

'Turtle Diary' crawls through strange, uninteresting plot

A movie called "Turtle Diary." Many people will dismiss such a strangely titled film immediately. It could only be a PBS documentary on the mating habits of loggerhead turtles, right?

Well, "Turtle Diary" is not a documentary. It is a wonderfully acted and highly original movie with a special understated style that makes for a few funny moments. Unfortunately, watching two hours of sea turtles nesting in the sand would have been more riveting and emotionally satisfying.

The two major characters' lives revolve around the London Zoo's turtle tank. Ben Kingsley plays a

Rob Sherman Cinema

reserved but long-to-be-assertive bookshop clerk. He meets a reserved but long-to-be-passionate children's book writer, played by Glenda Jackson.

Both actors have won wide acclaim for other parts they have played, and both present their respective dull and eccentric "Turtle Diary" characters very well. Kingsley, when he plots for the turtles, believes for all the world he is

becoming Francis McComber on the plains of Africa, simply because he has kept his eyes open for three hours while driving back from the coast. And Jackson, who can barely tolerate the emotional strain of doing something naughty, struggles to ask her neighbor to care for her pet water beetle when she goes out of town for the weekend.

Through the movie, bits of strange, distinctly British humor comes out. This is not the kind of humor that lets the audience forgive a bad movie because they laughed through it, like Rodney Dangerfield's "Back To School." More likely, it is the kind of humor that

makes them blink, sit up in their seats and say, "I say, old chap, that's rather amusing, isn't it?"

But "Turtle Diary" just isn't funny enough, or well-acted enough, to make up for a bad plot, and the audience feels disappointed and cheated when the film ends. The two major characters press themselves to break out of their boring lives by living on the edge, or what they believe is the edge. When Kingsley and Jackson have accomplished their feat, the audience is to believe they are changed people, made better by their experience. It just doesn't work. Their feat seems too trivial, too simple a task, to make them

different.

The whole story doesn't add up to much. People don't fall into bed with whom you thought they would. People that barely existed before suddenly die, and the audience is expected to feel for them. Some minor characters are given crucial roles at the end, but since no attention was paid to them earlier, their sudden importance is contrived. Other characters seem to be developing into something important but then disappear before anything useful can be done with them.

It is not that the audience doesn't want to care about the characters —

or the turtles — but hopeless, silly people such as those in the film have difficulty soliciting sympathy. Who wants to identify with people who spend their free time at the turtle tank?

Perhaps "Turtle Diary" will appeal to people who look for a movie with nothing but fine acting — perhaps to those who go in for minimalism. It is certainly not for people who like to become immersed in a movie, or people who want to first know the characters and then care what happens to them. It was disappointing to watch such talented actors in such an uninspiring and anticlimactic movie.

Thomas Wolfe comes home

By RENE MEYER
Staff Writer

PlayMakers Repertory Company will take off Saturday into its second decade as a professional theater with Ketti Fring's Pulitzer Prize-winning adaptation of Thomas Wolfe's novel, "Look Homeward, Angel." The production commemorates the 50th anniversary of Wolfe's death.

David Hammond, PRC's artistic director, says he has looked forward to directing the play since he came to North Carolina. The play reflects the world that the original PlayMakers grew out of and celebrates the heritage of both the theater and the campus.

Wolfe was born and grew up in Asheville (in the book he calls it Altamont). From the turmoil of his family life, Wolfe departed to this university. Chapel Hill's name is changed to Pulpit Hill in the book, but the descriptions are as true today as when the book was written, excepting only that the wilderness is not as wild.

Essentially autobiographical, the bulk of the play takes place in Asheville, or rather in Altamont. "Look Homeward, Angel" is one of four books that follows Wolfe's development. "Of Time and the River" and "Look Homeward, Angel" are both about Eugene Gant. The later two novels, "The Web and the Rock" and "You Can't Go Home Again," were edited from unfinished manuscripts. The main character has a different name but is essentially the same.

"Look Homeward, Angel," explains Hammond, "is about coming to terms with yourself as an individual, and the growth of a young man to the point in his life at which he is able to take responsibility for his own soul. The greatness of the book is that it conveys an experience that everyone goes through while growing up — separation from one's parents and a moving on to the part of your life for which you alone are responsible. It happens to be about an individual who is an artist, and it is about that artist developing the strength to follow his destiny."

The adaptation by screenplay writer Ketti Fring is superb, according to Hammond. "The most meaningful parts of the novel are observation and description, and how do you dramatize that?" he says. "Well, she pulled it off; I think she pulled it off beautifully. She picked quintessential moments of dramatic exchange." Most of the speeches are actually taken from all the books, not only from the title novel. The dramatization is in the end faithful to Wolfe's entire body of work.

PRC's production will feature four noted guest artists. Eugene will be played by Lance Guest, an actor whose film credits include "The Last Starfighter," "Just The Way You Are," "I



Betsy Friday, a lovely stranger, walks into Lance Guest's life



Artists James Pritchett and Isa Thomas discuss family matters

Ought To Be In Pictures" and "Halloween II." He has also appeared in television shows such as "Lou Grant," "St. Elsewhere" and the American Playhouse specials.

Betsy Friday, a native North Carolinian, will play Eugene's friend Laura James. A graduate of the North Carolina School of the Arts, she made her debut on Broadway in "The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas," and danced in the movie "Annie." For the past three years, Friday has been assisting choreographer Joe Layton ("The Lost Colony").

The role of Eugene's father will be played by James Pritchett. Returning to PRC for his third season, Pritchett played the title

role in last season's "Clarence Darrow." He also is known for his award-winning portrayal of Dr. Matt Powers in the daytime soap opera "The Doctors."

Isa Thomas will portray the mother, Eliza Gant. Thomas has toured with "Children of a Lesser God," and has been acting and directing for 22 years at the Asolo State Theater of Florida.

"Look Homeward, Angel" will be performed by PlayMakers Repertory Company at 8 p.m. on Sept. 27, Oct. 1-4 and Oct. 8-11 in Paul Green Theatre. Sunday matinees on Sept. 28 and Oct. 5 are sold out. Call 962-1121 for ticket information.

Delta Sigs have new beginning

By JENNIFER FROST
Staff Writer

"Starting from scratch" is what a blend of Delta Sigma Phi fraternity brothers is doing this semester.

"We feel we're unique . . . Anyone who joins becomes a creator instead of a conformist because he has an opportunity to contribute to the beginning of a new fraternity," said Rob Metzler, Delta Sigma Phi's rush chairman.

But Delta Sigma Phi is not completely new. The original chapter, created in the 1920s, lost its house to a fire in the 1930s, and funds were not available for reconstruction.

The fraternity is being re-established, thanks to Zeta Beta Tau fraternity, which relinquished its house on Finley Golf Course Road to the Delta Sigs.

After gaining the house, a representative from the Delta Sigma Phi national chapter came to the University to create an interest in the fraternity. "The national representative who came here stumbled onto our founding brothers," sophomore Chip Peoples said.

"They're all originally from a floor in Granville that was comprised of a group of guys who had almost an unofficial fraternity of their own. The representative found out about them by stopping a guy on the street and asking if he wanted to join a fraternity. The guy said no, but told him about the people in Granville," Peoples said.

From there, those interested contacted friends, friends contacted

more friends and by the end of last semester the fraternity had a 42-man chapter.

To prepare for their rechartering Nov. 15, the Alpha Delta Chapter met over the summer to remodel the house.

"When I first saw the house this summer," Peoples said, "I wasn't sure I wanted to live there. The carpets were stained, the furniture torn, the porches so full of trash no one could walk on them, and there had been a dog running loose in the house. It's come such a long way since then. Compared to other fraternities, it's a very competitive structure."

They have recarpeted, repainted and reworked the kitchen by adding a new deep fryer and fixing the ice machine and stove, Metzler said. "We also fixed up the porches, the bathroom, cleaned out trash and bought new tables, chairs and a television.

"We're now having the cushions around our fireplace fixed and are waiting for new furniture for the TV room."

All the Delta Sigs have left to do is more painting and minor repairs.

Funds for the renovation came partly from a loan provided by the Delta Sigma Phi national chapter and from Zeta Beta Tau fraternity, which gave money to compensate for the house's structural unsoundness.

So far, renovation expenditures have totaled \$20,000. Although the major repairs have been finished, the

Delta Sigs are allocating \$2,500 per semester to cover any unexpected problems which may arise.

The Delta Sigs name N.C. State University's Rho Chapter as a force that has helped them become established by providing an example for them to follow.

"N.C. State's chapter has recently reorganized," Metzler said, "so they've gone through what we're experiencing now. They've gone from a fraternity of five men to 70 in a year and a half. We'd like to follow this example and become another Delta Sigma Phi success story as they have."

Sophomore member Wes Robinson added, "We'd like to double in membership with quality men who will help us create a strong fraternity."

The fraternity is looking for men who are interested in leadership, can balance school and various social activities, and who have pride in themselves and will instill this in their attitude toward the fraternity, senior Greg Chapman said.

Metzler stresses the Delta Sig's pledge policy as a unique drawing point for those considering fraternity life. "We don't treat pledges as inferiors. Rush is a time to get to know the brotherhood and find companionship. We're here to promote friendship, not to denounce anyone. We don't ask our pledges to do any more than the brothers, except to attend pledge classes and complete a fall project."



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they go to get general information on the University's administration.

It was also a chance for officials to find out how much students know about telephonic registration systems and how much they would be willing to pay to use one.

"There are as many students willing to pay \$5 as over \$10," Black said. "It surprised me."

Black said that before he saw the survey results, he was not sure that students would agree with the idea of a user fee. "We wanted to check to see if it was a viable alternative for financing," he said. "Since 69 percent of the students would be willing to pay \$10 or more, it's a good possibility."


"We know that the new registration process has a lot of promise," Black said. "We're strong advocates of it."

"Students have supported us overwhelmingly and we have support at the highest levels on campus," he said.

University Registrar David Lanier said the new system may be ready for students' use by spring 1989.

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