

Hermes

Volume 84 Number 13

Students weigh in on Decision '04

Matt Bloomingdale
Staff Writer

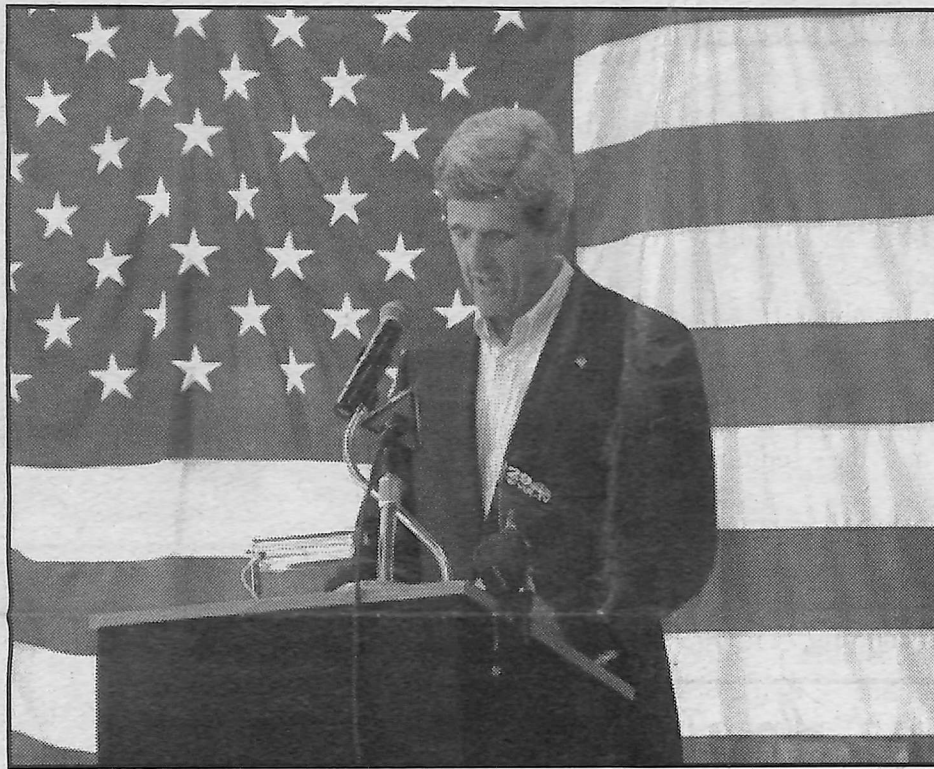
After months of democratic campaigning and weeks of pro-republican commercials, the majority of Dana students still have little idea as to what to make of Decision 2004. In fact, Junior Cameron Schweitzer was quoted as asking, "So, who's running?"

In a recent phone poll conducted by the Hermes, almost half questioned are still undecided about candidates and the November election.

When asked how they see themselves voting, 27 percent of students said they currently connect with incumbent President George W. Bush, 6 percent said they connect with "soon to be" democratic nominee John Kerry, 19 percent preferred a third candidate, and 48 percent of student are still undecided.

In addition to preference of political candidates, students were also polled as to their interest into political media coverage. Roughly 70 percent of students said they were uninterested by the media (especially television) coverage of the political scene.

"I'm just not very interested," said Junior Amanda



Sen. John Kerry speaks at a stop during his political campaign. Photo courtesy george.loper.org

Reddish.

Freshman Michelle Simon responded similarly. "I don't find [the coverage] very interesting."

While several students did not find the media coverage of Decision 2004 appealing, others tuned in religiously. "I watch the media coverage for at least an hour a day," said Junior Jennifer Muell, "I usually watch one of the NBC networks." Muell was one person who stated she was undecided about

political candidate preference.

"I hear a lot of slander right now and not so much discussion on the issues."

Senior Mackenzie Krause also was one who has made the effort to keep herself informed. "I'm pretty involved with what is happening. I enjoy watching 'Meet the Press.'"

While some students choose to keep themselves informed, others have to turn no further than

their classrooms to keep informed. Over a third of students said that they notice political commentary from a professor in the classroom.

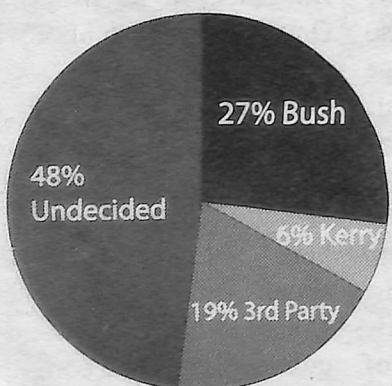
"I've noticed professors making political commentary in class," said Krause. "It doesn't bother me or influence me though." While Krause is not bothered by such commentary other students around the country have found it disturbing.

Over 600 students at the University of Colorado protested in a "Conservatives Come Out Day." Students felt their professors were making an unsafe learning environment by introducing their political beliefs and discriminating against those who disagreed.

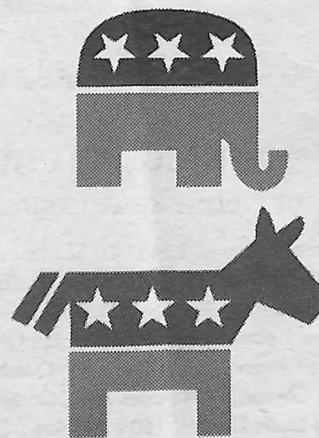
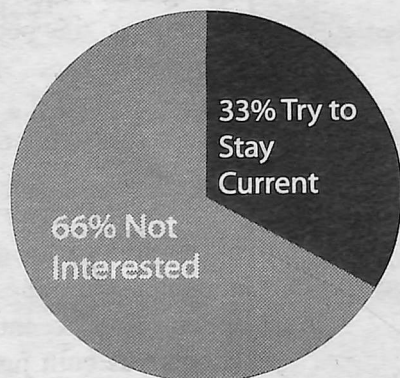
Sophomore Bernardo Hinojosa stated that many of his professors "make baseless, childish comments lacking objectivity and do not allow students a chance to respond." Other students found the comments to be "distracting" and "uncomfortable."

Despite your feelings politically, there is no lack of resources. Look in the campus center for information on the Campus Conservatives and the Young Democrats.

Candidate People Connect Most With



Attention Paid to Media Coverage of Candidates



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Features

Campus Activities Reminder

*Open Swim
7:00-9:00 P.M.
Every Tuesday
and Thursday.*

*Disco Cosmic
Bowling @ the
Blair Bowling
Alley, 9:00-
11:30 p.m. on
March 26.*

*March 27 Paint-
ball @ 8:00
A.M. Sign up
in the campus
center.*

*The Cultural
Fair will have
various ac-
tivities going on
throughout the
week.*

*Don't forget to
watch DTV
every Wednesday
night at 9 P.M.*

Qwest Center brings big entertainment

Becky Hultgren
Staff Writer

Kelly Clarkson, Clay Aiken and Britney Spears are just a few of the latest stars to hit Omaha's new Qwest Center. The Eagles, Metallica, and Godsmack are just a few more big names that will be appearing at the Qwest Center in the coming months.

The Qwest Center is known for its large arena which can hold 17,000 people at concerts, 15,500

people at basketball games, and 14,700 people at hockey/arena football games. The University of Nebraska at Omaha holds their basketball and hockey games at the arena. Parking may be expensive at a price of \$6.00 per vehicle but it is worth it.

"The arena was impressive for Omaha. I had to pay \$6.00 to park, but it was worth it because my tickets were free," said Marta Walker, senior.

The Qwest Center also has an extraordinary convention center that can hold state, regional, and national conventions,



Photo courtesy www.eomaha.com

tradeshows, consumer shows, banquets and receptions, business and organization conventions, festivals, Proms, Graduations, and other school functions.

The latest show to hit the Omaha Qwest show that many found interesting was the Car Show. This show which has been held at AKSARBEN in the past years had its first show in the Qwest Center and from what has been said, it was impressive.

"It was an impressive show. There was enough room to bring in a lot of different varieties of cars. There was just the right amount of old cars to impress people who like older cars and there were just the right amount of new cars to impress the people who like newer cars. Everyone can be satisfied at a show this large," said Christi Burkey, sophomore.

The Qwest center has brought a lot of wanted attention to the Omaha metro. Just recently a new Hilton was built just west of

the Qwest Center which has a walk way over 10th street, so guests wanting to explore the center can stay there and never have to walk outside. It has also been said that bands and singers will most likely stay at this HILTON for the fact that they will not have to go outside and walk through fans...they will just be able to walk across on this walkway straight into the center.

There is always something going on at the center. Here are some of the upcoming events:

The Prince Concert, 7:30 on April 7, 2004.

WWE SMACKDOWN! Presents WRESTLEMANIA REVENGE, 7:00 on April 11, 2004.

Dr. Phil will be filling the Omaha metro with his advice on April 23, at 7:00.

The Eagles Concert, May 15, at 8:00.

The Shania Twain concert, May 25, at 7:00.

For more information about the Qwest Center and upcoming events go to qwestcenteromaha.com.

What do I know about me

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"O" Street Center, 2246 "O" St., Lincoln, 441-3300
South St. Center, 3705 South St., Lincoln, 441-3333
Southwest Center, 5310 S. 139th Plz., Omaha, 894-9006
Northwest Center, 3341 N. 107th St., Omaha, 496-0088
Dodge Center, 4610 Dodge St., Omaha, 554-1040
Ames Center, 5404 Ames Ave., Omaha, 455-2121
Council Bluffs Center, 1604 2nd Ave., C.B., 322-6650

Opinion

NCLB Act leaves children behind

Jeremy Stolls
Staff Writer

Standing in a group of blue bedecked Democratic volunteers on a cold, moist Sunday morning I realized something very unnerving about my choice of profession.

We were all waiting for a heritage festival in a small town in rural Iowa to begin so that we could march in the name of Howard Dean. As we waited patiently for the local Tae Kwon Do chapter to line up behind us, some of the volunteers were discussing Howard Dean's education platform, which included striking the No Child Left Behind Act. At that time the NCLB Act was practically unknown to me and so I asked what was so wrong with it. After a lot of politically-charged Bush bashing I came to the conclusion that nobody really knew. Being a major in secondary education, and close to graduation, I thought it might be important to know. However, it wasn't until my student teaching stint at South High School in Omaha that I found out.

In 2001 the U.S. congress overwhelmingly



Photo Courtesy Paul Morse from ed.gov

approved the No Child Left Behind Act, a reform that emphasizes federally mandated standard-testing for students as well as accountability by the school systems. The plan is a procedural Gordian's Knot, but in a nutshell it goes like this. Every school must administer a standardized test to at least 95% of the student body. The tests are disaggregated for different economic and racial backgrounds, as well as non-

native English speakers and special needs students. The grading effectively breaks down into almost 40 cells. The results of this test are codified and published on a "report card" that announces each school, school district, and state's score relative to a pre-determined academic goal. This goal is called Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and is the new standard for academic achievement according to the United States Department of

Education. If a school does not meet AYP standards in math, writing, or science it becomes a "target school" and their federal funding is cut proportional to their "failure" to meet AYP. If a school's test scores satisfy the AYP the next year, they still have to succeed for a second year to be removed from the target school list. However, the program promises to have every school reaching AYP consistently within 10-12 years. This is not only unrealistic, it's impossible.

A diverse school, a school with more students from different racial, economic, and cultural backgrounds, therefore, will be tested in more cells than a school that is not as diversified. No Child Left Behind, in this way, targets minority students by targeting their school systems. Diverse schools are typically large inner urban public schools with large minority student populations. These schools are most at risk for being targeted, and their funding being cut. Non-diverse schools, small rural school systems with primarily white student populations are more likely to succeed according to this

program and will receive the federal dollars that are funneled away from more diverse "targeted" schools. The NCLB Act ensures that the schools that need the federal dollars the most will not get them. Nearly every high school in the Omaha Public School District has had their funding cut because they were unable to achieve AYP.

What is AYP and why can't our students reach it? Annual Yearly Progress is based on standards by the United States Department of Education and graded in four levels for each tested cell; beginner, progressing, proficient, and exemplary. A school must reach the level of proficient in four categories; writing, reading, math, and science, to meet AYP. The problem arises with the vast discrepancy in our public school systems. Large inner-urban minority schools, through a variety of circumstances such as low family income and disruptive home lives, are statistically lower achieving than schools that are primarily smaller majority schools. NCLB mandates that all students test at a certain level, with a certain body of knowledge, despite the fact that not all schools have equal access to resources. The responsibility falls on teachers to instantaneously give the students that background knowledge and increase student achievement less the school's budget, and their already meager salary,

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Hermes

Dana College

Hermes is written and published by students of the Dana College Communication-Print Media Department on Fridays during the fall and spring academic year. Content of the paper is developed independently of the student government, faculty and administration and does not reflect the policies of these groups. Opinions expressed in the Hermes are not necessarily those of the editors, college or the college community.

Hermes welcomes letters to the editor expressing original points of view. Hermes reserves the right to edit all letters according to space availability. All letters must include author's name and address. Under certain circumstances Hermes may request to have name omitted at time of publishing.

Readers are encouraged to submit story ideas and comments by calling (402)426-7328, or via Hermes, Dana College, Box 1252, Blair Ne, 68008. Submissions must be received by 4:00p.m. on Tuesday.

Got something on your mind? Tell us about it. We are always accepting letters to the editor. Send e-mails to hermes@dana.edu.

Do you have a writer inside that you are waiting to unleash? If so, we are still looking for writers. Contact either Kathy Wells or Rene Nicolay for more information.

Continued on page 4

Sports

No Student Left Behind: There may be another way

Continued from page 3

be cut.

This major discrepancy was initially going to be solved with federal money; "start-up cash" that would enable schools to compete on a slightly more level playing field. These federal dollars were to go to more destitute school systems, giving teachers the necessary resources to, in turn, provide their undereducated students the background knowledge they've deserved. In September of 2003, in the midst of a much-hyped 9-11 anniversary in which Bush advocated American solidarity against oppression, the federal government reneged on its promise to provide our youth with an adequate education. They withdrew the federal tax dollars, sending them instead to Iraq and to his "economic stimulus" package that continues to benefit corporate fat-cats.

The final issue with the No Child Left Behind Act is that it

will cause schools without sufficient resources or funding to water down their curriculum and effectively "teach to the test." Teachers, unable to provide a comprehensive liberal education as well as meet the AYP requirements will have to spend the majority of the school year simply teaching students the required knowledge to pass the mandated tests. Teaching modules that concentrate on critical thinking, aesthetics, performing arts, mentoring or student leadership could effectively be cut to provide enough time to simply teach what's needed. The bare minimum to pass AYP. The high school diploma wouldn't be worth the paper it's printed on.

Federal funding for schools has long been a favorite empty promise on political platforms; however our present administration is quick to point out that federal funding for K-12 schools is at an all-time high approaching 35 billion dollars. It may sound impressive, but with the NCLB

Act the increased federal funding won't be seen by many large school systems. That's to say nothing of the fact that the program itself wasn't approved for any special funding. With such a sweeping reform of our education system parents should expect some of their tax dollars to go toward helping teachers, students, and administrators work toward integrating and preparing for the new AYP requirements. When the administration failed to make good on its promise the horrible reality of this program began to sink in. Schools were going to be held accountable for not achieving the impossible.

As an educator, student, activist, and fellow inheritor of this country I don't want the decline to continue. Every generation has had its battles to fight, but in this day and age the problems that afflict our country (in fact, the world) seem to be so numerous and intertwined that the only solution seems to be to close our eyes and simply go on living. The

solution has been to either cynically accept that there is no solution, or to disguise the problem as insignificant, or too distant to worry about. At Dana College it may be very easy to do that, at times. But the real world is still out there, and it's being changed and challenged every day by the powers that be; by congressmen, investors, CEO's, judges, legislators, and the other people that effectively hold the keys to the kingdom. However, those people were once children too, and those keys were granted by an education; by a diploma that is worth more than the paper it's printed on. The No Child Left Behind Act, the latest effort by the present administration to make the rich richer, will make a high school diploma I believe that our schools and our children are where our hope for the future lies, and although that may sound like a cliché campaign slogan, it is more true than the majority of our own government seems to realize.

Up Coming Sporting Events

Track

March 31 Midland Lutheran Throwers Meet Fremont, NE

Baseball

March 27 Dordt College Blair, NE 12:00 P.M.

March 28 Morningside College Blair, NE 12:00 P.M.

Softball

March 27 Dana Invitational

Mt. Marty 10 a.m.

Doane 5 p.m.

Graceland 6:45 p.m.

March 29 Grandview Blair, NE 2:00 P.M.

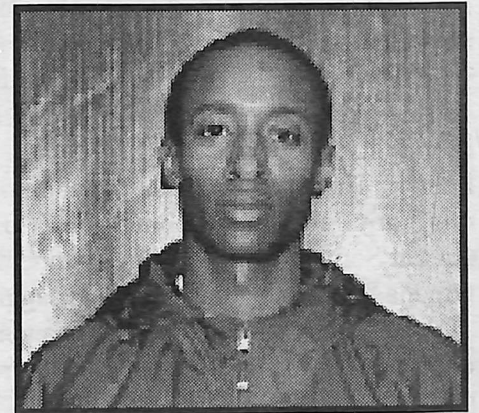
March 30 Hastings Blair, NE 1:00 P.M.

Clark wins national title

Cliff Ellis
Staff Writer

Senior track star Garry Clark from Washington, D.C. competed in the 600 meter event at the NAIA Indoor National Track and Field Championships on March 4, 2004 in Johnson City, Tennessee. Clark not only won the event, but he broke his previous record by running a 1:19.10. A few weeks prior to the national meet, Clark was able to capture the GPAC championship in the same event with a time of 1:22.23.

Clark hopes to be accepted in the Urban Studies masters program at the University of Nebraska in Omaha upon graduation this May. Some people on campus have asked him if he plans to contend for a spot on the U.S. Olympic team, but Clark modestly replies that he runs for the



Garry Clark, a senior sociology major from Washington, D.C.

enjoyment of competing. However, an informant from the Puma athletic gear company has contacted him about sponsoring his professional career. Among other things, Clark has been a member of the Dana College basketball team, president of Campus Crusade for Christ, and is currently a maturing amateur poet.