



Charles Grodin plays the crooked Nicky Holiday, who falls in love with Miss Piggy.



the movies

Louise Snider

Everybody loves the good-time fun of 'Muppet Caper'

Face it. The Muppets are a lovable bunch, whatever they do. Their adventures may not be as novel or exciting as one would hope, but they make up in spirit what they lack in script.

This is true especially of "The Great Muppet Caper" (G). In their second film, Kermit the Frog, Fozzie Bear and Gonzo are investigative reporters (Gonzo is a photographer) on the trail of jewel thieves.

The trail leads them from Manhattan to London where they land with a splash, having been tossed out of the airplane into a pond.

Since they never really are in danger, as Kermit was in the first Muppet movie, there is very little in the way of suspense or thrills. What "The Great Muppet Caper" does have to offer, however, is a great deal of fun and laughter with snappy lines, elaborate musical numbers and, of course, romance.

The English setting serves to sharpen the humor by providing a haughty foil to the Muppets' simple charms, as they get in and out of one scrape after another.

Dianna Rigg is the highlight of these folks. She appears as Lady Holiday, London's leading high-fashion designer — in startling contrast is Miss Piggy, who comes to Lady Holiday seeking a job as a model. Miss Piggy's fondest dream (would you believe?) is to cram her flabby limbs into couture clothes.

Lady Holiday hires her as a receptionist. It's a start, a toehold up the fashion-industry ladder and a chance to meet important people. Her first day on the job she meets that dashing fellow Kermit, and it's love at first sight for both of them.

True love doesn't run smooth for Muppets or humans. Kermit and Miss Piggy have their problems, one of whom is Lady Holiday's wastrel brother Nicky (Charles Grodin). A rival for Miss Piggy's affection, he also is involved with the gang of thieves who are after Lady Holiday's fabulous gem, the Baseball Diamond.

He first sees Miss Piggy at an elegant supper club where he dances with her in a lavish musical number and becomes her ardent admirer. To get some idea of how lavish and extravagant this musical number is, imagine Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers teamed up with Busby Berkeley's choreography and an Esther Williams aquatic extravaganza.

The movie also has its simpler scenes, and they are equally, if not more, effective. The cameo appearances of guest stars are especially well-conceived.

John Cleese (of "Monty Python" and "Fawlty Towers") does a clever tongue-in-cheek segment as an upper-class gentleman carrying on a relentlessly boring conversation about the weather.

Robert Morley, Peter Ustinov, Jack Warden and even Oscar from "Sesame Street" surface briefly in "The Great Muppet Caper," and like everyone else in this movie, they all appear to be enjoying themselves.

Watching them or working with them, the Muppets make people feel good.



Dianna Rigg is Lady Holiday, whose wastrel brother, Nicky, wants to steal the Baseball Diamond, a gem she owns.

table talk

THE COMMUNITY HOUSE in Birmingham has been taking busloads of four groups to Renaissance Center ever since the world's tallest hotel, the Detroit Plaza, opened along with the center.

For the recent International Freedom Festival fireworks, a group of 184 people — four busloads — dined at the Pool Terrace of the Plaza. They enjoyed cocktails on the balcony, before and after dinner. With the riverfront view, it was a great place to see the fireworks explode in the sky from barges on the Detroit River.

This fall The Community House will offer three excursions to the Plaza for cooking demonstrations by executive chef Beat Riche, assisted by a pastry chef. After the demonstration, the group will have a gourmet meal of the prepared dishes.

More details will be forthcoming in The Community House's fall brochure, distributed after Labor Day.

The community center also will go to the Renaissance Center in December for its annual Christmas visit.

A WESTERN Pick and Chew Barbecue, from 6 p.m. till midnight on Tuesdays, is a relaxed way to enjoy country fare at all Win Schuler's restaurants, including West Bloomfield and Rochester locations.

"A passel of ribs" (a 20-ounce slab) is \$4.95. Or, all the chicken wings, drumsticks and fixin's you can eat is priced at \$2.95. The fixin's include potatoes, cole slaw and baked beans. The buffet is served in the pub, where waiters and waitresses are dressed in cowboy gear. Western music is provided by Roy McDanna, who plays guitar and sings, in the West Bloomfield Schuler's. Country music also is served up at the Rochester Schuler's.

Dan Strutz, manager in West

Bloomfield, said of the Western night, "It's priced for the pocketbook. The customers are dressed a little casually. You can have a meal and a couple cocktails for \$10 for two people."

"**A SUMMER of Ethnic Delights**" is in store at the Michigan Inn in Southfield. Sunday brunch through Sept. 20 has an ethnic theme to please your appetite. This Sunday a spicy hot brunch will be presented, with tacos, burritos and other Mexican specialties.

Other pleasures will include a British brunch, July 26; Italian, Aug. 2; Oriental, Aug. 9; German, Aug. 16; Greek, Aug. 23; Hawaiian, Aug. 30; Cajun, Sept. 6; Jewish, Sept. 13; and "Those Fabulous '50s" (American eat), Sept. 20.

Brunch is served from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., priced at \$7.95 for adults and \$4.95 for children under 12. Reservations are suggested.

phone 559-4500 and ask for the Coffee Garden.

TABLESIDE FLAIR has been added to the dishes at Chuck Muer's Top of the Post in Detroit's Hotel Pontchartrain. Beginning on Tuesday, diners may order from several entrees prepared or flamed at table-side.

Veal picata and scampi, scamp (jumbo red Portuguese shrimp with herbs), boneless breast of duck and roast rack of baby lamb all will get tableside attention. For dessert, bananas flambé may now light your fire.

A bevy of new appetizers, entrees and desserts all have a gourmet touch. Mussels Morreale, a chilled-mussels appetizer, has been placed on the menu to accent the six-week appearance, beginning on Tuesday, of the Peppi Morreale Trio, playing dance music.

— Ethel Simmons

what's at the movies

ATLANTIC CITY (R), Louis Malle's wonderfully vibrant, superbly acted, romantic film about old and young dreamers in Atlantic City.

BUSTIN' LOOSE (R), Richard Pryor and Cicely Tyson in romantic comedy about ex-con helping a schoolteacher transport children from a Philadelphia ghetto to a Washington farm.

THE CANNONBALL RUN (PG), Burt Reynolds is on the road again, challenging the speed limits. With him are Roger Moore, Dom DeLuise and Farrah Fawcett.

CHEECH AND CHONG'S NICE DREAMS (R), What else, man, but dope? That's what Cheech and Chong are all about.

CLASH OF THE TITANS (PG), Animation and live action combine in the adventure of the Greek hero Perseus, son of Zeus, who must overcome many powerful monsters in order to win the hand of the beautiful Andromeda.

FOUR SEASONS (PG), Alan Alda and Carol Burnett in comedy about the up-and-down relationships of three married couples during the course of a year.

Cruise goes

in moonlight

Boblo Island's "moonlight cruise" on the Detroit River departs every Saturday at 10 p.m. from the dock next to Joe Louis Arena in Detroit. The moonlight cruise is among new boat departures added this summer.

Tickets for the moonlight cruise alone are priced at \$8.50, while the moonlight cruise and island package is available at regular park admission fees.

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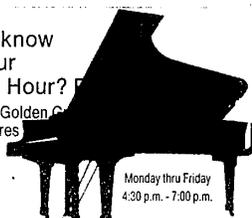
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