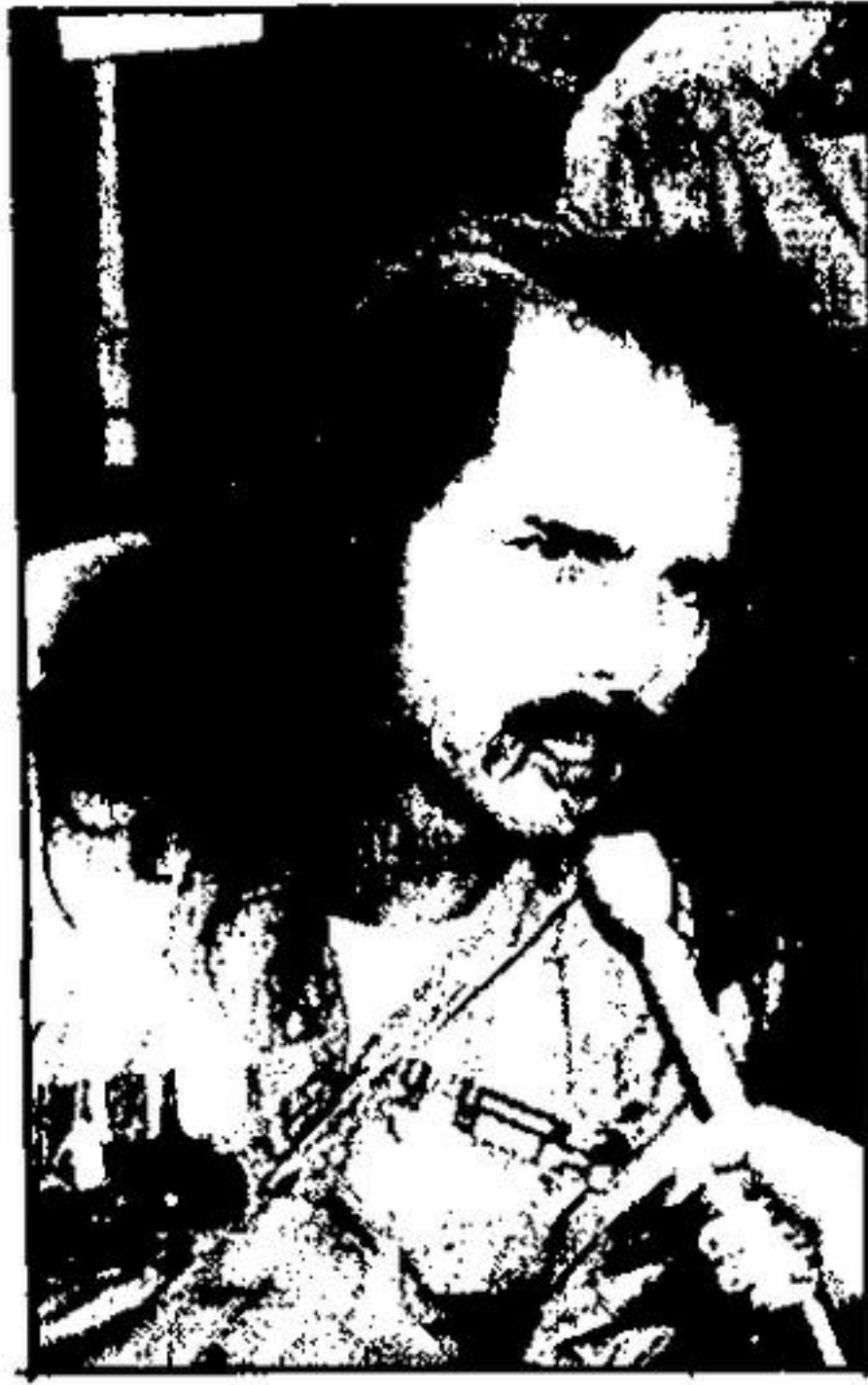


Cruise is wrenching in anti-war film

Entertainment

In Movie Theaters

BORN ON THE FOURTH OF JULY (R) It makes sense that Oliver Stone, director of "Platoon," would be drawn to the story of Ron Kovic, the Long Islander who went to Southeast Asia full of patriotic fervor, came back a paraplegic, and eventually turned into a fierce anti-war activist.



TOM CRUISE plays Ron Kovic, a paralyzed Vietnam veteran who returns to an America that no longer loves him in "Born on the Fourth of July."

Kovic's gradual disillusionment provides Stone with the chance to complete the statement he began in "Platoon," which left some people confused. After all, wasn't "Platoon" just an unusually graphic war movie in the guise of an anti-war movie? And wasn't there a lyrical-macho streak in Stone that possibly negated his vision of the senselessness of battle?

Stone's latest movie is unquestionably anti-war — it carries a clear message about the tragic waste wrought by American militarism. Stone shows how American men are bred to be warriors from childhood, and he does so in a film overflowing with anger about the hypocritical way those who didn't go to Vietnam have treated those who did.

In addition, by casting Tom Cruise as Kovic, Stone has coaxed one of today's most appealing young actors into exposing his demons, thereby tapping into a wealth of dark feelings about the whole notion of American masculinity.

Dominated by Cruise's bold, emotional performance, and by a sweeping score, the film is often wrenching. The feel is epic, even though the film looks intimate.

Unfortunately, about two-thirds of the way through, Stone loses his perspective. The movie goes on and on;

FILMETER



ROBERT DiMATTEO

characters scream at each other; frustration and rage mount. And we want to turn it off: Less would be more. Still, there are great things in this movie. **GRADE: ★★★**

BLAZE (R) Writer-director Ron Shelton's follow-up to "Bull Durham" tries to be as lively and bawdy as that baseball picture was. It doesn't quite succeed, though it is enjoyable.

This time, Shelton draws his story from "fact" — the memoirs of Blaze Starr, the stripper whose affair with populist Louisiana governor Earl Long scandalized the state. The relationship between Starr and Long is a rich one, and the movie is fortunate to have oddly sexy newcomer Lolita Davidovich and endlessly likable old-timer Paul Newman in the leads. The result is a heavy dose of Southern hokum — a hybrid of "All the King's Men," "Coal Miner's Daughter" and "Gypsy."

It's all very colorful and amusing. What it isn't is touching or affecting. Shelton fails to dig beneath the stereotypes of good-hearted showgirl and flamboyant politician. He also twists a lot of the "facts." And his movie lacks momentum: It seems to end a half hour before it actually does. **GRADE: ★★½**

ALWAYS (PG) The 1989 movie year gave us director Steven Spielberg in top form with the dazzlingly kinetic "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade." It also gave us Spielberg at his sentimental worst with this remake of the old Spencer Tracy flick "A Guy Named Joe."

"Always" was written by Diane Thomas, who burst upon the movie scene with "Romancing the Stone." One of the most promising screenwriters of her generation, she was

killed in a car accident before the picture went into production and Jerry Belson was brought in to rewrite the script.

The finished film has touches of the genre-bending cleverness that were Thomas' hallmark, but it also has a revolting sappiness that one is inclined to blame on others.

Richard Dreyfuss and Holly Hunter star as two fire-fighters whose full-blown romance is interrupted when Dreyfuss is killed in an exploding plane. This being one of those contrived after-life fantasies that Hollywood is so fond of, Dreyfuss is allowed to return to earth, where he influences the thoughts of the still-living.

But Dreyfuss alone can't make the movie live. Neither he nor Hunter is ideally cast, and the picture is smothered in TV-commercial-style cinematography and a sickeningly sweet John Williams musical score. Only the ever-fresh (and ever-paunchy) John Goodman in a supporting role and a rousing fire-fighting sequence give the film any vitality at all. **GRADE: ★½**

(Film grading: ★★★★★ — excellent, ★★★ — good, ★★ — fair, ★ — poor)



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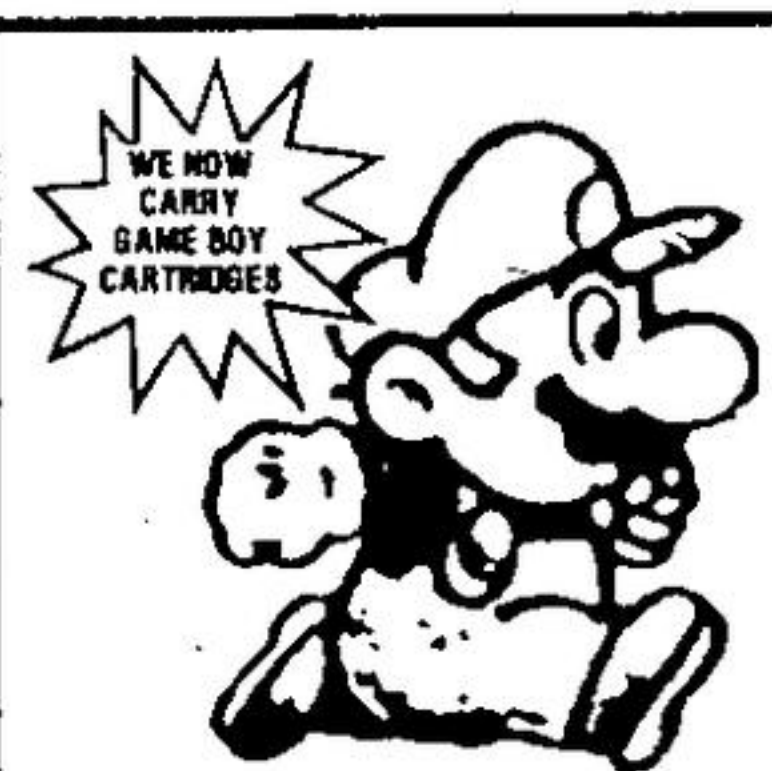
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GLT The 'dynamic duo' Hunt-Worsnop are together again

By Margaret Eggleton-Kaye
Herald Special

Yes, the dynamic duo is back! Director Neville Worsnop and Producer Dorothy Hunt are working together again on their ninth production for the Georgetown Little Theatre.

The Burning Man is a mystery/thriller and is the little theatre's entry into the Association of Community Theatre's festival of plays. Each year approximately 45 plays are entered, and awards given in a number of different categories. Often dubbed the little theatre's Academy Awards, winners in the ACT-CO festival receive a Thea. It is considered no mean accomplishment to be nominated for an award, and the Thea itself is a much-coveted statuette. A number of the plays on which Dorothy and Neville have collaborated have received nominations or have won awards. Dorothy has twice been nominated as Best Producer — for Count Dracula, which won an award for Special Effects, and for The Lion In Winter, which won a Thea for Best Visual Presentation.

Producer Dorothy's job entails finding production personnel for

all the many jobs required backstage and the general presentation of the play. She makes sure everything runs smoothly and is in place for the play to be performed.

Director Neville has a vast amount of theatrical experience both on and off stage. He has a very fine tough when it comes to building suspense, and you will not be disappointed with this production. Watch the tension build — who is the burning man, and was he murdered, and if so, by whom?

Adjudication night for The Burning Man is Saturday, Feb. 17. Following the performance the adjudicator (Mr. Christopher Covert) will give a short public critique of the play, followed by a more detailed and private critique to the actors and production team.

Don't miss the Georgetown Little Theatre's production of The Burning Man, presented at the John Elliott Theatre on Feb. 16, 17, 21, 22, 23 and 24. Tickets are available at Royal LePage Real Estate, Guelph Street, Georgetown, or by calling the Box Office at 877-3700.



AFTER FIVE

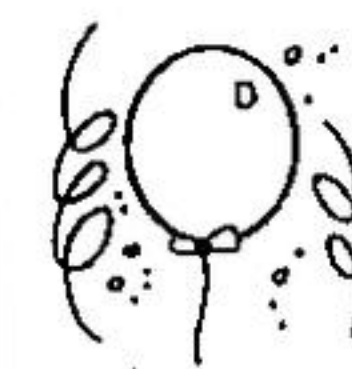
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