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There LD, required for "I" rated shows









Mystery writer throws fans a 'Hanging Curve' in newest book

"Hanging Curve" by Troy Soos (Kensington, \$22)

For those of you who have been waiting, here is another imaginative tale by Troy Soos, author of such



Poetroit Tiger."

For readers who aren't yet familiar with bM2 Soo' work, "Hanging Curve' is a good place to begin your relationship. Though this unpretentious, slightly off-beat whodunit marks another adventure in the life of fictitious major leaguer Mickey Rawlings, it's not necessary to read Soos' previous stories to find real pleasure in this one.

It's also not necessary to be a It's also not necessary to be a sports fan, or even a mystery maven, for that matter. If you simply enjoy a thought-provoking story, propelled briskly forward by some colorful characters and played out against an authentic, finely-stched background, you'll find "Hanging Curve" a real winner.

As the story opens, we find ourselves in St. Louis, Mo. It is 1922, the beginning of spring, that "exhibitanting time of year when. 200 hitters imagino winning the batting championship, dead-armed pitchers feel strong enough to win thirty games, and St. Louis baseball fans believe that this will be the year the Browns finally capture an American League pennant."

At 30, veteran utility infielder Rawlings (recently traded to the Browns from the Cincinnati Reds) isn't particularly dreamy-eyed about his own abilities. Still, he hangs in there, never

really losing hope that this year he'll get the chance to do some-thing other than warm the bench and that, somehow, he'll become an integral, heroic part of a championship season.

championahip season.

Life does throw him a curve, however, and we're around to see how he handles it. One night, a talented pitcher for a semi-pro team called the East St. Louis Cubs meets an especially curie fate. He is hanged from the backstop at Cubs Park. The Cubs are an all-black team which handily defeated an all-white semi-pro team the day before, while a gun-toting group from the local Ku Klux Klan looked on.

Who muckend the Negro

Who murdered the Negro pitche? Was it certain members of the all-white team who had been embarrassed at the plate that day by the young pitcher's provess? Was his death a lynch-ing, instigated by the Klan? Or was his life snuffed out for rea-sons that had nothing to do with the game of baseball?

Mainly because he has played, in the game against the Cubs (as an illegal "ringer"), Rawlings soon finds himself involved in tracking down the killer or killers. Assisting in his efforts is his old pal Karl Landfors, a distinctly unathletic journalist and "diehard socialist" dedicated to championing the rights of the underdog.

underdog.

Also joining the fray this time around is new acquaintance Franklin Aubury, a highly knowledgeable Negro attorney who goes to bat for the cause of justice. Rawlings live-in love former actress and Hollywood stuntwoman Margie Turner, rounds out the main cast (and also reveals a dark secret of her own before the story is played out).

As they try to run the villains into the ground and stave off further bloodshed, Rawlings and

crew take us on a kind of tour of the Midwest in the Roaring '20s. Here, encountered on a road trip, are the speakeasies of Detroit, and a baseball team some newsare the speakeasies of Detroit, and a baseball team some newspapers have nicknamed the Tygors. Here is a Klan picnic in the heart of Indiana, where one out of every three white Protestant men was a Klansman, including the governor and the mayor of Indianapolis. Here are the segregated passenger trains, where blacks could not ride in white cars, and whites could not ride in black cars and smaller segregated stations provided no eating or restroom facilities for black travelers. Here is a tonsorial parior in Indianapolis, where a black barber is forbiden by law to cut a white man's hair, although he can lawfully cut the same man's hair at a different location downlown. Here cut the same man's hair at a dif-ferent location downtown. Here are dreambooks and Moxie and Marmons and Black Swan Records and "Orphans of the Storm" and McClure's magazine and seersucker suits and bow ties and jaunty straw boaters. Throughout the story, real-life

Throughout the story, real-life characters make cameo appearances. You'll catch a glimpee of Cardinals star Rogers Hornsby (a member of the KKN, plus tightfiated Cardinals manager/owner Branch Rickey, baseball commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landia, 'the ferocious' Ty Cobb, Babe Ruth, Grover Cleveland Alexander and superstars Cool Papa Bell and Oscar Charleston of the Negro National League, along with many others.

Victoria Diaz is a Livonia free tance writer who specializes in book and theater reviews. You can reach her by voice mail at (734) 953-2045, then press 1854.

BOOK HAPPENINGS

Book Happenings features events at suburban bookstores, libraries and literary gatherings. Send news leads to Keely Wygo-Sena news team to neety wygo-nik, Observer & Eccentric News-papers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livo-nia, MI 48150, or fax them to (734) 591-7279 or e-mail to kwygonik@oe. homecomm.net

POETRY WORKSHOP Linda Sienklewicz, a published poet and member of Detroit Women Writers, will discuss creative techniques to enhance poet-ry writing. Sienklewicz will appear from 2 to 5 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 7, at Borders Books & Music in at Botoers Books & Masic in Rochester Hillis, All levels of writ-ers are welcome. Call (248) 652-0558, or visit the store on Rochester Road to sign up in

AUTHOR LUNCHEON

Award-winning author Ann Turner will be the guest speaker at the 8th annual Young at Heart Luncheon, sponsored by the StoryTellers Guild of The Community House, 380 S. Bates in Birmingham, The Massachusetts-born Turner has Massochusetts-born Turner has written fiction and non-fiction books, in addition to poetry. The purpose of StoryTellers is to enrich the lives of the young and young at heart through exposure to literature. Luncheon only tickets for the 12:30 p.m. Nov. 18 event are \$35, petron tickets are \$100. For reservations call The Community House at (248) 594-6405.

BOOK DISCUSSION

The Mother-Daughter Book Group will discuss "Father Arcane's Daughter" at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 11, at Borders Books & Music in the Novi Town Center. New members are always welcome in the group.

Spot the Dog, created by Eric Hill, has been a feverite among tod-diers for ages. "Where's Spot" is a cone of the best-loved stories at Toddier Time. Hear this engaging tale and teak home a phot of your child with Spot for a \$1. donation to Pews With a Cause. The program is set for 7 p.m.

Friday, Nov. 12, at Borders Books & Music In the Novi Town Center. LIBRARY PROGRAMS

The Michigan Humanities Council and the Friends of the Livonia Public Library present Literary Outsiders: Contemporary Voices. This series at the Carl Sandburg Library in Livonia offers a collection of stories of love, betrayal, mystery and modness, stories that ley bare the terrible lies of love and medness that bind us all. Family Dancing is the lest program in the series and takes piece at 7 p.m. Tuesdey, Nov. 9. The Carl Sandburg Library is located at 30.00 W. Seven Mile. Call (248) 476-0700 for details. The Michigan Humanities Council

BOOK SIGNINGS

B Noted children's author Jane Braskin Zaiben celebrates her love of food and art in her new cookbook." To Every Sesson: A Family Holliday Cookbook." Zaiben will make an appearance at the Familington Hills Borders at noon, Nov. 13, for a book signing and discussion. "To Every Sesson" is a collection of recipes for every hollidre pelabrated in for every holiday celebrated in America, from New Year's Day and Christmas to Chanukah and Kwanzaa. The store is located on

■ Meet Andrew Meacham, a jour-nalist for the mental health indus-try, as he signs copies of his new book, "Selling Serentty: Life Among the Recovery Stars." This book chronicles the key events that benefit recovery con book chronicles the key events that brought recovery center stage in America. Meacham will appear at the Borders Books & Music store, 5601 Mercury Drive in Dearborn, starting at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 17. For more Information, call (313) 271-4441.

E Dr. Joanne T. Jozefowski will B Dr. Joanne T. Jozefowski will sign copies of her new book "The Phoenix Phanomenon: Rising From the Aabes of Grief," 7:30 p.m. Fridey, Nov. 12, at the West Bloomfield Barnes and Noble Bookstors. The store is loceted et 6300 Orchard Lake Road.

■ Romance author Marian Edwards signs copies of "Heav-en's Reward" 1-3 p.m. Tuesday,

Nov. 16 at Paperback-N-Things, 8044 Wayne Road, Westland and 7-9 p.m. Friday, Nov. 19 at Waldenbooks, 30200 Plymouth Road, Livonia.

■ Farmington Observer reporter and Livonia resident Tim Smith will sign copies of his new book, "Miracle Birth Stories of Very Premature Bables - Little Thumbs Up!"

Saturday, Dec. 11, 1 p.m., Waldenbooks, Lakeside Mall, Hall Road, Sterling Heights. (810) 247-0420.

Thursday, Jan. 8, 7 p.m. Borders Books and Music, Oakland Mall, 14 Mile Road, Troy. Smith can be contacted directly at (248) 477-5450.

BORDERS FARMINGTON

Borders Books & Music in Farmington Hills offers a number of special programs and events during the month of November.

■ G. Lawrence Klayman, the winner of several awards, will disploy his botanical images in the store's cafe throughout the month. Klayman's work has been shown in many galleries and is currently on displey at several sites around Michigan.

Returning to present her work ■ Returning to present her work-shop "Millennium Cure: Get Your Life in Order." Iris Underwood can help people goin healthy emotion-al and mental control of their lives by helping them write their own personal mission statements for Y2X. 7 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 10.

The store is located at 30995 Orchard Lake Road, north of 13 Mile Road,

JCC BOOK FAIR

ICC BOOK FAIR

The Jewish Community Center is holding hold its annual Jewish book fair now though Nov. 14. Included in the event is the authors mini-fair 11 p.m. to 4 p.m. Sundey, Nov. 7. The fair will take place at the center's facilities in West Bloomfield and in Oak Park. More than 30 speakers will appear, and entertainment will be provided (both free). Call the center for additional information, (248) 661-7648.