



Charles Martin Smith is a naive young biologist who is flown in to the Arctic, where he establishes a base camp and studies wolves in their habitat, in "Never Cry Wolf," from Walt Disney Pictures.



the movies
**Dan
Greenberg**

Cinematography takes adventure out of ordinary

"Never Cry Wolf," based on Canadian author Farley Mowat's best-seller, is beautifully photographed. The storyline, however, is pretty dippy and Director Carroll Ballard ("The Black Stallion") might better have given us a credible hero with some knowledge of Arctic survival techniques.

Biologist Tyler (Charles Martin Smith) is sent to the Arctic by an unnamed government agency's "Project Lupus" to study wolves who are attacking and destroying caribou herds. Stereotypically tough, hard-drinking bush-pilot Rosie, played with great gusto by Brian Dennehy, dumps Tyler and his supplies in the middle of a frozen lake.

As far as film realism goes, we're in trouble right here. Long ago "Nanook of the North" taught us that the Arctic afternoon priority is finding shelter. Not so our friend Tyler.

He sits around ruminating about isolation and what he's supposed to be doing up there. Finally he checks the supplies (furnished by the unnamed government agency). He's stuck with lots of canned asparagus and a shortwave radio picking up Russian music.

ACTUALLY THIS unnamed government agency sent along extensive supplies, miraculously more than Rosie's plane could carry. Later on we see Tyler with a typewriter, elaborate binoculars, lots of books and much scientific gear including beakers and graduated cylinders (they make great beer mugs).

His only sensible supply was 24 cases of beer — his idea, not the government's. Maybe he wasn't so dumb after all. Tyler, a one-man litter epidemic, bumbles along, scattering supplies everywhere he goes.

The film generally lacks a coherent sense of place. The locales are never clearly related to one another. Most of Tyler's gear is stored in a base-camp hut. Sometimes he lives in a tent near the den of two white wolves (George and Angelique) to whom he becomes attached emotionally. We never saw him set up base camp and his tent seemed to move around unannounced.

Tyler never would have trekked the Arctic at all if he hadn't found shelter the first day. After Rosie the pilot left, Tyler is saved from his own stupidity and lack of preparation by an Eskimo hunter-hero type, Ootek (Zachary Littman), who appears on and off throughout the film with his adopted son, Mike (Samson Jorah).

At least they had enough sense to come in out of the cold. Ootek's philosophy, lore and survival techniques save Tyler's body and soul as he comes to grips with nature, man's encroachment, and his own immaturity.

THE FILM PROVIDES some interesting voice-over narration by Tyler. Gradually he understands the power of nature in face of civilization's threat. Even Tyler eventually learns to live with man's insignificance. Mike and Ootek show him the way.

The cinematography is well worth the price of admission, as are the extended wildlife sequences. Hiro Narita, director of photography, provides ample and gorgeous Arctic panoramas. Vast expanses of snow are intermittently punctuated with forest patches and rock outcroppings as Rosie's plane ferries Tyler to his remote location.

The storms, the animals and the natural growth of the brief Arctic summer are pleasurable to view.

Man's insignificance and animal resilience are photographically strong. Several scenes set Tyler as a tiny creature against the vast and snowy Arctic expanse. The animals are clearly photographed in close view, cowering and surviving, fatalistically serene as they were meant to be.

Although very well done, the photography tends to over use the extreme closeup. One such shot of an awakening eye is probably sufficient. Tyler's experiment with a mice diet is effectively shot in closeup as the living compatriots of his lunch peek out accusingly.

All told, "Never Cry Wolf" is lovely to look at but confusing to follow. If you don't expect a realistic storyline, you'll probably enjoy this Arctic animal story.

what's at the movies

BIG CHILL (R). College friends from the 1960s sit around feeling guilty about their success and death of a friend.

CHRISTINE (R). Hell hath no fury like a repossessed '58 Plymouth. Miss it.

D.C. CAB (R). Rude and funny. Profanity and nudity may offend.

EXPERIENCE PREFERRED . . . BUT NOT ESSENTIAL (PG). Delightful comedy about growing up.

GORKY PARK (R). Slick murder mystery set in Moscow. Good entertainment.

THE GREY FOX (PG). After 33 years in San Quentin, "The Gentleman Bandit" is released.

LIQUID SKY (R). Aliens searching for ecstasy.

THE MAN WHO LOVED WOMEN (R). Ego-tripping with macho-as-Burt Reynolds in Blake Edwards film also starring Julie Andrews as a psychiatrist. She was more helpful as Mary Poppins.

MOVIE RATING GUIDE

- G General audiences admitted.
- PG Parental guidance suggested. All ages admitted.
- R Restricted. Adult must accompany persons under 18.
- X No one under 18 admitted.

Guide to fun was fun to do

By Ethel Simmons
staff writer

West Bloomfield resident Dick Parker, who is one of the editors of the fifth edition of the Detroit Guide, said putting the guidebook together was mostly a labor of love.

"It's been selling very well, in the more affluent areas," he said. Despite good sales, said Parker, the editors have worked on the book more for the joy of it than financial reward, which is slight.

The large 475-page paperback is written in a zesty style and covers just about every aspect of fun and games in metropolitan Detroit. Its capsule descriptions give the lowdown on where to go and what to do, at bars and restaurants, clubs, museums, galleries,

theaters, shops and sports arenas.

The book is chatty, readable and tells you what's good and bad about places, even those with big followings. Restaurants are rated, with stars, for the first time in this edition.

PARKER WORKED on the first edition of the guidebook, originally published in 1970 and updated in two subsequent printings. Martin Fischhoff did the 1974 edition himself. It had two printings. The editors, who include John W. Grant, began to gather information in 1980 for the fifth edition.

The Detroit Guide at \$9.95 is available in area bookstores and drugstores including Parry's and Chappo's.

Parker said changes listed in the new guidebook include "a greater variety of continental-type restaurants than there

used to be." He said Detroit's ethnic eateries are still around in great number but today there are more Middle Eastern ones.

Parker also noted the arts are expanding. "In 1974, there was only one resident live theater in Detroit. Now there are five or six," he said. "On the music scene, jazz has expanded and there are at least a dozen different clubs. The number of art galleries has exploded."

Fischhoff, a public relations executive, is publisher of the Detroit Guide; Grant, fulltime editor on the book. Both Fischhoff and Grant are Detroit residents. Both worked with Parker in the late 1960s on the student newspaper, the South End, at Wayne State University in Detroit.



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