

## Leggett presents studies of authors

Writing is a dangerous business. Sherwin Cody, in his *Art of Writing and Speaking the English Language*, (1903), warns would-be authors: "The man who devotes himself exclusively to literature is almost sure to become more or less morbid, and we venture to assert that the successful novelist of today who lives by his pen has . . . a constant fight against morbidity, and one in which he is not always successful."

In *Ross and Tom*, John Leggett presents detailed studies of two authors who fought such a fight and lost—both committed suicide after achieving fantastic success with their first novels.

Ross Lockridge (1914-1948) achieved fame with his first and only novel, *Raintree County*, published in 1948. It was highly acclaimed by critics and won an MGM contest which netted Lockridge more than \$122,000. The day before his book reached the number one position on the New York Herald Tribune's bestseller list, Lockridge killed himself by sitting in a running car in a closed garage.

Tom Heggen (1920-1949) also earned instant fame with the publication of *Mister Roberts* in 1946. Heggen co-authored the play of the same name, and, at the time of his bathtub drowning (he had taken an overdose of barbiturates), he was earning \$11,000 a week from the book and the play, which was a smash hit on Broadway.

## ladd petersen between the lines

Why did two successful and promising writers take their own lives when they apparently had much to be happy about and look forward to? Leggett says that both Lockridge and Heggen were unable to write after their first efforts had succeeded and he blames this on the phenomenon he calls the "bitch goddess."

The bitch goddess, Leggett says, is "the writer spoiled by success, his need to write smothered in a surfeit of reward."

Of course, the two authors had problems other than success. Both, though surrounded by people, were lonely men, as writers tend to be. Both were terrifically egotistical, which a successful writer must be. Heggen was an alcoholic and depended on barbiturates to get him through the long days and the even longer nights. Though Lockridge drank little and used no drugs, he was plagued by worries about how his family would react to his book, which was based on the history of his ancestors' exploits in Indiana.

No one will ever know exactly why Lockridge and Heggen did what they did, but Leggett explains their lives as best he can, and for anyone interested in writing or writers, *Ross and Tom* will prove to be an engaging, though depressing book.

Leggett comes closest to explaining the suicides in the introduction: "Perhaps success had brought them to some promontory from which they could see the whole of their path and from there they had made this appalling comment about it."

Some writers struggle all their lives to get published. They survive endless nights of doubt, guilt and depression. While they suffer greatly, most endure. But, as the examples of Ross Lockridge and Tom Heggen prove, when a writer achieves the success he has always dreamed about, he must not succumb to the bitch goddess—the great American success syndrome for his sweet success will then be cruelly soured.

## Shearing Quintet will perform for Community Concert members

By David Ware

A master of modern jazz will appear this evening at Pershing Auditorium at 8 p.m. when the George Shearing Quintet performs for members of the Lincoln Community Concert Assoc. The Quintet features the world-famous pianist accompanied by four musicians on guitar, string bass, drums and vibraphone.

Shearing was born blind in London 55 years ago and began supporting his parents while still a teenager. Recognizing early the need for a distinctive musical trademark, he developed his singular style, utilizing chords in place of single notes to carry the melodic line.

In 1949, with a newly-formed quintet, he recorded "September in the Rain," which sold more than 900,000 copies, a remarkable sales record for that time. Looking back on the time of his major

success, Shearing said in a recent interview, "Our style was accidental, prompted by the desire to play some good music. . . After the initial accident of the quintet—and I realized what a popular accident it could become—I did everything I could to nurture it."

The result of Shearing's "nurturing" has been the popularization of the "Shearing Sound," accompanied by accolades from critics the world over, as well as by gratifying record sales figures.

Shearing devotes his summers to the teaching of jazz techniques and arrangement at the University of Utah jazz workshop and at the Chautauqua Institution in Chautauqua, N.Y.

The concert is open exclusively to holders of valid Lincoln Community Concert Assoc. membership card.

Serving Steaks, Prime Rib and Sandwiches nightly. Thursday night special on Prime Rib large cut \$3.95 small cut \$2.25

Upstairs enjoy excellent cocktails, wines or a beer in a quiet relaxed atmosphere.

STOP in for lunch or dinner — Enjoy our Sangria!

DRINK and DANCE to live entertainment.

This week enjoy

★ ICEBREAKER ★

in the Dragons Den

open 11 a.m. - 1 a.m. 1023 'O'

stuart

SHOWS AT 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30 & 9:30

IF YOU LIKED

ALEX KARRAS

AS 'MONGOL' IN BLAZING SADDLES

YOU'LL LOVE HIM AS SHERIFF BILLY IN

THE GREAT LESTER BOGGS

THE GREAT LESTER BOGGS

COLOR BY DELUXE AN AMERICAN COMEDY PG

Bob Ridgely Scott MacKenzie Willie Jones Susan Denbo

LYNARD SKYNYRD

plus special guest ELVIN BISHOP

IN CONCERT Thursday Oct. 3rd 8 p.m. at Pershing Auditorium.

Tickets \$5.00 in Advance and \$6.00 at the door.

Tickets available at the Union South desk, Dirt Cheap, Brandies, Miller & Paine, The Daisy, and Pershing Box office.

SHeldon FILM THEATRE

Documentary Films

ANAIIS NIN OBSERVED

A film portrait of a woman as artist Directed by Robert Snyder plus a short feature

ANTON CHEKHOV: A WRITER'S LIFE Narrated by Eli Wallach

Today at 3, 7, 9 p.m.

Admission \$1.25

Sheldon Art Gallery 12th & 'R' St.