

MAILER



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SUNDAY



The lion roars

Noted author Norman Mailer comes to Wilkes University for a public lecture this week.

TL 11/15/92
Front Page

1E

The literary lion roars at Wilkes this week

By GEORGE SMITH
Times Leader Staff Writer

He boozed with the best of them, brawled with anyone bold enough to block his path and staged a wild, radical campaign for political office in the tumultuous 60s.

He stabbed his second of six wives, endured a brief stay in Bellevue and fathered eight children.

And, in a herculean literary career that has spanned more than 40 years, he authored 27 books and was awarded two Pulitzer Prizes and a National Book Award for his remarkable work.

Norman Kingsley Mailer — arguably the nation's premier journalist and novelist — is scheduled to appear Thursday at Wilkes University.

Mailer, 69, will speak at the Wilkes-Barre university's Dorothy Dickson Darte Center at 7:30 p.m. He is expected to read from his works and respond to questions from the audience. Afterward, Mailer will attend a reception and autograph session in the Darte Center lobby.

"There is no simple answer," said J. Michael Lennon, Ph.D., vice president of academic affairs at Wilkes University, when asked what makes Mailer and his work so extraordinary. "In effect he's responding to American culture. He sees himself as a kind of a defrocked prophet of American life.

so he has a great sense that writers are people who should be confronting or even intervening in history. His idea of a great writer is Andre Malraux, who was involved in the French Resistance and was a minister of culture under De Gaulle and was there, on the ramparts, of both political, military and cultural wars."

So who exactly is this Norman Mailer, the journalist, the political activist, the filmmaker, the "Great American Novelist?"

"I think his identity is that of a romantic, an anti-technological pastoralist you might say, even though he lives in the city (New York) and is a great urban writer," Lennon said. "If you look at him purely as a literary man, his books are virtually a museum of narrative forms. There is no narrative form that he has not written in. So he's important in a purely literary way as a connoisseur of art forms. He's done everything from philosophical dialogues to self-interviews to short stories to novellas to novels to non-fiction novels to political and sports reporting. He's also done poems, plays, and screen plays. Mailer has done it all."

Lennon, 50, has edited several books on Mailer and has known the author personally for 20 years. He claims that Mailer — who earlier in his career was dubbed "America's angry young man" — is possessed with an emphatic responsibility to write and help interpret "the American experience."

The sagacious Mailer is indeed obsessed with

■ See MAILER, Page 3E

Norman Mailer at a glance

■ **Local appearance:** 7:30 p.m., Thursday, Dorothy Dickson Darte Center, Wilkes University, Wilkes-Barre. Free admission. Doors open at 7 p.m.; seating is first come, first served.

■ **Personal:** Born Norman Kingsley Mailer on Jan. 31, 1923 in Long Branch, N.J. Graduated from Harvard University with engineering degree in 1943. Married six times, currently to actress/painter Barbara Norris Church. Has eight children.

■ **Of note:** Authored 27 books; wrote and directed four films: "Beyond the Law" (1968); "Wild 90" (1969); "Maktson" (1970); and "Tough Guys Don't Dance" (1987). Received National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize for "Armies of the Night" in 1968; received second Pulitzer for "The Executioner's Song" in 1980.

■ **Books:** The Naked and the Dead, 1948; Barbary Shore, 1951; The Door Park, 1955;Advertisements For Myself, 1959; Deaths For The Ladies, 1962; The Presidential Papers, 1963; An American Dream, 1965; Cannibals and Christians, 1966; The Balllight: A Photographic Narrative, 1967; The Door Park: A Play, 1967; Short Fiction of Norman Mailer, 1967; Why Are We In Vietnam?, 1967; Armies of the Night, 1968; Miami and the Siege of Chicago, 1968; Of a Fire on the Moon, 1970; The Prisoner of Sex, 1971; King of the Hill, 1971; The Long Pabot, 1971; Malden: A Mystery, 1971; Presidential Grande, 1972; Marilyn, 1973; Genius and Lust, 1976; The Executioner's Song, 1976; Places and Pontifications, 1982; Ancient Evenings, 1983; Tough Guys Don't Dance, 1984; Harlot's Ghost, 1991

Mailer

(Continued from Page 1E)

such an obligation. Mailer not only interprets experience, he wallows in it. Perhaps the only thing that surpasses the magnitude of Mailer's literary standing is the richness of his personal life.

Never far from the public eye, Mailer has been a controversial figure since the publication of his first novel, "The Naked and the Dead," in 1948.

Mailer's passion for life — for violence, alcohol, drugs, extremist politics, sex, marriage, children and very fine writing — has left him with a smorgasbord of experience that borders on the bizarre.

Yet unlike other American writers he has managed to embrace these experiences both objectively and subjectively. The result has been a stunning array of books which have profoundly affected journalism, literature, and America's vision of itself.

In 1955, Mailer co-founded and bestowed a name upon The Village Voice.

In 1960, a drunken Mailer stabbed his wife, painter Adele Morales, with a penknife at a turbulent party. No charges were



Norman Mailer
Coming to Wilkes University

fled, but a stint in a psychiatric hospital followed.

Mailer chose newspaper columnist Jimmy Breslin as his running mate in the 1969 New York

City mayoral election. The Mailer-Breslin ticket finished fourth in a field of five.

In part, the political failure in '69 may have been because his secessionist platform required that New York City become a singular entity, the 51st state.

Muhammad Ali — and boxing — also fascinated the pugilistic Mailer. He published "The Fight" in 1975; the account of the celebrated Ali-Frazier bout in Africa elevated sports writing to new heights.

Mailer met convicted murderer Henry Jack Abbott, who was serving time in an Illinois penitentiary, in 1979 while completing "The Executioner's Song."

Mailer was helpful in getting Abbott's writing published and in securing the convict's release from prison.

Shortly after Abbott was granted freedom, and his "In the Belly of the Beast" was published in 1981, Abbott fatally stabbed a New York City waiter.

Weighty works

In 1983 Mailer published the difficult, ponderous, 709-page

"Ancient Evenings," a fictional account of Egypt in 1300 B.C. Oddly, this is his only book that is not concerned with American culture.

"Harlot's Ghost" followed in 1991. The weighty, 1,310-page novel that rests 1/10th of an ounce shy of four pounds on a U.S. Post Office scale, is concerned with the moral integrity of the CIA. The massive book ends unexpectedly with the words "TO BE CONTINUED." Mailer claims a sequel can be expected.

Has Mailer's very public, very turbulent personal life affected the popularity of his work?

Lennon says it has.

"I think it cuts both ways. I think it has hurt him and it has helped him," Lennon said. "A lot of people have decided that he is merely a public figure, so they don't take him seriously. There is a tradition in American culture that writers are retiring, that they are shy, that they put all of their energy into the written page. Mailer destroys those myths."

(Ernest) Hemingway. (Mark)

Twain ... They were writers who were out there. At the opposite end of the spectrum are (J.D.) Salinger and (Thomas) Pynchon, writers who are never seen. Mailer is obviously close to the other end. So it helps him because people recognize him. But there is also the negative: people think Mailer is somehow trying to sell books by being on the David Frost Show rather than by writing better."

Don't count him out

Mailer is on the cusp of age 70, a time when most people willingly forgo their life's work and retire to the comfort of a hammock. Will this roguish literary lion in winter, this gray-haired grand old man of American letters now slow down a bit?

Don't bet on it: the bell signaling the end of Mailer's 12th round with the world has yet to chime.

He recently completed a biographical study of Pablo Picasso, which is awaiting publication, and in the last two weeks has re-

galed in the limelight of a few speaking engagements after returning from a curious visit to Russia.

And there is always the presumably ponderous sequel to "Harlot's Ghost," which Mailer insists he will write.

"I think he's very serious about finishing it," Lennon said of the "Harlot's Ghost" sequel. "The next one will be about Vietnam. Vietnam, Watergate and the love affair. Now we have to find out what happens between 1967 and 1983. They are going to be the years of Vietnam, Watergate, and Nixon's resignation."

The ebullient Norman Mailer, whoever he is, can't be counted out just yet.

Mailer's appearance at Wilkes University Thursday is free and open to the public. Doors open at 7 p.m. Seating is available on a first come, first served basis.

Mailer will be there, on stage, symbolically naked perhaps; certainly no ghost, assuredly no literary harlot, and absolutely not dead.

Literary lion befriends Wilkes prof

By GEORGE SMITH

Times Leader Staff Writer

WILKES-BARRE — J. Michael Lennon lounges comfortably in his spacious, second-floor office in elegant, baronial Weeknesser Hall on the Wilkes University campus.

Lennon, tall, august, gray-haired and gray-bearded, is the university's vice president of academic affairs.

The 50-year-old professor of English has personally known prodigious American author Norman Mailer — who will be appearing at the school's Dante Center on Thursday, Nov. 19 — for more than 20 years.

Lennon did not seem to resent the intrusion by this interviewer interested in discussing Mailer. His eyes flamed and his voice became animated as he explained how he came to befriend the controversial writer who has been awarded two Pulitzer Prizes and the National Book Award.

"It was a professional interest at first because I wrote my doctoral dissertation on him," said Lennon, who received his Ph.D. from the University of Rhode Island in 1975. "While I was in the throes of writing the dissertation — which is always a great, earth-shattering, climactic event in the life of an academic — I wrote him a letter. That was in 1971. I told him about my ideas, and gave him a sense of how I saw his work unfolding and what my analysis of it was. The big question then was how could a novelist write non-fiction? I didn't see it that way, as an either/or proposition, like many Mailer critics do."

"He wrote back, and we corresponded for a while, maybe a year. Then I moved to Illi-

"Mailer's a real political junkie."

J. Michael Lennon

Wilkes professor

nois and was in my first full-time teaching job and was teaching a Norman Mailer seminar. He was going to appear at another university, Western Illinois University. That's when I first met him in the flesh, in 1972. We met, I went to his lecture and the reception, then we ended up going to a bar and talking until two o'clock in the morning."

Lennon, the energetic academic, and Mailer, the writer who feeds on experience, obviously had a lot of common. The men discussed books, literature, and politics.

"It was in the middle of the McGovern campaign, just before the election. Mailer had just written a book on the campaign called 'St. George and the Godfather.' We talked about that. Mailer's a real political junkie."

Lennon's interest in and friendship with Mailer has proven academically fruitful. He has edited a book of essays on Mailer ("Critical Essays on Norman Mailer"), two books of interviews ("Conversations with Norman Mailer" and "Pontifications: Interviews with Norman Mailer"), and edited "Pieces and Pontifications," a book in which Mailer essays are followed by a series of interviews.

Lennon shares a certain fellowship with Mailer beyond literary interest that may have enhanced his fascination in the author's

work. Both men served in the military, and both men are keenly interested in politics.

"Politics? Definitely," Lennon said. "We have a real kinship because of politics. Mailer loves the city of Chicago, and I spent a lot of time there involved in politics. He was always curious about what was going on in the Windy City and what Mayor Daley was doing."

"The military aspect is a little different because he was an enlisted man and I was an officer. He always ribs me about that," said Lennon, who served as gunnery officer aboard the USS Uvalde and as an instructor at the Naval OCS in Newport, Rhode Island.

In contrast, Mailer was drafted and served in the U.S. Army in the Philippines and Japan as an artillery surveyor, rifleman, clerk and cook beginning in 1944.

Mailer must hold Lennon in high esteem, because Lennon has been named one of five of Mailer's literary executors.

"That means we enjoy the privilege of carrying boxes of his work from his house to the vault (where Mailer's work is stored)," Lennon joked. "It means his secretary or he will refer questions to me about things he was written. I get calls from people who need dates, or information about his work. Eventually, I suppose, the notion is that I'll have a hand in watching over his literary estate to make sure that it's treated properly. Essentially it involves marshaling Mailer's work, because he's not at all interested in the past."

Lennon and his wife, Donna, a political science professor at Penn State University's Lehman Campus, have three grown sons. The Lennons live in Shavertown.

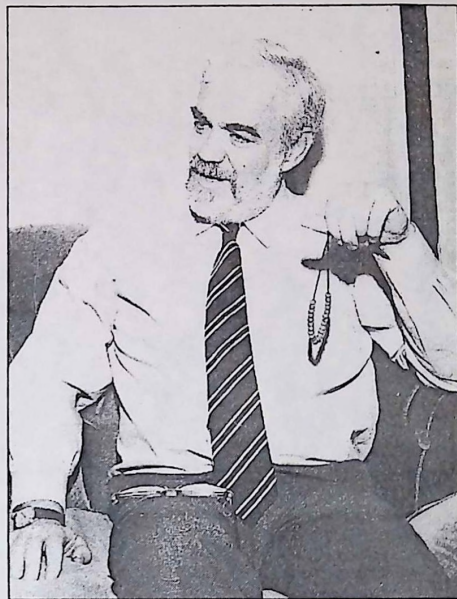


PHOTO COURTESY WILKES UNIVERSITY

■ Wilkes Professor J. Michael Lennon has known Norman Mailer for more than 20 years. The author speaks at Wilkes Thursday.

MUTUAL
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NOV 15, 1992

THE SUNDAY DISPATCH
PITTSBURGH, PA

SUN - 54.000

Norman Mailer To Read At Wilkes University

^{225 PF}
The Wilkes University English Department will host a public reading by American novelist Norman Mailer on Thursday, Nov. 19, at 7:30 p.m. in Dorothy Dickson Darte Center for the Performing Arts. A reception, sponsored by the Jewish Community Center, and book signing will follow Mailer's reading. Admission is free. Limited seating is available. The doors will open at 6:30.

A library exhibit and panel discussion are also scheduled to introduce the community to the work and life of Mailer. On display at the E.S. Farley Library on the Wilkes campus now through Nov. 18th, the exhibit includes a variety of articles and reviews, gallery posters, handwritten manuscripts, first editions, photographs, journalistic articles

and film scripts.

The panel discussion set for Wednesday, Nov. 11, at 7 p.m. also in the Farley Library, will be an open discussion of Mailer conducted by Wilkes University faculty and Dr. J. Michael Lennon, Mailer scholar and vice president for academic affairs.

Mailer's first novel, *The Naked and The Dead*, established his reputation as a major American writer when it topped the best seller list for eleven weeks after publication in 1948.

Among his best known novels are *The Deer Park* (1955), *An American Dream* (1964), *Why Are We In Vietnam?*, nominated for a National Book Award, and *The Executioner's Song*, which won a Pulitzer Prize in 1979.

After founding *The Village Voice* in 1955, Mailer adapted his novelistic skills to journalistic essays and reporting. His mastery of the non-fiction narrative was recognized when *Armies of the Night* (1968) won both the Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award. Over the past 40 years he has written regularly for *Esquire*, *Dissent*, *The Paris Review* and many other periodicals.

His most recent novels include *Ancient Evenings* (1983), *Tough Guys Don't Dance* (1984), and *Harlot's Ghost* (1991).

This program is supported in part by the Pa. Humanities Council, a statewide organization funded partially by the National Endowment for the Humanities. It does not necessarily express the views of the council or the endowment.

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NOV 15, 1992

POCONO RECORD
STROUDSBURG, PA

AM - 23,839

SUN - 23,934

Norman Mailer to read at Wilkes

WILKES-BARRE — Norman Mailer will give a public reading at 7:30 p.m. on Nov. 19 in the Dorothy Dickson Darte Center for the Performing Arts at Wilkes University ^{225 PF}

A reception, sponsored by the Jewish Community Center, and book signing will follow.

Admission is free. The doors open at 6:30 p.m.

The university's English Department is hosting the reading.

MUTUAL
PRESS CLIPPING SERVICE

NOV 17, 1992

THE DANVILLE NEWS
DANVILLE, PA

PH - 4.100

Mailer to give ²²reading at Wilkes

WILKES-BARRE — Novelist Norman Mailer will host a public reading Thursday at 7:30 p.m. in the Dorothy Dickson Dart Center for the Performing Arts at Wilkes University.

A reception and book signing will follow Mailer's reading. Admission is free. Seating is limited and doors open at 6:30.

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DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

NOV 18, 1992

THE SCRANTON TIMES
SCRANTON, PA

PM - 56,000

Thursday
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MEETINGS 225FF

✓ Lackawanna Adoptive Parents, 7 p.m., first floor conference room, Lackawanna County Administration Building, 200 Adams Ave.

✓ A.C.T. business meeting, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Wesley Village Retirement Community, Pittston. Jean Roman will be speaker.

✓ Lower Lackawanna Valley Sanitary Authority public work session, 7 p.m., Authority Building, Coxton Road, Duryea. The public is invited to discuss the preliminary 1993 budget.

✓ Compassionate Friends, 7 p.m., CMC Nurses Residence. Mary Loufer will present "How To Get Through The Holidays."

✓ Keystone Junior College Book Discussion Group, 7 p.m., Faculty Lounge, Miller Library. "The Thief and the Dogs" by Najib Mahfuz will be discussed.

✓ Rail Trail Council, 6 p.m., Two Guys, Forest City. The public is invited to attend. The group's purchase of trackbed from D&H Railroad will be discussed.

✓ Century Club, 2 p.m., at the club. Speaker will be Timothy B. McGrath, director of the State Office for Northeastern Pennsylvania for Senator Harris Wofford. He will present "The Federal Government's Role and its Impact On Senior Citizens."

✓ French Conversation Club, 8 p.m., Kostka House, University of Scranton. Call Pat at 563-1401 for reservations. Crepes will be served.

✓ Greater Scranton Insurance Association, 5 p.m., Sebastianelli's Restaurant. Elizabeth Jackson will discuss women in management.

✓ Overeaters Anonymous, 2 p.m., St. Paul's School, 1525 Penn Ave.

SPECIAL EVENTS

✓ Polish Union of the USA straw and paper ornament workshop, 7 to 9 p.m., St. Michael's Hall, 1703 Jackson St. The public is invited. There is no charge except an initial fee for art supplies. Make reservations with Terri Rumensky at 489-6877.

✓ Wilkes University will present a reading by Norman Mailer at 7:30 p.m. in the Darte Center for the Performing Arts.

✓ Scranton Christian Women's Club "That Finishing Touch" luncheon, 11:30 a.m., Grand Plaza Hotel, Dickson City.

✓ Scranton After Five Club "Bushels of Goodies" dinner meeting, 6:30 p.m., Grand Plaza Hotel, Dickson City. Cost is \$7.50. Presentations by Barbara Brown and Lou Rickard will be featured.

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ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL

Norman Mailer to give public reading

The Wilkes University English Department will host a public reading by American novelist, Norman Mailer, Thursday, Nov. 19 at 7:30 p.m. in the Darte Center.

A reception, sponsored by the Jewish Community Center, and book signing will follow Mailer's reading. Admission is free, but limited seating is available. Doors will open at 6:30 p.m.

CV 11/19/92.

CV 11/20/92
Citizens' Voice, Wilkes-



Lydel Sims

Watch Your Language

Norman Mailer may have coined the word 'factoid'

SIR: I have noticed that CNN has a short segment titled "FACTOID." I cannot find the word in my dictionary, though I do find that "-oid" is a suffix meaning like or resembling. How is something resembling a fact? I thought something either was or wasn't a fact. — CINDY B.

A: Not always. Norman Mailer, who is said to have coined the word, wrote that factoids are "facts which have no existence before appearing in a magazine or newspaper, creations which are not so much lies as a product to manipulate emotion..." As you suggested, factoids are of great usefulness during political campaigns.

By now, "factoid" is sometimes used to mean a minor or insignificant fact.

SIR: In various periodicals in recent years I have seen the word "redux." I can't find it in any dictionary. What does it mean? — M.K.

A: No, it's not in many dictionaries. It means brought back, returned to a healthy state. The "dux" is Latin for leader. If a candidate named Smith had been far behind in the polls, but somehow won reelection, you might refer to him as Smith redux. Sounds grand, doesn't it?

SIR: If words like already, almost, although, always and albeit are all right, why isn't "alright" all right? — HOLLY D.

A: Just because it isn't, that's why. Your mistake is in thinking there's logic in spelling. There isn't, of course, so never write "alright" when you mean "all right." It's simply not all right at all.

CLEAR PREFERENCE of the week, expressed by Jonathan G.: "A fast-food place in my town has a sign that says, 'For Speedy Service, Please Combine Orders Together.' I personally would prefer to combine orders separately."

(Send questions, comments, and good and bad examples to Lydel Sims, Watch Your Language, 366 S. Highland, Apt. 410, Memphis, Tenn. 38111. If you quote a book, please give author, title and page number. Sorry, but questions can be answered only through this column.)

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NOV 20 1992

OFFICE OF VICE PRESIDENT
FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Author Mailer offers his views on life

By DENISE PAVLOSKI
Citizens' Voice Correspondent

American novelist Norman Mailer appeared before a packed house at the Wilkes University Darte Center Thursday night for a public reading of three of his works.

Mailer established his career as a famous American writer at the age of 25 when his first novel — "The Naked and the Dead" — remained on the best seller list for 61 weeks after its 1948 publication. Mailer's best known novels include "An American Dream," "Why Are We in Vietnam?" and "The Executioner's Song," which won a Pulitzer Prize in 1979.

After co-founding the Village Voice in 1955, Mailer extended his journalistic skills to journalism. His non-fiction narrative "The Armies of The Night" (1968) won both a Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award.

Mailer was introduced by Dr. John Michael Lennon, Wilkes Vice President for Academic Affairs at Wilkes, who described Mailer as the "most prolific writer since

Henry James" and a "connoisseur of narrative forms." Lennon said Mailer's total body of work composes a "museum of narrative forms."

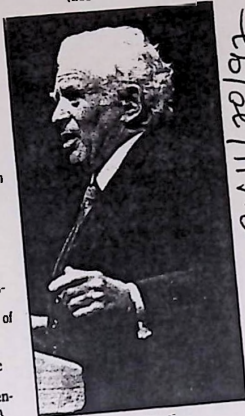
The author began by saying the unspoken theme for the evening would be "Art Saves Lives."

Mailer first read from his essay published in the October issue of "The New Republic" on the 1992 Republican convention. In this essay, Mailer created the scene of 4000 "wealthy Republicans" at the Houston Astrodome. Barbara Bush was described as the "queen of America" who could front any confrontation and who could address tens of thousands of people as if they were two or three.

Mailer went on to describe the AIDS issue at the Republican convention. "People with HIV have not entered some alienated state of being, they are human," Mailer read from his work.

Mailer described the Republican convention as "contradictory" with mixed messages with a mention of Dan Quayle "relaxed" in fear of getting his picture in the newspapers.

The novelist followed his first work by questions welcomed from the audience.
(See MAILER, page 37)



Norman Mailer

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NOV 20 1992

OFFICE OF VICE PRESIDENT
FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Mailer

from page 1

When asked how he was inspired to become a writer, Mailer answered "When I was an adolescent, I wasn't really good at anything." The first writing class Mailer took at Harvard struck him as "exciting."

"I followed it thereafter," Mailer described his transfer from Brooklyn to Harvard to the army as a "shock."

The novelist encouraged hopeful writers to keep writing. "There is no royal road to becoming a writer," said Mailer. He described the use of too many adjectives as "desperately dangerous."

"It is very hard to write a truly good novel," he said, "It's one of the most difficult acts known to mankind." The two key elements to becoming a successful writer, according to Mailer, are luck and character. "Character is terribly important to recover from disappointment."

The novelist said the three biggest diseases of America today are TV, advertising, and plastic. He said advertising encourages too many people to lie.

"A good novel grows out of itself," said Mailer, "It's very much like falling in love, it only happens a few times in life."

Mailer then read from two of his other works. "Harlot's Ghost", published in 1991, a story about the CIA where the novelist joked that it was the first time he created a character brighter than himself.

Mailer's third reading was from "Ancient Evenings," published in 1983. The novelist spent 11 years writing this novel about Ancient Egypt because he was "fascinated" with the Ancient Egyptian death customs much more "dy-

Egyptians that they enter into "extraordinary adventures" after death and their only chance in the underworld was if they had enormous wealth. This novel included vivid and squeamish details of the Egyptian death customs.

An exhibition of material on the

life and works of Norman Mailer were on display in the Wilkes Lobby and a reception was held following the reading sponsored by the Jewish Community Center.

Mailer signed all books from the huge crowd of fans and American writer hopefuls at the reception following the readings.

NOV 20, 1992

HAZLETON STANDARD
SPEAKER
HAZLETON, PA

AM - 24.441

Mailer older, not mellower

By KENT JACKSON
Standard-Speaker Staff Writer

Norman Mailer, the writer-battler, planted himself at the podium, back arched, chest barreling forward, and braced for the questions.

A questioner, he warned earlier in the night, has to be an artist to cause him visible discomfort on stage.

One question was designed to paint Mailer into a corner: "Are you still negative against women?"

Mailer, who debated with feminists in the early 1970s, brushed off Thursday's question on sexism.

"You tell me?" Mailer questioned the questioner in a tone that drew laughs.

The woman, one of the more than 500 people sitting in what Mailer called "a comfortable room" of the Dorothy Dickson Darte Center at Wilkes University, wasn't sure how Mailer felt about women these days. He might have grown more positive toward them, she said she had heard.

"Tell us what you've heard," Mailer said in the same tone, drawing the same laughs.

"I have five daughters and have been married six times," Mailer continued. "The only trouble I've had with women is I started with an extraordinarily elevated view of them. I've come to the conclusion that women are no better than men, but I have nothing against them."

Except perhaps Marilyn Quayle, whom he skewered in an article about the Republican National Convention that was published in the October issue of the *The New Republic*. During her speech at the convention, Quayle smiled at the wrong times — "on the beat, off the beat," says the article, one of three works from which Mailer read on Thursday.

But had he mellowed? asked another spectator during the dialogue that interrupted the readings.

"I haven't gotten mellow. I've gotten older," Mailer said.

True, his suit vest stretched as much at the stomach as at the chest. His curls, combed back, have whitened since the jacket photo of his first book, *The Naked and the Dead*, a World War II novel and national bestseller.

But his energy has surged.

In the 44 years since *The Naked and the Dead* appeared, Mailer has written, by the most generous count, 48 books. The precise number is subject to interpretation because many books are excerpted and reprinted, said Wilkes vice president J. Michael Lennon, who wrote his doctor's thesis on Mailer and invited Mailer to the university.

Mailer's writing takes many forms: novels, journalism, poems, essays, interviews, screen plays. He also acted, directed, and co-founded the *Village Voice* newspaper in New York, where he once ran for mayor.

Such energy may be a divine gift, according to beliefs of ancient Egyptians that Mailer described before reading from his novel about their culture, *Ancient Evenings*.

The passage described perceptions, perhaps from a soul, as a body was prepared for burial.

"How different my life seemed to my liver," Mailer read.

Mailer's liver, however, seems active as ever.

"I'm incredibly angry," he said. "... The thought of how this country has been wasted never fails to get me infuriated."

Mailer pumped bile on government, television, even plastics — the "excrement" of the oil industry, he said.

The Cold War, he said, could have ended 10, maybe 20, years earlier. The Soviet Union had become a "Third World nation," ready to crumble even without the final push from the Reagan administration's military spending. While pushing the Soviets, the U.S. piled its own debt as Germany and Japan prospered.

No fan of the Republicans, as Marilyn Quayle can attest, Mailer likes Democratic president-elect Bill Clinton. He compared Clinton's dedication to that of Picasso, an accomplished painter as a child. Clinton wanted to be president since a teen-age meeting with John F. Kennedy.

"I don't like what (Clinton) inherits at all," Mailer added.

The inheritance includes television, which Mailer said Americans watch more than any other people. Television, he said, disrupts the thinking of viewers every seven minutes with commercials, which encourage people to lie and show American companies have become more excited about marketing than manufacturing.

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DEC 2 1992
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1000 N. 10TH ST.
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19107

Mailer's older, but still breathing fire

■ Pulitzer Prize winning author tells Wilkes crowd he still means every agitating word

By GEORGE SMITH
Times Leader Staff Writer

WILKES-BARRE — America's angry young man is not so young any more, but he's still plenty angry.

Two-time Pulitzer Prize winning au-

thor Norman Mailer, who spoke to a standing-room-only audience at Wilkes University Thursday night, said his kisty reputation is warranted.

"I haven't gotten mellow," the 69-year-old Mailer said. "I've just gotten older. I'm still angry."



Norman Mailer

Mailer read excerpts from his work and responded to questions from the audience at the University's Dorothy Dickson Dart Center for the Performing Arts.

The appearance capped a week-long "Mailer fest" at Wilkes that featured an evening of lectures on the author's life and work and an exhibition of Mailer memorabilia.

■ See MAILER, Page 12A

12A The Times Leader, Wilkes-Barre, PA, Friday, November 20, 1992

Mailer

(Continued from Page 1A)

The controversial Mailer is one of the nation's top authors. He was awarded the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award in 1969 for "Armies in the Night." He got his second Pulitzer for "The Executioner's Song," published in 1979.

"How this country has been wasted is infuriating. We have been fighting a Cold War for 40 years, and it should have been over long ago," Mailer said. "I was in Russia for the first time in 1984. I found the technology to be poor, and if they have poor technology, they couldn't have a good army. We kept the Cold War going because we needed it to keep our economy functioning and to upset the Russian economy. Now, we will have to repair the Russian economic machine ourselves. So I'm not mellow, I'm still angry."

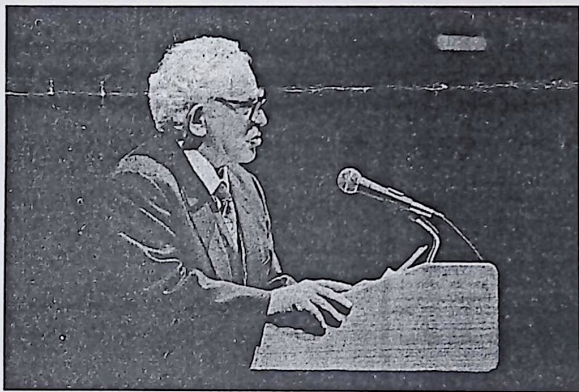
Once a self-confessed consummate boozier and brawler, Mailer is still possessed with the rage and passion that led him to be dubbed "America's angry young man" earlier in his career.

Short and stocky, Mailer walked onto the stage like a tired longshoreman. His strong, gruff voice crackled, and his intense blue eyes flamed under bushy brows as he read passages from two novels, "Ancient Evenings" and "Harlot's Ghost," and from a political piece on the Republican Convention called "By Heaven Inspired."

When accepting questions, his hands pointed into the audience like a heavyweight fighter firing superior jabs at some friendly sparring partner.

While Mailer discussed the weighty subjects of politics and writing, the evening was not without humor.

When asked if he would retreat



TIMES LEADER/VALENDRO A. ALVAREZ

PRIZE-WINNING AUTHOR — Pulitzer Prize winning author Norman Mailer reads excerpts from his works to

a capacity crowd at the Dorothy Dickson Dart Center at Wilkes University Thursday.

any of the millions of words he has written, Mailer said he definitely would not.

"When Picasso was asked if he had ever painted any bad pictures, he said, 'Some are better than others, but there are no bad Picassos.' That's how I feel about it," Mailer said.

Mailer is convinced Bill Clinton is a good choice for president.

"It's a tremendously interesting thing. Things are going to get a lot better, or we're headed for a catastrophe. It would have been a totalitarian disaster if the Republicans were elected," Mailer said.

"Clinton's early ambition to be

president is to his credit. If there is a rational way out of our country's problems, he will find that way out."

In writing recently released "Harlot's Ghost," Mailer jokingly said the character Hugh Tremont Montague was the only one he ever created that was more intelligent than he is.

"Harlot's Ghost" is Mailer's version of the CIA's involvement in United States politics, history and society as seen through the eyes of three CIA operatives. It took seven years to write.

The book sells for \$30, weighs almost four pounds, runs 1,310 pages, and ends with the words

"To Be Continued."

Will it be continued?

Mailer says it will.

"I'm working on it, but I'm not writing just yet," he said.

A book on Picasso's early years will be published in a few years.

"The Picasso book is done, but it could be two years before it comes out. Getting permissions for the prints takes time."

Perhaps with irony, Mailer's final reading was a passage detailing the embalming process used by the Egyptians. It came from "Ancient Evenings."

"I believe in Karma. I see God's wit in Karma and reincarnation," Mailer said.

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