

Students post higher test scores

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) - Nebraska 1995 high school graduates followed a national trend and rolled up higher scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test, the state Department of Education reported Wednesday.

Overall, Nebraska scores increased by 25 points — 12 points on the verbal scale and 13 points on the math scale.

Jack Gilsdorf, department consultant, said the increase could be attributed to a change in the test itself.

The test now reflects the strong reasoning skills college work requires, he said.

Gilsdorf said most states reported higher scores and some, like Nebraska, reported substantial increases.

"It is probably better not to shout too loudly, 'dramatic improvement!' because it is more likely an adjustment in the scoring process with the new test," he said.

Gilsdorf said that nationwide the verbal score had increased five points and the math score three points.

"A gain of 25 combined points in one year (in Nebraska) is noteworthy in light of a combined average change of plus or minus 3.82 (points) over the previous eight years," he said.

In 1995, 68 percent of Nebraskans taking the test were "A" students, compared with 35 percent for the nation as a whole.

The department analysis stated that Nebraska's SAT takers were a more select group of higher achievers compared to the rest of the nation. The increase in "A plus" students alone (4 percent of the sample) could account for much of the 25-point increase in the state's overall performance, the analysis stated.

The department also reported that only 9 percent of graduating Nebraska seniors took the SAT test in 1994 and 1995, compared with a national average of 42 percent in 1994 and 41 percent in 1995.

"That is the simplest explanation as to why Nebraska's average scores are so much higher than the average national scores," the analysis stated.

A department analysis of the 1995 figures showed that boys continued to outscore girls and that children from families with incomes exceeding \$70,000 outdistanced those with lower incomes.

Boys had mean scores of 504 in the verbal test and 589 in the math section, compared with mean scores of 485 and 526 for girls. Male scores increased 30 points (13 in verbal and 17 in math) in the last year. Female scores increased 22 points (12 in verbal, and 10 in math).

The analysis also showed that while white students continued to lead all other groups in verbal skills, with a mean level of 500, Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islanders led all ethnic groups in math with a mean score of 568, compared with a 562 mean score for white students.

Man who tried to hire a hit man receives additional sentence

LINCOLN (AP) - A man convicted of trying to hire a hit man to kill an undercover sheriff's deputy was sentenced Wednesday to 40 to 50 years in prison.

Lancaster County District Judge Donald Endacott imposed the sentence on Billy Ray Billups, 39.

Billups was already in jail on drug charges when he was accused of trying to hire a man, actually an undercover police officer, to kill the deputy.

The undercover deputy said he had bought crack cocaine from Billups while working on his case.

Prosecutors said Billups wrote a letter from jail indicating he would pay up to \$40,000 to have the deputy killed.

Stabbing trial in Hastings sent to jury

HASTINGS (AP) — A man charged with stabbing his former girlfriend to death told an emergency room nurse after his arrest that "it was worth it," the nurse testified Wednesday.

The prosecution rested its case against Thomas McBride after calling the nurse as its last witness. The jury began deliberations about 3:35 p.m. and was to be sequestered for the night if it did not reach a decision by 10 p.m.

McBride, 38, is charged with killing 42-year-old Sharon Oster Feb. 5 at the Hastings apartment of a mutual friend. He had been charged with holding Oster and her daughter hostage in 1994, and sexually assaulting Oster about a year earlier.

Nurse Dave Nissen, who treated McBride at

Mary Lanning Memorial Hospital after his arrest, said McBride's hands were covered in blood. When he asked McBride what happened, the nurse testified, McBride told him: "That's all right. It was worth it."

Nissen also testified that McBride said: "I didn't get my boy scout female survival badge."

In closing arguments, Adams County Attorney Donna Fegler told jurors the slaying was premeditated. She said McBride and Oster were together in the apartment an hour before Oster was killed.

Defense attorney Art Toogood did not call any witnesses, but entered into evidence the fact that Oster made no report to police of any threat by McBride between the time she ac-

cused him of sexual assault and her death.

An affidavit signed by Oster in a protection order filed Feb. 16, 1994, states that McBride talked about killing her and her daughter.

Toogood told jurors during closing arguments that McBride had not premeditated the murder, pointing out that he and Ms. Oster met at the apartment by chance. Toogood said McBride was also angry at the time of the killing and was not clearheaded.

A pathologist testified Tuesday that Oster was stabbed several times in the chest and abdomen, including one wound that cut the main artery from her heart. Dr. Blaine Roffman also showed graphic color photographs of Oster's body.

Sidewalk Sale

Save

20-30-50%

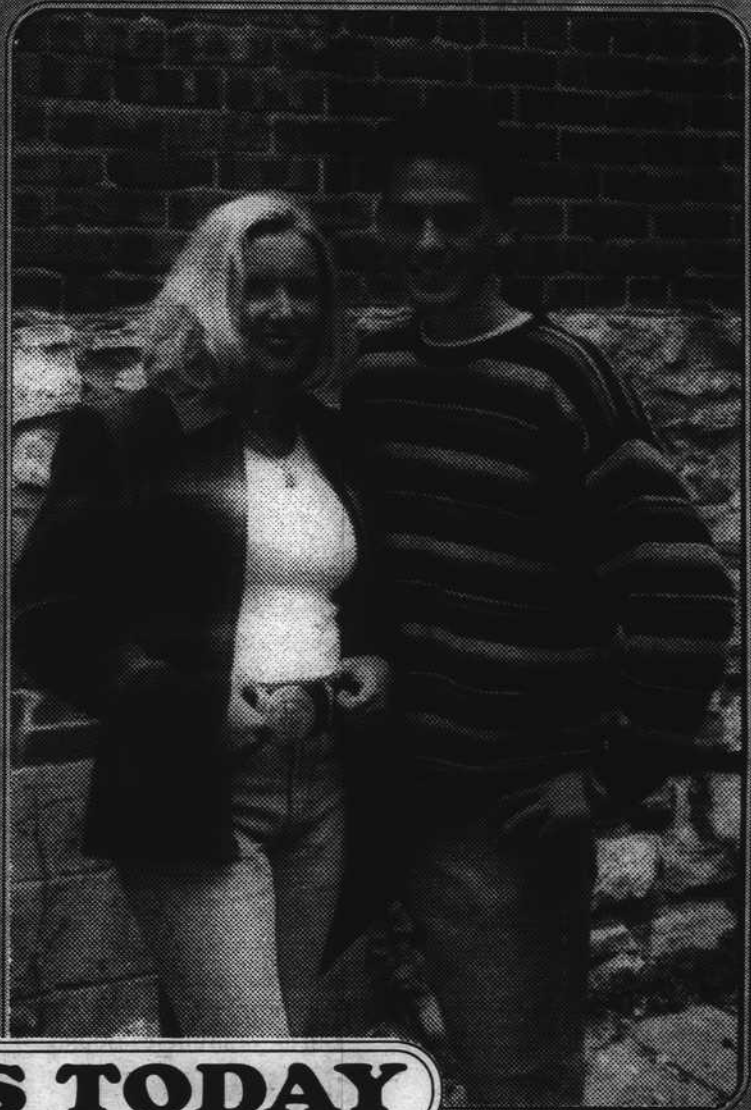
outside and throughout the store.

Our Big Fall Extravaganza!

Everything on Sale!

4 Days Only

Thursday 10-9
 Fri - Sat 10-6
 Sunday 12-6



STARTS TODAY

Drastic Reductions on Remaining Summer Merchandise!

Save **50-60-70%**

Many New Fall Specials For Men & Women:

Flannels	Leathers
Shirts	Shoes
Blouses	Boots
Knits	Pants
Sweaters	Skirts
Jeans	Suits
Outerwear	Ties



the **Post and Nickel**
 Men's and Women's Clothing, Sportswear and Footwear
 Downtown at 14th & P

Credit Cards & Layaways Welcome!