Entertainment Outlook



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Ah, the scouting life

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As someone who would never have been caught dead joining the Boy Scouts, I was naturally intrigued to read that the Canadian scouting movement is launching a \$100,000 advertising campaign to upgrade its

Apparently, membership has dropped considerably in recent years, and organizers trace this to a "boring" image. As such, they're setting out to promote the fun side of scouting, rather than just the character-building side or, as one member of the exeucitve put it, to "sell the sizzle, not the steak "

Well Let me say, to begin with, would never deny that the scouting movement has many admirable qual-

No one can criticize people who urgeboys to help little old ladies cross the street - except perhaps for little old la dies, who are (in my experience) a breath-takingly independent lot, and potentially dangerous when patronized

And certainly, you can't criticize a movement that teaches boys such in valuable skills as knot-tying, fire-starting and wallet-making - even if my own notion of teaching a lad self-sufficiency is to show him how to use the Yellow Pages

My own brother was a Boy Scout, and thus I had a first-hand chance to see how scouting helped him to develop responsibility and self-reliance.

I well remember the glow of pride on his face when he brought home the petcare merit badge he won for taking such good care of his hamster. And indeed. Paul took marvellous, manly responsibility for that rodent's well-being - scarcely a day went by that he he didn't ask mom if she had remembered to feed it, or to clean its cage.

(At the time, I wondered whether there might be an element of cheating in Paul's pet-care technique. But then I ralized he was simply developing the sort of skill that might serve him extremely well in adult life. I was right He's now a lawyer 1

You also can't criticize a movement whose motto is Be Prepared. But the Boy Scouts and I begin to part company when it comes time to define the nature of this preparedness

The Boy Scout's notion of Being Prepared for a camping trip is packing all the implements he will need to survive in the wilderness. My notion of being prepared for a camping trip is to get my Visa bill down below its limit so I can use the card to check into a motel

Essentially, this explains why I never joined the Boy Scouts. I had fundamental problems with a movement which stressed the virtues of spending weekends sitting in the forest primeval, getting rained on

Mankind spent hundreds of thou



sands of years climbing down from the trees, and even as a lad of 10, I could see no point in trying to climb back up. There just seems something ... well

Weir

counter-evolutionary about it all. I was well into my 20s before I spent my first - and last - night in a tent. This particular tent leaked - which wouldn't have been a problem, if a monsoon hadn't broken out at midnight Which it did

This left us with two alternatives. We could lie for hours on end in the puddle we had warmed up. Or, to try to get comfortable, we could roll over into a cold puddle

In the end, we just tried to divert ourselves with conversation. My companion - a self-reliant, outdoorsy type made philosophical jokes and wry comments about our situation, while I swore loudly at her

In any case, this wretched experience confirmed my belief that I had been very wise to avoid the Boy Scouts. And it leaves me very dublous when Scout leaders start talking about the sizzle and steak of their movement.

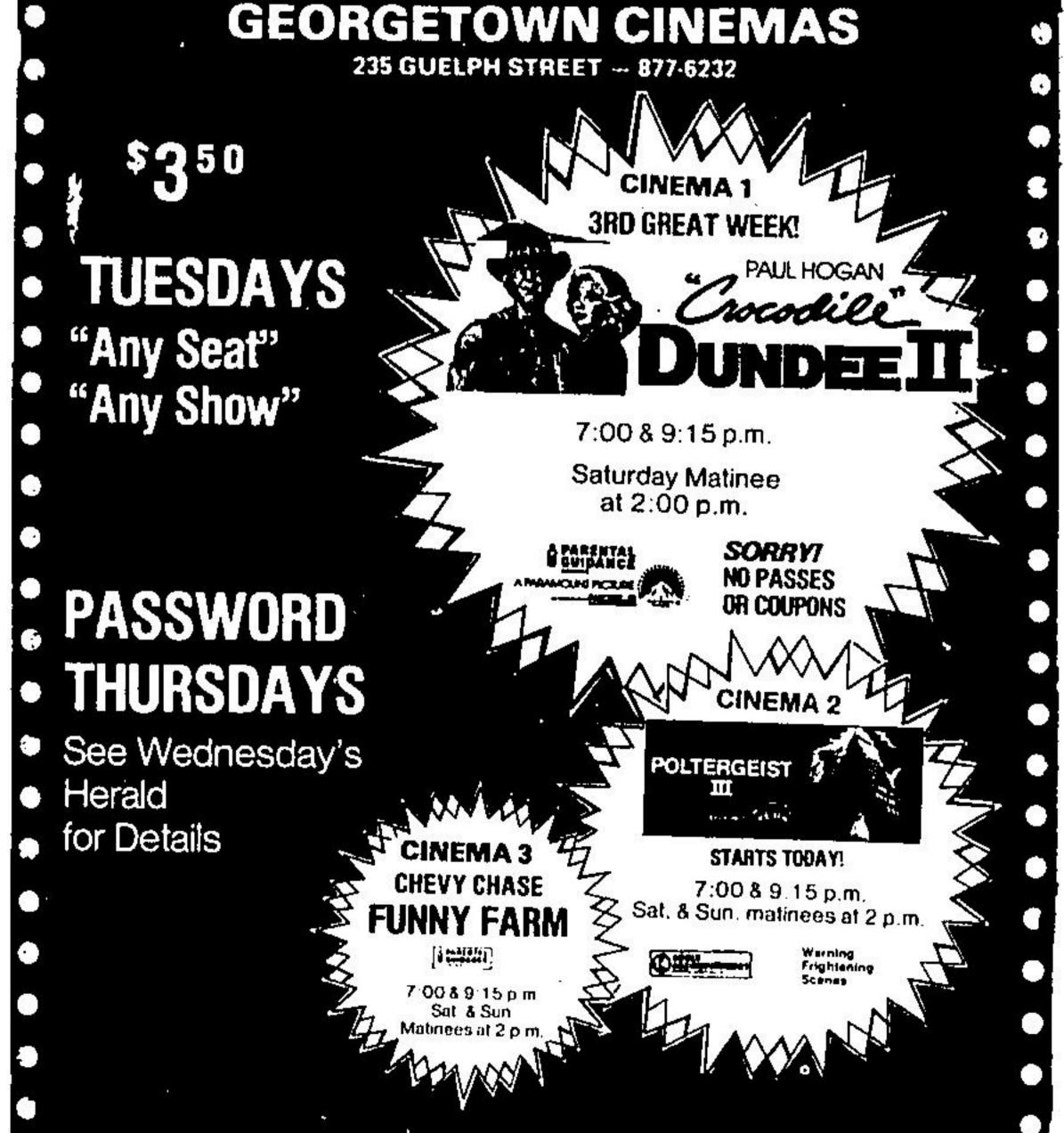
As far as I can see, scout-type activities have very little to do with sizzle and steak, and a whole lot to do with drizzle and shake.

Still, one should never let personal prejudice blind one to the merits of the Boy Scouts. Besides, let's hope this decision to promote a new image may even signal that the leaders plan to make scouting a different and happier experience for all concerned.

Imagine, if you will, a series of TV ads featuring healthy, adventuresome youths leaping out of bed at the crack of 10:30 as the summer sun slants through the windows of the Holiday Inn. After a quick 20-minute shower, it's the spirited trek to the dining room, where an experience Scoutmaster will show them how lo order Eggs Benedict . . .

Oh, to be young again.





In Movie Theaters

'CROCODILE' DUNDEE II (PG) One of the surprise smashes of the 1986 season was a good-natured little adventure comedy about a contemporary cowboy from Down Under who took New York (and a Yank reporter named Sue) by storm. This sequel continues the exploits of Mick 'Crocodile" Dundee - that lean, weatheredlooking Aussie who has probably done more for snakeskin than anyone on screen or off.

The sequel is like a child's version of an action movie: At times it has an Innocent and aweet Ineptitude. You don't believe a minute of the film while you're watching it, nor do you need to. The picture has an agreeable, jokey, knockabout air.

Once it gets to Australia, that is. The rather sluggish first hour is set in New York, where Croc's flame Sue (Linda Kozlowski) is kidnapped by Latin drug lords who want the con-

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tents of a letter that her ex-nusband has sent her.

There are labored stabs at humor, based on overly familiar setups - the rescue of a potential suicide on a building ledge, a urinal confrontation, etc. In general, the New York scenes make one long for a real clash-of-cultures movie like "Coogan's Bluff," which starred Clint Eastwood as a tough cowboy cop who learns the equally tough ways of Manhattan.

Back in Australia, the sequel seems on surer footing. The return of John Meillon, reprising the role of grizzled old Walter Reilly, is a boon to the movie's humor: Meillon has several genial gags where he leads the bad guys astray by playing on their ignorance of the bush country.

As Croc, Paul Hogan continues to be a bit stiff on screen, but that seems to be the way his fans like him. Linda Kozlowski, meanwhile, is downright odd - pretty but slightly off-center, like a low-budget version of a movie star. One would be lying to say that this is much of a movie, but it may fitthe bill for warm-weather escapism. GRADE: **



