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A&E

Comic Page

Comic Casserole provides the ingredients for new writers and artists with advice from comic book professional Frank Miller. Page 6



Monday

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Today, chance of light snow, areas of freezing drizzle possible.

'Big Twelve' translates to dollars, sense

By Tim Pearson
Senior Reporter

At the Orange Bowl on Jan. 1, UNL Chancellor Graham Spanier was doing more than watching Nebraska play for the national championship.

He also was in meetings all day drawing up a plan for the merger between the Big Eight and Southwest conferences, which was finalized Friday with the addition of Baylor, Texas A&M, Texas and Texas Tech to the Big Eight.

Spanier said the addition of the four Southwest Conference teams could only help the university and the conference.

"We think this is not only good for the Big

Eight, but this is especially good for the University of Nebraska," he said. "We believe by expanding the Big Eight Conference to include 12 teams, Nebraska will be in a strengthened position."

Big Eight



SW Conference

But before the university gave its approval, Spanier met with administrators and coaches to hear their opinions.

"I was very pleasantly surprised to come out of those discussions finding that there really weren't any drawbacks and a long list of positives," Spanier said.

There certainly will be no drawbacks financially, Spanier said.

"We've looked at this very carefully financially," he said. "We are in the midst of negotiations with the television networks about this 12-team league, and I can tell you we have offers on the table that are considerably more generous than we expected."

"We are very optimistic about this 12-team conference, and financially we'll come out ahead on this."

Nebraska Athletic Director Bill Byrne said the conference was talking with both over-the-air networks and cable networks. A television contract should be announced by the end of March, he said.

Byrne said discussions with the networks had included continuing the Nebraska-Oklahoma and Texas-Texas A&M football rivalries.

"Some of the proposals we're looking at, in fact almost all of the television proposals, call for a Nebraska-Oklahoma game and a Texas-Texas A&M game as part of the television package," he said. "My guess is that those will continue."

The merger came about when the Southeast Conference signed a television contract with CBS, which sent other conferences scrambling, Spanier said.

"It put the Big Eight in a vulnerable position,

See CONFERENCE on 2

New idea for grades suggested

By Matthew Waite
Senior Reporter

Yet another proposal has been submitted to the Academic Senate to change the way UNL professors grade their students.

Psychology professor Don Jensen issued a memo to the members of the senate Feb. 16 outlining his proposal.

Jensen's system would assign a grade for every credit hour earned. For example, the highest grade a student could receive in a five-hour class is AAAAA, the next would be AAAAB, and so on.

"Conceptually it's a very simple system," Jensen said. "For a one-hour course it gives fewer differentiations; for a three-hour course it gives more differentiations."

Jensen's plan comes after the Academic Senate voted down a proposed minus system and tabled a proposed 40-point system.

Jensen said a system similar to his proposal was used at Yale University when he was a graduate student in 1955-58. He said the system would keep the University of Nebraska-Lincoln committed to the A through F scale—keeping the numerical equivalents the same.

Jensen said the professors to whom he talked were opposed to the idea.

"Most of them feel like (the system) would be cumbersome, because you would have to put down more than one mark," Jensen said. "I think that is a trivial problem."

"Any change gets some opposition because people prefer not to change," he said. "I simply want a variety of options for the Academic Senate to consider."

Jensen said one problem with his proposal was that a new form would have to be made for each class earning a different number of credit hours.

"Those are practicality problems, which I don't think are very great," he said.

Keith Benes, president of the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska, disagreed, saying there would be other problems of cost to implement the system and confusion with the new system.

"Until there is compelling evidence that there is something wrong ... then there is no reason (to change)," he said.

Benes said the attitude of the Academic Senate was silly.

"It's almost chaos ... like these (professors) think our system sucks," Benes said. "There has become this prevailing attitude that they want to change it just for the sake of changing it."

"I'm starting to feel like a reaction-

See GRADE on 3



Jeff Haller/DN

Members of the Kiyira dance ensemble smile while singing and dancing Friday night during their concert at the Nebraska Union. The Ugandan group performed at the African Peoples' World Conference.

Conference explores African issues

By Kimberly Spurlock
and Paula Lavigne
Staff Reporters

As people of color become a more dominant part of the United States, a speaker said Friday, Americans need to become more familiar with the different cultures around them.

Neville Murray, coordinator of the Multi-Cultural Arts Council of Nebraska and keynote speaker at the first African Peoples' World Conference, said everyone, including blacks, needed to learn more

about the history and culture of Africans.

"As diversity becomes a fact of life and not just a buzzword," Murray said, "there will be a greater need for an understanding and appreciation among cultures."

The conference included poetry recitations, presentations on African music and the art of storytelling, and a panel discussion about relations between Africans and African Americans.

A performance by the Kiyira Ensemble from Uganda closed the daylong conference.

Murray said in the past, Africans were not viewed as human beings.

"We were commodities to be sold," he said. Because Africans not only were dehumanized and discouraged from learning but also were robbed of their culture, Murray said it was "incumbent for Africans to learn about their diversity, creativity and beauty."

"It is through that recognition of self that African people will prosper."

Through the arts, including music and literature, Murray said

one could learn about the many cultures surrounding Americans today.

"The best way to understand a group (of people) is through the arts — it's the least intimidating," he said.

Murray said that although the art created by people of color was not considered good at one point in American history, people took the art and claimed it as their own.

"Today the world recognizes jazz as American classical music ... But

See CULTURE on 3

Banking expert: Americans should save more

By Todd Neeley
Staff Reporter

Before the American dream can be restored, Americans must quit spending and start saving, a federal banking expert said Friday at the Lied Center for Performing Arts.

Peter Peterson, an investment banker, author and member of the Kerrey-Danforth entitlement reform commission, said the key to investing in America's future was addressing health-care reform and budget issues.

"We need to have a positive vision about what America should look like," he said to a crowd of about 100 people attending the Lewis E. Harris Lecture on Public Policy.

Investing between 6 and 8 percent of the gross national product, Peterson said, would be essential in fixing the national economy. Also, he said, if Americans would learn to save more money, it would help to improve the economy.

"We would be far better off to rely on personal savings," he said. Because the public deficit has

drained about two-thirds of the savings pool, he said, saving money may not be the solution to combat the deficit.

"It would be hard to increase private savings in the near future," he said. "But if we could find a way to encourage more people to save, it may be a way to partially restore the American dream."

Peterson said Americans needed to realize what they were doing by letting the deficit get out of hand.

"When we pass debts on, we are committing fiscal child abuse," he

said. If the deficit continues at the current pace, Peterson said, generations 40 or 50 years from now may be contributing more than 80 percent of their income to help pay for it.

In 1960, he said, 20 percent of the national budget was applied to the national deficit. And in 1990, that number increased to 60 percent.

"The current deficit is unsustainable," Peterson said.

In the next century, he said, it is

See PETERSON on 3