

# “Garbo Talks” of simple wants

By D. Dietrich  
Of The Print

“Garbo Talks” is a refreshingly simple film about simple needs. Amidst a sea of movies posing loaded questions or bombarding you with special effects, “Garbo Talks” maintains a slow but steady pace with warmth and feeling.

Greta Garbo mesmerized many filmgoers with her brooding expressions and deep voice cooing lines like, “Give me a whiskey, ginger ale on the side, and don’t be stingy, baby.” For Estelle Roth, creatively portrayed by talented actress Anne Bancroft, Garbo is the definitive star to whom all other movie stars take an easy second.

As Estelle, Bancroft portrays an aging woman who has never been able to let an injustice go unnoticed. She would rather go to jail for an evening before paying an unwarranted 64 cents extra for vegetables. Her intense independence has cost her one marriage and is a constant source of embarrassment to her young executive son, Gilbert.

Gilbert is tolerant of his mother but can’t quite grasp her idea that, “No one should ever be embarrassed.” Ron Silver plays the role of Estelle’s son with occasional understated sensitivity but also gives an uninspiring performance. Silver is consistently outdone by whoever he is sharing the screen with.

For most of his life, Gilbert has been a basic follower, but when he finds out his mother is going to die of cancer within four to six months, following becomes a craft. His mother has a special wish before she dies (not her last wish, she insists), she wants to meet Garbo. Fine, who doesn’t want to meet Garbo? The problem is that Garbo has been a recluse for years and is virtually never seen in public, let alone accepting visitors.

Gilbert is compelled to grant this one consuming wish of his mother’s. He begins his search with the hope that he will be able to catch Miss Garbo in transit, because he’s already discovered that she is totally inaccessible when at home.

Gilbert’s search leads him to a has-been photographer and his slumpy agent (played by the brilliant Dorothy Loudon) for tips on tracking someone who doesn’t wish to be seen. These two characters are part of a series of colorful performances that give delightful pieces of character. Tony award winner Harvey Fierstein, gives a heartwarming performance as a lonely and compassionate homosexual who helps Gilbert find Garbo’s home on Fire Island.

As Gilbert’s search continues for months, he not only loses precious time but, due to a grow-

ing difference in life’s priorities, his wife (played by Carrie Fisher), who goes back to Daddy in California. Fisher’s part is very important to the mood of the film for it is her blatant self-indulgence and cerebral inactivity that lays down the cards for the audience to let them know the director is attempting a comedic effect.

A foil to Fisher’s character is the role of Gilbert’s lover (played by Catherine Hicks), who is a sensitive and supportive woman looking for self-fulfillment (and an acting job). Although their personalities are completely opposite, they are both given lines essential to the comedic format of the film. Hick’s best line is her answer to Gilbert’s statement that she probably dates rich men. To this she answers, “Rich men are so peculiar, they always order California wine and then defend it.”

“Garbo Talks” does carry one message throughout the film and that is the idea that people need to cooperate and do a bit of both giving and taking to understand each other. Director Sidney Lumet (Dog Day Afternoon, Network, The Verdict) handles the film as a dramatic comedy with a light and charming touch. There is the inevitable dark death scene at the end but there are few if any tears shed because a dying woman’s needs are met when Garbo talks.

## Agent Orange suit nears



possible disabilities stemming from exposure to toxic chemical herbicides. The most common term was the defoliant Agent Orange. Agent Orange has been found to be extremely toxic.

There are currently numerous studies underway to determine the extent of effects caused by Agent Orange and whether Vietnam veterans have a valid complaint. The Oregon legislature passed the Vietnam Veterans Act of 1983 in order to provide further attention to veteran’s concerns.

Legislation has provided that Oregon physicians submit a report to the Health Division when requested by a veteran, surviving spouse or child of a veteran if they exhibit symptoms attributable to toxic chemical herbicides. The division also has developed a survey to gather statistical information from Oregon’s Vietnam veteran population to continue studies on possible repercussions of exposure.

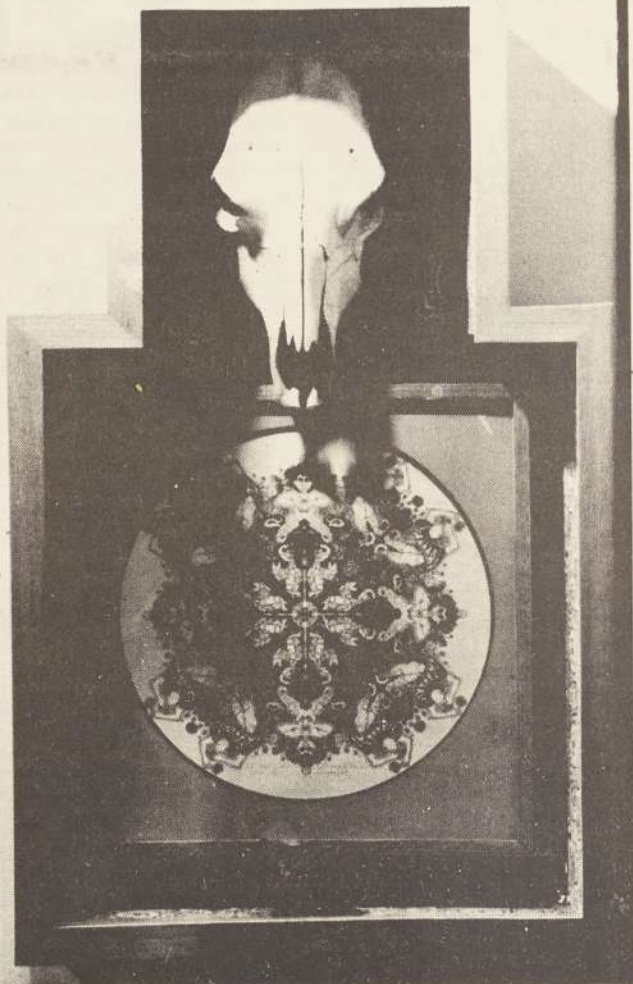
Approximately 107 million pounds of herbicide was sprayed in South Vietnam over a nine year span. The chemical compounds have been proven to cause cancer in laboratory

animals as well as birth defects. The specific effects on humans is still inconclusive, except for a skin condition known as chloracne.

A summary of reported Agent Orange symptoms and effects lists ailments ranging from loss of appetite to severe depression. Any veterans who believe they were exposed to Agent Orange are encouraged to seek professional advice as soon as possible and to fill out a survey form by the health division.

A class action suit is now pending regarding the benefits entitled to Vietnam veterans should the effects of Agent Orange be as great as suspected. There is a filing deadline of January 2 to be eligible for benefits resulting from exposure to Agent Orange.

Although this deadline is an important one, little information concerning the suit has been publicized, even to veterans. For more information on Agent Orange and related action being taken, write to the Oregon Department of Veteran Affairs, 700 Summer St. N.E., Suite 150, Salem, Oregon 97310-1270 or call 1-800-692-9666.



Artwork by Norm Bursheim, art department chairperson, is on display in Pauling Center until Dec. 14. Other artists are included in the show “Norm Bursheim Retrospective With Work From His Private Collection.”

