

a redesigned life

Story by Brian Christopherson

Editor's note: In this weekly series, we examine the exceptional work and accomplishments of individual students in art, dance, music, acting and design.

Art major deals with troubled past, excels in graphic-design field

Several years before he became a Christian, before he was married to Julie, before he witnessed the birth of his daughter, Breanna, before he attended UNL as a successful designer in the art program, he could have been a poster child for what was going wrong with the world.

He was the young man you wouldn't want to sit next to on the bus. He was one of those boys who ran with the gangs and wreaked havoc on your town. His town was Schuyler, but it could just as easily have been another.

"When you're running with the wrong crowd, you begin to believe in it," he said.

He was busted several years ago as an accessory in an assault case and off he went to jail.

He didn't have much to do but think in the darkness of jail. He had nothing in jail. He didn't have Julie yet, daughter Breanna or an education.

But he did have his thoughts, and in his brief three-month term in jail, he began to undergo a "spiritual awakening."

He became a believer in Christ and took a U-turn from his previous lifestyle. The five years after jail would be a blur.

"My whole life changed then," he said.

It started when his mother took a job at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and with his older brother already at the university, he decided it was best to leave Schuyler for Lincoln and opportunity.

Suddenly, the young man you once would have wanted no part of became the friendly guy who sits next to you in English class.

Maybe, in fact he is. His name is David Jané.

His friends are no longer gang members.

"I became heavily involved in a church group and began hanging with them," the senior art major said.

Jané now takes school seriously after coming to UNL as only a part-time student.

He decided he would pursue an education in art. It was something he'd always liked but never went after until he arrived in college.

"Once I ended up in the university, I heard about graphic design, started reading about it and became more and more interested," Jané said.

Jané found out that graphic design had a broad definition. "It's anything that you are going to see," he said. "It could be the logo on an automobile to Web designs. It's limitless."

He studied graphic design diligently and became tops in the class.

Things also began to go his way outside of school. Someone special walked into his life. He met a girl, Julie, at a church function, and they instantly discovered that they were "soul mates." They later married.

Even in his career goals, doors were being opened. As he worked community service hours for probation for his past wrongs, Jané met a man who would help him gain graphic-design experience.

One of his probation supervisors happened to be Rob Moore, president of Summa Corporation, a graphic-design company.

Before long, Moore offered this once troubled



Scott McClurg/DH

young man an internship.

Moore said he saw Jané grow in his designing knowledge while working for Summa Corporation but said his ability to be successful individually was impressive.

"I think he's got a lot of confidence as an artist," Moore said. "He has a lot more of his own vision. There are many different ways he can be versatile."

Moore wouldn't be surprised to see Jané succeed with his own business after he graduates, he said.

"He has the temperament to be his own boss," Moore said.

"He has that leadership bone to be creative. He's always starting and doing his own thing."

His leadership is evident by the fact that Jané already has a couple of free-lance clients of his own.

Figuring out his future after college may have been sped up with the addition of 6-month-old Breanna to the family.

"A child makes you grow up zero to 60 like that," Jané said. "I am always looking for jobs and laying roots for after school."

According to Ron Bartels, associate professor in the art department, Jané's talent makes him a solid bet to succeed, whether Jané works on his own or within a company.

Bartels said Jané was "an excellent designer—probably the best student designer for sequential/motion and Web site graphics."

Jané won't take too much credit. You wouldn't expect him to.

"I'm honored," Jané said of Bartels' comments.

"But I have to give God the credit. He's a good designer himself."

David Jané, a senior art major, uses computers to create graphics. Jané ties in his use of computer graphics to create designs for Web pages and other illustrations.



An example of Jané's Web site design skill.

Slow pace dooms 'Cheerleader'

BY SAMUEL MCKEWN

"But I'm A Cheerleader" is an odd, disconcerting experience—not the kind of movie you dislike; rather, you feel like you're missing its essential ingredients.

Here is a movie that is a satire on gay deprogramming camps that often doesn't seem so, accented by a visual approach straight out of a 1970s B-movie that doesn't do a whole lot more than make you wonder why a satire on gay camps is populated by burnout party wagons.

The director, newcomer Jamie Babbit, obviously intended the look, with the strange pinks and blues contrasting with a landscape of blotchy earth tones meant for long past Thanksgiving dinner. But like many of the movie's scenes, it fails to underscore its significance, much as the lullaby-type little girl soundtrack lacks the diversity to go beyond gimmick.

The opening scenes are the strongest, as super-pop cheerleader Megan (Natasha Lyonne, looking as WASP as she ever will) engages in tongue duels with her boyfriend (he's winning) while fantasizing about the bobbing breasts of her cheerleaders.

Megan thinks this is normal. But her family and friends know she's lesbian and stage an intervention to flip her back by carting her off to the woods to True Directions, an ominous beast of a home/castle designed to rewrite the sexual programming.

Predictably, the place is as absurd as its

matron Mary (Cathy Moriarty); the house is bathed in blue for boys, pink for girls, and the five-step plan includes indoctrinating the males to football, while Megan and her mates hand vacuum pink rugs. "But I'm A Cheerleader" slows down several times for group discussions, a pit stop between satirical set pieces.

The gag here is that none of the patients, if you will, have any intention or promise of improving. The message in the gag is that they can't and they shouldn't. One of the camp counselors (RuPaul Charles out of drag) teeters on temptation every time he sees Mary's son gyrating to disco music while weed whacking. That story is intertwined with a seriously-treated relationship between Megan the priss and another camper, the rebel Graham (Clea DuVall), who openly flaunts her sexuality, but feels the most heat from her parents to change. Her character is fleshed out the best—a surface deviant who eventually lacks Megan's inner strength, then must choose between the girl or the gold of her parent's wallet.

A lot of their scenes together work, more than can be said about much of the satirical script, co-written by Babbit and Brian Wayne Peterson, which is an uneasy mix of classic gay stereotypes and those conjured up.

The stereotypes mix and congeal; what's funny and what's not supposed to be isn't always entirely clear. The press notes describe the approach as "hyper-real," a midpoint, maybe, between drama and high camp.

The mood becomes distracting. It's a perverse vibe, but uncertain of just how much.

Lyonne, with her smoky voice and cartoonish facial contortions, is wrong for Megan, if only because the character she could play so well, Graham, is sitting across from her.

But more than that, Lyonne is an actress who plays gamely beyond her years—her performance in "Slums of Beverly Hills" makes any acting in "Almost Famous" seem almost prepubescent—and looks forced into playing below them. Beyond DuVall, whose greasy hair and wounded eyes fit her role, no others exceptionally stand out. Moriarty looks old. RuPaul plays many of his scenes as straight as his character pretends to be.

It leaves a flat feeling, like a John Waters comedy turned down a couple notches crossed with sticky plaid couches.

MOVIE REVIEW

But I'm A Cheerleader

Director: Jamie Babbit

Stars: Natasha Lyonne, Clea DuVall, RuPaul Charles, Cathy Moriarty

Rating: R (adult language, adult themes)

★ ★ of 4 stars

Allen shines amid 'Contender's' flaws

Actress turns in powerful performance as vice presidential nominee embroiled in scandal.

BY SAMUEL MCKEWN

It's an apt title for the movie, "The Contender." In boxing terms, the phrase is used to describe the mayor of Palookaville: strong enough to put on a show before succumbing to his weaknesses. So goes the movie, which explores the sexual politics of a female vice presidential nominee (Joan Allen).

Writer-director Rod Lurie, a former movie critic, thrusts the story straight into a documentary feel—the camera is fluid, but unpolished; lighting is drained down a level or two to accurately convey Washington's shadows.

It starts with the death of the current vice president, and the new, Clintonesque leader (Jeff Bridges) choosing to cement his own legacy by appointing a woman. There's another man,

Jack Hathaway (William Peterson), who loses his chance at heroism when he fails to save a girl from drowning.

The safe pick, Laine Hanson (Joan Allen) is actually a big risk for all the wrong reasons. Republicans, including the House Confirming Committee Leader Shelley Runyon (Gary Oldman, hidden behind balding tufts of curly hair), for shifting party loyalties. And then, the thunderball of an accusation drops on the Capitol.

There's pictures of Hanson, who's already had one sexy romp with her husband interrupted by the president, at a fraternity party in college. "Your garden variety gangbang," says one aide. "There's come all over her face."

Naturally, like Clarence Thomas and Clinton himself, the information age throws the bait out there, and Oldman's character latches on. Much of "The

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