

## table talk

### Works magic

A young magician, Lucy Smalley, will perform magic tableside from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. Sundays, May 10 and 17, at the new Restaurants on Main Street at Tel-Twelve Mall in Southfield. Smalley, 21, is a graduate of the Chavez College of Magic in Colon, Mich. She won a national competition for sleight-of-hand magic.

### Listed in guide

Two area spots are among those included in the 1984 editions of the Mobil Travel Guide, which selects some 20,000 restaurants, hotels, motels and resorts for listing in its seven volumes. They are the Shalea Inn in Auburn Heights and the Historic Holly Hotel in Holly. Besides star-rated food and lodgings, the guidebook gives information on local history, sightseeing, amusements, sports and recreation.

### Executive chef

Vijay Thakral, who once prepared a state banquet hosted by Egypt's late president, Anwar Sadat, is the new executive chef at the Dearborn Inn. Thakral is a native of New Delhi, India, where he received a degree from the Institute of Hotel Management, Catering and Nutrition. He came to the United States in 1973, working with the Hilton organization, and to Detroit in 1980, as a sous chef with the Westin Hotel.

### New sous chef

Dennis W. Herrina, who has spent six years with the Detroit Athletic Club's kitchen, has been named executive sous chef for Schuler's Inc. He will develop culinary techniques for the staff and coordinate an American Culinary Federation Chef Apprentice Program. The eight restaurants in the Schuler's group includes ones in West Bloomfield and Rochester.

— Ethel Simmons

### Prize winner staged

The prize-winning script in the Attic Theatre's Young People's Contest will be showcased at 7 p.m. Monday, June 4, at the theater, 520 E. Lafayette in Detroit's Greektown.

The play is "Simon and the Psycho Ward or the Art of Keeping Your Eyes Open" by Mumford High School student Christopher Alexander.



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Even Robert Redford can't make a go of it as baseball player Roy Hobbs in "The Natural."

## the movies

**Dan Greenberg**

### Cliches take over in baseball story

Audiences are asked to pay good money to sit still for 3 1/2 hours of confusing cliches in the screen version of Bernard Malamud's first novel, "The Natural."

No matter how handsome Robert Redford, no matter how attractively the movie was photographed, "The Natural" can't be saved.

It all starts with middle-aged Roy Hobbs (Redford) boarding a train for we-know-not-where, which is exactly where the movie went. He flashes back to his childhood (young Hobbs is played by Paul Sullivan Jr.).

His father, Ted Hobbs (Robert Rich III), teaches him everything about baseball because young Roy is a "natural." Father Hobbs dies and a bolt of lightning (a different bolt than when he hits homeruns) strikes a big old oak on the farm.

Roy crafts a marvelous bat from the tree and inscribes it "Wonder Boy."

**SEGUE TO REDFORD** as young Roy Hobbs the night before he leaves the farm for a tryout with the Chicago Cubs. He proposes to the girl next door — Iris Gales (Glenn Close) — if a farm can be next door. Much later you'll discover what happened that night, so don't forget about Iris; she'll be back to save the day.

The Chicago train stops at a carnival and Roy strikes out the Whammer, Joe Don Baker, in a two-bit imitation of Babe Ruth. This diversionary sequence introduces the world's nastiest sports writer, Max Mercy (Robert Duvall), and Harriet Bird (Barbara Hershey). She's a lunatic who shoots people with silver bullets.

She lures Roy to her room, shoots him and then commits suicide. I was convinced that she shot him in his pitching shoulder, but the bullet was removed from his stomach 16 years later.

Although Roy Hobbs' great passion was baseball, he restrained himself for an unexplained 16 years. Then he turns up as an unwanted player on the New York Knights, managed by Pop Fisher (Wilford Brimley) and coached by Red Blow (Richard Farnsworth).

Pop doesn't want a middle-aged, never-has-been and benches Hobbs before he plays. Hobbs gets to play when star rightfielder Bump Bailey (Michael Madsen) is benched for a slump and later dies crashing through the rightfield fence trying too hard, when it is too late. His ashes are scattered from a plane flying over the Knights' home field.

**WITH HOBBS** and "Wonder Boy" at the plate, the Knights near the top. But wait, don't forget cliché No. 17: Gamblers with a fix trying to take over the team.

If Pop wins the pennant, he gets control of the team. If he loses, the nasty Judge (Robert Prosky) takes all. Working with Gus the Gambler (Daren McGavin), Pop's niece, Memo (really, that's her name — played by sexy Kim Basinger), corrupts Hobbs, now starring in rightfield.

Of course, the Knights tie for the pennant. At their victory celebration, Memo slips Roy something that puts him in the maternity ward. This is not a perverted sex scene. It's just that the maternity hospital was the closest emergency room.

Without Roy, the Knights lose three straight, but he gets up from his death bed and leads them to victory.

The victory blow hits the light tower and blows out all the lights in a Fourth of July fireworks display that strains credulity beyond all previous limits.

**THE FILM ENDS** with a fully recovered, young Hobbs playing catch with his son. (Remember that one night with Iris?) You never do learn which Redford got on the train 3 1/2 hours ago.

Redford plays the true-blue Hobbs to the hilt. No dirty gamblers will corrupt him. Hobbs will never throw the game. Too bad someone got to Redford. He sure threw the movie.



Sexy Kim Basinger plays the niece of the Knights' baseball-team manager.