



Brian Priesman

Federal funds for the arts still needed

The Republican power base in Washington wants to sever all ties between the American government and American culture.

It wants the federal government to give no support whatsoever to theater, ballet, music, opera, film, literature, history, visual arts, television, museum work and anything else that the term culture describes.

And the plan isn't even economic.

Even the most vocal opponents have given up the argument that canceling the \$620 million worth of cultural programs will help reduce the present budget deficit of \$180 billion. Especially when a Senate Committee last summer can knowingly approve a military budget of \$7 billion MORE than for which the Pentagon asked.

So why does Congress seem determined to rid America of culture? Because the politicians in Congress are buckling under the influence of the Christian Right extremist groups.

These groups cite artist after artist who is "controversial" or "pornographic." But since the National Endowment for the Arts was started in the 1960s, fewer than 3 percent of the exhibits it has funded have created any controversy — fewer than 3 percent of everything funded in over 30 years.

But that fact is never made known by the NEA's critics. They just cite examples such as the controversial "Piss Christ" or the homo-erotic photography of Robert Mapplethorpe. But the Mapplethorpe photos never even received direct money from the NEA.

From a financial point of view, the NEA and its cousin, the National Endowment for the Humanities, are cheap. Their combined budgets last year amounted to fewer than 10 cents a year per person. Ten cents. Most people can find more than that underneath the couch.

But without these programs, the loss would be immeasurable. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting would face bankruptcy, museums would be closed and theaters would be dark.

In Nebraska alone, the loss would be horrible. Theaters such as The Futz in Lincoln and The Dundee Dinner Theater in Omaha would lose a lot of their funding. The Nebraska Arts Council's "Artist in the Schools" program most likely would be canceled.

Think of it — no more educational field trips to museums and no more theatrical presentations of Shakespeare to high-school English classes.

Why? Because the museums and theaters either would be closed or so expensive to get in to that only the elite could afford it.

The only way to save the NEA is to fight for it. Artists and their fans need to get off of their butts and do something. Speak out! Organize lobbying groups to compete against the NEA's opponents. FORCE Congress to listen.

If you don't, America will become the first "civilized" nation in recorded history to not have government support for the arts. And that's not something to be proud of.

Priesman is a freshman news-editorial and theater major and a Daily Nebraskan staff reporter.

Drinkin' it up



Jay Calderon/DN

T.J. Merwald of Bellevue (left) and a friend get primed for the 16th annual Avoca Quack-Off.

Town gathers for quaffs, quacks

By **Ted Taylor**
Senior Reporter
Jeff Randall
Senior Editor

AVOCA, Neb.—It doesn't take much to entertain the citizens of this small town east of Lincoln.

Give 'em a good cause, a few beers and a chance to win some money, and they're happy until spring.

Throw in some unsuspecting ducks, and you've got yourself a festival.

For one day every year for the past 15 years, this Cass County village's population of 245 has nearly doubled, the tennis court has been transformed into a feather-filled race track, and the people have gone ... well ... plain ducky.

It's Quack-Off time in Avoca.

It's a day full of events revolving around what most consider the cutest of the waterfowl family — the duck.

It's a day when duck hunters on hand put away their rifles and get to know the feathered friends they normally try to pick out of the sky.

The events range from a charity luncheon where the featured dish is "ducky dogs" to duck races to a

disturbing event known as the duck drop.

Put it all together, and what's not to feel ducky about?

The annual event has raised more than \$20,000 for the Avoca Volunteer Fire Department since its inception 15 years ago.

Vernon Dettner, the 67-year-old founder of the event, jokingly admitted that yes, beer had something to do with the idea that started with three ducks on a frozen pond.

"We were sitting down at the bar about half loaded up," he said. "So I thought, we ought to have a duck race or something in the wintertime."

Vernon's son, Steve, didn't disagree with his father, but said winter boredom was the main motivation for the town.

"It started out as just something to do in the wintertime," he said. "It's just built since then, and everyone keeps coming."

Do they ever.

From throughout the Midwest, more than 600 duck-a-holics converge upon Avoca. They come in droves from Lincoln, Omaha and South Dakota. They even come from as far away as North Dakota for the chance to rent, name and race a duck for the day.

Dr. Gregg Whelan, a dentist, drove all the way from Belcourt, N.D., with his wife of three months, Sandy. He also managed to encourage a group of duck-happy friends to make the trip.

"This is our third year," he said. "We brought some friends with us and made it a big event for us."

Lincoln's P.O. Pear's even chartered a bus to bring more than 40 people to the Quack-Off.

Dave Howe, a senior business administration major and one member of the Pear's posse, said they had been coming for the past three years.

Why? "To drink some beers and race some ducks — in that order," he said. "It's become a tradition for us."

When the event began, the elder Dettner said, they didn't have nearly the number of ducks that they did on Saturday.

But because of the increasing number of entries — 104 this year to be exact — and popularity of the Quack-Off, the event's coordinators have been forced to have the ducks shipped in from a small farm in Louisville.

And according to one of the duck

See **QUACK-OFF** on 10

Denny Duck disappoints in Quack-Off

By **Ted Taylor**
Senior Reporter
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AVOCA — Denny never had a chance.

That's how we felt when we first

arrived in Avoca. We hadn't even met our ill-fated duck, but we knew that our lack of duck racing expertise would certainly hurt our chances in the 16th annual Avoca

Denny

Quack-Off.

As representatives of the Daily Nebraskan, we wanted to make a strong showing in this small town. We wanted to let everyone there know that we were serious. But most of all, we wanted to win.

Unfortunately, it wasn't meant to

See **DENNY** on 10

Flutist to perform free recital at Kimball

By **Emily Wray**
Staff Reporter

Guest flutist Leonard Garrison will present his talents in a free recital tonight at Kimball Recital Hall.

John Bailey, associate professor of flute, said the program's diversity alone made the concert worth attending.

"His program is all classical music from a wide variety of style periods, which I think is the hallmark of a good recital program," said Bailey, who will accompany Garrison in the performance.

Pieces in Monday's program include a Bach sonata for flute and harpsichord in the Baroque period, and an American sonata by Robert Muczynski, featuring a jazzy style, Bailey said.

Karg-Elert's "Sonata for Atpassionata" and a French piece by Georges Hùe are the Romantic period's contributions.

Bailey said that the Atpassionata, an early 20th century piece, was very intense.

Garrison also will play a relatively new solo piece composed in 1993 by Lowell Liebermann. Anton

Bernhard Fürstenaw's early 19th century piece for two flutes and piano is called L'Union, Rondo Brilliant on Themes.

In addition to the pieces that will be performed, Bailey said, he was excited about performing with Garrison.

"He's a thoughtful, intelligent, excellent musician who plays a wide variety of music," Bailey said. "Personally, these are some of the standard pieces that my flute students play, so I'm looking forward to his interpretation."

Garrison's positions include co-

ordinator of the National Flute Association Masterclass Performers Competition and second flute and piccolo with the Tulsa Philharmonic.

He is also an instructor of flute at the University of Tulsa and will be conducting a Master Class with the flute department at the School of Music.

Also assisting Garrison in his recital will be Ann Chang-Barnes, piano, and Quentin Faulkner, harpsichord.

Tonight's recital starts at 8. Admission is free.