

A&E Opinion



Bret Schulte

Look for news coverage in A&E pages

A&E news. Sound a bit awkward? A little pretentious, perhaps? Downright boring? Well, that depends on what we do with it. The A&E section, although it does a fine job filling in the dead space between Sports and Classifieds, has the potential to serve an even grander vocation.

And that is to help you keep continually abreast of Lincoln's burgeoning entertainment scene; to inform you of new and better bands, upcoming Lied events, theater performances and all the rest. In short, to help you to have a better weekend — maybe even a better semester.

Instead of cramming into The Brass Rail for "Plastic Cup Beer Night and Abercrombie & Fitch Festival" spend an extra \$3 or so to see a show at Knickerbockers down the street. Check out a Lincoln rockabilly band, a hippie group from Colorado or even "an eclectic emo ensemble" (they're from everywhere). And drink your beer from a glass for no extra charge.

Although Lincoln still suffers from the unexpected loss last fall of the community's only true alternative theater, The Futz, The Lincoln Community Playhouse seems to be picking up on the quirkier stage offerings.

Along with mainstream megahits like "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" and "Tommy," it will be sponsoring riskier productions that you wouldn't expect to see in a building adjacent to a public library. "Bunnacula," "Shadowlands" and "Musical Comedy Murders of 1940" are among a few of the Playhouses' '98 - '99 lineup.

Lincoln also houses more than a dozen galleries and museums, which frequently sponsor national touring exhibits along with providing a permanent residence for local artists.

There is a lot to talk about, and it's our job to help lead the discussion. Not only will we report the when and where, but the how and why as well. This semester we are conducting a concerted effort to present a sharper and deeper picture of arts and entertainment events.

Our interviews will be more pointed and specific, stories will be better written and color photos (once nearly the sole property of sports) may greet you in A&E now and then.

An important part of this whole process is you; we are not only a college paper but a student paper. If there is something new happening: Tone Loc playing your frat party, or your best friend has created a new line of T-shirts sporting witty slogans — we'll cover it.

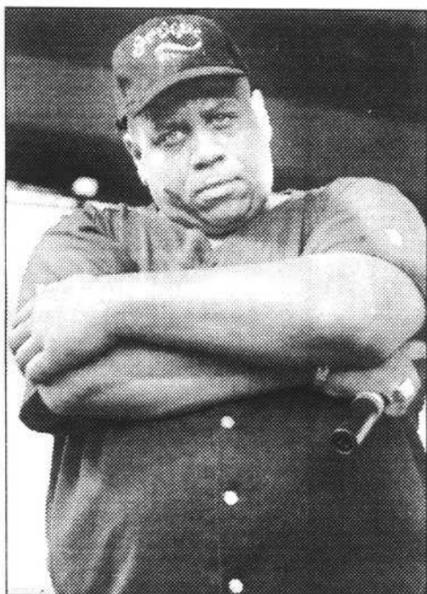
Although A&E sits in the back of the bus at the newspaper, we are an equal opportunity section and are here to make your ride a lot more fun.

Bret Schulte is a senior English major and the Daily Nebraskan Arts & Entertainment editor.



SCOTT McCLURG/DN
MICHAEL "WONDER MIKE" WRIGHT, who rapped on the first verse of what many consider to be the first important rap record, "Rapper's Delight," performs in front of a throng of UNL students Sunday night.

Over the (Sugar) Hill



SCOTT McCLURG/DN
HENRY "BIG BANK HANK" JACKSON, whose catch phrase "Woo-ha, got y' all in check" later became the basis for Busta Rhymes' best-selling rap single, performed with the Sugarhill Gang Sunday night at the Big Red Welcome.

Rap forefathers give tired performance

BY JEFF RANDALL
Staff writer

Sunday evening, a throng of UNL students was faced with its first true question of the 1998-99 school year: "Are you ready for the Sugarhill Gang?"

Apparently, hours of study weren't required for the answer, which was a resounding yes.

For the second year in a row, the University Program Council has welcomed University of Nebraska-Lincoln students back to campus with a dose of old-school hip-hop. And the Sugarhill Gang is exactly that, one of the first hip-hop groups to ever record.

And in theory, having such a group perform at the Big Red Welcome was a gift that could have rivaled even last year's Run DMC show.

But in practice, the Sugarhill Gang and Grandmaster Melle Mel didn't bring the same intensity, enthusiasm or skill as the Kings of Rock. And although the result was by no means dull or uneventful, it was a letdown.

The show began with the individual members of the Sugarhill Gang — Michael "Wonder Mike" Wright, Joey "Master Gee" Robinson Jr. and Henry "Big Bank Hank" Jackson taking the stage one after the other, encouraging the crowd to get into a frenzy early in the performance.

They tried to aid their efforts with a continuous stream of their lesser-known singles, including "Kick it Live from 9 to 5," "Livin' in the Fast Lane" and "Apache." But because of the crowd's lack of old-school knowledge — or

perhaps the intense heat — "frenzy" became a doubtful state of mind.

The crowd livened substantially with the introduction of Melle Mel, who offered up a mix of his own better-known tracks. "The Message" and "White Lines (Don't Do It)" resulted in a brief burst of energy from the entire audience, but upon hearing the actual album versions of those songs playing loudly in the background, they didn't hold up for long.

That trend continued through the rest of the show, with the Sugarhill Gang and Melle Mel shouting and working the crowd over the dubious sounds of their past recordings. At times, the show clicked. Other times, it became almost painful to watch.

The show closed with a full-scale onstage dance party during the inevitable "Rapper's Delight." But even on this most familiar of tracks, one with which most of the crowd could sing along word-for-word, the old album track could be heard on the system.

And when the show finally ended, the crowd left with what seemed to be little enthusiasm. The Sugarhill Gang and Grandmaster Melle Mel had completed their first Nebraska appearance, perhaps about 19 years too late to be either vital or emotionally charged. And although the second old-school welcome back show was something to be admired in principle, it didn't live up to expectations.

Maybe Run DMC spoiled UNL, but the main flaw of Sunday's concert was that most of the time, the "old" seemed to dominate the proceedings more than the "school."

Well, we'll always have "Walk This Way."