

Entertainment

Movie Review

Sibling Rivalry lacks focus and cohesion

By DIAHANN NADEAU
Herald Special

Kirstie Alley's latest film is on par with her previous efforts: Sibling Rivalry lacks focus, cohesion, and just about anything else that makes a film worth watching. It's too bad, because Alley has a fine comedic touch; it's just that the Cheers magic hasn't rubbed off on her movies. (Madhouse, Summer School, Prince of Bel Air to name a few.)

The idea is promising - Marjorie (Alley), a bored housewife, has a wild fling with a sexy stranger (Sam Elliott), who has a heart attack and dies - and she doesn't even notice it happening. However, the plot dies at about the same time.

Nick, a blinds salesman (Bill Pulman) accidentally whacks the body and thinks he has murdered the stranger. He calls Marjorie at home (having found her lost

wallet), where she is preparing a family dinner for the brother-in-law she has never met. Before leaving the house she finds out that her brother-in-law is in fact the dead man.

The two fake a suicide, and although it is a funny scene, the idea is completely implausible: she is the wife of a doctor and he is the brother of a policeman. Do they really believe that pills can be digested after death? Don't they know about autopsies? Com-

edy at the price of plausibility doesn't pay.

The plot deteriorates further when Marjorie's sister (Jamie Gertz) starts seeing Nick's brother (Ed O'Neill). The whole plot suddenly unravels, without milking the suspense, when Nick confesses to the crime, forcing Marjorie to confess to her sins. The audience is left asking themselves "Is this it?" Yes, it seems it is.

Alley is good, especially in her sobbing scenes - crying is something she does well. Elliott is as sexy as ever, but severely underused. Scott Bakula (Quantum Leap) plays the cuckolded husband. Carrie Fisher is Alley's

snarky sister-in-law. Frances Sternhagen, John Randolph and Matthew Laurance round out the cast.

No one is bad, although the characters are cardboard figures, and Gertz especially has to play a total cliché - the free spirited younger sister, a type explored, to much better effect in Sex, Lies and Videotape.

Carl Reiner directed this mess, proving that his son Rob is really the director in the family. Reiner Jr. has a magic touch, while Reiner Sr. seems to have lost it some time ago. Sibling Rivalry has its funny moments, but mostly it is a waste of time, talent and money.

Television

Degrassi High enters final viewing season

By BOB SPENCE

Thomson News Service

Cast members of Degrassi High, the realistic, multi-award-winning drama series, will soon be waving goodbye to each other.

The final season of Degrassi starts Nov. 5 on CBC-TV with a two-part finale that revolves around Sexual Awareness Week at the mythical high school.

Linda Schuyler, executive producer and co-creator of Degrassi, explained why Playing With Time Inc. is wrapping up its popular series.

"It's been a fabulous adventure, but we wanted to bow out while we felt the show was still fresh and strong," she said in a prepared statement. "I think we're leaving the series with the strongest season yet. Besides, many of the cast are growing up, moving on. It was time."

Thirteen new half-hour episodes will air this season. The plots revolve around topics that range from AIDS to rock 'n roll and from family problems to first kisses.

The series, and its immediate predecessor, Degrassi Junior High, have offered a candid look at contemporary teenage life. Issues such as teenage parenthood have been examined through the grit-encumbered eyes of reality.

The origins of Degrassi date back to the late 1970s. Schuyler, then a junior high school teacher and commercial editor Kit Hood formed Playing With Time Inc., in 1976 to produce their first film, Jimmy: Playing With Time, about a marathon piano player. A number of other productions followed. Wanting to move into drama, they purchased an option on Ida Makes A Movie, a book about a cat who entered a film competition and won for the wrong reasons. Using people instead of cats, they turned the tale into their first drama, which became the first episode of The Kids of Degrassi Street.

Over a period of eight years, 26 episodes were aired by CBC. Then, in January, 1987, Degrassi Junior High made its debut. It grew from the first series, but was not a sequel, said Schuyler. Several of the old cast members won roles as some of the new characters.

Degrassi High made its debut



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in 1989, as the Degrassi students moved on to high school. This season, they graduate.

There will be at least one more Degrassi tale, however.

Next summer, a two-hour movie, School's Out, will be filmed. It will follow the Degrassi characters in their first summer after high school graduation.

"Someday it may seem worthwhile to take up the story of the young ones and see what they turned out to be." - Mark Twain.

The celebrated author (whose real name was Samuel Clemens) was talking about Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, two of the

most memorable characters created by the gifted 19th-century storyteller.

And someone - scriptwriter Roy Johansen - has taken up the story.

Back To Hannibal: The Return of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn makes its Canadian TV debut Nov. 3 on Family Channel (8:30 p.m., ET).

It's a delightful movie, though it doesn't quite capture the full Twain flavor.

Sawyer (played by Raphael Sbarge) is now a young lawyer and Finn (Mitchell Anderson) is a rookie reporter. Both hurry back to Hannibal to help their friend Jim, a former slave, who is charged with murdering Becky Thatcher's husband. Paul Winfield plays Jim while Canada's Megan Follows (Anne of Green Gables) plays Becky. Another Canadian, Zachary Bennett, portrays a young orphan who tries to help Tom and Huck.

Tom Sawyer has to resort to some fast talking and quick thinking to foil a lynch mob before he and Huck can try to solve the mystery of who killed Becky's husband.

Youth Orchestra extends deadline

The National Youth Orchestra announced an extension on its original October 31st deadline for receipt of audition applications for the 1991 NYO session. Auditions are expected to be held across Canada from January 7 through January 15, 1991. Applications from young musicians will be accepted up to the time auditions commence. In most regions, a live audition will be possible. Otherwise, students may audition by cassette.

Interested musicians should immediately contact the NYO office, 1032 Bathurst Street, Toronto, Ontario, M5R 3G7. Telephone: (416) 532-4470/4479.



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