

MOVIES

A League of Their Own
Columbia, PG
*** 1/2

By Lee Williams
Emerald Contributor

In a summer overrun with aliens, lethal weapons, and returning batmen, *A League of Their Own* is a welcome breeze of comedy. It is kinder, gentler summer film fare.

Although stars Geena Davis, Tom Hanks, and Madonna do rack up a few scrapes, bruises and balls to the head, nobody gets bombed, beheaded or bashed by a Buick — an amazing feat for any movie released after June 1.

The film retraces the beginnings of The All-American Girls Baseball League and recounts the rough road leading up to the league's first World Series. Began in 1943 as a sort of sports novelty to fill in the void left by the male players who had traded "bats for bullets" to fight in World War II, the AAGBL would run strong for 11 seasons, and eventually be honored by The Baseball Hall of Fame in 1988.

The story opens with sisters Dottie (Davis) and Kit (Lori Petty) getting scouted off an Oregon dairy farm and into the big league. Scriptwriters Babaloo Mandell and Lowell Ganz, and director Penny Marshall wisely



stay focused on Dottie and Kit's relationship — the joy that the sport brings out in one sister is a joy that the other sister is forced to hide.

Davis is perfect as the gawky, older sister — the better athlete, but star-shy. Petty plays the little sister with the right mix of sibling anger and sisterly love. The acting all around is first-rate — a true team effort — from Tom Hanks as Jimmy Dougan, the former player-

turned-manager, who battles the bottle off the field, to Rosie O'Donnell's super-motor-mouth Doris. (Fans of Madonna will enjoy her extended cameo, but playing the team tramp is hardly a stretch.)

Director Marshall pulls together all of her actors with a gifted comedic hand, while, at the same time, highlighting the inequalities between men's pro-ball and women's pro-ball. (Would the Yankees have dared try the promo "Catch a foul, get a kiss" if attendance for The Babe had been down?)

These were women in the workplace, and the issues raised then remain germane today. (Child care then meant bringing your kid on the road.)

But the director must also take credit for the film's only flaw — oversentimentality. Deft with comedy, Marshall seems unsure with drama — forcing it. She milks every millisecond of sentiment out of the quieter, emotional scenes, pushing tight the close-ups, and pouring on the music, turning touching scenes into moments of sap.

This single error aside, it's still refreshing to find a thoughtful and intelligent summer film, where the main goal is to accomplish something, not to destroy cars, monsters or crazed criminals. Score another run for the women.

Bobcat slings ideological mud at Clay

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Comedian Bobcat Goldthwait said his act may be as annoying as Andrew Dice Clay's, but at least he believes in what he's saying.

"It's always annoying to me when someone hides behind a persona," Goldthwait said in an interview published Monday in the *Nashville Banner*. "Dice is always 'Oh, it's just an act.' Well, so what, if Hitler had had a character he would have been OK? That drives me nuts."

Goldthwait screams his punch lines in a shrill, hoarse voice that has become his signature. He tries to work in socially relevant topics like sexism and gay bashing.

Clay has raised hackles with jokes that some

have called sexist, racist or homophobic. His appearance in May 1990 on *Saturday Night Live* caused cast member Nora Dunn and musical guest Sinead O'Connor to refuse to appear.

Goldthwait said Clay goes only for the jokes that will bring the biggest reaction from an audience.

"He doesn't really have a program or an ideology, I doubt," he said. "I think if making fun of shoes could elicit that response, that's what he'd be doing on stage because the response is much more important than anything he has to say."

Goldthwait has appeared in such movies as *Police Academy*, *Scrooged* and *Shakes the Clown*.

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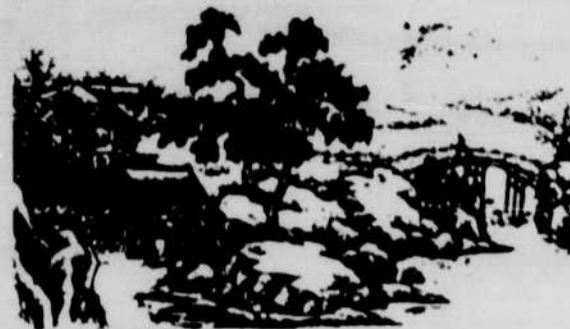
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