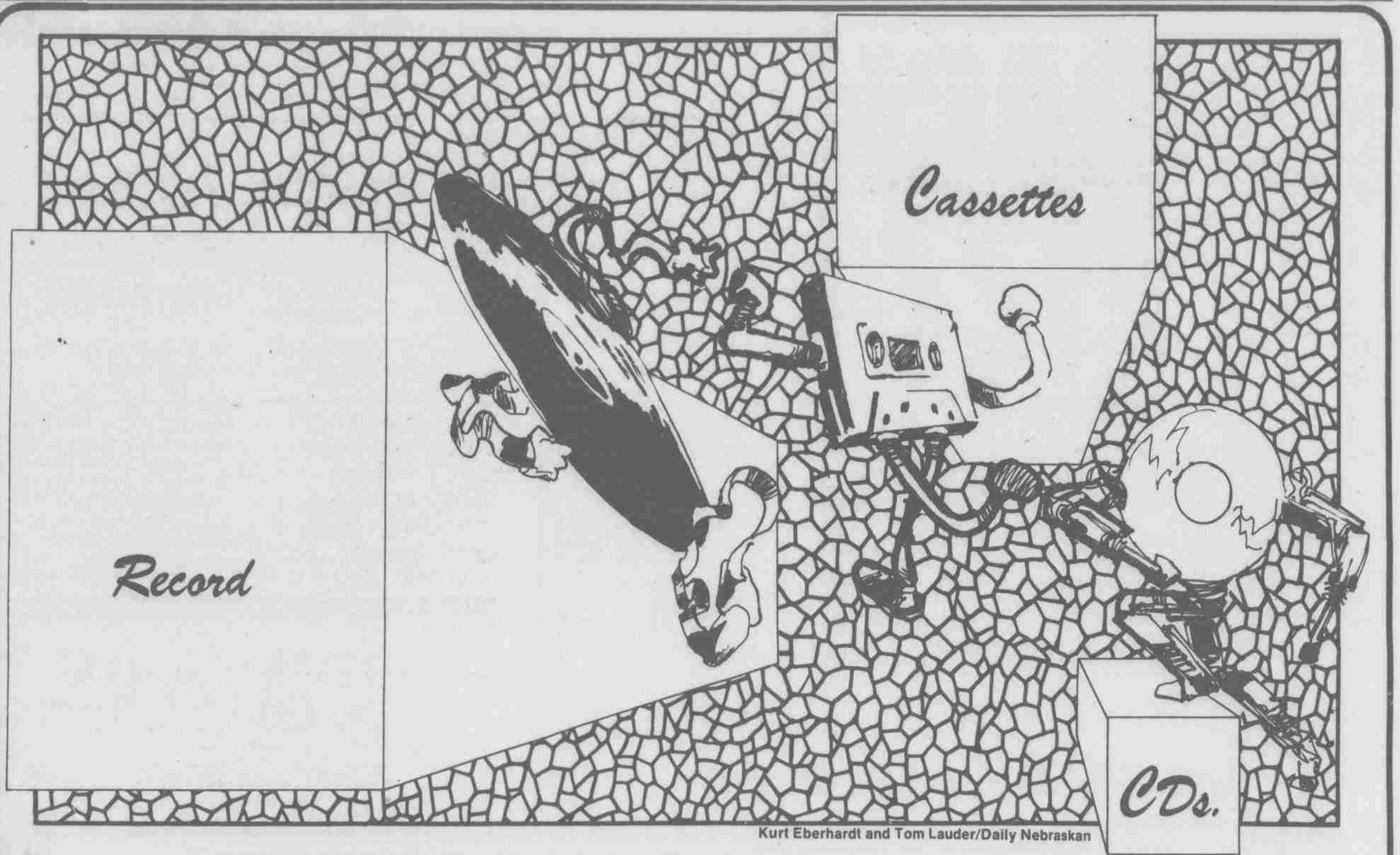


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Diversions

A preview of arts and entertainment



Cassettes, CDs gaining popularity

By Kathy Shultz
Staff Reporter

Nationally and locally, music cassette tapes are gaining in popularity, and compact discs aren't far behind, according to Lincoln music retailers. Cassette sales began to increase about 14 months ago, said Rod Ferguson, co-owner of four Pickles locations in Lincoln.

Although cassette sales have been steadily growing ever since, they have yet to outnumber album sales at Pickles, he said.

"Cassettes currently account for about 40 percent of our sales, while six months ago they only accounted for about 30 percent," he said.

At The Record Shop in the Centrum Mall, however, cassette sales account for 65 to 70 percent of total sales, said Lisa Steward, manager. In order to deal with the "cassette buying trend," Steward said The Record Shop will be increasing their cassette inventory and deleting the number of albums they carry.

Record sales at Dirt Cheap Records, 217 N. 11th St., on the other

hand, outnumber cassette sales two to one, John McCallum, owner-manager, said. McCallum said Dirt Cheap provides a variety of imports and independent labels that simply aren't available on cassettes.

On a national level, A&M Records sell 60 percent albums and 40 percent cassettes, said a public relations official for A&M. MCA Records sell 40 percent albums and 60 percent cassettes, Glen Lajeski, director of marketing for MCA said.

Local retailers, as well as national retailers, agreed that cassettes and

albums may be pushed aside by the up and coming compact discs, or CDs.

A CD is a smaller disc than a record that has music on one side. It turns at a much faster rate than an album as a laser beam reads the music, as opposed to a metal needle that could scratch the surface.

"Their sound quality is supreme. It's the closest one can come to the recording studio," said Steward.

Albums and cassettes have a tendency after the first 10 to 12 plays to lack dynamic range, unlike

CDs, McCallum said. As for durability, "short of dropping them on the floor and stepping on them or melting them, they are almost indestructible," he said.

Retailers say the price (CDs cost almost twice as much as most albums and cassettes), and the limited availability may be holding consumers back from making the change from albums and cassettes to CDs, but prices are expected to decrease soon. The demand is currently much higher than the supply, retailers said.