

Behind-the-counter Cupids



By GERRY BELTZ
Senior Reporter

This Valentine's Day, it's pretty much business as usual for merchants. Business as usual for the day before Valentine's Day, that is.

"Customers are picking stuff off the walls this year," said Terry Kraft, owner of The Romantic, 400 N. 48th St. "Business is great this year, but we are running out of stuff."

That's right, Kraft said, it's been another year of trying to keep chocolate body paint on the shelves.

"We had to have 300 jars flown in this morning. Other hot sellers have included: lingerie, couples games and massage oils."

Melissa Bernadt, manager of Flowerama, 5305 O St., said the hot item this year was the same as last year.

"Red roses," Bernadt said, "by the dozen."

Audrie Sparks, an employee at Priscilla's, 2029 O St., said the items ordered this year were a little different from last year, but business is still pretty good.

"We were pretty conservative this year in our ordering," Sparks said, "not as much specific Valentine's Day stuff, just general items."

Hoping to catch a hot dip at The Tubbery of Friday? Not a chance, said Bev Siffring, employee at The Tubbery, 818 P St.

"We're totally booked on Friday," Siffring said, "from noon until 1:30 a.m."

The greeting card business isn't exactly dead right now, either.

"Things are just wonderful," said Deb Walter, manager of Morrow's Hallmark in Gateway Mall. "We're selling tons of cards, and lots of candy and gift wrap."

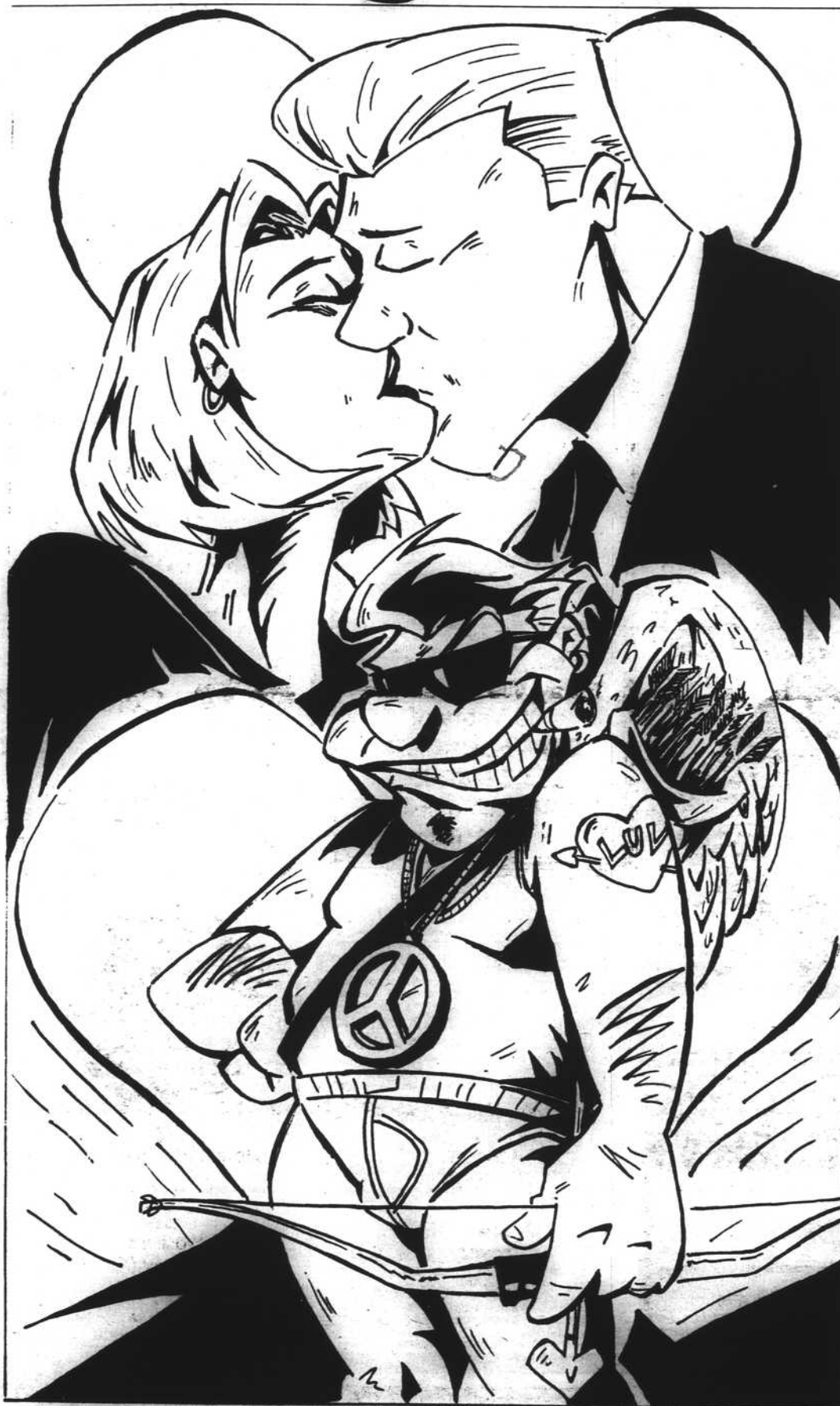
Other stores don't have what people are looking for.

Sweetheart roses have been widely asked for this season, but unavailable, Bernadt said.

"We're using them more in bouquets," Bernadt said, "plus we make more money on the larger roses than the sweetheart."

And some customers haven't been able to find even the not-so-hot items for Valentine's Day, Sparks said.

"I had a gal ask for some rubber bikini briefs for the men, that we didn't have in stock."



MATT HANEY/DN

Group brings art, heritage to university

By ANN STACK
Senior Reporter

Six women determined to change history — and make it at the same time — are visiting the University of Nebraska-Lincoln this week.

New Arts Six is a classically trained performing arts ensemble working to promote African-American culture and heritage through preserving its poetry, music and literature. The group is on campus this week as part of the Arts Are Basic program, sponsored by the College of Fine and Performing Arts.

Arts Are Basic brings performers into the university and the community to share their art with students. The artists are selected on the basis of what they can contribute to furthering the program's artistic vision, the ultimate goal being cultural diversity.

"The director of the program, Kit Voorhees, selects performers with artistic excellence, whose work has something to say and offers many ways to get into it and learn from," Arts Are Basic assistant coordinator David Bagby said.

New Arts Six have a repertoire that reflects the African-American musical heritage with original works "A Joyful Noise" and "Black Diva." These opera-dramas are highlighted with spirituals, which are the focus of the performances. They will present "Black Diva" at Kimball Recital Hall tonight.

"Black Diva" is a two-act performance based on the life of African-American opera singer Sissieretta Jones. She was an extraordinarily talented singer who was in her prime from 1892 to 1910. Jones performed before royalty in Europe, before four American presidents and at the Chicago World Fair, but could not tour with an opera company because of her race.

She is a singer typically overlooked when discussing early black female singers because she was one of black opera's fledgling pioneers, New Arts Six member Cynthia Dorn Navarrete said.

"Black Diva" was written seven years ago, and is in its third, and hopefully final, incarnation, Navarrete said.

"It's a perfect blend of Negro spiritual and opera," she said. "It's an interesting piece. It's not one you'd expect to see at the theater or a concert."

New Arts Six formed in Dallas in 1981. Not all of the original members are still with the group, but there has always been six of them. They've gone from singing in churches around Dallas to doing full-blown productions out of state, Navarrete said, and have been invited to tour Barcelona and Paris this summer.

The performance is at 8 p.m. Tickets are available from the Lied Box Office at \$4 for students and \$8 for the public.

Theatrix shows short on rehearsal time, high on energy

By LIZA HOLTMEIER
Staff Reporter

The UNL Theatre Arts and Dance Department's second stage, Theatrix, will begin its second semester season this weekend with a double feature.

The first feature, "Three By Ives," consists of three pieces from David Ives' "All In The Timing." The first piece, "Sure Thing," takes a humorous look at first impressions, while the second piece, "Foreplay" or "The Art of the Fugue," deals with miniature golf as a metaphor for sex. The final piece, "Speed the Play," involves four David Mamet scripts delivered in

seven minutes.

The second feature, "Patient A," has a more serious tone. It tells the story of Kimberly Bergalis, an AIDS victim who spent the last year of her life fighting for a change in public health policy.

The casts of the two shows have had only 2½ weeks to rehearse.

"The work has been incredible," said Heather Currie, director of "Three By Ives."

"We've had 28 hours of rehearsal to not only memorize lines, but to grow as casts and in our roles as well."

She said "The Art of the Fugue" was especially challenging because of

the difficult cues. The scene consists of three couples that must take cues from other couples not directly involved in the scene.

Cast members said in order to prepare for opening night, they have spent more time working on their roles outside of rehearsal.

Cast member Patty Dilon felt the time constraint helped to maintain the energy level of the casts.

"When you work on something for months, it tends to get redundant," she said.

Cast member Mike Zaller said the energy level has remained high for him because of the multiple charac-

"When you work on something for months, it tends to get redundant."

PATTY DILON
cast member

ters he plays in "Three By Ives."

Currie added that the directors of Theatrix productions also get to experiment with a wider array of responsibilities than in other productions.

The double feature opens tonight and will run through Saturday. Show times are tonight and Friday at 7, and Saturday at 7 and 10 p.m. The production will be held in Room 301 of the Temple Building. Admission is \$3.