

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

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**State
of the
ARTS**

Gerry Beltz

Little stores offer choice, friendship

It's like a virus.

Like spores, it grew.

Soon, there were two, then three, then four.

Blockbuster Video is everywhere, and there's no signs of its growth slowing down.

With the official announcement of Blockbuster acquiring ownership of the Video Station chain — and all five Lincoln locations — great sorrow comes to this movie fan.

Now, only the two-store Audio-Visual and Film Strip Video chains remain, and it is the little independent guys against the collective strength of Blockbuster.

I fear the worst.

Don't get me wrong; I do like Blockbuster. They offer free rental on community service videos and get about 100 copies of every new release (if it isn't NC-17 or unrated), virtually assuring anyone can come in to rent "Batman Forever" and damn it, it will be there.

Lost in the transition will be the individuality, the employees recognizing customers and forming that relationship not found in the conglomerate businesses.

It's called friendship.

I'm not talking about a video clerk who goes out with the customers for a beer after work, but someone who recognizes someone who has been in before and acts on it. Remembering a name or the type of movies rented can really make a mark on a customer.

What the little guys offer in the video rental realm that giant conglomerates can't offer is that one-on-one treatment, where the owner works at the store and not in a plush office in another time zone.

Also gone will be choices. If the big guy doesn't carry it, hard cheese to you. For those hard-to-find videos, you often need to hit the independent dealers.

Missed most with the passing of the Video Station outlets will be a unique service that they — and they alone — offered: customers could return their movies to any Video Station outlet, and not necessarily the one from which it was originally rented.

This was an incredibly generous service on the part of Video Station, and also came in extremely handy for those who run errands all day.

But will that be offered again? Noooooooope.

And do the little guys require a credit card number or a sign-up fee to rent from them? "Just a current driver's license and phone number will do just fine, thank you."

Could the future of "Demolition Man" wait around the next corner? Could we already lie in the skirmishes of the franchise wars, where Blockbuster Video and Subway restaurants will be the only remaining businesses because they reproduced when in contact with water (via "Gremlins")?

It's up to us to keep the little guys in business.

Beltz is a senior English education major and a Daily Nebraskan senior reporter.

Season brims with winter entertainment

Music events, movies abound in Lincoln, Omaha

By Cliff A. Hicks
Staff Reporter
and Gerry Beltz
Senior Reporter

The holidays are a time for giving and sharing, so consider sharing these great upcoming concerts and movies with your friends and family.

Jazz vocal ensemble Moore By Four will give a holiday concert at the Lied Center on Dec. 19 at 8 p.m.

Moore By Four is comprised of four vocalists, Yolanda Bruce, Ginger Commodore, Connie Evingson and Steve Faison; Sanford Moore on piano; Jay Young on bass and Robert Commodore on drums.

The group will perform new arrangements of seasonal songs like "Winter Wonderland," "Ave Maria," "What Child Is This?" and "Jingle Bell Rock."

Tickets are \$20, \$16 and \$12, with half-price for anyone under 18 or for UNL, Wesleyan and Doane students with ID.

Feminist punk band Babes In Toyland will play at the Ranch Bowl in Omaha, Dec. 19. The show will start at 9 p.m. and tickets are \$10.

Knickerbockers, 901 O St., will offer a bountiful cornucopia of concerts. On Friday, Mindspray and Vito & The V-Tones; on Saturday, Hog Hunter and Stew; on Dec. 22, Red Max and Shithook; on Dec. 23, Ezra and Nail; on Dec. 29, Grimace and Rosegarden Funeral; on Dec. 30, there will be a free show with Spelling Tuesday and WUF; and Dec. 31, Wide and Rascal Basket.

Mudslide Slim's, 1418 O St., also plans for a plethora of musical offerings. On Wednesday, Evel Paisley and Swiftly; on Saturday, Sideshow and We'd Rather Be Flying; and on Dec. 22, the Self-Righteous Bros. will perform "A Self-Righteous Xmas."

The holiday movie blitz is well under way, with a number of long-awaited films still in the lineup. Here are a few of those films and their release dates.

Dec. 15

"Jumanji" — With more computer technomagic mixed with real life, "Jumanji" will surely spill over to the merchandising jungle as well.

With elephants trampling cars and a house turned into something out of a "Tarzan" movie, plus Robin Williams at the helm for surefire comedy, "Jumanji" surely will be a hit for all ages.

"Heat" — You want star power? Here are



Photo courtesy of Michal Schmidt Artists International, Inc.

Moore by Four will jazz up the holidays with a Dec. 19 performance at the Lied Center.

some names: Al Pacino, Robert DeNiro, Val Kilmer. Together, they spell "Heat."

Word has it that "Heat" generates just that with every performer.

"Sabrina" — The remake of the 1954 Humphrey Bogart classic sports many familiar faces: Harrison Ford, Julia Ormond and ... Greg Kinnear?

Yep. The former "Talk Soup" host hits the big screen with this romantic comedy, and the word through the grapevine is that the film — and Kinnear's performance — are top notch.

Dec. 22

"Grumpier Old Men" — Not surprisingly, everybody (Walter Matthau, Jack Lemmon, Ann-Margaret) came back for this sequel to the surprise 1993 hit.

The real question: Will Burgess Meredith return with another half-dozen euphemisms for sexual intercourse during the credits?

"Sudden Death" — Oh goody, another "Die Hard" clone. This one, "Die Hard in a Hockey Arena," stars Jean-Claude Van Damme.

No, it isn't for fans of great acting, but with director Peter Hyams ("Timecop," "The Presidio") at the helm, anything is possible.

"Cutthroat Island" — Only "Waterworld" received more setbacks and money problems. Yet, with director Renny Harlin ("Cliffhanger," "Die Hard 2") steering the ship, "Cutthroat Island"

may find the buried treasure.

Geena Davis and Matthew Modine team up to fight off the bad guys and find the gold doubloons amid battles, swordfights and lots of swinging on ropes.

"Waiting to Exhale" — The women will have to convince the guys this is a sequel to "The Abyss" to get them to go, but strong performances from Angela Bassett and Whitney Houston are inevitable.

Director Forest Whitaker adds to the film's potential. But Houston's over-played ballad from the soundtrack doesn't help.

Other dates

"Nixon" (Dec. 20) — With stars like Anthony Hopkins, James Woods and Ed Harris, "Nixon" seems to be a surefire hit.

Will director Oliver Stone paint another controversial political picture with this drama? We shall soon see.

"Four Rooms" (Dec. 25) — A cavalcade of stars—including Antonio Banderas, Bruce Willis and Tim Roth — highlight this four-director cinematic gamble that features the input of directors Quentin Tarantino and Robert Rodriguez, among others.

Word has it that "Four Rooms" didn't fare well on initial release. Did too many directors spoil the pot?

Holiday dinner ideas for dorm students

By Albert Schmid
Staff Reporter

Stuck in Lincoln over the holidays with limited resources? Alone for Christmas and don't want to think about cooking a complicated dinner for one? Here are some simple ideas for your holiday.

With as little as a microwave or toaster oven, a mini-fridge, a can opener, several dishes, a glass, and some silverware you can make a good meal with little or no sweat.

To have a full dinner, start with soup and bread. You can pick up the bread at any supermarket. But if you insist on a fuller, richer bread, try seeking out a good bakery in town.

When it comes to soup for one, your best bet is canned. I would have to say that a concentrate would be best. You can microwave it and save leftovers for later.

You might want to match your bread to your soup. For tomato soup, try Parmesan or dill bread. French or wheat bread goes best with pea soup. And with carrot soup, try a cottage dill bread.

When it comes to salad, try a simple spinach salad with red onion and walnut or a bacon and blue cheese salad with a spicy dressing.

If you want to stick with the classic holiday entrees you can buy a boneless chicken breast or a small piece of ham. Both meats can be cooked in the microwave, but you must be careful so as not to overcook either one.

When cooking the chicken or the ham, put it in a bowl, add two teaspoons of water and cover it with plastic wrap. Cook for only thirty seconds at a time, giving the bowl a quarter turn at each interval.

If you want to spice up your entree, add a sauce. Sauces can easily be made using thickeners such as flour, cornstarch or arrowroot. An orange sauce will go well with chicken, and a tomato sauce or a brown sugar sauce is best for ham. All can be made in the microwave.

For dessert, a cake or cobbler is perfect, and both can be done in the microwave.

To add that special touch, buy a

"split" of champagne or half-bottle of wine. The champagne for one will run about \$3.50 to \$4, and the half bottle of wine will cost anywhere from \$5 to \$15.

Of course, if you're on campus you will want to pick up a non-alcoholic wine or sparkling grape juice.

Spinach Salad with Red Onion and Walnuts

1/2 pound fresh spinach torn into bite size pieces

1/3 of a cup walnuts

1/4 of a red onion sliced very thin

one ounce blue cheese (optional)

Prepare the spinach for eating, remove the stems and tear into bite size pieces. Chop the walnuts and slice the red onion very thin. Add the blue cheese. Toss together and add your favorite vinegar-based dressing. A good variation of this can be made by adding four pieces of bacon and three slices of tomato.

Orange Sauce for Chicken

1/2 cup orange juice

2 teaspoons honey

2 teaspoons cornstarch or arrowroot

Mix the cornstarch or arrowroot into the cold orange juice. Then stir in the honey. Cover with plastic wrap and microwave for 30 seconds. Remove the sauce, stir, cover and microwave again for 30 seconds. Continue process until thick.

Cobbler

To simplify the cobbler you can pick up your favorite kind of pie filling and add.

1/4 cup oatmeal

1/4 cup flour

1/4 cup melted butter

2 tablespoons sugar

Mix the four ingredients together and place on top of the pie filling in an oven-proof bowl. Place in a 350 degree oven for 10 to 15 minutes until done or place in the microwave oven for 2 minutes.