



'The Still Alarm,' 'Napoleon's Dinner' running on schedule



Production work on the up-coming one-act plays is going according to schedule, Student-Directors Maggie Bragg and Joel Hladacek said.

The theater projects class will present two shows, "The Still Alarm" and "Napoleon's Dinner." Hladacek is directing the former, Bragg the latter. The one-acts will be presented together on Dec. 5, 6 and 7. The Monday show will be at 8 p.m., the Tuesday show at noon, and the Wednesday show at 8 p.m. Admission will be free.

Hladacek chose "The Still Alarm" accidentally, he said, while thumbing through a book of scripts. It is approximately 15 minutes long and was written in the mid-1920's by George F. Kaufman.

"It is a very off-the-wall farce," Hladacek said. The show takes place in a hotel that is on fire. "It's about the character's reactions. Or rather, how they don't react," he said.

The cast for "The Still Alarm" includes students Dave Harvey, Pat Sterling, Joe Schenck, Don Williams and Roberta Ellsworth. This is

the first stage presentation Hladacek has ever directed and he feels confident in the presentation, he said.

"Napoleon's Dinner" was chosen by Director Maggie Bragg and was written by Samuel Shem. It will run approximately 50 minutes and stars Dave Harvey, Pat Sterling and Hladacek.

Bragg pointed out that "Napoleon's Dinner" is a "hard-core" show, complete with obscenities. "Some people might think it's vulgar, but without it (the language), the point wouldn't be made as well," she said.

Review

'Right Stuff' wonderful but far too long

By J. Dana Haynes
Of The Print

"The Right Stuff" is a dazzler of a movie with only one major flaw. Unfortunately, that flaw may be fatal.

"Right Stuff" is the story of the early days of NASA and the strange breed of test pilots who made space flight possible. It is also the story of the wives who sat at home and learned to deal with death as an everyday enemy.

Based on the book of the same title by Tom Wolfe, the movie is three hours, 20 minutes long not counting the intermission. It is about people and historic events, rather than car chases and the sexual revolution. Maybe that's one reason it is not doing as well at the box office as anticipated. Whatever the reason, it is a movie worth seeing.

The Right Stuff is a seldom understood, never talked about quality possessed by the test pilots who came out of World War II with a different outlook on life and death. The term "Right Stuff" was coined by Tom Wolfe. It is that *je ne se quoi* that made those men go up day after day in untested aircraft, "hang their hides out over the edge" and, quite often, not return.

The story begins with Chuck Yeager, portrayed with terrific reserve by playwright Sam Shepard (who won a Pulitzer and four Obies for his writing and who acted in "Frances" and "Raggedy Man"). Yeager was one of the first, best known jet jocks. In the late '40's, Yeager flew the first rocket plane, X-1, and broke the sound barrier for the first time.

From Yeager, the movie goes on to other test pilots, many of whom, like Yeager, "hung out" at Edwards Air Force Base, which then was a near-ghost town in the Californian high desert.

The film moves on the 1950's and the race between the USSR and USA to reach outer space. Realizing the Russians have a clear lead with the launching of Sputnik I, the United States government pushes an all-out project to get men into space. They begin by taking the top pilots from the air force, navy and marines and subjecting them to rigorous testing. Their goal is to create the first astronauts.

When all is said and done the government unveils the Mercury mission team, consisting of pilots Alan Shepard, John Glenn, Gordon Cooper, Gus Grissom, Deke Slayton, Scott Carpenter and Wally Schirra. These seven at Cape Canaveral and Yeager at Edwards are the nucleus of the film.

All the acting in this film is top-notch, although none of the actors are big-name stars. Still, there are stand-out performances, most notably that of Ed Harris as super straight John Glenn, dubbed "Mr. Clean Marine" by the others. Harris gives a terrific performance here and the work is even better when compared to his performance in "Under Fire," currently making the rounds of theaters.

The flip side of the movie is the long suffering wives, beginning with Barbara Hershey as "Glamorous Glennis" Yeager. The other actresses include Kathy Baker, Veronica Cartwright, Micky Crocker, Mary Jo Deschanel, Susan Kase, Pamela Reed and Mittie Smith.

All eight give fine performances, with the standouts being Deschanel as John Glenn's wife, Annie, who suffers from chronic stuttering and is hounded by the press to give statements. I don't know if Deschanel is terrific or the writing is. One way or another, the character works fine.

Hershey ("Boxcar Bertha," "The Stuntman") plays Glennis Yeager. She is wonderful



SAM SHEPARD (CHUCK YEAGER) and Barbara Hershey (Glennis Yeager) stand in the burned ruins of Pancho's Happy Bottom Riding Club in a scene from "The Right Stuff."

in this film as a woman who married a test pilot, knowing well in advance what kind of life they lead and thus feeling unable to complain. At one point, she tells her husband the government has spent millions teaching the boys how to fly and not one penny teaching the wives how to sit and wait. Hershey and Shepard play well off each other and many times I wished to see more of them at Edwards Air Force Base (and the Happy Bottom Riding Club) and less of Cape Canaveral.

This is not a flawless film. The first and most obvious problem is the length. Three hours 20 minutes is inexcusable, even for a flick of this magnitude. That is, I suspect, the main cause for the low box-office success.

The second main problem is in the stereotyping. In "The Right Stuff" every pilot is shown as brave, care-free and bon vivant, every bureaucrat, scientist and government representative is bumbling, unintelligent and interfering, and every reporter and photographer is uncaring, insensitive and a clod (well, there's something to that, of course).

All in all, this is probably going to be a classic movie, or at least it should be. It's only big flaw, and it might be fatal, is the length. No one is going to book a three-and-a-half-hours long flick for second or third runs.

"The Right Stuff" is currently playing at the East Gate and West Gate theaters.



THE SPACE AGE began with the Mercury astronauts, (left to right) Alan Shepard (Scott Glenn), Deke Slayton (Scott Paulin), Scott Carpenter (Charles Frank), Gus Grissom (Fred Ward), Wally Schirra (Lance Henriksen), "Gordo" Cooper (Dennis Quaid) and John Glenn (Ed Harris).

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