



Chevy Chase is a Secret Service agent who comes to the aid of a movie studio talent coordinator, played by Carrie Fisher, in "Under the Rainbow."

the movies

Louise Snider

Tasteless gags, overworked plot hamper comedy

"Under the Rainbow" (PG) is a movie about a German spy, a camera-happy group of Japanese tourists and 150 midgets. It's a movie which comes up short in every department except lowbrow jokes.

OK, terrible pun. But "Under the Rainbow" doesn't bring out the best in people.

It starts with some slight promise simply because it is so wildly absurd. However, the cuckoo coincidences, far-fetched plot and repetitive gags soon confirm the worst. The wild absurdity is dwarfed by utter tastelessness.

How much of this you can sit through depends on your tolerance for cuteness. The movie seems to have two premises. (1) It's sufficiently entertaining for audiences to simply see a lot of little people together. It's cute to see them do all the things that big people do. (2) For comedy, throw in a lot of suggestions about quirky sex and plenty of slapstick which depends on variations of the same physical joke — small guys always hit big guys in the crotch.

THE TIME IS 1938. A German spy (a short person) with a map of U.S. coastal installations is to meet a Japanese spy at the Culver Hotel in Culver City, Calif., and pass him the map.

The German spy will be identified because he is short; the Japanese spy because he looks Japanese and will be wearing a white suit.

Wouldn't you know it? One hundred and fifty midgets, brought to Hollywood to work as Munchkins in "The Wizard of Oz," are staying at the same hotel as the German spy. To complicate matters further, a large party of Japanese amateur photographers, all in white suits, is at the hotel.

Chevy Chase is on the scene as a secret service agent assigned to protect an assassination-prone duke (Joseph Maher), his near-sighted wife (Eve Arden) and their dog Streudel. They also have checked into the Culver Hotel.

Chase is even more bland than usual as the Secret Service agent. Adam Arkin as the beleaguered hotel manager and Pat McCormick, as the hotel detective whose only resource is his hip flask, both evoke more laughs than Chase.

WITH MOST OF the situations and gags played out in the first half hour or so, there is nothing left but to keep repeating them for the rest of the movie.

As a diversion, Carrie Fisher is present to provide a romantic angle. She is the movie studio's talent coordinator in charge of the Munchkins.

Among them are Billy Barty as the German spy and Cork Hubbert as a conscientious Munchkin who wants to help Chase.

Local legend has it that there were some unusual goings-on while "The Wizard of Oz" was being made, but this movie indulges in irrational extremes. The would-be Munchkins no sooner check into the hotel than they are swinging from the chandeliers, throwing wild parties in the kitchen and generally acting berserk.

"Under the Rainbow" is definitely infra dig.



Pat McCormick as house detective Tiny is tied up by the little people, who are staying at a Hollywood hotel while filming a movie musical.

table talk

CHUCK E. Cheese's Pizza Time Theatre opens at a new location, 2380 Orchard Lake Road, Sylvan Lake, on Aug. 26, with a special for groups and families of 20 persons or more during August and September.

Table Talk inadvertently failed to mention the 20-person minimum when talking about the special in a recent edition. So, if you want to enjoy a 10 percent discount on all food, free Chuck E. Cheese game tokens for the evening, a free pitcher of soft drink of your choice for every four people in your group, and more, get the whole gang together to visit Pizza Time Theatre.

Further information can be obtained by calling 478-5630. The special is available only at the Sylvan Lake location, as part of the grand opening celebration. Another metropolitan-area Chuck E. Cheese's is in Wayne.

THE BAR-B-Q House of Southfield is a second location for the popular Bar-B-Q House (of Warren). It's in the old Raven Gallery quarters on Greenfield north of 12 Mile Road.

Barbecue ribs and chicken and homemade soup are among the dishes featured. A barbecue rib snack is available for \$4.25, chicken snack for \$3.60. On barbecue dinners, you can have ribs for \$7.25, one-half chicken for \$5.60, ribs and chicken for \$7.25 and a whole slab of ribs for \$10.70. Beef,

ham, and rib and shrimp dinners are other choices.

Owner Wayne Zanti of Roseville opened his first Bar-B-Q House in Warren four and a half years ago. That restaurant won a WJBK-TV, Channel 2, award as "best place to eat" in a contest among the station's viewers.

The Southfield Bar-B-Q is still making its way since opening last spring. Hours are 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Mondays-Thursdays, 4 p.m. to 3 a.m. Fridays-Saturdays and 4-11 p.m. Sundays. Businessmen's lunches are served from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. weekdays.

THOSE CRAZY toga parties, brought back into vogue by the '50s nostalgia movie "Animal House," are still around.

Guests who arrive wearing togas for Dewey's Toga Party, from 5-9 p.m. Friday at Southfield's Michigan Inn, will receive their first two drinks for the price of one. Ouzo, flaming cheese hors d'oeuvres, music and belly dancers should keep the party lively.

The Greek spirit continues from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Sunday at the hotel's brunch, which will offer shishkabob, Greek salad, souvlaki, moussaka and baklava along with its usual fare. Brunch is \$7.95 for adults, \$4.95 for children under 12.

— Ethel Simmons

Telethon seeks phone volunteers

Volunteers, 18 years and older, are needed to answer telephones and record pledges during the 1981 Jerry Lewis Labor Day Telethon for Muscular Dystrophy Sept. 6-7.

Residents of Wayne, Oakland, Macomb and Washington Counties, plus Windsor, Ont., can volunteer to work a five-hour shift of their choice at the Jerry Lewis Telephone Center located nearest their homes. More than 1,000 volunteers are needed.

Those wishing to help at a telephone center, either on the phone or in a client capacity, may register by calling one of the following Muscular Dystrophy offices: North Area 399-8800; East Area 779-7860; West Area 381-3838.

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