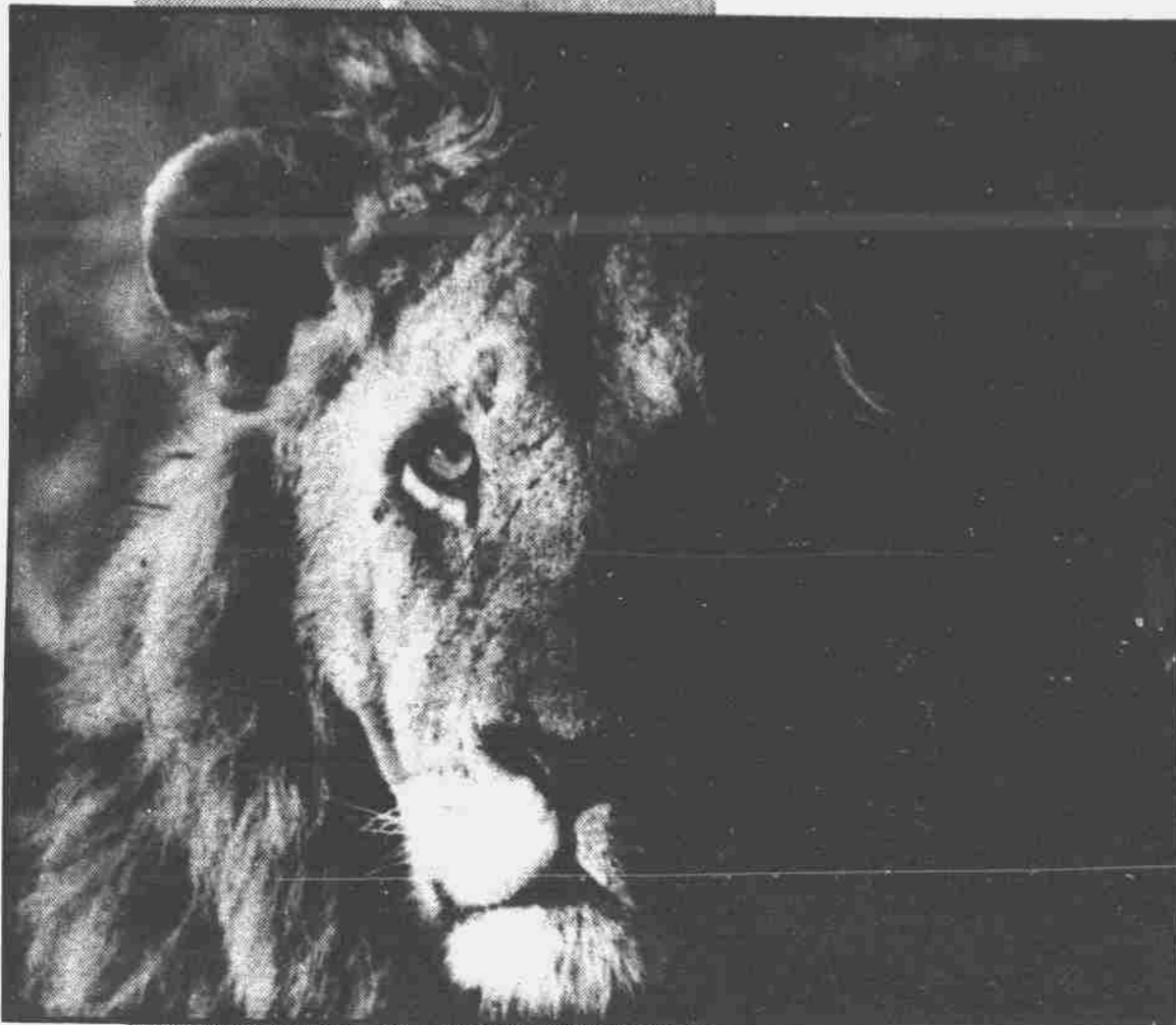


Arts & Entertainment



Photos courtesy of Don Young

Africa thrills safari guide

By Kris Saalfeld

Don Young lives two lives. For 10 months of the year, he coordinates law-related education for the Nebraska State Bar Association. During the other two months, he changes his dress and environment and becomes a safari guide in Kenya, Africa.

Young first became interested in Africa when he traveled there on

Personality

research as a UNL graduate student.

"I spent a year in Kenya, learned Swahili and went on safari. I literally got hooked. When I came back, I felt something wasn't right. I knew I needed to return," he said.

So Young started a business of his own, coordinating and leading two-week trips to Africa.

"I especially appeal to young people, professors and students, because the trip is at an affordable price," he said. "I've sold out every year since I began."

In Africa, Young said, people can see and be a part of nature at its best.

"On any day, we'll run across elephants, rhinos, hippos, monkey, antelope, aardvarks, zebras, giraffes and lions. We've watched 70 huge elephants nursing their young, with no barriers between us except the land. And we've watched a cheetah stalk her prey," he

said.

Many of Young's experiences have been happy. He once traveled with George Adamson, of "Born Free" fame, to find some of the full-grown cubs that had been set free.

"Imagine tracking 6-foot-long, 400-pound killer tigers and finding the remains of their kill from the night before. I was scared," Young said. "But when they saw George, they ran to him and licked his face. Then they fell asleep, purring at his feet."

Some of Young's experiences haven't been so happy.

"Last spring, we were sitting by the side of a flooded river, when the wildebeests came galloping mindlessly toward it. Each spring, they migrate to greener pastures. As we watched, the animals tried to cross the river. For two hours, we watched wildebeests being swept away by the flood. Only a few made it across. Then the vultures, with their 4- to 5-foot wingspan, began to circle the area," he said.

Before he traveled to Africa, Young hadn't touched a camera. Now, he said he loves photography and takes many pictures during his trips. His work has been published, and he has appeared on television.

Young said no one leaves Africa the same as he or she enters it. He says Africa is an ultimate thrill.

"I've been charged by elephants and rhinos in Africa, but that's the thrill of it," he said. "The thrill is to be there. The thrill is the threat of life."

'Dracula' still intriguing

By David Thompson

Who knows what motivated David Richmond and UNL graduate Bob Hall to rewrite "Dracula," one of the most popular stories of all time. Did they think they could improve upon all the other versions of Bram Stoker's myth? Did they just want to make money on the same old bankable plot?

Whatever their reasons, the UNL Theater Department's current production of their play "The Passion of Dracula" is

Theater Review

an interesting one and the story still manages to arouse an audience. This script is interesting in that it emphasized the more complex aspects of the situation that have been overlooked by blood-and-guts productions.

Dracula is not seen as the "I want to drink your blood" ghoulie that Bela Lugosi made famous, or as the toothy Don Juan that Frank Langella made him out to be. Instead, he is a man who has lived for centuries with a habit he can't seem to quit, "driven by the loneliness of immortality."

He is a scholar of English folklore, a man who seeks to tempt people and draw them away from the Christian faith they hold dear, into the mists of icy immortality. He is powerful because he doesn't take hold of minds, but of hearts. As he says to one cross-waving doctor, "You say I prey upon the helpless, while the helpless run to me... Desire is everything."

Christopher Darga's performance as Dracula is well done, although it doesn't deviate too far from any of the other Draculas we've seen. His facial features and his stage presence befit the classy aloofness of the character.

When the doors swing open and he floats in on wisps of smoke, he maintains the dignity of the character without slipping into parody. Lovers of superstition and ritual suspend disbelief when he says he has felt "the dark winds on the edge of time."

The other characters also embody implications beyond the simple case of a blood-sucking count. Wilhelmina, played by Susan Garrett, senses the loneliness of a man who is the last of his species. When

the other characters plan Dracula's death, she says, "You must pity him or commit plain murder."

The rest of the cast are all given their chances to ponder the situation. There is a Freudian psychiatrist who meets Dracula and says, "I should like to psychoanalyze him." There is bug-eating Renfield, Dracula's stargint man, who has "studied with the Master."

The other characters all bustle about with garlic and crosses, trying to save Christianity from the devilish messiah who hovers in their midst. There is something fascinating about a man screaming, "The Lord God is King" in hopes of rebelling against a being that pulls on his darker desires. Aside from a few problems with thick accents and slow pacing, the characters reach a little beyond the drab personalities of the period.

C.M. Zuby has designed a Jacobean manor that frames the goings-on quite well. There are arches, swords hanging on the wall, a stuffed owl, in fact, everything but cobwebs to create the atmosphere. The special effects of the show feature guns, bats, exploding lamps, flaming crosses and even a mouse that misses being a meal.

The problem is that audiences of the '80s, numbed on E.T. and Pac-Man, have a hard time marveling at such games. The last scene of the second act is a sort of gothic OK Corral, with the action staged quickly and cleanly. But instead of provoking the gasps intended, laughs are heard rising from the audience tempered on Galactic gun-fights. Perhaps no one cares if the melodrama isn't granted any seriousness, but it does take some of the fun out of it.

The authors have modernized the script a bit by throwing in enough cultural references for any dilettante to rationalize the fact that he or she likes good old-fashioned harem skarem. William Blake, Hieronymus Bosch, Charles Dickens, Alfred Tennyson, Christopher Marlowe and a reference to the English educational system are all thrown in, all with extensive Bible readings.

Sometimes it's a bit much, but we don't mind because it's all part of the fun, even when the final shaft of light shoots down from the heavens and the doctor says, "It is finished."

We joke about a rainbow appearing in the sky and wouldn't be at all surprised if it did. It's not Eugene O'Neill or Arthur Miller, but for a foray into the past, "The Passion of Dracula" will do just fine.

Disorganization beast tamed

Ever since I was a little kid, I knew that the world was divided into two types of people. There were the clean, organized, efficient ones. Then there were the slob. At age five, I found myself in the second category.

Although my parents sent me off every morning immaculately groomed, I invariably returned much the

recess. I'd have found a way to spill them, of course.

All during grade school, I went through sporadic periods of reform, during which I tried to clean myself up, organize my time and behave like a real live human being. But like an unreformed drunkard, I kept falling off the wagon.

By binding myself to a

Mary Louise Knapp

worse for wear. It would have been different if I'd tried to get dirty like the boys (girls were expected to share in the general American terror of grime), but no matter how hard I tried to stay neat, it never worked. Dirt just seemed to follow me around.

It was then that I acquired my first complex. Not only were my parents and teachers in despair over my appearance, but my peer group also disapproved. I'm still hurt by the girls refusal to share their "Playnts don't spill" paint kits during

strict schedule and a regimen of daily baths, I made it through the perilous junior high years. Being organized was fairly easy, since I had no social life to disrupt my schedule. Being well-groomed was also easy, because I was trying to acquire a social life.

With high school came additional activities, and, yes, even some friends. Three years of efficient, sober cleanliness had paid off.

The specter of slobery was not to be so easily conquered, however. Within

two weeks, my locker was bulging with papers and half-eaten lunches; my pockets were torn out and ball-point pen marks dotted my best blouses. I started showing up late for classes. Homework did not always get done. Play rehearsals started without me.

By the time I was a senior, I had degenerated into a worse slob than I'd ever been before. I rarely attended what few classes I had and spent the ill-gotten free time racing my Corvair or sipping beer in the parking lot with other male-factors. (It's been a few years, Mom, now the story can be told.)

It came to pass that I entered college, full of determination to kill the hydra-headed beast of disorganization, once and for all. The good intentions have remained to this day, but the will to carry them out was weak and has crumbled under the stress of parties and school activities. But from now on, things are going to get done on time. I swear it. This column is coming in a day-early.

