

## The Weekend in Preview

The following list is a brief guide to weekend events. Please call venues for more information.

### CONCERTS:

**Duggan's Pub, 440 S. 11th St.**  
Friday and Saturday: Radio King

**Guitars & Cadillacs, 5400 O St.**  
Friday: Sandy Creek  
Saturday: Step Child

**Knickerbockers, 901 O St.**  
Friday: Almost None, Lowercase i  
Saturday: The Mediums, Blacklight Sunshine, Rich Schultz  
Sunday: The John Entwistle Band

**Lied Center for Performing Arts, 301 N. 12th St.**  
Saturday: Klezmer Conservatory Band  
Sunday: Victor Borge

**Royal Grove Nite Club, 340 W. Cornhusker Highway**  
Friday: Version 3  
Saturday: Self-Righteous Brothers

**Zoo Bar, 136 N. 14th St.**  
Friday afternoon: Blues Mechanics  
Friday evening: The Paladins  
Saturday: Mark Hummel, the Blues Survivors

### THEATER:

**Lincoln Community Playhouse, 2500 S. 56th St.**  
Friday, Saturday and Sunday: "Big River"

**Mary Riepma Ross Film Theater, 12th & R streets**  
Friday, Saturday and Sunday: "Smoke Signals"

**UNL Department of Theatre Arts, Temple Building, 12th and R streets**  
Friday and Saturday: "Waiting for Godot"

**Wagon Train Project, 512 S. Seventh St.**  
Friday: Heidi Arneson  
Sunday: Nena St. Louis

### GALLERIES:

**Joslyn Art Museum, 2200 Dodge St., Omaha**  
Saturday: opening of "Arts of Asia"

# The Ghost in The Machine

## Haunted houses going high-tech

BY JASON HARDY  
Senior staff writer



They've come a long way from the days of mummies in high tops, cotton cobwebs and somebody's unemployed uncle wearing a spooky sheet. They're haunted houses, and nowadays they've become big business.

Thanks to top-of-the-line special effects technology, a new commitment to believability and lots of Pepsi sponsorships, haunted houses are now high-tech monuments to human carnage and macabre bliss.

Don C. Losole owns Design Effects, a nationally known manufacturer of haunted-house props, which is a major contributor to the fear technology that is taking haunted houses screaming into the future.

"It's definitely more realistic," Losole said of his newly remodeled, three story, 2,500-square-foot Fright Zone, 1711 California Drive, in Omaha. "We can get pretty close to what it looks like in the movies."

Things like mechanical monsters, voice synthesizers and even souped-up sound systems have become commonplace in the last four years and are no longer unique to Hollywood horror films.

"It's not just two little speakers and a boom box anymore," said Losole, attesting to the realistic sounds created by his house's Sony Minidisk system.

Jason Egan, a University of Nebraska-Lincoln junior and co-owner of Lincoln's newest haunted house, The Tomb of Darkness, 126 N. 16th St., said he, too, enlisted high-tech spook props to make his house more scary.

"I've got a flying corpse that shoots 8 feet over the crowd, a volcano tunnel, and I hire all drama students," Egan said. "It's not one of your black-wall haunted houses."

With the technological leaps and bounds comes a price, however, and Losole, who has been in the business for about five years, said it's easy to wrap up a small fortune in a single haunted house.

"Nowadays you can't build one for \$10,000 or \$15,000," Losole said. "Some of our props

cost \$15,000 and the Fright Zone itself costs \$500,000. We're also sponsored by Pepsi, who helped us get sponsored by Taco Bell and Baker's Supermarkets.

"We also honor the Baker's value card." Tom Godard, president of Haunted Mansion Inc., a haunted-house and prop manufacturer out of Kissimmee, Fla., can attest to the industry's escalation toward big-business costs and strategies.

"It progressed slowly at first and then by leaps and bounds in the last few years," Godard said.

To update his Haunted Mansion to the '90s standards, the 13-year spook veteran spent more than \$7 million on animatronics, latex props, genuine antique accessories, real snakes, spiders and chain saws — oh my!

"To make a successful haunted house is expensive beyond most people's budget," Godard said. "But it makes available a much wider range of attractions."

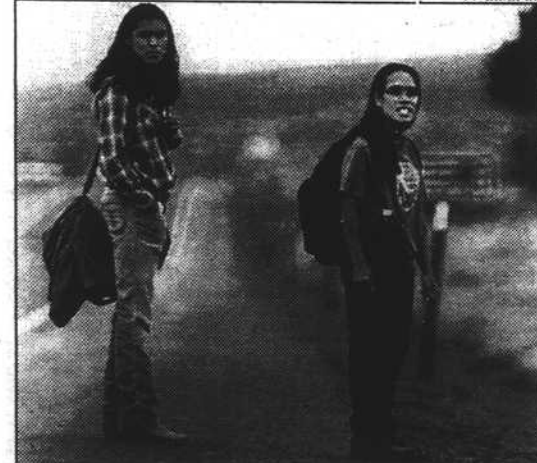
Despite the millions of dollars poured into haunted houses each year, Godard and Losole claim the old-fashioned basics have to take priority over the technology for a haunted house to be successful.

"No matter how many animatronics, no matter the sound quality and no matter the money, it's still the people that make haunted houses work," Losole said. "You could have a gorgeous set, but if you don't have the right people, it just won't work. People are still the backbone of the haunted-house industry."

Godard agrees. "There is no computer fast enough to analyze how a person is acting or approaches a scene. They can't make those quick decisions and act appropriately," Godard said. "If an actor sees many people is looking away, they know it's time to jump them."

But does all this ensure a higher level of fear? "I think it's a lot scarier," Losole said. "Every year our attendance increases, and so far this is the best we've ever had."

"I've had adults come out crying and people scared out of their minds. You know those big macho football players that walk in all tough? That's the best. We destroy those guys."



COURTESY PHOTO

The first feature film to be completely directed and produced by an all American-Indian team, "Smoke Signals" explores the stereotypes and hurdles of the American-Indian community.

## Film adaptation does book justice

BY SARAH BAKER  
Senior staff writer

More often than not, movies based on books tend to go awry from the original text and lead viewers to think they should have spent their six bucks at the bookstore instead of the theater.

But "Smoke Signals," based on the stories from Sherman Alexie's book "The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven," breaks the long-standing pattern of sub-par film adaptations.

The film is the first full-length, feature film written, directed and co-produced solely by American Indians.

It tells the story of Victor Joseph, who travels, along with his childhood companion Thomas Builds-the-Fire, from his home on an Idaho Indian reservation to Arizona to recover the

### Movie Review

remains of Victor's unexpectedly deceased father.

The two companions were saved by Victor's father, Arnold Joseph, as children from a blazing fire that encompassed Victor's childhood home and killed Thomas' parents.

Thomas and Victor are linked from the start after both being rescued from the fire. But as they grow older, the two become complete opposites.

Victor is the popular, handsome one who buys into the idea of being an American-Indian "warrior" and approaches life with an attitude that everyone is out to get him, while Thomas is an oddball with an obscure talent for storytelling and a pair of geeky braids.

Once the two leave on the trip after Arnold's

### The Facts

Title: "Smoke Signals"  
Stars: Adam Beach, Evan Adams, Irene Bedard  
Director: Chris Eyre  
Rating: PG-13  
Grade: B  
Five Words: Adapted book makes great movie

death, the story becomes one full of emotional turmoil, for both the viewer and characters.

The story relies on a mix of flashbacks and present day scenes, making for smooth and often

Please see SMOKE on 10