

Holiday lull precedes '88 celluloid storm

RECENT RELEASES:

No films premiered for New Year's Eve. But wait 'til next week.

STILL PLAYING

"Baby Boom" (C-) (PG-13) 105 minutes.

Diane Keaton stars in a yuppie comedy about a single business executive whose life is drastically changed by the unexpected, unwanted arrival of a baby. Overly cute and very predictable with too few laughs and too many yawns. Reviewed by Kathy Guyor.

"Batteries not included" (C+) (PG) 100 minutes.

Spielberg's latest release features extra-terrestrial plus Jessie and Hume Cronyn as an elderly couple who, along with several others, face eviction from their beloved city apartment building. Unusual relationship develops between the e.t.'s and the humans. Too bland despite some humorous scenes. Reviewed by Jeff Limatta.

"Broadcast News" (A-) (R) 135 minutes.

Entertaining and well-done, albeit contrived, story of life in the network news fast lane. Holly Hunter, Albert Brooks and William Hurt revel in all the glitz and sham of contemporary newscasting. It makes you wonder about 'film at eleven.'

"Cinderella" (A+) (G) 74 minutes. All you mean stepmothers and jealous stepsisters watch out! Cinderella's Fairy Godmother is back in town with all of Disney's original crowd in this 1950 classic.

"Dark Eyes" (A) 115 minutes

Marcello Mastroianni is a masterful turn-of-the-century romantic ne'er-do-well. Rich, sensuous cinematography complements superb rendition of screen play based on Anton Chekov stories.

"Dirty Dancing" (B-) (PG-13) 105 minutes.

Well-done and entertaining show-biz cliché. Rich, idealistic young girl (Jennifer Grey) falls in love with working-class dance instructor (Patrick Swayze). Music, dance and dialogue are good, but plot has more trite twists than Chubby Checker in the Peppermint Lounge.

"Eddie Murphy Raw" (R) (R) 100 minutes.

Eddie Murphy in footage taken from live concerts.

"Empire of the Sun" (A) (PG) 150 minutes.

Poignant, riveting Spielberg story of interned English boy separated from parents during World War II. Japanese invasion of China. Brilliant photography, ethereal sound and excellent acting add up to a winner.

"Fatal Attraction" (A) (R) 110 minutes.

Michael Douglas, family man, and his one-night stand, which turns into a nightmare at the hands of a psychotic woman (Glenn Close) in this suspenseful thriller. Riveting performances and a strong story build to an explosive, nerve-shattering conclusion. Reviewed by Kathy Guyor.

"Flowers in the Attic" (D+) (PG-13) 95 minutes.

When Dad dies, nasty mother (Victoria Tennant) imprisons children in attic of grandpa's mansion. Louise Fletcher is stiff and stilted as the repressed and repressive grandma. The rest of the cast needs acting lessons except for the two little kids.

(Ben Ganger and Lindsay Parker) who don't act, they just look cute. Unpleasant and not entertaining.

"Hope and Glory" (A+) (PG-13) 110 minutes.

An absolutely charming and marvelous two hours of World War II in England through the eyes and from the viewpoint of 6-year-old Bill (Sebastian Rice Edwards). Sarah Miles is his mother, and the rest of the cast, although locally unknown, are superb, in particular Ian Bannen as the crabby, cantankerous but loving grandfather. Don't miss it.

"House of Games" (C+) (R) 100 minutes.

Modern mystery teams up with sedate female psychologist with clever con man. Slow-paced, low-energy story is saved by an unusual plot twist that gives it an unexpected ending. (Kathy Guyor).

"Leonard Part VI" (R) (PG)

Superspy Bill Cosby is lured out of retirement to save the world.

"Nuts" (A+) (R) 120 minutes.

Barbra Streisand is superb as expensive call girl charged with killing an abusive client. Streisand's acting is the icing, but the cake includes top performance by Richard Dreyfus, Maureen Stapleton, James Whitmore, Karl Malden, Eli Wallach, Robert Webber and Leslie Nielsen.

"Overboard" (B-) (PG) 110 minutes.

Marginally clever story with some good comedy is marred by overly rapid transition of super-stoaty-rich lady (Goldie Hawn) to sensitive, caring mother of four boys living in stovely surroundings. Their daddy (Kurt Russell) is unbelievably thoughtful for such a crude lout — and not at all convincing.

"Pinocchio and the Emperor of the Night" (G) (G) 90 minutes.

Original story embellished and animation computer-enhanced but end result is flat. Some images are dull and moral has been complicated far beyond childhood comprehension. Reviewed by Jeff Limatta.

"Planes, Trains and Automobiles" (A) (R) 90 minutes.

Strangely enough, adversity, pain, suffering and misfortune can be a lot of fun — when they happen to someone else. This time it's Steve Martin and John Candy misadventuring from New York to Chicago during holiday rush. Martin's tantrums and lovable, bumbling Candy make it a pleasant outing.

"The Princess Bride" (A-) (PG) 98 minutes.

Rob Reiner's delightful fantasy, based on William Goldman's novel, involves miracles, villains, the swamp-fire-forest and 'the pit of despair' in a land long ago and far away. True love conquers all. Reviewed by Jeff Limatta.

"The Running Man" (B) (R) 105 minutes.

Futuristic action set in police state in 2017. Arnold Schwarzenegger is game show contestant fighting for his life. Good guys win, bad guys lose. Lots of action, violence and droll groans delivered as only Schwarzenegger can. Reviewed by Kathy Guyor.

"Suspect" (A) (R) 120 minutes.

Top thriller of the year. Cher excellent as public defender assigned violent, indigent, deaf-mute (Liam Neeson) accused of murder. Nicely set with Washington, D.C. providing backdrop for twin struggles: power in government and survival in the streets. Dennis Quaid is engaging as

high-rolling lobbyist summoned for jury duty.

"Teen Wolf Too" (D-) (PG) 90 minutes.

Jason Bateman is Michael J. Fox's cousin in more of the same "Wall-mania." Makes the first one look like a classic. Reviewed by Brian Nichols.

"Three Men and a Cradle" (B+) (PG) 100 minutes.

One pretty baby, three handsome men, many comical situations and a good story equal a very funny movie. Selleck, Danson and Guttenberg are terrific as three single men learning to care for and love a baby left on

their doorstep. Reviewed by Kathy Guyor.

"Throw Momma From the Train" (B+) (PG-13) 90 minutes.

Clever comedy has Danny Devito and Billy Crystal trading murders: a bossy mother and a nasty ex-wife are the targets. Will the killers accomplish their evil deeds? Story keeps you guessing and laughing until the end. Devito and Crystal are terrific together.

"Wall Street" (D) (R) 125 minutes.

Sophisticated mediocrity with high cholesterol cast in bland expose of Wall Street shenanigans. Michael

Douglas, Martin and Charlie Sheen, Terrence Stamp, Hal Holbrook, Sam Young, Sylvia Miles and Daryl Hannah perform slightly better than Oliver Stone's screenplay and direction, which has all the appeal of dead marshmallows.

"Weeds" (A) (R) 115 minutes.

Nick Nolte is superb as prisoner who rehabilitates himself — first by reading and then by writing a play about prison life. Performances attract attention of critic (Rita Taggart) who campaigns for Nolte's release. It's all very well done but Nolte's acting is the best.



Pinocchio, devoid of political ambition, on his way to the mayor's house to deliver a musical jewel box.

the movies
Dan Greenberg

Professor Dan grades the movies

A+	Top marks - sure to please
A	Close behind - excellent
A-	Still in the running for top honors
B+	Pretty good stuff but not perfect
B	Good
B-	Good but notable deficiencies
C+	Just a cut above average
C	Mediocre
C-	Not so hot and slipping fast
D+	The very best of the poor stuff
D	Poor
D-	It doesn't get much worse
F	Truly awful
Z	Reserved for the colossally bad
	No advanced screening.

Visitors looking for winter sport will find it on the slopes

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kids learned to ski by jumping off snowy rooftops at the turn of the century. That club evolved into the National Ski Association, now the United States Ski Association.

The good news is that the U.P. can guarantee you 200 inches of snow a year and good skiing at places like Big Powderhorn or Blackjack in Bessemer, Indianhead in Wakefield or Pine Mountain in Iron Mountain. The bad news is that it takes a day or two to get there.

The first real ski resort in the Midwest was Caberfae at Cadillac (816-862-3301), still very popular after 50 years. It is an excellent place for individuals and families to learn and far enough north to have snow.

The most popular ski resorts in the state are in the northern half of the "mitlen", especially northwest around the Traverse City-Harbor Springs area.

Not all the winter fun is on the slopes, and you will find lots of off-slope activities at places like Boyne Mountain in Boyne Falls (516-547-2441), Boyne Highlands in Harbor

Springs (516-536-2171), Schuss Mountain in Manistowish (516-533-8621) or 'next door' at Shanty Creek in Bel Air (516-533-8621). All the resorts I have mentioned will participate in the free ski day, but you may need to call more than one to find room at this late date.

For other northwest resorts call the Traverse City Area Ski Council in Bloomfield Hills (331-5050). For other participating resorts around Michigan and more information on Learn to Ski Free program, contact the Michigan Travel Bureau toll-free at 800-5432-YES.

BUT IF you really want to enjoy Michigan winter, don't stop at skiing. Plymouth has literally tons of frozen fun at the ice sculpture spectacular Jan. 7-17, when amateur and professional chefs carve hundreds of fantasy figures in ice.

Tip-Up-Town, Jan. 16-17 north in Houghton Lake is one of those crazy, wonderful winter festivals designed to see northerners through a long cold winter. It started as a fishing festival, but now it includes pony rides, long beard contests and snow

sculptures.

In the south, you golfed on grass, but when you get wacky with winter you go to the Polar Ice Cap Tournament and hit a few balls on frozen Spring Lake Jan. 23. The two courses are the Penguin 9 and the Frostdite 18.

Also consider: Silver Creek Challenge Cross-country Ski Race Jan. 30 in Tawas City; Fercville USA in East Tawas Feb. 5-7; North American VASA Cross-country Ski Race in Traverse City Feb. 13-14. And in the UP: Pine Mountain Ski Jumping Classic in Iron Mountain Feb. 5-6; Can-Am Luge Race (that's bobbed-ding) March 4-5 in Marquette; Suicide Bowl Ski Jumping Tournament in Isbiperming March 5-6.

You won't be able to see them all but any one should give you a taste of winter. For other closer to home activities call the Southeast Michigan Travel and Tourist Assn. 555-8220. For snow conditions, call toll-free 800-292-5404.

Once you've seen a Michigan winter, you'll find it come back often.

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GET ON THE RIGHT TRACK

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Observer & Eccentric NEWSPAPERS CROSS-COUNTRY SKI SCHOOL!



Cross-country skiing is a fun, exciting and healthful way to enjoy the outdoors this winter. You can learn to cross-country ski at the Observer & Eccentric Ski School at several neighborhood locations in Oakland and Wayne Counties. Clinics begin in January (weather permitting).

\$10 includes equipment rental and 1½ hour ski lesson
\$5 (with your own equipment)

Due to limited space availability, pre-registration is required. For complete registration information, call any nearby site listed below, Monday through Friday, at least one week in advance of lesson.

Observer & Eccentric Cross Country Ski School locations:

ADDISON OAKS COUNTY PARK
1480 West Romeo Road
Oakland, MI 48051
693-2432

BEECH WOODS RECREATION CENTER
c/o Southfield Parks & Recreation
22200 Beech Road
Southfield, MI 48034
354-9603

HERITAGE PARK
c/o Farmington Hills Parks & Recreation
31555 Eleven Mile Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48018
473-8570

INDEPENDENCE OAKS COUNTY PARK
c/o Oakland County Parks & Recreation
9501 Sashabaw Road
Clarkston, MI 48016
925-0677

MAYBURY STATE PARK
c/o Northville Community Recreation
303 West Main Street
Northville, MI 48167
345-0200

WARREN VALLEY GOLF COURSE
c/o Wayne County Parks & Recreation
33175 Ann Arbor Trail
Westland, MI 48185
281-1990