

arts/entertainment

'Carrie' author cites small town influence

By Brian McManus

Author Stephen King, who was in Lincoln Wednesday promoting his latest book *The Dead Zone*, said his book *Carrie* is based on his high school experiences.

The author of *Carrie*, *Salem's Lot*, *The Shining*, *The Stand* and *The Dead Zone*, said students in smaller high schools are less sophisticated than their counterparts in the larger schools.

"There are certain social strata that develop in a smaller school that are less likely to be found in large urban schools," King said. "In the bigger school, there are some people classified 'weird', but there are enough of them that they can form their own clique and stick together. In smaller schools, there is often just one or two on the bottom of the pile. They are stranded alone, it becomes a kind of pecking order. Everybody pecked on them but they, in turn, have no one to peck back at."

He said he noticed when he taught high school that the students on the bottom usually ended up dropping out.

"This was the kind of character Carrie was, but I gave her a talent, the capability to turn around and get back at people, which I suppose is pretty Old Testament thinking in a way," he explained.

KING'S BOOKS often deal with the supernatural. He said he writes two types of novels—ones like *Carrie* in which the psychic element plays a part, and books like *Salem's Lot*, "where I deal with ghosts and boogies, which are, I believe, things that most people don't believe in."

In the second type of novel, King said, readers must "suspend their disbelief" to get into the story. If the writer is good enough, he added, this should be no problem.

"But on the other hand, *Carrie* and *The Dead Zone* are both psychic novels, and they're both based on phenomena that were purported to have really happened.

"The idea of *Carrie* was based on a story I'd read in *Life* magazine in '62 or '63 . . . the girl in the article was very much like Carrie. She was from a religious, fundamental family; there was a very strong tug-of-war between her religious homelife and what was going on at school, and she was caught in the middle of it."

"When she reached puberty, all sorts of phenomena started to happen—bottles of holy water would shatter or fly across the room, crucifixes would break. People saw these things going on, including a *Life* magazine reporter. Near the end, about 12 people, including the reporter, saw a console stereo rise up and smash a window. It could've

been a hoax, I suppose, but this was a reporter from *Life*, not the *National Enquirer*.

"ALL THIS PSYCHO-KINETIC phenomena seems to revolve around young people. There are so many chemical changes that they go through at puberty. Nobody really understands all the changes that happen at the time—all those glands are dumping God-knows-what into your bloodstream. So I used this in a book. Most novelists are opportunists. If they see a possibility in something, they'll grab it with both hands."

In King's latest book, *The Dead Zone*, the main character has an accident, and is comatose for four and one-half years. When he awakes, he finds he has lost his girl, his career and some of his youth. He also discovers he possesses a psychic ability, a second sight that can be activated by touching a person or object.

King said the book is based on a man named Peter Hirkos, who is supposedly clairvoyant. Hirkos was in a coma during World War II and after coming out of it had heightened clairvoyant ability.

"My feeling, from what I've seen of people in comatose conditions or with head injuries, is that, if a part of the brain dies, (that's where the title *Dead Zone* fits in), then a fallow or dormant part of the brain will take over to do the work," King said.

"I theorized that in the case of my character, the fallow, awakening part had a heightened clairvoyant sense. The concept may or may not be true, but it gives it that patina of reality."

BEFORE HAVING his book published, King said. "I had various odd jobs . . . everything from doing laundry to pumping gas. Actually, when writing, I preferred this kind of job. You could put your brain in neutral. Then when you came home, you were ready to sit down—you wanted to sit down, and turn on the brain, let the thoughts flow."

"Later on, from about '71 to '73, I taught high school in Maine. It was much harder to write then. I was up in front of everyone talking all day long, and by the time I'd come home, my brain would be pretty numb. I'd look at the typewriter and not want to do anything."

"Of all my early jobs, I'd say pumping gas was my favorite. You could observe people all day long. I love looking at people. It's quite a contrast to this, where I'm the one under the microscope."

King said his current promotional tour for *The Dead Zone* is tiring.

"I've got so many things to do in such a short time."

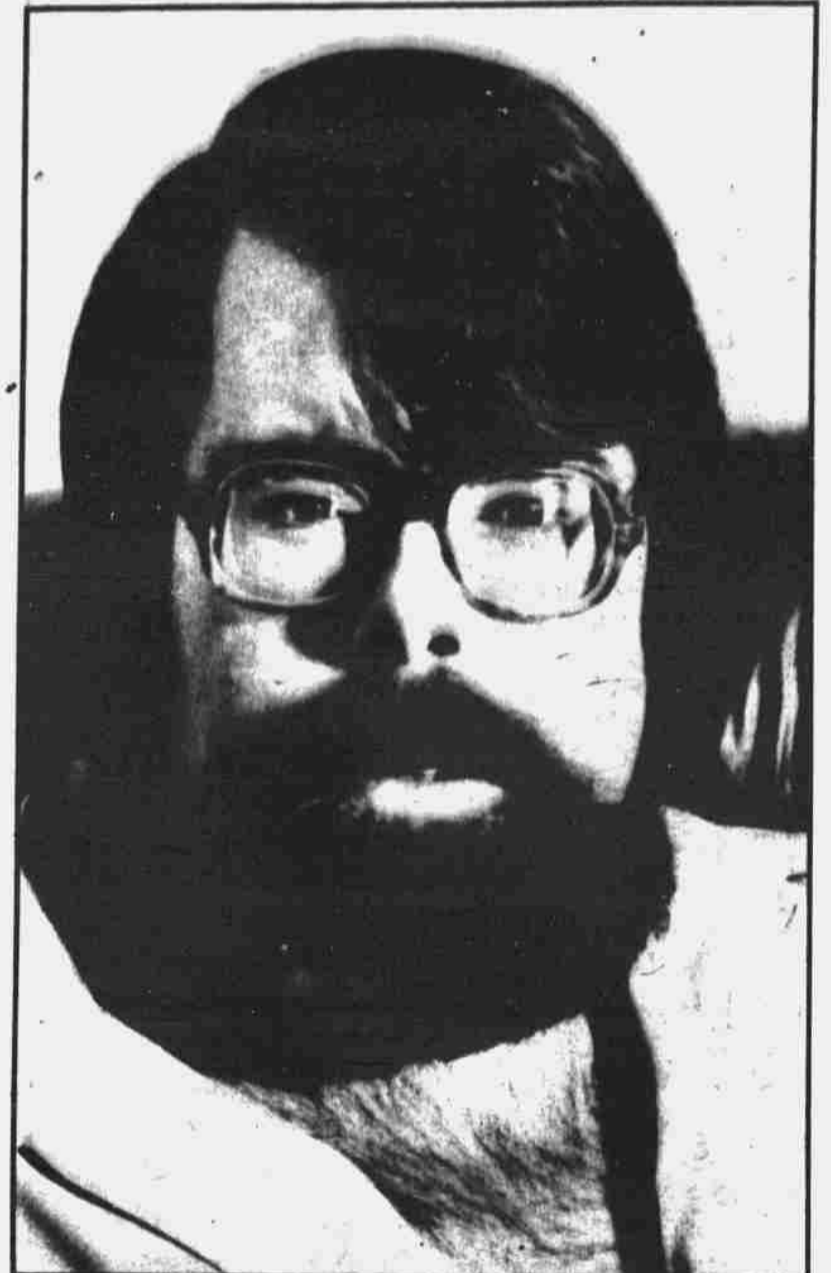


Photo by James Leonard

Author Stephen King

Some aspects aren't bad, like signing books. The people are usually very positive and complimentary. And, as I said earlier, I really enjoy watching people."

"But, after a while, I grow very tired of defending myself. When you're on tour like this, it seems like you're constantly being put in the position of justifying and explaining . . . it would be much easier if I could say to people, 'Look, I just do this for the money', but that's not at all true. Writing means a lot more to me than that."

UNL offers study tours, flights to public for first time

By Alice Hrnicek

For the first time, UNL Flights and Study Tours will be offered to the public as well as to students.

Seventeen three credit hour tours and four non-credit tours will be sponsored by the International Educational Services, the UNL Division of Continuing Studies and the UNO College of Continuing Studies Dec. 26 through Jan. 12.

A number of tours already are filled and others are

reaching capacity, according to Christa Joy, coordinator of the tours.

Joy said that although the public is invited, people signing up for the study tours must have completed usual class prerequisites or have the instructor's permission.

A more offerings have improved the program, Joy said. "This year people will be going to a number of countries instead of the usual Britain and France," she explained.

Five tours have been added, including an Australia-New

Zealand-Hawaii visit. Directed by Ted Doane in the animal science department, the travelers will view livestock and private farms and ranches as well as national and university research centers.

A computer science course directed by Lester Lipsky will concentrate on comparing computer facilities in Great Britain with those in the U.S.

LED BY Harry Duncan and Donald Knoepfler, fine arts, a history of printing study tour will take students to museums and universities influential in printing history.

Bruce Kochis, modern languages, will guide a cultural-historical and language improvement tour through Czechoslovakia.

The only new non-credit tour is the Kenya Safari. Joy said that among the tours which have enjoyed the most popularity, an European comparative economics course is filled and has a waiting list. Conducted by Harish Gupta, of the Economics Department, the students will study economies in Great Britain, Belgium, West Germany and France.

Tours for credit also are offered by the departments of architecture, educational foundations, English, human development and the family, journalism, law, modern languages, philosophy and theatre arts.

Trips to the British Isles, Greece and the Greek Isles, London, Amsterdam, Heidelberg, Interlaken and Paris are available for non-credit traveling.

JOY SAID that the tours give better instruction than their counterpart classes in Lincoln.

"In offering the study tours, if there is no distinct advantage in quality education we won't offer it," she said.

The advantage of the language tours is obvious, she said. "If you're in Paris, you can't help but hear French."

Other tours have aesthetic advantages as well as the value of authenticity in setting, she added.

The cost of the trips, which require a minimum of 10 participants, ranges from \$655 to \$1,850. Round-trip commercial airfare from Lincoln or Omaha, accommodations and tuition are included.

Prices are \$50 to \$150 higher than last year due to airfare increase, Joy said. The tours will all be on regularly scheduled airlines. In the past, chartered flights have saved expenses, but price checks have indicated this is no longer the case, she said.

Registration will be accepted through September. At that time, tours with low enrollments will be cancelled.



Photo by Tom Gesner

The rock group Thrush performed for passers-by on the north side of the Union Thursday. Members are, from left, Jeff Pflus, Sharon Kokes, and Jay Kremer.