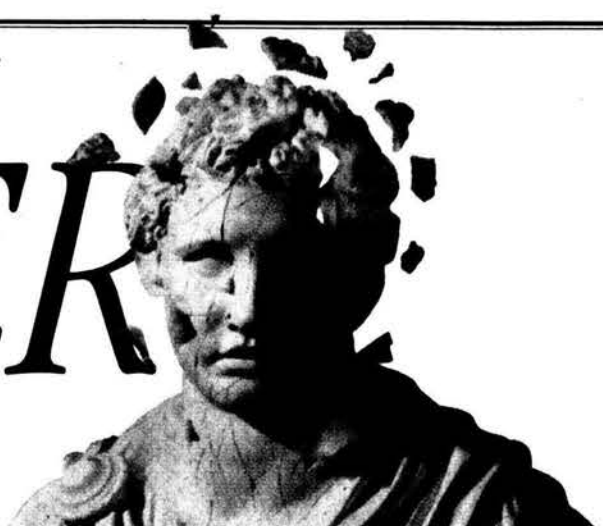


REGISTER



Boys take first games with pride.
See Basketball, PAGE 12

New album releases and reviews.
See Reviews, PAGE 10



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THE ILLEGAL ART OF TAGGING

Senior A.J. Kendall stands in front of a piece he painted on the wall of his friend's basement his sophomore year and explains how seriously he feels about graffiti being considered a form of art. Regardless, he says he hasn't tagged in months because he knows he can get into trouble at school or with the law. PHOTO BY ROB HUNTER/REGISTER

GRAFFITI OFFENSE: PENALTIES

School: For the first offense guardians are contacted, secondly a student receives an in-school suspension. Final offense is reassignment or expulsion.

State: Court hearings are held to determine the fees for the destruction of property. It's charged as misdemeanor and can result in probation or jail time.



BY KATIE BACKMAN

*Name changed to protect identity.

After tagging buildings and trains with the name of his graffiti crew, senior A.J. Kendall went home to find two men tearing through his room.

They were Omaha Police Department officers. They were looking to prove he was responsible for some graffiti around town.

"My mom called me home early," Kendall said. "When I saw the cops in my room, I got butterflies in my stomach because I knew why they were there."

When the officers found the evidence, he then had four months of probation when he was only a freshman. His mother didn't punish him because he had court hearings, fees and probation due to his graffiti.

The court fees were \$45 and there was a \$100 fine for the graffiti.

One of his friends did three months of probation and 10 hours of community service. At the time, Kendall said he didn't know the same punishment was offered to him as well.

"I was charged with destruction of property," Kendall said.

After his probation was up, he made a goal to keep out of trouble. He said now the police are trying to find the crew he was involved with in the past. They call themselves a crew because they are an organized group, but do not consider themselves to be a gang.

Kendall said gangs commit violent acts, but crews do not. He said his crew would never cover up another crew's tag because it is disrespectful.

Tags are labels for each different graffiti crew. It is like the group's signature.

"I haven't done graffiti recently because it is pretty risky," he said.

Omaha Police officer Kevin Donlan, of the gang intelligence unit, said people who are younger than

16 will be charged with a misdemeanor and receive a ticket.

If the person is 16 or older, he has to have a court hearing with a judge deciding on his sentence.

"The penalties the person could receive range from helping clean up the graffiti, paying a fine, probation or jail time," Donlan said.

In some cases if the graffiti was on residential property, he said the homeowners often don't want the criminal coming back to clean off the graffiti.

"Graffiti is a destruction of property and is cited as that when people go in front of a judge," he said. "If people draw hearts on lockers, it still damages the property, but usually isn't gang related so it won't have the same charges as gang-related graffiti."

Freshman Talia Duffer said she thinks graffiti is a problem at school and more should be done to stop it. She said she thinks graffiti can be offensive and is

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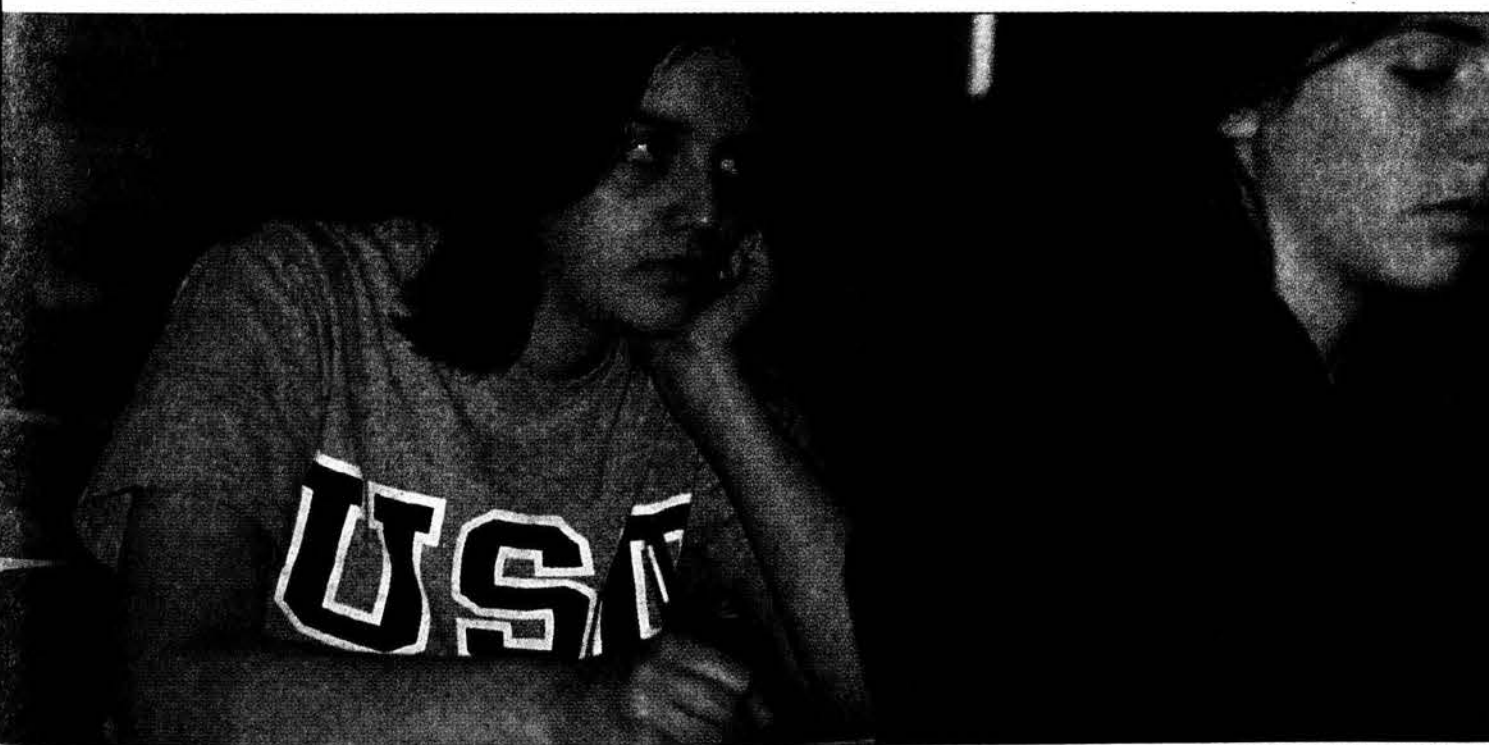


PHOTO BY ROB HUNTER/REGISTER

Amelia Peterson (LEFT) and Melinda Meyers listen to a speech in Dr. Jurgen Shawver's English class. Juniors have already taken two practice Criterion Referenced Tests (CRTs). The state-graded test will be taken in February.

Central passes state standards, fails federal

Standardized testing deemed unfair for use measuring progress.

BY DANIELLE WELTY

Chandler Sanders is only 11, but she already wants to go to Central. Unfortunately, by the time she's a freshman school she aspires to attend may be on the way to becoming a private or charter school. Instructional Research Manager Wanda said this is because if Central, along with all other secondary Omaha Public Schools, continue to produce scores on Criterion

Referenced Tests (CRTs) that do not meet the federal government's requirements, the school will be reprimanded for the students low performance. This may eventually lead to the majority of staff members being fired and either a business, private school or the state taking over the school.

The CRT tests every student takes as a junior are given to the state and the federal government to score and then give an assessment on how the schools are performing. Disappointingly, many students who take the CRTs don't try their hardest because they do not see how the tests affect them.

Junior Robert Herman said when taking CRTs he isn't concerned about the score he gets because he will have graduated nearly a decade before anything serious happens to Central as a

result of the low test scores.

"Those tests are horrible" he said. "I don't just fill in random answers like some people do, but if I don't get a question the first time, I'll just guess and move on so I can get the test over with."

Central passed the state level of testing, scoring an exemplary and a very good, both of which are higher than the average state standards. But students did not fare as well when it came to Adequate Yearly Process (AYP) through which the federal government holds schools accountable.

Students are scored on these tests not on a scale of 1-5, but by ratings of advanced, proficient, progressing and beginning.

To meet or pass the AYP standards, 66

Continued to TESTING on Page 5

School mourns death of teacher who loses struggle with disease

BY KATIE BACKMAN

Technology instructor Peggy Wheeler went to the hospital in May to start treatments for liver cancer. She died after a long battle on Nov. 23. She was 37.

Pathways teacher Cindy Thompsen was one of Wheeler's close friends. Thompsen started teaching six years ago and said Wheeler was the one who helped her adjust to Central her first year.

The liver cancer was discovered in April. Thompsen said Wheeler didn't want to hide her disease from the staff because she would soon be undergoing surgery.

Wheeler's mother Betty Aufenkamp said the surgery removed parts of her pancreas, her entire spleen and gall bladder in hopes of stopping the infection.

Complications occurred and she was taken off the transplant list because infections, Thompsen said.

"From what I heard they couldn't get the infections under control," she said.

Aufenkamp said only family members could visit her while she was in the hospital. Sometimes, depending how she felt, the visitors had to wear robes to be sanitary.

"Her body went haywire and she was taken off the transplant list," she said.

Her parents, husband and her new baby Phoebe visited Wheeler during her treatments. Aufenkamp said she could tell Wheeler and her husband adored each other.

Her baby was born October 1 2002 before she was diagnosed with cancer. She remembers Wheeler loving her new baby daughter as much as she could each day.

During May she was in and out in the hospital. In June she stayed in the hospital up until her death.

"The last time I saw her (at school) was at the end of May," Thompsen said. "We hugged each other and I began praying for her. I would never see her again. She told me she

was willing to be a genie pig for the doctors because it was a rare form of liver cancer."

Wheeler donated her body to science.

Thompsen said she would send a card to her in the hospital every week, but she only wrote back once. Wheeler wasn't really in a good enough condition to respond.

Alumnus Jason Goossen said when he heard of her passing he wrote a memoir about her but, he was out of town during her services. His letter was read at the memorial in the courtyard. He said he was very surprised about the situation and will miss her.

"I talked to her a little through e-mails while I have been at college," Goossen said. "She was always a nice and approachable person."

One of Wheeler's best friends who she had in high school began sending e-mails out to her other friends.

Thompsen said she remembers the friend telling her she wanted her to cherish the last memory she had before the disease weakened her health and changed her appearance.

"Her laugh," Thompsen said. "She had this laugh that I can still hear echoing today."

The memories of her six-year friendship are what now matter most to her. Thompsen said she learned a lot from Wheeler.

She said the friendship was very close because in the beginning of Thompsen's career, they spent six periods a day teaching together. She remembers her being a very intelligent person with deep conversations.

"We would always talk," she said. "Those philosophical talks I will really miss."

She said Wheeler would spend time on the Internet looking for new curriculum ideas or purchasing presents for her family.

Wheeler began teaching at South High School, but shortly after she transferred to Central. Not only did she teach in the business and English departments here for 15 years,

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Cruise's recent film is causing a stir, and for good reason.
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The Unicameral is considering a state-wide ban.
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CALENDAR

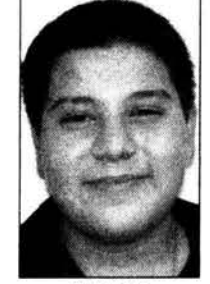
Club formed to entertain bored students

BY BRIAN LEE

Members of the new Hacky Sack Club meet in the new gym where sponsor Deron Larson and 16 students enjoy their hobby.

He and the members all unify around this unorganized sport and have fun playing it before school.

"Enough kids seemed like they were interested in it," Larson said. "They had no outlet for it."



Lozano

Larson has morning duty outside on the three-side, and members having to frequently ask students to stop playing.

After he and his friends had been confronted by Larson several times, freshman Eric Lozano suggested they start up a club so that they could play without getting into trouble.

"It's really cool," Lozano said. "We have a cool teacher that loves to hacky sack as much as we do."

Larson said there is a definite sort of fellowship in this new club and what it does.

The club is now considering having T-shirts made.

"As a teacher, it's just getting up earlier to get to school," Larson said. "I don't mind it though. I enjoy what we do and the kids make it a lot of fun."

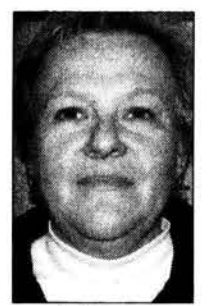
Members seek to recognize good teachers

BY JEFF HART

Future Educators of America (FEA) have started a new event at Central called Feature Teacher.

"It is a great way for the students of Central High to appreciate the teachers they have," club sponsor Ellen Plath said.

She said the Feature Teacher event will present teachers' names during morning announcements with a brief summary about the staff member.



Plath

"The group is very excited about this," she said. "They feel that they are finally paying back the teachers for all their hard work and determination to their students."

She said the teacher who is being recognized would receive a small gift from the club.

Teachers fill out a form to be nominated.

"I didn't want to force anyone into doing it," she said. "I think some people wouldn't want to participate."

She said after the teachers turned in their forms. All the forms were put in a pile and once a week the club will pick out one the forms.

The teacher would get the pleasure of having the presentation done for them.

The idea had been brought forth by the club and has been going fairly well.

She said the FEA has also attended a Leadership conference at University Nebraska of Omaha.

"It was a great way for the members of the club to get to know others students from other schools, and to get familiar with the workings of the club," she said.

The conference included workshops on how to become a steadier leader and how to use skills in everyday life.

She said it was very fun and helpful to the students who went.

"I think they learned and had a great time," she said.



PHOTO BY ROB HUNTER/REGISTER

Senior Jordan Jacobs presents the colors at a recent basketball game. Being a senior cadet in ROTC, she earned an award for staying dedicated to her title and earning achievement in the classroom.

Senior earns high-rank award for ROTC, academics

BY MARIAH BIANCHINI

All her hard work finally paid off when senior Jordan Jacobs was awarded the Legion of Valor Bronze Cross for Achievement Award.

This prestigious award is given to one out of every 4000 senior cadets. This year Jacobs was selected as one of the 23. Factors considered in selection are Class Rank, ROTC rank, academics, leadership and community involvement.

Lt. Col. Mike Melvin was allowed to nominate one senior cadet, in this case he chose Jacobs. She then collected letters of recommendation.

These along with her resume and the fact that she was 40th in her class at the time and in the top 10 percent of her ROTC class were all considered in the selection.

Jacobs is very involved with volunteering both inside and outside of school.

She volunteers at Immanuel Hospital where she, along with another person, are supervisors of all of the volunteering staff.

She assigns the other volunteers positions as well as trains them how to do their jobs.

"It sounds corny, but one day I was reading a story about a girl who volunteers in 'Chicken Soup for the Soul' and I told my mom about it. She suggested that I start volunteering at Immanuel."

Jacobs said her preferred place to volunteer at the hospital is the Child Development Center.

"I like to help people and to know it is making an impact on their lives," she said. "Especially at the hospital, knowing I am making a sick persons feel better for a day is nice."

Jacobs is also involved with Key Club as the co-secretary. Key Club is another volunteering group. Between her volunteering at the hospital and Key Club Jordan is able to meet her requirements for National Honors Society.

Future Business Leaders of America is another activity Jacobs is involved in. She spends the year preparing for competitions and collection and service projects.

Jacobs has been involved with Tae Kwon Do for ten years. She recently earned her black belt and also is an assistant instructor at the YMCA.

ROTC has played a huge role in Jacobs's love for service and leadership abilities.

"I knew personally that I would get a lot more out of ROTC than music or gym," she said.

Jacobs said she was amazed at the diversity of things she was taught and how they pertained to every day.

"We learn about American history, in relation to the military tactics," she said. "My third year I was certified in CPR and throughout I have been taught First Aid."

Jacobs was even taught marksmanship. "Did you know Central has a rifle range?" She asked.

After high school she wants to major in psychology and take premed courses. She is sure she wants to become an anesthesiologist. Her desire to work in the medical field started at a young age.

"Here is a little known story about me," she said. "When I was a little kid, I picked up one of my mother's baby books laying around. I opened it up and pointed to a fetus and told my mom that I was not scared of that."

UPCOMING EVENTS

DECEMBER

23-31 (THURS.- WED) HOLIDAY BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

The varsity boys and girls basketball team competes against high schools from the surrounding area. The tournament is officially over on Jan. 3, with the announcement of the champion.

JANUARY

5 (MON.) STUDENTS RETURN FROM WINTER RECESS

Students have one week of school before finals. Projects and in-class themes are usually collected or assigned during this hectic time of the year.

6 (TUES.) ATHLETIC BOOSTERS MEETING

The athletic boosters will meet to discuss the financial issues of the athletics at this school. The meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m.

12-14 (MON.-WED.) FINAL EXAMS

Final exams for the semester will be held Mon.-Wed. of this week. Students will take exams in all of their core and elective classes to determine their final grade.

20 (TUES.) SECOND SEMESTER BEGINS

The second semester will begin on this day. This is the marks the halfway point of the year.

Teens join club to help prevent poor judgement

BY COURTNEY THOMAS

After the death of Rose Incontro by a drunk driver last year, many friends of hers started SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) in her memory with the goal of preventing future similar deaths.

This year the club attended a drug-free walk, which took place downtown.

Club treasurer junior Amanda DeWitt thought it was very beneficial to attend and that it was for a good cause.

"The walk really helps get a message across," DeWitt said. "I'm particularly since I'm against underage drinking and always discouraging my friends (from drinking)."

Club members read drunk driving statistics over the intercom last year and plans to do the same thing within upcoming months.

Junior Mindy Sotello is grateful for this opportunity in which she is given the chance to spread awareness of the dangers of drunk driving and the decisions that can harm both her and others.

The members said they were very appreciative of this chance.

"We can reach a lot of students by doing this," Sotello said. "Because everyone hears the announcements and hopefully the message gets across."

Members of the SADD Club plan to speak to middle school students about the horrors of drugs and alcohol.

Students raise concerns for animal safety

BY BRIAN LEE

Raising awareness of animal issues in society and providing the knowledge regarding animal and other such cruelties are some of the issues discussed at meetings of Central High Education for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (CHEETA) Club.

CHEETA Club sponsor Catherine Kennedy started the club last year. There are currently 25 members in the club.

"There is a very close link between human abuse and animal abuse," Kennedy said. "That's one goal that we would like to raise consciousness of this year."

Members frequently have guest speakers come in and the club takes field trips every so often.

Speakers who have come in this year and last year have included veterinarians, a vegetarian chef, member of the Red Cross First Aid for animals, and a representative of the Raptor Rescue and Rehabilitation Center.

Senior Kelsey Gotch is the president and junior Tayla Henderson is the president.

"We try to educate people about animals," Gotch said. "We are not trying to lecture them but just to educate about wildlife."

CHEETA members recently took a field trip to the Henry Doorly Zoo and Imax Theater to see a video focusing on tigers in the wild.

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PHOTO BY KATIE BACKMAN/REGISTER

Maggie Wheeler's mother Betty Aufenkamp baby-sits Wheeler's daughter, Pheobe, while Daniel Wheeler works during the day. Aufenkamp said she can see a lot of her own daughter's physical traits in Pheobe which she uses as a comfort.

'WHEELER' CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Friends remember teacher's love of family

she was a graduate, too. Principal Jerry Bexten said regardless of how long people knew her, they would realize she was a nice and happy person. He said she will be deeply missed at school because she created many friendships with faculty and students throughout the years. Thompson said she was always a very caring person. "She was a great mentor, and I could tell she was an excellent person in a great family," she said. "Thinking back to her teaching methods, Goossen said Wheeler's classes were always enjoyable and his senior year he was an extern for her. He said he thought her teaching style was very laid back and she would talk to students as



Wheeler

adults not children. He also thought she was always an approachable person if he had to talk to her about anything. "Her class was never boring because she was so creative," he said. "She was one of my favorite teacher and I think she was just as good at being a mother, daughter and wife." Assistant principal Paul Semrad said he remembers her to be a very caring and loved teacher. He remembers when he taught her years before and she was always an avid reader and writer. He developed a lot of history and good memories with Wheeler, especially once she became a teacher at school. "It was a tragedy," Semrad said. "I thought

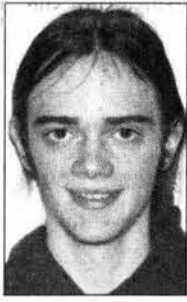
she was a great person and she will be missed." Senior Stephanie Hatch said she was always entertained in Wheeler's computer graphics class. During the school year she knew Wheeler was missing a lot of school because she had cancer. "She was always just a fun person to be around," she said. Hatch said last year Wheeler told the students she should have five more years to live. When she heard the news of her death, she knew she would miss her because Wheeler was always a nice woman to be around. Central's faculty responded to the sad loss with a positive sense of hope. Thompson started a fund to plant a tree in memory of her friend and mentor. Faculty and students donated \$1,000 to pay for the tree. A memorial plaque will also be purchased.

"We didn't expect that much money, so we are going to dedicate a plaque to her, too," Thompson said. "It is our memory of her that will live on and it is also a tree because I remember she loved the outdoors so much." Aufenkamp said a scholarship and donations to liver cancer research also started at school. Daniel Wheeler, her husband of 15 years, said he was impressed with everything people have done to honor the memory of his wife. He said he was touched by a teacher reading at the memorial service at school and by the caring shown to him by so many of her family members and medical personnel. He said he is glad there was a ceremony at school to where she dedicated a lot of her time. "She was born a teacher," he said. "Teaching was very important to her. Everything the school did for her was so wonderful."

Student plans to donate hair to foundation for wigs for children

BY DANIELLE WELTY

Senior Charles Serfass plans on cutting his long brown hair that measures over a foot long and donating it to the Locks of Love foundation. Locks of Love is a non-profit foundation that takes donated hair to make wigs for children who have lost their hair for medical reasons. The majority of donors are children who want to help other children. "At first I just used the donation as an excuse to grow out my hair because my parents and some of my friends kept on telling me to cut it," Serfass said, "but then I got really serious about it." There are several qualifications that one



Serfass

must meet for their hair to qualify for usage in a wig. The hair must measure at least 10" in length and curly hair may be pulled straight to meet that requirement. The organization is asking for hair from men, women, young, old, all hair colors and from all races. Hair may also be colored or permed, but it may not be bleached or chemically damaged in any way. Of course if hair does not meet one or more of these qualifications it is not wasted, but it is sold to offset the cost of manufacturing the wigs. When sending hair that is cut, as Serfass is, it must be in ponytail or braid form, placed in a plastic bag and then sent in a padded

envelope. There are also four hair salons in Nebraska with one in the Omaha area that will cut hair that meets these qualifications and then send it away for the donor. Serfass said he has yet to set a date to get his hair cut. "I will probably just go get it cut one day and surprise everyone," he said. "But I definitely plan on cutting it before winter break." He said he has minimal fear of cutting his hair despite the dramatic physical change because he knows it's for a good cause. Serfass also uses his love and talent of music to better the community by raising money and food for donation. He is a member in the band Nextweus along with seniors Matthew Schrad, Adam Nebel and

Central alumnus Doug Hageman. "This past summer I also helped out at Hanscom United Methodist Church's summer bible school," Serfass said. "I have also participated in my church's youth group whenever we have a big event that needs some help." In addition to his out-of-school volunteer work, Serfass belongs to the school's National Honor Society (NHS) and has volunteered at numerous events such as tutoring before school for any students who may need extra help with their homework. He said that turnout for these help sessions has been good this year. Serfass has also volunteered his time as a bell-ringer to collect money for the less fortunate for NHS volunteer hours and said he plans on doing much more around the community.

Senior says environment key difference between public, private schools

BY DANIELLE WELTY

When one thinks of a private school, the stereotype usually consists of smart, spoiled children who wear lots of plaid, khaki and Polo shirts. Senior Hollie Engdahl attended Catholic private schools for the better part of her life and had most preconceived notions of private schools, for the most part, incorrect. "I went to St. Cecilia's from pre-school through eighth grade," Engdahl said. "And I don't think the education was really any different than public school. It was more the environment." She said people typically find private schools appealing because of the atmosphere and the sense of security small schools give both the parents and students. Freshman Darryl Hinson said he thinks students at private schools are exposed to more opportunities than those who attend public schools. "Their parents pay more money so they get better school supplies and the classes are smaller so teachers can help students more one on one," Hinson said. "But public schools get some opportunities and experiences that private school kids do; it's probably an even exchange."

Freshman Maggie Baumann said she finds attending a small school doesn't expose the student to real-life situations. "They get out into the real world and it's completely different to their tiny school with only 15 students in each class," Baumann said. The religion aspect that is a daily part of many private schools, including Engdahl's, is another reason why parents choose to pay thousands of dollars a year in tuition for their children to attend private schools. "A lot of really religious people like the fact that schools like St. Cecilia's offer it (religion) as a class," Engdahl said. "But by the time I was in 8th grade a lot of people a lot of people, including myself, were burnt out and didn't consider ourselves Catholic anymore." She said she attended a religion class everyday, went to church at least once a week and sometime on a regular basis, a priest would come into religion class to talk to the students. Religion was something that was addressed everyday, even in art class the majority of art styles studied displayed some sort of religious figure or symbol. "Other than religion, all my classes were basically the same as those in public schools, with the exception of one," Engdahl said

When she decided to come to Central her freshman year Engdahl realized she was behind the majority of her peers in math. Though she started 9th grade in Algebra 1-2, which is the level of math freshmen are expected to be on, many of her friends were in geometry and above because their junior highs offered advanced levels of math. "I eventually caught up by taking Geometry and Algebra 3-4 my sophomore year," Engdahl said. "Now I'm in Calculus." She said the choice to come to Central was an easy one because both of her older siblings went here. This meant she would be turning down a \$2,500 scholarship Mercy offered her. "It (Central) was close to my house and it was free," Engdahl said. For her coming to Central was a fresh breath of air. "There are so many rules at St. Cecilia's," Engdahl said. She said it was new to her to be able to stand up in class without asking to do so and not having to walk to class in a single file line with a teacher guiding her from class to class. "People ask me why I put up with everything they made us do, but it was normal to me,"

Engdahl said. "It was what I grew up with." She said there were some things she found unreasonable such as girls could wear pants under their uniforms to school, but as soon as they entered the building the pants had to be taken off. "The uniforms were definitely a plus because I didn't have to worry about what to wear, but one time a girl came to school with boxer shorts under her skirt and they made her take them off," Engdahl said. "I don't know how they found out she was wearing them, but it just didn't seem like as big of a deal as they made it." Baumann said she thinks the students in private schools are so overprotected and are not able express themselves with all of the dress codes and strict rules. "You have to wear certain tennis shoes, you can't have too many piercings and the uniforms make you look like everyone else," she said. "It's almost impossible to express yourself." Engdahl said there are a lot more rules and structure in private schools, but that doesn't mean less students get in trouble. "There were a lot of kids getting in trouble for breaking some of the many rules," Engdahl said. "But there were less fights than there are here."

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Task force helps keep school safe

BY DANIELLE WELTY

If a student threatens another, he is not automatically suspended or expelled.

Instead the school takes the time to assess the situation and help the student while preventing any further threat to the remainder of the school.

Principal Jerry Bexten said a Threat Assessment Team is formed to decide what actions are taken after a threat is reported.

"The team typically consists of the student's administrator, a counselor such as Mr. Moore, Officer Stokes, teachers of the students in question, as well as myself," Bexten said.

He said the team sits down to assess if the students is really a threat in the first place, and if it is determined there is a valid threat, some action must be taken.

If the student is considered a threat his or her parents will be contacted and a punishment of some sort will be administered. In some lesser cases, the suggestion to seek professional help may be all that the school can give the student.

"We can do anything from taking no action to talking to a parent to an expulsion depending on the severity of the situation," Bexten said.

He said anytime the school gets a threat, officials go through the process though it may later prove to not be serious. The safety of the students comes first.

Freshman Alicia Bender has never been threatened by another student, but she said she feels safe knowing the school is doing more to prevent threats from becoming a serious issue.

"It's good that they have the Threat Assessment Teams so at least we know the school is taking the proper precautions instead of just jumping to the conclusion that the student didn't mean anything by it or that they must be serious about it," Bender said. "I'm glad they're taking time out to do something."

Assistant principal Dionne Kirksey said she has only been to a few team meetings and none of which have been serious enough to expel a student.

The most she has given out as a punishment for a threat is a suspension and said the majority of the time the threats that come to her are students who don't mean anything by it and are just making stupid comments.

"There are three different levels of threat," Kirksey said. "The first level is the low level which is an indirect and usually vague threat, a medium threat is more direct and concrete while the high level threat is extremely direct to one student. The student usually has a plan to carry out the threat."

Central has never encountered a high level threat.

Biology teacher Sandra McCreight has had very few threats in her classes, but said it was important that a threat be stopped before it becomes something more.

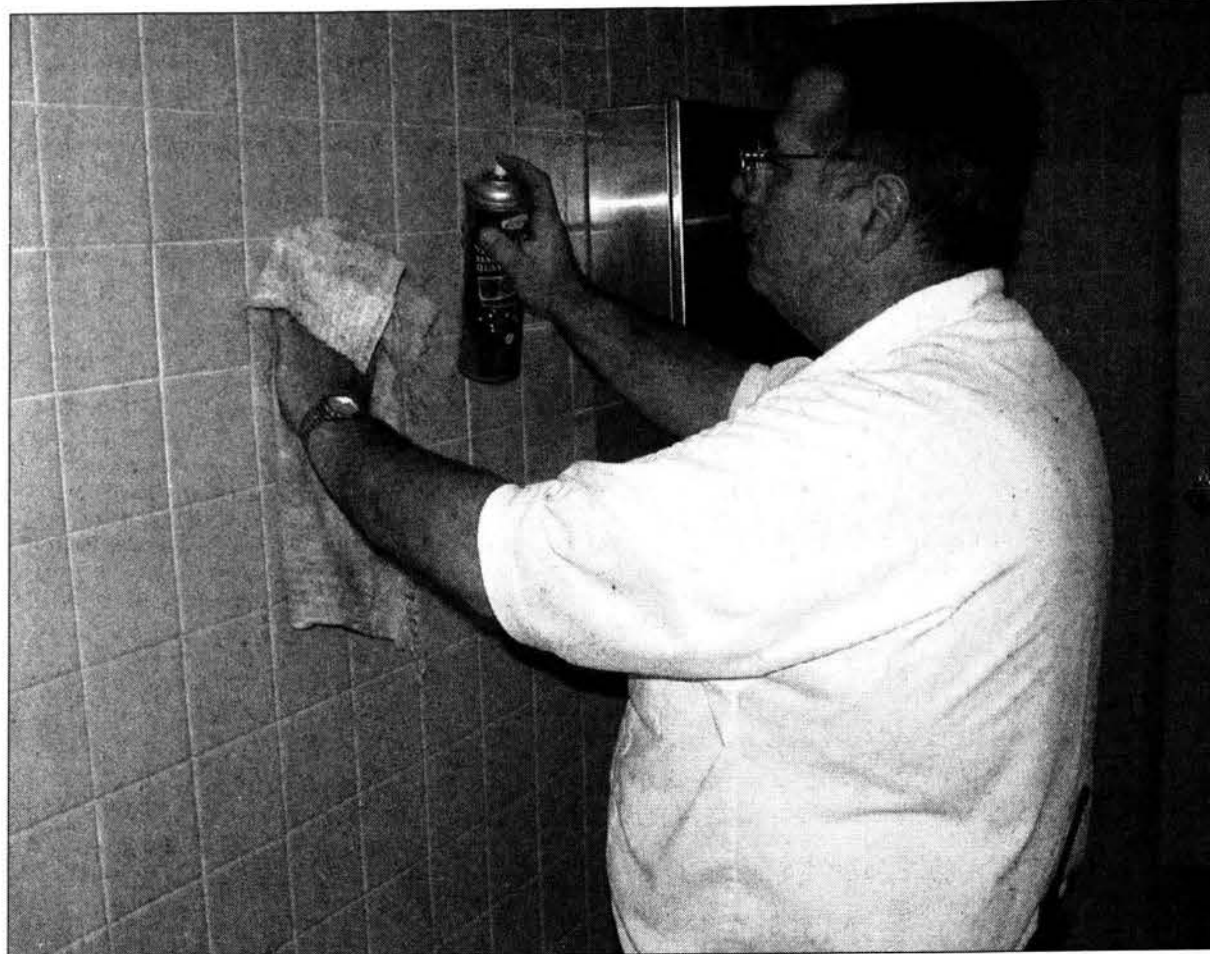


PHOTO BY MICHAEL SMITH/REGISTER

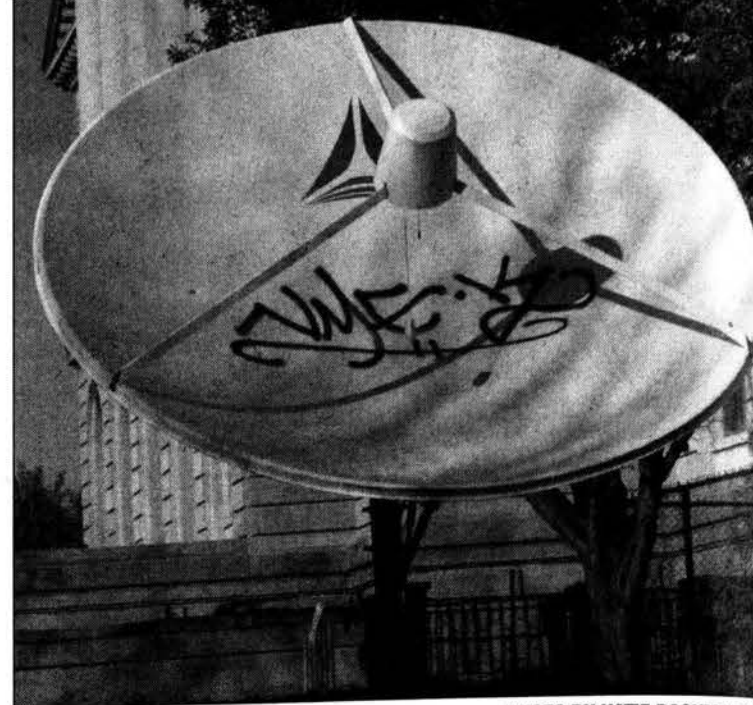


PHOTO BY KATIE BACKMAN/REGISTER

(ABOVE) The school's satellite, located on the southwest side of the building, was vandalized or "tagged" in October. Once it was reported to district officials, they sent a maintenance crew to clean it off immediately.

(LEFT) Custodian Frank DeGeorge uses a special spray to rub off graffiti from one of the boys' restrooms. He said this can be a routine for him many days during the week.

Officials fail to see art in destruction of property

■ 'GRAFFITI' CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

considered vandalism.

According to the Student Handbook, if someone is found with graffiti materials or writing gang graffiti in or near the building, the possessions will be confiscated as a first offense.

A second offense is an in-school suspension.

Any other violation in school, the students could be expelled or reassigned.

The bigger the area vandalized, the heavier the fine will be. When graffiti is found in school bathrooms, custodian Frank DeGeorge said the school has cleaners strong enough to remove most types of pens or markers.

If it is spray painted on the building, the Omaha Public Schools' (OPS) maintenance crew will sandblast it off.

Principal Jerry Bexten said graffiti is a difficult act to try to catch someone doing.

When he has caught students in the past, they receive the punishments here at school and are turned over to law officials.

There were rumors of students being escorted to the bathrooms by security to try to limit the amount of graffiti in the bathrooms.

Bexten said it wouldn't happen and he hasn't heard administration talking about it.

"Students have to go to the bathroom," he said. "There are too many students and not that many security guards to do it. If it came down to the need of drastic measures, it could lean towards those types of punishments."

Donlan said any time someone draws on other's property, it is graffiti and not artwork.

Some people don't see graffiti as artistic, Kendall said, but if it's done on paper, some of his friends think it is art.

While he tries to simply draw on paper, he can't help to think how cool it could look in paint, on a wall.

"I would do it to abandoned buildings and walls," he said. "Sometimes I thought it would make the city look better by making a crappy building look nice. In New York City, some kids are paid to graffiti walls."

Now instead of going to privately owned properties, he does what he calls graffiti on basement walls of his or his friends' homes.

Other times he buys plywood or drywall to paint on.

Four months have passed and he hasn't painted on any buildings. All he does now is draw on his notebooks during school.

Some students see the drawings and ask if he can draw their names.

"I had about 10 people a week asking me to draw their names," Kendall said. "I started charging them \$3 to \$5 a name."

Freshman Jordan Peterson said graffiti at school isn't as bad if

it is done to someone's house.

She said it is more likely a person would report it if it happened at their house to get it taken off than in a restroom stall at school.

"I had an older neighbor and she had a huge nice fence, but someone did graffiti on it," Peterson said. "It was worse than school because it was her own house and she was older."

When tagging the satellite at school in early October, senior Joe Smith* at an OPS high school said he didn't see it as vandalism. He saw it as getting his crew's name out.

He said he grabbed on to the satellite on Central's property as Central senior John Doe* pushed him onto the dish.

Smith said he didn't care about the security camera because he couldn't see it. So he began to paint the letters for the crew he is involved with.

Bexten said the cameras didn't pick up the kids doing the graffiti because the satellite dish is out of its range.

He said they did get an idea of a time period when it could have been done. But the school only has security working until 6:30 p.m.

The custodians stay in the school until 11:30 p.m., but they are without any official security guards.

During his time Smith said he received six months of probation because he did stencil spraying on a building.

Even though he now has a criminal record, it hasn't stopped him from graffiti and he has been doing it since seventh grade.

"I think it is graffiti when a person vandalizes property," Smith said. "But when it is on paper it is art because legally graffiti artists are punished for graffiti vandalism."

Smith and Doe said their mothers would not bail them out of jail if they were ever caught tagging.

However, they both said as long as they don't get caught their parents don't care.

Smith said he does graffiti around the city every day of the week. He doesn't classify it as a gang activity because he isn't trying to cause any trouble.

Project administrator for school safety and climate for OPS Roddie Miller said the district doesn't allow graffiti sitting around the campuses for everyone to view.

She said it has never developed to the point where families or students reported the sight of graffiti as offensive and demanded its removal.

The only reports she receives are by the faculty in order to schedule a time to take it off.

"The graffiti doesn't stay for more than an hour from when it's reported," Miller said.

The routine OPS has to follow is to file a report with the gang unit and officers come to the scene and take photos.

Sometimes, Miller said the OPS maintenance crew immedi-

ately cleans it off.

"We notify the police whether it is inside or outside of the building," she said.

To the district, even something written in a bathroom stall about love is considered graffiti.

Miller said the custodial engineers at the school are the ones who usually clean it up.

One year when two students were caught, DeGeorge said they were forced to clean the toilets for two days.

"I don't do graffiti in the bathrooms because it is too simple," Doe said. "We did the satellite because we didn't think anyone would expect it."

Considering every school in the district, Miller said there is one school that stands out as having more graffiti cases.

Donlan said Central has the same amount of graffiti complaints year to any other school in the Omaha area.

He said he thinks it says something good about Central because it has the highest population of students.

Freshman Milicia Snoddy said she doesn't think it is a problem at school.

The corn silos off of I-80 clearly show the tagging from a year ago. Doe said he had to climb ladders and crawl through areas with

ken wood and glass to get the graffiti on the silos' windows.

"I go out and do graffiti almost everyday," he said.

He said the crew has 10 to 12 members ranging from 13 to 17 years old.

The reason why he is a part of a graffiti crew is because he likes getting its name out.

"I don't think our style is writing, but it is art," Doe said.

Senior Nate Dittman said he couldn't say if his friend Doe is making a wrong decision when he does graffiti on buildings because he doesn't think he could tell him what is right or wrong.

"Graffiti can look junky, but can defiantly be an art form," Dittman said.

He said he thinks art shouldn't be contained to a canvas because the boundaries take away from what it could look like.

Dittman said he wouldn't want to go outside and do graffiti on a school building.

"If graffiti is an art form then keep it on paper or a canvas on a school building," Bexten said. "Graffiti is flat out vandalism and simple."

Kendall said he hopes crew members are careful because he has heard through friends still doing time with the police, that they are being watched.

The only thing Kendall said he does now is when he bought a van he put some graffiti on it.

"I'm not interested in it that much any more," Kendall said. "I think it's a sense of maturity and I have other important things to worry about. I was never involved with graffiti as a gang, just a crew."

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SMOKING SECTION SECOND-HAND SMOKING SECTION



Smoking should be banned in all restaurants

When attending a restaurant, people usually ask for a pleasant meal. Nonsmokers who are choking on cigarette smoke decided to try to ban smoking at restaurants.

Lancaster County Board in Lincoln approved the proposal of bringing this issue up to the City Council. The decision will be if all restaurants and bars in the city will be nonsmoking facilities.

This is how it should be.

Omaha representatives plan to sit in the two public hearings to see how it plays out and what will be the reactions if it happens. There is a possibility of this same "smoking push" in Omaha.

Smoking in dining areas should have been banned when it was prohibited in shopping malls. Since malls have been free there hasn't been a change in

business, raging protests from smokers or smokers quitting king altogether.

Once the malls prohibited it, people quickly adjusted smoked outside the building before entering.

If the law is passed for restaurants and bars it wouldn't smokers from eating or drinking. Maybe the possible will make smokers want to quit smoking or feel as if there is nowhere else to smoke.

At family restaurants, there are two sections, but none which are effectively divided. If the people are lucky there glass wall to pack all the smokers behind.

But at most restaurants, people rely on the ceiling fans distance between sections.

The current and popular method of ceiling fans, clearly can't help. In fact, it becomes more of an annoyance. The circulate the smoke throughout the building directly to family with the baby in the high-chair.

Smokers tend to forget that smoking does bother other people. Nonsmokers are fighting for their health and the opportunity to maintain it in public places. Most nonsmokers

think selfishly in this case and are not trying to personally attack the smokers.

Lincoln City Council should consider what is more important, health or money.

Health should be the quick response. Mom and pop businesses to nationally-known locations could experience a slight dip in business.

Sooner or later smokers will want to eat at a restaurant and learn how to adjust to eating without the usual cloud of smoke.

EDITORIAL

The OPINION of the Register staff

While nonsmokers will realize restaurants won't be polluted anymore and would be more likely to go out more.

Bars and restaurants are privately owned, but offer public use. So when a smoker tries to light up a mid-cigarette meal, he will have to go outside.

Sure business owners won't want to tell the regulars they can't light up a cigarette, but they'll get over it.

The owner would rather tell one guy to not smoke than have his business shut down because it broke a state law. This will all just be something Omaha people would have get used to.

Omaha City Council should think about how many billboards and public service announcements are made displaying the results of second-hand smoke. If the Omaha-Lincoln area did this it would be known as the first few cities to start it.

This could start a wave of more people quitting smoking. If teenagers can't try to look cool in restaurants because it is illegal to light up, they may never start.

Parents might not feel as if there is anywhere to go with friends to have a cigarette with, so would quit as well.

If parents quit, teens couldn't sneak cigarettes.

Smoking in restaurants and bars should be banned because when it comes to choosing health or money, the choice is obvious.

Tougher laws needed for paintball gun use

Omaha Police need to crack down on laws that pertain to paintball and pellet guns, and it needs to do it quickly before more people are injured and more private property is damaged.

Teens have been shooting paintball guns while they drive and some have even recorded it. Though these teens may think this is fun, they may not realize just how serious the penalty can be if they get caught.

However, catching these people may be a little easier, especially when they record themselves doing the stupid things they do.

Deputy Shawn Milikan with the Douglas County Sheriff's Department said there is one law that deals specifically with paintball and pellet guns.

Right now the law in Omaha states that a paintball gun should not be in a car or on public property with the CO2 cartridge attached. That also means that the gun should not be put together while driving and it should not even be in the trunk of the car.

They should not be shot from highways, roads, bridges or any other city streets. If a person does so, the penalty is a Class III misdemeanor and the punishment can be up to three months in jail, up to a \$500 fine or both.

So those who shoot the guns while driving are breaking two laws and according to the Omaha Police Department, the punishment varies from offense to offense.

Milikan said that he has no problem charging someone with a felony if the injury is severe enough or looks like it will be bad enough.

He said that a Class III felony can give the criminal up to 20 years imprisonment, \$25,000, or both.

Also, the only place the guns can be shot is on private property and in designated areas where the guns are allowed, which include paintball ranges. But that is not stopping people from shooting at signs, houses and even the elderly.

It is also fine and not considered illegal if the paintball or pellet gun is shot in a lawn or in a yard, as long as it is not being shot at someone.

Considering how stupid kids are today, it is amazing the police have not caught more teens doing these stupid things.

Driving down the freeway, drivers can count all of the paintball spots on the signs and overpasses. Even on side and country roads, kids with pellet guns drive by and see if they can shoot the deer that are on the yellow signs.

EDITORIAL

The OPINION of the Register staff

Help line shows way to save minors' lives

Combine a whole bunch of high school kids, an empty house and a keg. This combination can lead to a deadly situation.

The neighbors surrounding this house holding this 'kegger' are worried about their cars neatly parked along the street being vandalized or hit and the red plastic cups that once contained an array of alcoholic beverages which are now filling their backyards after being thrown over the fence.

But most important of all, the majority of these neighbors are concerned about the health and safety of the children participating in this party.

Council Bluffs has a solution for all of these fretting neighbors, it's called a Party Tip Line. One can call the line and give the address or approximate location of an underage drinking party so that authorities can go check it out. The caller may also receive up to a \$50 reward in addition to the satisfaction of

possibly saving several lives. Hopefully this will soon arrive in Omaha so alcohol-related deaths and accidents among minors may be reduced.

In 2001, 246 people were killed in Nebraska as a result of drunk drivers.

The problem is not an occasional party and a beer or two. It's those who take it to an extreme. Those who drink more than any one person should be able to consume, and then they attempt to drive home.

Take for example of the boy from Westside who several years ago hit a father and daughter while they were going for a walk. He was drunk. He didn't know what he was doing.

His choice not only affected him, but all of those close to him and the family members of the two he killed.

This boy's parents will forever wonder how their son could make such a huge mistake. This tip line one solution to help with this huge problem.

EDITORIAL

The OPINION of the Register staff

LETTERS, E-MAILS, FAXES, POLLS, CARTOONS

Register reporters mishandle religious topics

Editor,
As I sat down to read the latest edition of the Register, my were drawn to the Opinion section. I was overwhelmed sadness as I read three specific articles that harshly attacked Christianity. I find it quite astounding that Central sees itself on diversity and acceptance and then promotes articles that completely oppose it. I understand freedom of press, but we also have a tradition of civility and balance which was sadly absent from the articles.

Regarding the column titled "Religious Issues Leave Me Confused, Outraged," I feel sad that the author has such a dismal experience of the Church. However, thousands of teens, including myself have had very different experiences. Powerful worship, relevant Bible study, working hard worlds, and having personal relationships with God is real. The accusation that religion is irrelevant, misguided waste of time is more a reflection of the author's bad experience, rather than an objective analysis of what is taking place in churches around the world.

I have one final point regarding references in the last two articles regarding religion and homosexuality. Christians do not hate homosexuals. We believe that the scriptures teach that it is wrong. The Bible teaches to hate sin, not the sinner. If we are disobeying God.

Erica Mayhew (12)

EDITORS' NOTE

It is first very important to point out that the "articles" referred to were editorials, the opinion of the staff, and columns, the opinion of the author. It is also very important to point out that the Register does indeed diversify its coverage, including pieces highlighting the charity and religious work done by individuals such as the Afghanistan story (see Issue 1, section A, page 9, column 1). It is encouraged for students and faculty to submit their opinions to the Register in the form of registered letters to the editor. Thank you.

Morning after pill belongs over the counter

Editor,
Having the morning after pill available over the counter is a pretty controversial issue. Most would say it is irresponsible girls who don't want to bother with birth control.

But there are times when birth control fails and this pill is necessary in ensuring the girl does not get pregnant. Some might even take it as a precautionary measure.

I believe that teen pregnancies would decrease drastically if the morning after pill was made available over the counter.

Amanda DeWitt (11)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR WANTED

Letters to the Editor are gladly accepted in room 315, via e-mail at Central.Journalism@ops.org or in Mr. Deabler's mailbox in the main office.

Letters must be factual and contain the author's full name and grade. Incorrect or unsigned letters will not be printed. The use of pen names is not allowed.

Columnist should be more knowledgeable about religion

Dear Editor,

Growing up in a home with no religious base made my life hard. Regarding a column in the last issue of the paper, I feel sorry for the writer's lack of faith.

All of the work and effort religious people put in every week are because God's word tells them to serve.

Secondly, the money people donate each week doesn't go to the pastor or rabbi's party time, it goes to missionary's who help starving kids. Not every religious person hates gay people. Jesus teaches us to love everybody, yet it is a sin to be gay, because gay people cannot multiply.

But everyone sins every day and sins are all the same in God's eyes. Killing someone all the way to cussing are all the same and everything in between is considered a sin in God's eyes.

Forgiveness is the key, if you have faith then you receive forgiveness. My point is that my childhood without religion would have been hard. It has changed the meaning to my life and I have faith in God.

I think the community is awesome and supportive. Even if there is no God, heaven, Jesus or whatever, I am glad I have more faith than the writer.

Erica Yates (12)

Newspaper entertains readers with four different sections

Dear Editor,

I think the Register is pretty cool and I think the staff is doing a great job on informing us with information about our school. Though there are many interesting stories, I think we as a school should discuss more politics in the school newspaper.

I think you are succeeding and doing a good job. Keep bringing the students good information.

Jonathan Lopez (10)

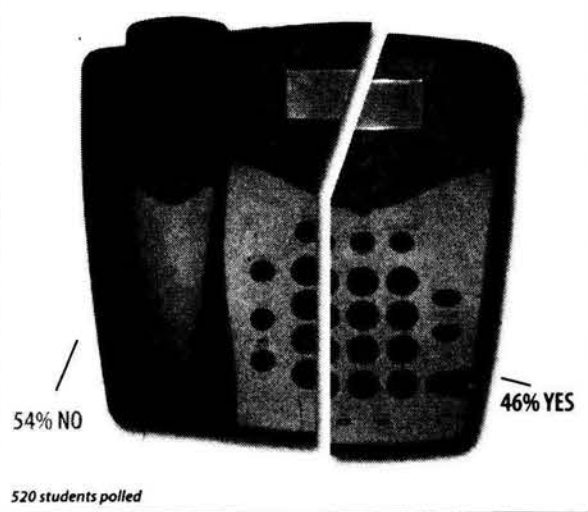
Senior misses in-school weight-lifting contests

Dear Editor,

I think Central was more fun when we had Mr. Central and the talent show

STUDENT POLL

Is the drug tip line a good idea and will it help?



during school. Now the school isn't as fun as it used to be without these two events.

LaSonia Hart (12)

Newspaper should diversify sports coverage

Dear Editor,

I think that the newspaper should have more equal coverage of all sports. I like how the paper is now, I just want to know more about the less popular sports that my friends are in. That includes underclass school sports which are not covered very often in the paper, if at all.

Alex Maca (11)

New help line seen as good idea

Dear Editor,

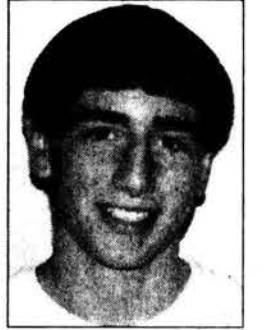
The party tip line is a great idea. It can help prevent underage drinking which can usually lead to sex. It is also a good idea to be anonymous.

Aaron French (9)



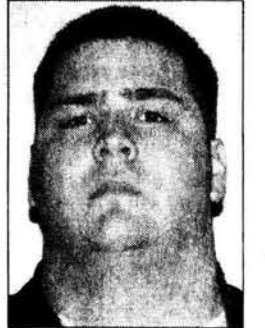
REGISTER YOUR OPINION

DO YOU THINK IT IS A GOOD IDEA TO HAVE A TIP LINE FOR MINORS WHO ARE DRINKING?



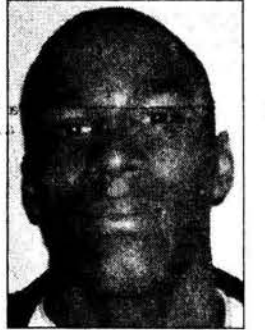
"It should get people in trouble, but if someone has a serious problem they could use it to get help."

Jared Dittman (9)



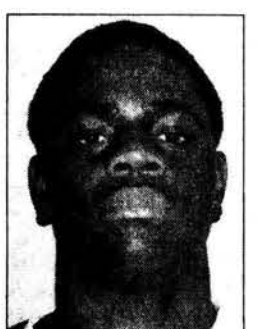
"Just let them party as long as they aren't hurting any one."

Matt Storm (12)



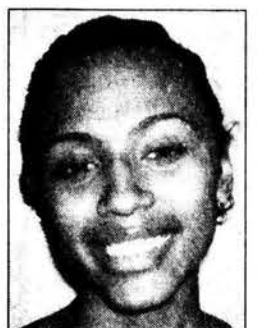
"I think it would be safe because underage people shouldn't be drinking because it seems something bad always happens."

Ronald Cardwell (12)



"It's a good idea to stop kids from drinking, but it doesn't teach them a lesson."

Brenton Donaldson (9)



"Someone could get hurt. But they could get in trouble and those consequences could be worse."

Trista Kelly (10)



"If it isn't hurting someone, then there is nothing wrong with a little fun."

Natalie Younger (9)

Senior gives time to prepare auditorium for Spring play, annual Roadshow

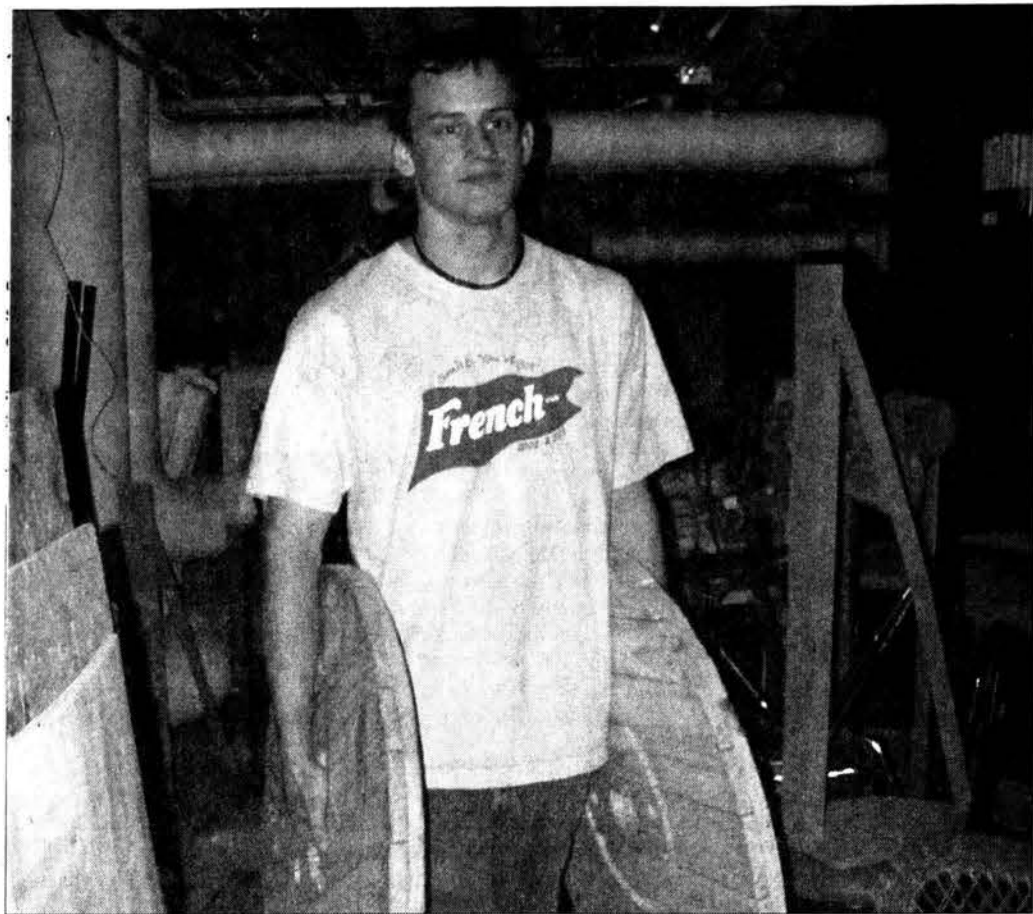


PHOTO BY KATIE BACKMAN/REGISTER

The "Cinderella" cast was responsible for clearing the make-up room for "The Prairie Nutcracker," play. Senior Jason Nehrig (ABOVE) moved furniture and other set materials under the stage.

BY DANIELLE WELTY

Senior Jason Nehrig goes to the auditorium every day fourth hour to make sure everything is still in one piece.

It is difficult to get to and even use the stage because of all the renovations. As each phase of the renovation advances, both he and drama teacher John Gibson said they are fearful of what may happen next.

"The construction has made it impossible to work or even stay in the auditorium for an extended period of time," Nehrig said. "It's absolutely disgusting in there."

He said recently he had taken some of the shelves out of the auditorium for use and had to wash them six or seven times to get all of the dust and debris from the renovations off.

"Everything is just covered with dust and dirt," Nehrig said. "Whenever I walk across the stage I can see my footprints."

Not only is dust a problem, but being so close to a construction zone raises questions about safety. He said he heard a drill once fell on the stage by accident.

This is another reason why students couldn't be on the stage.

This inability to use the stage has not only caused drama classes some inconvenience, but the Fall musical, "Cinderella," was also affected.

Gibson said at first the musical cast attempted to mop and sweep the floors to prevent the show from being postponed.

But as illness struck many cast members and teachers as a result of the horrible work environment and the lack of heat, Gibson said

he had to call it quits.

"Postponing the musical was a tough decision, but someone had to do it," Gibson said. "It was just so cold without any heat in there, even the dancers who were moving around were complaining."

The Fall musical will take the Roadshow's place and the Roadshow will be held during the Spring musical's date. Therefore, there will not be a spring show.

The Spring musical had not even been chosen yet. Gibson said this decision is usually made by his advanced drama students after they read seven or eight plays.

He said not having a play wasn't a great loss, but others believe the month the cast spent rehearsing "Cinderella" was time that could have been better spent.

"There were a few people that were upset because we'll basically have to relearn everything because that's a lot to remember," Nehrig said, "but that was expected, and fortunately the overall consensus was pretty positive."

Nehrig has not only helped with the construction and design of the set, but he is also a cast member and said he is anticipating the return to practices.

"Hopefully we can get everything cleaned up so we can meet and get ready for practices as soon after the break as possible," Gibson said.

This is a bigger task than it may seem.

Nehrig had been calling several different cleaning services to come into the building and give the school a quote on the approximate cost of cleaning the entire auditorium.

"I called one service and I was told that it

would cost more that it was worth just to have them take down our curtains, send them away and have them cleaned," Nehrig said. "He asked us to get some vacuum cleaners and do the best we could with what we have."

Gibson said there are many parts of the auditorium that will need professional cleaning and other parts may need to be replaced altogether.

"We have to make sure that the dimmer lights and the sound system even work properly," Nehrig said.

Anytime electronic devices and lights have to be cleaned, they usually end up askew so much has to be done to get them back in order, Gibson said.

Cleaning may be costly if much of the auditorium is beyond repair.

Nothing was removed or put into storage from the auditorium towards the beginning of renovations because Gibson said no one thought there would be such a mess.

Nehrig said he isn't sure where the money is coming from to clean the auditorium, but something has to be done because students shouldn't be punished for the renovations they are supposed to be helping the school.

All of this cleaning and rebuilding of the auditorium must be done quickly as it already been rented out for a performance Dec. 20 and 21.

"The Prairie Nutcracker" is being performed in the auditorium through TAC (Theater Administrative Center)," Gibson said. "So it's not usable by then I don't know what we're going to do, but we'll have to find something for them to go."

Alumnus composer brings musically-improved ballet to school during winter break

BY BRYAN SWOTEK

Changing "The Nutcracker" isn't an easy task. However, alumnus Rick Kuethe composed music for a midwest version of the ballet called "The Prairie Nutcracker."

The ballet will be performed on Central's stage on Dec. 20 and 21 and even students will be able to appreciate the messages and art.

Kuethe said this "prairie" ballet, which was originally written by Betsie Andrews, is about the midwest in 1869.

Andrews said when the music starts, some people forget they are viewing "The Nutcracker."

"The music flows so well with the cast and the set," she said. "Without the music it would be a completely different production."

Andrews said she was sick of hearing the same music used in the original ballet and thought the music could use a change.

She has been using Kuethe's music in dancing ever since the 1980s because she loves his music.

"I would call him a new-age Copland because his talent is easily comparable to those great composers," she said.

Kuethe said he wrote 80 percent of the music currently in the ballet.

It wasn't exactly an easy task for him to get his music heard.

He said Andrews wanted him to write new music in a short time period for this ballet.

Kuethe said she originally came to him not to completely write new music, but to change it slightly.

Andrews said the ballet and music began changing when Kuethe sent his music to them.

"His music was absolutely incredible. The music we had, which was all written by Tchaikovsky, was Russian influenced," Andrews said. "It did not fit with the midwest theme, but Rick added a lot of new instruments not originally in the music."

One of the instruments in the ballet is an Indian flute, which played a big role in the midwestern culture and is heard frequently in the ballet.

Kuethe said she had been performing "The Prairie Nutcracker" for years and had grown tired of the music.

She wanted to incorporate a new twist to change the dances and the traditional plot.

"She wanted to use the same music by Tchaikovsky and just add piano parts, but I did not think that the music fit very well, so I wanted to write new music," Kuethe said.

Andrews wanted him to work with the original composer's music and slightly modify it, but he ran into some difficulties.

Kuethe said he called Andrews and told her he did not think the music was fitting and he wanted to write new music for her.

He said she did not want new music since her dancers and other cast members had already known the music.

"Tchaikovsky's music kind of worked, but I didn't think it was not really the style of music that the piece needed," Kuethe said.

After Andrews received the new music pieces, she said she realized the dances needed a different tempo.

She said she had to work quickly with the dancers to teach them the new moves for "The Prairie Nutcracker."

He said he loved the ballet and the plot.

He went right to the heart of the performance, the only thing the production needed, which was new music.

Andrews said his music is fun, whimsical and heartwarming.

She said he used different instruments and new techniques compared to the previous composers.

"The people in the midwest and especially his fans and people in Omaha should be able to hear the music," Andrews said. "The ballet has a lot of midwest ethics and issues that we have to hang on to."

She said she would hope people in all age groups would appreciate the music and the dancing in the ballet.

She said she hopes children don't think it is only for adults because with the new music it now can easily entertain all ages.

Since the play is being held at school she

hopes it brings more of the aspiring young drama and dance students.

She said she has had full-grown people who have full-time careers in farming, come up to her completely moved after one of her performances.

When these type of fans approach her she said they grab and shake both of her hands saying how they've portrayed the farm life.

"I wouldn't recommend bringing young kids to the ballet, but some have come and were absolutely in love with it," Andrews said. "They just sit on the edge of their seats and their eyes get really big."

Kuethe said he has been working on the music for the ballet since the summer of 2002 when Andrews originally proposed the ballet.

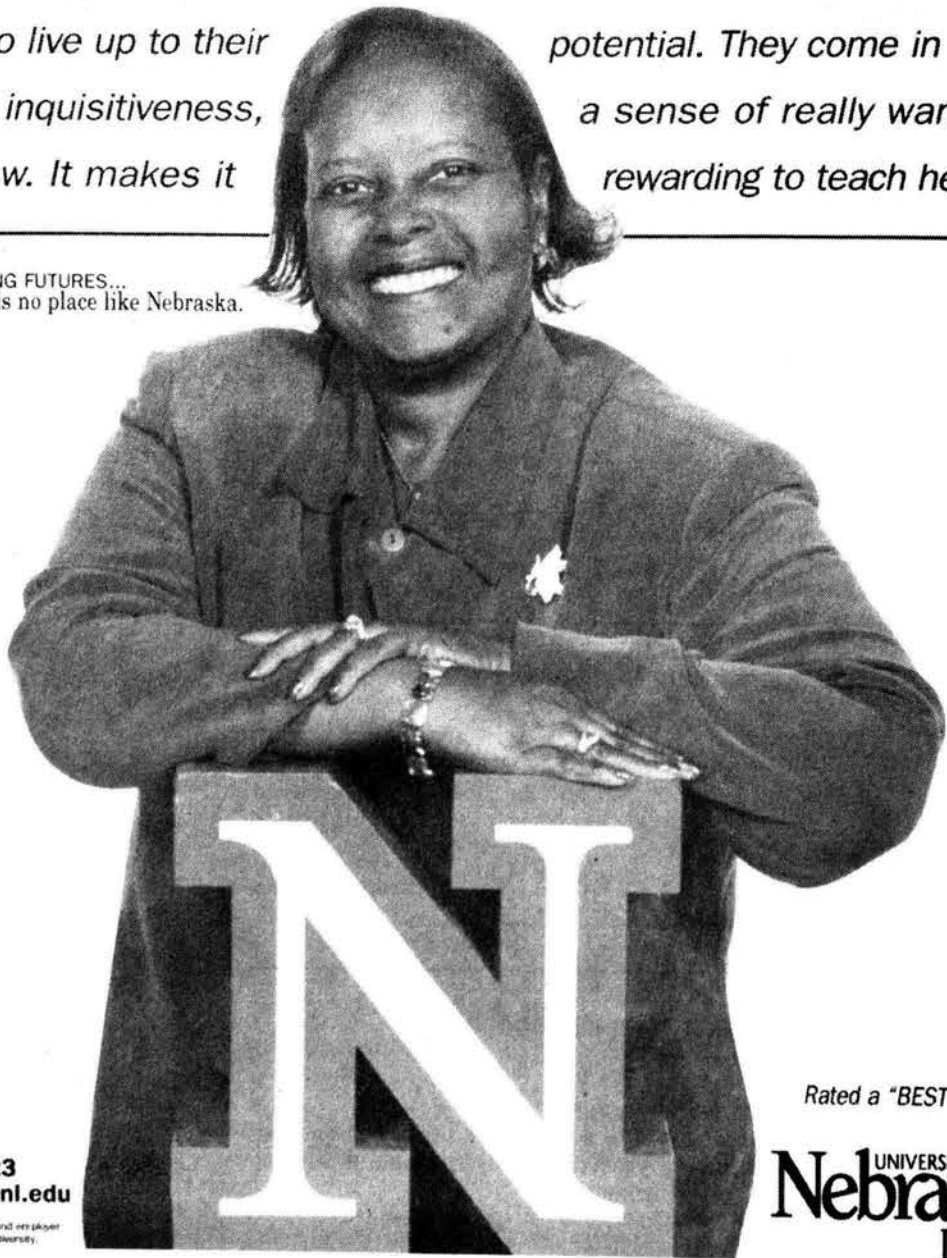
Since then he has given 21 pieces of music to Andrews.

"I have been really busy writing music and putting it all together on the piano, but it has been so much fun and I am really looking forward to the final product," Kuethe said.

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COURTESY OF WARNER BROS. PICTURES

Berry puts on a dramatic and thrilling performance to give the audience something different from her past characters.

Thriller uses twists, turns to push towards unexpected end

BY DANIELLE WELTY

"Gothika" was fortunately not like other horror movie ever released because it was actually entertaining.

MOVIE REVIEW



"GOTHIKA"
Starring: Halle Berry

There aren't any scenes where cheerleaders are mutilated after a mysterious man attacks them down for a parent reason. The movie is suspenseful and had extremely twisted, and dark ending.

"Gothika" is set in a psychiatric and Halle Berry, who plays the role of Miranda Grey, does a acting job as a mental patient.

Imagine waking up in a psychiatric locked in a glass cell, wearing a medical gown while former co-workers stare at you.

This is what Berry's character must with in one of the opening scenes.

Grey was once a doctor at the psychiatric ward. The movie opens up her talking to a patient, Chloe, the demons attacking and raping

Chloe refuses to speak with her because Grey believes she is crazy.

The movie fails at its wild card of making Grey appear to be insane.

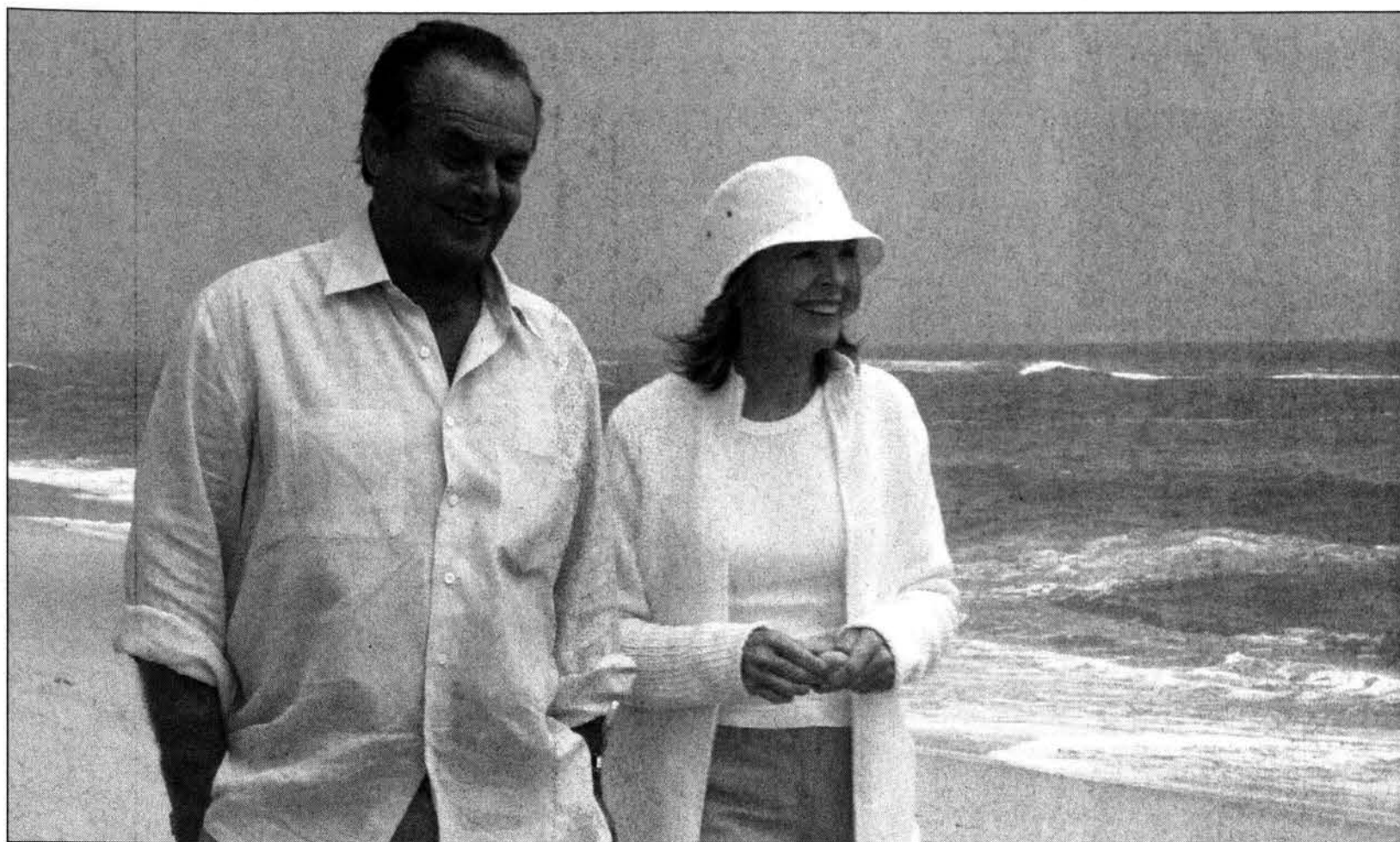
The reason behind Grey being placed in the ward in the first place is because she committed a horrible murder, and her motive as well as the details of the murder are revealed throughout the movie in flashbacks.

Flashbacks in a pseudo-thriller movies never truly appeal to the audience or bring a new form of entertainment.

"Gothika" touches base with something humans know very little about, their own minds.

There is a thin line between sanity and insanity as well as reality and fantasy throughout the movie. The only problem with "Gothika" was its title.

The line "not alone" is prevalent throughout the movie as it is marked on walls and slashed into character's skin and would be better suited as the title rather than "Gothika."



COURTESY OF COLUMBIA PICTURES

Jack Nicholson and Diane Keaton are stunning audiences with their acting abilities and humor in "Something's Gotta Give."

Adult-oriented movie fails to intrigue teens

BY JOHN KENDALL

"Something's Gotta Give" is definitely "something" else due to remarkable performances from some classic actors.

Harry Sanborn (Jack Nicholson) is an aged playboy who has never dated anyone over the age of 30 in his 63 years of living. He has also never been married.

Sanborn begins to have a change of heart, however, after running off with his recent young love, Marin (Amanda Peet), to her mother's beach house.

They have an awkward encounter with Marin's mother, Erica Barry (Diane Keaton), and her friend Zoe (Frances McDormand), and later come across the charming, young doctor Julian Mercer (Keanu Reeves).

The movie is a tale of not knowing what is ahead until it is lost, trying to find it only to lose it again and again.

Keaton fulfills her role as a neurotic 53-year-old playwright who is uncomfortable with her daughter dating a significantly older guy.

Nicholson, a chauvinistic and laissez-faire owner of several rap record labels, contrasts her character to create that key, humorous friction needed for any

movie like this one.

His suggestive humor appeals to the guys in the audience, should a guy go to see this movie. He proves to be a classic, well-rounded actor being able to do a villainous comedian (Joker, "Batman") as well as an old romantic.

The audience will also see a side of Nicholson they may have never seen before during one of his more nonsensical, random moments.

Peet and Reeves have a rather typical role and performance as young lovers in this movie who both happened to be interested in dating older people, and McDormand displays a model acting job as the supporting friend.

Some characters just seem to drop off the face of the Earth for a while at times, as well, only to pop up later at seemingly irrelevant moments.

"Something's Gotta Give" has a PG-13 rating for brief nudity, sexual content and strong language. It is definitely a movie geared more towards an adult, feminine audience, but there is nothing about the movie most people would not understand.

Some people of the younger, less mature generation, however, might not want to see certain scenes of the movie.

Much of the humor is sexually oriented, but with the bit of taste and class that allows anyone of any reasonable age or gender to enjoy.

MOVIE REVIEW



"SOMETHING GOTTA TO GIVE"
Starring: Jack Nicholson

This probably comes from the adult actors making the jokes for a change.

The movie does contain some of the stereotypical "chick flick" symptoms in which it is not sure whether they should be laughed at or be found as annoying.

There are also some situations, which a younger audience might understand but not really connect with. There are certain shots here and there in the movie where the technical quality is a little under par. Meaning some scenes appear to have a grainy look to the screen as well as one moment where there is lightning, but it is obvious it was not done in the same setting.

"Something's Gotta Give" is a decent movie overall, giving the audience a nice break from the all too common attempt at a teen-oriented romantic comedy.

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COURTESY OF EPIC RECORDS

ALBUM REVIEW

"LOST DOGS"
By: Pearl Jam

Grunge band's newest release allows acoustic songs to shine

BY ROB HUNTER

If nothing else, Pearl Jam has established its dedication to its fans. "Lost Dogs," along with the B-sides, is a newly comprised collection of songs recorded over the past 13 years, produced at high quality for release. What the album is not, is a "best of" collection with 20-some re-recordings that are already owned.

The band provides 31 unreleased songs for its grunge fan base.

The obscure tracks from vocalist Eddie Vetter seem to be intended for loyal fans, not newcomers, or at least the style of the recordings seems to indicate that most newcomers would not understand.

As they should be. Vetter has made it clear to the press and his fans he has no intention on releasing music for the mass-popular genres.

As evidence, the band hasn't released an album with a barcode since 1996, including "Lost Dogs," making the band's music ineligible for popular music charts.

For fans who have combed record stores and Internet file-sharing servers for rarities, the album is a dream come true.

The album includes live sets like "Footsteps," and the Who cover, "Leavin' Here," which leave the listener appreciating the acoustic aura Vetter so willingly embracing puts off.

The live songs leave the psychotic Seattle-grunge fans shocked with the quality of the rarities.

"Footsteps" is the single best song in the collection.

It makes the band come alive without having to blow the speakers out.

It continues to remind the listener of early power songs like early "Better Man."

The second part of the album, or the B-sides, seems more of a mellow ode to Seattle and the grunge culture.

It feels more real, and draws the listener closer to Vetter.

The mellow "Drifting," "Dead Man" and "Strangest Tribe" seem to mirror Neil Young's quieter work, and almost have the listener believing Young is behind the guitar, not Vetter.

"Dirty Frank" however seemed very sporadic and unlike most Pearl Jam pieces, it left listeners unsure how to react. It wasn't the highlight of the collection.

The hidden track "April 20, 2002," seemingly written for the day former Alice in Chains front man Layne Staley's body was discovered, proves the band retains close ties to their fellow Seattle musicians.

For fans more interested in the present than the past, the band will also release a DVD on Dec. 23, "Live at the Garden," recorded in New York during its most recent tour.

The collection is not "Blonde on Blonde," but is most definitely worth the \$13 paid for it.

Unless you are a fan, the first part of the compilation is about as good as a coaster.

However, the B-sides is a melancholy album worth being placed near the stereo for repeated use.



COURTESY OF WARNER BROS. PICTURES

Tom Cruise, who plays Nathan Algren, rides his horse into battle many times in the film "The Last Samurai." The film is bound to be a hit with movie critics.

Cruise brings film to award-winning level

BY BRYAN SWOTEK

Every time a blade is thrown, it is heard throughout the theater. Blood can even be heard as it drops and flows to the ground.

There is no doubt Tom Cruise's new film "The Last Samurai" will win awards. The movie is absolutely outstanding.

It is not often when a movie can take breath away and make the watcher feel sorrow or chuckle in the same movie.

It starts out with a bit of history and gives the audience a little information as to what is going on and where the movie is taking place.

The movie requires a lot of attention. It does not seem like a mind-bending movie, but the entire idea of battle and war requires a lot of focus.

The movie offers no time for restroom breaks, so those should be taken before the movie begins.

The historical aspect is completed with geishas in colorful dress walking through the streets and the big change in the scenery of Japan.

Cruise's character is Nathan Algren, a raging alcoholic and experienced fighter in the Army. He is sought out for his fighting and war tactics.

Algren is asked to go to Japan to teach a very inexperienced army the skills they will need to fight the Samurai.

People in the audience actually begin to feel

as if they are in Japan and are looking over bloody battlegrounds.

Ken Watanabe plays the head Samurai Katsumoto. He successfully performed the role of the fighter and with little difficulty, made the fight scenes look real.

When the army is attacked by the Samurai and loses a drastic amount of people, Cruise is injured. His injury marks the real beginning of the story.

It may seem like a late starting focus for a movie, but it is all relevant because the beginning has a lot of information and the audience should pay close attention to what is going on.

After being attacked, Cruise finds himself in the town where the Samurai lives. There, he is nursed back to health and he becomes well-acquainted with the people in the town.

He quickly comes to like a woman, Taka, who helps him.

Taka, who originally does not like Algren, has a change of heart when she sees how well he gets along with the family and how willing he is to protect the village. Not to mention her.

Cruise looks incredibly scruffy in this epic and almost the entire movie takes place in 1876 Japan.

All of the natives in the land look incredibly clean and well-shaven and then Cruise comes in and makes the town look dirty.

MOVIE REVIEW



"THE LAST SAMURAI"
Starring: Tom Cruise

Album rocks old style with cutting bass lines, deep lyrics

BY MICHAEL SMITH



COURTESY OF EPIC RECORDS

ALBUM REVIEW



"SPLINTER"
By: The Offspring

While the punk rebellion has been so watered down and commercialized by bands like Good Charlotte and Blink 182, any open ear can tell that The Offspring is serious about letting out its rebellious yells.

Welcome to hearing music from a real band with real lyrics. It doesn't take the sellout title and that is why The Offspring has been so successful in recent years.

The band opens its seventh album, "Splinter" with the lyrics: "We are strong... We are right... We won't be pushed aside." It is about time to hear from a good punk-rock band.

Pleasing the audience seems to be more important to the band than filling the members' wallets.

The band proves it still has talent because each song is powerful.

"The Noose," a reeling, fast-paced anthem, which may be one of its best songs recorded to date.

The Offspring proves with "Splinter" that it is still a force to be reckoned with. Nothing will stand in its way.

With a distinctive acoustic sound on the whole album, the lyrics add a sense of flair that is not in most albums.

It is the combination of songs like "The Noose,"

other tracks like "Long Way Home" and "Da Hui" with the more experimental sound that truly defines The Offspring and makes it even more original from other bands.

The bass thumps and the guitar cuts, just the way it should. "Splinter" truly shines.

The mood is shown in the dynamics this band brings into the music. The albums' tracks are significantly better than any of The Offspring's album in all the years of its defiant music.

"Splinter" really follows directly in the footsteps of the band's previous album in 2001, "Conspiracy of One." While "Splinter" is an excellent record it never quite reaches the previous' sound and flair.

"Spare Me" is an upbeat, catchy song with a strong rhythmic backing and a distinctive keyboard line. The song also brings enlightenment that makes for good karma for listeners.

True fans should not worry, but instead should find a lot to appreciate in its entirety. "Splinter" certainly holds its own and keeps listeners with an open mind.

The audience who enjoyed The Offspring's past albums will particularly enjoy "Splinter."

There is no doubt about it, this album will soon top charts.

This album is definitely not a splinter in The Offspring sound.

This band is definitely headed in the right direction.



COURTESY OF A&M RECORDS

ALBUM REVIEW

"SACRED LOVE"
By: Sting

Jazz feel keeps listener hooked on soft oldies

BY JOHN KENDALL

Sting's latest release "Sacred Love" is an earful of timeless and entrancing sounds.

It is difficult to pin just one period of music to this album as are sent off reminiscent of Bowie, Billy Idol, and going back as sounding like it was from the with a very jazz-like twist to the and tempo.

There is a track or two which with a sound reflective of Dead & Dance, as well.

He also appeals to those into more of the rhythm and (R&B) widening his audience than just those people who hold the classic rock and alternative spirit.

Musical artist Mary J. Blige, an appearance courtesy of Epic Records with a duet in a track album, "Whenever I Say Your Name" a song of mournful longing.

Other guest appearances include Vicente Amigo playing the flamenco guitar in the second track, "Send Your Love," and Anoushka Shankar playing the sitar in the ninth track, "The of My Life."

There is also a remix at the end of the album of the aforementioned "Send Your Love" put together by Audé.

All of the songs are of a respectable length, differing from most of these musicians out in the media. These track under three minutes, and one track barely over six minutes in length.

A majority of them range from four to five minute range.

His music follows the model in writing of alternating between verse and chorus, and yet none of them seem to get repetitive and drab. Most likely due to the multiple each track contains, and none of sound like the last.

One moment there will be slight gruff in voice and upbeat of jazz, and the next there is the beat of classic R&B and hip hop.

All this exists among the presence of other instruments going on at the same time including the basic guitars and drums as well as the common, or even known, casted darduk, cello and trombone.

Sting's lyrics are all very thought out and not repetitive only that, but they seem as though could apply to anyone at any point in their life.

If the listener is happy, the music will sound cheerful or at least content, even if it was not meant that way. The same works the other way should the listener be depressed, an upbeat track could accompany their sorrow.

This is not a feat many musicians can do, or at least do with ease.

Sting proves his worthiness as a memorable and classic musician by creating those songs, which are unique in their emotion.

The songs on this album are neither too aggressive, nor too mellow. They are set at just the right feel so they can be listened to while performing any task.

"Sacred Love" contains a total of 11 unforgettable tracks, which may seem like all too much, but it's easy to keep the listener entertained for roughly an hour.

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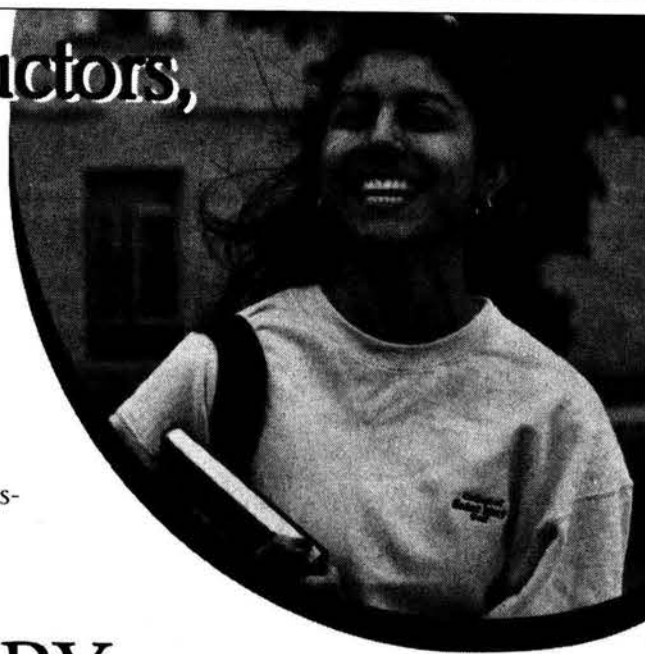


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Wrestling team struggles in second tournament

BY KATIE BACKMAN

The wrestling team competed in the annual Town Invitational Tournament Dec. 12 and 13 and brought home some much-needed experience, along with some medals.

Sophomore Cavin Cooper placed first in his weight class of 119 pounds.

After the tournament, Cooper said he was excited for the next tournament at the Ralston Invite on Dec. 20 because each of his matches will increase his abilities.

"I expected to win at the (Boys Town) tournament," Cooper said. "After I did, I thought I had worked hard and paid off."

He beat Kellen McKim of Omaha Scott High School 8-5.

On the first night of the two-day tournament, Cooper started his winning streak by beating Eric of Elkhorn.

Then he competed against Brody Mayberry of Aurora, who he beat, which put him in the championship match.

"I just acted on instinct and I ended up winning the duel," Cooper said.

On the first day, the Eagles had three finalists who were juniors Blake Gayer, Cavin Smith and Cooper.

Cooper is the only one who competed in the championship at this tournament.

The double elimination tournament included schools that were out of Central's district, but included some of the highest-ranked wrestlers in the state.

Sophomores Guy Smith and Jae Torpy were eliminated from the tournament the first day.

To prepare the team for each tournament, the coaches said wrestlers practice every day after school.

Cooper said he had confidence with Cooper's ability to win and was very happy when he did.

"I expect all of my wrestlers to win if they can," Foster said.

Gayer also competed in the tournament and placed eighth in his 130-pound class.

Gayer won his first match with an impressive pin against Shawn Elsey of Logan View.

He said on the final day, he placed fourth at the tournament, but he plans on improving enough to qualify for State.

He said he thinks his confidence grew too fast and he thought he could beat anyone.

Gayer said the State tournament will be tough, but he is looking forward to it because he thinks he will place.

"I never know what to expect with Blake," Foster said. "One time he will pin someone, but the next move he could be pinned."

Sophomore Joel Torpy placed sixth in the Boys Town Tournament.

He said before his next match he is going to work out more and practice freeing his legs to avoid being pinned.

Foster said when wrestlers lift weights or do other exercises to improve their strength, it doesn't change their weight class because they don't start any strict protein diets.

Injuries aren't something any team can't prepare for and junior Terrance Smith found that out the hard way.

Foster said Smith hurt his knee and basically had to disqualify himself from his last match.

He placed sixth in the tournament because he had to forfeit.

One the first day Smith was on his way to earning a top place after winning against Jon Mahoney of Underwood.

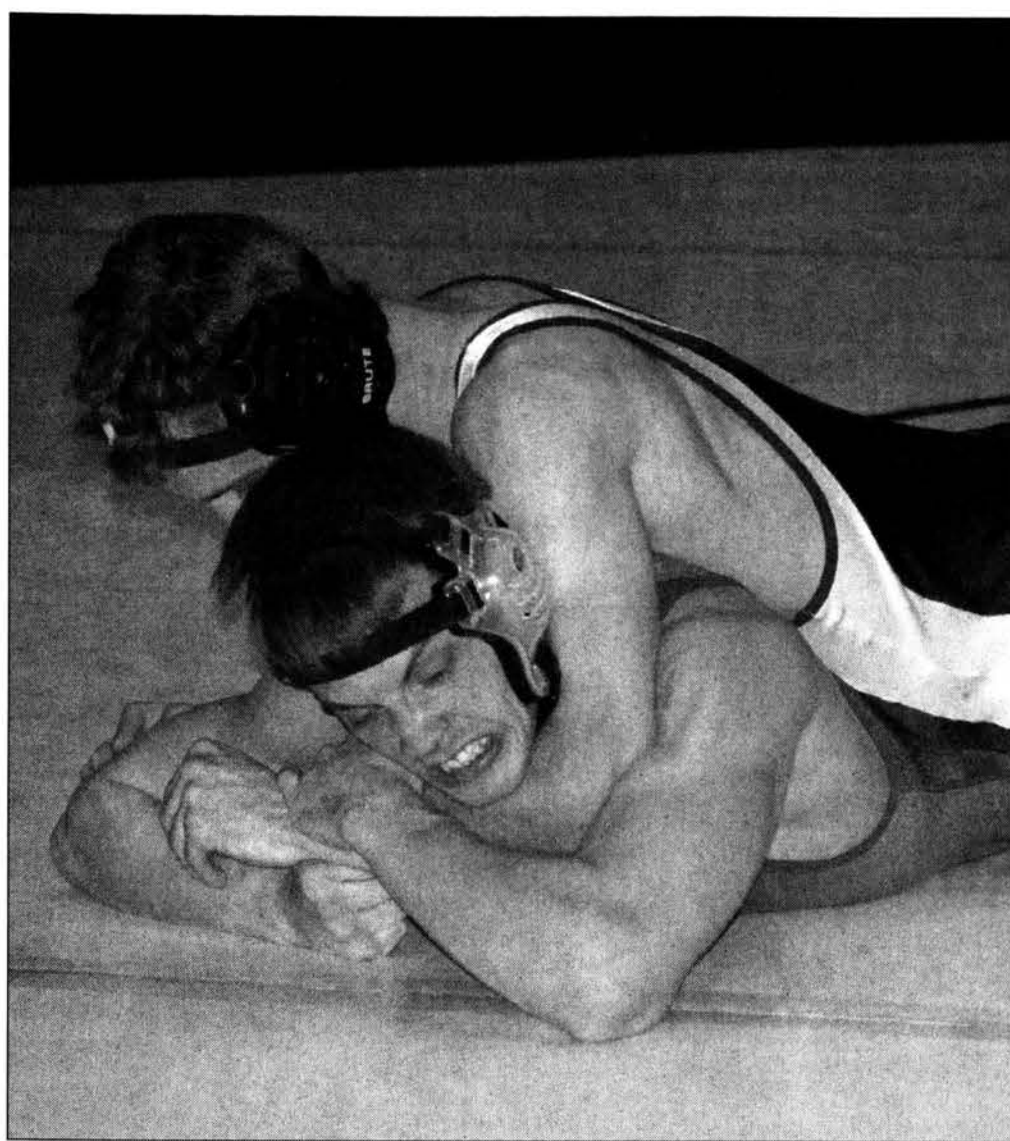
He kept up his dominating ways until the semifinals, when he lost to Dylan Wheaton of Omaha Scott.

For the tournament at the Ralston Invite, Foster said a couple of the wrestlers are going to be out of town and some won't compete because of injuries.

But he said he expects the team to perform well and compete as if they were trying to win at State or Districts.

He said each tournament needs to be taken seriously because it is a part of the season.

Jeff Hart contributed to this story.



Junior Blake Gayer (ON TOP) helps the team gain points in his first match, dominating Shawn Elsey of Logan View and winning Central's first match.



DEVIL IN A BLONDE WIG
A COLUMN BY ASHLEY WELTY

Student proves to be perfect fan for NU football

When people talk about Nebraska most imagine men sitting around discussing the star players in the Husker lineup.

I like to do those things too, but in this Husker-male-dominated state, I am not accepted.

I love football. I love to watch it and even play it. But since I am a girl, I should be somewhere on the sidelines cheering. This is one girl who won't stand for that stereotype.

Nebraska football is huge, if you haven't noticed, so I have always been raised that the only sport worth watching is football. I grew up with my father yelling at the television during a game and wondered why he was yelling.

When I got older, I thought football was just plain stupid. It was just another sport, who cared. But then I sat down to watch a game to see what the big deal was. I thought it was mildly interesting so I sat down each Saturday and started understanding the game of football.

So when I was in sixth grade, I tried to play football with some of my guy friends. But they never gave me the ball. I started to realize that football field was one place a girl didn't belong.

I have experienced this stereotype all of my life. Even a couple of months ago I tried to talk to my guy classmate about the upcoming Husker game. He basically ignored me and ended up pushing me out of the circle.

I get shocked looks anytime I name a player or the score from a game. Girls aren't supposed to watch football. I am supposed to go play with Barbies or cheer on the sidelines.

I went to a Husker game last season. I was so excited to see a game live. The last time I went was when I was younger and really didn't care. But this time I found myself rushing my dad out the door at 10 a.m., when the game didn't start until noon.

On the way there I looked out the car window and saw people decked out in red and white. It made me laugh, like all Nebraskans were supposed to make a pilgrimage to Lincoln sometime in life.

When I stepped into the stadium, the noise was unbelievable. Every person was screaming at the top of their lungs, or so I thought. Then the game began and the whole crowd yelled. But I got looks like "what are you doing here?"

So after all my experiences, I still continue to watch football. To all those people who believe that girls shouldn't like or even watch football, see ya at the game.

Basketball player signs letter of intent with university in Chicago

BY JEFF HART

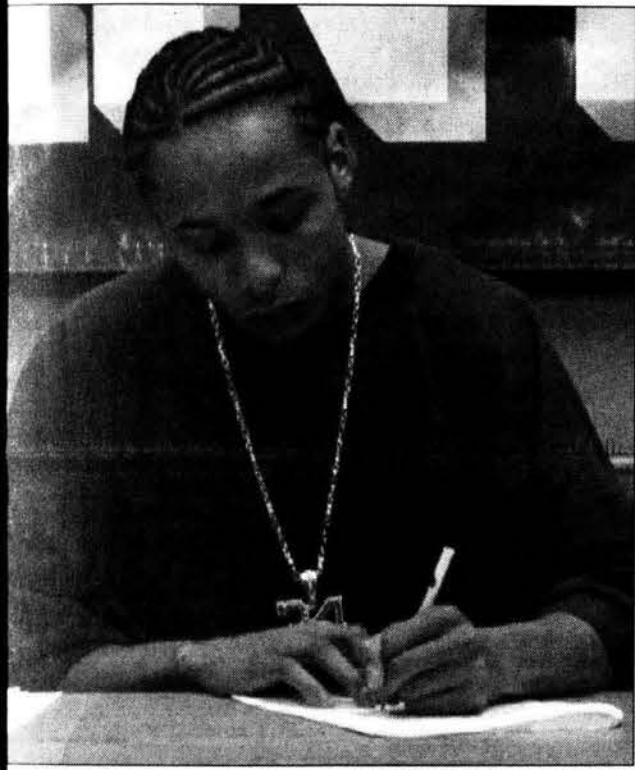


PHOTO BY JEFF HART/REGISTER

Karl White signs a letter of intent with the University of Illinois at Chicago in the conference room in November.

Friends, family and administration surrounded senior Karl White as he signed his letter of intent to the University of Illinois at Chicago.

"I feel like I just signed my life away," White said. "I am confident in my decision."

White signed his letter on Nov. 19. This season he has become one of the stars of the basketball team.

He is one of the first students from Central to sign a letter. White's signing came as a shock to many of his friends and family.

His father, Karl Epinger Sr., said he did not know why he had made this decision, but had a lot of confidence in his son.

"God's going to be waiting for him when he gets to Chicago," Epinger said. "He will be safe, I am sure of it."

Epinger said he has met the coaches and is very happy with the system.

White had been receiving offers from many schools, but he had narrowed it down to two schools: University of Illinois in Chicago and University of Evansville, Ind. Both of the schools have a great basketball reputation, he said.

"I signed with University of Illinois at Chicago, because I felt that this school had given me a great offer and I took it," White said.

White said the signing, which is normally a big decision, was an easy one for him when he sat down and thought it out.

"I had two Division A Schools, who were offering great scholarships and wanted me to play basketball for them," he said. "I chose the better offer."

He said the school had a lot of talent and ability to have a great year in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) both this and next year he would have the greatest impact if he went to

University of Illinois at Chicago.

Head boys varsity basketball coach Eric Beherns said White will help boost the game and the University of Illinois in Chicago. His talent and ability to adapt will help him succeed.

"I know that Karl will fit in with the program," Beherns said.

Beherns said the school has a very strong team this year and have two juniors who are all-conference players. He said if White keeps working hard, he will become a successful player on the team.

"I feel that the school will not only help me with my basketball career, but it will give me a good chance to get a decent college education," White said. "I want a life after college"

He had other reasons for his choice.

"I wanted to go back to Chicago for college because I have a lot of family that live fairly close to the university," he said.

He said his family was always in his mind when he thought about his signing. He said he has lived in Chicago and fell in love with the city. It would feel like home again to him.

"It is not like I am going to a strange, new city for college," he said. "I already know my way around Chicago."

He said his family would help him out whenever he needed it, and he would still remember what the city is like.

He said his family and friends support his decision. His friends and teammates showed their support at the signing by simply being there.

"Karl is a wise person and he works hard in the sport," senior Courtney Grixby said. "He knows what he wants to do in the future."

He said White has a good future, and he has a great knowledge of the game and what will happen on the court.

"He will play well anywhere he goes," Grixby said. "He is a very good player."

New gym facility may replace long-standing Norris middle school home basketball court

BY MICHAEL SMITH

Central does not have a home basketball or football field.

Principal Jerry Bexten said it is the only school in the Omaha area and maybe in the state that does not play in its home gym.

These thoughts have brought about change possibly even more renovations.

Assistant principal and athletic director Pennington said school administrators and all High Foundation members have been signing a possible lobby.

Dr. Rusty Crossman, who is part of the school's foundation said unfortunately the Public Schools' (OPS) bond issue did not have a lobby in the plans.

He said most of the plans included rewiring air conditioning.

He said the required amount of funds must be required quickly to complete the lobby project.

"We have had the plans drawn up," Crossman said.

He said the foundation has everything in place except how to pay for the addition.

OPS does not have any money to pay for the project, so he said the foundation must look for money.

Marketing teacher Harry Gaylor said it is

very difficult to keep up with and understand what is going on. Gaylor is also part of the foundation and said the project changes on a daily basis.

"The facility that we have now is not a complete facility," he said.

Gaylor said the school should not have to put up card tables at Norris Middle School in order to sell concessions.

He said all of this could be resolved with a concession stand in the proposed lobby area. However, Gaylor agrees with Pennington and Crossman, the whole vision is a matter of finding financial support.

Gaylor said he believes the entire renovation project is larger than a lot of people make it out to be.

"With a lobby, the gym could be a multi-purpose facility used for anything from art exhibits, music contests or music performances," Gaylor said.

Senior Crystal Howard said playing basketball games in the gym at Norris feels like her home because the team always practices there.

"Most players would rather practice and play at our real school," Howard said.

Bexten said the project is in the discussing stages right now, until money is found for the project.

Pennington said if the lobby is built, he would imagine it being built between the old entrance of the gym and the glass tower showcased from the recent renovations.

Sophomore Hannah Andahl said it would be good if the school could find funds for the project.

"I go to a lot of games and I know that a lot of students from other schools would rather travel to Central's gym to see the new renovations that have taken place," Andahl said.

Pennington said the lobby would have two levels.

He said one level might include a show room for awards, and the other a concession stand and team rooms for players.

Pennington said the current facility where home games are played doesn't feel like a real home game.

He said student's had to play games on a court with Norris' name all over it.

Pennington said with the new gym addition and renovations, the Eagles signature is painted across the court and to some players that is where the Eagles should play and dominate over their opponents.

He said banners must be put up every time there is a game at the middle school.

"Here, we could keep up the banners as we please," Pennington said.

Sophomore Chuck Mulligan said he likes the whole idea. He said he thinks no team should have to travel to another gym to play its home games.

"I feel that the current gym definitely needs more seating because our basketball teams are good enough to track people in," Mulligan said.

Pennington said he has recently received a bid on bleachers for the open part of the expansion of the gym.

He said they must look into this matter seriously in order to make sure that the expansion can hold the bleachers and will not cave in the floor.

Howard said she thinks the idea of having a lobby is a good one.

She said the school needs to explore all of the possibilities because it is in Central's best interest.

Pennington said Central's locker room facilities are so far apart from one another, a team room would be adequate for the visiting team.

"A team room would be enough because that is what we use now at Norris," Howard said.

Howard said she feels that more people would come to the court because it would be Central's own.

"The new court would really attract a lot

more people," she said.

Bexten said after talking with coaches, they have expressed a high interest in playing in the renovated gyms.

Jim Angele, the assistant director of the Nebraska School Activities Association (NSAA), said Central is one of many schools across the state that does not play at its own campus.

Angele said Central is not alone.

He said Ogallala High School moves two and a half blocks down the street to play in an auditorium.

He said it has also come to his attention that Omaha Northwest High School is not playing any home games in their facility due to a water flooding.

Howard said an exhibition game this season would be something she and some of the other players would like to participate in.

She said a game at the real home court would be something nice to do before the seniors on the team graduate.

Angele said the NSAA has no problem with Central possibly playing varsity games in the new gym as long as the score is reported to the NSAA on time and the game is played on the scheduled date.

"We must have ample amount of time to score the wildcard points for the teams," Angele said.

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Basketball teams remain undefeated

Boys and girls varsity players use winning strategies in order to walk away from Norris Middle School with two wins.

Boys stun crowd with fast-paced first period

BY KATIE BACKMAN

The boys varsity basketball game against North High School didn't have an empty seat in the gymnasium. The Eagles' 89-73 win kept the crowd entertained and team with a perfect record.

Eagle speed was just too much for the Vikings.

Head varsity coach Eric Behrens said he thought the game was difficult to win because both teams had tough players.

At the beginning of the game, he said he didn't know what to expect.

Senior Karl White opened the game with a three-point shot. During the first period, seniors Davon White, Karl and junior B.J. Valentine scored, pushing the score to an impressive 11-0.

With five minutes and 25 seconds left in the period, senior Cortney Grixby stepped onto the court.

Behrens said Grixby wasn't going to be a starter because he was still recovering from his hand injury.

Vikings' senior Brandon Jackson tried to score the first two points for the team with a lay-up, but it was blocked. The top scorer for the opposing team was senior Jaquan Williamson who scored 15 points.

Sophomore Derrick Russell stunned the audience by scoring the most points for the Eagles.

"I scored 22 points," Russell said. "It was a lot of work."

Karl was the next highest scorer for the Eagles with 19 points.

Grixby and senior Brandon Gunn showed their teamwork like promised by passing the ball a lot.

The Eagles were in the lead at halftime at 45-33.

A few Eagles did suffer injuries during the game.

Russell's arm was cut and bleeding. The other injuries were suffered by Gunn and Washington.

Gunn said he was elbowed in the mouth and his tooth went through his tongue.

He said he wasn't badly injured and his tongue didn't even swell.

Washington said an opposing player elbowed him in the face and it cut deep into his cheek.

His cheek area continued to bleed after the game was over.

"I think we played a good game," Russell said. "We are a heck of a lot better."

Washington said he thinks the team played hard, and even though it is the second game, he thinks it was its best performance.

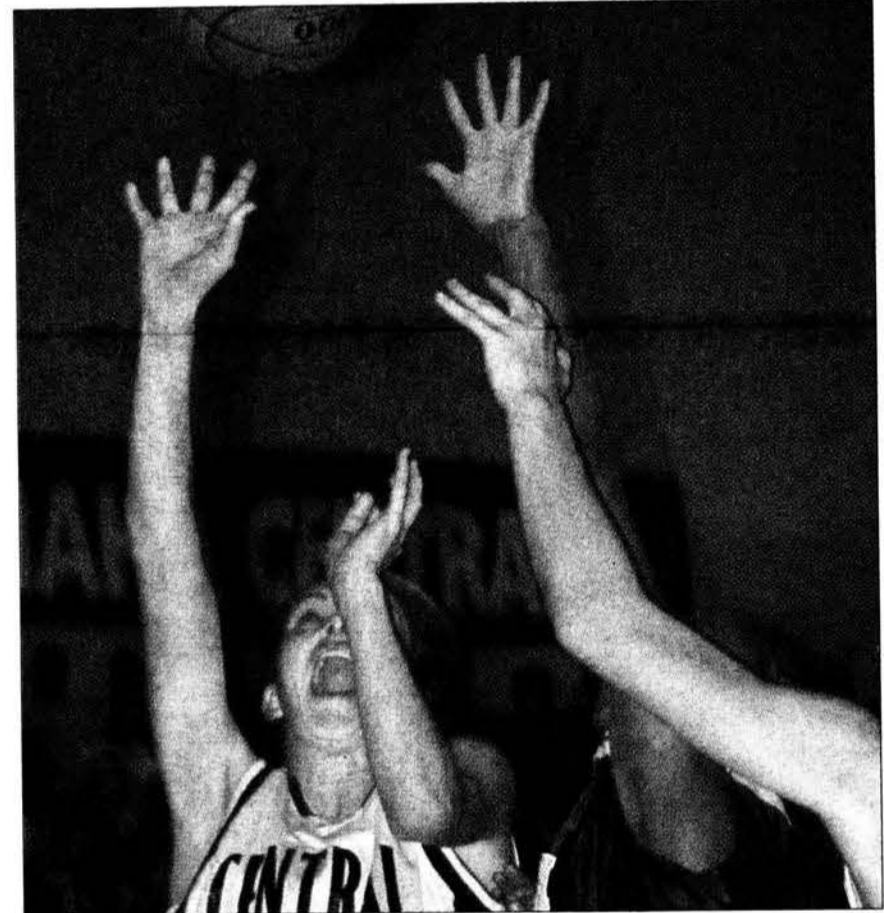
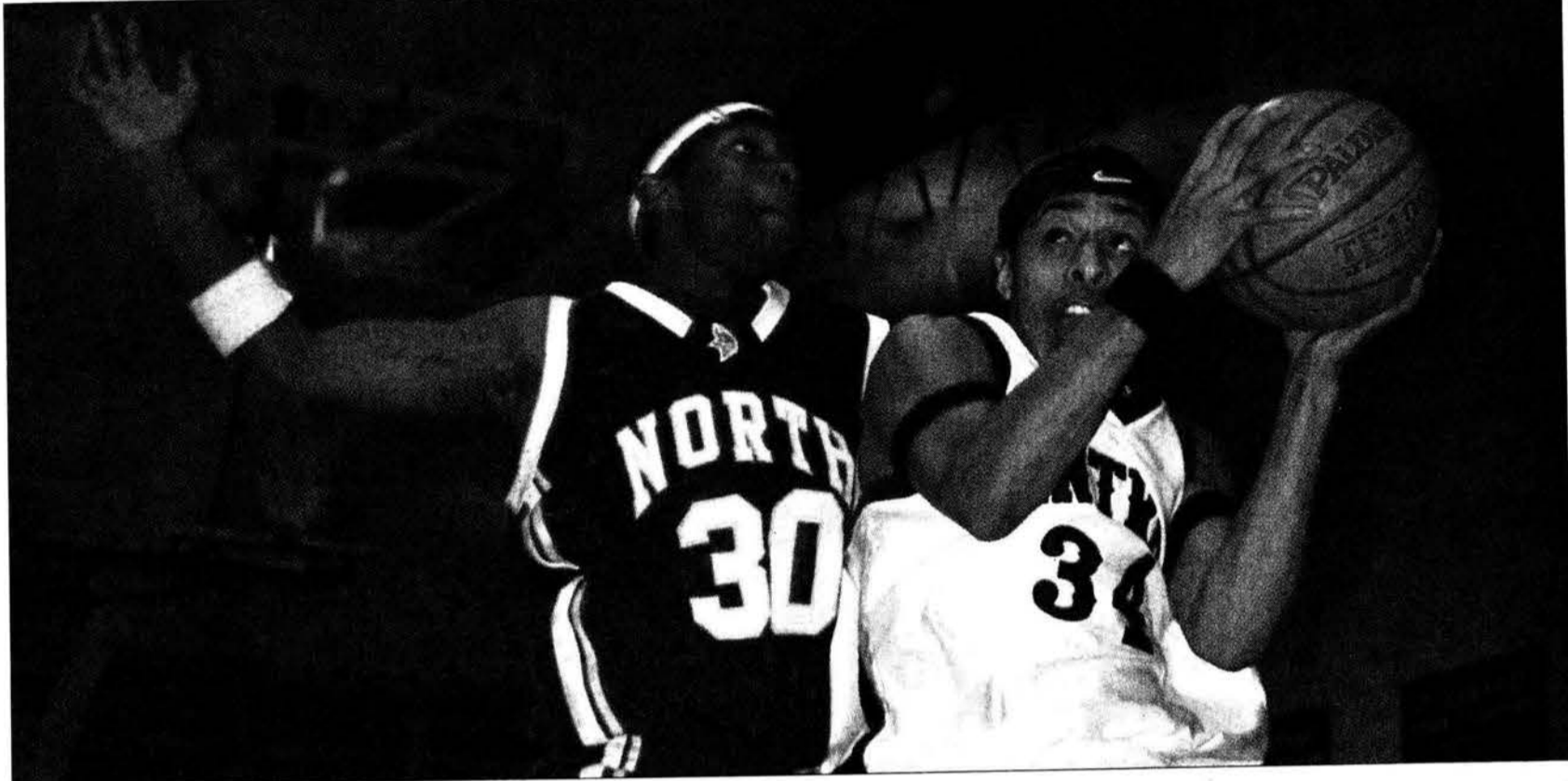
With the two wins, he thinks it is getting the team well on its way to winning State and other tournaments.

After the game, Washington said he thinks the Eagles have to improve on their defense and free throws.

"I think we were mentally prepared," Washington said. "North played alright, they just need to get more prepared."

Davon said he thinks the team ran across the court a lot and it paid off once the game was over.

He said he the next game against Westside should be a challenge because the team has a lot of taller players.



(CLOCKWISE FROM TOP) Senior Karl White attempts to score in the air, while Vikings' senior Brandon Jimerson jumps to block. Senior KeOnna Williams catches the ball from a pass, as she turns to shoot a three-pointer. White prepares to shoot at the first game against Papillion LaVista. Junior Casey Bigsby scores on a run-away steal. ALL PHOTOS BY ROB HUNTER/REGISTER

Lady Eagles show how to win with new coach

BY KATIE BACKMAN

First year head girls basketball coach Chad Townsend has the goal was to play hard and have fun.

At the recent game against Central High School, the team did what we were asked with a 58-38 win.

The lady Eagles ran their offense all over the court.

The game opened with the Vikings' two-point score from junior Amy Booker of the Eagles.

Booker said she thinks the Vikings played a good offensive game.

With five minutes and 49 seconds left to the first period, the score was 2-0.

The Vikings scored the first six points from senior Natasha Marisett was the leading scorer with 10 points.

Before the game started, the Vikings girls coach Tola Black wanted her girls to play tough.

she thought Central was one of their main rivals.

"Some of our players didn't know Crystal was a senior this year," she said. "So the game was exciting for them."

The starters for the Eagles were seniors Crystal Howard, Stephanie Williams, Casey Bigsby and Booker.

Howard scored 16 points for the game.

"We played a good game," she said. "I thought Natasha Marisett and the Vikings played a good game."

Each pass made an opportunity for the Vikings to steal the ball. The Eagles frequently did.

With four minutes and 44 seconds left in the first period, Marisett, sophomore Ashley Mayfield made a steal.

The first period score was 10-0. Howard then opened the second period with a three-point shot.

At the beginning of the game, Townsend said he wanted the team to run up and down the court so the opposing team would be worn out.

At the game, the girls did what the Vikings were called a few times, traveling with the ball, trying to keep up with Central's speed.

Eagles opened the second period of each period with a score of 10-0. The fourth when Vikings' sophomore Thomasha Perkins scored three points.

The only visible injuries during the game were of freshman Rachael Rupp who hurt her knee in the second period and Vikings' senior Brandy Carter who was hit in the face.

The Eagles won running away 58-38.

Junior Darcy Rutherford said the team played good offense.

"I am glad we won," Rutherford said.

Bigsby said she thought the Vikings played more of a streetball game. Meaning the team didn't stay organized with its offensive and defensive playing.

"They just played differently than us," Howard said.

Bigsby said she is glad the team played a structured game because it helped them win.

Prep transfer impacts team through high scoring, leadership, attitude

BY MICHAEL SMITH

B.J. Valentine is a junior who has high hopes for the season after switching from a Creighton Prep Bluejay to an Eagle basketball player.

Since he was just 4 years old, Valentine possessed basketball skills, which both impressed his family and friends. Valentine's grandmother owned a basketball team and he grew up playing with it and learning the fundamentals of the game.

"I had a close-nit relationship with them," Valentine said. "We were like family all together."

He has played on such select teams as the North Omaha Bears and the North Omaha Cardinals, where he met and started relationships with many of his current players on the varsity basketball team.

Valentine has always played the same position, point guard. He said he doesn't want any other position, no matter what the cost.

"It is the main position and backbone of the team," Valentine said. "I want to be the main person and I am also the type of person that always wants to have a ball in my hand."

He has continued because of his drive and motivation for the game. He said he is always focused on the future and what is set in front of him.

Valentine has not been an Eagle for long. He started high school at Creighton Prep. He said he went to Prep because it was where his grandmother wanted him to attend.

"I went there and gave it a try," he said. Valentine said at Prep he was a lot more focused and there were very few distractions.

But Prep's basketball program was not going the way he wanted it to.

White said sometimes he did not see eye to eye with the head coach.

"When you play point guard, you are basically a coach on the court," Valentine said.

He said it was not working and he was only playing half of the time.

Prep's varsity head coach Josh Luedtke said he was Valentine's coach and has never really had any issues with him.

"We let B.J. do things that only he could do," Luedtke said.

He said Valentine is an Eagle now and he is still a good kid.

"Myself and the rest of the Prep staff wish B.J. well," Luedtke said.

Senior Karl White said Valentine has a lot of heart for the game.

White said he has represented the team well.

"He is definitely getting along with the coaches and building relationships," he said.

Valentine said he knew he had to make a change his junior year. He looked at a private New Jersey school, but unfortunately he found out that they had run out of dorm rooms so he picked a different school in Omaha.

He said he picked Central because of the basketball program the school offered and the relationship he had made with the players.

"These are my childhood friends and I have played on a team with them at one point in time or another," he said.

Valentine said Central has the best chance for a State title this season.

"My main focus is what I can contribute to the game and the team as a whole," he said.

Valentine said he is willing and ready to play as hard as he can to get the wins. He wants to show everyone what he is made of.

"I am used to these games," Valentine said. "I have played on varsity teams before and excitement was just not coming fast enough (Prep)."

He said he has received numerous letters from colleges commending his abilities and could go to any college, he said his choice would be the University of Connecticut.

Valentine said the team this season focused on implementing strong defensive rebounding skills. He said all he wants is State title, which is on every player's mind.

Valentine said if the team plays the way he has focused and practiced by, it should be this season and he is going to do his best to that happen.