

Arts & Entertainment

Award-winning novel a confusion of fact, fiction

By Pat Higgins

"I started out knowing that I was going to write about kidnapping J.D. Salinger and taking him to Fenway Park to see a baseball game," said W.P. Kinsella, explaining the origins of his new novel *Shoeless Joe*.

Kinsella was in Lincoln recently for the Intersections Conference sponsored by the Center for Great Plains Studies. *Shoeless Joe* is this year's Houghton Mifflin Literary Fellowship winner. Previous recipients have included such literary stars as Phillip Roth and Robert Stone.

Shoeless Joe is a totally absorbing fable about classic American myths, specifically, baseball and J.D. Salinger. It is quite amusing and heartwarming — somewhat similar to a Kurt Vonnegut or Tom Robbins approach. Being a baseball fan is not mandatory but it certainly helps.

Baseball the key

The basic premise of *Shoeless Joe* deals with an Iowa farmer named Ray Kinsella who is jolted out of a typically mundane existence when he begins to hear voices. These voices sound like the Holy Spirit in

the form of a sportscaster. These religious pronouncements inspire Ray to do a variety of unconventional, if not weird, activities which tend to be amusing. Baseball is the key aspect of Ray's vision.

"There is something timeless and ritualistic about baseball that makes it magical," Kinsella said. Actually I'm an atheist and am adamantly opposed to organized religion but baseball has a certain religious quality about it."

Includes Salinger

J.D. Salinger, author of *Catcher in the*

Rye and other tales of adolescent angst is used in *Shoeless Joe* as a semi-fictional character. In the book, Salinger is initially skeptical but he eventually joins in Ray's visions of baseball. In real life, Salinger is well known for his desire for privacy.

"I've always admired Salinger's work," Kinsella said. "While I was doing research for *Shoeless Joe*, I re-read all of Salinger's work. In *Catcher in the Rye* there is a character named Richard Kinsella, and then I found a short story by him (Salinger) in a 1947 *Mademoiselle* that had a character named Ray Kinsella. Then I decided to use my name in *Shoeless Joe* to further confuse fact with fiction."

"I spent a few days with the libel lawyers in Boston but since I show Salinger in such a favorable manner I don't think that he would be angry. I would never try to personally invade his privacy."

Baseball fan

Kinsella lives in Alberta, Canada, and has published four collections of short stories.

"I look at myself as a story teller," he said. "I did find that writing a novel is easier for me than writing short stories."

Kinsella is most definitely a baseball fan. He and his wife spend the summer visiting various major league cities to watch games.

"I write about baseball as myth and ritual but I have no illusions about what baseball really is," Kinsella said. "However, we do tend to live by ritual."

Kinsella said that he is a dedicated Yankee-hater and the only rule change he approved of was the American League's adoption of the designated hitter.

"I could have been a pretty fair designated hitter," he said. "I couldn't field, though. They always put me in right field."



Photo by D. Eric Kircher

Novelist W.P. Kinsella relaxes during a recent interview in Lincoln. Kinsella, author of *Shoeless Joe*, was in Lincoln for the Intersections Conference, a writers' convention.

Program, concert highlight weekend

Mankind's search for a cosmic identity is the subject of "Child of the Universe", a new program in the Ralph Mueller Planetarium. "Child" deals with the fundamental questions raised whenever men contemplate their place in the scheme of all that exists. This program was created by Jack F. Horkheimer, executive director of the Miami Space Transit Planetarium. It is a winner of the International Award for Multi-Media and has become known as a "classic" in the planetarium community. "Child" is a favorite of planetarium audiences.

"Child of the Universe" begins Saturday at the Mueller Planetarium in the State Museum on the UNL campus. It will be presented on the following schedule: Saturdays, 2:30 p.m.; Sundays, 2:30 and 3:45 p.m.; Weekdays, by reservations only; call 472-2642 for information.

The UNL University Chorale and the Varsity Men's Glee Club will present a joint performance on Sunday in honor of the 50th anniversary celebration of the Nebraska Capitol. This free public concert will begin at 3 p.m. in the Capitol Rotunda.

The University Chorale, under the direction of Carolee R. Curtright, will open Sunday's concert with "Awake and Arise" by Edward Gibbons, "Fragments from the Mass" and "Alleluia" by Emma Lou Diemer, and "And Back Again" by Dede Duson. The Varsity Glee Club will join the Chorale to sing "Ave Maris Stella" by Trond Everno.

The Varsity Men's Glee Club, directed by Ralph Miller, will conclude Sunday's program with "Christ the Lord Hath Risen" by Chant; "April is in My Mistress' Face" by Morley; "Come Again Sweet Love" by Dowland; "Sometimes I Feel" and "Blow the Man Down", arranged by R. Shaw, and "Jerry", arranged by L. dePaur. The 45-member University Chorale and the 60-member Varsity Men's Glee Club are select groups designed to explore choral literature for treble and bass voices respectively. Both groups perform at Kimball Hall and throughout the Lincoln and Omaha areas.

Salad bar features 80 items

By Chris Hodges

A salad bar for salad aficionados opened Monday in the Colonial Room at the Nebraska Union. The new salad bar is gigantic and features 80 food items.

At \$3.50, the all-you-can-eat bar is not everyday fare for budget-minded students. The food is of high quality and enormous quantity.

Once the \$3.50 has been paid, prepare for a feast. The bar includes the following:

1. Salad — Iceberg lettuce, bib lettuce and spinach.
2. Toppings — Uncountable number of combinations.
3. Bread — White, dark and rye.
4. Soup — Chicken, beef or soup d'jour.



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5. Meat — Roast beef, ham, corn beef, turkey, salami and Branswager.
6. Cheese — Bricks of Swiss, Cheddar and Husker.
7. Dessert — Chocolate or lemon mousse and rice pudding.
8. Beverage — Entire pot of coffee, tea or milk.

The deluxe salad bar was installed in the Colonial Room, southeast corner of the union during spring break. Ron Pushcar, assistant director of food services, said he came up with the idea and hopes it will draw more people to the Colonial Room.

"We're interested in making available every item possible with a salad bar," he said.

Smorgasbord

The possibilities are mind-boggling. This is a smorgasbord that picky eaters might as well avoid. Everyone else will revel in the multitude of baskets, plates and containers piled full of enticing goodies.

Salad, alone, offers many combinations. The lettuce and spinach are crisp and cool. Choice of dressings includes Bleu Cheese, Italian, Ranch, Thousand Island, French and Catalina. For the health-food eater, there are alfalfa sprouts, bean sprouts and sunflower seeds. For the vegetable lover, the bar offers zucchini, pea pods, olives, mushrooms, cucumbers, scallions and tomatoes. Everything rests on a huge bed of ice.

The cole slaw, macaroni and potato salads are bland but creamy. The cherry peppers are mild, and the pickled beets and three-bean salad are slightly tangy. Perhaps the spiciest food item is the marinated vegetable mix — zesty disks of scalloped carrots and chopped celery. The carrot-and-raisin salad is sweet and crunchy.

Without a doubt, the fresh meats and cheeses are the best bargains of the meal. For \$3.50, all-you-can-eat, the Colonial Room blows McDonald's right out of the picture.

Quality meat

This is not pre-packaged meat. The beef is sliced from a roast and rolled into finger-sized bits. The same goes for the ham and corned beef. The turkey is boned and pressed, but it is still high-quality meat.

The cheese is primo. None of the supermarket-grade, pre-sliced cheese that tastes like plastic cardboard. Each cheese comes in an enormous block. The Swiss is aged and flavorful, the Cheddar and Husker are mild.

Now that you've blown your diet, you might as well have dessert. The chocolate mousse is rich and fluffy and not overly sweet. The lemon mousse tastes like fresh lemon, absent of artificial flavoring. The rice pudding is mildly nutmeg-flavored.

All in all, the Colonial Room's salad bar provides a meal that everyone should treat themselves to at least once. Possibly twice. Maybe as often as your budget or diet will allow you to get away with.