

Entertainment

Movie Review

'Defending Your Life'—fails

By DIAHANN NADEAU
Herald Special

Defending Your Life is Albert Brooks' latest film endeavor, an interesting interpretation of life after death. Judgment here has nothing to do with God and everything to do with L.A. Law - you should hope for a good lawyer in the afterlife.

Brooks stars as Daniel Miller, an ad executive who runs into a bus on his birthday - in his brand new BMW. He wakes up, sort-of, in a hospital gown, in a wheelchair, one of a large group of dead, numbed, and bewildered people. He is taken by tram to Judgment City, a place set up to look like L.A. and Southern California. Billboards advertise nightclubs and bowling, just like home. Daniel is even checked into a middle-of-the-road hotel called the Majestic, where mints are placed on the pillow and Kiwanis

dead are bid welcome.

Soon he discovers the plan of action in Judgment City: nine days of his life are reviewed over a four day period, while a defense attorney and a prosecutor debate in front of a couple of judges to determine whether he moves on to another and smarter world, or returns to boring, brainless, earth. The judgment is not based on how good, bad, greedy, or nice Daniel was; it's based on how fearful he was. Judging from the clips, Daniel was afraid of a lot.

The only diversion he has is the beautiful Julia (Meryl Streep), whose defense is going a lot better than his and who seems destined to move on to better things. (Her hotel serves champagne and caviar in the lobby.) They fall in love, but Daniel is too fearful to take advantage of it.

Defending Your Life plays on a lot of cliches about Modern Life. It has a real So-Cal mentality; I

don't think anyone from Europe would have conceived of such a place. Brooks gives it a nice, humorous feel, a bit wry and ironic. Yet the movie is flawed. The script doesn't rise above the cliches, it becomes one itself. Brooks is clever, but ultimately shallow. One leaves the theatre a little disappointed, although it's hard to pinpoint the reason.

The cast is generally good, except for Brooks, who is rather annoying as the constantly pained and bewildered Miller. Streep is good but almost wasted as Julia, Lee Grant and Rip Torn play the lawyers, and Buck Henry is completely wasted as a substitute lawyer.

Defending Your Life raises some interesting questions and gives one something to think about, but it doesn't quite make it as a memorable movie. I think come judgment day Brooks might have a hard time defending this film.



Catering to Community

Club 2000 in Norval has joined-up with Riviera Productions - under the guidance of Cathy Burley from Guelph - to present a wide variety of live entertainment to the Halton Hills community and outlying areas. At a reception last week in Norval, plans to make the Norval night spot more attuned to the community were unveiled. The club will commit \$1 from cover charges collected Tuesday through Friday, on a weekly basis, to a local charity. Tuesday nights will feature "Specials" from Jazz, to Big Band sounds to Rock. Wednesday evenings will be

devoted to the 'Country Music Talent Contest', with cash prizes based on cover charges collected. Thursday and Friday evenings will be geared to the Country Music crowd, while Saturday nights feature a 'Rockin' Dance Party'. Recording artist Elaine Jarvis (right) the co-host of CHCH TV's Showdown - seen on Saturday nights - will be performing regularly and welcoming patrons, while Terry Sumsion (The Entertainer) pictured with Cathy Burley, is expected to perform this summer. (Heral photos by Colin Gibson)

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DEFENDING YOUR LIFE



Mature Theme

Evenings at 7:00 p.m. Only

LAST 2 DAYS



Evenings at 9:15 p.m. Only

CINEMA 2

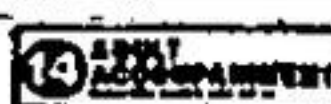
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