READER
November 2, 1972 SAN DIEGO'S FREE WEEKLY

"If I didn't think this was a wholesome place,

holy rollers!

I'd never let him spend so much time here."

BY MELANIE STULTZ

Slowly driving down Front Street, the car tips its nose up a little, like a ship sailing to the quiet dark places out of the harbor lights. A few blocks below Broadway at G, the halting flow of a neon marquee protrudes from the darkness. Monty's Skateland: the entrance booth is a small jutting arc, where the glassed-in man sells you a ticket. Saturday night, big double session.

The inside is lighted indirectly from the edges, and from the ceiling over the rink there are pinkish lights. The interior of Skateland is a soft, brown, tinted like very old photographs. As you enter, there are three or four rows of old plush seats, transported from some theater, so that you can sit and watch the skaters. On the far end there is a snackbar, settled in the corner, itself making a definite clump of activity, with people sitting and revolving on the stools, the smoke from their cigarettes turning with them. Along the far wall, set back a little and next to the snackbar are the trophy cases and the club banners and the furnishings of skaters and clubs. The banners hang on the walls like medieval caparisons, each a symbol of the club's spirit.

The floor of the rink is satiny. There are twenty-five skaters, skating backwards with a swift smooth cross of the legs, one behind the other. Their bodies shoot backwards in a bobbing glide, the knees flexed a little and heads and shoulders curving in and out of the space in the air that they make. Their bodies are like supple rods which vibrate gently and exactly to the rhythm of the boogie music. There are two divisions of movement: the long propelling glide, and the smaller more contained flexion of the inner part of the body.

The control booth is next to the trophy place. It is like a room in a radio station, with glass walls and a microphone for announcing the next move. The music runs off an old juke box, set up with an amplifier. There are tapes too, and a whole catalogue of records, classified by blues, boogie and waltz. The floor guard, the man who watches the skaters and runs the music, can control the movements and speed of the skaters by the type of music he plays. A good floor guard can keep things paced well and keep things controlled even if the crowd is raucous.

The man in the ticket booth was Ray Blakesley. He is a tall wiry man in his late twenties, with a cordial mouth and crinkly attentive eyes. His roller skates are his feet; soft black cashiony looking shoes, and noiseless rollers. "What they're doing here tonight is rexing. That's skating backwards in an Egyptian movement. It dates back to 1932, here in San Diego, at the old Truccadero on Broadway. They started doing this, crossing their legs behind them in an X, and I guess the name comes from that. You see that up there, that banner with A.R.C., over the door? Well, that's the initials of the American Rexing Congress. That's probably been organized for ten, eleven years. I'm chapter vice-president, and I'll be president next month. I've been skating at this place ever since I can remember. It used to be the old Pacific, until Monty (Lewis) took it over. Tonight is our club night, the Royal Rexers. There are seven clubs located in this rink; each has from ten to forty members. They're mostly kids, junior high and so on, but there are older people, and parents too."

There is a girl in the middle of the rink, describing figures in a small area, skating backwards in the rexing style. "See that girl in the middle there?" Ray points at the skater making small figures. "She's doing the hardest thing in rexing. It's called spot rexing and its all done off a figure eight, in a ten foot square. There are all kinds of figures you can do. She's very good, a senior in that division. Not a lot of people can do spot rexing. I can only half-way do it."

The floor guard, a young man with wavy and slicked back dark hair and a dancy sort of swinginess, turns and stops to talk to Ray. We're discussing music, and beat, and the floor guard snaps his fingers and says, "The first thing the old timers do when they come here to teach is ask, 'Can you count how many beats per minute?' And they teach 'em how to. That's it you've got to feel that beat and know it and work from it when you're skating, especially in competition." "Yeah," Ray smiles, "for rexing, it's the boogies, which run from about one hundred to one hundred thirty beats per minute. Blues average around ninety; we use them for dance skating and figure skating."

"Skating is really thrilling. You come in here and you see the people zooming around and you want to do it. It's pride, pride in yourself when you can do it, when you get good. Some people are naturals. There's Bruce, he's a good rexer, and that little girl there, in white, Marty, she's very good; used to be a rexer and now she's a dance skater."

The girl in white is small and elegant. She has white bell-bottoms and a white tunic shaped like a peplum, tucked in that way at the waist. She is buoyant and flippant and skates with a special kind of curvy stroke.

Bruce is around thirteen, and tall and slim. He dances a rex. A very jazzy, rhythmically exact step; you almost forget he's going backwards; he stills himself with that sidewards motion. His mother, Mrs. Newman, is watching from the rail. "If I didn't think this was a wholesome place, I'd never let him spend so much time here. But this is something he really sticks with. He loves it. Friday night his club meets, and he likes to come Saturdays. Tuesday is rexing night; there are about twice as many people as there are now, and he likes to come then. He's been skating about two years now, and twenty-three trophies."

(continued on page 7)

BROWN Women's Lib

AN INTERVIEW WITH MARGARET CASTRO

BY GWEN LANGDON

Margaret Castro first entered County politics this June when she ran against Assemblyman Wadie Deddeh in the 77th Assembly District primary. She took less than fifteen percent of the vote and even failed to carry her own precinct. The Mexican-American population of the district, however, is about twelve per cent and only six per cent were registered to vote. Add to those statistics the *machismo* among Mexican-Americans and her election loss is no mystery. After losing the election, she went east to New York to walk the Spanish-speaking precincts with Bella Abzug, the feminist Congresswoman.

A member of NOW (National Organization for Women), Miss Castro is not the typical feminist. She is neither anglo-saxon nor Protestant, and when the blush of pink spreads over her cheeks, it spreads over an olive complexion, without freckles. She has none of the benefits of the typical women's libber: she did not come from a wealthy or middleclass family and she has not had the prestige of a finishing school. Possibly against the will of her culture, she has sprung from her people, the Mexican-Americans of San Ysidro.

She sat in her office, strewn with Spanish-language leaflets, posters, pink and blue Mexican caps and talked to the READER. The corners of her mouth turned up into a smile and her dark eyes danced along with her dangling earrings. She used her hands to express herself, revealing on her left hand a gold ring with a peace symbol.

READER: Did you find it difficult to run in the primary because you were Mexican-American, particularly because of attitudes about women?
MISS CASTRO: Yes, I did. Mexican men came to me and said, why didn't you ask me first if you could run? The women told me I should let men go into politics first.
READER: And what did you say to them?
MISS CASTRO: I told the men I didn't have to ask anyone's permission to run and that I was running for all the people.
READER: What's the status of the women's movement among your people?
MISS CASTRO: Well, recently a book, *The Women's Voice*, was published by the women who met at a Texas convention of the Raza Unida. The women got together and discovered that no woman held a decision-making post. They were all secretaries and clerks. So about twenty of them got together and told the men that if it was necessary they would start their own group. They presented a list of 53 demands to the general assembly, telling the men that the women would no longer be used to go to bed with or be put in a secondary position.
READER: What happened then?
MISS CASTRO: The men passed the resolutions.
READER: What kind of resolutions did they make?
MISS CASTRO: They indicated that they wanted to get away from the usual Catholic principles: they wanted to be able to take birth control pills and they wanted to be allowed to have abortions.
READER: But these were women who were already politically aware. What about the women who aren't involved in politics?
MISS CASTRO: Well, we have to work to get the ordinary Mexican-American housewife involved in politics. It's so difficult to communicate with the white women who make up the up the women's movement. I can't get it through their heads that what they need is a movement representative of all women – white, Filipino, black and brown. They talk about civil rights, but I don't see minorities represented in their groups. I keep asking them, where are the blacks, browns and orientals? I don't see them on committees. If they're a movement, they should be for everybody.

article in MS. blasts Democrats for treatment of women

I've written an article that will be in *MS.* in December which blasts the Democratic National Convention for its treatment of women and Shirley Chisholm delegates. I was the spokesperson for Chisholm in the California delegation. At Miami, the North Carolina delegation was approved by the convention, even though its representation of women was not high enough. Also, the Chisholm delegates received bad treatment from convention officials and the Miami community. When we arrived at the Convention, we went to pick up our credentials and were sent to a country club eighteen miles away from the convention center. When we go to the club, we were sent back, only to be told that our credentials had been stolen. Eventually, we go in. The day Shirley was nominated I had to argue for eight solid hours to get passes that had been promised us by Larry O'Brien.
READER: What have you accomplished in working for McGovern?
MISS CASTRO: In the primaries, there were only about twenty-five per cent of the Mexican-Americans registered; now we're up to forty-five per cent. We found that our people thought they had voted when they registered. Right now we're registering 2500 people in a housing project. It's slow work because the people do not speak English. That causes a lot of problems. When I ran in the primary, there were four candidates for the office and people somehow got the idea that you could vote for two of the four. Their ballots were disqualified. Part of the reason that happened was that the Spanish-language ballot was posted only outside outside the voting booths. Spanish-speaking people had to use ballots written in English when they went inside the ballot box to vote. It's difficult to remember the sequence of more than ten propositions. Thank goodness ballots will be soon available in Spanish.
READER: Aren't the schools teaching Mexican-Americans English through bilingual programs?
MISS CASTRO: Yes, they are, but teachers are allowed to speak only English to children who speak Spanish.
READER: If you were to set up a bilingual program, how would you organize it?
MISS CASTRO: Well, I think the teachers should be allowed to speak both English and Spanish, and the classes shouldn't be larger than 15, so that the teacher could do a good job. The parents should attend class at least once a week to observe the child. That way the parents would understand how difficult and how important it is for the kids to learn to speak English. The Anglos in the class should be required to learn Spanish, too, and their parents. That way the Anglos could talk to their neighbors that don't speak English. The bilingual program should extend not oly from preschool to sixth grade; it is needed beyond that.
READER: How did you learn to speak English?
MISS CASTRO: In school. I never spoke Spanish after the fourth grade, I always spoke English. For a few years, I hardly ever talked, it got to a point where I could barely talk. Finally in the seventh grade, a teacher kept me after school and helped me to bring up my grades in English and chemistry. I said then that I wanted to become a social worker, but it wasn't until I came back from the Peace Corps (Margaret joined the Peace Corps after leaving and order of Catholic nuns in India) that I ever spoke another word of Spanish. I suddenly realized that I had been all over the world helping others and that right at home my own people were being suppressed; I didn't see any Mexican Senators or Assemblymen.
READER: Margaret, why was it that in the fourth grade you stopped speaking Spanish?
MISS CASTRO: I was in the back of a classroom speaking in Spanish to my friends. The teacher called me a dirty Mexican.

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Most professional

A Review by Kathleen Woodward

After last Tuesday night's opening of Paul Zindel's Pulitzer Prize-winning play, *The Effects of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds*, Anaid Kelada, the director, asked the audience for feedback. The praise he received was lavish and well-deserved. "It's the most professional non-equity production I've seen," said a young actress who was visiting from New York. "I haven't been so moved by a dramatic experience in years," another woman said. The Cassius Carter production of this very difficult play to stage in theatre in the round was indeed stunning, revealing the brilliance and sensitivity of Kelada, a director San Diego is most fortunate to have. And the discussion afterwards, the warmest and most intimate I've yet encountered at the Cassius Carter, showed us just what an articulate, intelligent, and engaging man the attractive Kelada is.

THE EFFECTS
OF GAMMA RAYS
ON
MAN-IN
THE-MOON-MARIGOLDS

The title of the play is misleading. In its apparent zaniness it recalls Tom Wolfe's rollicking *Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby*: you can never get that title straight, and the point is that it doesn't matter if you mix it up. But *The Effect of Gamma Rays* is a deadly serious and compelling play, and although we laugh throughout, sometimes against our will, the humor is biting and acrid, never exhuberant.

The tone and structure of *Gamma Rays*, in fact, is quite similar to Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* The time is the fifties, as the opening sounds of Patti Page's "Tennessee Waltz," perfect choice, tell us. The setting is the shabby and cluttered apartment – creative chaos, you might call it – of Beatrice, a middle-aged, brassy, sadistic and frustrated Martha. Living with her are her two high school-age daughters and their $50 a week boarder, Nanny, a senile, ancient woman played with perfect feebleness by Mary M. Egan. The family is completely female, and it is a destructive world where everyone lives half-lives. One character does, however, emerge unscathed.

This is Tillie, the sweet and simple younger daughter who, encouraged by her science teacher, withdraws into a world of science, turning it into a life-sustaining fiction about the elements and the "atom" ("What a beautiful word," she says). She is capable of a kind of fairy tale wonder and creative reverie which is also productive: the title refers to her successful science fair project. As the shy and eager-to-please bright student, Lee Murphy with her frail body and soft, almost thin voice, is appropriately delicate. She sensitively conveys the miracle that we see at the end of the play. Having watched her mother's most serious breakdown to date, she is still able to dream.

Her mother, we learn, has a small reservoir of wonder hidden in her – we see it once in a beautifully lyric dream she relates to her other daughter, Ruth, neurotic and epileptic. But as her life was overcome by the dead weight of poverty and the fragments of exploded dreams, the Dream changed into a nightmare. Her projects are no longer creative and pure, but sad, even morbid, money-making schemes (she thinks, for instance, of starting a nursing home in eight garages). She still retains an imaginative hold on life, however, although it is reduced to language – in almost one breath, for example, she can call Tillie's rabbit the "angora manure machine" and "cottontail compost heap." As Beatrice, Carole Marget gave an outstanding performance, moving swiftly from one of this woman's many moods to another. I offer one suggestion. In her final scene it would be more in keeping with Beatrice's mercurial and complex character, I think, if she were alternately coldly savage, in perfect possession of herself, and lost in a fumbling despair. As Carole Marget plays her, she is almost solely the latter, drained and hating life.

The other girl is, unlike Tillie, her mother's daughter. Ruth, a sex-pot, is played with the proper hyper-energy by Eleanore Auerbacher, although she is perhaps too manic in the beginning of the play. She fights her mother viciously, knowing when and how to manipulate her, and yet is also generous and loving. It is Ruth, it is clear, who has been stunted by the gamma rays, a metaphor for the influences and impulses of the environment on human beings.

At the discussion after the play, the single negative comment about *Gamma Rays* was made by a UCSD sociologist who argued that the play (nor the production, no one could fault it) was not convincing. Such a girl as Tillie, he said, couldn't emerge from the battering environment her mother had provided her. This is just the point, however, that Zindel is making. Influences are complex, not programmed; chaos can be creative; a given cause does not necessarily produce a given effect. As Tillie believes, and Zindel hopes, "After radiation is better understood, a day will come when the power from exploding atoms will change the whole world we know. Some of the mutations will be good ones – wonderful things beyond our dreams."

★FILM★

Bell Company — David Newman and Robert Benton, authors of BONNIE AND CLYDE and THERE WAS A CROOKED MAN, are the latest alumni of Hollywood, cutting through history's mess to remind us of man's unilateral pettiness. Their entertaining story of a good Christian lad, who flees from the Civil War draft and falls in with a merry gang operating from a brothel in about the ruthless realities of the prairie. The authors are absolutely sincere, but nothing more. Backgrounds of endless, ever-tempered Great Plains convey a sense of magnitude rather than does the movie no harm. (Fashion Valley)

Barbarella — A cheesy-looking Italian make of the French erotic comic strip, starring Jane Fonda under her then-husband Roger Vadim's direction. There are orgies and costume galore in an effort to look sexy, but the movie, for all the frenetic cuts at nakedness, is just barely sillier than the average American sexploitation. (Mission Valley Center 3)

Blonde — A tongue-in-cheek send-up of rock music, made with black romance and violence. (California)

Bless the Beasts and the Children — A Stanley Kramer tribute to humanity, occasioned by the slaughter of buffaloes, and accomplished in song by Kenny and Richard Carpenter. (Deep feelings) (Cam)

Blood from the Mummy's Tomb — The requisite Hershell Gordon Lewis art of the late Seth Holt, who died before an uncommon knack for staging bad dreams. Some stretches are fairly hysterical, but you have to be willing to succumb. (California)

Broadway Melody — Cloaked with HOLLYWOOD REVUE. This combination adds a pretty thorough census of the musical comedy participants in MGM movies since 1929 (Bessie Love, Joan Crawford, Anita Page, on and on). The overly worked technique is heavily anchored, though. (Cinema Live)

Buck and the Preacher — For his first directing try, a yarn about black pioneers, Sidney Poitier seems to face very orderly matters of what he wants to do, especially in the action scenes. Co-starring Belafonte with generously bad teeth and Peter with a gimmicky thompson gun. (Fox)

Butterflies Are Free — Slick, patent version of the recently slick Broadway play, directed by stage hand Milton Katselas. Goldie Hawn, Eileen Heckart and introducing Edward Albert as a sweet young blind man. Blythe Danner, where are you? (Fashion Valley 6)

Cabaret — Liza Minelli asks to be loved all over—as a sexpot, as an awkward adolescent, as a Carnegie Hall entertainer—and it's asking a lot. The time and setting of 1932 Germany operate on behalf moodiness. And it was a good idea to use the receding pixieish face and reluctant lyrics of a vaudeville singer (played decorously by Joel Grey) as a retort to all the pretension and sentimentality. It was a bad idea to allow the entertainment in this cheesy movie-musical cabaret to be set in gritty Broadway. (Mission Valley)

Conquest of the Planet of the Apes — They have to do the whole damn movie over the second one—and this is the fourth. Like the third, it functions as a formula manhunt concentrates except that the fugitive is in a monkey suit. (Solana Beach)

The Crimson Cult — One of the festier Vincent Price fright vehicles, which is perhaps hassle fright. Cobbled with THE RAVEN, a self-conscious "camp" takeoff on the Poe poems, directed by Roger Corman, and starring Price, Lorre, and Karloff in overdrive. (Alvarado, 10/27 only)

The Deadly Trap — A new suspense from Rene Clement (PURPLE NOON, RIDER ON THE RAIN), who is one of eleven or seventeen film makers to have been dubbed "the French Hitchcock." In this loud the neo French style of employing American stars (Faye Dunaway, Frank Langella, Barbara Parkins). (Grossmont)

Dracula Has Risen from the Grave — (If you don't already know why the name of director Freddie Francis is near no consciousness of Hammer horror films, this excerpt won't explain it. But one inspired segment—of Christ as the mast of a pantaloon chicken. Cobbled with HORROR OF THE DRAC ULA, directed by Francis' other at Hammer, Terence Fisher, who is thought to be the lesser of the two Fisher, however, gets the better of this skeevy side comparison. (California, 10/27 midnight only)

Easy Rider — The new film generation's anguish and paranoia about America is acted out in these separated stories by Peter Fonda, who strikes mystical poses and motorcycle profiles, Jack Nicholson, who chews up the scenery like an indigestible ham, and Dennis Hopper, stoppers of the dyke, doing a naturalistic Method version of a pervert cute freak. (Del Mar Drive-In)

Everything You Have Always Wanted To Know About Sex (But were afraid to ask) — Just as Woody Allen's skill as a comedian is far more verbal than visual, so his direction is far more romantic than perceptive. In this bright series of seven sex skits, Allen proves himself a connoisseur of hilarious accidents. Everyone else is better at reacting than Allen himself, but there are plenty of supporting characters around. Very funny, but nothing more, so don't let anyone tell you (Allen does) there won't be any diving left. (Valley Circle)

Fiddler on The Roof — Literal but rousing musical version of Sholom Aleichem stories, set in the Russian Pale. Norman Jewison's impersonal technology demonstrates (still) how far craftsmanship can go in making a near work of art: the musical numbers have a gritty texture and the Broadway stock tunes has been scrubbed clean. Topol is excellent in the role of Tevya, the rest of the cast of a piece. (Loma)

A Fistful of Dynamite (Duck, You Sucker) — Sergio Leone's mass killings are as routinized as marching band maneuvers, and his story development has the speed of a beard. However, the landscapes, the stop-motion flashbacks and Morricone's daffy music are quite delirious. The two leads, Steiger and Coburn, are so absorbed with their regional accents, not to mention their stylish coats and hats, that they often absent themselves of their positions in the story. And for all their devotion to speech, Coburn's Irish savvies very inscrutable and Steiger's Mexican positively materialized. (North Park, Cinerama)

The French Connection — Low-mileage steam raises incessant swipes at the dictionary of cops fighting, and every blow is below the belt. Among its several Oscars, the furthest astray is the one for the editing of this movie, which only lets its plot while roaming the streets in incoherent cat-and-mouse pursuits. The famous car-shaking-runaway subway escape scene, a severe case of probability, is good for a laugh over the lengths to which this project will go to rattle the audience. (Campus Drive-In)

Funny Girl — Streisand's debut movie, directed roughly to pumping up its guaranteed clot, provides an unequivocal definition of prima donna. For a story set in the Ziegfeld Follies, there is a quiet absence of alternative females. Meanwhile, the movie's males act as passive mirrors. Omar Sharif is required to write sweetly at Barbra's every quip, looks nearly ill. (UA Cinema)

The Gang That Couldn't Shoot Straight — Jerry Schatzberg gets nuts from Jimmy Breslin's best-seller. The thugs are supposed to look comic, but they are overshadowed by the film-makers. (College)

The Garden of The Finzi-Continis — Vittorio de Sica's alleged return to form turns out to be a regression—an all too old neo-realist heart-tugging in boarding-house-and-bicycle technical terms. As always with de Sica, there is considerable emotion expended in the story of a wealthy Jewish family crushed by Italian Fascism, but what emotions there are are facile valued. Dahlbeck as Spinoza's mother, and the rest of the cast, are fine, but the period with greater precision than anything de Sica has done. (Cass)

Getting Straight — Elliott Gould's nervous work, doing exasperated readings of somewhat quick-witted speeches, is impressive just for his long control. The vision of campus revolutions is far from convincing, but the movie is fairly entertaining for its reckless fluidity. (Del Mar Drive-In)

The Godfather — Although it feels more, in its many hours, like a movie in every visible gangster-story gimmick, there is no convincing impression of selling the truth, at least not in the book. Coppola has no taste foolish except Colon Lastoudio as ruthless. (Pkwy; El Cajon)

Harper — Cinematic ex-pose of the revivalist circuit. It's an "inside job" since the star evangelist used to be one, and he's been hired for the benefit of the camera, although his heart and soul were not in his act. (College)

The New Centurions — An L.A. cop's "inside" police novel of many pages and many characters has been ruthlessly condensed by scriptwriter Stirling Silliphant. So many different situations are enacted so as the characters that almost everyone appears psychotic (calls it erratic. (Fox)

Night of the Living Dead — Gruesome horror film that has earned a considerable underground reputation. The Living Dead walk again, pursuing victims and devouring their entrails. Perhaps the finest movie ever shot in Pittsburgh. (NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD is the personal project of the George Romero, who shows us what taken on, even on a micro-exotic budget. (Strand)

Now You See Him, Now You Don't — Comedy about invisibility ability which enables a bunch of actors movie-makers to Disney their ex. Co-billed with WARP, a revived nature documentary concerning an chimpanzee who is difficult to imitate. (Inglis)

Pretty Maids All in a Row — Roger Vadim's heart, his eye, and boobies last, in his first Hollywood job, is utterly lost around an American high school. This sex comedy/murder mystery has the same goggle-eyed interests as the BREATH SALE movies, although it's a bit more smutty and less dreaming. A thoroughly dismal experience. (Mission Valley)

The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie — Good old-fashioned character cinema in two old-fashioned English home movie techniques. Adapted from Jay Allen Presser's play presentation of Muriel Spark's novel about a Scottish girls' school teacher, circa the Thirties, who impresses her own peculiar romantic ideals on her loyal students. Pamela Franklin, as the key pupil, does an intelligent job, while Maggie Smith, as the teacher, gets an overall hard that she was awarded an Oscar. (Mission Valley)

Reefer Madness — A 1936 "shocker" about the evil weed has been dug up, primarily for laughs, for those who want to feel superior. Kan.

Rosemary's Baby — Roman Polanski's Hollywood debut and, as expected, his deepest delving into communication, is a mixed version of the novel. Polanski slides right over the coats of some ringers as if he simply missed them, his camera ingenuity—hovering lens and plunging angles—moves them—electrifies the apartment setting into an undulating form-world around a handsome and secret realtor values, haunted phone calls, and wine-sour conclusion, are most compelling in an oversized oval movie. The Cinerama 7 hemming loses as long as any conversation could have. Director by Richard Fleischer, numerous second units, and three different Japanese for the East-side scenes. Which accounts for the erratic visual quality. (Campus Drive-In)

2001 — Most of its reputation comes from its exposing the master to special effects that had been done smoother in experimental shorts. Kubrick's pretentious sports on modern technocracy have never been too short, not then, not today. (DR. STRANGELOVE), and not since (C LOCKWORK ORANGE). Nonetheless, there is a genuine feeling of awe now and then during this incomprehensible chronicle of mankind from ninth to ninth. (UA Cinema)

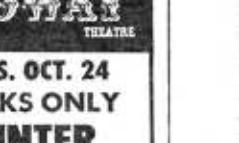
Where Does It Hurt? — Ostensibly about the medical racket, this gruesome bore of amputing jokes—about sex, race, or whatever is sure to offend—has the dampness of a movie which decks nobody to see it. Peter Sellers memorizes cutaways, to wipe control room and then, and plain mannerisms worshipers will his latent talent. (Mission Valley Village)

Who is Harry Kellerman and Why Is He Saying These Terrible Things About Me? — Something to do with a leading composer of rock songs who takes his latest arranged around town be a conscious stranger, but it turns out that he is his own worst enemy. His psychiatrist has a German accent, which shows the lopsided plot as well. The rock genius is played of course by Dustin Hoffman; this new pop star anything, including a goiter. (Village)

Witchcraft Through the Ages — This 1921 historical review of black magic has been recently obscene and re-issued with a soundtrack, including a helpful narration spoken by William Burroughs and some lively musical distraction. The documentary uses—book illustrations, paintings, etc.—make elegant images on screen. Interspersed dramatizations of the "possessed" and their deranged visions indicate that Benjamin Christensen, a Dane, reserves a share of the thunder accorded to Murnau and Dreyer for pioneer probing in cinematic perversion. (Universal)

You Can't Cheat an Honest Man — Doubled up with NEVER GIVE A SUCKER AN EVEN BREAK, this makes the third opportunity in three weeks for the W. C. Fields fiends in San Diego to gorge themselves while the rest of us scan the funnies with troubled eyes. (Cinerama)

"A SEPARATE PEACE"



HICKEY & BOGGS

NOT YOUR NORMAL GUMSHOES

Hickey and Boggs—each is the kind of name which must expect a lifelong siege of puns, nonsense rhymes, snide pronunciations, together they sound like a partnership in a realty agency. Virtually the movie's total attitude toward private eyes is exposed in the selection of the heroes' names which give the movie its title. These guys are sadsacks, undernourished and underemployed, being devoured by Life, by Progress, by the City, or you-blame-it. This somber aspect might come as a small surprise since, wearing dogtags as earthscourse as Hickey and Boggs, the heroes might have turned out to be slapstick sidekicks. Especially since the casting department's remarriage of Bill Cosby and Robert Culp encourages recollection of this twosome's glib, rhythmic re-bop on the defunct "I Spy" TV show. The cocky camaraderie, modelled for years by that team, is herewith decisively burned, and mourning is sincerely discouraged. Their new on-screen relationship is a professional one, not much else. The invincible fraternity of the "Spy" characters is replaced with a barely familiar acquaintance ("Tell me, have you ever killed anybody?"). As insurance against the actors' gliding into too much giddy gracefulness, there are Cosby's plump cigar, marking his speech musky, and Culp's eyeglasses, and their baggy, off-the-rack suits.

Down several flights of stairs from galvanized nameplates like Spade, Marlowe, and Hammer, Hickey and Boggs are basement dwellers. Most of the downhill slippage can be credited to their guilty self-consciousness about working as private detectives in 1972. The Hickey character (Cosby) at one point leaps onto the sentiment that runs through current action movies, announcing that men of action are, like buffaloes, an endangered species. "It's time to get out," he meditates aloud. "This job isn't about anything any more." (This line, delivered amidst an ominous hush, is about the only incident of dialogue slopping over the narrow boundaries of the story proper.) What distinguishes Hickey and Boggs, just slightly, from their detective ancestors is the loss of virulent self-righteousness. The traditional detective's snobbery about everybody from clients to cops is squashed to a new low, mainly because the traditional verbal facility of wisecracks or first-person storytelling has been mislaid. Hickey and Boggs have a swallowed-up manner of mouthing off, lowering their heads and looking half-sorry to be forced into verbal counterpunching. Preferably they remain altogether mum. So, the events they pass through are permitted to achieve a sort of uncontrolled, unslanted factuality. Such as: while Hickey's kinky client ogles the kids on playground swings, Hickey stays shut about it; so, rather than being filtered through a first-person commentator with the pious bias of a Lew Archer-type, it is witnessed as neutral fact.

At first sight these dismal partners are perched on barstools in unimaginative stumps, discussing an unpaid phone bill during a commercial break on the TV set over the bar. The scenic elements—a familiar dimly lit bar, a boxing match on the TV, the drinks and smokes—suggest that these characters travel in grooves so well-worn that their lives must be chiefly skips and slides and static. Following the opening dialogue, it rapidly becomes apparent that Boggs suffers from a light limp and a heavy drinking problem. And that Hickey's regular sportcoat is a poor fit, riding too high on wrists and rump; besides, it is a gaudy ersatz green and a mismatch for color coordination, with Boggs' ersatz blue. And that both men are split from their wives and they brood over it. And that their ranging, rusting cars are in a slow-motion race to the junkyard.

This quick compilation of flaws (their ex-wives could surely pout on another dozen without pause) might easily have come across less as character-sketching than henpecking. However, one of the dominant attributes of this level-headed movie is its reticence. Characters' defects, and affects, are positioned in front of the viewer but never pointed at in plain words or close-up inspection. Boggs' brief turn with a call girl is a short, wordless affair, and the woman's face is not seen; so, the event acquires a kind of twilight reality, like something that happens during a midnight awakening and can't be recalled clearly the next day. Later, Boggs' visit to the nightclub where his ex-wife does a nude go-go stint risks becoming enfeebled in bathos. But the scene is steered toward nebulousness. It is hard enough, on one hand, to translate Culp's hoozy expression—silly plastered smile and watery eyes; and he is ripped from his runway seat by his disgusted partner before his expression evolves into anything legible. But, beyond that, the playing of the dancer passes by all of the standard sentimentalities about the fallen broads who inhabit barrooms. Shimmying ferociously, she registers as a blur of artificial beauty effects—honey blond hair and layers of cosmetics. The anonymous actress (does the voice actually belong to the face?) plays the part for hard feelings and malice, tossing Boggs a witless taunt—"Eat your heart out"—and faint farewell—"Get yourself killed." For the type of scene, the absence of any heart-stomping eye-contact between the two is notable.

The amount of time allotted to doing inventory of the heroes' fumbled lives is highly questionable allowance, considering how firmly nailed down these dismal personalities are. At least since John Le Carre's novels began turning into films, detectives, spies and cops, no matter how slick at their jobs, are understood from the starting gate to be bloody bastards in personal relationships and bachelor-incompetents on their own. Some random, rank items from detectives' pantries: and overused Chemex coffee filter ("Harper"), a stockpile of Swanson frozen dinners ("Bullitt"), a box of Corn Flakes mislocated in the office files ("Billion Dollar Brain").

All the slices from the private lives of Hickey and Boggs, even though they are of-a-piece with the understated seediness and melancholy of the movie as a whole, taste stale simply for their musty conformity to stereotypes. (It's a gauge of the movie's overall conservatism that it didn't feel free to skip the detectives' characterizations altogether.) It probably would have been better had the heroes' images been tilted more toward the brassiness and disarray of the faceless call girl and the streaky go-go dancer. Probably all the identity required for Hickey and Boggs, in order to make the story work, is their occupation. Through their legwork, their cars' soaring odometers, their visits to potential "leads" who have vanished or are uncooperative or are found dead, their time-consuming detours to the police station, and their after-hours unwinding over stiff drinks, Hickey and Boggs measure in miles and in moodiness the diffusion and scurry of urban living. Their assignment amounts to a cheerless survey of a modern metropolis, its yawning disparities and its muted despair. The sunny, populous beach where Hickey accepts this case and the misty secluded one where it comes to a noisy end. The Los Angeles Coliseum on Sunday afternoon, crammed with Rams fans, and the same stadium on Monday afternoon, evacuated. The unpresponsing flower shop run by doomed Chicanos and the diffuse estate donated by its eccentric owner for the use of a platoon of black militants. And the continual procession of unknown faces, looking mean or deceptively sweet or overly painted or frightened or whatever, which are as hard to assimilate as the daily rush of faces along Hollywood Blvd. Passing through unfamiliar people's lives and environs, the pair of private eyes are much like tourists; and their experience registers the superficiality and lingering dissatisfaction of the too-frazzled sightseer. Which is, in short, the commonplace urban experience.

What *Hickey and Boggs* seems to be concerned with, over and above the fairly intriguing particulars of plot and character, is a common sense of urban dread. In this murder-mystery context, the common, queasy, indefinite sensation develops from the lively separation of various interest-groups in the L.A. underworld, which are drawn toward one another unintentionally, drawn on a collision course through intensely felt barriers of suspicion and hostility, drawn by a partially obscure plot evolving from a gangland doublecross and a cache of $400,000 in hot money. In this affair, the detectives' importance, which is not increased by all the detailing of their private lives, is simply that they enter the scene at the same point as the moviegoer. They know nothing of the case's background—a bank holdup in Pittsburg the year before; a shootout killing six; the jailing of a traitor to the Organization; and this marked man's girlfriend, of unknown whereabouts, who has harbored the stolen, patiently awaiting her man's parole. Proceeding methodically down a list of names connected in the past to the elusive girlfriend, Hickey and Boggs are foragers into the tangiement; their daily legwork traces the unapparent connections between the characters. But, following the same list of names is a trio of "soldiers" (an appealing piece of angst for hired killers), who start out half-a-length behind the detectives; more efficient, the "soldiers" quickly catch up. The action scenes, very effective for their wearying and frustrating factor, occur when the two

(continued on page 7)

READER'S GUIDE to San Diego movies

HICKEY & BOGGS (continued from page 5)

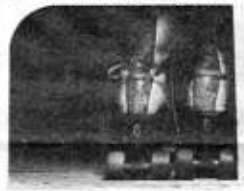
The plainest clue to the movie's concern with urban plight comes during the credits at movie's end. There, the cast of characters is grouped under restrictive labels like The Organization, The Law, The Fences, The Chicanos. Throughout the story, each of these discreet groups maintains the static position and self-interest of a social class. The several independent factions, each one angling only for its own advantage, and the high population within each group, suggest the pressure of competitive urban jostle and overcrowdedness. With the alternating images of well-tailored respectability (the Organization brass), heavily equipped overconfidence (the "soldiers"), honey-tongued pimping (the fences), nearly hopeless apprehensiveness (the Chicanos), underdog scrappiness (Hickey and Boggs), and frustrated authority (the police), the film describes a power structure that is just complex enough to stand as a model of the general urban struggle. The feeling of crisis (doom is just around the corner) finds its prettiest expression in the silent, suffering face of an actress identified as simply Carmen. When her dark glasses, a thin shield, are removed, her small panicked eyes and her perpetually clenched bearing are sufficient by themselves to mark this woman as the one with the unwanted responsibility of safekeeping the loot. She and her fellow Chicano conspirators have a spare handful of lines between them; but the movie's opening line, spoken to no one, belongs to her. And although it is one of those grating bilingual lines that are an awkward compromise between ethnic accuracy and the low-rated mentality of American filmgoers, it immediately clarifies the movie's stricken, bomb-shelter atmosphere: "Madre de dios, protect us now."

The grave Chicano faces, silently gazing into one another's eyes—they have no allies of course— looking for some hint of possible relief, are a recurring image to keep the tone urgent. Obviously, the likeliest relief for their increasingly stiffened manner, their remorse, and their pessimism, is death. Their children, always below eye level, catch no sign of the crushing situation. Children are used as bystanders during much of the secretive maneuvering in the plot, but the chance to underline any of the usual ideas about the meaning of children in this tough world is resisted, for the best. (Certainly no un-usual ideas are brought up either. The film's prevailing principle is to adhere to a narrow path. So, while no very adventurous steps are tried, at least no faulty ones are committed.)

The movie's dramatics—the hush-hush negotiations, attempted payoffs, stakeouts, ambushes—grow credibly, inevitably out of this mortal struggle from which no one is allowed to resign. No matter how profound may be anyone's regret or unreadiness, the play goes ahead. A choice among alternatives is not available in this urban ritual, where one's initial step means an inextricable commitment. For the private detectives, whose involvement seems accidental, there is a strong inclination, after every step, to hibernate in th handiest bar. These easygoing establishments, dark and quiet and public, feel safer than the open street, and safer than home or the office, where Hickey and Boggs are sitting ducks for an attack or a set-up by anyone who can use the phone directory. But, in response to the offer of a $25,000 reward and to the melodramatic reflexes of their profession they follow the "leads" in the case like a dutiful daily itinerary.

Pacing, under Culp's first feature-length directing try, is very steady, pressured. Which means, for one thing, that there is a respectful interval between killings. (A relative restraint is exercised throughout the action episodes—usually they are a lot of noise, running and shooting that cause little bodily harm—so that, when the body count reaches nine in the final seashore shootout, it seems a justifiable binge.) The camera pursues a slavish closeness to the plotline and the people along it, almost never dropping back to pick out a handsome scenic composition. Hardly an image could be pulled from sequence and stand on its own; and this should be understood as a compliment to the movie's strict obedience to its self-imposed narrow track. Too much choreographed action, composed photography, or eccentric acting would poke holes in the omnipresent oppressiveness (and smog) in the air.

Not unexpected in an actor-turned director, Culp's attention seems to go toward extracting glimmers of humanity out of brief lapses in his actors' guarded, stern images. How fragile the characters' maturity, how close they are to boyishness, if not infantilism, is hinted in momentary flashes. Notice the smile on Hickey's face when a practical joke on his estranged wife backfires and sends her into enraged bitchiness—a pathetic smile that is part amusement, part apology, part embarrassment. And notice the high schoolish hero jacket worn by the shockingly youthful chief of police detectives. And the pretty, blond Ivy League cleanness of a shockingly youthful Organization bigwig. And the horseplay glee with which the muscle boy of the "soldiers" carefully beats up a victim; or again, when the prospective victim is not found at home, the game-playing frivolity with which he smashes the kitchen dishes. And the ostentatious tantrum which the Organization's head man is obligated to stage, for the benefit of his calmly patient underlings, after his "soldiers" have fouled up a job, each word bellowed childishly at equal volume—"Explain it! I want to hear how they missed! What was it? Dumbness? Yellow?" —*Duncan Shepherd*



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Ray is out on the floor, spinning around and around with a kind of outflung abandon, very locomotive and the blue shirt of his club, the Royal Rexers', shining out on his back. The shirt is appliqued with a Mercury-winged roller skate. The wing is gold, and Ray hears it off way down the floor, speeding in a suspended glide far out past the walls of Monty's Skateland.

Up in North Park, on University Avenue, is Palisades Gardens. It's been around since 1947, run by Johnny Wright. It sits in the middle of the block, and you can tell where the door is because there are people hanging out around it, leaning back on the walls, smoking, and holding water balloons. "Go on, now, you jerk, do it!" The kid is near the wall with a big melon-shaped yellow balloon, grinning a little and wanting to smash it but knowing his timing's off and who's he going to aim it at anyhow?

We walk to the ticket booth. There's a staircase a little to the side of it with a velvet span hanging across it and a sign that says, "Balcony closed." A young woman with burgundy plushy pants walks down and climbs over it. We go in past the skate rental window and into a little foyer that looks like the changing room for a gym class, with everyone doing stuff to their socks, and sticking arms in other peoples' faces because of the crowding. The rink is full and noisy and chaotic.

There are skaters and skaters with big angular thrumming bodies and skates that you can feel rolling across the small bones of your feet. They are all skating forward. It is a hawklike kind of skating, very slit-eyed and predatory. All around the edges are young bruised-eyed girls with clinging purple and red and green jersey shirts and hip-hugger pants, lighting up cigarettes and thinning their mouths. The boys are lank-haired and craggy faced and they pose, and thrust their legs in snarry stopping turns. In the middle of the ceiling there is a grinning jack o'lantern with black and orange streamers streng around him.

There are some weavers in this clanging throng; people who are skating skillfully and using themselves like serpents, coiling in and around, insinuating themselves through the aimless boundings of most of the crowd. One very tall black man with legs like filaments bends and twists through the skaters, his arms hang behind him, thumbs gripping his pockets. And a serene old man in a sweater vest and flannel shirt, with richly polished black roller skates, ambling around the rink with his blue eyes half-shut and his face folded in clarity.

His name is Mr. McElroy, and he's due to arrive in December. He's skated this rink since it opened, and he's been skating since he was five. Back in Providence, Rhode Island, where he comes from, he used to play Roller Polo, in 1917 or thereabouts. Five men, with skinny sticks, which are scoop-ended sticks like hockey sticks, and a fat rubber ball. And he played hockey in high-school.

There was always, in the winter, ice eight inches thick and you could skate forever. "Skating's great, it is. These skates I have, they're real fine. They don't make 'em any more. Chicago Velvet Treads. I have to be very careful with them. Now, they're about a hundred and ten. I got them barely used, for just seventy-five dollars, from a boy who'd been to Viet Nam and lost both legs."

A young floor guard, a high-school boy who plays trumpet in the band, and figure skates, is talking now. "Skating's what you want to make it. It can be a whole life. I can see myself being a professional. It is an art if you want it to be. Mike, the head floor guard, spends more time here than he does at home, not counting sleeping, that is. And Midge Edwards, our figure-skating professional, it's her life."

The girl has a vinyl smile on her shirt, right above her abdomen. "I mostly come here to see people, and because it's something to do besides riding a bicycle. I come here pretty often."

The music starts again, a blaring saccharine blur, and the skaters rush forward precipitously, in great buzzing strokes. People falter and fall and the whistle blows. They recover themselves and skirt the rink round and round.

Personal

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DEAR JOHN: Last Saturday night I was lying on a bus bench with my head on a thrift concept, gazing at the stars — I saw a comet, or was it a new penny? I closed my eyes and said you. That's one wished to and night. That's nine misses 2 many. Tim enter "L".

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Notices

"THE MAN OF Understanding," a slide-sound presentation introducing the 4th and radical spiritual teaching of Franklin Jones, author of **The Knee of Listening**. At The Prabhat Hall, 4481 University Avenue, 3:00 and 8:00 p.m.

THURSDAY, Oct. 26, "Women in Politics." Hale Clark Mosckhead the Socialist Workers Party candidate for Congress from the 31st district, Maxine Mc. Shoreheed was one of the Los Angeles organizers of Antiwar Liberation Day held May 21st this year. 8:30 p.m. in Council Chambers, Annex Center, Cal State SD. Sponsored by the Young Socialist Alliance.

SATURDAY, Oct. 28, "La Raza and the '12 Examples," a panel including Olga Rodriguez, a Chicano Feminist, and Richard Garcia, professor of Chicano Studies at Palomar. 11:00 a.m., in room CP, Aztec Center, Cal State San Diego. Sponsored by the Young Socialist Alliance.

SOUTHWESTERN GIRL SCOUTS are now accepting applications for fall. Write for full details on how you could join a troop in Pacific Beach. P.O. Box 80880, San Diego, Ca. 92109.

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