

Trash and flash box office smash

By CRAIG PIECHURA

Pity the poor janitor, Ed Kauffman. The man has never seen the cult movie sensation, "The Rocky Horror Picture Show," but he witnesses its aftermath every weekend. Depending on the enthusiasm of the crowd, Kauffman and his six-man crew haul eight to 14 plastic trash bags out of the Prudential Town Theater in Southfield after the midnight movie every Friday and Saturday night.

"There's always the toast, the rice, the newspapers and confetti," said Kauffman. "Once in a while other things get through like eggs, tomatoes, pears, and hot dogs—a lot of hot dogs."



Craig Olsen, an all-American boy from Walled Lake Western High School, dressed up like the film's main character, Frank-N-Furter, a transvestite from Transylvania.

The Rocky Horror Picture Show is billed as an audience participation movie. Patrons often dress up in costumes like the ones worn by the characters in the movie. Many emulate the main character, Frank-N-Furter, a transsexual transvestite from Transylvania. The movie cultists also bring an array of props which includes rice, toast, toilet paper, confetti and squirt guns which are unleashed at pre-arranged times during the show.

This planned spontaneity and sanctioned decadence is encouraged by the theater management because the show sells out every weekend.

"The film opened Sept. 1 at Prudential and we anticipate it will probably run there through next summer. It'll be in the area for at least a year," said Bill Spurlin, United Artists Midwest division supervisor.

THE USHERS are encouraged to participate in the performance and allowed to dress informally in Rocky Horror t-shirts, says Spurlin. "It helps the audience respond better."

One of the ushers at the performance, Jim Manduzzi, saw the picture four times at another theater before he was hired to work at the theater. He and a few of his co-workers were responsible for some of the wildest antics and nonsense that went on Saturday night. One of the ushers had a hydraulic squirt gun that sprayed a jet of water almost 35 feet to soak the back of a fellow usher. In his haste to get out of firing range, another usher knocked over an ashtray filled with white sand and cigarette butts in the lobby.

Patrons tracked the mess into the theater but nobody noticed. The floor was already an inch deep with soggy rice, newspapers, toilet paper.

The movie action, as you may have already gathered, is incidental. It's impossible to hear the soundtrack most of the time because people are shouting out pre-arranged straight lines and comebacks. And it's often difficult to view the film when most of the regulars' flashlights shine their flashlights on the screen anytime anyone mentions anything about needing a light or seeing a light.

THE ANTICS are all in good, dirty fun, insists Spurlin and Jon Kaplan, theater manager.

But approximately 25 persons who saw Friday night's show thought things went a little too far. That night an underage movie-goer stained about



A couple on the screen are being married. And on cue, the crowd tosses handfuls of rice.

two dozen people's clothes after dousing them with a colored liquid in a squirt bottle.

The Southfield Police were called by complaining patrons.

Spurlin has promised to clean anyone's clothes damaged at Friday night's performance.

The police were called back to the theater the next night for a different reason. Because a 16-year-old caused all the trouble Friday night, ushers Saturday night demanded that ticket holders show proof they were at least 18 years old. The movie is rated "R."

A group of students from Walled Lake Western must have heard a movie reviewer call the film "sophomoric" because quite a few of them were sophomores. When they bought the tickets earlier in the day, they maintained that they were not asked for proof.

But when the theater doors opened at midnight, underage patrons were not given a refund. They were told to sell their tickets to an adult who wanted to attend the sold-out movie.

The crowd grew restless and demanded to be admitted. One young man called the police after he was refused a refund saying that the management had no right to force patrons to become "secondary ticket agents."

MARK MEYERS, a senior at Walled Lake Western dressed in his friend's mother's silver sequin blouse, shouted words of encouragement to his 16 and 17-year-old friends who were denied admittance to the theatre.

A make-believe vampire, Norm Farley, was told that after dressing up in a bathing suit and pantyhose he could not enter the theater. Farley argued that the management should have required him to show identification when he was sold a ticket.

Police agreed with Farley. Officer Daryl Gray told the theater manager, Kaplan, he couldn't "change boats in the middle of the lake." The officer announced to the crowd: "Everyone (Continued on page 6A)



Here's the nightmare of the Rocky Horror Picture Show for janitor Ed Kauffman. Kauffman said other theaters caused him grief last week with Mickey Mouse's 50th Birthday cartoon matinee. "Every kid spilled a coke, which ran down the aisle and knocked over popcorn which stuck to the Coke."

Photos by
Allen Schlossberg

THE INSIDE * ANGLE

NEW FACES abound at the City of Farmington's Public Safety Department these days. Gary Goss, 30, a seven-year Detroit police veteran and Daniel Potter, 25, four years with the Detroit police, were recently hired by Chief Dan Byrnes. And there's a new badge for a four year Farmington public safety officer, Frank Lauboff, 26, was promoted to sergeant.

YOU CAN'T FIGHT city hall. Farmington Postmaster Kenneth Harris might agree with that old saying. A long-standing dispute between the post office and one of its neighbors may be quieting down, but the City of Farmington played the perfect go-between. A few months back, the irate neighbor appeared before city council, complaining of the late-night noise at the post office. A recent change in postal procedures caused the disturbance, Harris explained to city officials. Nothing will change until the new post office is built (sometime next year). But apparently, that wasn't the end of the problem. To reduce the noise at night, Harris approved the construction of a temporary structure, but he forgot to get approval of the city by applying for a building permit. And, as it turns out, the structure is built with materials that fail to conform to city ordinance. When the city notified Harris that the structure was non-conforming, he told them he was unaware that the addition would require a building permit. He thought that the building was owned by the federal government and that a building permit was unnecessary. But, lo and behold, it turns out that the government leases the building from a private owner so, indeed, a building permit is needed. At any rate, when the new Twelve Mile road structure is built, the loading dock will go, the temporary noise barrier structure will go and hopefully, the neighbor who can't sleep at night will be happy. Well, you can't please all the people all the time.

SEEMS THE CITY likes Bibles, but isn't too fond of weakling bans. This week the council passed a resolution proclaiming the week of Nov. 19-26 as Bible Week as requested by E. Clay Shaw, the mayor of Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. But the council decided to take no action on a request from the Friends of Animals, Inc., asking council to issue a proclamation urging the preservation of the diminished wildlife habitat. The organization is calling for the end of all hunting throughout the country.

PATRICIA ANN BROWN, 34073 State, Farmington, has been named one of the

Outstanding Young Women of America. The award is designed to honor and encourage exceptional young women between the ages of 21 and 35 who have distinguished themselves in their homes, professions and communities.

TWO FARMINGTON HILLS residents have been named to the suburban military screening committee by Sen. Donald Riegle. They are Aldo Vagnozzi and Robert Roether. At ease.

IF YOU'RE FREE at 7:30 p.m. you might be interested in wandering over to Lawrence Institute of Technology in Southfield to listen to Dale Compton, vice-president of research for Ford Motor Company. He will discuss cancer research, the development of the electric car, advanced batteries for automobiles, catalysts and emissions research. A physicist and manager of scientists and engineers, he will also devote a portion of his talk to career advice for students. The title of Compton's address will be, "How Privately Employed Engineers and Scientists Serve Public Purposes." A question and answer period will follow the lecture.

KAREN SHEFSIEK, of Farmington, an Ithaca College junior majoring in voice, is a winner of the 1978 auditions in the College National Competitive Category, New York State Music Teachers Association Region 7. She will next compete in the state auditions at Skidmore College in Saratoga in November. She was chosen a soprano soloist for the presentation of Debussy's "Clair de Lune" at the Judith Raskin Concert Master Class. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Shefsiek, 29719 Fernhill Drive and is a 1976 graduate of North Farmington High School.

CONGRATULATIONS TO Roy Wilson, 22206 East Skye Drive, Farmington Hills, for being elected 1978-79 secretary of the Michigan Manufactured Housing Institute Board of Governors. He is senior vice-president of Fort Wayne Mortgage Company. The MMHI is the state-wide association of mobile home park owners, dealers, manufacturers, suppliers and special services.

DEADLINE
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