

Stirrings cheer to many



Day-after sales spawn bargain hunter hell

CALLEY LATHROP

Staff Reporter

Black Friday: the day after Thanksgiving when Americans get up at unheard of hours to hunt bargains at stores that promise low prices for anyone daring enough to brave the elements and the mobs. Are the supposed bargains worth it?

Although most stores opened as early as 5 a.m., some heralded in shoppers on Thanksgiving night. Reports of people being injured while pursuing discounts are on the rise. Last year at a day-after-Christmas sale altercation, a woman had to be hospitalized for injuries she sustained during the event. When Playstation 3 was recently unveiled, there were long lines with people

camping out waiting for the sales to begin.

In Milwaukee, Wisc. a man was severely injured after running into a pole and hitting his head during the mad dash into the local Wal-Mart.

Is getting a bargain really worth the aggravation, frustration and humiliation? Watching the old Christmas movies, in which a happy little family has a good old-fashioned holiday, complete with big dinner and presents is rarely

the case anymore as America is becoming more commercialized. Are a few discounted-gifts really worth it?

Maybe, maybe not.

In this country, we have a lot of money. Not all of us are rich, but (especially in West Linn,) we seem to fare pretty well over the holidays. Everywhere, there are food drives and toy drives. I think we should be spending these holidays being thankful for what we have; not our possessions, but our families. Whatever happened

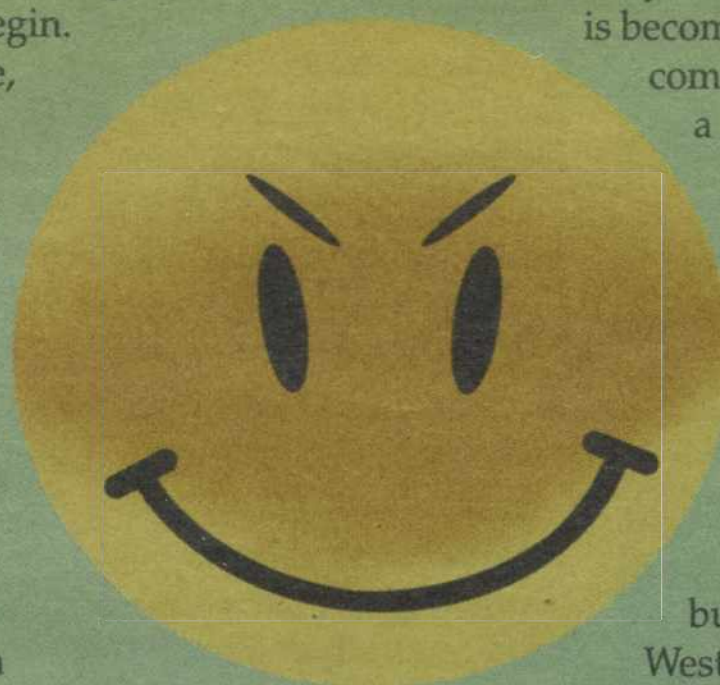
to the day after Thanksgiving, the day that was spent lying on the couch watching *Miracle on 34th Street* and eating leftovers? Why have we replaced it by going out to buy more junk that we'll never need anyway?! I find it appalling that the consumer market overshadows the true meaning of the holidays.

Forcing stores to open at a normal time would not solve the problem. Consumers would be outraged! Some Americans are so obsessed with making money and saving it, that no one would be happy (except for those of us who don't care what happens these mornings). Maybe we should all just stop and take a deep breath. It won't be the end of the world if you don't get that iPod for a tiny

bit cheaper than any other day of the year. Stopping the sales might, however, eliminate the injuries that occur every year.

I'm not going out the day after Christmas, and I didn't go out the day after Thanksgiving. I'll be asleep. I don't see a point in getting up before dawn, braving the cold and the crowds, and spending money I don't have!

The question is, what matters more to us: our families or stuff? Everyone says that the holidays should be spent being thankful for what they already have. So don't set that alarm for 4:30 a.m.; doing so could result in physical or psychological injury, and really, only the retail industry benefits.



Classics give gifts no human can match

JOHN CAMPBELL

Entertainment Editor

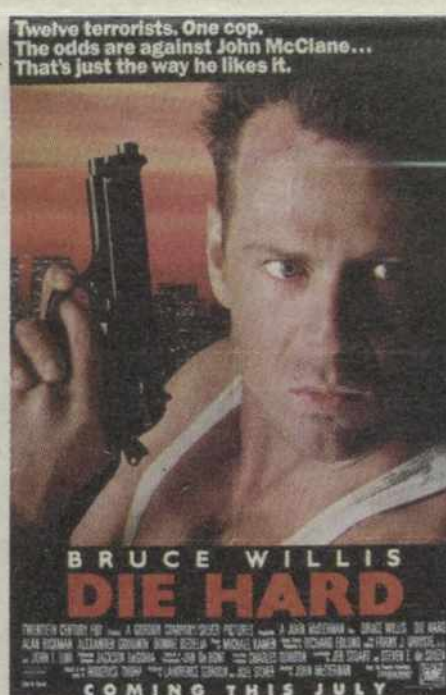
It's December yet again, which means the holiday season is in full swing; stockings are hung by the chimney with care, families gather for their yuletide celebrations and full grown adults beat each other to get the newest Tickle-me Elmo. For those looking to relax this holiday with a bundle of DVD's, fear not. Here are eight holiday films you may not be aware of.

"National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation," has become a modern classic. Starring Chevy Chase ("Caddyshack"), it is the story of a man who's trying to create an old-fashioned family Christmas. Through the stupidity of his cousin, selfishness of his boss, and dementia of his great uncle, Christmas is ruined. This may sound like a bit of a downer, but the spirit of Christmas solves all.



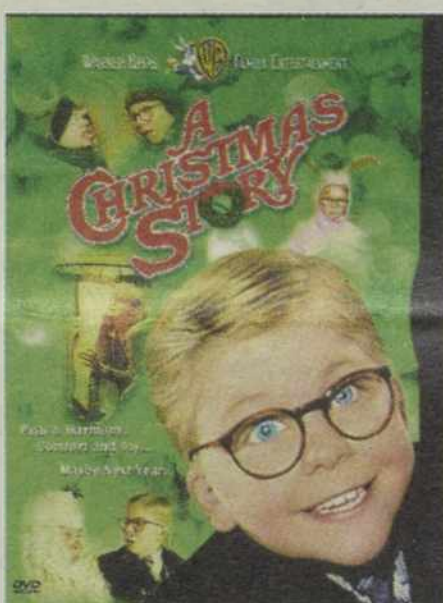
Those familiar with the work of Charles Dickens know he wrote one of the most famous Christmas novels, "A Christmas Carol." There are numerous film versions of the book, with the most original being "Scrooged" directed by Richard Donner ("Superman") and starring Bill Murray ("Ghostbusters"). Murray plays a selfish television

executive who is visited by three ghosts on Christmas eve. This version adds humor and creative modern day updates that enhance the original vision of Dickens' novel.



When thinking of holiday movies "Die Hard" is not usually the first thing that comes to mind, but for action lovers, it is one of the best. It stars Bruce Willis ("Pulp Fiction") as an off-duty cop visiting his family on Christmas eve, while at his wife's office party terrorists take over. This forces him to jump into action and save the day. "Die Hard" is not your typical holiday movie, but it does have a surprising amount of yuletide spirit in between its gun fights and explosions. If this sounds good, check out "Die Hard 2: Die Harder" which also takes place on Christmas eve.

For cult film lovers there is always "A Christmas Story." A box-office failure when it was originally released, it has developed a huge following with merchandise including action figures, T-shirts, and numerous other products. The film stars Darren McGavin ("Kolchak: The Night Stalker") and is the simple story of little boy who wants a BB gun for



Christmas and the obstacles he encounters on his quest. Full of humor, heart and just a dash of Christmas spirit, "A Christmas Story" is a classic the whole family can enjoy.



For a much darker take on the holiday season there is "Bad Santa," starring Billy Bob Thornton ("Friday Night Lights") as a career criminal who gets jobs as a department store Santa only to rob the mall on Christmas eve. The film is not for everyone. It has a lot of cursing, drinking, and generally horrible things. For those who can embrace the film's dark and absurd nature, they will laugh the whole way through.

For those interested in a more heartfelt holiday film there is "All I Want For Christmas," starring Ethan Embry ("That

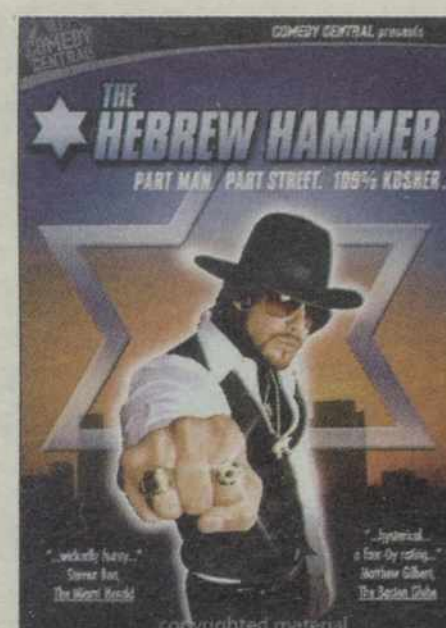
Thing You Do"). It tells the story of a brother and sister trying to reunite their divorced parents for Christmas. The film manages to be funny and touching without being too sappy or sentimental. A brief cameo by Leslie Nielsen ("Airplane") as Santa is also well worth the price of the rental.

For those Tim Allen fans out there, no holiday is complete without a viewing of the 1994 classic "The Santa Clause." Allen ("Home Improvement") stars as Scott Calvin, a successful business man who knocks Santa off his roof. This forces Scott to become the new Santa Claus. The film does a great job of poking fun at its legendary figures while also keeping a certain amount of holiday spirit. For those interested, this is only the first installment of a trilogy.

Christmas is not the only holiday celebrated during this season and while I have only listed Christmas movies, there is one Hanukkah film that is worth a look: "The Hebrew Hammer" is a hilarious send-up of 70's B action movies. Adam Goldberg

("Saving Private Ryan") stars as a Jewish private eye who must save Hanukkah from Santa's evil son. The movie is hilarious without being offensive.

These are only a select few of



the numerous holiday movies, TV specials and animated favorites that are available on DVD this holiday season. There are hundreds of other choices to choose from but the eight films listed above are a good start. So in between the egg-nog swilling, present opening and general holiday festivities, enjoy a classic film or two.

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