

## Art League shows off students' creations in Union

ART from page 17

trayal of subtle catharsis.

A part-time student, Griffing said artists need a highly visible venue to improve their skills.

"I've wanted to be an artist since probably the second grade," he said. "I think of this as potentially a small step towards becoming a professional artist."

The works that will be presented

were selected by a two-person jury.

Amy Martin, another featured painter for the display, commented on the subjectivity that goes with being included in a juried show.

"It's a toss-up," Martin said. "It all depends on the tastes and styles of the jurors."

The Art League is a student organization that has gone in and out of existence for the last few years, Merritt said.

"Surprisingly, money hasn't ever

been a problem," he said. "For some reason the organization has had trouble consistently being active."

Merritt said finding a good place to showcase work has been a major obstacle in creating interest for the Art League.

"It's pretty hard to find a place for students to show their work," he said.

The Rotunda Gallery could be just the place for art students to find an audience at UNL for years to come.



COURTESY PHOTO  
JOHN TRAVOLTA stars as Jan Schlichtmann, a tenacious personal-injury attorney whose determination and ego entangles him in a case that threatens to ruin his successful career.

## 'A Civil Action' leaves audience wondering

BY SAM MCKEWN  
Senior editor

### The Facts

Title: "A Civil Action"  
Stars: John Travolta, Robert Duvall, William H. Macy  
Director: Steve Zaillian  
Rating: PG-13 (adult language)  
Grade: C  
Five Words: "Civil Action" is a little boring

Give "A Civil Action" this much: It's a bigger dose of reality than most cracker-jack, John Grisham-like courtroom dramas.

For one thing, the good guys, led by lawyer Jan Schlichtmann (John Travolta) don't win. And much of the film's drama doesn't take place in the courtroom.

And for all its philosophical posturing about the legal system — that emotional investment equals courtroom defeat — it's all director Steve Zaillian ("Searching for Bobby Fischer") has going for him. Any emotional impact is dulled by its inconsistencies.

The case is certainly a potential tear-jerker. Based on Jonathan Harr's best-selling book, the movie tells the true story of eight families who saw their children die of leukemia in Woburn, Mass., possibly because of contaminated water from a nearby factory.

Unbeknownst to him, one of Schlichtmann's partners in a small law firm (Tony Shalhoub) takes on the case for the affected families. The firm, which asks for no money up front from plaintiffs, can only take on suits that promise big payoffs.

The families of Woburn turn out to be such a case. The factory is owned by two national food companies, Beatrice Foods and W.R. Grace & Co., and Schlichtmann hopes to sue and receive

the payoff of a lifetime.

After this setup, the film goes murky in its details. Little is told about the actual case or the legal defense, led by Beatrice Foods' lawyer Jerome Facher (Robert Duvall), a quirky Harvard professor who loves the Red Sox and outfoxing his opponents. We're just supposed to know that he's a better lawyer than Travolta's character.

We're also supposed to watch Travolta transform from a slick, fast-dealing ambulance chaser to a man that starts to feel for the families, and basically, in paying his own money to win the case, lose everything his firm owns.

Look hard or you might miss it. Travolta makes no speeches about his emotions. A couple of looks is all we get. We know he's spending money and so are his partners, but do they raise a shout when they each mortgage their houses? Nope, except for the firm accountant (William H. Macy) whose role in the film is more comic than sad.

Best case: When Duvall's character drops the legal bomb of the film, saying Schlichtmann hasn't proven the chemicals contaminated the water, we have little choice but to believe him. We don't know what exact connection Beatrice Foods or W.R. Grace & Co. had with these factories, nor are we ever told. So, with much of the facts of the case taken out, we're clueless as to the truth.

This may have been the whole point. Little of the film is devoted to the truth or the case. Rather we watch as Schlichtmann loses all his money, his friends and his livelihood. It's a little powerful, but not very engaging.

There are good scenes in the film, most involving Duvall, who gets better with age. The best involves the main courtroom scene, intercut with a lesson in Facher's class. We know why he's a good lawyer and why his side will win.

That Schlichtmann will lose becomes clear early in the film. But at the end the film reverses itself a little, as Schlichtmann begins to realize what really happened in Woburn. It's news to the audience, and the revelation of how the water got polluted derives from about a 10-second scene.

In the end, there are simply too many questions left for the viewer. The case takes eight years, but it feels more like two weeks. The film is fractured, as are the audience's emotions afterward.

"A Civil Action" is real. And it makes its point. But the limited extent to which many viewers will care about that point leaves the movie a disappointing biography rather than a powerful tragedy.

## Earn NU credit with courses that fit your schedule



### College Independent Study

Accounting	Industrial Systems
Agricultural Economics	Journalism
AG LEC	Management
Art History	Marketing
Biological Sciences	Mathematics
Broadcasting	Nursing
Classics	Nutrition
Economics	Philosophy
English	Physics
Family Sciences	Political Science
Finance	Psychology
Geography	Real Estate
Health	Sociology
History	Technical Writing



### Evening and Saturday Program classes.

Courses are available to complete these degrees:

#### Undergraduate

Business Administration (BS)	Management (BS)
Communication Studies (BA)	Marketing (BS)
Economics (BA, BS)	Political Science (BA)
Finance (BS)	Psychology (BA)
Integrated Studies (BA, BS)	Sociology (BA)
	Minor in International Affairs

#### Graduate

Business Administration (MBA)  
Community and Regional Planning (MCRP)  
Marketing, Communication Studies and Advertising (MA)



## Keep your options open

### College Independent Study

Enroll at any time. Study at your own pace. Take tests when you are prepared to do your best.

### Evening and Saturday Program Classes

Evening classes begin Jan. 11.  
Late registration runs through Jan. 19.

## Nebraska

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA - LINCOLN  
Division of Continuing Studies  
Department of Distance Education  
Department of Part-Time Student Services and Professional Programs

© 1999, University of Nebraska, Board of Regents.  
The University of Nebraska is an affirmative action/equal opportunity institution.

### For free course catalogs or for registration information:

1. Call 472-2175.
2. Visit our web sites:  
[www.unl.edu/conted/disted/](http://www.unl.edu/conted/disted/) or  
[www.unl.edu/conted/parttimeprog/](http://www.unl.edu/conted/parttimeprog/)
3. Visit our offices at the Clifford Hardin Nebraska Center for Continuing Education, 33rd and Holdrege Streets.

# BUSCH GARDENS AUDITIONS

LET YOUR TALENT SHINE IN TAMPA BAY

**Saturday**  
**January 30, 1999**  
**9:00 am - 12:00 pm**  
Dance auditions 10:30 am  
Mabel Lee Hall  
University of Nebraska

- One year contracts
- Excellent benefits including: medical dental & vision
- Company paid holidays
- Time off with pay

**Video Taped Auditions:**  
If you're unable to attend the audition, please send your resume and a recent photo along with a video tape (which will not be returned).

For information and helpful audition tips call:  
**(813) 987-5164**  
Or write to:  
Busch Gardens Auditions-  
Entertainment Department  
P.O. Box 9158  
Tampa, Florida 33674-9158  
Anheuser-Busch Theme Parks are  
Equal Opportunity Employers M/F/D/V.

**BUSCH GARDENS**  
TAMPA BAY, FLORIDA

VISIT OUR WEB SITE:

[www.tampatalent.com](http://www.tampatalent.com)