



the movies
**Louise
Snider**

'Puberty Blues' has style, but wipes out

Remember the Frankie Avalon-Annette Funicello beach blanket movie? Uncover the lumps in the blanket and you've got "Puberty Blues" (R). This Australian import has the impact of "Fast Times at Ridgemont High" — at the beach.

It's the story of the "rights of passage" of two teenage girls, Debbie (Neil Schofield) and Sue (Jad Capelja). Mostly, it's the story of Debbie. She also is the movie's narrator, a circumstance which cues us that she is a survivor looking back on some critical experiences of her adolescence in Sydney, Australia.

Debbie and her high school peers spend all their free time at the beach. The beach itself is divided by indivisible borders which reflect a caste system as rigid as any in pre-war India.

At the highest rung on this social ladder are the surfers — blond, loose-haired boys devoted to surfing, sex and smoking joints. Next to them in status are the "surfer chicks." It is to this exalted inner echelon that Debbie and Sue aspire.

THE CHICKS do not surf. They literally wait on the boys. They wait for them to come out of the water and they wait on their wishes. Eagerly, they hand the boys towels and they run to fetch them hamburgers and milk shakes. (The girls don't eat with the boys, just as they don't surf.) At night, it's time for a drive-in movie and basic, back-of-the-van sex.

There is no romance or courtship in these relations. When Debbie and Sue get accepted into the surfing crowd (because they keep quiet about a cheating episode at school), Debbie is paired off with Bruce (Jay Hackett). His ultimate concession to sensibility is to remove his wad of chewing gum before kissing her.

Bruce is neither better nor worse than the rest of the surfers, all of whom display a very narrow-minded, macho mentality. The only one who shows any sensitivity is Gary (Geoff Rhoe). Since he also is on hard drugs, you can write him off.

But if the boys act like wretched Neanderthals, the attitude of the girls is even more revolting. They are willing, compliant victims who cooperate readily in their own degradation. Perhaps the girls, as well as the boys, have become dulled by too much sun and too much salt spray.

BRUCE BERESFORD, who directed "Fender Benders" and "Breaker Morant," directed "Puberty Blues." His style is seen in the film's visual coherence, moments of striking imagery and edgy, satiric bite. The latter, however, is softened by good and skimpy character delineations. Debbie's middle-class parents, who are completely befuddled by her behavior, are too naive to be credible. When Debbie says she is going to the movies, her mother warns her "don't sit on the aisle. Some pusher might jab you with something."

Garry, the surfer who is one iota more sensitive than the others, seems to have no reason for being in the movie other than to make a point about drug abuse.

And Debbie, the protagonist of the film, is herself somewhat vivid. But the oddest flaw in "Puberty Blues" is the narration. It introduces us to the sandy world of Debbie and her friends, offers comments on a few situations, then, unaccountably, stops. Wiped out by a wave, I suppose.

upcoming things to do

- **CLASSES**
Will-O-Way Apprentice Theatre in Bloomfield Hills is holding registration for fall classes that begin next week. Children, teens and adults are interested in acting, singing or dancing may attend open house from 6:30 to 10 p.m. today and Tuesday. For more information, call 644-4418.
- **WORLD ADVENTURE**
Greece will be featured in the first segment of the World Adventure Series at 7:30 p.m. Friday at the Highland Lakes campus of Oakland Community College. The program, presented by the Detroit Institute of Arts, will be held in the Student Center Arena. Tickets are \$3.50, \$3 for seniors and students. For more information, call 360-3041.
- **'ROBBER BRIDEGROOM'**
"The Robber Bridegroom" begins a two-weekend run at the Oakland University Barn Theatre at 8 p.m. Friday. Other curtain times are 6 and 9:30 p.m. Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sundays. Tickets range from \$1.50 to \$3.50. For more information, call 377-2245.
- **'MR. HAPPINESS'**
The Fourth Street Playhouse, 301 W. Fourth in Royal Oak, opens its Midnight Studio production of "The Duck Variations" and "Mr. Happiness," both by David Mamet, at midnight Friday. Performances continue on Fridays and Saturdays through Saturday, Nov. 5. Tickets are \$4 for adults, \$3 for students and senior citizens. For reservations or more information, call 545-5668.
- **DANCE SAMPLER**
A "Community Dance Sampler" will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday so that students may view the new dance facilities and meet the instructors at Oakland Community College. Fee is \$3. For more information, call 544-4949.
- **FOLKTOWN**
Folktown, a coffeehouse in the Southfield Civic Center, will present the Lost World String Band at 8 p.m. Saturday. The band plays Irish, ragtime, Cajun, blues, swing and old-time dance music. Admission is \$4.50. For more information, call 835-9448.
- **AUDITIONS**
Will-O-Way Repertory Theatre in Bloomfield Hills will hold open auditions for their Agatha Christie mystery "The Hollow" at 2 p.m. Sunday. Tryouts will take place at the theater, 775 W. Long Lake Road, Asters should perform. Performances will run Saturday, Oct. 22, through

Saturday, Nov. 12. For more information, call 644-4418.

The Fourth Street Playhouse in Royal Oak will hold auditions for "Whiteleaf," a premiere of a play by Bill Soganna, from 7 to 11 p.m. today and Tuesday. Auditions are by appointment only, and performers must prepare two contrasting monologues not to exceed three minutes combined. Cast needs are for a mother, age 45, and two sons, 22 and 16. For an appointment or more information, call 545-3668 between 1 and 10 p.m.

● **DYNASTY**
The first full episode of the TV show "Dynasty" will be shown on a big screen in the ballroom of the Michigan Inn, 16400 J.L. Hudson Drive in Southfield. Festivities start at 8 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 28. There will be free food, WNIC radio personalities and surprises.

● **'ROMANTIC COMEDY'**
The Village Players of Birmingham will present Bernard Slade's "Romantic Comedy" at 8:30 p.m. Friday, Sept. 30, and Saturday, Oct. 1. Tickets are \$4 and reservations are recommended. The playhouse is at Hunter and Chestnut. For more information, call 544-2075.

● **'FIDDLER'**
Stagecrafters, 176 Bowers in Clawson, will present "Fiddler on the Roof" in 12 performances starting Friday, Sept. 30, through Saturday, Oct. 22. Curtain times are 7 p.m. Sundays and 8 p.m. other days. Tickets are \$8.50, \$4 for seniors and students on Thursdays and Sundays. Call 585-8437 for more information.

● **WEDDING BANDS**
The Mayflower Meeting House, 455 Main in Plymouth, will host "Showcase of Bands" from 7:30 to 10 p.m. Tuesday. Admission is \$2. Four bands that may be hired for weddings will audition. Free engagement portraits will be given to all couples in attendance.

● **VARANI PERFORMS**
Pianist Flavio Varani will perform at 8 p.m. Wednesday at Fair Lane in Dearborn. The free concert is the first in the 1983-84 series sponsored by the campus' Cultural Events Committee. The concert series will continue with Dan Fordeschew, Romanian baritone, Oct. 19; Richard Phipps, prize-winning cellist, and his accompanist, Nov. 16; Danica Potts Consort, Dec. 5; and Fedora Horowitz and two members of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra (violin, cello and piano trio), Dec. 18. For more information, call 593-5555.

what's at the movies

CUJO (R). Thriller based on the Stephen King horror story about a mad dog.

EASY MONEY (R). Rodney Dangerfield as Monty Capelja can inherit millions but only if he gives up drinking, smoking and gambling for a year.

FLASHDANCE (R). A determined young woman works as a welder by day and a dancer by night. Movie doesn't make too much sense, but the dancing has a terrific impact.

HERCULES (PG). Musclemen Lou Ferrigno (the Hulk) is featured in adventure film about the early life of the mythological hero.

MR. MOM (PG). Michael Keaton is a rising young executive who gets pink-slipped and trades jobs with his wife, a housewife and mother, who then goes out to work.

NAKED WEEKEND (R). Yvette Mimieux and Christopher Allport star.

NATIONAL LAMPOON'S VACATION (R). Walley World, the world's greatest theme park, is the destination in this cross-country comedy starring Chevy Chase, Beverly D'Angelo, Imogene Coca and Christie Brinkley.

RETURN OF MARTIN GUERRE. Winner of three French Academy Awards, romantic mystery is about man who returns from war after nine years. Gerard Depardieu stars.

RETURN OF THE JEDI (PG). Third chapter in the middle section of George Lucas' "Star Wars" trilogy. With Luke Skywalker, Hans Solo, Princess Leia and other characters from the previous films as the Rebel Alliance battles Darth Vader and the forces of the Empire.

RISKY BUSINESS (R). Teen-ager, left alone while his parents are on vacation, gets unpressed.

SMOKEY AND THE BANDIT — PART 3 (PG). Comedy retreat with Jackie Gleason as Sheriff Justice and Jerry Reed as Clells, who stands in

for the bandit. Hurt Reynolds had sense enough to stay away from this turkey trot.

STAYING ALIVE (PG). John Travolta recreates the role of Tony Manero, now struggling in the competitive world of Broadway dancers, in this sequel to "Saturday Night Fever."

TO BEGIN AGAIN (PG). Academy Award winner for best foreign language film and a tender story of remembrance and love.

LA TRAVIATA (G). Franco Zeffirelli wrote, designed and directed this sumptuous version of Verdi's opera with opera stars Teresa Stratas, Plácido Domingo and Cornell MacNeil.



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