

## the Fine Print

By Cliff Hicks and Emily Wray

### Critics agree: Detective novel deserves a look

I so wanted to give Emily a change of pace this week. Something away from the science-fiction and surrealism that we've been discussing up to now.

My original thought was to give her a Raymond Chandler story. Unfortunately the only one I had handy was the one I hadn't read yet.

What I ended up giving her was "Sweet Silver Blues" by Glen Cook, the first in the series that follows a private dick (gumshoe, investigator, you know what I mean) by the name of Garrett. But Garrett's story is not exactly a typical noir-style detective book.

"I like this trash. It's got a murder mystery, vampires, goblins and other assorted creatures carrying guns," Emily said after finishing the book.

Garrett's adventures take place in a world that blends the detective fiction of Chandler, Hammet and others with fantasy writing. The result is unique, to say the least.

"I actually pretty much read it cover to cover," Emily said, "which didn't affect the chemistry test grade that I was supposed to be studying for too much."

Wow. We're both going to like a book. This is a first — and probably a last.

"Must be the end of the semester blues," she said. "Desperation has set in."

Garrett runs a private investigation agency out of his home, with occasional help from "the Dead Man." The reason he's called this is he's of a different race that communicates with the living after their physical deaths.

The case sounds simple enough. Old Man Tate, a gnome, hires Garrett to find the inheritor of a great deal of wealth. The reason Tate has Garrett do it is the deceased, a guy named Denny, left Garrett as executor of his will.

The trail, as in any good mystery, is convoluted, twisted and fascinating.

Garrett is looking for — wouldn't you know it — one of his ex-girlfriends from back when he was a Marine in the war. Ex-girlfriends like these tend to show up in detective fiction.

"But Garrett's still in love with her!" Emily said.

True, Garrett indeed is in love. But, to paraphrase "the Dead Man," Garrett chases after every skirt he sees.

However, we both enjoyed "Sweet Silver Blues," which is unusual. It made writing a review more difficult because there was little for us to argue about.

I'm even lending Emily the rest of the series — all of which have some kind of metal in the title — during Christmas vacation. Wow.

Hicks is a sophomore news-editorial and English major. Wray is a junior news-editorial major. Both are avid book lovers and Daily Nebraskan staff reporters.

# Descendents revisit punk

California band reunites for tour, not just nostalgia

By BRET SCHULTE  
Staff Reporter

As the name suggests, the Descendents hail from a long and richly famous background.

Their history takes root in Southern California old-school punk and blended with their own quirky angst-accelerated melody.

Although they haven't existed in name for several years, the Los Angeles band has reunited and is bringing its distinctive punk-flavored speed-rock to Omaha's Ranch Bowl this Sunday.

The Descendents are on tour supporting their first studio album since 1987, "Everything Sucks," on the self-aware, independent alterna-label, Epitaph.

"With this new album we want people to realize that we're not some nostalgia rock band," singer Milo Aukerman said. "This album is hard to place, we are too fast for punk and too melodic for hard core."

Graduating from the L.A.-area school of punk, the Descendents are contemporaries of the now-defunct legendary hard-core band Black Flag, as well as power pop-combo The Last.

"Bill Stevenson (drummer), actually started the band back in '78," Aukerman said. "We have been buddies since high school. Bill came up with the name because he liked the sound of it, and we held on to it up until '87."

The band's links to California hard-core are particularly strong. Stevenson decided to drum for Black Flag while



COURTESY PHOTO

lead singer Aukerman continued his graduate studies at the University of California at San Diego. This opened a revolving door for Aukerman — and thus the split identity of the Descendents.

"When I am not singing for them they are a different band, called All, with Chad Price as vocalist," Aukerman said. "They're fantastic, and they really carry the spirit of the Descendents with them in every way possible."

All has been touring and recording extensively since forming from the Descendents in 1987. Aukerman has kept himself busy over the years by earning his Ph.D. in biochemistry and then doing research at the University of Wisconsin at Madison.

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## Punk rocks Omaha

By PATRICK MINER  
Staff Reporter

The Suicide Machines, a band from Detroit, used to be called Jack Kevorkian and the Suicide Machines. However, when they performed in front of people who thought they were going to see the infamous doctor, the band decided to change their name.

The Suicide Machines will bring its mix of punk and ska to the Ranch Bowl Sunday, opening for the punk band the Descendents. The Suicide Machines are supporting their Hol-

lywood record debut, "Destruction by Definition."

The band began playing together in 1992, and soon opened for the Mighty Mighty Bosstones during the band's second Detroit appearance.

"We were a very confused band then," drummer Derek Grant said. "When we started, we didn't clearly understand ska and sounded more like polka."

Grant explains that the band's punk and ska sound is very separated. On "Destruction," the punk

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COURTESY PHOTO

## Hangar 18 goes live with two local bands

By ANN STACK  
Senior Reporter

Richard Schultz thinks the very best art should evoke such an emotional response it would be like looking in the artist's diary.

If that's the case, the singer/guitarist of the Omaha band Sawdust Devil is laying the pages out for a public viewing tonight at Hangar 18, 1118 O St.

Despite delays, Hangar 18 opened Wednesday, and tonight marks the bar's first live show. Sawdust Devil will play at 10, with Lincoln's Radio King (formerly Cowtown) following.

Sawdust Devil is comprised of Schultz and his wife, bassist Melissa Wood, and drummer Sven Deepe. Schultz and Wood met at a telemarketing firm in Omaha, where Wood remembered him from his brief stint at Wayne State College as a broadcasting major. (She studied the clarinet and graduated in 1990.)

The two dated, and when he told her he was forming a band, he invited her along for the ride.

Sawdust Devil is promoting its first full-length release, "Affirmative" on the Lincoln-based "ism" label. Their music is hard-edged and quirky, but difficult to pinpoint — kind of Husker

Du crossed with Stabbing Westward.

Schultz, whose voice is at times reminiscent of Live's Ed Kowalczyk, cites such influences as the Doors, David Sylvian and Concrete Blonde — but you'd never hear that in his music.

"Musically, I'm Joan Jett meets AC/DC," he said. "Purely the post-Nirvana, John Cougar crunchy hooks, with good storytelling that's heavy enough to fall through the floor rock 'n' roll."

Tonight will be Radio King's debut performance as a band, after the breakup of Cowtown eight months ago. But three of Cowtown's members are in Radio King — drummer Rand Paul, guitarist Tony Robertson and bassist Marty Stienhausen. They recruited

former Cocktoses singer Mike Miller to handle vocal chores.

Paul and Stienhausen were in the thrash band The Demigogs together, before forming Cowtown. Fans of Cowtown would probably groove on Radio King, Paul said.

"The sound's evolved a lot," he said. "We're a lot smoother. We're tighter as a unit now."

Radio King is mostly a bluegrass rockabilly outfit, with some surfer-punk reggae thrown in for good measure, Paul said.

There is a \$3 cover charge for tonight's show.