



Jonathan Taylor/Daily Nebraskan

Sacred Cows

Band combines musical styles

By Stew Magnuson

When Pete Vandenberg, guitarist for the Kearney-based band Sacred Cows, was asked what kind of music his band plays, he paused for a moment, then said, "We just want people to dance and shake, not shuffle around the dance floor like they do at the cover bars."

Indeed, there is some confusion about exactly what kind of music the Sacred Cows play. The Sacred Cows is made up of Vandenberg on guitar and vocals, his wife, Jane Hasty, on keyboard, David Zikmund, who shares vocals and plays bass, and Ron Volentine, drums.

Above anything else, the Sacred Cows are stuck -- stuck between musical styles and stuck in the middle of Nebraska, playing for people who, Vandenberg said, "just sit there and stare at us when we play."

The Sacred Cows formed late in 1982. The band reached its present size last summer after Zikmund joined it. Vandenberg said the name "Sacred Cows" doesn't have any religious connotation. Rather, the name was taken from the phrase meaning something that can't be touched or altered. The name actually is an anti-thesis of what the band is trying to accomplish.

"Everything should be accessible and open to change... There needs to be a breakdown in rigid thought," Vandenberg said.

The Cows started off as a hardcore punk band, Vandenberg said, but as the members became more proficient

with their instruments, the tempo slowed down. Although the music is a little slower, Vandenberg keeps the same political and social message in his lyrics.

For the most part, Vandenberg writes the lyrics and Zikmund composes the music.

Zikmund, a former member of two Lincoln-based bands, Spawning Carp and The Pepsi Generation, is 19 -- the youngest member of the band. He lives with his parents and makes T-shirts and flyers. He also did the cover artwork for the band's new EP, *Separatist*.

Vandenberg, 26, is a geology student at Kearney State College and Hasty, 25, is a part-time nurse, specializing in cancer treatment.

Drummer Volentine, 27, could be Nebraska's only farmer who moonlights as a new-music drummer. Volentine works on his family farm growing corn and alfalfa.

Zikmund said the Sacred Cows is not very popular in its hometown. The music scene in Kearney is geared toward heavy-metal and Top-40 music, making creativity difficult.

There aren't many places for the Cows to play in Kearney.

The Cows play places like the Fort Kearney Inn, a rollerskating rink and a bar in neighboring Elm Creek. Zikmund likes playing at Elm Creek despite the heckling the band members sometimes endure.

"They're there to drink and we're there to make fun of them," Zikmund said.

Continued on Page 16

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