

# Novelist Says Literature Gives Us Insight Into Ourselves

By Jan Travers

A great novel is a specific kind of creation which explores the insides of social classes, according to Dr. Chaim Potok.

Potok, substituting at the last moment for the ailing I.B. Singer in the Provost's Lecture Series, held a second session Friday, April 9, in the Gallery Lounge for student and faculty.

"The novel is a voyeuristic instrument par excellence," said Potok. "It brings you inside a world you wouldn't go, inside people's rooms and inside people's minds who are inside the room."

Potok, author of the best seller "The Chosen," said that before he finished the first 50 pages of the novel, he had thrown out at least 1100 pages until he felt the voice was right. "When in doubt, leave it out," said Potok, quoting Mark Twain. "If you are not sure of what you wrote, get rid of it and do it better," he added.

Potok, speaking in a deep, resonant voice which sounded like it was reproduced from a compact disc player,



assured the audience that writing is the only profession he could imagine himself in. "It is hard work but it is also exciting. Sure, there is a lot of drudgery involved, but the real satisfaction comes from having written.

Enjoyment is not there all the time, but it is part of the process somewhere," said Potok.

Literature has awesome power, according to Potok. "It is very important to read literature from across

the spectrum. It opens up an awareness of the enormous possibilities of literature. It takes the human experience and shapes it, making sense of it through your imagination. Our lives aren't coherent, they don't make sense. Life is a shapeless amorphous thing.

Literature helps us make sense of it," said Potok.

By reading different things, Potok said we see how different members of our species live, gaining insight into ourselves.

Potok admitted that he, like most other writers, draws on his own life experiences in his work. "The heart of great literature of the western world always resonates life lived and truths touched by individuals." Some writers work closely with autobiographical material while others use it to spark images. "You must be aware of the world to write fiction."

Potok says writers take an experience and put it in a setting rather than replicate it in its original setting. "Every novelist explores his own particular world with the hope that if successful he bridges the world between himself and his readers," said Potok.

## COMMENCEMENT NOTES

Commencement is Saturday, May 16, 1987 at 9:30 am in Founders Hall of the Milton Hershey School in Hershey. Featured speaker will be James H. Guerin, executive chairman of the ISC Group in Lancaster and a member of the college's board of advisers.

Graduating students are to be gowned and in Founders Hall by 8:30 am to receive instructions and be lined up for the procession. You will be walking down a brick walkway wearing a long commencement gown--high heels might not be appropriate. Please leave personal items in your car because PSU is not responsible for items left in the gowning room.

Students or guests with disabilities who may need assistance or reserved parking can contact the Community Relations Office at 948-6272 immediately.

If you are not planning to attend the ceremony, remember to complete a "Graduation in Absentia" form in the Records Office, W-101 or call 948-6020.

## PSU Student to Run in Dauphin County Primary


Jeanette L. Brinker, student government president at Penn State, Harrisburg, has announced she will wage a write-in campaign for Dauphin County register of wills in the Democratic primary.

Brinker, who had received the endorsement of the county Democratic Committee, arrived to file her petition on March 10, the last filing day, less than one minute after the doors to the

Bureau of Registration and Elections had been locked.

After protesting the decision, her case was review by the county commissioners in an emergency meeting. However they voted 2-to-1 to deny her request to be placed on the ballot.

Rather than petition the court to have the commissioners' decision reversed, Brinker has decided to run as a write-in candidate.



**Capital Times**

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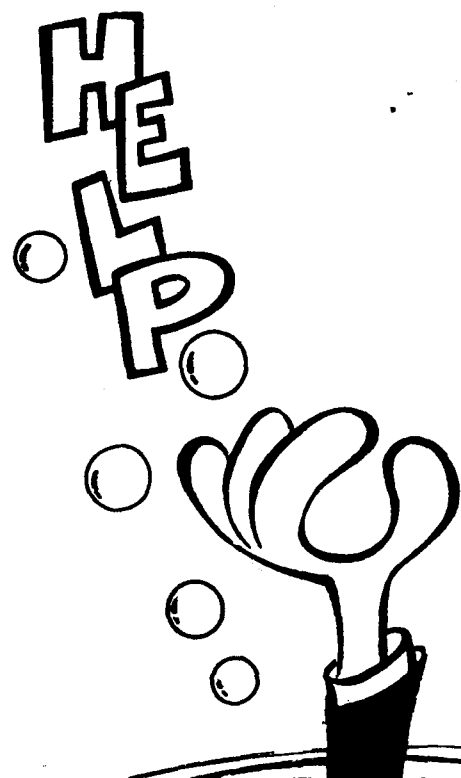
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The Capital Times is planning ahead for next year. Due to graduation, we have lost a number of staff members. If you are interested in joining the student newspaper, please put your name and phone number in our mailbox in room 212. We will need writers, production staff, artists, photographers, business manager and anything else you can come up with.