

'Princess and the Pea' tale retold on stage

BY CHRIS JACOBS

The Star-City Dinner Theatre will open its doors Thursday for "Once Upon a Mattress," a musical comedy that has helped define the careers of Carol Burnett and Sarah Jessica Parker.

This year, however, the lead role (Princess Winnifred) will be played by Suzanne Lee, a University of Nebraska-Lincoln junior music major.

"I think they have a brilliant lead role," said Bob Rook, artistic managing director of Suzanne Lee's

performance.

Produced by the UNL School of Music Opera Program under the direction of William Shomos, professor of voice and opera, the show will run Thursday through Sunday over the next two weekends. The show starts at 7:30 p.m. Thursday through Saturday and at 2:30 p.m. Sunday.

Tickets are \$13 for the performance, \$26 for the performance and dinner and can be purchased in advance by calling 477-8277. The Star-City Theatre is located on Eighth and Q streets.

"It's 'The Princess and the Pea' with a contem-

porary twist," Shomos said of the musical.

"It's simply great fun, a comedy."

Rook, who has worked with Shomos before in one of his own pieces, said he was impressed with the bright colors of the set design, which was built by members of the UNL Theatre Department, and the modern day references Shomos added to the script.

In one scene, characters ask to use a life line when demanded to answer questions in one scene of the musical, Rook said.

"Once Upon a Mattress" opened at the Phoenix

Theater in 1959, propelling a young Carol Burnett to stardom and fame as she played the part of Princess Winnifred. In 1997, Sarah Jessica Parker earned a Tony Award nomination with the role for Best Musical Revival.

Said Shomos: "If I give you a moral, it's going to be too serious and heavy."

Shomos went on to admit a lesson of the story: "Don't judge a book by its cover. We've heard it a million times, but it is, nevertheless, true!"

Shomos' bottom line: "The show is entertaining."

RIGHT: Brandi Michael, 15, Erica Hansen, 16, and Jenna Smith, 15, all of Lincoln, hang out with a group of friends at The Coffee House on Monday night. Smith said the group of friends comes to The Coffee House weekly before going to see movies.

MIDDLE: Sophomore finance major Erica Dinsmore studies Monday night at the Mill. Dinsmore said the Mill offers a pleasant study atmosphere and good coffee.

BOTTOM: Max and Ruby Reis enjoy a cup of coffee Tuesday morning at Coffee Culture, where their son Terrance is the owner.



Old hall changes its look

■ After a two year facelift, Richards Hall is ready for re-dedication and opening.

BY SEAN MCCARTHY

The outside of Richards Hall may be one of the only things that looks similar to the building's original look.

For two years, the building was closed from faculty and students as extensive repairs were made. Asbestos removal and lead abatement began in 1998 and renovation construction started in 1999. The cost of the renovation was \$8.5 million.

Today, Richards Hall is set to be officially re-dedicated. Chancellor Harvey Perlman, NU President Dennis Smith and Lawrence Mallet, interim dean of the Hixon-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts, are among the key speakers.

Along with tours of the building, the Eisentrager/Howard Gallery will be dedicated. The gallery is named after two former University of Nebraska-Lincoln professors, James Eisentrager and Dan Howard. The gallery is comprised of three gallery spaces and is named in recognition of the two professor's donations to the University of Nebraska Foundation.

The new additions to Richards Hall include a kiln pavilion for ceramics and a new sculpture foundry. Joseph Ruffo, chairman of art and art history, said Richards Hall was basically gutted during the renovation period. The biggest challenge of the renovation was to reorganize the building to be more efficient.

"The old building had a lot of wasted space," Ruffo said.

While the inside of the building went through significant changes, much of the exterior to Richards Hall remained unchanged. The shape of the windows remains intact, but energy-efficient glass is now installed in the panes.

Kathryn Scherfenberg, a junior ceramics major, said she liked the new look of the building.

"There's a lot of space," she said.

With the new renovations and added space, the Ceramics Department moved into Richards Hall from its former home at the Woods Art Building. Eddie Dominguez, ceramics professor, said the increased space allowed students to increase the scale of their work.

"It's a very functional building," he said.

Su Harvey-Sorensen, a senior ceramics major, has taken classes at UNL since 1977. She took many classes in Richards Hall and occasionally worked in the basement as the building was deteriorating.

"It was like a system of catacombs down there," Harvey-Sorensen said. "It looked like a scene from a 'Dracula' movie."

Although she loved the design of the basement, she also said it was dark, poorly lit and disorganized. She planned on attending today's reception.

"I'm really glad they kept Richards Hall," she said. "I've always loved this building."

Tours of the building will run from 4-6 p.m. The re-dedication ceremony will start at 5 p.m. in the Richards Hall auditorium.



Story by Chris Jacobs

Photos by Derek Lippincott

Coffee Talk

Analyzing the ever-popular trend of coffee-house culture

Coffee is a beverage – to state the obvious. So why do people come together all over the world and spend time with one another in the presence of coffee?

It's coffee culture – much like the bar or dance cultures with a different face – and it's often ignored as a vital form in the art of social interaction.

Ken Kavanaugh, general manager of The Mill at 800 P St., said there was a trend in coffeehouses over the last six to eight years, but the trend had been a part of our society for generations.

"Once people start, they stick with it," said Kavanaugh, who has been working at The Mill for six years.

Mark Shriner, owner of The Coffee House on 1324 P St., said drinking coffee was a good alternative to drinking alcohol and being part of the bar scene.

Shriner, who bought the establishment in 1990, said the coffee culture was composed of diverse individuals.

Said Shriner: "We attract anybody and everybody – all races, ages, sexual orientations, religious backgrounds ... adults, kids, college students, businessmen, salesmen."

"We don't care what you're all about as long as you agree with us on enjoying a cup of coffee."

Shriner said coffee houses were originally designed as meeting places for conversation, and in England, the tip originated so waiters wouldn't tell authorities what people talked about while enjoying the dark beverage.

Scott Brewer, an anthropology major at Nebraska Wesleyan University, said he had gone to The Coffee House to study, hang-out and have conversations since he was a junior in high school.

Said Brewer on why he liked the place: "This place doesn't have any pretensions. Sometimes I view this as an alternative version of a soup kitchen."

"All sorts of people are coming here – some to just get out of the cold for a while."

Brewer said coffee houses gave him a comfortable place to hang out.

"You have a set of regulars you know, so there's a sense of community," Brewer said.

"It's the Elders Club or bowling alley of younger generations."

Jennifer Kuzara, a senior anthropology and German major at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, said she had been going to The Coffee House since her freshman year in high school because there was nothing else to do in town.

"We don't care what you're all about as long as you agree with us on enjoying a cup of coffee."

Mark Shriner
The Coffee House owner

"It's an opportunity to be sociable ... meet people you otherwise wouldn't meet," said Kuzara, who frequents the establishment almost every day of the school week.

Kuzara's argument for going every day makes sense.

"If you have an hour or two-hour break between classes, where else do you go?" she asked.

Kuzara said she liked coffee because it gave her an energy boost, but that wasn't the main reason she went to The Coffee House.

"Coffee is a side effect," she said. "You drink coffee because you're here."

Shriner said coffee was an important part of our history, citing examples of coffee being banned by kings, women in Turkey divorcing their husbands because they couldn't make a good cup of coffee and popes saying it was a wonderful beverage to prevent it from being cast away by the Church.

Shriner also said coffee was responsible for our 24-hour work days.

Kavanaugh talked about people gathering around coffee pots at work because it was a legal stimulant.

But most people don't look at coffee as a drug, said Brewer, who admitted to not really liking coffee, preferring the coffee house environment instead.

Said Brewer of his past experiences in high school at coffee houses: "I'd come here every Friday and Saturday, play a couple of games of chess and go home at midnight thinking I'd solved all the world's problems."

Coffee might not bring divine inspiration, but it certainly can provide people with an inclusive environment to try.

Said Shriner of The Coffee House: "We advertise to all minorities in town. We're all a member of the same race – the human race that is."