

'She-Devil' is dark comedy that fizzles

Entertainment

In Movie Theaters

SHE-DEVIL (PG-13) The career of director Susan Seidelman continues to be a confounding one. After getting off to a fresh, inventive start with "Desperately Seeking Susan," she has made a string of half-baked feminist confections. Her latest is this adaptation of Fay Weldon's novel "The Life and Loves of a She-Devil."

FILMETER



ROBERT DIMATTEO

Seidelman's movies begin well, with arresting casting and stylish concepts, but, midway, they inevitably fizzle. It's as if she doesn't know how to follow through on her cleverness — even when she's adapting material that has served others well. That's the case with Weldon's social fable, which formed the basis for a first-rate BBC miniseries (shown here on A&E).

The tale is about Ruth, a dumpy, obedient English housewife and mother who seeks revenge when her abusive husband leaves her for a sexy, vacuous romance novelist. The British version of "She-Devil" was faithful to Weldon's stinging, darkly ironic viewpoint. As the wronged wife assumed lavish disguises (and even endured painful plastic surgery to ultimately wreak havoc on her cheating husband and his mistress), we could see to our amusement and horror that she was becoming a physical facsimile of the romance novelist — a gorgeous doll whose inner sensitivities had been consumed by hate.

"She-Devil" is clearly a broadside against a world that remains cruel and indifferent to women who aren't stereotypically beautiful, feminine and involved in glamorous careers. In the book and the miniseries, the story has an invigorating wrath: It's furiously didactic and deliciously nasty. Seidelman's version is more commercial, safe and predictably feminist — less a black comedy than a dark gray one. Gone is the subplot about plastic surgery, while the fate of the romance novelist has been sweetened.

The changes have much to do with Meryl Streep and Roseanne Barr as, respectively, the romance novelist and Ruth. Where the BBC version centered on Ruth's character (played amazingly by Julie T. Wallace), this version centers more on the novelist. And, as the purring, grandly demure Barbara Cartland figure, Streep gives her first full-blown comic performance on the screen and runs away with the movie.

Barr, meanwhile, does a variation on the whiny, tart-tongued domestic

goes wrong — the "Vacation" movies are broadly amusing jests and very popular.

The third in the series offers a malicious twist on the first two: The Griswolds are planning to spend a nice



CLARK GRISWOLD (Chevy Chase) tries to create the perfect Christmas experience for his family when his country cousin Eddie (Randy Quaid) shows up in "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation."

goddess she plays on TV and in her stand-up act. She has her moments, but one feels that the movie is protecting Barr's inexperience as an actress — only giving her scenes she can handle. (A lot of her dialogue is done as a voice-over.)

The other principal performers — Ed Begley Jr., Sylvia Miles and Linda Hunt — contribute some fun, but everyone is stuck in a movie that settles for easy japes and trendy burlesquing. And the twisted point of the material is straightened out: Ruth really does triumph in her revenge, where Weldon's anti-heroine only scores a Pyrrhic victory at best. **GRADE: ★★**

NATIONAL LAMPOON'S CHRISTMAS VACATION (PG-13) The National Lampoon "Vacation" comedies are dedicated to anyone who has ever embarked on a much-needed trip, and then, as the calamities piled up, found himself wishing he had stayed securely at home.

Starring Chevy Chase and Beverly D'Angelo as Clark and Ellen Griswold — a well-meaning suburban couple with two kids for whom everything

Christmas at home in corny, Currier and Ives fashion when all of the family relatives — some familiar from the other movies — show up for the holidays. Soon, two sets of in-laws, a flaky aunt and uncle (Mae Questel and William Hickey), and Ellen's hillbilly cousin (Randy Quaid) have filled Clark and his brood with far more ill will than good cheer. Meanwhile, Clark is having quite a time getting 125,000 Christmas bulbs that festoon the outside of the house to light up at the same moment. Electrocuting may come before illumination. **GRADE: ★★**



Glad Tidings

Christmas is here, along with our good wishes for a happy, healthy holiday. Our sincere thanks to all.

the HERALD

Home Newspaper of Halton Hills — Since 1866
45 Guelph St. Georgetown 877-2201

GEORGETOWN CINEMAS

235 GUELPH STREET — 873-1999

CINEMA 1

NOW PLAYING



Two of L.A.'s top rival cops are going to have to work together... Even if it kills them.

SYLVESTER STALLONE KURT RUSSELL

Tango & Cash

Evenings at 7:00 & 9:15 p.m.

WARNING
Violence & Coarse Language

14 ADULT ACCOMPANIMENT

Daily Matinee 2 p.m.
Dec. 23 to 28

PRANCER

FAMILY

CINEMA 2

3rd SMASH WEEK



MICHAEL J. FOX
CHRISTOPHER LLOYD
Getting back was only the beginning.

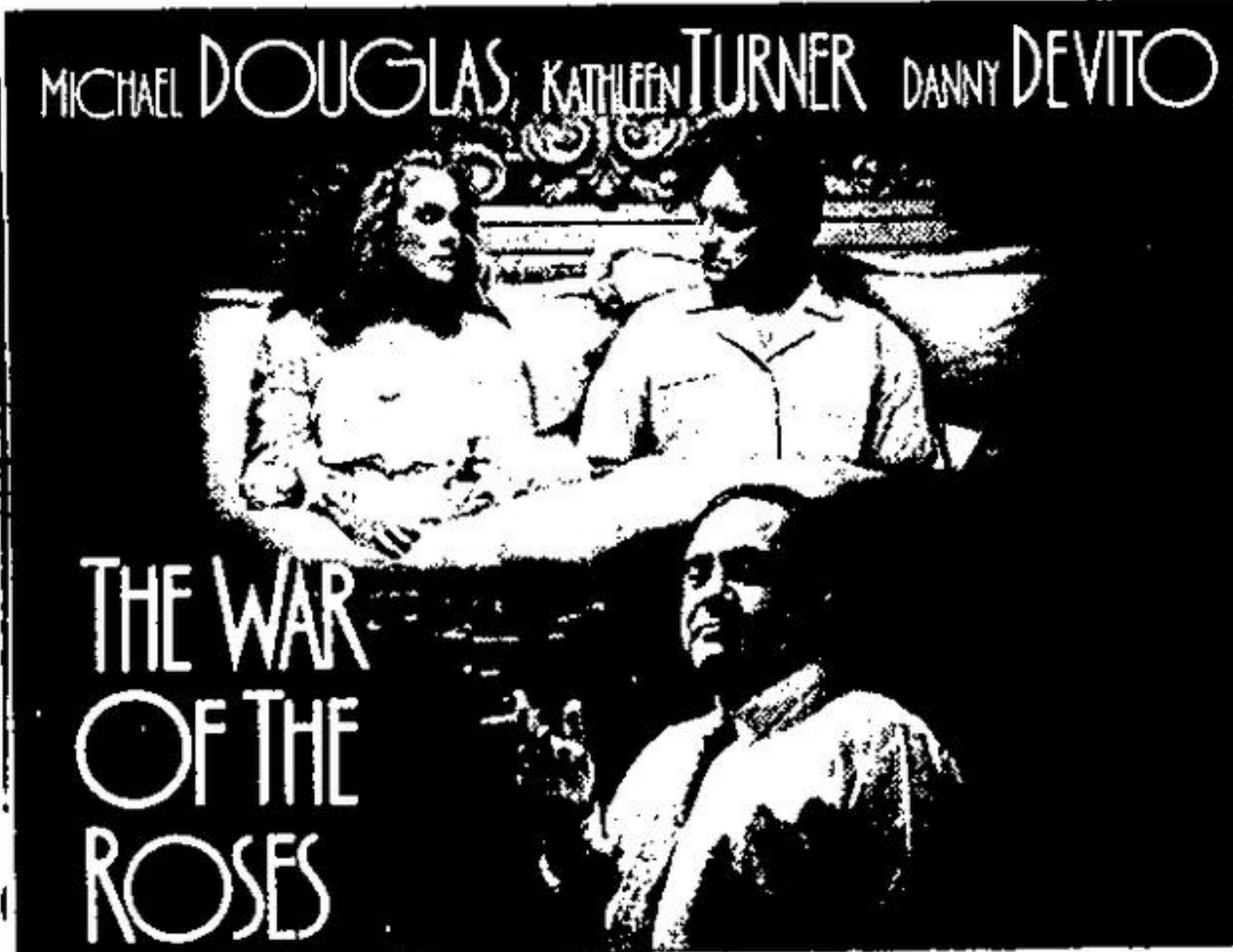
BACK TO THE FUTURE II

Evenings at 7:00 & 9:15 p.m.
Daily Matinee 2 p.m.
Dec. 23 to 28

PARENTAL GUIDANCE

CINEMA 3

3rd GREAT WEEK



MICHAEL DOUGLAS, **KATHLEEN TURNER**, **DANNY DEVITO**

THE WAR OF THE ROSES

Evenings at 7:00 & 9:15 p.m.

ADULT ACCOMPANIMENT



A DON BLUTH FILM

All Dogs Go To Heaven

From the Director of AN AMERICAN TAIL and THE LAND BEFORE TIME

FAMILY

6th GREAT WEEK

DAILY MATINEE
at 2 p.m.
DECEMBER
23 to 28



DAILY LUNCH SPECIALS
For Under \$4.00
Across From GO Station
37 King St., Georgetown
877-3541

CRITIC'S CHOICE VIDEO

Rentals & Service
Open Every Night Till 10 p.m.
\$10.00 OFF Any Carry-In T.V. VCR or Microwave Repair With This Ad.
235 Guelph St. (Beside Cinemas 3) **873-0754**



235 Guelph St. Georgetown **877-3642**
WATCH FOR OUR TWO HAMBURGERS FOR \$1.00
STARTING JANUARY 2nd/90
*T.M. OF/M.C. DE BURGER KING CORPORATION • 1989



SEASON'S GREETINGS
FROM THE STAFF AND MANAGEMENT
118 Guelph St. NORMANDY PLAZA **873-1409**

QUIK PIK

"MORE THAN A CONVENIENCE STORE"
OVER 2500 MOVIES
Mon.-Thurs. 99¢
Including New Releases
WEEKEND New Releases \$1.99
Other 99¢
Cigarettes Pkg. \$3.99 Tax
Cigarettes Ctn. \$28.99 Tax
Tobacco Can \$17.95 Tax
Milk 4 L. Bag \$2.99
160 GUELPH ST. **877-6463**



HALTON HILLS TAXI
110 MILL ST., GEORGETOWN ONTARIO L7G 2C9
DIVISION OF HALTON HILLS HOLDING LTD.
877-1234
877-7400 AIRPORT SERVICE
877-9311 PARCEL DELIVERY

VIDEO RANCH

BETA — NINTENDO — VHS
CHOOSE FROM 1000'S OF TITLES!
CHRISTMAS SPECIAL
5 MOVIES FOR \$16.95
FROM SATURDAY, DEC. 23rd TO TUESDAY, DEC. 26th
Reserve Your Movies Early!
MACHINE RENTALS
CAMCORDER — VCR — NINTENDO
58 Main Street N. MOORE PARK PLAZA **873-0700**



OOEY GOOEY GOOD!
TRY OUR NEW DELIVERY SERVICE!
308 Guelph St. **873-1651**



Season's Greetings
Hwy. 7 & Winston Churchill in Morav, Ontario **840-3251**
873-0437