

## arts/entertainment

# Fallen arches raise \$9,227 at dance marathon

By Kris Hansen

What do a badger, a timberwolf, a giant chicken and 30 pairs of fallen arches have in common? They all rock and rolled the weekend away at the Chi Phi-X103 Dance Marathon for Muscular Dystrophy.

More than 30 couples completed the 30-hour marathon, held in the Nebraska Union ballroom Friday and Saturday. This is how it went.

### 6 p.m. Friday - \$0.00 - 30 hours to go

More than 40 of the 63 couples who signed up to dance arrived to test their mettle. The first band, Badger, cranked up the volume as the lights went down and the marathon was on. The ballroom rocked as the couples dug in, tantalized by the sight of two Kawasaki Bravos up on the stage, waiting for the first place winners to claim them.

Veteran dancers paced themselves and started slowly, but a few energetic dancers started off with a whirl and a hop.

"I don't believe how these two are dancing," said one member of Badger after one wild performance. "If they keep this up, they won't last 30 hours. They won't even last 30 minutes."

But they did. Susan Davis and Craig Marshall, students at Nebraska Wesleyan, kept up their pace for the whole marathon.

"I'm in the National Guard," said Davis. "After that, I can do anything."

The couples broke for 15 minutes when the state muscular dystrophy poster child arrived. Wanda Petersen, 5, handed out discount coupons for haircuts to the dancers and charmed them with her blue eyes and shy smile.

"I don't want to dance," said said. "But I like to watch."

After a quick cup of orange pop ("I'd call it orange sludge," muttered one dancer), the couples dove back on the floor. Instructors from The Dance Emporium tried to guide their stumbling feet through some disco steps, but the dancers preferred the can-can, funky chicken and stroll.

### 10 p.m. - \$3,045 - 26 hours to go

Essence took over for Badger and the crowd rocked on until midnight, when they took a half hour break for pizza. Disco by Bootlegger took over and kept the dancers moving, despite the soreness settling into legs and feet.

Although most of the dancers were college-aged, Culler Junior High sported five dancers. Renee Gould, 14, Michelle McGowau, 14, Peggy Bruce, 15, Brent Hutson, 15 and Trissa Mosier, 14, all danced "for MD, Jerry Lewis and because we love it," Mosier said. "It's a challenge, so you can tell yourself you can do it. Thinking about the kids makes you want to dance more."

The real challenge, however, was swallowing goldfish for every thousand dollars raised. Sophomore Dale Kovanda handled the first fish without a quiver, but others had more trouble. Freshman Mark Zeller hesitated,

tried again, put it in his mouth, spit it out, and finally downed it with a chaser of water—after chewing it.

"You feel it wiggle all the way down," gasped Marlea Montoya, 17, from Southeast High. "And his tail got stuck in my teeth."

### 3 a.m. - \$4,155 - 21 hours to go

The pace picked up with the Flying Dutchman, trains and a round of "Redneck Mother," which seemed to be every band's favorite song. At 4 a.m. the couples broke for four hours of sleep and headed for the commons with their sleeping bags.

The dancers crawled out again at 8 a.m., gulped orange juice and doughnuts, and staggered back to the floor.

"Four hours of sleep is almost worse than one," complained freshman Jeff Fuhr. "With one, you feel like you haven't really started sleeping. Four puts you in the middle of the night and that hurts."

### 9 a.m. - \$5,079 - 15 hours to go

Choogie took over with a polka, a hustle and a can-can or two. The dancers became inventive as their muscles loosened up.

"You can do anything to disco," said Craig Brauer, one of eight dancers who created their own square dance. "You've got to find ways to pass the time."

However, Terry Harris, 20, seemed out to prove that he could disco to anything. Harris said he danced last year, winning fifth place, and hoped to win this year. He had more than just a love of dancing to keep him going, however.

"I had a close friend who had muscular dystrophy—a very close friend," he said. "I'm dancing this for him."

Timberwolf took over the stage at 12:30 p.m. and balloons took over the floor. Balloon people, fights and volleyball games were accented by the bang of exploding balloons.

A limbo contest soon had the crowd hopping and wiggling under a bar. Freshman Todd Dirksnyder, 6-3, fought the junior high dancers for the title and narrowly lost to 5 foot Gould.

### 2:30 p.m. - \$6,003 - 9½ hours to go

The dancers started to frazzle as Long Shot picked up the musical ball. Leapfrogging became the popular sport as dancers tried anything to get off their feet.

The couples broke for dinner at 6 p.m. and consumed a 26-foot submarine sandwich. After half-baths in the bathrooms and a change of shirts, they shuffled back to the floor to dance to Sally.

"This is the hardest part. You've gone so long and yet there's so long to go," said 18-year-old Kathy Oenbring.

Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs Richard Armstrong cheered the dancers on at the 9 p.m. break.

"I have to praise you (the dancers) and Chi Phi for having the devotion and leadership to do this kind of thing on campus. You amaze me," he said.

### 9 p.m. - \$7,279 - 3 hours to go

Light and Sounds Fantastic took over the floor show and poured new energy into the dancers. The ballroom dove into a world of lasers and strobe, with fog boiling off the stage and creating the smoky haze of a dance-hall bar. The crowd swelled as watchers joined the dancers on the floor and energy rose to a fever pitch. The KFRX giant chicken arrived in a hail of cheers and led a round of funky chicken after kissing all the girls. The dancers formed a chain for the final dance and then broke in hysteria and exhaustion as the magic hour struck.

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Photo by Tom Gessner

Omaha senior Mariann Padgett and Craig Braver were one of the couples this weekend at the MD Dance marathon.

# 'House of God' kills faith in medical profession

By Scott Kleager

The fear starts when you realize your roommate, the one who tortures dogs for fun, has been accepted to medical school. It's with that premise in mind that Dr. Samuel Shem wrote *The House of God*.

Unforgettably ironic, the novel destroys nearly all the confidence one holds for the medical profession. The hospital is portrayed as a place where doctors work hardest at

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placing patients in any department except their own, a place where a contest among interns is judged by how many autopsies each one does, and a place where years of training matters little.

The irony stems from Roy, the protagonist who's just out of BMS (Best Medical School in the world) and his shattered ideals about medicine. From the moment he walks into *The House of God* Medical Center to begin his

one-year internship, Roy faces a bad dream.

### Money-grubbing doctors

Senile men and women, most of them terminally ill, lie around, being kept alive by money-grubbing family doctors who don't even know what's wrong with their own patients. Roy discovers that an old woman, who is senile and complains of nervousness to her doctor, is admitted and given all kinds of worthless tests just so Blue Cross will grease his palm. In the meantime, extreme complications arise from the tests and her "nervousness" gets worse.

Which is when the Fat Man arrives as savior to Roy and the rest of the new interns. First, the Fat Man clues Roy in to the names of things around the house. For instance, the incurables are called GOMERS (meaning "Get Out of My Emergency Room") and, since GOMERS only take up space, they are to be transferred to another part of the hospital.

Which means one doesn't try to find a cure for them. It means, instead, that ones BUFFs and TURFs (BUFFING the GOMER's chart so it looks good and then TURFING the GOMER to another department for testing). This makes life in the ward easier.

### BUFFING, TURFING

So Roy finds out immediately that medicine isn't rush-

ing in at the last moment to save someone, it's really BUFFING and TURFING. Until he comes to grips with this reality, his life is miserable.

This creates a great setting for a novel. *The House of God* is both funny and sad, sensual and pallid, scary and inspiring. It's also well-written, which makes the reader wonder whether Dr. Shem studied creative writing or medicine.

Stylistically, the novel is a masterpiece. Shem's use of the abbreviation is noteworthy. For example, Molly, a nurse who gets involved with Roy and is an expert at the SBNM (the Straight Bendover Nursing Maneuver), or ROR (Relationship on the Rocks) and then LOL in NAD (Little Old Lady in No Apparent Distress) which is not to be confused with a GOMERE (feminine for the masculine GOMER).

The novel begins to wear on one's nerves because it's a too-funny look at a not-so-funny subject. Most of the doctors are cold and sometimes ruthless, and that doesn't boost one's confidence in the medical profession.

But *The House of God* is a major statement concerning aging. It says plainly and firmly that to keep the very old alive just to make money, or for any "ethical" reason, is not right.