

MOVIES

'Independence Day' Has Nothing to Recommend It

By Michael Gallagher

New York (NC) — The setting of "Independence Day" (Warners) is Mercury, Ariz. It's a nice place to grow up — at least of you have loving, practically perfect parents, as Mary Ann Taylor (Kathleen Quinlan) does — but it's no place to end up in if you are talented and ambitious, as Mary Ann is.

A recent high school graduate, she works as a waitress at a diner owned by her mother and father (played nicely by Frances Sternhagen and Josef Sommer, who gets

to play a nice guy this time instead of the shifty, cynical character he's usually portrayed), but she takes pictures incessantly. Her ambition is to become a professional photographer and, as a giant step in that direction, she's hoping against hope to get a scholarship to a Los Angeles school where she can study under a famous photographer whose work she admires.

There are no complications on the family side since her parents, as I have already noted, are practically perfect. Her number one fan is her mother, though she's dying of

and who thinks Mercury is just fine. The situation is a sort of down-home version of "Saturday Night Fever," in which John Travolta thought Bay Ridge was just fine and couldn't understand how anyone could yearn to make it in Manhattan. Here, however, the focus is upon the heroine.

Complications there must be, however, if we're going to have a movie. Alice Hoffman's script brings them in by having Mary Ann fall in love, and shortly thereafter, into bed with a young college dropout, Jack Parker (David Keith), who is not ambitious

and who thinks Mercury is just fine. The situation is a sort of down-home version of "Saturday Night Fever," in which John Travolta thought Bay Ridge was just fine and couldn't understand how anyone could yearn to make it in Manhattan. Here, however, the focus is upon the heroine.

There is also an intensely melodramatic, poorly integrated subplot involving Diane Wiest as Jack's hapless sister and Cliff De Young as her brutal, sadistic husband.

"Independence Day,"

directed by Robert Mandel, is a movie of little substance which seems to have strayed from the television screen. It's pleasant enough when it doesn't plunge into its Grand Guignol subplot, but aside from a vibrant performance by Kathleen Quinlan (who seems fated for roles in mediocre movies) and by some good supporting performances, it has nothing to recommend it.

The film is predictable from first to last. (Do you have any doubts that Mary Ann will get the scholarship? Do you have

any doubts that she'll agonize once she gets it?) There is also an astounding lack of any sense of moral consequences or even of any tension whatsoever surrounding the sexual relations of the hero and heroine.

Because of the affair and because of a relatively sympathetic depiction of suicide, this is strictly adult fare, and the U.S. Catholic Conference has classified it A-III. Adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is R, restricted.

BOOKS

Breaking Bread: The Catholic Worker and the Origin of Catholic Radicalism in America, by Mel Piehl. Temple University Press (Philadelphia, 1982). 284 pp. plus index. \$15.95.

Reviewed by Nancy L. Roberts NC News Service

Since Dorothy Day, the matriarch of the Catholic Worker Movement, died in November 1980, recognition of the movement's pivotal role in American Catholic activism has grown. To the burgeoning literature of the Catholic Worker Movement, Mel Piehl's "Breaking Bread" is a significant addition.

During the tumultuous 1960s, Americans' view of Catholicism was altered by the radical social activism of Daniel and Philip Berrigan and others of the Catholic Left. Most were surprised by the idea that Catholics could be radicals, let alone pacifists. Yet Catholic radicalism, Piehl points out, had existed in America since 1933, when Miss Day and Peter Maurin started a newspaper and a social movement both called the Catholic Worker.

And rather than merely being "the simple germ of something larger," Piehl writes, "the Catholic Worker was a complex phenomenon, blending Catholicism and radicalism into an enduring

composition of great subtlety and strength."

"Breaking Bread" defines and traces the elements of the Catholic Worker Movement, placing it squarely within the historical context of American and European religious, intellectual, and social radicalism. Based in part on Miss Day's private papers contained in the Catholic Worker Collection at Marquette University, "Breaking Bread" analyzes the role of Miss Day herself. Piehl identifies her as the "dominant force" in the movement.

"It was (Miss Day's) common sense and awareness of American social and cultural realities that enabled her to distinguish between the kind of religious idealism that could inspire a viable social movement in this country and fantastic notions that would merely look ridiculous," he adds.

Piehl concludes that Maurin's true significance for the movement was "more personal and symbolic than programmatic or intellectual." Yet he cites instance after instance where Miss Day herself sincerely "promoted the fiction that the Catholic Worker Movement was simply an attempt to realize Peter Maurin's ideas."

Piehl argues persuasively that it was "personally comforting to Miss Day (who was raised to believe that "man proposes, woman disposes") "as well as

Mentally Ill

A discussion of "Psychotropic Medication: Benefits and Side Effects," by Dr. Mahendra B. Nanavati, will highlight the meeting of Families and Friends of the Mentally Ill and Emotionally Disturbed, 7:30 p.m., Monday, Jan. 24 at the Church of the Reformation, 111 N. Chestnut St.

Winner

Albert James, a junior at Aquinas Institute, was the recipient of the Winner's Circle \$5 for the week of Jan. 12

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strategically useful to her as a woman leading a social movement in the sexually conservative Catholic Church, to be able to point to the male co-founder of the movement and to emphasize that she was merely carrying out Maurin's program."

But "Breaking Bread" does not focus solely on Miss Day. It also emphasizes the contributions of other Catholic Workers, including those outside the New York headquarters. Miss Day's "charismatic leadership" worked not to exclude others, Piehl explains, but to attract talented colleagues whose abilities com-

plemented her own.

Carefully researched and enjoyably readable, "Breaking Bread" is the first book-length work on the Catholic Worker Movement to include full scholarly apparatus — footnotes and bibliography. Scholars and

general audiences alike will find it well worth reading.

(Miss Roberts, the author of a PhD dissertation on the Catholic Worker at the University of Minnesota, teaches journalism history at the University of Rhode Island.)

Sarah Child



All in the Family

If the Shoe Fits, They Wear It

Some things I haven't yet figured out:

- Why both the seventh grader and the high school senior are able to wear all my sweaters, blouses, coats, boots etc. but none of their things seem right for me.

Lawyers Form Nuclear Arms Control Unit

The recently formed Monroe County chapter of Lawyers Alliance for Nuclear Arms Control will show the film "The Last Epidemic," 12:15 p.m., Monday, Jan. 24, at the Monroe Country Bar Association Office.

The organization is a non-profit, non-partisan group of legal professionals. A national headquarters was opened in Boston in December 1981. Since then, local chapters have been formed in nearly two dozen states.

The film presentation is also an organizational activity, and is intended for persons in the legal profession.

- Or why no matter how many dishes I fix for supper somebody always wants to know if he or she could have a bowl of cereal instead.

- Or how it is that our daughter makes time for school, sports, dates and extracurricular activities by the dozen but never has a moment to run an errand for the family.

- Why when I get into the car the tank never registers more than just enough to get me to the gas station.

- Why nobody ever tells me when they've had a fantastic day — I only hear about the lousy ones.

- Why I always discover I've run out of coffee after the stores close.

- Why the grocery cashier always wants precisely the amount of money I've saved for something else.

- Why our sophomore's too tired to take out the garbage but always has enough energy to play hockey, go bowling or turn his room into a gymnasium.

- Why the phone rang every five minutes during Nicholas Nickleby but not once while the ball game was on.

- Why I should complain about anything when I have it so good.

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