

# 2400 students attend fourth annual Thespian festival

■ High school gathering boasts largest attendance of any University of Nebraska-Lincoln summer conference.

By SEAN MCCARTHY  
Staff Reporter

Students used to performing in the humble confines of high school auditoriums will have to adjust to the packed audiences who will view their shows at the Lied Center for Performing Arts.

A change of scenery will be in store for students from across the nation this week, as they come to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln for a nationwide thespian festival.

Aspiring actors, dancers and singers will have an entire week to shag their skills for auditions, workshops and scholarship offers. The festival draws about 2,400 students from 288 schools across the nation, as well as Canada and New Zealand. This will be the fourth year the festival has been held at UNL.

From June 23-27, students will get a chance to learn everything from singing in Broadway musicals to street performing. They will also get a chance to sample dorm living, attend workshops in classrooms and perform at the Howell Theater,

Kimball Recital Hall and the Lied Center.

Michael Hager, assistant director of housing for administration, said the festival was the largest conference UNL will host this summer.

"It also is the one with the fewest problems," he said. "It's a very well-organized and supervised group."

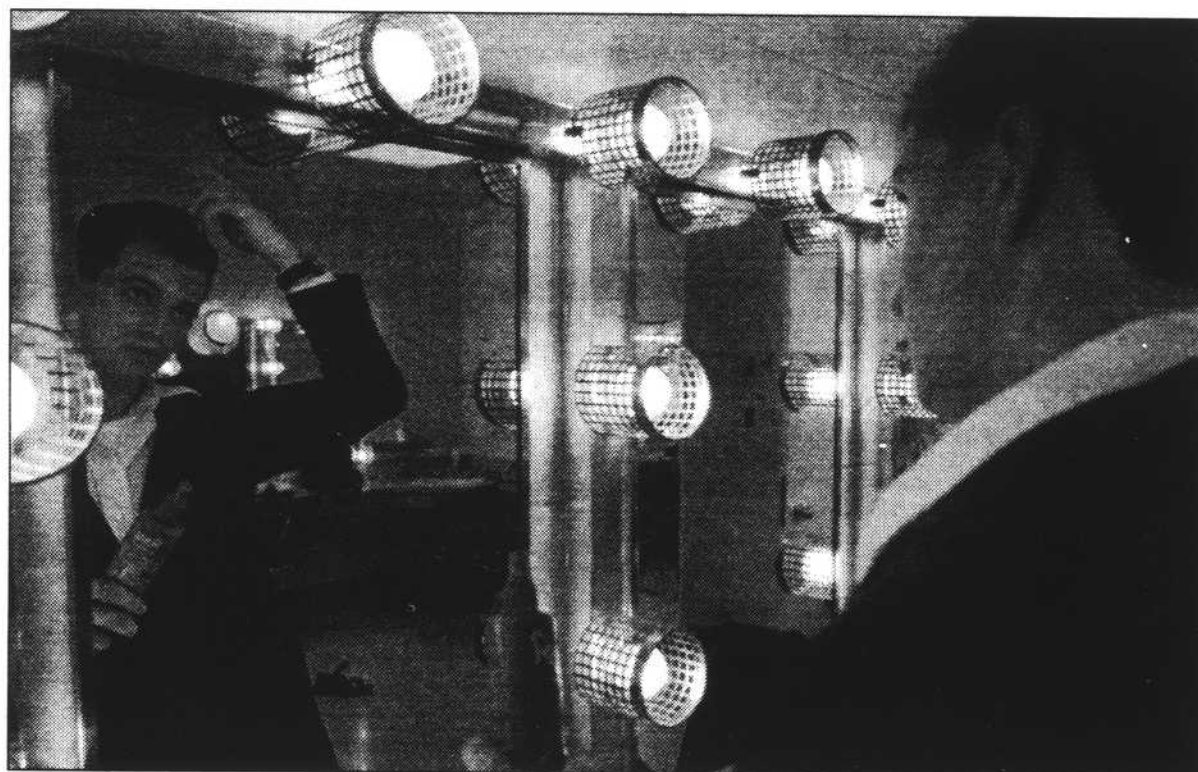
During their stay, students will fill Harper-Schramm-Smith, Cather, Pound, Neidhardt, Abel and Sandoz residence halls. Hager said some families will be staying in hotels while their sons and daughters are at the festival. Along with the families, musicians from out of the state will also be taking up lodging.

"It's a good economic impact for the city," Hager said.

Bob Vaughn, director of operations at the Lied Center, said preparing for the festival has become easier each year. That doesn't mean the challenge of accommodating a packed house for five consecutive nights isn't there, he said.

"We need to be prepared for any situation that might occur," Vaughn said. "The Educational Theater Association has the system down to a 'T' when it comes to emergencies."

Vaughn said the Lied production staff would be on hand to see if the stage designs for all of the plays and musicals would comply with the safety regulations. His biggest challenge, however, would be accommodating and organizing the staffing schedules to comply with the heavy rotation of



SCOTT MCCLURG/DN

**THESPIAN ADAM KRAFT** prepares for the Aurora Colorado, Eagle Crest High School's production of "CHESS," Wednesday evening at the Lied Center for Performing Arts. Kraft, joins over 2,400 other high school students from 39 states and 3 countries in the 1998 Thespian Festival.

shows the Lied Center will get for the next few days. The task is not without rewards, Vaughn said.

"Seeing students really deriving the joy from this art makes the drudgery worthwhile," Vaughn said. "This is the payoff."

## On the cover

**JAMES BUTLER**, a dealer for Harvey's Casino & Hotel in Council Bluffs, Iowa deals a hand for Lloyd Hoban of Mifflinburg, Pa., and other customers of Harvey's.

Photo by Mike Warren

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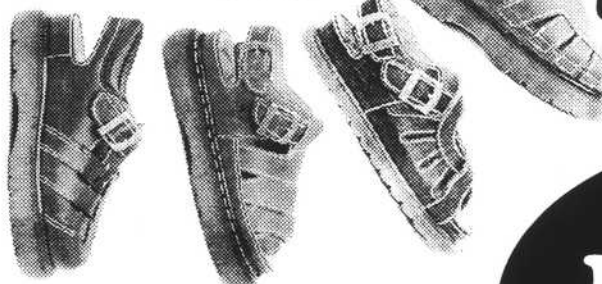
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