Films

Continued from page 12

deaths of his five shipmates. This puzzles expert seaman John, who leaves Hughie asleep and locked up on the Saracen and rows over to investigate the mysterious schooner. Leaving psychopathic Hughie alone with Rae is John's big mistake, catalyzing the frightening cat-and-mouse survival game that unfolds throughout the rest of the film.

"Dead Calm" actually interweaves two parallel suspense stories, as Hughie overpowers Rae, commandeers the Saracen and abandons John to the sinking Orpheus with no help in sight. As formidable Rae manages to fend off and ultimately outsmart Hughie, John is left to restart the Orpheus, which is swiftly taking on water. He also must contend with the horror that he finds aboard, including nude mangled corpses (four women and one man) and a videotape suggesting that the boat was outfitted as an orgy cruise to nowhere.

Neill ("A Cry in the Dark") is excellent as a loving husband and skilled navigator who is pushed to the brink when he is forced to survive entrapment beneath the decks of the sinking, grisly vessel. But the star of this film is Kidman, an Australian actress whose delicate demeanor makes her character a surprisingly strong foe for Hughie.

"Dead Calm" should leave viewers with cheers for its believably resourceful female protagonist and an appreciation for well-crafted suspense thrillers — a genre that seems to have degenerated in recent years. Several intense violent touches — including a nightmare sequence reliving the tragic death of the Ingrams' tiny son — are unsuitable for youngsters and may be unpalatable for some adults.

Due to several gratuitous violent images, implications of horrifying violence and a brief, graphic nude sexual encounter, the USCC classification is A-IV — adults, with reservations. The MPAA rating is R — restricted.

Family

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charist and confirmation.

During the months of preparation that preceded Erin and Jenna's initiation, the family grew accustomed to setting aside Sundays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. for religious education, Mass and RCIC sessions. While the schedule wasn't always easy to maintain, the family grew accustomed to spending the day together. Nowadays, they generally follow Mass with a special family breakfast or outing.

"With both of us having careers, and all of the girls' activities, there's very little time for family," Dennis explained. "This is one time we can count on together."

The benefits of attending church as a family were slower to dawn on Erin and Jenna. Dennis recalled that the family's first "major battle" erupted from the couple's attempt to introduce the girls to religious practice by taking them to Sunday Mass. "Erin immediately said, 'I'm not

going" Dennis recalled.

The conflict ended with an ultimatum. "We told (the girls) they weren't knowledgeable enough to decide for themselves—that they would have to go and find out enough information to make the decision for themselves," Judy said.

Erin and Jenna's decision to seek initiation was abetted once they began attending St. John the Evangelist School on Humboldt Street. "I felt left out going to St. John's and not being able to go to Communion," Erin recalled.

However, neither Judy nor Dennis realized the extent of the initiation process their family would have to undergo. Nor could Elizabeth Webster, Blessed Sacrament's director of religious education, give them a precise outline early on, since the parish had never before offered the RCIC.

"(Webster) was real up front about telling us we were going to be sort of the guinea pigs," Dennis said, "but I think we both agree Liz really knows her stuff, and she worked very hard. For being the first program, I thought it went unbelievably well."

Liz Webster is her own harshest critic, pointing out that Blessed Sacrament's RCIC was too heavily programmed, and that it should have offered more opportunities for parents to grow in faith. "RCIC is where RCIA was at the beginning ... but you have to start in a way that you can handle it," she explained.

Whatever shortcomings the RCIC process may have suffered, Dennis and Judy agree that sacrificing their Sundays was a worthy investment. "I liked the fact that we were involved," Judy said. "When I made my First Communion, all my parents were responsible for was getting the dress and buying the presents."

The real test of Blessed Sacrament's RCIC lies in how deep and lasting a commitment it elicits from those who participate. Already, Dennis has volunteered to serve as a eucharistic minister and lector. Both Erin and Jenna would like to follow his lead and become more involved in liturgical ministry. Unfortunately, the avenue they would choose — as altar servers — is not open to them at Blessed Sacrament. "Girls and boys should be equal," Erin argued. "It's just not fair at all."

Judy also still harbors some areas of disagreement with what the church teaches, but believes that the years have made her more tolerant. "I don't reject the whole church because of that," she said. "But I don't expect my kids to follow church rules without questioning."

Nevertheless, she credits the church for recognizing and adapting to changes in family life. 'I know there are people out there who would like to get involved with the Catholic Church, but they see the church as inflexible, as never changing. Well it did change," she said. "I was afraid I was going to get a big lecture, but I was never made to feel inadequate or a bad parent because my children weren't baptized."

— Teresa A. Parsons

'Sleaze TV'

Continued from page 12

tices departments, but claimed the move had not been the result of any recent consumer complaints.

In addition, hundreds of readers responded to an article written by the U.S. Catholic Conference — which was carried by several Catholic newspapers —that criticized the sleazy NBC made-for-TV movie "Full Exposure: The Sex Tape Scandals" and urged people to form an "informal coalition" between the country's major advertising agencies and other concerned consumers.

The USCC Office for Film and Broadcasting offered to share a list of the names and addresses of top advertising agencies with anyone who contacted it. To date, the office has received more than 500 written requests for this list. In replying to these requests, the office suggested how readers might go about composing their own letters to ad agencies and asked for copies of any replies readers received from ad agency management.

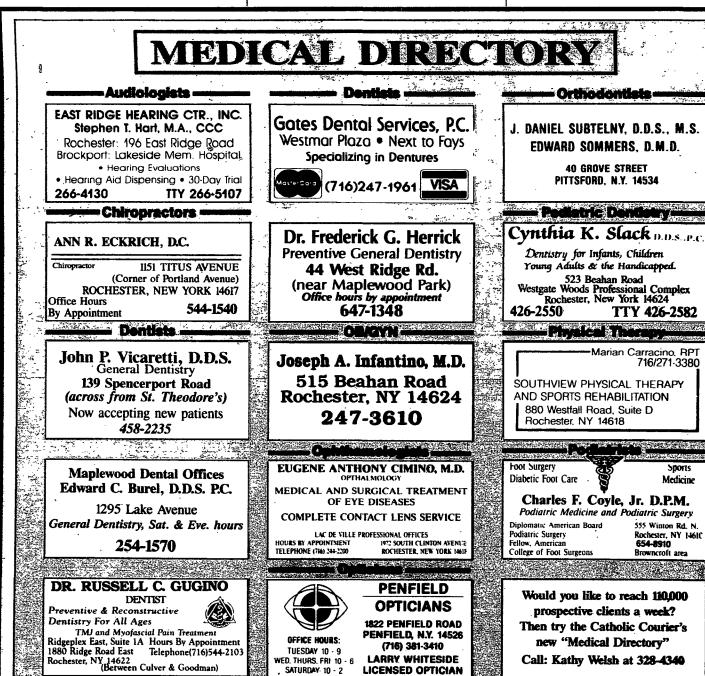
Although the networks deny acting in response to pressure, Brandon Tartikoff, president of NBC's entertainment division, admitted in an April 23 The New York Times article that "people are saying they want a different texture in their programming."

Others say last fall's pell-mell rush to prepare programming for the air after the writers' strike left insufficient time for network review of the product; that the cutback in all three networks' standards and practices divisions left few, if any, staff to review programs; that the popularity of VCRs has made the complaint process far more streamlined for those who tape programs for future review and analysis.

Bill Carter, author of the *Times* article quoting Tartikoff, contends in it that in the early '80s the complaints directed at the networks for explicit sex and violence on prime-time network programs were essentially dismissed by network management because they originated with religious organizations the networks considered out of the mainstream of American life.

What distinguishes the current phenomenon from these previous campaigns to clean up television is what is the advertisers' perception of these complaints as originating at the grass roots, even though Wildmon's American Family Association has been a vocal player in several of the recent approaches to major advertisers on the networks.

Hirsch is director of the U.S. Catholic Conference Office for Film and Broadcasting.



RCIA

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dates for Eucharist and confirmation throughout the year, based on individual readiness. "Initiating people at different times of year, there are things you give up—the sense of community, of being with people in the same shoes you are," she explained. "I also don't know that the larger community would be as welcoming (to individuals)."

Above all, Webster's experience with the RCIA strengthens with each passing year her conviction that other forms of sacramental preparation and adult education are lacking. "One of the strongest criticisms of the average Roman Catholic experience is when you have the people in the pews saying, "Why isn't there something like (RCIA) for me?" she said.

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