

# film

## Gracie

Directed by David Guggenheim (*An Inconvenient Truth*), this movie was inspired by real events in the life of his wife, Elisabeth Shue. The story is set in the 1970s, when it wasn't possible for girls to play competitive soccer. Gracie (Carly Schroeder) is determined to fight for the right to play on a team because not only is she better than a lot of the boys, she simply loves the game. A predictable, clean-cut, feel-good family movie that will appeal to nonsoccer fans, too. **B+**

—Yvonne P. Behrens

## Mr. Brooks

This suspense thriller by writer/director Bruce A. Evans (*Kuffs*) reunites *The Big Chill* stars Kevin Costner and William Hurt. Costner plays the title character, a respected family man with a secret, and Hurt plays his wicked alter ego. The film has a stellar supporting cast, including Marg Helgenberger as Costner's wife and Demi Moore as a detective. All the right ingredients will keep you on your toes, and Costner is quite believable as the bad guy. **B**

—YPB

## Paris, Je T'aime

Several directors from around the planet were asked to make a short film about the city of Paris. With the title *Paris, Je T'aime* (*Paris, I Love You*) as their focal point, the emphasis in the stories is on amour, or the loss thereof, rather than, say, the political, cultural or artistic history of Paris. Thus, the 18 short films seldom vary in content. Considering the diverse filmmakers include Mexico's Alfonso Cuarón, Germany's Tom Tykwer,

Japan's Nobuhiro Suwa and Portland's own Gus Van Sant, this is somewhat surprising.

With regard to these affairs of the heart, two films have gay angles. More of a muse than an object of desire, the Paris grave site of writer Oscar Wilde brings a British couple (Emily Mortimer and Rufus Sewell) together in U.S. writer/director Wes Craven's "Père-Lachaise."

In Van Sant's "Le Marais," Gaspard (Gaspard Ulliel) enters a printer's shop with his English boss (Marianne Faithfull), immediately feels a connection to the printer's apprentice, Eli (Elias McConnell of Van Sant's *Elephant*), and starts talking to him in French. While Eli nibbles on his food with little French on his tongue, the stunningly attractive Gaspard paces back and forth, declaring this connection he senses with Eli. Then as quickly as Gaspard appears, he departs. Eli impulsively runs out the printer's shop, chasing after him.

In one of the film's better segments, Van Sant approaches Paris as a cheeky film essay. Gaspard is the bold poet once found in the French Nouvelle Vague films of the 1960s, only now the young heterosexual revolutionary is a gay man working for the Anglo establishment. (I suspect Van Sant cast Faithfull, whose most famous song is "Broken English.") Gaspard claims this great connection to Eli, yet he does not discern the latter's weak French-speaking skills. Only when the moving image of Gaspard vanishes does Eli express himself outside the printer's shop (read: theater). **C+**

—John Esther

## Ping Pong

An adaptation of a popular and long-running manga series, *Ping Pong* explores the friendship of



Gaspard Ulliel (left) and Elias McConnell star in Gus Van Sant's segment of *Paris, Je T'aime*.

two Japanese high school table tennis enthusiasts, Peco and Smile, and how pingpong structures and interprets their lives. Peco is wacky and high-spirited, whereas Smile (who got the name because he never smiles) is introverted and seemingly indifferent to the game. As Smile's pingpong skills increase, Peco gets worse, and depends on his friendship with Smile to dig him out of his sudden emotional crisis. Filmed in a style that mimics the composition and framing of comics panels, this touching and fascinating story makes for pleasurable viewing. Opens June 8 at Hollywood Theatre. **B+**

—Jemiah Jefferson

## Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End

If you thought *Memento* was mentally challenging, wait until you see *Pirates III*. In between all the explosions and sword fights and funny accents and really bad teeth, you get approximately 8,493 different double-crosses and triple-crosses (give or take a few). You'll likely stop caring about the multiple plots about 30 minutes in and just drink in the loud, dirty, explosive sights. Johnny Depp is the only saving grace for this overlong, overcomplicated mess that is mostly full of sound and fury, and far too many subplots. **C-**

—Andy Mangels 10

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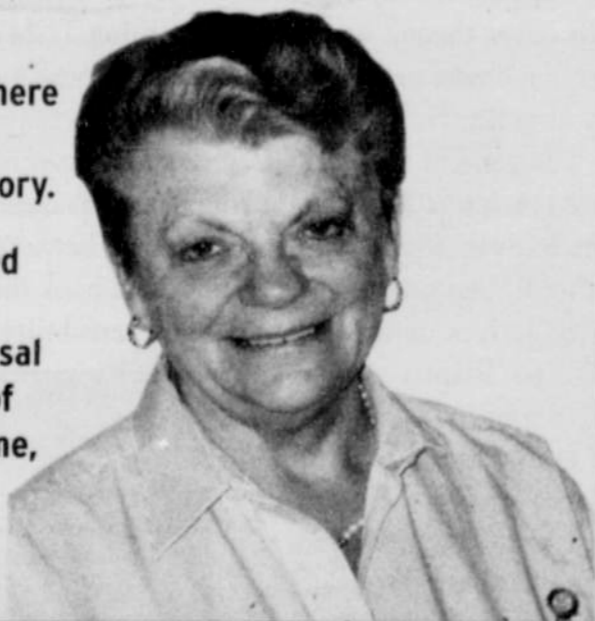
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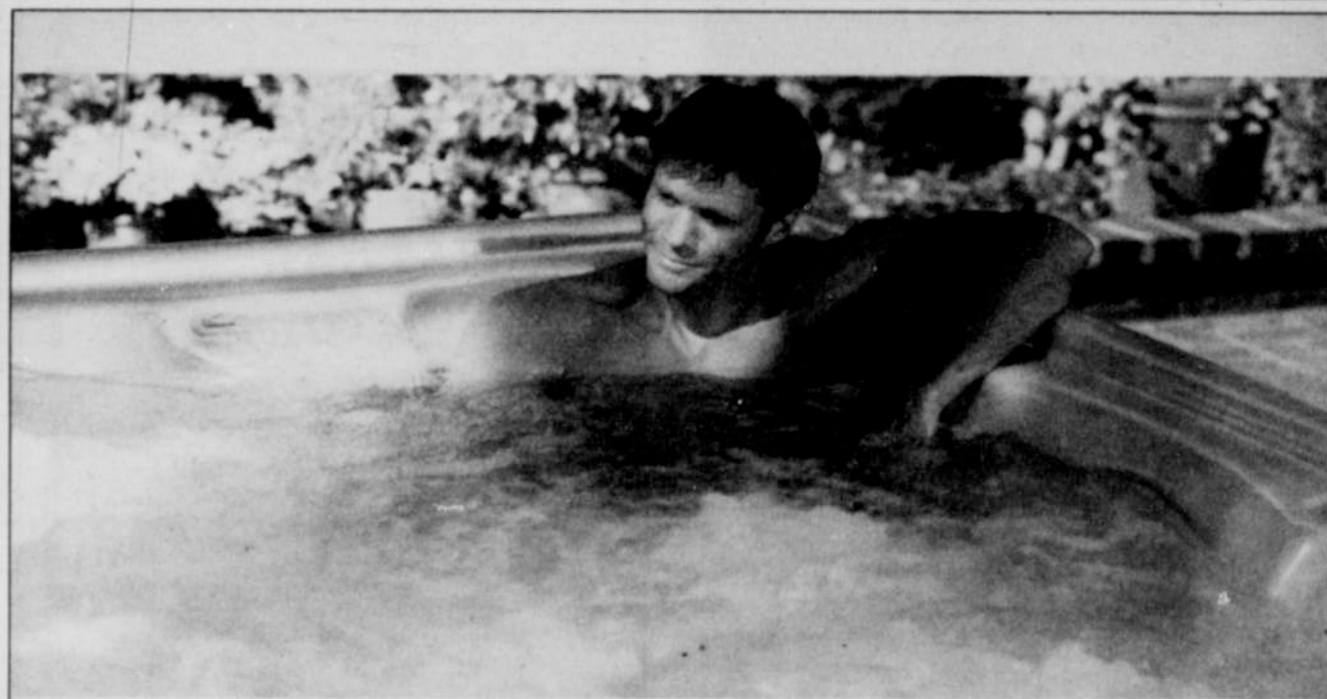
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