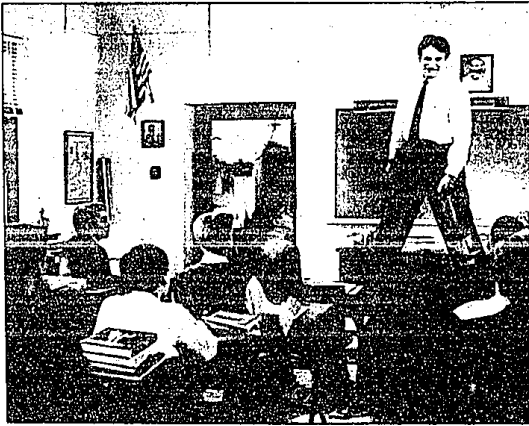


MOVING PICTURES

The traditional curriculum at Welton Academy is given new life by charismatic English professor John Keating (Robin Williams) in "Dead Poets Society."



Masterful performances shine in 'Poets Society'

Societies have always agonized over proper education for the young so that when they do mature, they will assume power and wealth — and control the culture in ways pleasing to their elders. The principles of education adopted by any given society, of course, reflect the ruling establishment's view of how well things are going.

The terrible tragedy presently being played out in China indicates conflict between various elements of the power structure and their divergent views about how Chinese children should behave.

That same issue is at the heart of Peter Weir's ("Witness," "Gallipoli" and "The Year of Living Dangerously") latest film "Dead Poets Society" (A+, PG, 124 minutes).

John Keating (Robin Williams) is the new English instructor at Welton Academy as the fall 1959 semester begins. Welton is the very best, the most traditional, the finest prep school in New England, or anywhere else in the country for that matter. Just ask the faculty or the boardmaster, Gale Nolan (Norman Lloyd).

Welton Academy specializes in discipline, achievement and tradition, hence Keating's injunction to his students, "gather 'round ye boys ye may" doesn't sit too well with the establishment which, of course, wants to replicate itself. "If it was good enough for our fathers it was good enough for our sons."

In particular, Keating inspires seven young men in his class, four of whom figure dramatically in the forefront of this very well acted, finely photographed and generally excellent movie.

Neil Perry (Robert Sean Leonard), Todd Anderson (Ethan Hawke), Knox Overstreet (Josh Charles) and Charlie Dalton (Gale Hansen) revive and lead the Dead Poets Society, a long defunct "club" that Keating had been part of as a student at Welton 17 years earlier.

The entire cast, under Peter Weir's direction, performs in the finest manner imaginable. The fact that the seven young actors — the four noted plus Dylan Kussman, Al-leon Ruggiero and James Waterston — lived, worked and played together during the 10-week shoot sustains the warmth of youthful friendship and idealism so aptly portrayed on screen, a mirror of the personal bonds established during filming.

Robin Williams' portrait of a dedicated teacher whose warm humanism overrides the rigidity of the system is as much, or more, than any actor has the right to expect from an actor. The inspiration of his personality will stand as a guide and symbol for many for a long time.

These masterful performances were photographed by John Seale as



the movies
Dan Greenberg

were the very vivid, scenic settings which are Welton Academy and its several thousand acres. ("Dead Poets Society" was filmed in Middleton, Del., at St. Andrew's School, founded in 1930 by Felix DuPont.)

Those images, perfect for this story, will remain in your mind's eye long after the film has ended. Tom Schulman's extremely literate script, Maurice Jarre's fine musical score and all the other motion picture crafts are combined under Peter Weir's direction into one of the better films to premiere in a long time.

Despite some good moments, only hardcore Trekkies will rave about "Star Trek V: The Final Frontier" (C+, PG, 100 minutes). Of course, all the favorite stars are back and need no introduction, but plot number five needs a lot of explanation.

Sybok (Laurence Luckinbill) is a charismatic, half genius, half psychiatrist on Nimbus II who hijacks the Enterprise because he needs a starship to go find god. If Indiana Jones can recover the Ark of the Covenant and the Holy Grail with a whip and a pistol, I suppose it's logical to find god with a starship where no man has gone before.

Every film, fantasy or otherwise, has its own logic and part of the fun is playing along with someone else's imagination. Unfortunately, here the imagination is spotty and there are too many continuity and plot flaws to make "Star Trek V" work.

The major plot flaw, of course, is how easily Sybok "converts" antagonists who then enthusiastically join his quest. It just doesn't wash, but someone obviously washed his headgear so that the film opens with Sybok wearing a clean, fresh headpiece after a long, dry, dusty horse-back ride.

The film's two best moments has three good chums, Captain Kirk (William Shatner), Mr. Spock (Leonard Nimoy) and Dr. McCoy (DeForest Kelly), gently and good-naturedly bantering with one another. There's some fine, warm comedy in those sequences.

However, just when the film seems ready to take off on a sophisticated tact with significant discussion of man's role in life, it turns into simple-minded space opera with totally unsatisfactory conclusion.

The film's last 15 minutes have an incredible array of unexplained plot elements, impossible (even for fanta-

Grading the movies

A+	Top marks - sure to please
A	Close behind - excellent
A-	Slight 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 colossally bad
	No advanced screening

sy) events and a highly unlikely solution to those events. I thought being a Klingon meant you never had to say you're sorry.

There was no screening for "How to Get Ahead in Advertising" (R), starring Rachel Ward in a dramatic comedy, or is it a comedy/drama, probably about the advertising business.

With major motion pictures such as these opening, "Miracle Mile" (P) (R), probably won't get much play. It's billed as a surrealistic thriller about a young couple with 24 hours before nuclear disaster.

STILL PLAYING:

"Criminal Law" (B) (R). Suppose thriller about attorney who discovers his client is guilty.

"The Dream Team" (B+) (PG-13) 105 minutes.

Psychiatric patients have quite a trip trying to see a ballgame at Yankee Stadium.

"Earth Girls Are Easy" (PG). Gena Davis and Jeff Goldblum in sci-fi comedy.

"Fright Night II" (C-) (R). "Fright of Dreams" (B+) (PG) 111 minutes.

Fanciful baseball story as Iowa farmer builds diamond so Shoeless Joe Jackson can play again.

"Ridley Scott's Last Tango in Paris" (R). "Ridley Scott's Last Tango in Paris" (R).

"Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" (B+) (PG-13) 120 minutes.

Good entertainment, but enough already.

"K-9" (C+) (PG-13) 100 minutes.

James Belushi in weak comedy about narcotics dog and detective.

features Anna Magnani as the leading actress of a South American theater troupe. With "The Rules of the Game" (France - 1939) at 9:30 p.m. The director's finest hour, about the various intrigues surrounding a weekend in the country. Renoir also acts in this much-maligned film.

Personal problem — "The Man with the Golden Arm" (USA - 1955), 7:30 p.m., June 16. Frank Sinatra as a drug addict under Otto Preminger's powerful, preachy direction and backed by a knock-out Elmer Bernstein jazz score. With "The Three Faces of Eve" (USA - 1957) at 9:45 p.m. About a woman with three personalities. Joanne Woodward won an Oscar for this, her first major film role.

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CINEMA GUILD, Modern Language Building, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Call 924-0227 for information. (\$2.50 single, \$3.50 double feature)

"Renoir — The Golden Coach" (France - 1935), 7:30 p.m. June 17. A day when originally released, writer-director Jean Renoir's feather-light farce

Please turn to Page 4

ALTERNATIVE VIEWING

Home movie worth seeing

Sullivan's 'Guide' has the gusto

By John Monaghan
special writer

Four years ago, filmmaker Fred G. Sullivan decided that his family was as good a subject as anything Hollywood could produce. His resulting movie, "The Beer Drinker's Guide to Fitness and Filmmaking," may be the best home movie ever made.

The 83-minute film won special recognition for originality at the U.S. Film and Video Festival and recently played to good reviews in Boston and New York. It arrives in Detroit via the downtown Tele-Arts Theatre this weekend.

The film opens with Sullivan setting a camera on automatic timer, then running into the picture field before it clicks. From here, the film chronicles the joys and frustrations of day-to-day life in Saranac Lake, N.Y., with Fred G., wife Polly and their four children.

IN BETWEEN, changing diapers and picking toys up from the front lawn, Sullivan dreams he is Adirondack Fred, stripped to the loincloth, stalking through woods like Rambo with a beer belly. In reality, Fred G.

is more at home carting the family around in a puke green-colored station wagon.

"Meet the wretched family," he growls during one such interlude (certainly more akin to "Married... with Children" than "Father Knows Best"). "Mr. and Mrs. Wretched and their four wretched children."

Then there are wistful moments looking through family albums and wedding pictures, conversations with the postman, philosophical discussions of regular vs. light beer and scenes of Mom retreating to the roof to steal some time away from the family.

A fair amount of frustration surrounds Fred G., who continually drags the family near bankruptcy to make films. He tries to fill his children full of the same lofty ideals, yet while his daughter is asked to describe her biggest dream, she replies sincerely, "A big house."

SULLIVAN, 42, describes himself as a "woodchuck Woody Allen" who has been making movies since age 8. Clips from those early epics (where he always played the hero) also show up in "The Beer Drinker's Guide."

along with footage taken during overseas service in Korea.

As in "Sherman's March" (Ross McElwee's highly personalized look at his relationship with Southern women), the independent filmmaker is seen as an idealist, outsider and nut. But where McElwee could only be seen when aiming his shoulder-held camera into a mirror, Fred G. becomes a fleshed-out local hero that almost everyone can relate to.

"THE BEER Drinker's Guide" cost \$50,000 to produce and its investors (a pair of local businessmen) probably worried when the film, originally titled "Sullivan's Pavilion," opened to less-than-boffo business. Only after adding the word beer to the title (which cost an additional \$4,000 to change the opening reel), did it start to make money.

In fact, "The Beer Drinking Guide" did so well in Burlington, Vt., that it actually outgrossed "Rambo, 3" for seven straight weeks.

This weekend, Adirondack Fred faces an even bigger challenge — competing with the likes of "Star Trek" and "Indiana Jones."

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