



This photo flashback shows the launching of the Gordon C. Leitch

Tales to end an old year...

Shirley Whittington

What are you doing today?

Contemplating an overfull stomach and a depleted bank account? Fretting about the bills that will flood in with the new year?

Trying to remember where you put the receipts for the gifts you bought that didn't fit or were the wrong colour? Seething because you paid full price on the 24th for stuff that's marked down by half on the twenty seventh?

Dad - do you wish you'd been kinder to the wife's relatives? Mum - are you counting the days till the kids go back to school? Kids - are you bored because the batteries are worn out on the electronic football game?

Your court jester offers three seasonal vignettes for your diversion. All were observed within the past fortnight.

It is the day before Christmas in a fashionable shopping mall.

The mingled sounds of carols and cash registers penetrate even into the ladies' washroom where behind the locked door of one of the little cubicles there is the sound of weeping. "Why did he have to do that to me - now?" sobs an anguished somebody.

Under the partition, one can see a pair of shapely feet, clad in expensive leather boots. Also visible are an open bottle of Tia Maria, and a half full bottle of costly sherry. Between sobs, a hand reaches down, and a bottle is hoisted.

The lady is there with her bottles and her anguish for a long time on that Christmas Eve. Nobody interferes. It is, we all agree, none of our business.

Outside on the snowy sidewalk, a Salvation Army volunteer tends his kettle and rings his bell. His smile is frozen on his face. He is

regarded by busy shoppers as an obstruction. They frown as they bustle by studying their shopping lists.

An elderly lady approaches, and slips some folding money in the plastic bubble. Then she gives the officer a bulging shopping bag. "I bought some chocolate bars and things," she says. "I thought you could use them in your hampers."

She leaves, and the officer's smile comes unfrozen. He rings the bell with one hand, and juggles the bulging grocery bag with the other. He looks awkward but happy.

One large shopping mall offers to solve gift buying problems via computer. I fill out a card with an elderly friend in mind. I indicate her age, her interests and her hobbies. Which room in the house does she spend the most time in? The bedrooms. She is old, and frail. I note the amount of money I wish to spend, and give the information to the computer.

The print out announces the following. "English virgin wool blanket: designer velour bathrobe: copper wine cooler: blood

pressure kit: copper wine cooler."

Visions of geriatric decadence swim before my eyes. My friend, swathed in blanket and robe, drinking chilled wine, and now and then checking her own blood pressure? Well that's better than watching soap operas all afternoon I guess.

I asked the lady who supervises the computer if many people have circled the \$1,000 and up category on the information sheet. "Only one," she says. "A lady who was looking for gift ideas for her husband. The computer suggested several things."

"And did she buy them?" I ask.

"No," says the lady. "She said she was going to frame the print-out and give it to her husband with a note saying she didn't have \$1,000, but this is what she'd buy him if she did."

Sad times, happy times - all are part of the season. I hope the happy times prevailed at your house. May the joy of the Christmas season spill over into the new year for you and those you love.

The best and worst of 1980 ...movies that is!

by Terry Dupuis

The following are my own selections for what I consider to be the 10 Best Movies I sat through in theatres during 1980. Such lists, of course, are personal and debatable, but these are 10 movies which I enjoyed so much I would gladly sit through them all again. They are arranged in alphabetical order:

1) **BRUBAKER**: Robert Redford gave an excellent performance in this dramatic but true-life story about the experiences of a reform warden who takes over an appallingly organized corrupt prison.

This picture was grim and realistic and it weighed in as one of the best of all prison pictures that have been made.

2) **THE COAL MINER'S DAUGHTER**: This biography of country and western singer Loretta Lynn was a triumph for Sissy Spacek, who should be a top contender for Best Actress next April. Sissy even did her own singing in the role.

The supporting cast was uniformly excellent, too, especially Tommy Lee Jones as her husband. Even non-country fans can enjoy this film.

3) **THE ELEPHANT MAN**: This dramatic film was based on the life of John Merrick, a man born with a rare glandular condition which badly disfigured him. John Hurt gave a remarkable performance in the title role, and Anthony Hopkins was also fine as the doctor who tried to help him. The time period of Victorian England was vividly recreated in this powerful and moving motion picture.

4) **THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK**: Who says sequels can never be as good as the original? This one certainly was. It contained even more action, humour and dazzling special effects than "Star Wars". It also added a memorable new screen character named Yoda.

5) **THE GREAT SANTINI**: This film had nothing to do with a magician. It was about a father-and-son conflict. Robert Duvall played a tough Marine sergeant named Bull Meecham who wants his son to follow him into

a military career, but the boy has other ideas. This drama was powerfully acted, and it had a good involving story to it.

6) **THE HUNTER**: This turned out to be Steve McQueen's final film, but at least he went out with a winner. This exciting crime-action drama was very much in the tradition of "Bullitt" and other McQueen hits of the past. McQueen played "Papa" Thorson, a rugged modern-day bounty hunter.

7) **HOPSCOTCH**: Walter Matthau and Glenda Jackson reteamed for this comedy two years after "House Calls", and the result was another hit. Matthau had one of his best roles in years as a CIA agent whose life becomes endangered from both sides when he decides to write his memoirs. There was excellent location work filmed in various countries, and director Ronald Neame kept things perking.

8) **MY BODYGUARD**: This one was the "sleeper" of the year, much like "Breaking Away" was in 1979. Toronto actor Chris Makepeace of "Meatballs" scored heavily as young Cliffie Peache, a student who is harassed when he starts at a new high school. Matt Dillon played the bully, and Adam Baldwin was the bodyguard. The adults in the cast included Martin Mull, Ruth Gordon and John Houseman. The result was an appealing comedy-drama for both generations.

9) **ORDINARY PEOPLE**: This extraordinarily powerful drama was another triumph for Robert Redford who made a striking debut here as a director. He got flawless performances from Donald Sutherland, Mary Tyler Moore and a newcomer named Timothy Hutton. This heavy but absorbing drama about family relationships is certain to be nominated for a whole flock of Oscars next April.

10) **SOMEWHERE IN TIME**: Christopher Reeve decided to try something different so that he wouldn't get typecast as Superman. He certainly succeeded, because "Somewhere In Time" is definitely different.

It's an offbeat and haunting romantic fantasy about a man going back into the past to reclaim a lost love. Not only Reeve, but also Jane Seymour and Christopher Plummer were seen to good advantage.

Other Movies I enjoyed in 1980 which I considered to be worthwhile:

American Gigolo	Chapter Two
Tom Horn	Hide In Plain Sight
Caddyshack	Private Benjamin
Oh Heavenly Dog	Airplane
The Blue Lagoon	The Fog
Middle Age Crazy	Loving Couples
Last of The Mountain Men	Hero At Large
Little Miss Marker	Bear Island
Electric Horseman	Black Stallion
The Black Hole	Final Countdown
Going In Style	Borderline
When Time Ran Out	The Changeling

The following is my own personal 10 Worst List for this year, movies which seemed to be either badly made, or boring, or which just personally didn't appeal to me in any way. In any case, these were the ones which I personally found painful to sit through, although these films may have been liked by some other viewers:

1) **CRUISING**: A violent, badly written exploitation picture which is not likely to do Al Pacino's career any good at all.

2) **DRESSED TO KILL**: A pretentious shameless imitation of Hitchcock, in which director Brian De Palma even plagiarizes from himself - he uses his own ending from "Carrie"! Michael Caine's role as a transvestite psychiatrist is not likely to do his career any good either.

3) **FIENDISH PLOT OF Dr. FU MANCHU**: Unlike Steve McQueen, Peter Sellers made his screen exit in a lousy vehicle. It's probably the unfunniest comedy the great comedian ever made. It poorly serves his memory.

4) **IN GOD WE TRUST**: Eccentric-looking comedian Marty Feldman wrote, directed and starred in this satire on modern-day religion. There have been reports in

magazines that Marty tried to commit suicide after the release of his picture, due to the negative critical and public response to it. But both critics and public were right on: This one is atrocious - a boring, insulting comedy, in fact the only movie this year that I walked out on.

5) **THE ISLAND**: A nasty absurd and thoroughly nauseating screen version of Peter Benchley's best-selling novel. Michael Caine may have made another career blunder by starring in this modern-day adventure tale of pirates in the Caribbean.

6) **GUYANA: CULT OF THE DAMNED**: A thoroughly despicable cash-in on what happened to Rev. Jones and his followers in Guyana in 1978. It sheds no new light on what happened, but merely exploited its subject. Even all of the names in the story were changed to avoid lawsuits.

7) **THE NINTH CONFIGURATION**: A misfire from William Peter Blatty who wrote the Exorcist. This pretentious film about a group of shell-shocked VietNam Veterans who are under psychiatric observation in an old castle by being allowed to act out their fantasies was ponderous and silly and didn't seem to make sense on any level.

8) **PROM NIGHT**: This weak made-in-Toronto thriller was nothing but warmed-over "Carrie" and "Halloween". In fact, Jamie Lee Curtis of "Halloween" fame was its star.

9) **SATURN THREE**: This foolish often unintentionally hilarious science-fiction thriller has to be seen to be believed. Most of the picture has Farrah Fawcett being pursued around a space station by a horny robot, while boyfriend Kirk Douglas tries to rescue her. This whole production was a mess, especially in the script department.

10) **WHOLLY MOSES**: Another disastrous biblical spoof which completely misfired. It was a mistake for Dudley Moore after his triumph in "Ten" to make this completely unfunny comedy which didn't have a single laugh in it. Even Dom DeLuise couldn't save this one!