

DIVERSIONS

Tiresome college comedy 'Slackers' falls flat

BY CHRISTY LEMIRE
AP ENTERTAINMENT WRITER

So much is wrong with the morose college comedy *Slackers*, it's hard to know where to begin. So let's just start with the title.

What the characters do is far from slacking — unlike the 1991 Richard Linklater movie *Slacker*, in which the characters really do slack.

Here, three friends lie, cheat and steal to avoid essays, tests and anything else that requires work. But their schemes — which include hacking into the school's power system and stealing blue books from a delivery van — are so elaborate and labor-intensive, it probably would have been easier just to study.

It also would have been easier to care whether Dave (Damon Sawa), Sam (Jason Segel) and Jeff (Michael C. Maronna) pull off their latest scheme if they weren't so two-dimensional. They are singularly driven to undermine the system, which grows tiresome almost immediately.

But when geeky Ethan (Jason Schwartzman) catches them cheating during an exam and threatens to turn them in if they don't help him snag his dream girl, Angela (James King), it merely leads to a stagnant series of gratuitously gross and painfully unfunny sexual jokes.

An agonizing scene involving '50s bombshell Mamie Van Doren baring her breasts in a hospital bed and demanding a sponge bath has such a kitschy weirdness and falls so flat, it feels like something John Waters would have concocted.

Dowry Nicks, a fashion photographer directing his first feature film, strings together a series of sketches with virtually no coherence or consistent tone. Nicks and screenwriter David H. Steinberg, who co-wrote *American Pie 2*, want us to laugh at jokes about sex toys and bodily functions, then feel warm and fuzzy about the blossoming romance between Angela and Dave.

The Ethan character, who's central to the movie's plot, is the

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weakest part of all. He's so psychotically obsessed with Angela, it's impossible to muster any sympathy for him. The shrine in his dorm room — complete with Angela's underpants, which he wears on his head, and a doll he

made from strands of her long, blond hair — is played for laughs.

But later, he rants about loving and hating her at the same time, and wanting to work out his emotions by locking himself in a room with her. That's not funny — it's violent and frightening.

It's also disappointing. *Slack-*

ers is Schwartzman's first movie to appear in theaters since 1998's *Rushmore*, the Wes Anderson cult favorite. Ethan is a sort of magnified version of Schwartzman's *Rushmore* character, Max Fisher, in his obsessive quest to get the girl; the only problem is, it's impossible to connect with him.

As the trio's leader, Sawa is sporadically charming in a smarmy kind of way.

But Maronna was funnier (and had better material) as red-haired office clerk Stuart in the TV commercials for Ameritrade. At least in those, he played a legitimate — and likable — slacker.

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Antique show
will include
gourmet foodBY LANA MINI
STAFF WRITER

Greasy fish and chips and cold ambrosia won't be available at this event. Instead, fresh crepes, hearty quiche and homemade soups will be part of the menu prepared by Chef Linda Pagel on Feb. 8 and 9.

No, Pagel isn't working at a five-star restaurant, rather she'll use her skills at the 38th Annual Antique show at St. John's Episcopal Church at the corner of Woodward and 11 Mile Road.

This year, more than 1,000 people are expected to visit the 28 dealers from the metro-Detroit and Ohio areas — and enjoy a gourmet lunch or dinner costing under \$7.

"I've been organizing this show for 16 years and it gets better and bigger each time," Linda Avery, a parishioner of St. John's said.

For antique collectors the show is a gem for furniture, glassware, china, jewelry and Asian rarities. Avery said some vendors sell more than antiques; such as pottery. The presence of specialized dealers also keeps customers returning. Wally Wilmet, of Wally's Antique Clocks in Royal Oak is

a welcome-regular vendor.

"I've been selling my antique clocks at the show for many, many years," Wilmet said. "It's not only good exposure for my business, but the people (at St. John's) are wonderful, they make the dealers feel comfortable."

It's that comfort that keeps the antique show anticipated year after year.

"It's truly more than just a business. The dealers and people come back each year because there's a nice feeling at the church. So warm," Avery said.

The profits improve the church such as a children's nursery, a much-needed elevator and the remodeling of the library where brides wait on their wedding day. Open Hands, the parish food bank, also receives profits.

Admission to the show is \$4 for adults, kids 12 and under are free. Other food items for lunch are soups, baked potatoes and chili. Dinner items will vary. No dinner will be served on Saturday. The show will be open from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. on Friday and 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. Saturday.



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