

second runs

Louise Okrutsky

Morbid fascination manifests itself in many ways — from slowing down on the highway to check out why the police and ambulance surround a disabled car to watching something like "Blue Velvet." The 1986 movie attracted much attention for its macabre sexual content.

Dennis Hopper excels in a role almost too unsettling to watch for two hours. When he starts to inhale nitrous oxide, the faint of heart may want to call the whole thing off. Isabella Rossellini plays the woman caught in Hopper's web of excess, slick and delectable. Like Hopper, she turns in a memorable performance. You'll also know why Rossellini raised a few eyebrows by wearing a little velvet gown to the Oscars that year. Nice FR move.

The movie was directed by David Lynch, whose credits include "Elephant Man" and the very strange but riveting cult classic, "Eraserhead."

ANOTHER MOVIE that the obsessive may wish to at least fast-forward through some scenes is "The Fly." Jeff Goldblum plays another one of his high-strung, smart-aleck characters as the scientist who starts out studying molecular transportation and ends up learning more than he wanted to about entomology. The 1958 black-and-white version with Vincent Price wasn't quite like this. Price was at his hammy best and '50s movie technology at its campiest. Remember the scenes in which Price, his head obviously superimposed onto the body of the fly, squeaked, "Help me, help me?" It was good for a chuckle.

Here's one for the next trivia night — the screenplay for the 1958 version was written by James Clavell who, as you know, later went on to write "Shogun."



Jeff Goldblum is in a sticky situation in "The Fly."

The 1986 version isn't quite like that. Goldblum does a gory job of showing a man plummeting into animal-like behavior, his body doing things over which he has no control. However, you have to look past scenes such as the one during which the scientist/fly regurgitates his food.

Geena Davis plays the journalist who attempts to carry on a romance with Goldblum. It's a sticky situation. The end leaves open the question of whether or not the journalist is carrying the offspring of her liaison with the ill-fated but high-flying scientist.

Obviously a product of the current mania for setting up sequels. What's next? "Son of Fly"? "The Fly Papers"? "I was a Swatter for the FBI"?

Go ahead, give it a whirl. It isn't great art, but it's pretty well done.

Benny forgot to shop early

By Sharon Dargatzis
Staff writer

Benny, the original last-minute Christmas shopper, clutched a carton of hemp-flavored Chew and headed east, mumbling, "It's the thought that counts."

THE MORAL of the parable? Shop early.

But if it's Dec. 24, the discount and department stores have closed and your gift list still reads like the Detroit telephone book, it's time for a little gift improvisation. With some stores open all night, last-minute shopping isn't as tough as it used to be. There's more than Hostess Twinkies and hot coffee-to-go on some 24-hour market and drug store shelves.

"You should come here at 11 p.m., on Christmas Eve," says Teresa Stoner, assistant manager at Perry Drug Store on Woodward just south of Square Lake Road, Bloomfield Hills.

"You'd see lines at every counter, at least two registers open and the manager running around." Shoppers buy just about anything, including lots of cologne and perfume, a last-minute favorite.

"We're doing well with our appliances. We have a lot in stock and they're selling, but they're really not last-minute gifts. Toys aren't really last-minute either."

Eleventh-hour types look for knickknacks and gift shop curios. Perry's does a brisk business in ceramic Chia pets, scented pots for simmering potpourri, porcelain figurines and hurricane lamps.

"WE SELL a LOT of cosmetics and watches," Stoner noted. "It's for someone who wasn't on your list but you know them well enough to buy a gift. You know, 'Oh, gosh, I forgot to buy something for my friend Suzie!'"

If you don't have time to find a 24-hour drug store, consider the corner mini-mart.

One 7-11 store in Troy was selling "Crocodile Dundee" and "Top Gun" on videotape for less than \$11 each.

The store manager pointed out seasonal music on cassette, paperback books by Sidney Sheldon, Andy Rooney and Victoria Hill, piles of packaged fireworks, chilled

champagne, sunglasses and small decorated houseplants as possible stocking stuffers.

But if you're gambling on finding a gift the night before Christmas, why not take a real risk? "We have lottery tickets," the manager suggested. "And (holiday) envelopes to put them in."

If there's no 24-hour market nearby, consider the all-night gas station. Some stock small items that can be packaged together as a car maintenance or car travel kit. Or consider buying a gallon of gas, tying a ribbon around the can and promising to cut the rice plant's lawn for a month this summer (if the gas is for "he mover").

IF YOU PLANNED on homemade gifts, but haven't touched a sewing machine or picked up a hammer in months, consider "ungrading" the unfinished materials into a project kit.

Write out instructions, arrange the pieces in a box and wrap. The recipient may never know the difference.

upcoming things to do

COMEDY TIME

Mark Sweetman on Wednesday, Dec. 23, and Ruben-Ruben on Wednesday, Dec. 30, bring their comedy to Joey's Comedy Showcase at Mr. McGee's Irish Pub in Livonia. Tickets cost \$5. All shows have two warm-up acts. Every Monday has "open mike" night. Showtime is 9 p.m. Call 471-9181.

HEADS CAST

Barry Williams, who appeared in "The Brady Bunch," stars in the Birmingham Theatre's five-week engagement of the musical "Promises, Promises." Performances run Wednesday, Dec. 30, through Sunday, Jan. 31. The Neil Simon-Burt Bacharach-Hal David musical includes a special performance New Year's

Eve and matinee on New Year's Day and Jan. 2. Most tickets range from \$15.50 to \$21. For more information, call 644-3533.

TOE-TAPPING JAZZ

There's jazz every Sunday night at Max & Ernie's in Farmington Hills. For a \$2 cover charge, redeemable with any food purchase, listeners can

hear the Hot Club on Sunday, Dec. 20, and the Bugs Beddow Band on Sunday, Dec. 27.

CARS AND TED

Ted Nugent rings in the New Year on Dec. 31 with a 9 p.m. concert at Cobo Arena in Detroit. Tickets are \$18.50.

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