

'Life': Intelligent comedy

RECENT RELEASES

"Beetlejuice" (P) (PG).

Michael Keaton and Geena Davis in ghost story with a twist: The ghosts are nice quiet folks and the people are noisy and pretentious.

"Biloxi Blues" (B+) (PG-13) 105 minutes.

Eugene Jerome (Matthew Broderick) learns about life, Army and otherwise, in this nice period piece set in a Biloxi, Miss., boot camp in 1945. Good performance by Christopher Walken as the tough, but sensitive sergeant, whipping raw recruits into shape, but Epstein (Corey Parker) needs more than a silly New York accent to sound intelligent.

"The Fox and the Hound" (A) (G) 80 minutes.

Animated Disney film about an unusual relationship between a young fox and a hunting hound. An array of talking forest creatures make this a typical, enjoyable Disney film. Reviewed by Kathy Gyor.

"Johnny Be Good" (B-) (PG-13) 85 minutes.

Anthony Michael Hall as the superstar of high school football faced with ethical choices as college recruiters descend on masse. The gang that made this doesn't know the difference between satire and silliness. Not even worthy of dollar night.

"A New Life" (A) (PG-13) 100 minutes.

Alan Alda's latest is a frank, intelligent romantic comedy about divorce, love and remarriage and all the other problems middle-aged people face.

STILL PLAYING:

"Action Jackson" (C) (R) 90 minutes.

Action movie set in Detroit pits police Sgt. "Action" Jackson (Carl Weathers) against corrupt auto magnate.

Vogan's 'Leg' looks at the 'game of life' through a ball team

By John Killian
special writer

"Sit in the bleachers and watch the women practice. It is a roundhouse practice, the women fanned out in a rough star pattern. The man pacing the foul line . . . notices the wind stirring the leaves and looks back to his pitcher. She is working on her knuckleball, throwing it without a spin so the seams look parallel."

"The pitch dips and weaves through the air before it crosses the plate. It lands in the catcher's mitt lightly, not enough force to overcome the breeze. The catcher flips one of her black braids over her shoulder before returning the pitch and signals for another knuckleball." Ah, spring and baseball are back. On fields all over the place, from professional proscenium to pickup games played on litter-filled fields, the boys and girls of summer are honing their skills for another season. The crack of the bat and the smack of the ball against a leather mitt are the sounds that fill the air. The game within the game is being developed.

One of the best of these games is played out in the pages of "In Shelly's Leg" by Sara Vogan (Graywolf Press, \$7.50). In this first novel we are treated to the game of living, played with all the joy and sorrow and folly that make life alive. The setting is a small town in Montana. The players are the patrons of a bar, Shelly's Leg, and the members of the women's fast-pitch baseball team the bar sponsors.

SHELLY'S LEG Women's Fast-Pitch Softball Team has been on top for the past six seasons. During the course of the novel, the team moves through one more season. This is not a "baseball" novel, however. It is a season in the lives of the characters. The battery of Margaret, the pitcher, and Rita, the catcher, and Sullivan and Shelly are the center of the action.

Margaret is a divorced mother of two who, at 30, is seeking a stable life for her family. She lives with Woody, a pedal steel guitar player. Woody has filled her life and her house with his presence.

His overstuffed chair and his guitar crowd her living room. His ambitions and his plans crowd her life. When he plans to go on tour with his band he asks Margaret to come with him. She refuses.

She can't imagine life on the road with two children and the uncertainty of a band's existence. She has drifted for too long. She needs roots and familiarity.

Rita grew up in a smaller place and has come to this town. For years she has worked at the bar. For years she has merely been here. Rita is Margaret's best friend. She needs to get out.

When Woody comes to Rita, she is

Grading the movies

A+	Top marks - sure to please
A	Close behind - excellent
A-	Still in running for top honors
B+	Pretty good stuff, 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 colossal bad
*	No advanced screening

"Batteries Not Included" (C+) (PG) 100 minutes.

Spielberg's latest release features extraterrestrials plus Jessica Tandy 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.

"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.

"The Dead" (A) (PG) 80 minutes.

John Huston's last film is superb characterization of a turn-of-the-cen-

the movies



Dan Greenberg

tury Irish family. Based on James Joyce's story of the same name from "The Dubliners."

"D.O.A." (C-) (R) 100 minutes.

Professor of English Dexter Cornell (Dennis Quaid) is poisoned and sets out to get his killer before he dies.

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

Michael Douglas, family man, and his one-night stand that turns into a nightmare at the hands of a psychotic woman (Glenn Close).

"Frankie" (B) (R) 110 minutes.

Mrs. Walker (Betty Buckley) is abducted upon arrival in Paris and her husband, Dr. Richard Walker (Harrison Ford), chases her kidnappers with help from hippie-smuggler Michelle (Emmanuelle Seigner).

"Good Morning Vietnam" (A) (R) 120 minutes.

Non-stop Robin Williams at his very best as Armed Forces Radio D.J. in Vietnam.

"Hairspray" (C-) (PG) 88 minutes.

Tasteless parody of teenage life in Baltimore during the early '60s cen-



Alan Alda and Ann-Margaret separate and enter the frightening but funny world of blind dates and new relationships in "A New Life." Also appearing in the movie are Veronica Hamel and John Shea.

ters on local TV dance show.

"Hope and Glory" (A+) (R) 120 minutes.

An absolutely charming and marvelous two hours of World War II in England through the eyes and from the viewpoint of six-year-old Bill (Sebastian Rice Edwards). Sarah Miles is his mother and the rest of the cast, although locally unknown, are superb.

"Ironweed" (B) (R) 140 minutes.

The down-and-out world of an aging alcoholic (Jack Nicholson) closes in and crumbles as ghosts from his past surface and friends fade.

"The Last Emperor" (A-) (PG-13) 125 minutes.

Bernardo Bertolucci's stunning presentation of the epic tale of China's last emperor, Pu Yi. At age 3 he came to the throne three years be-

fore Sun Yat Sen's 1911 revolution, a fascinating story of survival through two world wars and Mao's Communist takeover of mainland China.

"Masquerade" (F) (R) 95 minutes. Unimaginative story of heist (Meg Tilly) and three fellows after her money.

"Moonstruck" (A+) (PG) 102 minutes.

Cher as a 37-year-old Italian widow in Brooklyn about to remarry. She's terrific and Nicolas Cage, Vincent Gardenia and Danny Aiello are great in this pure distillation of the American ethnic schtick.

"School Daze" (D) (R) 120 minutes.

Director-Writer Spike Lee ("She's Got'ta Have It") tries to do it all in two hours with a comic-spoof-satire-musical mockery of black college life.

"Whales of August" and "Young at Heart" (A+) (PG) 85 and 30 minutes respectively.

Lillian Gish, Bette Davis, Ann Sothern, Vincent Price and Harry Carey Jr. give new meaning to the phrase, "the golden years" in "Whales."

Local filmmakers Sue Marx and Pam Conn's "Young at Heart" is superb documentary about Lou Gehrig and his recent bride, Irena Swaway. The lives of these two elderly artists testify to human courage at its very best.

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

One pretty baby, three handsome men, many comical situations and a good story equal a very funny movie.

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