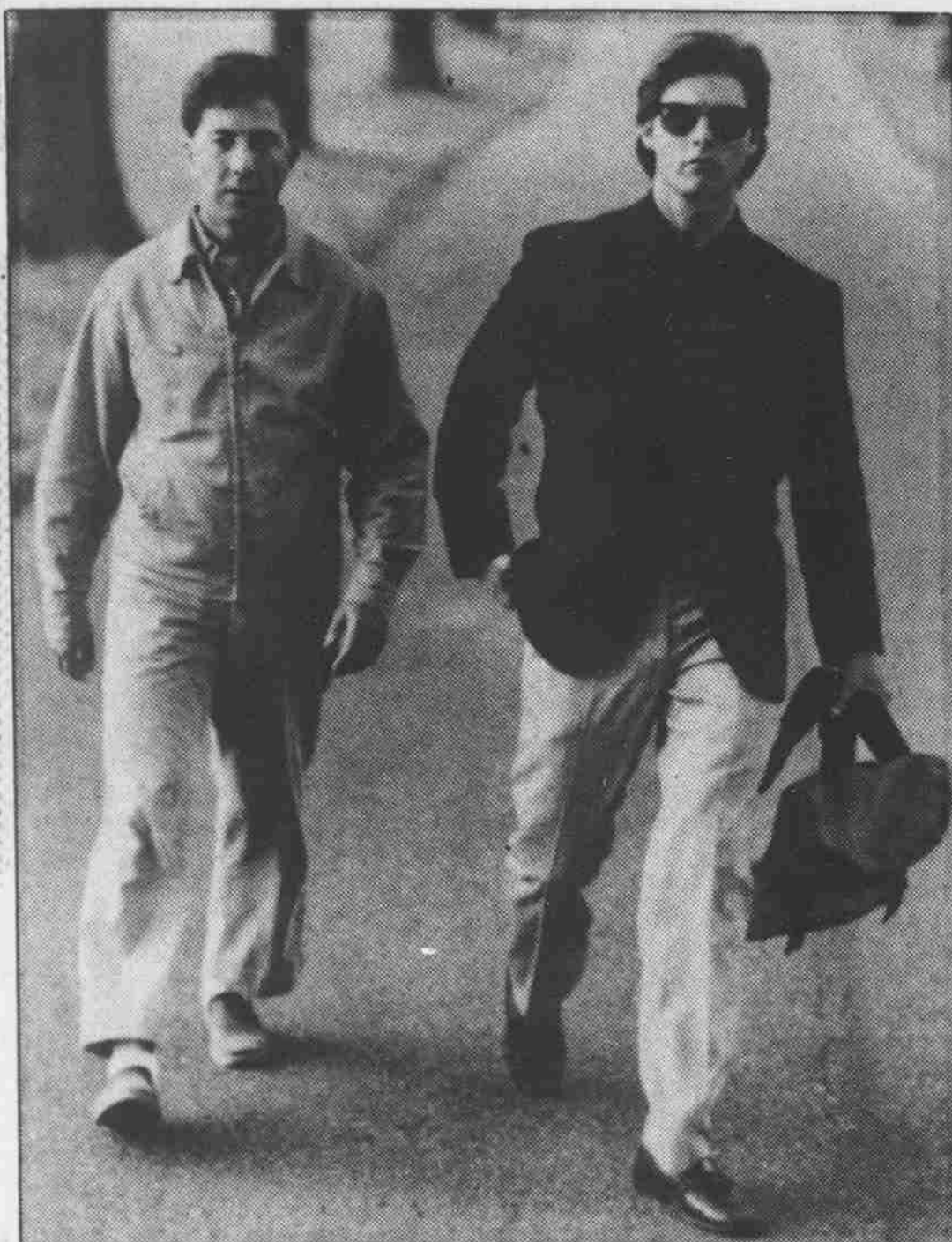


Union a haven to movie junkies



'Rain Man' is but one of the Union movies offered this fall

By ELIZABETH MURRAY

Staff Writer

If a guy took a different girl to every Union movie before Fall Break, he could spend a mere \$18 on 30 different dates.

Moviegoers who enjoy watching films solo could see 30 movies for only \$9.

And they'd be getting their money's worth, according to senior Mark Ricker, chairman of the Union Film Committee.

Highlights of this semester's movie lineup include: "Rain Man," "All the President's Men" and "The Accidental Tourist." Only six of the Union movies before Oct. 18 will have an admission fee.

Of course, there will be those students who do not go — and will never go — to Union films. In fact, the three most popular student responses to Union movies seem to be: "There's just no time," "I live off campus" and "The Union shows free films?"

But this semester the committee hopes to offer something for everyone, Ricker said. With a new format for the posters listing Union films and a wide variety of films, the series should draw a larger audience, he said.

Ricker said the film committee organized some of its lineup by category this semester.

Special events include a human rights festival featuring "The Killing Fields" and "The Official Story," sequel weekends, and 50th anniversary movies like "Wuthering Heights" and "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington."

In the past, some students have complained about the quality of sound and production in the film showings, Ricker said. One group of students even presented the committee with a profane petition demanding new equipment be bought for the films.

Ricker said that sound quality should improve this semester although there is no new equipment. He said students should keep in mind that a film itself is often to blame rather than the equipment used to project it.

Because most of the movies are free, students really have no place to complain about the quality of production, but viewers should be allowed to have food and drink in the theater, one student said.

"One time a friend and I brought a bucket of bones to a midnight movie and we had to leave them outside," said Ann Frey, a senior from New London. "By the time we came out, they were cold."

But students are not without their fond memories of Union films.

One senior recalled being very confused when, in the spring of 1986, the Union Film Committee mistakenly showed the X-rated version of "The Man Who Fell to Earth" instead of the somewhat shorter R-rated version. He said he could not figure out how he had slept through so many "good" parts when he saw the movie the first time.

Those students who do attend think the films are worth the occasional inconvenience. "I like to be with other students, plus I want to get the most out of student fees," Frey said.

Newest Vietnam film helps hide truth

By HASANTHIKA SIRISENA

Staff Writer

Welcome to the age of the handy-dandy, all-purpose conscience cleaner. It's fast, easy and sometimes entertaining. It isn't cheap, but then, nothing is these days. And it's a luxury that only modern culture can afford. What I'm talking about is the Vietnam movie.

We know the story well; it is a popular cultural myth. Young, idealistic college student joins the cause of justice and righteousness and goes to fight in the big, mean jungles of Vietnam.

But lo and behold, he gets to Vietnam, and it isn't Kansas. It's not only hot and dirty; it has hills — lots of them. To make it worse, they are not your average, benign hills. These hills have Vietcong crawling all over them. The Vietcong are like cockroaches; you can step on them, swat them, shoot them, napalm them, but you cannot kill them.

If that weren't bad enough, our young, idealistic soldier has to hang out with soldiers who are not as nice as he is. They use bad words. They rape, plunder and pillage. They are sometimes even evil incarnate. The college graduate manages to survive man-eating sergeants, the loss of his good buddies (all of whom had two

more weeks to serve before going home) and the Vietnamese, who all look alike, so you can't tell the bad from the good.

This young man, in an hour and 50 minutes, is supposed to show us how bad and brutal war is and how it turns idealistic minds into cruel callous killing machines. That is the Vietnam War.

Or is it?

College graduates did not fight the Vietnam War. The majority of the soldiers could not afford to go to college. None of these movies ever offer a three-dimensional black character, but most of the soldiers sent to Vietnam were black.

Even fewer of these movies ever address the culture difference in any understanding way. Let's face it, these movies do not deal with the Vietnamese at all or with the fact that the American armies could not understand the culture, and as a result, adapt to fighting the Vietnamese.

None of these movies deal with the psychology that led to the Vietnam War and maintained it even during the undeniable anger it evoked among the American populace.

Few of these movies seem to deal effectively with even the basic factors that led to the downfall of the American initiative in Southeast Asia:

the reduction of fighting to mere reactions to Vietnames offensives, the inability to define a definite enemy, the inability to define a clear objective.

These movies reduce Vietnam to a hopeless battle between history and allegory. However, history and allegory are both complex and intricate, requiring the utmost care and skill to be effective. Unfortunately for these movies, both devices are the hardest to carry off in the time afforded by an average Hollywood movie.

Take, for example, the newest addition to the rapidly growing list of Vietnam movies, "Casualties of War." The movie is based on the factual account of four American soldiers raping a Vietnamese farm girl. The movie suffers under the brunt of severe indecision and hypocrisy and focuses on the wrong people. You cannot teach soldiers to kill an enemy, who by necessity they see as evil, and then convict them for behaving immorally during war time.

"Casualties of War" could have been much more effective if it had dealt with the cultural difference between the soldiers and the Vietnamese woman and the roots of the soldiers' hatred instead of the superficial explanation given.

This movie — like so many of the

others — fails as a dedicated history and fails to explain itself if indeed it is an allegory. Histories and allegories need time and distance to develop. Without distance, you only manage to dredge up painful inaccuracies and hopelessly muddled feelings, and that is the basic flaw of all of these movies. The films seem unable to define the themes because we still can't define Vietnam.

But even if Vietnam movies fail as histories or as allegories, they still have a purpose. Earlier, I called them conscience salves, and that, in the end, is exactly their function. If you want to know the psychology of the war, read the excellent novels on which these movies are based. If you want to read about the politics behind the war, read the historians who go into excruciating detail about the massive stupidity of the American establishment in dealing with Vietnam.

If, however, you want to get rid of Vietnam, turn to Hollywood and bury it under a massive pile of media rubble. For \$4.40, you can do a two-hour tour of duty, intellectualize the conflict, feel sorry for the soldiers who fought and walk away thinking that by forcing yourself to watch it, you have absolved yourself of any connection with it.

Quest for books need not become annual headache

By LEIGH PRESSLEY

Staff Writer

For many UNC students, buying textbooks requires a comfortable pair of shoes, a fat checking account and a big bottle of Excedrin.

But three area stores are working to relieve students of the hassle of book buying.

UNC Student Stores offers a central campus location, which is convenient for students without cars, said John Jones, the store's assistant manager for books and computers.

New books are sold at publisher's prices and used books at a 25 percent discount, Jones said.

"You should try to buy used books and sell them at the end of the semester," he said. "If you keep getting money back, you should end up paying about one-fourth of the book's original price. You're recycling your dollar."

During the book-buying rush, long lines usually crowd the Student Stores. The new central staircase should help alleviate this problem, Jones said.

"Students should be able to go up the central stairs into the book area, pick up their books, go to the cash register and be on their way," he said. "It creates a big circle without crossing lines and results in a better flow of traffic."

Stephanie Sarra, a freshman from New Orleans, said she missed the crowd by buying her books early at Student Stores. "I just thought it would be a lot easier," she said. "It's nearer to my dorm, and I have to walk everywhere."

Jones recommended that students buy books early in the morning, late at night or at the end of the book rush to avoid long lines.

"The problem with saving time is there are so many students buying so many books in such a short period of time," he said.

Student Stores book rush hours are: 7:45 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday.

Pop's Tarheel Textbooks at 301 W. Franklin St. offers a wide selection of used books.

Darren Evans, the store's general manager, said that being able to drive to the store makes book buying easier for students with cars.

"Our biggest attraction is a parking lot at the door," he said. "It's convenient to drive up, get what

you need and head out on your way. Also, we sell a lot of used books to help save students money. We sell most basic liberal arts books for undergraduates."

Pop's Tarheel Textbooks sells books at the same standard prices as Student Stores, he said.

Most students appreciate having a choice. "I like being able to compare prices," said Rob Withers, a first year graduate student from Cincinnati.

Pop's Tarheel Textbooks' hours are: 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday.

The Alpha Phi Omega book co-op provides an opportunity for students to buy books at low prices and sell used books.

Students can register their books, setting their own prices, in the spring and fall. If the books are sold, a portion of the selling price is returned to the student.

Tara Lapham, coordinator of the APO project, said 85 percent of the profit is returned to the student and the remaining 15 percent is given to the Bernard Grail Scholarship Fund.

"Basically, we sell the books for them," she said. "They price their own books and sell them for what they want to."

Lapham, a junior from Burlington, said both the seller and the buyer get a better deal.

"The student can get more money, because the price they set is usually lower than used books at Student Stores and you get more money than if you sell books back at the end of the semester," she said.

Lapham said the variety of APO books depends on what people are trying to sell.

Lapham said the spring book drive usually results in more books than the fall drive does.

"There's a better return of books in the spring, because people like to have money for vacation or don't want to bring books back after the summer," she said.

Lapham said students who know what books they need can get good deals. "If they know what they need and don't mind looking through, they can get a better price with us," she said. "In the long run, it will save money to check with us."

The APO book co-op is in the Union rooms 211, 212 and 213. Hours are 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Friday for the next three weeks.

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