

'Almost Famous' a reality after two decades

By Joseph Guberman

In his Camp Hill home, surrounded by acclaim for his first published novel, David Small is happy.

He's happy about his book's positive critical reception. He's happy the book is in its third printing. And, he's happy that the paperback rights have just been sold.

Small deserves some happiness. After twenty years of writing, and some permanently shelved unpublished novels, he finally has a winner.

His book *Almost Famous* (Norton) is the story of a young baseball star's emotional collapse after a car accident shatters his career. The event is the basis for his theme, "The two death phenomenon."

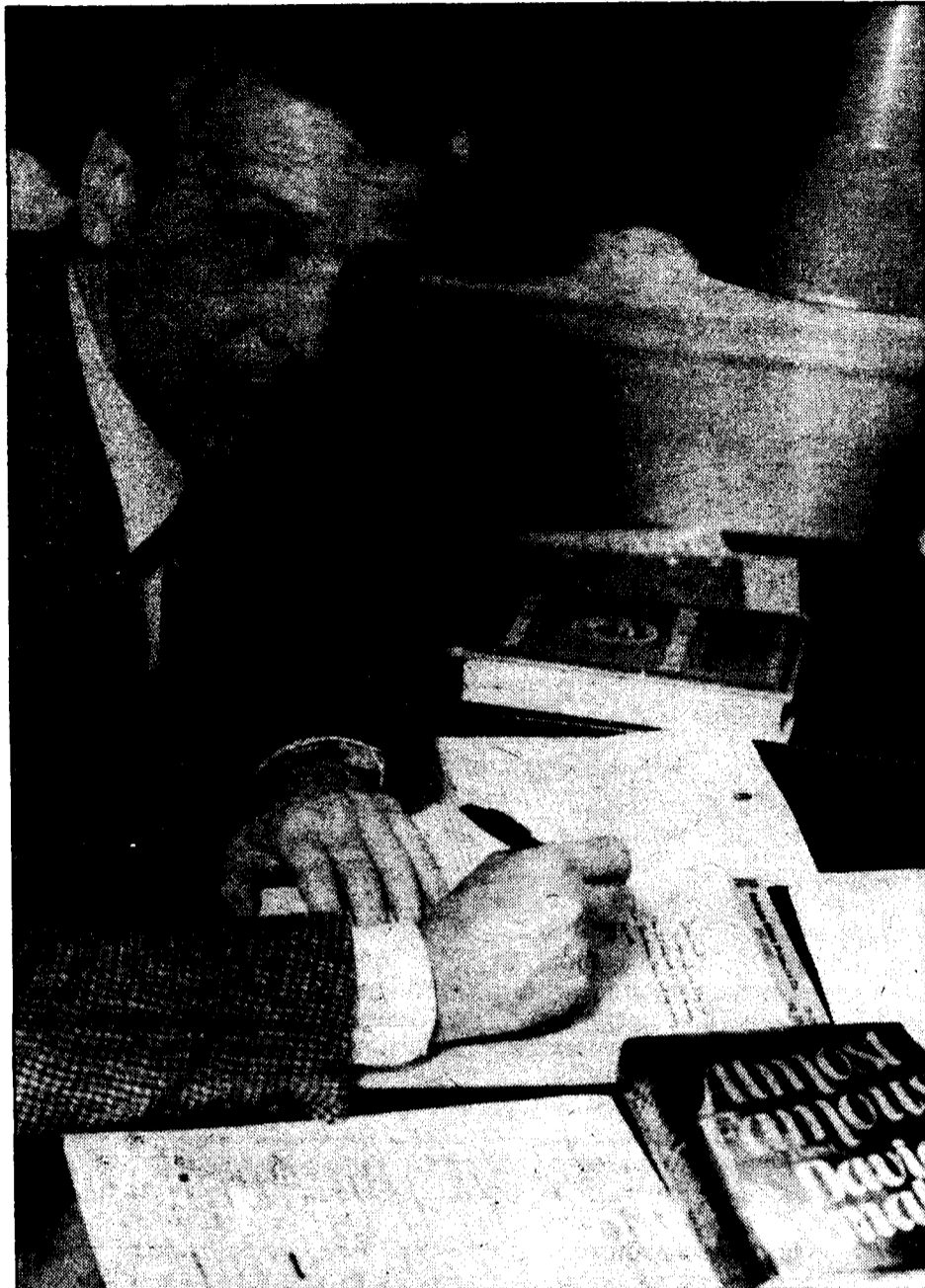
The "two death phenomenon," Small believes, "is that an athlete dies twice, unlike the rest of us who die only once.

First the athlete dies at the end of his career, and then natural death."

Small feels baseball allowed him a unique forum to analyze this because, "baseball is a metaphor. This metaphor can be attributed to my brother and my past." He explains that his brother was the source for the main character, and that a lot of the material is biographical. For instance, the main character's father dies of a tragic death, as did his own. Small feels that all fiction is somewhat biographical. He adds "Making sense out of life for himself and for others is what it's all about."

Small was born in Gardiner, Maine in 1937. He attended Carlisle High School, and received a B.A. in English Literature from Lancaster's Franklin and Marshall College in 1960.

He's always enjoyed writing. However, there was a time in his life where anything he wrote



Photography by Joe Hart

"I don't want to be a celebrity, I want to be a writer."

David Small
author

he hated. He attributes this to a writer's block, and a lack of self-confidence.

Small first began writing *Almost Famous*, while he was still in college. Years passed, and there was still frustration and disappointment. After

years of re-writes he still had no readers.

In his Capitol Campus lecture, at the Annual Book and Author gathering on October 19th, Small told of his long tedious re-writes over a period of years. "After almost two decades, I stuck with this book

because I was so deep in the forest there was really no way out." And, quite candidly Small admits, "I can't live a meaningful life without writing."

Small was enthusiastic about the lecture. In an exclusive interview, Small said, "if you tell others what you've gone through, they may be inspired and encouraged to pursue their own secret ambitions, however far off they may seem."

How many authors like Small receive acclaim for their first published novel? The number must be minute. Even so, *Saturday Review* described *Almost Famous* as a "languid, bluesy novel," and called it "stunning" and "elegantly crafted." *Publishers Weekly* said it was "splendid, compelling." The book has also been praised by two noted American writers, Walker Percey— who described it as "strong, honest, well-crafted"— and Wright Morris who said that Small was "a writer who deserves readers."

Capitol Campus' own library head, Charles Townley, calls it, "Quality work," and said the novel should lead to more of a national recognition.

The author is happy with his work and current home. He doesn't feel that living in Camp Hill will hurt his creativity. "On the contrary," he says, "I believe it's a plus. I don't want to be a celebrity, I want to be a writer, and Camp Hill is a quiet community, and a perfect environment to raise my son."

Since 1963 Small has worked as a teacher, radio announcer, and for the federal government. He currently works for the Pennsylvania Medical Society as Associate Executive Vice President.

Last summer Small was awarded the 1982 David R. Sokolov Fellow for fiction at the Breadloaf Writer's Conference, Middlebury, Vermont. He is currently at work on his second novel which, because of the success of his first book, also deserves readers.

Guitarist to perform

Solo guitarist Richard Metzger will appear at Capitol Campus in the Lion's Den on December 2, 1982 at 12:15 p.m. Mr. Metzger will perform, on acoustic guitar, classical selections including four pieces by J. S. Bach.

Metzger, described by critics as a personable young man with good performer-to-audience communication, enlivens his recitals with brief, sometimes lighthearted, com-

mentaries on the selections. He uses no amplifying equipment so that his sound, pure and intimate, maintains the integrity of the compositions. As stated in a recent review, Metzger's music sounds like music.

Mr. Metzger received a Bachelor of Fine Arts in music from Pennsylvania State University and now teaches at Lehigh University, College Misericordia (Dallas, PA), and at Wilkes College (Wilkes-Barre).

**Guess what...
You CAN
get pregnant
the first time.**

Let's
talk
about it!



TRI-COUNTY
PLANNED PARENTHOOD

234-2468
944-1421

1910 North Second Street, Harrisburg, Pa.
#4 Highspire Plaza, Middletown, Pa.