

## King of rock 'n' roll killed by America's one-way flow of love

By Douglas R. Weil

Being a big rock 'n' roll enthusiast I feel committed to write about the death of the man that so many have called "the king of rock 'n' roll," Elvis Presley.

But honestly I don't really know that much about the swivel-hipped truck driver-turned pop culture god, other than the fact that he started out as a truck driver and later became a pop culture god.

Sure I know some of the songs—"Hound Dog," "Blue Suede Shoes," "Love Me Tender," "Heartbreak Hotel" and "Jailhouse Rock," just to name a handful.

One thing I do know about Elvis Presley is that he died years and years ago. It wasn't an irregular heartbeat, twisted colon, or drug abuse that drained life out of Presley. It was America.

### America kills Presley

That America killed Presley may sound extreme but it makes sense if you give it some thought. Like so many other pop culture heroes (Bob Dylan, Clark Gable, Roger Maris, Judy Garland, ad infinitum), we track their every move as if they are prized game. Magazines like *Photoplay*, *Rolling Stone*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Newsweek*, *Time* and *People* are prime examples of the public's need to gouge.

We want to know everything there is to know about their lives, their art, their loves. What makes a good story on this or that pop idol is the number of new things the latest article tells us.

And always, we demand to know more. Most times more than we need to know. Always more than we know about our neighbor or our best friend. To say that journalists are to blame is far too simple. America wants information, even if that information is the latest in rehashed half-truths. If you doubt the truth of that statement just take a look at the circulation figures for *National Enquirer*.

Eventually we sap every bit of identity, character and strength from our heroes. In the end we leave them with very little identity, just enough character to get out of bed and not enough strength to allow them to leave the asylum of their multi-walled mansion.

### Because of love

Why do we do it? LOVE. We really do love these people first because we admire their work, images or lifestyles, usually all three.

But the root of our love lies in the fact that loving someone we don't know allows us the comfort of knowing we can't be hurt by them. We pry them for their innermost feelings and thoughts yet we know that in order to love our hero nothing will be demanded from us in return.

Eventually this one-way flow chart of love erodes the hero into just another stereotype, more of an ideal than a living and breathing human being.

And now we have Elvis, I suppose just as we want him. Now he is just another figure in the wax museum of the mind. Alive Presley was an idol, dead he is a myth. And myths only are what you want them to be.

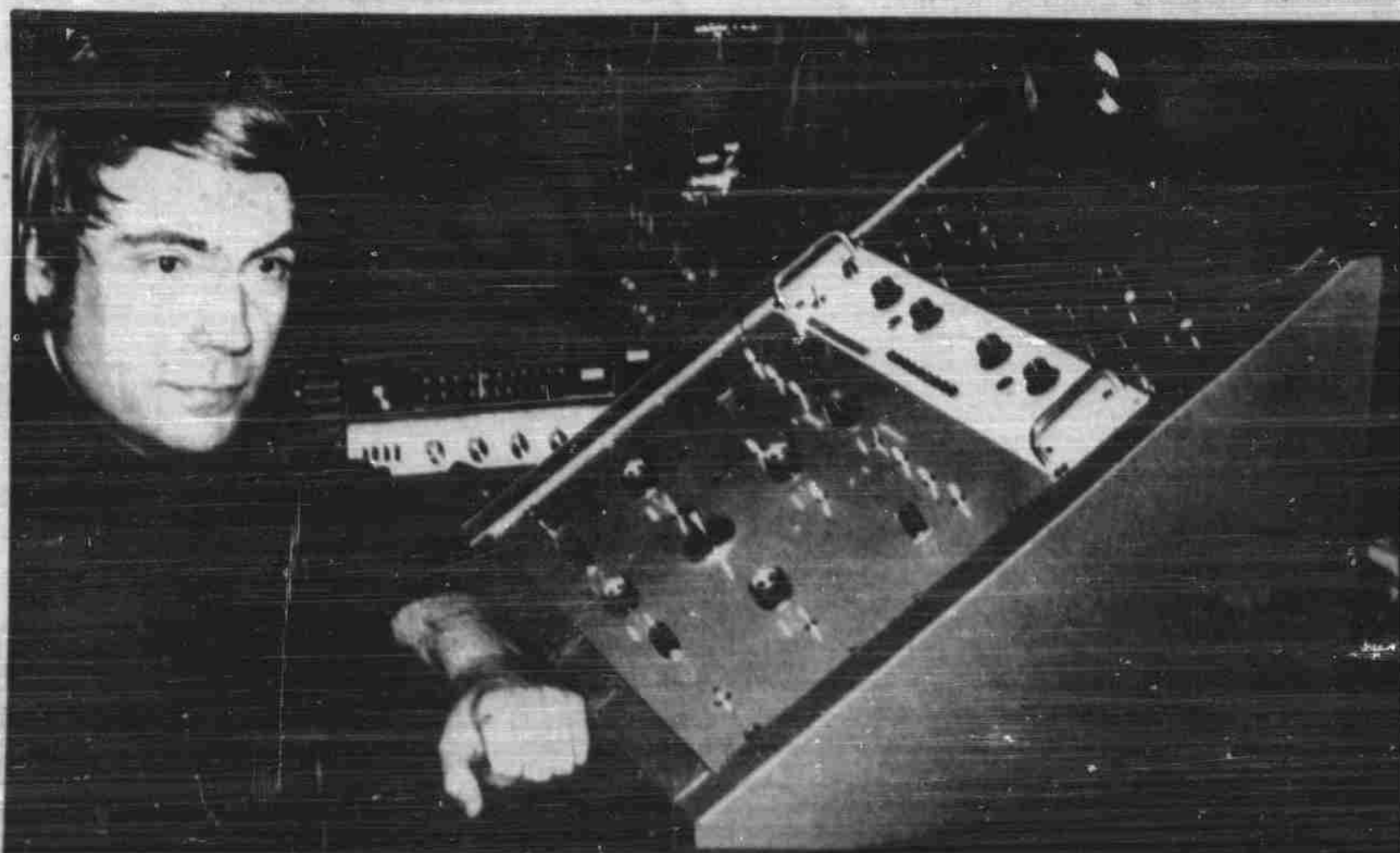


Photo courtesy of Ralph Mueller Planetarium

Jack Dunn, co-ordinator of the Ralph Mueller Planetarium, sits by the controls of the laser light and sound system.

## Network salutes poet/teachers

A salute to poets who teach in schools across the country is the subject of the *Anyone for Tennyson?* program on the Nebraska Educational Television Network tonight at 10.

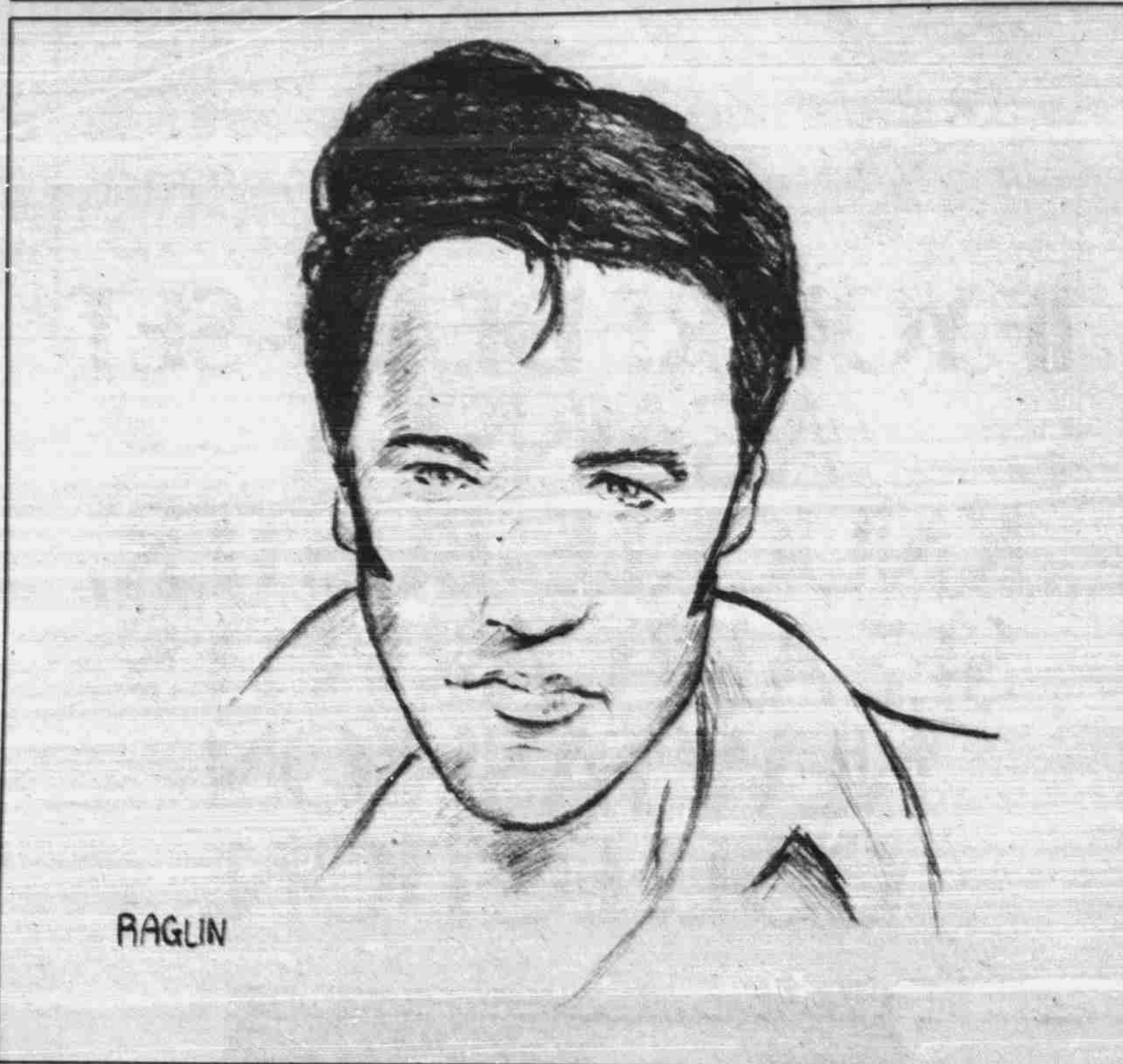
The First Poetry Quartet dedicates "Poets on Campus" to persons who have successfully combined careers of writing and teaching. The Quartet strolls the campus of a typical midwestern university and gives an evening performance built around the words of teaching poets.

Nebraska ETV Network Program Manager Ron Hull plays the guest dean and local actress Pat Dickson portrays Mrs. Fletcher, the faculty hostess. The program was recorded on the UNL campus.

The series is produced for National Public Broadcasting Service distribution by the Nebraska ETV Network in association with the Great Amwell Company, Inc. of New York.

The show will repeat Sept. 3 at 6:30 p.m.

## arts & entertainment



## Lasers won't zap you at show

It's perfectly safe, said Jack Dunn, co-ordinator of the Ralph Mueller Planetarium. There's no need to worry about the planetarium program Oct. 7 and 8, even though spectators sit in a room full of laser beams.

The laser light and sound concert, created by Lawrence Goodridge, uses a low-power laser system.

"To my knowledge, this is the only low-power laser light and sound system in the world, and it was designed as such," said Goodridge, who teaches at the Art Academy of Cincinnati.

Laser physicist James Rockwell built the laser system for Goodridge. It uses a helium-neon laser to produce red light and argon laser to produce blue and green light. A four-channel tape deck controls mirrors that synchronize

the laser display to recorded music, which ranges from Mussorgsky to Santana.

Goodridge said conventional laser-show systems use complicated and expensive equipment that requires special power supplies and water cooling. His system needs no special hockups and fits in a station wagon.

Goodridge said he hopes planetariums will buy his \$29,000 system. The Great Plains Planetarium Association will meet in Lincoln while the laser show is in town.

Dunn said laser shows have proved popular in cities like Denver, where the Laserium has had nearly 100 per cent attendance for three years. Dunn said he hopes the laser performance will interest people who usually ignore the planetarium.

Students will be admitted for \$2 to one of the ten 45-minute performances, Dunn said, while general tickets will cost \$2.50. All ticket sales will be in advance, he said. Since the planetarium seats only 100, he advised buying tickets early.

Goodridge was trained as a painter. About eight years ago he began making sculptures using light as a design element. He said he became interested in laser shows while working for a large company that put on traveling presentations. He said he felt pressured to program money-making shows and had his own laser system built so he could follow his own ideas.

"I guess I'm the only artist in the world who is individually using a (laser) system," Goodridge said.

Goodridge said that while most of the laser show is recorded on tape, he can make changes in each performance using switches and controls on a console, making each performance unique.

The laser show will run Oct. 7 through 9, times to be announced.

## Correction

In the Monday *Daily Nebraskan* Doug Street was incorrectly identified as the instructor for the *On The Spot* theatre class. Douglas Anderson, another UNL graduate student of theatre, will be the instructor of the class.

**COME TO THE FAIR**