

A view of recent books — mystery, greed, queens, vans, nuns

When successful authors of good detective stories decide to step out of their proven field and write "significant" novels, they run a calculated risk. Will they be declared important novelists — or will they lose the impact and momentum of their earlier detective stories?

Dorothy Uhnak, author of "The Investigation," was a police officer for 14 years and won two medals for her distinguished service. Then she wrote three skillful detective stories with a policewoman as the heroine: "The Ledger," "The Witness," and "The Bait." (Simon and Schuster, 344 pp., \$9.95)

The inspiration for her new novel, "The Investigation," is obviously the infamous 1965 Alice Crimmins case, in which a mother with a rather loose reputation is charged with killing her two children. In Miss Uhnak's version, the mother is beautiful, blonde Kitty Keeler, whose two small children are first reported missing and then found dead, one strangled, one shot. The police believe Kitty killed the children, especially when they discover she has been

involved in various sordid love affairs with Mafia-type characters. Publicity about the case convinces the public that she is guilty; and an ambitious police captain and a politically-motivated district attorney press the charges.

But Sergeant Joe Peters, a tired police officer approaching retirement and the breakup of his marriage, finds Kitty innocently appealing, falls in love with her and determines to prove her innocence. With Kitty's estranged but devoted husband George and her shrewd gangster friends trying to help her, and Sergeant Peters frantically seeking witnesses who might back up Kitty's story that she had left the children alone the night of their deaths, but had not killed them, the suspense is skillfully built up. Indeed, the ending manages to pack a surprise, even though we may have read all about the Crimmins case.

Lawrence Sanders, author of "The Second Deadly Sin," wrote an arresting novel called "The First Deadly Sin" (which dealt with pride, while the new one tackles greed — and we can fully expect a "third deadly sin" to

give us lust. (G. P. Putnam's Sons, 412 pp., \$9.95) In "The Tomorrow File" Mr. Sanders turned out an intriguing if not very convincing fantasy tale about the future; and in "The Marlow Chronicles" he changed pace again to write a tender and very funny novel about a flamboyant actor facing up to imminent death.

When the famous artist Victor Maitland (he specialized in painting luscious female nudes) is stabbed to death in his studio, no one seems to care. Certainly his widow, a former model, his angry son, his neglected mother and sister, his jealous fellow artists, his greedy art dealer and his sexy mistress shed neither tears nor clues.

Only the ex-Chief of Detectives Edward Delaney, a carry-over from "The First Deadly Sin," and ex-alcoholic Sergeant Abner Boone, now grimly on the wagon, go over all the evidence, re-interview all the suspects long after the trail is cold, and eventually discover an ingenious tax fraud in the art world and an ingenious murderer obviously motivated by greed. (which we already know is "the second deadly sin.") Nor would it be

books

By WALTER SPEARMAN

The Investigation
by Dorothy Uhnak

The Tomorrow File
by Lawrence Sanders

Queens of England
by Norah Lofts

Van People: The Great American Rainbow Boogie
by Douglas Kent Hall

The Eighth Sacrament
by Thomas Cullinan

unfair to suggest that dullness and lack of character depth might also be considered deadly sins!

ENGLISH QUEENS

If you are one of those cats who wants to look at a queen — from Boadicea back in Roman times to Queen Elizabeth II today — just pick up Norah Lofts' handsome new book, "Queens of England." (Doubleday, 192 pp., \$12.50)

In fact, you can follow the entire history of England by consulting Miss Lofts' Book of Queens — and you will find them more humanly interesting than you might have expected.

THOSE VAN PEOPLE

A new American sub-culture is revealed — and praised — in "Van People: The Great American Rainbow Boogie" by Douglas Kent Hall (Thomas Y. Crowell Co. 158 pp., \$17.95). The book is packed full of van pictures.

It's an expensive fad, says Hall, but a very

popular one. Hundreds of thousands of van fans are turning in their low-price compacts and paying \$12,000 to \$15,000 for brightly painted vans, then taking off across the country for new adventures.

EIGHTH SACRAMENT

THE EIGHTH SACRAMENT. By Thomas Cullinan. (Putnam, 224 pp., \$7.95)

Oddly enough, and unbelievably enough, this "suspense story" is about a Mother Superior in an Ohio convent who finds two of her nuns murdered, falls in love with the investigating officer (or is he really an officer?) and is about to run off with him when she discovers that the convent is a center of dope smuggling and million-dollar sales. All that's pretty hard to believe, but then Author Cullinan, a television writer, is also author of "The Beguiling," which was made into a movie with Clint Eastwood and Geraldine Page.

Walter Spearman is a professor in the UNC School of Journalism.



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GPSF to step up activities program

By BERNIE RANSBOTTOM
Staff Writer

Nestled behind the offices of the Yackers-Yack and the Association for Women Students is a tiny, one-room office that houses the Graduate and Professional Student Federation (GPSF).

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Many students are unaware of the existence of this organization. Beginning this fall with a stepped-up program of social activities, however, GPSF hopes to take a more active role in the lives of UNC's more than 5,500 graduate and professional students.

"Most of the programs funded by Student Government are geared toward the undergraduate," GPSF treasurer Jack Molyneux says. "We're trying to develop activities which will serve the graduate students, activities which will bring graduate and professional students together and help them to meet one another."

GPSF was organized in 1971, Molyneux says, and the amount of appropriation per student which the federation receives from Student Government has been steadily decreasing since that time.

He says this means that many of the fees paid by graduate and professional students are being used to fund organizations used almost exclusively by undergraduates.

"Basically, we try to get the graduates' student-activity fees back to them," Molyneux explains. "About two-thirds of our budget (which totals \$19,000 this year) goes back to the departments."

"We have some troubles with that when we try to get money because we're treated like any other organization," he says. Student government asks what GPSF is going to do with the money, but because the 66-member departments spend most of the appropriation on their own projects, the organization has been unable to outline any specific programs in the past.

Thus, GPSF is putting a new emphasis on sponsoring organized activities for its members this fall. "Right now we're just trying new ideas,

feeling out to see what kind of reactions we get to these new activities," Molyneux says. "This is the first time we've tried a really active social program."

"We will be working fairly closely with the Craig social committee. So far, we've tentatively approved \$1,500 for GPSF social activities."

The first of these activities will be a swim at the quarry near Pittsboro on Sept. 10, Molyneux says. Beverages may be provided.

The owner of the quarry has donated it for GPSF's use that day with the stipulation that GPSF provide a lifeguard and a system for checking IDs.

Other tentative activities include a beer night at one of the local bars around Sept. 16 and a bull roast at the quarry Sept. 24. Specifics such as times, locations and directions to the quarry will be included in Campus Calendar announcements in the Daily Tar Heel, Molyneux says.

"If graduate students will be interested, we'll find out soon enough," Molyneux says. "We're trying to publicize these activities well enough so that if people don't come, we will be sure that it was because they didn't want to and not because they didn't know about the activity."

Music Department to hold auditions

The UNC Music Department still has openings in three of its organizations.

Male singers are invited to audition for the University Chorus and the Men's Glee Club. The chorus, a mixed group under the direction of Chip Stam, rehearses from 4 to 6 p.m. Mondays, and from 4:30 to 6 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Robert Porco conducts the Glee Club, which meets from 4 to 6 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays. Interested persons should report to 106 Person Hall as soon as possible or phone Porco at 933-1093.

David Reed, director of the University Wind Ensemble, announced openings in that organization for clarinetists, bassoonists, oboists and string bass players. Performers on other instruments are also encouraged to contact Reed, as certain sections may be enlarged to accommodate newcomers.

The Wind Ensemble is open to all UNC students, although music majors are especially encouraged to try out. Interested musicians should go to 222 Hill Hall to set up an audition time or call Reed at 933-2270.

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