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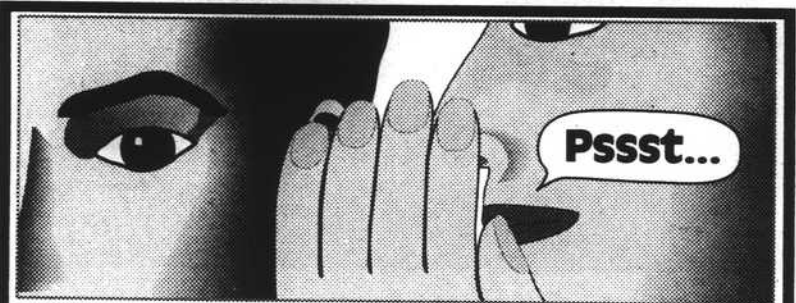
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Read-a-thon promotes literacy

By JESSICA FARGEN
Staff Reporter

Lincolniters may have participated in marathons, triathlons and dance-a-thons, but this weekend more than 200 Lincoln residents added a read-a-thon to their lists.

The Lincoln Literacy Council sponsored a 25-hour read-a-thon at The Mill, 800 P St., Friday and Saturday to celebrate the 25 years that the council has been around.

Participants hoped the event would raise awareness of illiteracy, and teach people of all ages that reading doesn't have to be boring.

Lois Poppe, executive director of Lincoln Literacy Council, said 10 readers were scheduled during each hour. They read from three to five minutes from a book of their choice.

Most participants were reading books from their childhoods that had a theme applicable to all ages, Poppe said. "I just love seeing people enjoy

reading and books, and realizing that literacy is important for all of us," Poppe said.

Individuals and organizations sponsored the read-a-thon by pledging \$100 per reader, \$1,000 for an hour, or four people could donate \$25 together.

Several local celebrities, like Mayor Mike Johanns and Bill Robertson, anchorman for KOLN- KGIN Channel 10/11, kicked off the event, which organizers hoped would raise \$25,000 for the Future Fund, a program to ensure that literacy programs continue.

Robertson introduced Johanns as the first reader for the event, which took place Friday from 8 a.m. to midnight and Saturday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Johanns sat on a white, plastic chair in front of a crowd of about eight people, and read a poem he remembered reading as a child, "Casey at the Bat," into a microphone.

Johanns said he hoped the read-a-thon would open people's eyes to the importance of reading, especially to children.

"It is important that we as adults display a message that reading is fun and enjoyable to show kids that reading is not work," Johanns said.

Robertson said his job at the event was to introduce the readers and get people excited about the read-a-thon.

He did not get excited about reading, Robertson said, until he was in college, and was glad that there were people out there working to encourage reading.

"As a young person, reading was not my favorite thing to do. But it's funny - now I would rather read than watch TV," Robertson said.

The Lincoln Literacy Council is a private, nonprofit organization with more than 500 members. Its programs include teaching adults 16 years old and up to read, teaching foreign people to speak English and offering one-on-one tutoring, using volunteers.

"Reading is such a key to life, and with a book you can transport yourself all over the world," Johanns said.

UNL project enlightens children

By AMANDA SCHINDLER
Staff Reporter

Architecture Hall cast a shadow on a new building, constructed from refrigerator boxes and covered in tempera, Friday at UNL. It stood out not for its architecture, but because it was made by 10-year-olds.

The project, known as the "Squatters' Village," was one of many activities sponsored by the College of Fine and Performing Arts and the College of Architecture in their annual "A" Festival.

Students and faculty from the colleges collaborate to sponsor the event, which offers various workshops for both elementary and high school students from Nebraska. "A" Festival, now in its third year, emphasizes the six art disciplines of theater, dance, music, visual art, interior design and architecture.

Friday morning, the young students

split into small groups and went to hourlong sessions in subjects including ballet, architecture, ceramics, sculpture, printmaking and computer graphic design.

Dan Kmiecck, a senior high school student from Fort Calhoun, enjoyed a workshop on improvisational acting.

"You never know what's going to happen," he said. "The second you're put in a situation, you have to go with it."

Creativity was also encouraged, as shown in elementary students' chalk drawings on the sidewalks near Architecture Hall and Kimball Recital Hall. Filled with bright blues, greens, yellows, pinks and oranges, the designs depicted everything from elaborate houses to modern-day malls and an orange tractor with green windows.

Elementary school students got an additional treat when artist-in-residence Jeff Raz told stories. Raz, who comes to University of Nebraska-Lincoln twice a year through the residency program, helped at last year's festival.

"A" Festival first originated with the alumni groups of the two colleges, but is organized by the UNL student volunteers. They work mostly with the younger age groups, and high school sessions are led by faculty members themselves.

"It's two-sided," said Jay Palu, a senior architecture major. "On one hand, young students learn about the arts from art professionals. On the other hand, you have (college) students from all fields taking a break, and taking a mentoring role."

One high school participant, Keri Haney, said, "Students who are going to college can get a good look at the hands-on activities."

More than 400 elementary school students came this year, and 450 high school students. Nearly 250 students were turned away due to a lack of facilities, "A" Festival coordinator Ron Bowlin said. More than 40 schools were represented.

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