

## F Street Recreation Center to rebuild for the future

*More space, services expected from new facility*

BY DIANE BRODERICK  
Staff writer

A 4.5 million renovation and expansion project aims to transform the F Street Recreation Center into something more all-encompassing — a community center. The center, 1225 F St., will undergo a \$3.5 million renovation project that would make it capable of handling more people of different age groups and offering more services.

Another million will be put toward property acquisition, so the center will be able to expand its size.

In its history, the Rec Center already has gone through several major transformations.

It started as a fire station, which was then retooled to serve as a senior center. In the late '70s, it expanded to include another major segment of the population — children — and assumed the title it still holds today: The F Street Rec Center.

"We are probably the most culturally, generationally, financially diverse center in the city," Karla Decker, the center's director said.

Morning programs for seniors and afternoon activities for children are the center's two main services.

Inside the center, pink walls surround two pool tables, long tables on wheels, a foosball table and several folding chairs.

Its walls are adorned with chalkboards, signs announcing such upcoming events as the Senior's Valentine Potluck, and photo collages bringing to memory past occurrences, such as Faces of Kwanzaa '98.

Regular programs for seniors include a weekly choir group that visits various nursing homes and a

walking group that meets twice a week. It also provides seniors a dose of healthy competition.

"They shoot pool, and they play cards — and some of them can do it seven days a week," Decker said.

Children's activities include touch football, pool, basketball, a yo-yo club and tutoring.

Various special cultural holidays also are celebrated, including Kwanzaa and the Lunar New Year, the largest celebration of Asian culture, she said.

One of the center's more ambitious programs is its PLAY camp — Positive Learning Activities for Youth — which takes place in the summer.

It originally was offered five years ago exclusively to children with behavioral problems, Decker said.

"Those children especially need structure, or else they'll just lose everything," she said.

But its scope was widened, and now is open to children in kindergarten through sixth grade who live or go to school in census districts specific to the area.

In the past, the summer camp has been located in Lincoln exclusively, but for next summer a new approach has been planned.

A University of Nebraska-Lincoln staff member at the center had worked with children in Scottsbluff, which Decker says has a 50 percent Hispanic population. Camp planners were dis-

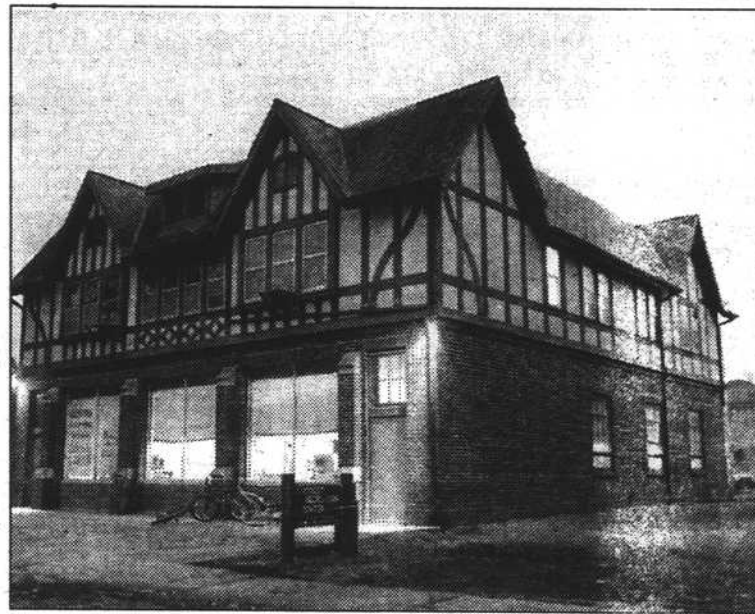
cussing the cultural differences between the two groups of children, and it sparked an idea.

"We said, 'We ought to pop our kids on a bus and take them to Scottsbluff this summer,'" Decker said, "and a lot of people found the idea intriguing."

A series of trips to western Nebraska are planned for the camp. The children will learn about a specific subject each week, then visit places that will give their learning a context.

**"We are probably the most culturally, generationally and financially diverse center in the city."**

KARLA DECKER  
F Street Rec Center director



HEATHER GLENBOSKI/DN  
THE CURRENT F STREET Recreation Center, located at 1225 F St., will undergo construction and a major expansion this fall.

and Recreation Department.

It will become a community center — its name not yet determined — within about two years, with involvement in four neighborhoods all within about two miles of the center, he said.

The existing center will mainly be built around and touched up because of its solid structure, Johnson said. But surrounding buildings will be demolished or partially demolished, and Johnson said that in its place will stand a new center, almost eight times larger than the current facility.

A gym, a game room, an aerobics room, indoor and outdoor tracks, offices and meeting rooms are just a few of the new services that the center will be able to offer, once completed.

The project arose out of a desire to make that area of Lincoln a more appealing place to live, Johnson said. "If you look at the demographics of that area, it's the lowest income-per-capita area of the city."

The level of living is lower in this area of town because of a widely distributed mixture of college students and low-income families, Johnson said.

Decker echoed Johnson's observations. Right now, she said, there are vast populations not being served very well, including the unemployed, a large immigrant population and people with disabilities.

And the renovations will help the center reach more people more of the time, Johnson said. No longer will the day have to be divided between age groups.

A greater breadth of social services will be offered, which could include job training, public health checks and teaching English as a second language, Johnson said.

"This is the end of almost seven years of planning," Johnson said of the project, funded through a program that returns state tax dollars to the city.

But when construction begins this fall, the center will have to relocate — temporarily.

"We will have to move to another location — we're not sure where it is," Decker said. "But we will stay in the neighborhood."



ART COURTESY OF LINCOLN PARKS AND REC  
An artist's rendition of the remodeled F Street Recreation Center

## Monkey Boy searches for the fruits of roots-rock labor

BY CHRISTOPHER HEINE  
Staff writer

Television and movie producers of the 1970s discovered the monkey was an easy tool to help post-Nixon America laugh again.

"Ha-ha-ha. They look just like humans!" the country chirped.

The phenomenon seemed innocent enough at the time. But what happened to our youth in "Star Wars" pajamas giggling at every ape or chimpanzee strutting across the screen?

The adorable primates of "BJ and the Bear," "Every Which Way But Loose" and "Beneath the Planet of the Apes" left indelible marks on a young Generation X long before they discussed evolution over bottles of Rolling Rock and pot brownies.

The band Monkey Boy might just be the primate pathway needed to appropriately assess the lasting effects these playful apes had so many years ago.

The group, with its roots-rock

### Concert Preview

#### The Facts

**What:** Monkey Boy

**Where:** Knickerbockers, 901 O St.

**When:** Friday

**Cost:** \$4

**The Skinny:** Missouri band wants to give you the business — monkey business

sounds, will appear at Knickerbockers, 901 O St., Friday night. Some Lincolniters may recognize Monkey Boy's singer, Jimi Hathaway, from his former band, Keely Zoo.

The monkey business continues. In the case of this Warrensburg, Mo., group, it has seemed to cause a unique form of devotion.

Monkey Boy's debut CD, "H2O," seems to highlight the band's discovery of water, and more importantly, women. The album encompasses exam-

ples of male-chases-female in an almost cave-man sense.

Hathaway croons about his lusting with a voice that sounds like "Weird Al" Yankovich. And similarly, this man wreaks savage, unintellectual havoc.

The opening track, "Paranoid Schizo," crudely vocalizes his timeless yearning. "Whenever I say goodbye, I just want to kiss you," he sings. "Whenever I say goodnight I just want to do you. You lying there doing what you always do to me. Lying there ... tits in the air ... I just want to screw you."

Guitarist Chris Meck said this set of lyrics demonstrates that Hathaway is a "very multidimensional writer."

"He's one of those writers who can really put a twist on words," Meck said. "He has this childlike innocence in one phrase. And in the next line he's real sarcastic and witty."

Members of Monkey Boy are based out of an old sharecropper's lot near Warrensburg called The Freedom Farm. The band's lyrics suggest women, when at the farm, don't feel the need to cover

their breasts. One envisions this acreage to be a free-wheeling, throwback society based on the prelapsarian garden of Eden.

"We party a lot there after the bars close," Meck said.

The alcohol and the ladies evidently are driving the males just plain horny crazy.

However, beer and the female form of our species is not the only thing the Monkey Boys tend to be deeply affected by. They also seem to like ducks quite a bit.

On their album's sixth track, "The Pond," Hathaway pins down the fun to be had with these feathery friends.

"Let's go down to the pond and mess with the ducks," Hathaway poeticizes. "Let's go down to the pond ... I want to get messed up."

Three tracks later, "It's All About Ducks," digs deeper into this theme.

Hathaway appears to believe that these ducks are born leaders.

"Wherever you go, I'm sure to follow," he sings. "If you ever fly ... I'm

right behind you."

Meck said the songs are indeed inspired by real, live ducks.

"It's a real pastime in Warrensburg for slacker-types to go down to Lion's Lake and get high," he said. "Water is a theme throughout the album, and I think Jimi uses the ducks as a metaphor."

Monkey Boy's performance at Knickerbocker's this weekend will mark the band's first appearance in Lincoln.

Meck said the band "wants to be as entertaining as possible."

If nothing else, Monkey Boy will serve as a barometer for the effects of the '70s chimp-entertainment explosion.

Unfortunately, it sounds like the era of surreal interaction between animals and humans may have taken its toll on Hathaway.

The homeless singer likes to wander from place to place much like a duck or mating monkey.

"Jimi's one of those people who doesn't have a home," Meck said.