

Movie critic named

Dan Greenberg is the Observer & Ecumenist's new film critic. He replaces Louisa Salder, who resigned to pursue other writing interests.

Greenberg teaches film history/appreciation and filmmaking at Oakland Community College's Orchard Ridge Campus in Farmington Hills. He has been with the college since it opened in 1965.

Before that, Greenberg was business manager of Channel 56 in Detroit while completing his doctorate in radio-TV-film at Wayne State University. He also received a master's degree in the later from WSU and his bachelor of arts in English from the University of Michigan.

Greenberg is writing a book surveying and analyzing film literature. He also has written articles for *Magill's Survey of Foreign Cinema and Film Quarterly*.



Dan Greenberg



Meryl Streep and Kurt Russell are lovers, who share her troubles in "Silkwood," the story of Karen Silkwood.

'Silkwood,' Streep are paired perfectly

"Silkwood," which opened Wednesday at area theaters, is an excellent movie. It has everything audiences want — a realistic, gripping love story, characters who stimulate our emotions, stunning photography, serious issues, subtle direction and a fine cast. But most of all, "Silkwood" has Meryl Streep.

In "Kramer Vs. Kramer," she made us think seriously about women's roles in a changing society. In "Sophie's Choice," she indelibly etched the Holocaust's pain in our minds.

In "Silkwood," Streep is brass and bitchy, sometimes tough, sometimes touching as Karen Silkwood, a personality who lives on the screen and in our minds because of Streep's talent. Her intelligence and charm enrich us all.

The generalized news reports of Karen Silkwood's mysterious death in 1974 become intimate and meaningful under Mike Nichols' subtle direction. We care about Karen Silkwood, her lover, Drew Stephens (Kurt Russell), and their live-in lesbian friend, Dolly Pelliker (Cher).

THEIR RELATIONSHIPS are affected by Karen's growing union activism and sense of responsibility for the dangers of the plutonium plant where she works. These are the serious concerns of someone we love.

The film is first and foremost a touching, realistic love story. Glossy Hollywood perfection gives way to people with plimpts and perspiration. They sweat and stink. Sometimes they have finer moments. They are very human.

The strength of love among Karen, Drew and Dolly stimulates our concern for everything they do. Their personalities interest us in the abstract problems of corporate responsibility and radioactive peril.

That is characteristic of the very best films, which focus our attention on abstract issues by making us care about the people who are facing those problems. In this regard, "Silkwood" excels.

Nichols' sensitive direction and the fine acting — particularly Streep, Cher and Kurt Russell — never bombard us with heavy sermons. The film gradually builds images of love, of fear, of danger, but always delicately, so that we are led slowly to realize the great dangers inherent in our atomic, private and public worlds.

AS KAREN SILKWOOD becomes more involved and more concerned with plant safety and union representation, she is treated to a level of indifference beyond corporate concern for profits. Her union's national leadership has a "moral imperative" regarding health and safety. It diminishes noticeably after the certification election is won. Her co-workers also lose interest as job security becomes their major concern.

Considerable credit for the movie's impact goes to the director of photography, Czechoslovakian cinematographer Miloslav Ondrick. The soft, delicate quality of low-key yellowed images heavily emphasizes naturalistic scenes (the countryside, the rain, the trees, the sunset) and reinforces the personal relationships of Karen, Drew and Dolly.

In contrast, the harshness of plutonium plant machinery is brightly lit to emphasize the frightening technological threat. But the indelible images left are those of the countryside, the scratched, nicked, faded wooden house, and the faces of the people whose humanity we respect.

In its own quiet and understated way, "Silkwood" should scare us all as it touches delicately but surely on the frightening questions of corporate and individual responsibility, radioactive peril, and the impact of fear on human relationships.

what's at the movies

BIG CHILL (R). William Hurt, Kevin Kline and Glenn Close in drama about a group of college friends from the 1960s who are reunited by the death of a close friend.

CHRISTINE (R). A '68 Plymouth Fury has a mind of its own and control over its owner Arnie, in tale of terror by Stephen King.

DANTON (PG). Terror during the time of the French Revolution.

THE DEAD ZONE (R). Christopher Walken and Martin Sheen about the threat of World War III.

GORKY PARK (R). Three people are murdered in Moscow's Gorky Park, and an investigator tries to unravel the mystery. Starring William Hurt, Joanna Pacula, Lee Marvin and Brian Dennehy.

THE MAN WHO LOVED WOMEN (R). Blake Edwards film with cast headed by Burt Reynolds and Julie Andrews.

MICKEY'S CHRISTMAS CAROL (G). Animated featurette from Walt Disney Pictures. This is the first new movie in 30 years with the famous mouse Mickey.

THE RIGHT STUFF (PG). Airborne stories of test pilot Chuck Yeager and the Mercury Astronauts are told in movie based on Tom Wolfe's bestseller.

MOVIE RATING GUIDE

- G General audiences 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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