say, the band's latest, "Blue Screen Life," is not disappointing.

The most recent endeavor is another studio achievement, with millions of layers of voices, subtle baritone guitars, and

warm melodies like points of light.

The second full-length from the San Diego band is faultlessly laced with two key elements: unaffected guitars and hypnotic, double-stitched vocals.

The laid-back, iridescent feel of Pinback's music is only augmented by the latest release, from the catchy melodies of "Concrete Seconds," to the surreal twangs of "Seville," the album manages to kidnap a listener's conscience and hold it hostage until the experience is over.

Unlike earlier material, the focus is

kept clearly on the harmonies, no matter how many odd time signatures get thrown in. Think Devo, The Cars, Modest Mouse, Can and Primus all put together—and then think of none at all.

"Blue Screen Life" has enough tricky time signatures to keep even the most analytically-retentive musician guessing what comes next, but at the same time, tracks like "Prog," "Concrete Seconds" or the exquisite single "Penelope" are so pretty and eloquent that they'll be stuck in your head for weeks.

Featuring an all-star cast of the most talented from bands like the melancholy Black Heart Procession and the pretentious symphony of Three Mile Pilot, then back to the playful Thingy and incomprehensible Heavy Vegetable, Pinback was a wild card to begin with.

But after two moving albums and one heart-rending EP, the band looks as if it is ready to take whatever gets thrown its way and make it harmonious, surreal and utterly invigorating.

Beautiful. Absolutely beautiful.

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Central's Top

The Register surveyed 453 students about their favorite

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The number one picks for comedy, drama, western, action, horror and science fiction.

'American Pie'



Courtesy of UNIVERSAL PICTURES

Jim (Jason Biggs) is caught in an embarrassing moment by his parents in students' favorite comedy "American Pie."

Teen sex romp "American Pie" sure knows how to create laughs.

Four high school seniors, Oz, Finch, Jim and Kevin make a pact to lose their virginity before they head off for college. The guys search for the perfect prom date who will also join them in the sack, and unfortunately, only a select few of them are successful.

But that's all right. The movie is all about the fun of the chase.

The film has a lot of entertaining moments without being too over the top. It is obviously made for teens and college students.

The script was well done and the plot is full of some great ideas that few other filmmakers had previously stumbled upon.

"American Pie" is far from just playful searching for a little action.

It includes some quaintly placed lessons, such as using protection and waiting for the right person, although not all of them took that small bit of advice. Aside from popular teen actors, Chris Klein, Shannon Elizabeth and Tara Reid, the film also features a cameo appearance from the members of Blink 182.

The film was very typical, with relatively older jokes, but the writers came up with a creative way to use them. All in all, "American Pie" is a fun flick to watch with your friends and get a few laughs.

- Layne Gabriel

'Star Wars'



Courtesy of WARNER BROTHERS
Obi-Wan Kenobi (Alec Guinness) shows off his Jedi skills in the first "Star Wars" movie.

"Star Wars" is possibly the best science fiction movie ever made and set the tone for the rest of the Star Wars saga.

The first "Star Wars" was actually the fourth in the series. The story is written very smoothly so that the viewer does not even realize that it starts in the middle of the epic tale.

"Star Wars" displayed awesome graphics and proved that there would always be room for technological advances when it comes to the business of making movies.

Originally made in 1977 the movie focuses on a universal rebellion forming against the evil Galactic Empire ruled by Emperor Palpatine.

Princess Leia (Carrie Fisher) leads the rebellion but is captured and imprisoned by Darth Vader who is the Emperor's right hand man (pardon the pun).

Luke Skywalker (Mark Hamill) buys two droids for his uncle's farm on the planet Tatooine, not knowing that his life will never be the same.

Luke's journey is majority of the story line, setting up events for next movies in the series.

After finding a message from the captured princess Leia on R2D2, Luke Skywalker joins Jedi Knight Obi-Wan Kenobi (Alec Guinness) and Han Solo (Harrison Ford) in a mission to rescue the princess and destroy the Galactic Empire once and for all.

"Star Wars" was written and directed by George Lucas who possibly created the most influential science fiction movie of the century.

It is easy to see why "Star Wars" is considered to be a classic. Do not miss out on the movie that started the Star Wars phenomena.

- Danny Whelan

'Cruel Intentions'



Courtesy of COLUMBIA PICTURES

The sultry teens of "Cruel Intentions," clockwise from bottom right are Selma Blair, Reese Witherspoon, Ryan Phillippe and Sarah Michelle Gellar.

Boy likes girl. Boy's stepsister makes bet he can't "get" innocent virgin girl.

Boy gets innocent virgin, but not without trouble. Stepsister eats her words and gets some serious revenge. "Cruel Intentions" pulls off the teen love thing while still remaining scandalous and keeping some intriguing mystery to it.

Touted as a teenager flick, "Cruel Intentions" goes against the norm and portrays the darker side of affection and private school.

Although the film is filled with some interesting manipulation and romance, the cast pulls it off flawlessly. The acting by Ryan Phillippe, Sarah Michelle Gellar, Reese Witherspoon and Selma Blair is outstanding. Normally in teen films, acting talent is traded in for the "look of the minute."

But not in this film. Here, the looks are only meant to uphold the high-class image the movie is trying to project. Steamy love scenes and scandalous plot twists are prized above everything else.

Gellar plays Kathryn, an excellent smoldering temptress who captures the bodies and minds of pretty much any man that passes her by, including her stepbrother, Sebastian (Phillippe).

The film is beautiful in general, highlighting the benefits of being rich kids in society at large and, of course, trying to get girls to include in Sebastian's book of seduction.

The cinematography is compelling and sets the mood for the entire film, which is dark and somewhat risqué.

"Cruel Intentions" is just plain evil and it's hard to understand why something so bad can be so good.

- Layne Gabriel

'Blazing Saddles'

Any movie that manages to make fun of the Ku Klux Klan, lounge-lizard music and an actor named Slim Pickens is a good one.

Any Western movie that manages to do the same is simply amazing.

"Blazing Saddles" is Mel Brooks at his peak. His biting sense of satire is particularly biting. His inappropriate comments are particularly inappropriate.

Forget "Spaceballs" and "Young Frankenstein," this is Brooks' crowning achievement.

The film is centered on a crooked state secretary, Hedley Lamar (Harvey Korman), and his attempts to take the town of Rock Ridge so he can flatten it to make way for a railroad.

Eventually, his crooked actions lead to the death of the Rock Ridge sheriff. The town demands a replacement, and the governor sends Bart (Cleavon Little), a black city-slicker to take the reins of the town.

Almost the entire movie deals with Bart and his attempts to win over the townspeople, who are put off by both his attitude and race.

Eventually, he teams up with the Waco Kid (Gene Wilder), and the two easily become the most formidable duo in the West.

As with all of Brooks' films, the plot is weak. But comical situations and quotable lines propel the movie through even its most boring stretches, making for quite the enjoyable cinematic experience.

This film, while not exactly "Gone With the Wind," is certainly something to experience.

- Matt Wynn

'The Exorcist'

Still as thrilling and frightening to audiences today as it was when it was originally released, "The Exorcist" remains a horror classic.

This creepy tale of a young girl possessed by a malevolent spirit will send chills down the viewer's spine. The movie starts with a fairly tranquil setup of Regan McNeil (Linda Blair) and her family, living a quiet suburban life.

This tranquility does not last long. While playing with an Ouija board, Regan unleashes a demon by the name of Captain Howdy.

Captain Howdy possesses the girl, but it takes a while for her family to notice the transformation.

By the time her family realizes what has happened to her, Regan is beyond their help. At first it seems incomprehensible to her family that anything supernatural could possibly be going on.

Her mother enlists the aid of two priests, hoping for the best.

The two are ultimately able to save the girl, but not without paying a huge price.

The movie is notorious for some absolutely disgusting scenes, like the infamous pea-soup scene and the 360-degree turn Regan's head makes, and they truly are gross, especially for those who have weak stomachs.

This is one of essential horror movies. It is an amazing mix of psychological terror and physical gore that is legitimately frightening in every way.

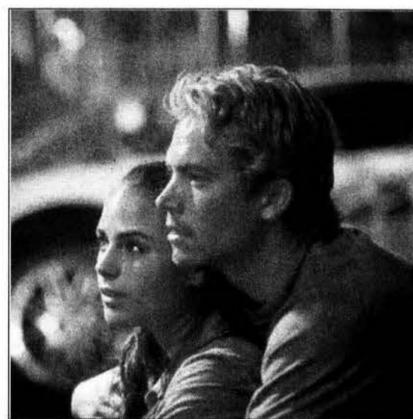
"The Exorcist" is a rare type of scary, the type of frightening that can keep you awake all night after you see it for the first time.

Mixing religious and morally unacceptable acts is quite a cocktail. The re-released version of "The Exorcist" contains some extra scenes not included in the original.

For serious fans of the movie or for those who think they can take the extra scare, it's a must see.

- Kaitlin Butz

'The Fast and the Furious'



Courtesy of ORIGINAL FILMS

The star-crossed lovers of "The Fast and the Furious," played by Jordana Brewster and Paul Walker

Nox.

Cooling system.

High-speed auto theft.

Three things I thought would never be uttered in the same movie, but when "The Fast and the Furious" came out, it disproved shabby expectations and came to be a known as a great action flick.

The fact of the matter is, "The Fast and the Furious" was the most memorable movie of last summer.

It movie was supposed to flop. It was supposed to be empty, over-publicized and a waste of a lot of money.

It wasn't.

Dominic Toretto (Vin Diesel), is one of the best street racers in Los Angeles. Brian Spindler (Paul Walker) is an undercover cop and secretly aspiring street racer. Mia Toretto (Jordana Brewster), is Dominic's sister who catches Spindler's eye as the movie's engaging and inviting plot opens up.

The story tells of Spindler as he attempts to infiltrate the street racing underground of Los Angeles, headed up mainly by Toretto, an expert racer and suspected automobile thief.

"The Fast and the Furious" had a surprisingly moral, decent and even intelligent style to it.

For anyone with a love of cars, a love of movies or a just a love of things of high quality, this movie should top the list of things to check out.

- Steve Packard

THE TOP 5

in each genre

Best Comedy

"American Pie"

Comedy Runners-Up

"Billy Madison"

"Scary Movie Two"

"Tommy Boy"

"Half Baked"

Best Western

"Blazing Saddles"

Western Runners-Up

"American Outlaws"

"Wild Wild West"

"The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly"

"The Sons of Katie Elder"

"Tombstone"

"Tombstone"

"Tombstone"

Best Drama:

"Cruel Intentions"

Drama Runners-Up:

"A Beautiful Mind"

"Requiem for a Dream"

"The Green Mile"

"The Hand that Rocks the Cradle"

"Love and Basketball"

Rental Picks

movies to rent. Here are the top picks in six of the categories.

Best Horror:

"The Exorcist"
 "The Shining"
 "Halloween"
 "It"
 "What Lies Be-
 neath"

Best Action:

"The Fast and the
 Furious"
 "Rush Hour"
 "Action Runners-Up"
 "Rush Hour Two"
 "The Matrix"
 "Fight Club"



Morpheus (Lawrence Fishburne) is attacked by one of Central students' favorite action movies, "The Matrix."

Best Science Fiction:

"Star Wars"
 "Science Fiction Runners-Up:"
 "ET"
 "Planet of the Apes"
 "Spaceballs"
 "Mystery Science Theater"

RUNNERS-UP

The films that took second place honors in comedy, horror, action and westerns.

'Billy Madison'



Courtesy of WARNER BROTHERS
 Billy Madison (Adam Sandler) tries to seduce his teacher.

Going back to elementary school could never have been as much fun as it was in "Billy Madison."

Billy Madison's (Adam Sandler) dad takes his sweet time trying to figure out who to give the company business to.

It's between Billy and his arch nemesis Eric Gordon (Bradley Whitford) and if Billy wants the company then he's got a two weeks to finish each grade, one through 12.

The film mainly centers around Billy's crush on his third grade teacher Veronica (Bridgette Wilson).

Along the way, Billy picks up cool little kid friends, and he helps them along their way.

The film in general is hilarious. Sandler, along with Norm MacDonald and Chris Farley highlight the film with silly, creative characters and

Sandler flicks kind of went downhill since "Billy Madison," so it's a relief to see something that is funny, but still has a sense of tact to it. Mind you, "Billy Madison" is absolutely ridiculous, but that's quite all right.

The plot is somewhat silly, but it's a cute idea. He pelts kids with dodge balls, looks at porn and jetski's in the fountain in front of the house.

Probably the funniest part is the penguin. Whenever Billy gets ridiculously hammered, he starts to notice a rather large penguin following him wherever he goes.

The script is funny without making you want to jump off a building.

It's recommended if you just want to let go and laugh a bit.

- Layne Gabriel

'The Shining'

Stanley Kubrick's "The Shining" frightens audiences with blood-filled elevators and hacked-up twin sisters.



Courtesy of WARNER BROTHERS
 Jack goes on a rampage through the empty Overlook Hotel in "The Shining"

Colorado Overlook Hotel during the winter, when no guests would be staying at the hotel.

He is warned early on that the winters in the mountains are horrendous, and often the heavy snowfall closes up the roads for months.

Soon Jack, his wife, Wendy (Shelley Duvall), and their little son, Danny (Danny Lloyd) are left alone at the huge, isolated hotel, and as the weeks go by, the snow grows heavier, and Jack gets a bad case of writer's block, he slowly but surely begins to lose his mind.

That's when things start to get interesting. Soon, it begins to get obvious that the hotel itself is indeed haunted, and as young Danny rides his bike through the endless corridors, he starts to get visions of terrible things to come.

Add that to Danny's increasingly violent images of the hotel's past, and you have one disturbing and frightening film.

In the last 45 minutes, all hell breaks loose. The twists, turns and dramatic ending just help make this great movie even better.

- Bryan Swotek

'Fight Club'



Courtesy of CBS/FOX PICTURES
 The aggressive angry males of "Fight Club," led by Brad Pitt, gather around the latest casualty.

"Fight Club" is the best movie ever.

It is also a psychological journey into the mind of Ed Norton and his good friend Tyler Durden (Brad Pitt). Norton's character is never named. He worked at a cookie-cutter firm in a cookie-cutter office at a disposable job.

He had trouble sleeping at night so he found an outlet. He became a support group junkie.

He went to meetings for people with testicular cancer, leukemia and brain disorders, among others. That's pretty much his entire life, what he wakes up for every morning.

Enter Tyler Durden. He sells soap. He changes Norton's life.

Norton moved in with Tyler, and Fight Club begins. Norton begins coming to work bloodied and bruised in dirty clothes.

His boss threatened to fire him, but Norton drew on his skills to arrange full-time pay in the comfort of his own home.

He and Tyler move Fight Club disciples into the house and start making plans to bring down major corporations.

But Tyler is making the destruction plans and Norton begins to feel a little left out.

He starts delving into the doings of Tyler and discovers things he really didn't want to know.

But now that he does know, it is his job to stop Durden in his tracks.

Everywhere he goes, Fight Club is. He panics, freaks out, and Tyler Durden reveals the truth to everyone.

The plot takes very unexpected twists and keeps the audience engaged through all three hours of the movie.

- Emily Neumann

'American Outlaws'

The only thing that can be said about the movie "American Outlaws" is that it should be outlawed.

It lacks decent plot development, good writing and realistic characters.

"American Outlaws" takes place in a mid-western town where a corrupt railroad baron tries to take advantage of the inhabitants of the town by giving them hardly any money for their own land.

When some ranchers refuse to sell their land to the railroad company, their homes are burned down.

A group of concerned farmers get together and decide to start a gang to fight the problem.

After robbing banks and foiling the plans of the railroad company the gang becomes recognized as heroes.

Pretty soon everyone in the area has heard of the gang, especially its leader, the young Jesse James (Colin Farrell). James' girlfriend is played by Ali Larter.

Nothing about this movie is impressive and overall the movie seemed to fail at everything it tried.

The characters in the movie were boring to begin with, but with a cast of acting wannabes, they failed to make even the blandest characters seem believable.

- Danny Whelan

(LEFT) Ali Larter and Colin Farrell in "American Outlaws," one of the few Westerns on Central's top list that was made in the past few years.

Courtesy of Warner Brothers

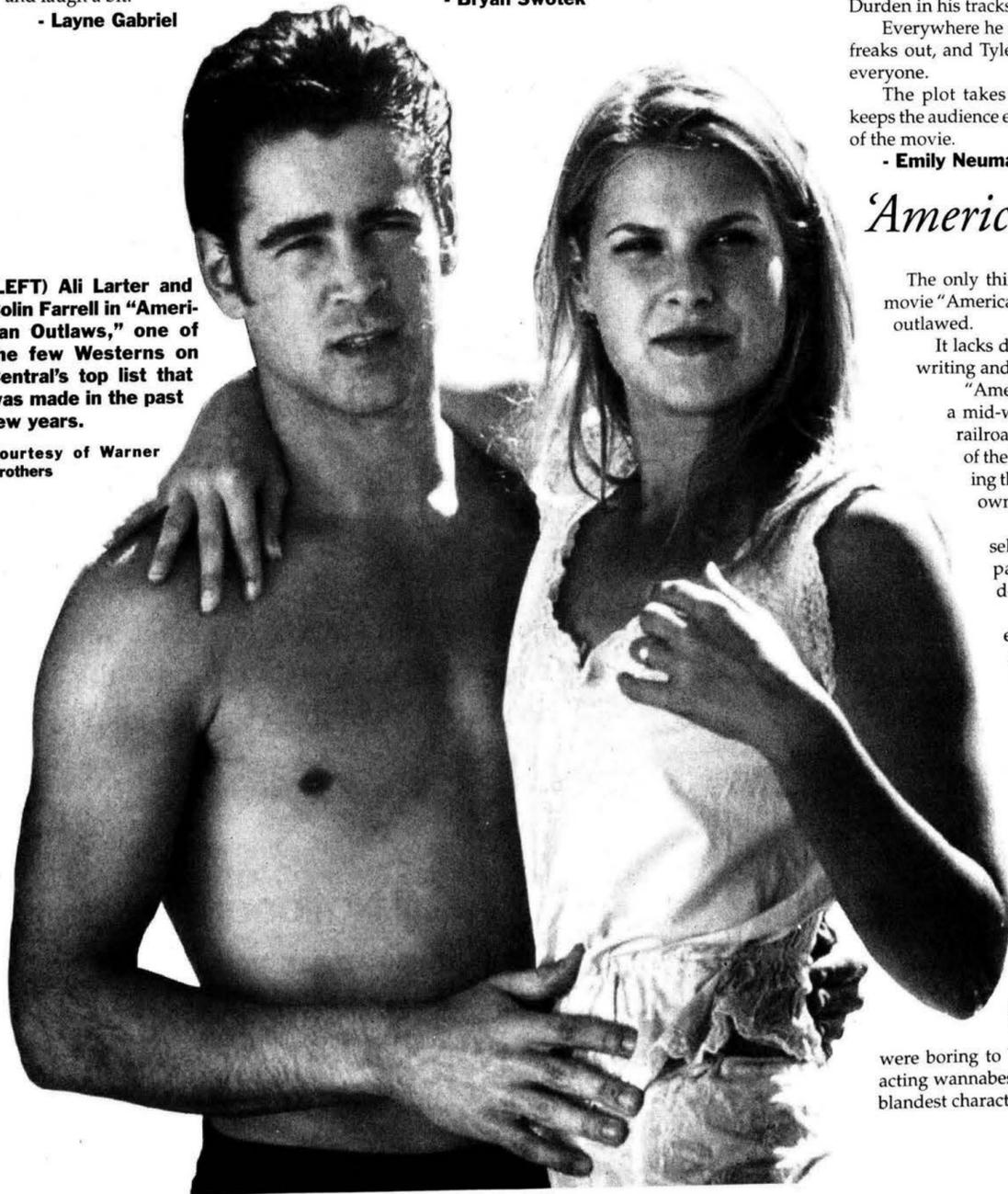




Photo by LAYNE GABRIEL/THE REGISTER

Travis Ritter (left), vocalist for Anti-Depressant joins Trial By Error's vocalist Jeff Tinnean (right) in a cover of POD's song "Southtown" at a recent concert at the Joyo in Lincoln.

Lincoln hardcore band thrives despite demanding schedule

By Layne Gabriel

For Lincoln band Trial By Error, getting through the last year has been a bit of a challenge, but the guys have balanced their schedules and kept going strong.

Guitarist Mike Moore and vocalist Jeff Tinnean met in jazz band at Lincoln High School and formed a band. In the summer of 2000, the band dropped a member and picked up drummer Brandon Filbert. Filbert brought in bassist Joel Wagner, and the final lineup of Trial By Error was set.

Balancing school and band practice can be hard. And with Wagner as the only member of the band with a car, it's a little more difficult than expected.

Fortunately the guys' parents help out a lot.

Filbert's parents help drive, purchase equipment and give them a place to practice.

The band has been working on promoting shows as much as possible and working on its website, trialbyerror.net.

The band plans on being

around for quite a long time. Everyone plans to stick with the band as long as possible.

"We don't talk anything about breaking up," Wager said. "We just do what we do."

Tinnean said he thinks that Trial By Error is different from some other bands in the area, which gives the band some staying power.

"Not to sound like I've got an ego trip, but I think we have a lot more talent than some bands out there. I mean, all of us are good at what we do because we've all been doing it for a while," Tinnean said. "It's not like we picked up a guitar and said, 'Hmmm, I think I'll try to play this so I can be in a band.'"

The band has pulled together a decent set list and is planning on putting out an album fairly soon.

Until an album is released, it is easy to catch Trial By Error at the Joyo or Knickerbockers in Lincoln, and the band is hoping to have more shows in Omaha.

Local band living 'The Good Life'

By Kaitlin Butz

In less than a year, local band The Good Life has gone from being a side project for its singer/songwriter to a fully functioning five-member band.

Tim Kasher, who plays guitar, does the drum machine programming, sings and is the main songwriter, started The Good Life as a way to release songs he had written over the years, synthesizer and bass player Jiha Lee said.

The first album, "Novena on a Nocturne," was completely written and arranged by Kasher, featuring him and various musicians he brought in to play on selected tracks.

None of the current members besides Kasher were featured on the Oct. 31, 2000 release. By the following summer, Lee said, Kasher had gotten a group of musicians together who worked well together and they formed the current lineup of the band.

Besides Lee and Kasher, The Good Life also features percussionist Roger Lewis, multi-instrumentalist Ryan Fox and guitarist Landon Hedges.

The group's second album "Black Out" will be released on March 4. Lee said she thinks the new release is good, especially since the band has gone through so many changes. She said the sound of the record is different, but that fans of "Novena on a Nocturne" would not be let down by the differences.

There is still some anxiety about how fans will react to "Black Out" since it is the first album most of the members have taken part in.

"I don't want people to think we ruined it," Lee said.

While Kasher wrote all the vocal and instrumental parts on the first record, the second one is more of a collaborative effort. Members said that Kasher still writes most of the lyrics and the basis of the songs, but that members work together on writing their own parts.

"He makes a sketch and we paint the picture," Fox said.

The band recently started a national



Photo Courtesy of SADDLE CREEK RECORDS

A CD release show on March 16 will mark the release of the Good Life's new album, "Black Out." The album is the band's second in almost two years. Clockwise from upper left: Kasher, Fox, Lee, Lewis and Hedges.

tour, which stretched from coast to coast. It has received mostly positive reactions when playing around the nation. Lee said bigger cities and college towns usually have pretty good crowds, but often band members don't observe the response.

"We're usually concentrating on playing, so it's hard to really gauge what is really going on in the crowd," Lee said.

Lewis said the band's music often draws comparisons to groups like the Cure, but any similarities are not intentional on the band's part.

"I don't think we aspire to be like any-

body," Fox said.

Though The Good Life is described by its members as a fully functioning band, several are involved in other bands.

Kasher is the frontman for Cursive. Hedges is in Little Brazil and Desaparecidos and Lee and Lewis have both played with Bright Eyes.

The band has high hopes for the new album and members said they want to build on The Good Life's past success.

The Good Life will play its CD release show for "Black Out" on March 16 at Soka Underground with Neva Dinova.

Omaha music chain joins selective group of independent record stores

By Kaitlin Butz

In an industry where 12 companies make up 90 percent of all sales, it is hard for an independently-owned music store to stay in business.

In 1995, the Coalition of Independent Music Stores (CIMS) was started to try and help smaller music stores stay alive in such a competitive market. This selective group of 72 music stores across the country includes the seven Omaha area Homer's stores, CIMS president Don Van Cleave said.

He said the birth of CIMS came after a group of smaller

music store owners realized they needed to band together if they were ever to survive in such a competitive market.

"All of us had problems getting attention from the labels," Cleave said.

Big chain stores like Best Buy, he said, get so much of the potential business that it can be nearly impossible for an independent store to get by.

Independent stores also get very little attention from record labels when it comes to in-store promotions. Membership in CIMS can help them get more attention.

"It immediately gives them a bigger profile in the industry," Cleave said.

Cleave said the way CIMS operates is that record labels come to it and pay them promotional money. CIMS, in turn, gives the money to its member stores, who use the money to promote the record label's artists by putting up posters, playing albums in store or putting CDs in listening booths.

To be granted membership into CIMS, stores had to undergo a rigorous process. Stores could apply or be asked to join. Cleave said once a store was considered, it was subject to secret visits and

background checks it ensure its good market reputation and leadership.

The local Homer's chain has been a member of CIMS since early 1999, Mike Fratt, vice president of merchandising at Homer's, said. He said the owners of Homer's met up with some people from CIMS at the fall 1998 at an industry convention.

By the following spring, CIMS had contacted Homer's and invited them to join.

Fratt said CIMS has helped Homer's in many ways. With so much consolidation in the music retail market, it helps a smaller

store to band together with others.

"As a group we have enough clout that we can stand up to the industry," he said.

Collectively, CIMS is the fifteenth largest account in the music retail industry, Fratt said. Without banding together like this, the stores would never have been able to make such an impact on the market.

Every month, CIMS decides on about 20 albums that it will promote for that month, Fratt said. To choose the albums, a ballot is sent out to all member store owners with about 40 to 50 al-

bums on it. Albums must get a percent rating to be selected.

The Old Market Homer's is able to get an in-store appearance from techno artist Moby several years ago because of its involvement with CIMS, Fratt said.

The driving force behind CIMS has always been an appreciation for music. It has become a respected force in the music market, but has also provided a for member stores to retain principles that got them into music business to begin with.

"We are here because we love music, none of us here at Homer's are getting rich," Fratt said.

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Reviews & Previews

Photo exhibit opens at Joslyn

By Layne Gabriel

The Joslyn Art Museum recently debuted an exhibit by Australian photographer Tracey Moffatt. Moffatt's exhibit opened Feb. 2 and runs through the end of March.

The exhibit features some unique art to the Joslyn collection, associate curator of 20th Century Art Janet Farber said.

"Moffatt is an artist that I'd been interested in for some time," Farber said.

When one photograph of Moffatt's was added to Joslyn's permanent collection, Farber became interested in receiving the traveling exhibit.

She said looked over proposals two years prior to scheduling the exhibit, and then included the exhibit in Joslyn's roster for the year.

The exhibit includes photographs and five films that range from about 10 minutes to full-length, which is about two hours.

Moffatt's photography varies in medium from black and white film to digital photos that she has used throughout her career.

As her photography changed throughout her career, her printing process changed, to accommodate what is most appropriate.

Most photography exhibits do not feature both photos and films, which makes Moffatt's exhibit more enticing, Farber said.

"Moffatt deals with questions about differences among class, race and gender," she said.

She also said that she is pleased to have Moffatt's exhibit at Joslyn because she is a very celebrated artist in Australia, but her art is rarely seen in this area.

Although Moffatt was not available to give a talk to Joslyn visitors, there are a few special programs featuring her exhibit including college night and after hours tours.

Farber is pleased that the exhibit has made the Joslyn Museum a destination for visitors who have the opportunity to see art from another country.

"It's an interesting look at an artist in mid-career," Farber said.

Roadshow falls short, manages to entertain

By Layne Gabriel

The 88th Roadshow was an array of entertaining skits, creative dances and the typical bunch of acts, but fell a little short in a few areas.

Roadshow this year had some fresh, new ideas, such as featuring seniors Khay Patterson and Rose Payne as Masters of Ceremonies, and a patriotic skit created by the stage crew for the occasion.

Unfortunately, the fresh ideas needed a little more polishing.

With only a week and a half to get Roadshow under the crew's belt instead of the usual three weeks, the show seemed a little disjointed and incomplete.

Between acts, crew members were frantically attempting to put props where they needed to be, but often appeared confused.

The lighting was also very trying on the eyes at times. Although some of the lighting set the perfect scene, such as during A Cappella's act, at other times it was too dim to see what was happening onstage.

The acts were not as high of caliber as usual, but they still adequately represented talent at Central.

Some of the acts stood out from the rest of the show. Possibly the best comedy act was the Mens Chorus who sang, "You've Lost that Lovin' Feeling."

Now normally, a music act is far from comedic, but the way the men pulled it together was very creative.

Other standout comedy acts included, "Single Man Drought," performed by seniors Theresa Fuchs and Katy Young, and the "Saturday Night Live" skit "Happy Fun Ball," performed by an array of seniors.

The most creative act written by a student had to be Michael Heller's, "The Act that Didn't Get In," which parodied some hits that could have potentially been seen during auditions.

His uncanny and intentional lack of vocal skills made the act one of the funniest things in the show.

The best act of the show was far from a comedy act, though.

"Mack the Knife," performed by seniors Hallie Wunsch and Aaron Wilhoft, was an excellent change from some of the "normal" Roadshow acts.

Wilhoft's impression of Louis Armstrong was impeccable, which made it a lot of fun to watch.

The majority of the show was pretty much the same old same old. The show lacked the variety that is usually seen in Roadshow, but that is beyond the control of the director.

All in all, the show was a little disappointing, but there were definitely some high points.

Calendar



Courtesy of WARNER BROS. MOTION PICTURES

Stuart Townsend stars as the vampire Lestat and Aaliyah stars as Queen Akasha in "Queen of the Damned," the second movie based on an Anne Rice book. Although the film has some new people taking over parts from "Interview With a Vampire," it is still stunning.

'Queen' certainly far from damned

By Layne Gabriel

There are movies that take your breath away and make it impossible to speak full sentences until half an hour after the film is over.

"Queen of the Damned" is one of those movies.

The second film based on an Anne Rice novel, "Queen of the Damned," does not completely follow the book, as expected, but is excellent nonetheless.

Stuart Townsend plays Lestat de Lioncourt, a vampire seeking fame by leading a rock band which he names after himself.

Although Townsend is no Tom Cruise, who previously played Lestat, it does not really matter. Townsend's beauty makes Lestat such a captivating character.

Ancient vampire Queen Akasha (Aaliyah) is aroused by Lestat's violin playing and offers her blood to him, which he drinks.

When she finally graces the world, she seeks Lestat and claims him as her king, which creates a convoluted love plot, considering that Lestat appears interested in Jesse

(Marguerite Moreau), a mere mortal fascinated with the vampire underworld.

All of this happens while Lestat rises to fame with his rock band and captivates audiences all over the world.

Although Lestat's fame is enjoyable for him and captures the interest of society, he has also angered many other vampires for giving away some of their best-kept secrets.

Possibly the most captivating scene is Lestat's performance onstage. He holds the presence of any rock god and is reminiscent of Scott Stapp of Creed.

The plot all falls together and makes the film an absolute wonder. It is full of the sexy mystique that Rice's books are laden with, and

does it well.

The cinematography is captivating and creates a dark, mysterious feel to the film.

"Queen of the Damned" also includes original music by Jonathan Davis of Korn. Davis provides the singing voice for Lestat and does an excellent job at that.

It is difficult to tell that Townsend is lip syncing to Davis' music.

The costuming is spectacular.

Akasha gyrates around in bizarre metal bras and long, flowing skirts, while Lestat's gorgeous slender figure is often just donning leather pants and maybe a sheer shirt, if he's feeling modest.

Some may find the film to be another pathetic attempt at a vampire movie, but "Queen of the Damned" is far from that.

The film is captivating and full of mystery and beauty.

MOVIE REVIEW

"Queen of the Damned" - Rated R

1/2 of 5

Director: Michael Rymer
Starring: Aaliyah, Stuart Townsend
Book by: Anne Rice

Album Releases

March

5 Natalie Imbruglia "White Lillies Island"

After a long hiatus since her last album, Natalie Imbruglia finally returns with some fresh, new material on her album "White Lillies Island." The album is sure to be the test of whether Imbruglia will be a one-hit wonder or a legitimate pop star.

5 Jars of Clay "Eleventh Hour"

Christian band Jars of Clay releases its first album in over three years. "Eleventh Hour" features new songs of the band's acoustic pop style. The band had previous cross-over success in the mainstream music market.

5 NOFX and Rancid "Split Series 3"

Veteran pop-punkers NOFX team up with East Bay originals Rancid to put out a new split album. This is sure to please any fan of nineties punk rock.

5 Brandy "Full Moon"

It's been four years since Brandy has released an album, and now she makes a triumphant comeback with her mature album "Full Moon." Considering her recent marriage, it should be interesting to see if her songs have become more mature.

12 Corrs "VH1 Presents Corrs Live in Dublin"

Irish siblings Andrea, Caroline, Sharon and Jim come together as the Corrs. The band's fifth album, "VH1 Presents" gives listeners an intimate look at the band.

19 Jimmy Buffett "Far Side of the World"

The man behind "Margaritaville" returns with some all new material on "Far Side of the World." Jimmy Buffett has been a prolific writer in the music industry since the late 60s.

19 Michael Jackson "Butterflies"

The "King of Pop" returns with some new material after rereleasing some old friends like "Thriller." Jackson has been a staple in the pop music scene since his Jackson Five days in the 70s.

Movie Releases

March

1 "40 Days and 40 Nights"
"We Were Soldiers"

8 "All About the Benjamins"
"Panic Room"
"The Time Machine"
"Undisputed"

15 "Ice Age"
"Resident Evil"
"Showtime"

22 "Blade 2"
"ET" Rerelease
"Sorority Boys"

29 "Clock-Stopppers"
"Death to Smoochy"
"National Lampoon's Van Wilder"

Concerts

March

1 System Failure at Rebels,
Council Bluffs

2 Naked on a Sunday Morning
at Rebels, Council Bluffs

2 Bane, Hatebreed, Poison the
Well and What Feeds the Fire at
the Ranch Bowl

2 Desparecidos at Sokol.

4 Cryptopsy, Diaboloc, Dimmu
Borgir and Krisiun at Ranch
Bowl

8 1000 Foot Crush at Rebels,
Council Bluffs

12 Ani DiFranco at Rococo
Theatre, Lincoln

12 Passing Thru, Names
Without Numbers, Xiled at
Rebels, Council Bluffs

13 Twizted at Ranch Bowl

15 Wu-Tang Clan at Sokol

15 Squad Five O, Names
Without Numbers, No Other
Reason at Rebels, Council Bluffs

17 Pinback, Canyon at Sokol

18 Natalie Merchant at Omaha
Music Hall

23 FC-12, No Other Reason at
Rebels, Council Bluffs

25 Rob Zombie, Sinistar, The
Damned at Pershing, Lincoln

29 Frenzal Rhomb, Mad
Caddies, NOFX at Ranch Bowl

30 Bombardment Society at
Sokol Underground

Drama

March

1 "The Man Who Came to
Dinner" at Omaha Community
Playhouse

6 "Little Women" at the
Orpheum

8 "The Grass Harp" at Bellevue
Little Theatre

15 "Coppelia" at Omaha
Theater Company for Young
People

Leaving Town

March

3 Bush, Default at The Pageant,
St. Louis

6 Ben Folds at the Beaumont
Club, Kansas City.

8 Azure Ray, The Band that
Saved the World, The Good Life
at the Bottleneck, Lawrence,
Kansas

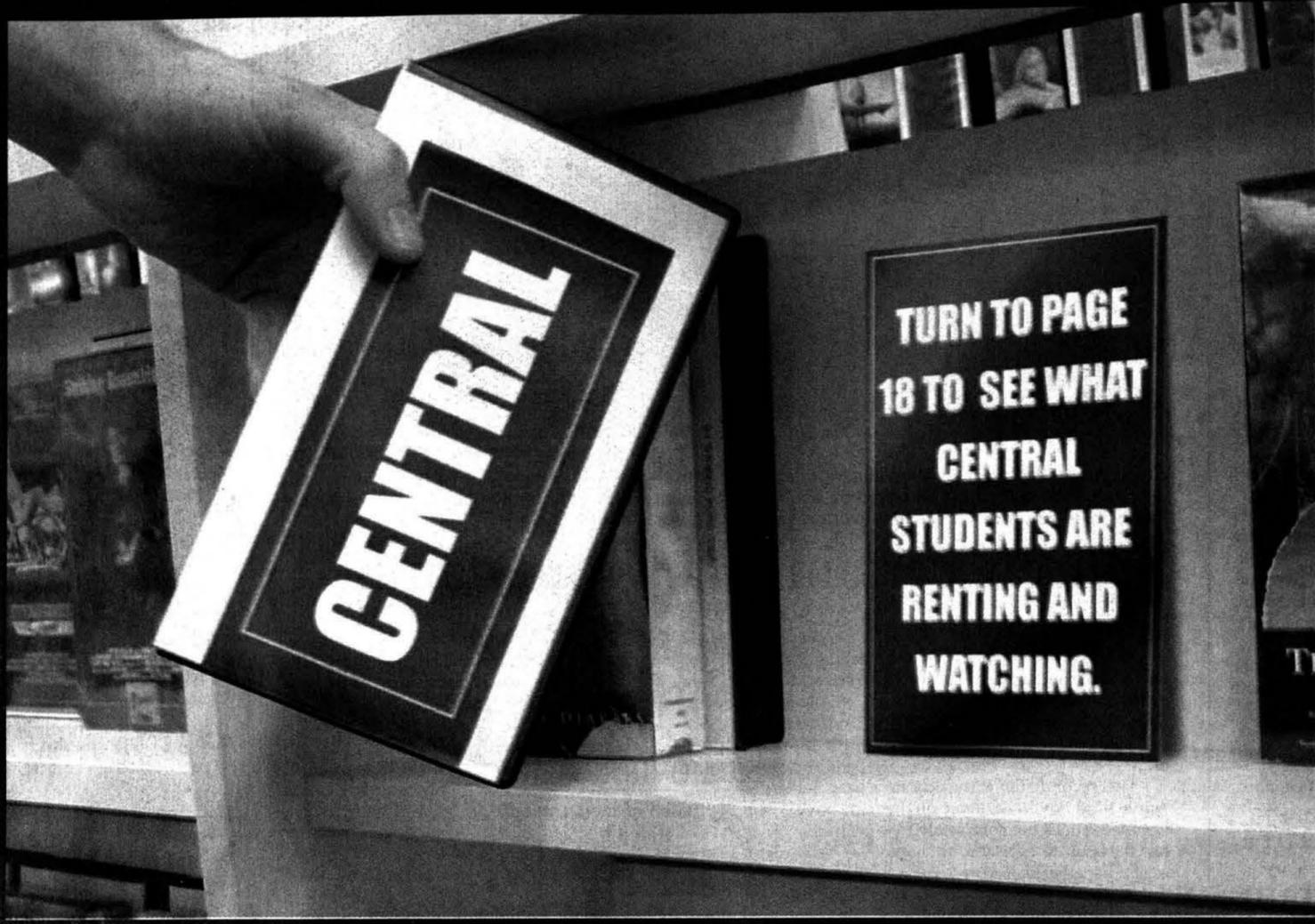
14 Alien Ant Farm, Fenix TX,
Adema at the Bottleneck,
Lawrence, Kansas

28 Kid Rock and Tenacious D
at Kemper Arena, Kansas City



THE GOOD LIFE
Local group goes from
one-man act to full-
fledged band.
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The results are in...



Recently, Central students were asked to pick their favorite movie rentals in several categories. See the results of the poll on page 18.



"Rush Hour"



"Scary Movie"



"The Matrix"



"American Pie"

Music booker sees bright future for Omaha underground

By Kaitlin Butz

Colin Shenefield runs the local music booking company Victory for the People, but in his mind it is not a company.

It is a movement.

Shenefield books shows for local and national touring bands, mainly at the Junction, but occasionally at other venues around Omaha.

Through his work, Shenefield has gained insight on music, its role in Omaha and how the local music community may shape itself in the future.

All of this was incidental though. Shenefield started booking shows in November 2000 to help a friend who had to leave his job as a booker to go on tour with his band.

When his friend got out of the business, Shenefield said he took over for him and became the main booker for local and indie shows at the Junction.

Shenefield said he books as

many shows as he possibly can and tries to have one every weekend. This year has been his busiest so far, booking eight shows in February and five so far in March.

Shenefield said a band or its booking agent usually contacts him if it is interested in playing a show.

Occasionally, he will approach a band about booking a performance.

It is easy to book national touring bands, but Shenefield said he is still always interested in finding good local bands. He said it is important to him to provide a showcase for new original music.

"I'm trying to provide a place for these original bands to play," he said.

At every show he books, Shenefield said he always tries to get local bands to play along with whatever national band may be in town.

This serves two purposes. It gives more exposure to local bands as well as drawing in local fans to see national bands they may not have heard of yet.

To make sure as many people as possible get to see these original bands, Shenefield said he tries to keep his shows as accessible as possible.

All of his shows at the Junction are \$5 and have at least three bands.

Unfortunately for many younger fans, all Junction shows are 18 and older because it has a bar. Shenefield said he wishes he could book more all-ages shows, but finds a lack of all-ages venues.

Shenefield has booked all-ages shows at Stage Right Coffee and Tea Co. and at the Cog Factory before its closing.

He said a loss of money from bar totals could be the reason why some owners are wary of having more all-ages shows.

However making money is not of the highest importance to him.

"My concern is creating something stable that will be here long after I'm doing it," he said.

It is commitment to music like this that keeps Shenefield in the booking business. He said he prefers to think of Victory for the People as a movement and not a business because he wants to make a difference in the Omaha music community.

Music is a very personal thing for Shenefield. He said that is one reason he is so passionate about his work. He said Omaha has a good cultural vibe and that many of its bands just add to that.

"The majority of bands that play are just really pure," he said.

In his work as a booker, Shenefield has traveled to other cities and been able to compare Omaha's music scene to others.

He said people all over are excited about bands coming out of Omaha. He said he thinks once the city gets a good consistent venue, it would be much better off.

"Omaha is getting there, but it doesn't have a place where you know you can just go there and it will be a good show," he said.

Shenefield said this consistent venue should be for all ages because drawing a crowd of music lovers that is truly for all ages is important.

He said he has heard talk of people interested in opening up a new all-ages venue, but has not heard any concrete details yet.

The addition of a new venue will be one of the last steps in Shenefield's mind in making Omaha one of the nation's new musical hot spots.

"Once that (opening of a consistent venue) happens, Omaha will be on the forefront of independent music," he said

Radio show starts sixth year on air

By Layne Gabriel

Six years on the air is a long time for a local music radio show. At least Bill Stewart, general manager of 89.7 the River, thinks so.

The River's local music show, "Planet O" has been on the air since 1996.

Lately the show has undergone some changes, including a new host, Josie Grey, who replaced Central graduate Brock Edwards and Mike Potter.

"Planet O" showcases local music every Sunday night. The playlists are based on requests, Stewart said.

On occasion, "Planet O" features local bands in the studio play live and chat with the host as well as concert information.

Stewart expects some features to "Planet O" with Grey's new position as host.

After Edwards and Potter left the show, Grey was offered the job, and she gladly accepted.

She was not very familiar with the local scene, but with the help of her co-hosts, she has been meeting more bands.

"We're trying to get more bands to come up here and play live," Grey said.

She has been going through emails and posting information on web sites to get more local bands interested in exposure on "Planet O."

She also plans to go into other genres of music that are not often played on local radio stations, Stewart said.

The staff is trying to branch out on the type of music played. "We're taking a chance on the hip-hop stuff," Grey said.

Her co-host, Billy Potter, graduated from Central in 2000 and became involved with "Planet O" after Grey asked him to join the crew.

"I just kind of fell into it," Potter said.

He became interested in learning about radio after a part at University of Nebraska Omaha. He decided that it was not for him and transferred to Iowa Western because he had friends in the radio program.

After getting into the program, he began to DJ and became the co-host of "Planet O." His previous exposure to local music made him interested in the show early on.

"I basically live at the River Bowl," he said.

The show is touted as the longest-running, local music show in Omaha, and both Grey and Potter enjoy being part of it.

"Planet O" initially started after a student approached the staff with an idea for a local music show. The staff saw an opportunity to create a new program and "Planet O" was born.

The River acquires local music it plays on "Planet O" from bands sending albums. The music is reviewed by the staff and subsequently played on air, Stewart said. Senior Atwood said that "Planet O" offers local musicians excellent success.

"I like the new ska scene that's sprouting up in Omaha with 8th Wave at the forefront," Atwood said. He said that a band was featured in one of the River's music spotlights, that got him interested in it.

Although Grey is wrapping up her second year at Iowa Western, she is content about being a part of the history of "Planet O," and looks forward to seeing the show evolve.

"I probably won't be here too long, but I'll pass it on," Grey said.