

arts & entertainment



McFadden novel 'Serial' 'insult to give, joy to read'

By Mark Young
The Serial, Cyra McFadden, Alfred A. Knopf \$4.95

The Serial is a book to get behind and evolve with. *The Serial* dissects the middle class of Marin County, Calif.

The Marin residents gobble up a candyland of Volvos and \$200 bias-cut jeans. While they stuff themselves with material goods, McFadden's characters put down greed and get into personal growth. Ultimately, this funky middle class lives only to take lovers, yoga and, in the end, each other.

Our guides in this candyland are Kate and Harvey Holroyd. Kate and Harvey live in a "tacky" tract house and bum each other out.

book review

Serial's 52 episodes chronicle Kate and Harvey's attempts to relate and coexist. They can't, but their attempts make for some of the best comedy I've read in a long time.

McFadden, a Marin resident, turns the hype called language in California into a blunt assault weapon.

McFadden's wit bites like a shark. The long gags are timed well and each paragraph thoroughly damns its occupants.

McFadden never pushes her point and the characters are wisely allowed to condemn themselves.

The book peaks when Harvey comes home to a living room full of his lovers and their friends, all of whom are in a lynching mood.

"I hear you. I hear you," Harvey said sincerely. He was trying to remember the enemy avoidance techniques he'd learned in Korea. Could he pull off a combat crawl out the patio door?

"Harvey," Martha said, "we love you, you know? That's why we're here. That's what you've gotta grasp. We really, really love you. We wanna help you."

Harassed at home and exhausted by extra marital acrobatics, Harv loses it.

The Serial has run through six printings since June. The major reason is that it is a damn fine book.

McFadden has cranked out a minor satirical marvel. *The Serial* is an insult to give and a joy to read.

The book's success is due in part to clever packing by Alfred A. Knopf, *The Serial's* publisher.

Knopf choose to market *The Serial* as a glossy, spiral-bound paperback. Each episode is complimented by a Tom Cervenak drawing.

At \$4.95 the book is a bargain. Give *The Serial* to that professor who tries to be with it, without it. Better yet give it to that special someone in your life who slurps down \$1.90 drinks at the Clayton House and babbles about Hegel and Marx.

Liquor licenses renewed despite LPD's concern

By Jim Williams

Are ten Lincoln bars in big trouble? Are they about to have their liquor licenses revoked, forcing them to close? Are police planning a massive crackdown on liquor violation?

No, say City Council and police sources.

Reports had said ten bars might not have their licenses renewed; the Royal Grove, 340 W. Cornhusker; Godfather's, 240 N. 12th; Town Tavern, 1115 P; the Office, 1705 O; the Night Before, 1035 N; Sandy's, 1348 O; Chesterfield, Bottomsley and Potts, 245 N. 13th; the Morocco Lounge, 1010 P; Oscar's, 245 N. 13th; and George's, 2555 Cornhusker. The Zoo, 136 N. 14th, which changed ownership at the time of the controversy, mistakenly was included in some lists.

City Council Chairman Richard Baker said all 10 bars' licenses now have been renewed.

Baker said licenses usually are renewed automatically each year after the licensee fills out a short request form. If citizens, the police or fire departments request it, the licensee can be asked to fill out a long form, Baker said. The long form is the same one used by first-time liquor license applicants, he said.

Baker said all 10 requests for the long-form procedure came from the Lincoln Police Department (LPD).

Trouble spots

Detective Sergeant Don Wilkins explained how police chose the 10 bars on the list as potential trouble spots.

He said the four plainclothes officers on the liquor detail were asked to list problem areas. Of the 15 or 16 nominees, Wilkins said he selected the bars in the list.

Wilkins said the long-form procedure is LPD's only official way to bring problems to the attention of the City Council and the State Liquor Commission.

Baker said the council approved the license renewal requests after the bars' managers discussed problems with the council and LPD. He said he had asked LPD to report on the ten bars every three months, instead of the usual annual report. He said if the reports show frequent violations, the council might exercise its power to have liquor licenses revoked.

Dancers perform

Members of the Raymond Johnson Dance Company will present a free lecture-demonstration in the Union Ballroom today at 3:30 p.m.

Judy Somberger, Kimball Recital Hall publicity assistant, said the demonstration would be a good way for students to learn about modern dance and the Johnson company. She said it also would help people find out if they'd enjoy the company's dance recital set for 8 p.m. Nov. 5.

"Certainly we realize that some violations are going to occur," Baker said.

He said the council would take a harsh view of violations like employees drinking on duty or sales to minors, but would be more lenient on incidents like parking-lot fights that are not subject to control by a bar's management.

No crackdown

Wilkins said there would be no crackdown or step-up in police enforcement efforts at the bars. He said the liquor detail's plainclothes officers usually visit managers about once a month to discuss problems. He said that officers probably would have more frequent discussions with the managers of the bars on the list.

Wilkins said a change in LPD's procedure in reporting incidents at bars might make a difference in reports to the

council. Tom Jelsma, part owner and manager of the Royal Grove, agreed.

Jelsma said that under the old reporting system, police simply kept track of the number of police calls to each bar. Jelsma said that meant if bar management called LPD to help solve a problem, it was held against the management's record. Jelsma said that under the new procedure such calls would be listed in the management's favor.

Jelsma said the council was helpful with his renewal application.

"The problem was the way it (police calls) was reported more than any problems," Jelsma said. "We've had a good working relationship with the police. I don't think the problem is nearly as great as was made out by everyone."

A definition is a definition is a . . .

What is Art, besides the guy who does the shoe rentals at the bowling alley?

Pick your definition and read your character—

a) the making of things that have form and beauty. (You must have had Art Appreciation in junior high, and this answer is just as true as everything else you learned there.)

b) a conscious expression of the tension between the preconscious self and dissonant real-world cultural imperatives; synthesis. (You're a terror at pseudo-intellectual cocktail parties, but you'd be better off spending your time searching shark-infested waters for a case of Canadian Club.)

c) whatever I say it is (You wanna write this column, wise guy?)

d) nothing is Art, until the true Socialist state has purged the last traces of oppressive feudalism from our culture. (Why aren't you standing in front of the Union passing out unattractive literature?)

e) pigeons on the grass, alas.

f) Uh, I don't know. (Congratulations, at least you're honest.)

Unlimited arts

Yes, what is Art? There are the Fine Arts, the Visual Arts, the Plastic Arts, the Art of the Theatre, Conceptual Art, Anti-Art, Environmental Art, Manual Arts, Arts in Transition, the Art of Sensual Massage, Martial Arts, Culinary Arts, the Art of Padding a Column with Long Lists, Non-Art. . . the list certainly is not endless, but it

Jim Williams brain waits

approaches the limit at a rate equal to the square of the number of artists practicing on any intellectual level higher than that of Manfred the Wonder Dog.

There's no reason to suppose the artists have the answer. Once there was an artistic person named Gertrude Stein, best known for being incomprehensible at great length. It was she, in fact, who penned the pigeon ditty above. She also began a poem, "A rose is a rose is a rose," and may have ended it eventually.

Stein once wrote a serious essay. She thought it was an ambivalent prose poem, condemning and yet encompassing the creative/destructive nature of personal and societal greed.

Hysterical farce

George Horace Lorimer, then editor of the *Saturday Evening Post*, thought the essay was the most hysterical farce since the founding of the Democratic Party. He printed it, probably paying Stein a big bag of gold for the privilege. Who was right? They used to say "Ars est celare artem" (they may say it yet for all I know,) which means "Art lies in the concealment of art." Did Lorimer conceal Stein's art? Did Stein? Or did she do the whole thing for the big bag of gold? "Pigeons on the grass, alas" doesn't pay much rent, especially if you get paid by the word.

Which recalls another American female intellect, Dorothy Parker, who presided over a group of shining minds calling themselves the Algonquin Round Table. This merry group heard that some Englishman had made a list of the most beautiful words in the language, corny stuff like "autumn leaves." The Round Table wits thought quite correctly that the Limey had picked words by their meanings, not their sound. They debated several weeks (it was pretty dead around the Algonquin Hotel that season) and finally pronounced the most beautiful-sounding words in the English tongue to be "cellar door."

However, legend has it that Dorothy Parker's own nominee, deftly combining beauty of form and content, was "check enclosed." That's my kind of artist.