

As I See It

Middle Class Emptiness

By Pat Costa



When laymen get together and discuss the horror of drug abuse by young people almost invariably the refrain can be heard: "But, it hits even the best of families."

A recent ABC Movie of the Week, "I'll Come Home in the Spring", exposed the fallacy in a phrase that turns out to be a misnomer: "best of families."

To a not very observant eye, the family in this television play may have appeared to be an A-1, pillar of the community, responsible, loving unit.

In actuality, the foursome made of Jackie Cooper, Eleanor Parker, Sally Fields and Lane Bradbury had as much strength as an emptied peapod.

And empty they were. The storyline hinges on the running away of the older daughter, played by Miss Fields, to join the hippies. The movie opened with her return, the reaction of her younger sister and parents and immediately set the stage to show why the girl had departed this upper middle class ghetto.

Father a high powered executive, Mother a frightening shrew who pops aspirin, sleeping and vitamin pills with alacrity but has no idea why her two children should find it so easy to step up to hard drugs.

Miss Parker's role was brief but the acting so credible at times as to cause this viewer to shrink in her chair particularly during one stream of high pitched invective.

Sally Fields seems to have separated herself successfully from the Flying Nun image with this role of a confused young girl.

Cooper, cast in the role of a father who thinks he loves his children, but really has no time for them and certainly no understanding, was believable.

Writer Bruce Feldman, a young man whose script was his first serious work, chose to portray the children as almost totally blameless. It was one of the more serious faults of the story. There were others. But in spite of them, the plot provided a penetrating look at just what it is that turns kids to desert middle class "respectability."

Kudos to the Rochester police department on its ad campaign to alert citizens to the dangers of leaving their homes and parked cars unlocked.

"Lock it or Lose it," as the campaign is known is the work of Darcy Associates. Capt. Thomas Hastings of the police department's planning and research division, credits Dick Tobias who also does the narration with putting it together.

The public service messages which are peopled with characters such as Burglar George of "George's Carry Out Service" and young car thieves who attempt to spirit away a car bodily when they can not get the doors open, are an imaginative blend of humor and excellent advice.

"Make a car thief look like a car thief," advises one message. How much better than the former announcement which suggested locking your car so that a good boy wouldn't go bad, thus taking the blame off the kids' shoulders.

Once Over Briefly

**STATUE, THE**—An obnoxious "comedy" about a man who has won a Nobel Prize (David Niven) and learns that his wife, a famed sculptress, has done a gigantic statue of him—a striking likeness except in one very private detail. He sets out on a ludicrous, tasteless "search" to discover who posed for that part. One of the few non-hardcore pornography films to be condemned by NCOMP lately. Also condemned by the critics. (C; R)

**OWL AND THE PUSSYCAT**—Barbra Streisand, in a non-singing role, plays a loud-mouthed, foul-mouthed part-time prostitute who enters the life of a would-be novelist (George Segal) and the two proceed to grate on each other's nerves. Except for a few funny scenes and some good quips here and there, it's a rather vulgar comedy, complete with a cop-out happy ending. Much of the language (and the fact that only New Yorkers will understand segments of the film) will turn many people off. (B; R)

**WHERE'S POPPA?**—A rather sick black comedy about a senile widow who messes up her son's private life, mostly via some grotesque personal managements in eating and showing affection for her son. Directed by Carl Reiner, but largely blasted by critics as gross. (B; R)

**PROMISE AT DAWN**—A touching film portrait of a mother's devotion to her son, based on the memoirs of author Romain Gary, whose mother, Nina, played by Melina Mercouri, does everything to insure that her son will amount to something, despite what she has to do to earn money (fraud, sometimes) and "protect him" when she discovers he has lost his sexual innocence, she makes him promise to take prophylactic precautions in the future; but it's

a very poetic, warm film—extending from Russia to Poland to Nice, ranging from the 1920's to the 1940's. Mercouri's husband, Jules Dassin, directed. (A-3; GP)

**TORA! TORA! TORA!**—A documentary-like recreation of the attack on Pearl Harbor, with the "count-down" seen from both the American and Japanese sides, with American producing the U.S. side of the film and Japanese actors and directors producing their side. It received mixed reviews. (A-1; G)

**JOE**—This film provides a crude caricature of middle-America in the person of a right-wing laborer whose ultimate solution to America's problems is to kill off long-haired youths. He becomes an unlikely friend of an advertising executive who has slain an East Village hippie his daughter had been living with. Peter Boyle gives a striking performance as Joe, but the language and sex and the simple-minded philosophy make it restricted fare. (A-4; R)

**DOCTOR'S WIVES**—A sexed-up blooded-up version of a medical-clinic soap opera, with lots of adultery, perversion, alcoholism, drugs, abortion, open-heart surgery—the latter vividly portrayed. In short, enough to make you so sick you might need a doctor, but stay clear of the bunch in this film. They have enough problems. (B; R)

**HUSBANDS**—John Cassavetes, Peter Falk and Ben Gazzara play three middle aged husbands who suddenly decide they've really been missing out on "life" and go on a four-day spree in hopes of "finding" themselves. Some good insights offered about "the way we live now" but much of the film is meandering. Some will be offended by a vivid vomiting scene and a sex sequence. (A-3; GP)

NOT WITH MY WIFE YOU DON'T (1965) Thursday, Feb. 25 (CBS)

This is a laugh-a-minute, leer-a-minute sex comedy starring Tony Curtis and George C. Scott as two Air Force colonels. Curtis the jealous husband of Virna Lisi, Scott a bachelor satyr who desires her.

Most of the film deals with Curtis' efforts to foil Scott, and vice versa. The film was praised for its very fast-paced comedy, sight gags, old film clips, spoofing of foreign bedroom-farce films and the acting of Scott and Curtis. But it is filled with what one critic called "tasteless innuendos." The national Catholic film office rated it A-3, unobjectionable for adults.

McCLINTOCK! (1963) Saturday, Feb. 27 (NBC)

Another typical John Wayne Western, this stars the Duke as a rip-snortin' cattle baron who has family problems: his wife (Maureen O'Hara) has left him over suspected infidelities and now wants a divorce and custody of their teen-aged daughter. Wayne is out to show that he not only knows how to handle homesteaders and Indians, but women as well: the he-man way.

Women's Lib will not be happy with this; neither were the critics.

NCOMP rated it A-1, unobjectionable for all.

STAGECOACH (1966) Sunday, Feb. 28 (ABC)

A remake of the 1939 John Ford classic of an alcoholic sur-

This is a summary and evaluation of prime-time films offered by the network to its affiliate stations. Check your local listings to ascertain if your channel is scheduling the network offering.

geon thrown in with some varying types in a stagecoach journey through dangerous Indian territory.

Bing Crosby plays the doctor's role and the rest of the new cast features Ann-Margret as a prostitute, Van Heflin as a marshal, Red Buttons, Bob Cummings and Keenan Wynn.

If the whole thing looks similar to the recent Paul Newman film, Hombre, it's because that film too was adapted from Stagecoach.

Critics found this Stagecoach O.K. for an action Western but one that doesn't compare with the original—and what ever does?

NCOMP rated this A-2, unobjectionable for adults and adolescents.

THE FLIM-FLAM MAN (1967) Monday, March 1 (ABC)

George C. Scott gives a delightfully off-beat performance as an aging, irascible con artist who decides to take a young recruit (Michael Sarrazin) under his wing and show him how easy it is to make a living off man's greed.

The dialogue is sprightly, the scenery is gorgeous (filmed in Kentucky), and there is fine acting, including that of Henry Morgan as a long-suffering sheriff. Sue Lyon is the love

interest who helps Sarrazin decide flim-flamming is not for him.

A highlight of the film is one of the best car-chase sequences in years, reminiscent of the Keystone Kops days.

NCOMP rated this A-2, unobjectionable for adults and adolescents, and recommended it to those "who like their larceny well-mixed with laughter."

(No movies are scheduled by the networks for Tuesday or Wednesday evening).

Grade Scholars In All-County Music Festival

More than 450 grade school musicians will give a public concert at 1:30 p.m. this Saturday, Feb. 26, at Spencerport High School.

Coming from 14 schools, they will rehearse together Friday and Saturday in a chorus directed by Jerry Exline and a band conducted by Musev Shareef. Terry Taylor is chairman.

In connection with this annual elementary music festival, the Monroe County School Music Association has invited area teachers to a morning session, from 9:30 until 11:30. George J. Henkel, Brighton music department chairman, will describe the Manhattanville Music Curriculum.

Taking part in the festival are pupils from St. James, St. Pius X, St. Salome and schools in Brighton, Brockport, Churchville-Chili, East Irondequoit, East Rochester, Fairport, Greece, Hilton, Spencerport, West Irondequoit and Wheatland-Chili.

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**Kar-Mac Manor** Routes 5 & 20 Between Geneva & Waterloo Thruway Exit 42 Roast turkey, Ham and Chicken dinners \$2.85 plus all you can eat from Mr. Mac's Picnic table. Char broiler flaming steaks, lobster tails, seafood—banquets to 500. Daily 5 'til Midnight—Sun. 12:30 'til 10 P.M. 315-789-1305 or 539-8044.

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