



Bruce Dern is up to his neck in trouble in "Middle Age Crazy."

**Couple of squares**

Kevin McGee of Livonia (left) and Howard Egan of Highland rehearse for the Theatre Guild of Livonia-Redford musical revue, "The Shape of the World (Round on Weekdays, Square on Sunday)," which opens Friday and runs for three weekends at the Guild playhouse, 15138 Beech Daly, south of Five Mile Road, in Redford Township. Admission is \$5 and tickets can be reserved by calling 422-3664 or 421-0114. The revue contains 40 musical numbers from a variety of comedy productions and revue recordings. Others in the revue are Kay Grismer of Plymouth, Beverly Intihar, Northville, Doug Kerr, Plymouth, David Tucker of Livonia, Sandi Martin of Detroit and Rosemarie Patanis, Redford.



the movies  
**Louise Snider**

**This film needs more craziness, or maybe less**

From the song came the movie, "Middle Age Crazy" (R), a middle-aged film that's not crazy enough. Director John Trent and writer Carl Kleinschmitt seem to lack the courage of any convictions. They couldn't decide whether to go for laughs or be serious, so they tried both and achieved neither. "Middle Age Crazy" isn't funny enough to succeed as a comedy. Bruce Dern, the male lead, isn't a comic in the mold of Dudley Moore and "Middle Age Crazy" isn't a "10." Nor is the film substantial enough to succeed as a drama. There is the occasional chuckle and thought-provoking moment, but they don't mesh in a meaningful way. They're separate incidents in a random film.

DERN IS the anxiety-ridden male who has just turned 40 and is caught up in a mid-life crisis. It is a relief to see him in something other than the psychotic-type roles which have frequently come his way, although the potential for the extreme still seems to lurk beneath the surface.

Actually, the one serio-comic episode that holds together occurs when Dern falls apart and runs about yelling, "I don't want to be the daddy anymore." He doesn't want responsibilities; he doesn't want to deal with his family's problems.

Then, as usually happens in this film, the material things get in the way. How much compassion can you muster for a man who has a loving family, a beautiful and sexy wife, a luxurious home with a patio, pool and hot tub and, to support all this, a successful contracting business?

O.K., so he builds taco stands for a living; still, he must be the most successful taco-stand builder north of the equator.

The argument is not that wealth precludes sensitivity, but that Dern's anxiety seems to center about brand names and fashions. Consequently, he hangs up his polyester suits for jeans and boots; he trades in his Olds for a \$40,000 Porsche; and he leaves his wife for a Dallas Cowgirl.

This last action is indeed puzzling. He shoves aside the pulchritudinous Ann-Margret when it seems her sole ambition as his wife is to give him sexual satisfaction. What does he expect from the Dallas Cowgirl, a discussion on nuclear non-proliferation?

After stepping out and acquiring new threads, new wheels and a new lady, is he happy? Of course not. Having acted out his fantasies, he returns to the virtues — none, family, business.

It's a sequence of events which was clearly indicated from the beginning of the film. The comforting moral for would-be sinners: You can have your fling and then return to everything you left behind. Who said, "You can't go home again?"

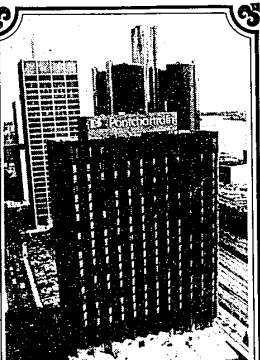
**what's at the movies**

**NEW RELEASES**

- AIRPLANE (PG).** A picture that takes off. This spoof of all those "Airports" movies is one of the zaniest films around.
- THE AWAKENING (R).** Silly film about archaeologist and curse of long-dead Egyptian queen.
- THE ELEPHANT MAN (PG).** Largely true story of grossly deformed man rescued from sordid life by compassionate doctor. Fine acting by John Hurt, Anthony Hopkins and John Gielgud balances out directorial shortcomings.
- FADE TO BLACK (R).** Terror as deranged young man dresses as his movie favorites to re-enact their scenes.
- FIRST DEADLY SIN (R).** Cop searches out killer responsible for series of bizarre murders. Frank Sinatra and Faye Dunaway star.
- THE GREAT SALTINE (PG).** Robert Duvall as Air Force pilot and dominating father in strong story of family conflict and love.
- HOPSCOTCH (R).** Chemistry of Matthau/Jackson pairing works again, but we don't see them together often enough in this half-way humorous (first half) film.
- IT'S MY TURN (R).** Jill Clayburgh in humorous story as independent woman (again) who falls in love with ex-baseball player during weekend in New York.
- OH, GOD! BOOK II (PG).** George Burns returns as the Almighty with a new message. Luanne, as "Tracey," to deliver his words.
- ORDINARY PEOPLE (R).** Robert Redford's directorial debut is a smash in this extraordinarily well-acted, moving film about a "perfect" family trying to cope with a son's mental illness.
- PRIVATE BENJAMIN (R).** Goldie Hawn joins the army to escape and find herself.
- SOMEWHERE IN TIME (PG).** Romance with Christopher Reeve and Jane Seymour. Young man falls in love with portrait of a beautiful woman and goes back in time to find her.
- THE STUNTMAN (R).** Fascinating, complex film that "books" the viewer as it toys with notions of reality and illusion. Action comedy and mystery on a movie location.

**MOVIE RATING GUIDE**

- G General audience admitted.
- PG Parental guidance suggested. All ages admitted.
- R Restricted. Adult must accompany person under 18.
- X No one under 18 admitted.



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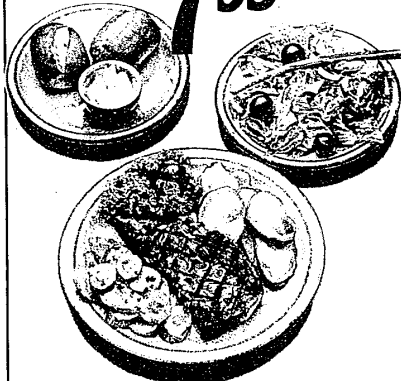
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