

GOING TO THE MOVIES



Stallone battles villain in 'Demolition Man'



JOHN MONAGHAN

"Cliffhanger" put Sylvester Stallone back on top of the summer action movie heap. His latest effort, despite the jokey and implausible script, may just keep him there through the holidays.

Simply put, "Demolition Man" is the best time I've had at a truly bad movie this year.

It's 2032. An earthquake has finally leveled Southern California and paved the way for the peaceful, but dull megalopolis of San Angeles. Murder has been wiped out, along with everything else deemed bad for you — cigarettes, caffeine, alcohol, salt, and even sex.

Police officers now shrink from violence, which makes it all the more difficult to deal with Simon Phoenix (the ever-watchable Wesley Snipes), a super-villain literally put on ice in the 1990s who escapes the deep freeze.

Only one man can stop him — Stallone's John Spartan, the headbanded LA cop who put Phoenix away in the first place. The prison system froze him when his apparent carelessness led to the deaths of hostages, and now, 40 years later, they put him back in uniform.

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This big budget battle of good and evil eventually leads underground, where free-thinking radicals cling to old-fashioned all-American vices like hamburgers and muscle cars. If this isn't strange enough, Stallone falls for the female officer (Sandra Bullock) you just know will turn out to be his daughter in the inevitable "Demolition Man" sequel.

While Stallone does his most convincing acting while encoiled in a large block of ice, Snipes has a great time playing the bad guy. Outfitted with blond hair, a blue eye, and attitude to spare, he energizes the movie and makes you forget how shaky this roller coaster really is.

Take the running gag about profanity, which has also been outlawed in the future. Whenever you swear, an omnipresent machine issues a ticket and a verbal warning. After while, as the action grows more and more intense, characters can cuss a blue streak without consequence.

But "Demolition Man" isn't about logic or even about the foreseeable future. Like most science fiction, it's a reaction to events today, specifically about our fear not only of police brutality, but also our fear of a world without it.



ANDREW COOPER

Any serious social discussion ends here in a flurry of explosions and car chases.

To his credit, first-time director Marco Brambilla stages some excellent fight scenes, pitting Snipes' convincing martial arts moves against Stallone's still-impressive bulk. Moreover, this former TV commercial director has managed to work in product endorsements in the cleverest and most shameless ways possible.

Imagine the feeding frenzy among ad execs when it was announced that old TV advertising jingles would now become the stuff of oldies stations circa 2032.

The Jolly Green Giant and Oscar Meyer wieners are just two of the big winners.

And we can only guess the price tag paid by Taco Bell to become the one restaurant which, according to the movie, came out on top after the "food franchise wars" of the early 21st century. Now all restaurants are called Taco Bell.

Most critics will crucify "Demolition Man" and they'll be justified on most points. I'll stick with the crowd on this one. It's no masterpiece, but fans of high-octane action won't walk away disappointed.

To leave a message for John Monaghan, dial 953-2047, mailbox number 1866, on a touch-tone phone, fax him a note at 691-7279, or write him in care of Entertainment, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.

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FILM CLIPS

"DEMOLITION MAN"

Released by: Warner Bros.
Starring: Sylvester Stallone, Wesley Snipes, Sandra Bullock, Nigel Hawthorne, Denise Leary
Directed by: Marco Brambilla
Produced by: Joel Silver, Michael Levy and Howard Kazanjian
Written by: Daniel Waters, Robert Renau and Peter M. Lenkov
Rated: R (Restricted. Under 18 requires an accompanying parent or guardian.)
Running time: 2 hours, 9 minutes
Rating (out of a possible four):

Key: Don't miss it ☐ Strongly recommended ☐ Worth a look ☐ Wait for video ☐

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Cultures collide in 'Beverly Hillbillies'



When the Clampetts — Jed, Granny, Ely May and Jethro — strike oil in the swamp behind their Ozark mountain shack, their new fortune sends them to relocate to the stuffy city of Beverly Hills, where cultures collide with hilarious results on both sides.

Twentieth Century Fox presents a Penelope Spheeris film, "The Beverly Hillbillies," opening Friday at metro Detroit movie theaters. The film stars Diedrich Bader, Dabney Coleman, Erika Eleniak, Cloris Leachman, Rob Schneider, Les Thompson, Lily Tomlin and Jim Varney, and is directed by Spheeris and produced by Ian Bryce and Spheeris. "It was during casting for 'The Beverly Hillbillies' that Spheeris got her surest sign that movie audiences were primed for a reunion with the Clampetts and their Beverly Hills neighbors.

"It was a Saturday morning at the Hollywood Presbyterian Church, an open casting call for the part of Ely May," recalls Spheeris. "Over 250 girls showed up to read; some were ideal for the role, and some were obviously inappropriate. But what I got that day was proof that everybody loves the Clampetts. Everybody wanted to be part of the 'Beverly Hillbillies' spirit."

For Tomlin, who plays the impossibly efficient Jane Hathaway, the same discovery came a little later. "We'd be filming on Sunset Boulevard in the Clampett's jalousie," the actress recalled, "and you could see the affection on people's faces as they watched us drive by. They just lit up when they saw that old car."

Jim Varney (who plays Jed Clampett) has become well known to audiences over the past decade as know-it-all Ernest P. Worrell in scores of commercials and in four "Ernest" movies.

Cloris Leachman (Granny) is

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well-remembered on the big screen for her work in the Mel Brooks films "History of the World: Part I," "High Anxiety," and "Young Frankenstein" and in the Peter Bogdanovich film "The Last Picture Show," which earned her an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress.

Erika Eleniak (Ely May) co-starred last year as Jordan Tate, the birchley surprise who found herself unwittingly teamed with Steven Seagal in "Under Siege."

Diedrich Bader (Jethro) makes his motion picture debut as the dim-thought-enthusiastic Jethro Bodine. He has made over 20 episodic guest appearances on shows such as "Fresh Prince of Bel Air," and "21 Jump Street."

Dabney Coleman (Mr. Drysdale) has made a career of playing loveable bad guys in such films as "On Golden Pond," "Twelve O'Clock High," and "9 to 5," in which he played

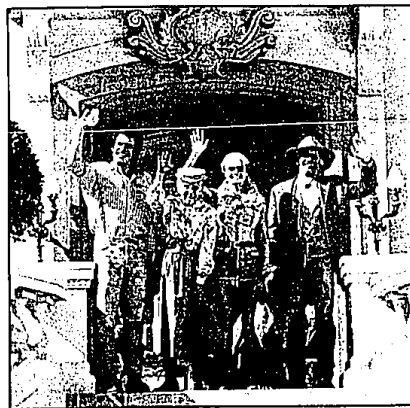
the sexist boss of Jane Fonda.

For the role of Jed, the unflappable mountain man who finds good in everyone, Spheeris found a natural in Jim Varney. Varney, it turns out, is descended from Appalachian Kentucky Hillbillies, and the Clampetts hail from the Ozarks. The fit was perfect.

"Jim's a real hillbilly, so half my work was done," said Spheeris. "And he really knows comedy."

"Jed is an American from the last frontier," said Varney of his character. "He is a remnant of a bygone age. He's Daniel Boone, he's Davy Crockett."

"Being from Kentucky, I remember my dad taking us kids up to West Virginia, where he was born. It was pretty far back into the woods, very similar to where the Clampetts start out. So as I got into this character I tried to remember the people I met there — real hillbillies, people who lived in shacks on stilts with tin roofs. It was an interesting life."



DIANA NEWCOMB

Clampett reunion: Diedrich Bader is Jethro, Cloris Leachman, Granny; Erika Eleniak, Ely May; and Jim Varney, Jed in "The Beverly Hillbillies."

Discussion series features Fellini film

BY VICTORIA DIAZ
SPECIAL WRITER

Talk Cinema, a film discussion series sponsored by the Friends of the Livonia Public Library, continues 7 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 20 at the Livonia Civic Center Library, 32777 Five Mile Road.

Veteran film professor, Frank E. Ross will lead the series, set for the third Wednesday of each month through June.

Admission for the series is a \$5 membership in the Friends of the Livonia Public Library, payable either in advance, or at the door.

Screenings begin 7 p.m. sharp, and seating is on a first-come, first-served basis. For information, call 425-4053.

Federico Fellini's award-winning "La Dolce Vita" is scheduled for showing on Oct. 20.

Upcoming movies include — Ingmar Bergman's "Wild Strawberries," "Bridge on the River Kwai," and one of the most popular musicals of all time, "Singin' in the Rain."

Provided by Blockbuster Video, each film will be shown on a full-size screen.

UPCOMING MOVIES

Action, drama, romance — there's something for everyone at the movies. Here's a list of what's in the wings:

■ Opening Wednesday, Oct. 13, "Rudy" — Based on the real-life story of Rudy Ruttiger, the film is an uplifting tale of how one young man overcame incredible odds to pursue his dream: to play football for Notre Dame. Stars Sean As-

tin, Ned Beatty, Charles Dutton, Jason Miller, Lili Taylor and Robert Prosky.

■ Opening Friday, Oct. 22, "Fearless" — A spiritual love story about the aftermath of a catastrophic experience and the lesson it teaches two survivors about the value of life. Stars Jeff Bridges, Rosie Perez, Isabella Rossellini, John Turturro and Tom Hulce.

"IT'S THE FUNNIEST FILM OF THE YEAR"

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—Cedric Belfrage, PARENTING PUBLICATIONS



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SHOWCASE STONING HILLS	SHOWCASE WESTLAND	STAR GRANT
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