

# North students take action in film class

By HOWARD RONTAL

"Caged In" is the torrid story of what goes on in a local high school after the

first bell rings. See just what animal passions are let loose between teachers and students, students and students, teachers and teachers and students and their coke ma-

chines. Coming soon to your local film festival. While the screaming type is a gross exaggeration, "Caged In" is a real movie. It

is in production at North Farmington High School and will be shown at the school's first spring film festival in 1977.

The movie is actually a satire of school life, and the script writers, actors, director, producer, cameramen and film editors are students in the North Farmington High film making class.

Dean Cobb, 28, head of the speech division of the English department at NFHS doesn't so much teach the class as direct traffic, answer questions and make suggestions.

"Thank god I have some rather trustworthy kids and I can leave them on their own. They can do what has to be done."

The students have divided into small film-making crews and by the end of the semester will have made 10 films running in length from three to ten minutes.

Titles include "Brotherhood," an animated satire on the lack of soul on shoes and in humans, "The Furry Duck," and an animated save-the-whales film, voiced over by Crosby and Nash's "Wood on the Water." In "Caged In" scenes shot at the zoo will be spliced between footage of school life.

Besides making films students are given a short course in the history of films, are shown films on film-making (how else to learn a film-making course) will have guest speakers in January and possibly an artist in residence.

The course is an elective and most in it are seniors. The film-making students are not the school's intellectual elite, said Cobb. "We have really creative kids. Maybe we don't give them as many creative outlets as we could or should. The kids are looking for a creative outlet."

With the first-semester, first-semester, college-type registration at NFHS, the course filled up "very, very, quick," said Cobb.

SENIOR LISA PATRELL, called the class a "break in the day." Lisa, who bears a resemblance to a young Marilyn Monroe, is interested in acting. Since there are few acting courses offered, Lisa has taken public speaking, and the film-making course to learn everything related to acting.

"In small productions it's good when everyone knows everyone else's job."

Cobb, not a film fanatic but a self-confessed speechaholic, bucked into the course when its founder and guiding in-

fluence, June McKnight, took a year's leave of absence.

A 1970 speech graduate of Central College, Cobb learned what he knows of photography as a staff photographer in the army. "I didn't know what end of the dummery to look through," which according to army logic, made him a prime candidate for photographer's school.

This is the first film-making course Cobb has taught.

Because of his speech background Cobb will have each student director explain to the film festival audience how the film was made. That way they also get public speaking practice.

THERE WAS A TENSE few weeks when Cobb wasn't sure that there would be a film-making course to teach. Mrs. McKnight bought the original equipment out of her own pocket, and when she left we did the equipment.

But the Michigan Council of the Arts came through with a grant which should provide three years of "pretty extensive film making," said Cobb. "Without them we wouldn't have had it."

In the first year alone Cobb ordered \$2,000 worth of cameras, film and editing equipment.



Focusing in on the action is Cindy Van Paris who is participating in the filmmaking class. (Staff photos by Harry Mauthe)



Kris Jandus makes an old man out of Scott Hoenesheid. All she needed was some talcum powder for his hair, mascara for his face and an artificial mustache.



Lisa Patrell holds a clay gorilla in front of the film set.



Filmmaking teacher Dean Cobb talks over the set for the animated save the whale film with Carol Ackerman.



Brian Hoffman and Dave Martin project a film of a cross country meet onto the back of a film box and study it with an editorial eye.



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