

# Sea journey renews professor's wonder

## UNL biologist's books teaching practical science

By Mark Baldridge  
Staff Reporter

John Janovy is a man with a passion for life. In fact, he's made life his life's study.

A professor of biology at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Janovy is the author of several popular books, notably "On Becoming a Biologist" and "Keith County Journal."

His most recent book "Vermilion Sea: A Naturalist's Journey in Baja California" came out last week from Houghton Mifflin.

In it, Janovy recounts his experiences and meditations resulting from two separate summer trips to Southern California. He went on a quest to satisfy his curiosity about marine creatures and renew his sense of wonder, he said. He went, he said, for the pleasure of discovery.

And he traveled with one other purpose, he writes in his new book — to see a living whale in the sea.

In his book he writes, "We all sit in silence and listen. The morning is dead and calm. From across the glassy surface comes a sound, a deep and mighty sigh — the sound of a gray whale breathing, a sound of great

exhalation that is thirty million years old. How far the earth has come, I think, from the Cambrian seas, how much has changed, how many forms have lived for millions of years, then disappeared forever."

Janovy said he found his Baja experiences rewarding.

"Any time you get to take off for a month and study the things that interest you the most, it's always renewing," he said.

In his writing, Janovy ponders questions raised by human intervention in the environment.

He describes human activities, social and political, in biological terms. They are the result of survival mechanisms sometimes gone awry, he said.

Though he sees humans as "truly magnificent animals," he said he worries about their ability to cooperate for a common good.

"At least at the individual level we have this rational capacity. We have the ability to solve our problems," he said. "What stresses me is that we don't seem to be able to do that at the population level. We don't even seem to be able to do it in a community of more than five or six people."

"You begin to wonder if human groups larger than a basketball team are really able to function very well," he said.

Though his latest book is entertaining, it also serves a deeper purpose. Janovy said he believed science

See JANOVY on 10



Jeff Haller/DN

John Janovy, a professor of biological sciences, often writes in the Nebraska Union to get away from the distractions in his office.

## Reed faces fears, death in uplifting, cool release

### Reviews



"Magic and Loss"  
Lou Reed  
Warner Bros.

After listening to Lou Reed's latest, "Magic and Loss," "Dirty Boulevard" suddenly seems like a nice place to be.

Written for two friends who died of cancer last year (one of whom was R&B songwriter Doc Pomus), "Magic" is a firsthand account of the painful healing process that follows loss. In spite of the somber subject matter, the 14 vignettes that make up the LP manage to be uplifting, and ultimately, "Magic and Loss" is more about living than dying.

Very often, the only thing separating the songs is their titles, which read like beatnik poetry ("Sword of Damocles: Externally," "Goodbye Mass: In a Chapel Bodily Termination"). In fact, every song on "Magic" is subtitled.

Musically, this is Reed's barest



Courtesy of Sire Records Company

Lou Reed

collection since his work with the legendary Velvet Underground, with percussion included on just five of the LP's 14 songs. Mostly, the album contains the jangly guitar work of Reed and co-producer Mike Rathke, and it beautifully underscores Reed's deadpan delivery.

Although "Magic" was inspired by Reed's two friends, it's not fair to say that the album is entirely about

them. Very often, the man is coming to terms with his own fears and disappointments, as he does with the uneasy humor of "Harry's Circumcision: Reverie Gone Astray" or the flat-out anger of "Warrior King: Revenge."

When Reed laments not having had "a chance to say goodbye" on

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## Storyline, music, cast enthralling in 'Evita'

### theater

By Steve Pearson  
Staff Reporter

In scheduling Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Evita," actors with the Lincoln Community Playhouse, 2500 S. 56th St., and director Bob Hall, took a big risk — a risk the cast was willing to accept.

Composer Webber and lyricist Tim Rice's story of the second wife of Argentine dictator Juan Peron is an intense pop opera that requires the utmost in physical energy and vocal consistency. Despite a slow start — perhaps due to opening night jitters — and a few lapses here and there, the "Evita" cast delivered a compelling performance.

The play begins with the death of Eva Peron, or Evita, and then flashes back to the beginning of her meteoric rise from working-class actress to the most powerful woman Argentina had ever known.

Rachel Kornfeld (Eva) takes advantage of a winning voice and a commanding stage presence to claim the stage as her own. She displays a wide vocal range — from the hot dance number "Buenos Aires" to the

tender ballad "Don't Cry for Me Argentina." Her committed performance makes her instantly believable as the fiery Evita.

David Landis appears as the Argentine revolutionary Che Guevara. Though Guevara never met Eva, lyricist Rice chose to utilize his persona as a narrator and commentator for "Evita." Landis maintains a cynical tone throughout his performance and is most impressive when he lets himself slip into an uncontrolled rage.

Kevin Paul Hofeditz portrays Juan Peron with dictatorial flair.

Both Stacy Johnson and Phil Brawner provide excellent support with strong, well-trained voices.

Although the show does not call for a lot of dancing, choreographer Craig Ellingson made the most of the opportunities provided by the script.

But most of all, this was a show of technical triumph. C.M. Zuby's set, a montage of black and white portraits of principal characters, is fabulous. With limited props, the stage is transformed from a movie theater to a night club to an apartment with relative ease. Additionally, a movie screen that is integrated into the set often displays actual photos of the events being described — a mixing of fact and fiction a la "JFK." This effect is

See EVITA on 10

## Guns, ghosts, gangsters don't galvanize slow week



By Anne Steyer  
Staff Reporter

Hopefully the residuals of the Superbowl can tide viewers over because this week is full of mediocrity in the area of home video. Nothing really leaps out to say "Rent me, rent me," although the new Jim Abrahams spoof is somewhat promising.

"The Hitman" (R) Chuck Norris stars in, yes, another action-thriller. Requisite Norris props abound — guns, explosions and violence. (Available 1/29)

"Hot Shots" (PG-13) Jim Abrahams, one of the creators of "Airplane!" and "The Naked Gun" moves to the director's chair for "Hot Shots."

Billed as "the mother of all movies" this "Top Gun" spoof stars Charlie Sheen as flyboy Topper Harley. Longtime screen actor Lloyd Bridges is his incompetent commander.

Together they embark on Operation Sleepy Weasel, a mission designed to strike at the center of operations in a desert kingdom.

They are aided by squad members Cary Elwes ("The Princess Bride") and Jon Cryer

("Pretty in Pink") and Valeria Golino ("Indian Runner") who plays Sheen's love interest.

This spoof contains zingers aimed at some of Hollywood's most popular films, including "Rocky" and a much-needed lampoon of "Dances with Wolves." (Available 1/30)

"House IV" (R) William Katt ("The Greatest American Hero") returns to the now famous possessed house that caused problems for him in the original film.

The "House" films are not traditional horror films. The comedy here is more slapstick than black. (Available 1/29)

"Life Stinks" (PG-13) Director Mel Brooks has created another adult-oriented comedy, but this time he builds it around a serious theme — homelessness.

Brooks is Goddard Bolt, a filthy-rich real estate baron who bets his archenemy that he can survive 30 days on the streets on his own. By his own means without his money, his credit cards or his connections. The wager: half of an enormous parcel of urban-development land.

Lesley Ann Warren is the bag lady who becomes his friend. Of course, she's also the love interest. Furthermore, she's probably the first homeless person who always looks like she walked out of Vidal Sassoon. (Available 1/29)

"Mister Johnson" (PG-13) Director Bruce Beresford ("Driving Miss Daisy") brings an-

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