Championship fever hit the University of Nebraska at Kearney this spring as the Loper wrestling squad walked away from Pueblo, Colo., as the NCAA Division II National Champions.

The Loper Wrestling team notched their second national title in five years, their previous coming in 2008, as they knocked out the No. 1 St. Cloud Huskies who had sat atop the rankings as the big dogs all season. 

“My blood pressure was out of the roof,” Loper head coach Marc Bauer said. “I was just so proud of the way we competed at nationals. Our guys got out of the gate quick and finished even stronger.”

Individually, three Lopers came home with national championship titles beneath their belt. The middle weights dominated their opponents and bolstered the roster giving the Lopers just enough to edge the Huskies 107 points to 95.

“Want to enjoy this as long as I can,” Bauer said. “Everyone involved with our program puts a lot of time and effort into making this possible. There is no greater satisfaction for everyone involved right now.”

Seniors Dalton Jensen and T.J. Hepburn, and junior Raufeon Stots all walked away champions.

Dalton Jensen at 141 pounds, pinned William Young of Newberry at the 4-minute, 18-second mark of his match. “With out a doubt pinning my opponent in the finals and knowing that I put us in a closer position to cinching the national team title was my most memorable moment,” Jensen said. “In that moment I felt 20 years of hard work pay off. It’s such a great feeling being part of the Lopers national championship team.”

Raufeon Stots at the 149 pound weight class claimed a 5-4 victory over John Hargery of Maryville. “Feels so good,” Stots said. “I have to try and keep my head on straight because I like being a humble person. I have been able to do a lot of cool things like interviews and dinners, but I think the most rewarding impact would have to be the feeling of an accom-
Loss of Ayala hits hard

Omar reflects on tragedy, encourages others to be open, seek help

BY JAY OMAR
Antelope Staff

The UNK community lost a member on Feb. 22 when senior psychology major Gabby Ayala took her own life. Ayala, originally from Grand Island, left behind grieving family members and friends as well as a fond reputation.

Scott Anderson, a graduate of UNK and friend of Ayala, remembers her as a very charming girl.

“She was always trying to make people laugh,” Anderson said. “She was one of the toughest girls I knew, and she never got made fun of because she would always be quick to send it right back.”

“I just wish I knew what was going through her mind. I know she had so many close friends, and she could have let someone help. It is just hard to know that she was trying to do it by herself,” said Anderson.

Psychologists around the country have been looking for the causes of suicide as well. The answers found are both simple and difficult. According to “Psychology Today” the No. 1 reason for suicide is severe depression. While this is no surprise to most, the best way to handle the situation escapes almost everyone.

Most depressed patients “suffer in silence” as licensed psychologist Dr. Alex Lickerman said in an article for “Psychology Today.” He wrote that as uncomfortable as the encounter may be, it is up to friends and family to recognize the symptoms. “Despite making both parties uncomfortable, inquiring directly about suicidal thoughts in my experience almost always yields an honest response,” Lickerman said.

The tragedy of suicide is never easy, but something must change. With a suicide occurring every 15 minutes in the United States in 2008, the country is begging for a solution. The National Suicide Prevention Network, which operates hotlines around the country, says rates of calls jumped 18 percent just between January and May of 2011. Calls to suicide hotlines have raised nearly 20 percent overall in the United States.

If only people could be more open with each other and simply talk about it, maybe prevention could occur. As hard as it is, if you suspect a family member or friend is depressed, talk to them about it. If you are feeling depressed do not be afraid to let someone in and help you. If all of the right precautions are taken, maybe we can help each other and ourselves, and keep from losing great people like Gabby Ayala.

If you or someone you know are having suicidal thoughts, call the suicide prevention hotline at 1-800-273-8255. Locally, the university has confidential counseling and an anonymous screening website: http://www.mentalhealthscreening.org/screening/Welcomes.aspx.
Luke Mills warms up March 15 in the Nebraskan Student Union with his acoustic version of “Wonderwall” by Oasis. Mills is a musician and songwriter from Alma and has traveled the country with a few of his previous bands. He said, “If you can’t make a song sell as an acoustic version, it probably isn’t that good of a song in the first place.”

Sudoku ★★★★★

How to play:
Sudoku is a placement puzzle. The aim of the puzzle is to enter a numeral from 1 through 9 in each cell of a grid. Each row, column and region must contain only one instance of each numeral. Completing the puzzle requires patience and logical ability. The puzzle initially became popular in Japan in 1986 and attained international popularity in 2005.

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Fransk gets frank about student fees

The following article is a letter to the editor from Campus Recreation Advisor Scott Fransk in response to Jay Omar’s March 7 editorial 'Let’s see our money in action' addressing student fees

BY SCOTT FRANSK
Campus Recreation Advisor

My staff and I have recently read the op/ed piece you wrote about the fees and other issues on campus, and I wanted to address some concerns that I have with some of the information you have provided your fellow students.

Campus Recreation at UNK does not receive an $80 fee from any student that goes directly to Campus Recreation. The students of UNK are charged $1/credit hour up to $12 each semester and a vast majority of that money goes to staffing the facility with enough left over for a few minor annual upgrades. I have attached a fee comparison sheet that I would like you to look at to see just how inexpensive Campus Recreation at UNK is for the students.

After looking at the listed 2011-12 student fees, the only $80 fee that I saw was for Counseling and Health Care, and Campus Recreation does not receive any financial benefit from that fee.

The overall budget for all of Campus Recreation (Intramurals, Aquatics, Informal Recreation) is approximately $275,000 with approximately $118,000 of that coming from the $1/credit hour weight room fee, the rest comes from state aided, revenue bond, SET accounts and intramural entry fees. If you look at what other institutions charge students for fees, we do an amazing job maximizing the recreational experience of the students of UNK on an extremely bare-bones budget. The student weight room fee went from $0.25/credit hour to $1.00/credit hour in a vote during the spring semester of 2007, prior to my arrival on campus (which was June 1, 2007).

This fee is still voted on annually. The goal was to set aside money each year to make moderate upgrades to equipment. Since that time, the minimum wage has increased from $5.75/hr. to $7.25/hr. And one of my first actions on campus was to address significant risk management concerns and increase the number of staff in the facility.

Both of these actions have dramatically affected the level of upgrades that can be managed on such a small budget. And my first concern will always be risk management when it comes to allocation of financial resources.

I share your frustration about space issues, but I wanted to let you know that each year since I have been here, this facility has become more popular. My staff records hourly and daily headcounts and we reached an all-time one-day high of 823 patrons during the week of January 23rd this year. (My first year, our one-day high for the year was 671 on March 10, 2008.) My staff does not count usage from academic classes (which have the facility from the morning until 2:00pm during the week) or athletic team practice (which have the facility from 2:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m. during the week).

Academic classes are why every student is here at UNK, and they are not going away. There is not another place for the various indoor athletic teams to practice, so this is not going to change. We are very fortunate, because many other colleges/universities with shared space like ours will utilize the facility for classes and athletic practices until 8:00 p.m. without regard to the general student population.

We are currently examining options to alleviate the overcrowding in the weight room, but there are no plans in place to address space issues in the Fieldhouse (the indoor track area), and there won’t be unless there are significantly loud voices from the student population to the UNK administration and the understanding that students will need to pay for it to happen. Guaranteeing space for the general student population from 6:00 p.m.-close is the absolute best that can be done given the circumstances at this time.

Additionally, the coaches of some of the athletic teams have been very generous in allowing students into the Fieldhouse while practice was going on as long as their practice was not impacted. Again, this is uncommon at most universities for coaches to work with the students in such a positive way. I really appreciate what you said about the individuals who make life uncomfortable for others in the weight room, but I really wish that you would have waited to write this, because it wouldn’t have been an issue. That is because prior to this article coming out, my staff has been given instructions to focus on individuals that are disruptive after receiving some formal complaints.

When I first arrived, the weight room here had that exact feel of somebody’s “basement” (as you said). I characterized it as a place only someone like Rocky Balboa would want to work out, and we have worked hard to soften the edges of that room and make it more friendly to anyone interested in working out, not just the “workout fanatics.”

Obviously, one can only do so much to that room on a limited budget, but I thought we have succeeded and our usage rate numbers would seem to back up that argument. Our policy is for any individual that makes life uncomfortable for others in a place where everyone is welcome should and will be asked to correct their behavior or leave.

I know your role in this article is to create a stir about things that could be run better on campus, but I really wish that a focus could be made on the things that are going great for Campus Recreation and the rest of the university. I bet you didn’t know that:

My first year we had 59 intramural basketball teams, and this year we had 91 and it is our biggest event, an increase of 54 percent and a number.

Our available pool hours have almost...
McPhillips journeys through poetry, diaries, stories

BACK TO HER IRISH ROOTS

It has been said that literature and history are intertwined. When the opportunity to research a lost part of history and create poetry for it, junior English major Lacey McPhillips couldn’t say no.

“I’m only a quarter Irish, technically, but my Grandpa was really proud of his Irish heritage, and it kind of rubbed off on me and the other grandkids,” said McPhillips, from Lindsay. “That’s kind of where my interest in that comes from.” McPhillips became interested in researching Irish history through the Undergraduate Research Fellowship while taking a poetry class with Allison Hedge Coke, associate professor of English.

“Lacey became interested in furthering her poetry through her research into her Irish heritage,” Hedge Coke said. “I felt an undergraduate research project was appropriate to her calling and accepted her proposal to commit this year to studying Irish and American literature related to the Diasporas of Irish people to this part of the Americas.”

McPhillips began her research in the same way the Irish began their journey to America—in Ireland. She then began researching how the immigrants fared in America and how the Irish came to assimilate into American culture.

The result of her research is free-form poetry.

“I’ll have poems from everywhere that the Irish people were. Like in Ireland, as they were crossing the sea, when they got to America and as they spread out,” McPhillips said.

According to McPhillips, personal stories and diaries of the Irish are the most interesting part of her studies. “Seeing things from eye-witnesses is really cool because that’s the only way you really know how it was and what happened,” she said.

McPhillips said she has realized through her research that history books aren’t able capture the hardships and prejudices the Irish had to face.

“You see all the numbers in history books and they don’t really mean anything, but when you hear about it from a real person, it makes it real,” she said.

McPhillips will present her findings at a student research day in April and may be continuing her research overseas this summer in Ireland.

“Two universities in Ireland have invited her to further her research there, on site, in an extended stay,” Hedge Coke said.

For McPhillips, undergraduate research has opened many doors, but most importantly, the research has helped her develop her skills as a creative writer.

“I get to create characters and give them a voice,” McPhillips said. “Whereas before, I just thought of poetry as, ‘I’m supposed to just talk about myself and my feelings,’ and that’s boring.”

In all, McPhillips said that she has no regrets spending this year researching the Irish people and encourages other students to look into the Undergraduate Research Fellowship.

“If you find something that you’re interested in, it’s a good way to supplement your education rather than just depending on the classes you go to. It’s more of an independent learning thing,” she said.

BEING FEMALE IN THE FBI

On Mar. 26, Candice DeLong, former FBI agent, speaks in front of a packed house at Copeland Hall about what it was like being one of the first female agents in the FBI. DeLong was apart of investigations on infamous cases like the Tylenol murders, the Unabomber and many more in her 32 years of service. DeLong plays a role in the television show “Deadly Women on the Discovery Investigation Channel.”

Fransk from page 4

doubled over the last 5 years.

We have some amazing success stories of individuals who have made dramatic improvements to their physical health during their time here.

There is a faculty on this campus that has run over 350 races.

We have added an upgraded equipment consistently over the last five years (and would love to add additional treadmills, but there is currently no more space).

We have employed approximately 100 student staff this year, allowing these students to earn some money on campus to help with any spending needs and gain some professional development.

By the end of the school year, more than 25 percent of the students at UNK will have played at least one intramural event…most universities dream of numbers this high.

More than 40 percent of our intramural participants are female, again, something most places look at as impossible.

Twenty-nine percent of our intramural participants are freshman and 27 percent are sophomores, this campus loses 20 percent of its students after their first year and we only lose two percent, which, I would argue, means that if you are physically active on campus, you are more likely to stay in college into your sophomore year.

Marshall Everitt was the first ever student from UNK to officiate the national flag football tournament this year.

I have the best student staff on campus.

Lastly, I have an open door policy when it comes to any UNK student and I would appreciate talking about concerns anyone has before it ends up in print for the public to see. Inaccurate information ($80/semester fee), incomplete information (space issues) and complaints that are currently being addressed (rude patrons) all could have been clarified prior to what I consider an article that takes an unfair jab at my staff and myself.

It has been a few years since the Antelope has sought out any positive article about Campus Recreation at UNK and you would be amazed at the awesome stories about the patrons, participants, staff, programs and future of Campus Recreation…I hope you take advantage of one of these options for a future article.
“My biggest motivation this year was me losing in the national finals last year. The feeling of losing in the national finals last year stuck with me all year long, and I looked to not only get that national title but do it in dominating fashion.”

T. J. Hepburn
Senior

“My biggest barrier of this year would have to be going to school only half the year. This is the first time I had to do it. I had to work full time during the first semester of school and start school after Christmas. I was able to push through majority of my matches through heart and determination.”

Raufeon Stots
Junior

“My biggest motivation this year was me losing in the national finals last year. The journey leading up to nationals has been tough. Dalton Jensen, myself and Raufeon spent extra time in the room developing each other’s style.”

T. J. Hepburn
Senior
The Loper wrestlers stand for recognition at the NCAA Division II tournament following a championship weekend.

The championship wrestling team ranks seventh in NCAA Division II in team GPA with a 3.257. The Division II Wrestling Coaches Association annually honors teams and individuals that excel on and off the mat academically. The University of Mary, (North Dakota) led the nation with a 3.33 GPA.

A team's GPA is calculated by averaging the cumulative GPA of the 10 wrestling classes. Eight of the ten must have competed at their NCAA regional meet.

To qualify, a wrestler must have a 3.00 cumulative GPA, be in his second full year at his current school and be a varsity team member or significant reserve.

This year, 164 student-athletes from 40 different schools qualified. Individually, 11 Lopers were selected to the “All-Academic” wrestling team.

“The bar is set high for our guys academically,” Loper coach Marc Bauer said. “We have a lot of our student-athletes that take their academics very serious, and I appreciate that attitude.”

“We work with our student-athletes to understand what it means to be a good student. Early to class, sit in the first two rows, participate, connect with the professor regularly and take care of business,” Bauer said.

ALL-ACADEMIC FIRST-TEAM
Senior, Joey Wilson (3.02)
Sophomore, Mark Fiala (3.70)
Freshman, Matt Lenagh (3.53)

ALL-ACADEMIC SECOND-TEAM
Senior, Kazuhiro Fujinawa (3.31)
Senior, Jordan White (3.61)
Junior, Islam Abitov (3.65)
Freshman, Matt Oliver (3.61)
Freshman, Nick Ridgeway (3.54)

HONORABLE MENTION
ALL-ACADEMIC TEAM
Junior, Drew Comito (3.08)
Junior, Stephen Weimer (3.18)
Sophomore, Tim Crocker (3.45)
Champs from page 1

Dlagnev from page 1

Foreign Film Series to show:

Once revolutionary, controversial French novel, 'Madame Bovary'

By Yifei Zhao
Antelope Staff

The Foreign Film Series will go French this month with the presentation of the realist drama “Madame Bovary” on Thursday at 7 p.m. in Thomas Hall 106.

The film “Madame Bovary” based on the eponymous novel by 19th-century French novelist Gustave Flaubert will be shown in French with English subtitles. It is a story of adultery and unhappy love affairs of the provincial wife Emma Bovary.

Emma Bovary is a beautiful and flighty girl who truly believed love and marriage would bring fulfillment to her life. After she married Charles Bovary, she feels marriage is dull and restless.

As the feeling of boredom and restlessness with the peace of country life settles in, Emma finds a romantic fantasy with a young clerk, Leon. She wants an affair with Leon, but Leon leaves town to seek his future in Paris. Emma then starts a passionate affair with Rodolphe. She tries to convince Rodolphe to run away with her, but Rodolphe also leaves her. Finally, Emma can’t find the romance that she desires. She commits suicide by consuming arsenic.

The modern language department sponsors this event, and it’s open to all faculty and students. “The department firmly believes that viewing these films helps our students to see the language they are studying in an environment other than the classroom and to catch a glimpse of the culture native to that language,” said Xavier Chavez who is in charge of the Foreign Film Series.

Champs

Dlagnev

Center to represent USA in London at the 2012 Olympic games.

A big name in the Midwest since his college success at UNK where he finished his career on a 71-match win streak, he was the first recipient of the NCAA Division II National Championship trophy. Over 200 fans welcomed the Loper wrestling team back to Kearney on Mar. 11 at 4:30 p.m. A short celebration program for the team was held in the Health & Sports Center.

The emotions following the victory were “no different than in 2008, it continues to put us on the map in the wrestling world,” Bauer said. “Nationwide everyone in the wrestling world knows us as a wrestling school. It is a tremendous boost for everyone that supports this program.”

Aside from the three champions, the Lopers, strength and depth contributed immensely to the title that included seven All-Americans. The Lopers’ Ross Brunkhardt (184 lbs.) placed third at the meet, Joey Wilson (165) and Kevin Barrett (285) placed fourth, and Mark Fiala (174) finished eighth.

Next year the Lopers will lose five of their starters, four of them All-Americans. However, they will return three All-Americans, four national qualifiers. “We have some individuals in the room that will be picking up the slack from the weights that we are losing,” Bauer said. “We should have another solid team again next year. Time will tell.”

Dlagnev

Training for Team USA freestyle, Dlagnev is likely to become known nationwide and worldwide. Dlagnev cruised to a 6-0, 7-0 win over Canada’s Sunny Dhinsa in the Pan American Championships this past February. Dlagnev won this event for the second time.

But his personal success has not detracted him from knowing where he came from.

“I’m really excited for the UNK wrestling family,” Dlagnev said. “They are doing a great job out there.”

Outside of his preparation for the trials and keeping up with his training schedule, Dlagnev is learning a new hobby of card magic tricks and playing video games.

But no tricks rest on the wrestling mat.

Dlagnev and UNK’s wrestling success tie together, success that has been soaring since Dlagnev graduated in 2008.

plishment.”

As Raufeon Stots performed his victory dance on his way off the mat, it was TJ. Hepburn’s turn to put the Huskies away with a win and ultimately bring home the title.

Hepburn at 157 pounds powered the Lopers to the Division II crown. Coming off of a heartbreaking loss when he was taken down in the closing seconds of the finals last year, Hepburn quickly took the opportunity to redeem himself, pinning Jarrod Shaw of West Liberty in only 2 minutes, 17 seconds. The win made it impossible for St. Cloud, who had two more wrestlers yet to wrestle, to gain enough points to out-score the Lopers.

It came down to the finals Saturday night in Pueblo, Colo., with Jensen at 141 pounds, Stots at 149 pounds and Hepburn at 157 pounds carrying the Lopers’ hopes.

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But no tricks rest on the wrestling mat.

Dlagnev and UNK’s wrestling success tie together, success that has been soaring since Dlagnev graduated in 2008.
What did you do for Spring Break?

“I went to Jamaica, because it was my last year in college, and I wanted to go somewhere with my best friends where not a lot of people go.”

Taylor Davidson
Senior/Business administration
Scottsbluff

“All I did was study because I have so many essays to do, and I have to get a 4.0 GPA; for myself and for my parents.”

Angelo Verdugo
Freshman/Political science
Lexington

“I went back home and worked construction to make enough money to make it through the rest of the school year.”

Justin Thomas
Sophomore/K-12 Physical education
Arthur

“I went to Illinois with the tennis team. While we were there, we played three different teams and were successful against all of them. And then we came back to Kearney and played again, and then practiced all week.”

Tealyn Trimble
Freshman/Nursing
Kearney

Spring Break in SD

Reader-submitted photo

Yein Kim, a senior advertising major from Sokcho, South Korea, submitted this Spring Break photo of herself at Badlands National Park in South Dakota. Kim also visited Mount Rushmore while in South Dakota with friends. After studying in the United States for five years, Kim was excited to finally visit these landmarks and said it was a “priceless experience.”

CAMPUS BURSTS INTO BLOOM

Photos by Brooke Alstrom

Not only did Spring Break give students a chance to rest and recuperate before the final month of the semester, but springtime flowers sprung up all across campus. It looks like blue and gold won’t be the only colors on campus this spring.
The All-American Rejects to headline concert April 5

BY TARA WASENIUS
JMC 215

It seems as though The All-American Rejects come out with a big hit, then fade back into the studio, only to return again even stronger. On April 5, UNK students will get to see just how strong they’ve become.

The All-American Rejects have been on the music scene since their breakout hit “Swing, Swing” from their album, "The All-American Rejects," released in 2003.

The Rejects were announced as the headliner for UNK’s LPAC spring concert after a campus-wide poll was posted and taken by students regarding their preference.

“LPAC members compiled a list of potential bands, then we narrowed down our choices to three that we could afford and thought would be best for UNK students,” said Abby Rosenbaum of LPAC’s production chair committee.

Concerts in the past have included Red Jumpsuit Apparatus and Chris Cagle.

Jed Dush, a senior criminal justice major liked the choice. “I think that LPAC has always done a wonderful job of picking entertainment for UNK, and I think that they did just fine again.”

The Rejects are starting up promotion for their new album, "Kids In The Street." The band is known for progressing with each hit bringing on a different sound. They’ve undoubtedly matured their sound and influences on the albums following their self-titled debut.

As a band, they still have a core fan base and continue to gain more. “I love the choice! I used to listen to them while in high school, and I think it’s great that UNK is trying to create the memories for me of back in high school,” said sophomore Megan Rothluebber.

After seeing the last two albums’, "Move Along" in 2005 and "When The World Comes Down" in 2008, success worldwide it’s easy to see that fans will continue to get more from the band. Successful singles such as “Dirty Little Secret” and “Move Along” pushed the "Move Along" album to double platinum while the first single for "When The World Comes Down," “Gives You Hell” was certified four times multi-platinum by the RIAA.

The next album is expected to drop this spring and has already released the first single “Bee Keeper’s Daughter”.

The Rejects are known for an entertaining and energetic live show. “The All-American Rejects will be a fun concert and an opportunity I will not miss!” said senior industrial distribution major Alex Larkin.

Rosebaum spoke of all the work LPAC is doing to make sure every detail is in order to give students the best concert experience. “There are lots of details for an event this large, making sure we have the right equipment and supplies, making sure advertising is created and sent out to the public and campus, security for the event, and people to accommodate what the band members needs.”

The concert is expected to draw in 3,000 to 4,000 attendees to the Heath and Sports Center Arena.

The All-American Rejects will headline LPAC’s spring concert April 5. The band was chosen after a campus-wide poll was taken by students.

Campus Lutheran
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www.nelcm.com

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All day Thursday, Saturday after 10 p.m.

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Unplanned Pregnancy?

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The bar scene is a part of college, but so is an extremely tight budget. No one wants to give up a Friday night out on the town, but sometimes the numbers in the bank account don’t allow it to happen.

The bar scene in Kearney can definitely be expensive, but at the right place on the right night, it can be fun and cheap. According to Adam Chapman, a fourth year industrial distribution major from Omaha, the four best bars in Kearney are fairly easy to spot.

“Depending on the night, some bars will be popular and some will be boring,” Chapman said. “On a normal night it’s between Cunningham’s Journal, Shooters, Lumberg’s and O’Malley’s.”

Chapman’s observations come after two years of bar experience, and Chapman says that he mainly makes his decisions based on weekly drink specials and atmosphere.

Monday and Thursday nights are popular nights for Lumberg’s as live karaoke and $2 liquor drinks bring in a large crowd. Tuesday belongs to Cunningham’s with their famous and highly advertised “Old School Night.” Old School Night charges a $5 cover but offers $1 drinks and shots. With 80s music on the loud speaker, crowds are usually large, making the bar a popular mid-week hot spot.

Shooters, the best bet on Wednesday, offers karaoke and makes a hard push on Thursday nights with “Penny Pitcher” night.

O’Malley’s struggles to maintain popularity, but wins the battle for best pre-game spot as it is always a very popular early on the bar run. With affordable drinks, an outside courtyard and an indoor basketball hoop, this is a great place to get started.

How about on a Friday and Saturday night? On the two most popular bar nights, the specials seem to disappear, leaving the best atmosphere to determine the hot spots. Tyler Lee, a senior pre-med major from Doniphan, says it is a no-brainer.

“Cunningham’s is the place to be on a Friday or Saturday night. That is just where everyone goes. It is big, there’s dancing, drinks don’t cost too much, and everyone is always happy,” Lee said.

As hard as the other bars in Kearney try to make their establishments more college friendly, Cunningham’s seems to be the winner when it comes to the battle of the bars.

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whether it is the location, the combination of the courtyard and the upstairs dance area, or just the name itself, Cunningham’s simply draws a crowd.

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“If you are out to the bars on a Friday night and you are not at Hams, you are going to hear story after story of what you missed the next day,” Lee said. “Other bars in Kearney have their place, but Cunningham’s definitely wins.”
Based on the best-selling novel by Suzanne Collins, “The Hunger Games,” directed by Gary Ross, is a brilliant adaptation of the wildly popular young adult series. Though the plot is grim, “The Hunger Games” forces the audience to open their eyes to a horrific event that could be plausible. The story delves into the dangers of big government and the overall moral question of the line between entertainment or sheer barbarism.

“The Hunger Games” takes place in Panem, a country built on the ashes of what we know as North America. Panem consists of the Capitol, and twelve outlying districts, each of which supplies different materials for the Capitol.

An uprising of the districts 74 years before brought about the Hunger Games, in which each district was required to provide a girl and boy between the ages of 12 and 18 to fight to the death on national television.

This is where Katniss Everdeen’s (Jennifer Lawrence) story begins. On the day of the “Reaping,” Katniss’ sister Prim is chosen, but Katniss volunteers to take her place. Along with Peeta Mellark (Josh Hutcherson), Katniss must survive the torments of the Capitol’s games along with impressing the crowd who wants to see her die.

Through her own survival skills and knowledge of the forest, Katniss fights for her life and Peeta’s. Lawrence’s performance, along with the rest of the cast’s, is phenomenal. She truly captures the character of Katniss, leaving no room for doubt that the Games are a sick form of entertainment to her and the rest of the districts.

The ostentatious costumes of the Capitol are a stark contrast to the clothes of the Districts leaving little room to doubt the massive social gap between the elitist Capitol and District 12.

Now, for those who read the book and are nervous for another “Eragon” fiasco, fear not. There are differences between the book and the movie; however, they only add to the series as a whole. In a risky move by Ross, the film takes the audience outside of Katniss’ point-of-view and reveals how the Games are run and the reactions of other characters in the Capitol and District 12.

This move aided in giving the audience background information that would have otherwise been lost due to the pacing of the movie.

The only complaint I would make is that the shaky filming style at the beginning of the movie was a little distracting. However, it was only used occasionally and it became easier to follow as the movie progressed.

Vampires out, 'The Hunger Games' new fan favorite

BY BRIANNE WETOVICK
Antelope Staff

“Say it. Say it out loud.”
“You’re a vampire.”
Girls and guys alike read along, horrified yet captivated as we were there for the unfolding of the relationship between a 100-year-old vampire and an ordinary girl.

This is the craze known as “Twilight.” The book series has been at the top and exploded throughout pop culture since 2005 and only gained steam as companion books, clothing and accessories along with movie adaptations were snapped up by swarms of fans, or “Twi-hards.”

As the Twilight craze is coming to its inevitable end, (the second part of the last movie hits theaters November 2012) and excitement for vampires is winding down, the momentum in literature has decidedly shifted.

Fast forward to the future. A nation that has been through an uprising, and now forced to live in fear of the government, and each year live through the “celebration” of a tournament to the death by children. Only one child will be declared the winner. These games that have captivated audiences are “The Hunger Games” by Suzanne Collins.

Since 2008, fans have been slowly turning from vampires to the less glamourous story of Panem, the broken country that was once the United States. Interest seems to have turned to craze as the first film adaptation of the series opened last week. Sold-out tickets, competitions, fan role-play and the like have been sweeping theaters, just as it did for the "Harry Potter" series, and also when "Twilight" hit.

So what's so great about the series? We are presented with a heroine- Katniss Everdeen, whose whole life is her family. She breaks rules for them, and her only concern is their well-being. Katniss’ family is turned completely upside down when her sister, Prim, is chosen to compete for her district in the Hunger Games. Katniss willingly volunteers to take her place to compete instead. Through Katniss’ eyes, we see everything there is to see about these games and also the games the government plays to keep its citizens in line. Brutality and back-handedness abounds as more and more is uncovered.

I wasn’t so sure about jumping on the bandwagon with this series. I’m a die-hard Potter fan, tried the “Twilight” series (until I couldn’t stand the tween following anymore), and “The Hunger Games” seemed questionable. A prodding best friend who wanted me to see the movies with him finally got to me, so I cracked the spine and dove in. What followed was a three-day marathon of the whirlwind that is “The Hunger Games.”

Honestly, to be enthralled by a story like that is rare. Many people have said they simply could not put the books down. I would have to agree. Collins writes in a way that you have to find out what happens next, have to see who will live. Katniss’ personal struggle and love of her family is so different from any other series, and blatantly different from Bella Swan’s in the "Twilight" series. Katniss lives for others and is unselfish, while Bella is self-destructive when she can’t have what she wants. It’s just refreshing to have a strong heroine who stands up for what’s right and fights for her family, too.

In the end, I think audiences are seeing the obvious differences. Why settle for mere sparkle when you can have fire?