

# FEATURE

## Book-based films top list

**NEW YORK (CNS)** — The following are home videocassette reviews from the U.S. Catholic Conference Office for Film and Broadcasting. Each videocassette is available on VHS format. Theatrical movies on video have a USCC classification and Motion Picture Association of America rating. All reviews indicate the appropriate age group for the video audience.



### 'The Baby-Sitter's Club'

Seven enterprising pre-teen girls run a backyard day camp for neighborhood children while one of them (Schuyler Fisk) copes with the return of her father (Peter Horton) to the area which he insists she keep secret from her mom and stepdad. Based on a popular series of children's books, director Melanie Mayron's lightweight summer camp story is weakly developed, though it depicts resourceful, hard-working youngsters cheerfully providing emotional support for each other. Mild menace. The USCC classification is A-I — general patronage. The MPAA rating is PG — parental guidance suggested.

### 'The Indian in the Cupboard'

Unremarkable fantasy in which three-inch-high plastic toys belonging to a 9-year-old boy (Hal Scardino) magically come to life as a miniature Onondaga Indian (Liefke) and an Old West cowboy (David Keith). Based on a best-selling children's book, director Frank Oz's special-effects movie is pleasant if undramatic fare, mostly retaining the quality of a bedtime story except for minor violence and fleeting sexual innuendo. The USCC classification is A-I — general patronage. The MPAA rating is PG — parental guidance suggested.

### 'A Kid in King Arthur's Court'

Magically transported from his southern California baseball field to 12th-century Camelot, a timid teenager (Thomas Ian Nicholas) finds the inner resources to rescue King Arthur's daughters (Paloma Baeza and Kate Winslet) from a villainous usurper (Art Malik). Director Michael Gottlieb's unimaginative fantasy-adventure strings together a sluggish series of routine obstacles for the lad to overcome, often with 20th-century gizmos from his backpack. Minor violence. The USCC classification is A-II — adults and adolescents. The MPAA rating is PG — parental guidance suggested.

### 'Tommy Boy'

Derivative comedy in which a porky, likable dimwit (Chris Farley) battles the machinations of his late dad's scheming bride (Bo Derek) while trying to save the family business with some grudging help from a clever employee (David Spade). Director Peter Segal's innocuous buddy movie offers only a few funny moments sandwiched between endless fat jokes. Some slapstick violence, minor sexual innuendo, a few crude remarks and minimal profanity. The USCC classification is A-III — adults. The MPAA rating is PG — parental guidance suggested.

For the latest film reviews, call CNS's new movie review line, 1-800-311-4222.

## Healing abortion's other victims

The young woman spoke gently and sorrowfully as she told me about her abortion eight years ago.

"When I first found out I was pregnant, I was already 21 weeks along," she said. "I was 22 years old. I had been dating a young man for awhile but we were both too terrified to keep the baby."

"I am the middle daughter of a strong, traditional Catholic family from the Midwest," she continued. "My older sister had a child out of wedlock and I was the first daughter to go to college. I was afraid that my news would give my father a heart attack. I just couldn't disappoint my parents. More than anything else I was scared — scared that my relationship would fall apart, scared that my parents would find out and scared that I was going to have an abortion."

"I remember when the abortion was over I felt an incredible sense of relief," she went on. "But within a couple of months everything started to hit me. I began a downward spiral of self-destructive behavior. Some women turn to drugs or alcohol to get rid of the pain of their abortion. Others even contemplate suicide. I became very promiscuous; I had a string of broken relationships. I was going downhill quickly. I had nightmares and I was afraid to be by myself."

"Two years after the abortion God began placing things before me," she recalled. "I was at the library one day and a book on pregnancy fell open on the ground. It landed on the page that showed an unborn child at 21 weeks. Then my friend had a miscarriage at 21 weeks. Lots of things were bombarding me. I went to a post-abortion healing program. It helped to a point, but I still continued with my destructive behavior."

"Shortly afterwards I moved to Washington and four years after the abortion I went on a Catholic retreat for young adults," she said. "It was the first time since the abortion that I went to confession. Confession was a big part of my healing. After the retreat the healing progressed. But what really helped me in my healing was thinking about the gut-wrenching emotion of the Agony in the Garden. It was the realization that Jesus died on the cross for me and for my sin. Finally I was able to grasp the mean-



family matters

By EILEEN MARX

ing of his death and Resurrection."

Today this young woman is a volunteer at Project Rachel, a ministry of one-on-one pastoral counseling and sacramental healing for anyone who has been affected by the trauma of an abortion. She helps facilitate a support group for Project Rachel in the Archdiocese of Washington. She also shares the experience of her abortion with seminarians and priests during their retreats so that they can help women who are in need of post-abortion reconciliation.

This young woman told me that she felt called to Project Rachel.

"I want to give to other women the mercy that God has shown to me," she explained. "Post-abortion healing is not an easy process. It's very painful. God requires us to be honest with ourselves and to do some real soul searching. When you empty yourself and let God speak to you, that's when the real healing begins."

The first Project Rachel was founded by Vicki Thorn in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee in 1985. Today there are more than 90 Project Rachels throughout the United States.

"What many people don't realize is that back in 1975 when the U.S. bishops drafted their pastoral plan for pro-life activities, they not only called for pastoral outreach to women in crisis pregnancies but also to those women broken by abortion," Thorn said. "The bishops have been an incredibly prophetic voice in post-abortion reconciliation."

"Project Rachel is a message of hope and healing," Thorn continued. "Many times the effects of a woman's abortion surface seven to 10 years later. At that point their lives are in a shambles. These women hang onto their pain because it's all they have left. At Project Rachel we invite people to grieve over

their loss.

"We also acknowledged that post-abortion healing is not just a process for women," Thorn added. "With abortion, there is a whole circle of impact, including fathers, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. They are the forgotten pieces in this. They need to know it's okay to grieve. Something very important was taken from their lives. It's normal and natural to grieve for what we've lost."

The young woman who lost her child eight years ago is a painful reminder of the personal and human dimensions of abortion. We need to be strongly committed to peaceful efforts to end abortion and to shape a society that respects life at all stages.

But to really bring about change, our language of life must also be a language of love and forgiveness. What if we followed the example of Project Rachel and offered a message of mercy to abortion's other victims? It seems that shouting harsh judgments and condemnations at women who have had abortions only serves to harden hearts rather than change them. What if we let women know that when the painful reality of their abortion comes home, the church will be there to ease their suffering and to give them the gift of God's mercy and love? I imagine that the women who are reconciled through Project Rachel experience God's forgiveness in a powerful way that most of us will never know.

As the young woman finished talking about her abortion and her reconciliation, she said, "Many women who have had an abortion feel they are evil and damned for all time. It becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. But when they read Scripture or go through post-abortion healing and reconcile their broken relationship with God, they understand that God loves them and he doesn't want them to destroy themselves. In their minds they know that God has forgiven them. But complete healing of their hearts doesn't happen until they are finally able to forgive themselves."

Project Rachel's Referral Line is 1-800-5-WE-CARE.

Marx lives in Lawrenceville, N.J., with her husband and two children.

## CNS reviewers criticize PBS sex ed program

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Examining the growing controversy over sex education and school health clinics is "Sex, Teens and Public Schools," to be rerun Thursday, May 2, 10-11 p.m. EST on PBS.

Hosted by broadcast journalist Jane Pauley, the program furnishes a multiplicity of statistics on the rising rate of teenage pregnancies — more than 1 million a year.

Half that number become teen moms, 70 percent of whom remain single parents.

Welfare payments to families begun by teen mothers amounts to \$34 billion a year.

That last statistic has caught the attention of Congress as it seeks to cut various welfare programs.

The documentary, however, is not about the political debate over aid to dependent children, but what schools can do to lower the rate of teen pregnancies.

Visiting public schools in California, Colorado and Arkansas, the program listens to students, teachers, experts of all kinds and a parent or two.

All are agreed that teen-age pregnancies are not a good thing but differ on what schools should do about it.

Some insist that schools should only teach the reasons for sexual abstinence.

Others are equally insistent that because most teen-agers are sexually active, they need to know about contraception.

One supposes that abortion, though never mentioned, is part of what this group calls a "comprehensive" curriculum.

Those proposing sex education be limited to teaching the values of abstinence are Christian fundamentalists characterized as members of the so-called religious right.

Those advocating contraception as a necessary part of the solution to the problem dismiss the rights of parents in teaching moral values to their youngsters.

The result is a program that clearly states the problem of teen sex and its consequences, but in discussing the role of schools in dealing with it minimizes the primary role of parents in raising

their youngsters.

What's missing here is a larger frame of reference to help focus on the essential causes of the problem. Children today grow up in a hothouse media environment clogged with sexual innuendo.

Adolescents have been preconditioned to think about sex long before they are ready for its responsibilities.

One might conclude that school sex education programs are only a Band-Aid approach to the social and moral problems created by a media culture that is largely uncaring, if not directly detrimental to young people.

### NEXT-TO-NEW SALE

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