



Staff photo by Joel Sartore

Three blind mice belly up to the bar at Saturday's Storie Booke Balle. The mice are Julie James, left, Angie Bonnes and Andy Bailey; Carol "Goldielocks" Chmelka pals around with Pete "The Bear" Balerud next to a "Song of the South" background.



STORIE BOOKE Fantasy figures from Alice to Zorro

By Christopher Galen

Cinderella was there, along with Robin Hood, Hansel and Gretel, Zorro and several of Winnie-the-Pooh's friends. Later, the Three Blind Mice showed up, and a few of King Kong's cousins also made their appearances.

All these famous fantasy figures, and dozens more, were part of the Storie Booke Balle, a unique and extravagant dance put on every two years by Alpha Tau Omega fraternity.

The Balle was Saturday night at the Ramada Inn in Omaha. More than 200 people attended, dressed in the costumes of their favorite characters from the likes of "Mother Goose" and "Alice in Wonderland."

The tradition of the Storie Booke Balle began in 1926, when Lincoln hosted the first Balle. NU alumnus W. Joyce Ayres was on the committee that created the Balle, and he said the ceremony that surrounded it still stands out in his mind.

"Invitations to the dates of the guys were in the form of scrolls written in Old English," he said. "There was an awful lot of work that went into it. I think we spent all of \$100, which was a lot of money back then."

Alpha Tau Omega Social Chairmen Bill Claussen and Kif Ward sought to maintain the tradition of the Balle when they designed this year's edition.

"It took four or five months of unbelievable hard

work, but we've done it," Claussen said.

He guessed that it took 50 hours of planning a week to prepare for the Balle, which was cloaked in an element of surprise to preserve its magical image.

"The main thing to make it special is the length we go to for this," Ward said. "You're really back in a story-book land." Ward estimated that more than \$3,000 was spent in preparation for the Balle.

Part of that money was spent painting two 66-foot murals depicting nearly every notable character imaginable.

Because of the extensive cost in time and money, the Balle is presented every other year, making Saturday evening's the 28th bi-annual Balle. Many of the previous Balles were in the old Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln, which Ayres recalled as the perfect place for such an event.

One of the features of the Balle — the slide — has been a tradition since the dance was at the Cornhusker. Party-goers must descend the slide to get into the ballroom.

"When we moved the dance to the Cornhusker, we added the slide," Ayres said. "It was an instant hit. I remember one year we had an All-American football center dressed as Gandhi, and he brought a goat with him on a tether. He slid down the slide and landed on the poor goat."

And the Balle went on.

Butz: Positive agriculture attitude needed

By Jann Nyffeler

"Agriculture is a long way from going down the tubes," Earl Butz, former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture said during a public lecture Sunday afternoon in the East Campus Union. His visit was sponsored by UPC-East Sights and Sounds Committee, the Faculty Convocation Committee and Alpha Zeta.

Butz, who was a cabinet member from 1971-76, said that it is easier for the media to portray American agriculture in a negative light by focusing on failures rather than successes: "It's the American system — the right to succeed is accompanied by the right to fail," Butz said.

By publicizing foreclosures and other problems, the media makes it easy to "forget about the guy who's sensible, who's paying up at the bank," Butz said.

Half of American farmers have no debt, Butz said. Of those who are in debt, half owe less than 20 percent of their assets; half of the remaining group owe between 20 and 40 percent of their assets.

"Some won't make it, some shouldn't," he said.

"We're going to come out of this stronger than we went into it," he added.

"I've got some good news and some bad news," Butz continued. "The good news is that the bad news is running out. The bad news is: As farm prices rise, food prices will rise and farmers will be blamed for it. We need to work on positive public relations now, when nobody's mad at us."

In commenting about the PIK program, Butz said the plan was both a political and economical necessity. "They had to do something," he said. He is frightened, he said, by the "high degree of acceptance all over the country."

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Mayoral candidates explain advantages of past experience

By Chris Welsch

Experience in city government or experience in state government: Which is more important for the mayor of Lincoln to have?

A debate between mayoral candidates Roland Luedtke and Joe Hampton Thursday centered around past government experience and views on local issues. The debate was sponsored by the Near South Neighborhood Association and the South Salt Creek Community Organization.

Hampton said his day-to-day experience as Lincoln City Council Chairman and his success as a Lincoln businessman make him the better candidate.

"In 35 years of business, when I made a decision I put my money out, and if that decision was wrong, I lost the money," he said. "That is a strong discipline on you. When a career politician makes a decision, it's with your money, and if that's wrong, you pay."

Luedtke said his career as a lawyer supplemented his work in the Legislature and as Lieutenant Governor.

Accentuating the positive instead of playing "opposition politics" would make him a better mayor, Luedtke said.

"We must avoid confrontation," he said. "All parts should work together."

Luedtke proposed a round table discussion, where as many neighborhood organizations and other groups as possible could meet to discuss community issues. He said such a table would have to include a broad mix of people in order to provide a balance.

Both candidates agreed that neighborhood organizations are a new political force in Lincoln and that input from these groups is important to city government. Both candidates said they would give the whole-community need precedence over the needs of a single neighborhood.

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