

# Obstacles remain for High Definition TV

## entertainment ISSUES

By Matt Larsen  
Staff Reporter

High Definition Television, or HDTV, has the potential to be the most important new technology of the 1990s.

Much more than just an improved television picture, HDTV will have wide ranging benefits in medicine, telecommunications, publishing and defense, as well as influence over the entertainment industry.

Currently, three systems are pending approval as the Federal Communication Commission standard. Industry experts are forecasting the approval of one by the end of the year. U.S. approval of a high definition system will follow Japanese and European systems already in place.

One of the setbacks hindering the HDTV approval is the NTSC standard in use, a system that relies on 40-year-old technology. Although the high-definition signal is superior, it must conform to the older system's specifications.

Frank Jonas, the manager of KOLN-TV, says he believes it will be a long time before HDTV becomes the standard of the marketplace.

"The high definition signal will have to be compatible with the current signal," Jonas said. "There is a very large investment in television sets out there, so the current system is far from obsolete. It will be another 10 years before HDTV really comes into widespread use. Even then, it will be very similar to stereo televi-



Lisa Pytlík/Daily Nebraskan

sion right now, like a high-level option."

Hubert Brown, lecturer of broadcasting at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, agrees that HDTV won't be a major factor in the industry until the late '90s.

"We'll begin to see it by the end of the decade," Brown said. "It will be very expensive and that will slow things."

High definition television also will add fuel to the battle between over-the-air broadcasters and cable sys-

tems. Jonas said the costs are prohibitive to equip a station for an HDTV capability.

"There are a lot of expenses in conjunction with fitting a station for a high-def broadcast, such as new transmitters, cameras and recording equipment," Jonas said.

In the Lincoln area, the cable system has an advantage. Due to the increased amount of data necessary for an HDTV picture, a high-def signal takes up twice as much signal space as the current signal under some

of the proposed standards.

Bob Huber, technical operations manager of Lincoln Cablevision, says the Lincoln system can handle the added demands of HDTV.

"We are currently rebuilding the city of Lincoln and we are going to an 80-channel capability," Huber said. "I think we can handle anything coming down the road for the next 20 years."

Before any major moves are made, the FCC needs to determine the standard for HDTV. Huber said Cablevision cannot determine definite

specifications because of the differences between standards.

"There are several methods of high definition that they've been talking about," Huber said. "One method is to use twice as much bandwidth as the current TV station's signal uses. If that is the case, then our current 36-channel cable system would be cut in half, and we would only have 18 channels of high definition television. But there are also other types of HDTV that they are talking about, that's why we need a standard to find out where we're going from here."

In the production end of the industry, where the programs are created, HDTV brings along a new set of standards. Because of the exceptionally high resolution of HDTV, which is comparable to film, small imperfections and lighting conditions that were undetectable before will be noticeable. Brown says producers will have to be on their toes.

"Everything that happens in broadcasting has ratcheted the standards higher," Brown said. "High definition will be no exception."

Even though HDTV may not be in use until the late '90s, it still represents a giant step forward in the world of consumer technology. Brown says HDTV will follow color TV and the video cassette recorder as the next big technological step in the evolution of television.

"High definition will come eventually," Brown said. "Nobody remembers the first VCR. The first Sony Betamax cost \$3,000 in 1976. It took seven years before VCRs became popular, but they became the fastest-selling product in history. I think we can expect the same kind of turnaround for HDTV. Once the technology becomes affordable, sales will skyrocket."

## Live show taken to Extreme

By Robert Richardson  
Senior Reporter

They came together five years ago from two different Boston bands. They're all in their mid-20s, and even though they play in a heavy metal band, they don't listen to a lot of heavy metal.

They are the men of Extreme. Extreme played Sunday night at the Music Hall in Omaha to a semi-packed auditorium, where it was the second of two opening acts for Winger. The first opener at the concert extravaganza was another metal act, Tangier.

As the lights on the stage were about to be lit, Extreme took the stage. And as the lights came up, drum, guitar and bass sounded in synchronicity, and the intensity didn't stop for the next 45 minutes.

Heads were gyrating to the beat of

"When I'm President," from the album "Pornograffiti," Extreme's second effort with A&M Records. Long strands of hair were flying all over the music hall as the sounds reverberated through the hall.

The band slid through several songs from its current album, including a harmonious ballad "More than Words." It closed their headbanging set with the hard-rocking "Get the Funk Out."

While singing most of its songs to stage lights and butane lighters from the audience, Extreme rocked hard and put on what they are most proud of — a good stage show.

Pride runs deep with Extreme. Nuno Bettencourt, lead guitarist, said some bands use prerecorded lyrics or music. Extreme is different because it is all natural, and, Bettencourt said, they "sweat it out for everybody."

"The one thing that we're very proud of is we're real," he said. "What

we write is very emotional. What we come up with comes from our hearts. And our live performance is probably what we are most proud of because we do our stuff live, and we really work hard live."

Bettencourt has been hailed as the Eddie Van Halen of the '90s, and his five-minute guitar solo showcased the speed and dexterity of his small 5-foot-6-inch frame. But Bettencourt doesn't think he can live up to Van Halen's image.

"There's only one Eddie," he said. Bettencourt is too modest. He and the rest of the band members, Pat Badger, bass; Paul Geary, drums, and Gary Cherone, vocalist, have paid their dues in less than desirable clubs. They've also had a record deal with A&M for about two years.

"We've been around," Bettencourt

See EXTREME on 10

## NU forensics team achieving high goals

By Andrea Christensen  
Staff Reporter

The 60-member UNL forensics team already is setting its sights on national tournaments because of an exceptional year, Coach Ann Pettus said.

"We're doing really well this season," Pettus said. "We have a good crop of individual speakers who have already qualified for nationals. Also, we may have a team at the national debate tournament for the first time in several years."

The team of Jeff Beatty and Jude Hays are looking forward to the district debate competitions, which

will be held in three weeks. The top five teams will qualify for this spring's national debate contest in San Antonio, Texas, where they will argue both sides of the issue of U.S. trade policy with Pacific Rim nations.

"Between now and districts, we just have to get ready and prepare. Then I think we'll have a good chance to qualify," Beatty said.

Lee Grutman, a sophomore speech communication major, said he thought the Cornhusker speech team was doing well. It is competing successfully against much larger squads, he said.

See FORENSIC on 10

## Chickasaw Mudd Puppie's album formed with music greats' help

By Robert Richardson  
Senior Reporter

Loud, harmonious and obnoxious music with creative percussion, a blaring harmonica and a cool name characterize the latest release, "8 Track Stomp," from the Chickasaw Mudd Puppies.

The Chickasaw Mudd Puppies, hailing from Athens, Ga., the musical citadel of alternative music, have some heavy names to add to their credits of friends and helpers. Producing "8 Track Stomp" are R.E.M. front man Michael Stipe and blues man extraordinaire Willie Dixon. Both musical greats also provide a backup with vocal and instrumental expertise along with obvious musical direction. "Cicada" is a perfect foot-stomp-



Chickasaw Mudd Puppies  
"8 Track Stomp"  
Wing/Mercury Records  
Rating: 4  
Ratings are 1 (bad) to 5 (excellent).

ing introduction to the Mudd Puppies' rockabilly and fast-paced blues style. Harmonica mixed with guitar and a tambourine provide a sweet-and-sour sound that makes the lis-

tener cringe and smile at the same time.

The group starts out the album with a simple rhythm, "Wasp." The tune is a relatively easygoing melody that builds and falls from several climactic points. Again, the blend of the guitar and sharp-mouth harp provide a plain but hard-hitting attack. Coupled with obscure vocals, "Wasp" is a pleasurable, fun song that strikes the feet with an incredible dance fever.

Could the previously mentioned combination come together for a strong but mellow ballad?

"Cold Blue" is exactly that. It is a song overpowered by breathy vocals with a soft musical touch that draws the listener into a story with the at-

See MUDD on 10



Courtesy of PolyGram