

Young actor captures audiences heart

by Melissa Freels
Co-Editor-in-Chief

Caroline Wolff didn't have another "get up and go" in her. It was time to settle down and provide a stable life for herself and her son Toby.

Her decision to do this is the focus of "This Boy's Life," a powerful movie released in theaters Friday. The movie is based on an autobiography by Tobias Wolff.

The story begins in the late 1950s, which was a time of optimism for Americans. Everyone was looking for a better life. Caroline (Ellen Barkin) and her Toby (Leonardo DiCaprio) epitomize this attitude.

After divorcing her husband, Caroline takes her son on a cross-country road trip in search of fortune. Hoping to get rich by finding uranium, the two end up in Utah. When their dreams of "getting rich quick" fade, they move to Seattle on the spur of the moment.

In Seattle, Toby's mother meets Dwight Hansen (Robert De Niro), a smooth-talker who hides his strange outlook on life and his twisted view of right and wrong.



Caroline marries Dwight, and she and Toby move to Concrete, Wash., to live with Dwight and his three children. To her, it seemed to be the perfect environment for her teenage son.

In the small town of Concrete, however, Caroline and Toby begin to see the other side of Dwight -- the abusive, mentally unstable side.

Dwight's new wife and stepson live in "his" house, and he makes sure that they know it. Dwight is the kind of man who

finds fault in anyone but himself.

"This Boy's Life" is an exceptional film. It has the perfect mix of humor and drama. The humorous scenes of a young boy coming-of-age are offset by chilling scenes of abuse -- at one point, in a fight about mustard, Dwight nearly strangles Toby.

"To me, this is a movie about hope and the spirit of youth -- how a young boy can take what is potentially a very negative and destructive situation and, by his own strength of spirit, turn it into

something positive," Barkin said.

Although the movie is set in the 1950s and 60s, the message can be understood across generations. The film illustrates the harsh realities of an abusive step-parent and dysfunctional stepfamilies.

Barkin, De Niro and DiCaprio are all very powerful in their roles.

As Caroline, Barkin's role is atypical of her well-known performances in "The Big Easy" of "Sea of Love." But in "This

Boy's Life," she gives a perfect portrayal of Toby's mother.

De Niro is strong as ever in his role of Dwight. His performance will spark a hatred very similar to the hatred felt toward his character in the recent remake of "Cape Fear."

DiCaprio, however, is probably the film's greatest asset. His performance of Toby, a young boy going through a confusing adolescence, is brilliant. Audiences may remember the 18-year-old in his recurring role as a homeless boy who moves in with the Sievers on the TV sitcom "Growing Pains," in 1991. In addition to many other television appearances, DiCaprio made his feature film debut in "Critters III."

Actor Jonah Blechman, who portrays Toby's close friend Arthur, also strengthens this film with his convincing and impressive performance.

The authenticity of the story and the strength of the performances make "This Boy's Life" a must-see movie.

"This Boy's Life" is rated R for language, violence, sex references and sex, and has a running time of 114 minutes.

'3 White Guys Wearing Glasses' visit Clackamas

by Daphne Hartt
Staff Writer

While there are still many cynics who feel poetry is for "sissies" or for "weak people," "3 White Guys Wearing Glasses," Peter Jensen, David Johnson and Erik Muller, proved otherwise.

The three poets visited the campus to recite their collection of works to an audience of students and staff in the Gregory Forum, April 26.

The three men met one another in Eugene years ago and have had lasting friendships ever since.

Jensen, who also teaches at Lane Community College, started writing poetry several years ago. Some of his poems are featured in an on-campus literary magazine, "Denali," for which he was also the literary adviser.

Muller and Jensen met at Lane CC and are currently col-

leagues. The book is a collection of poems from Johnson, Jensen, Muller and Susan Applegate.

Johnson has worked as a graphic designer and journalist. Currently, he is a contributing editor at "What's Happening," a Eugene weekly. He also has written previous books, such as "Eleven Poems for Julie Ellen," "Butch Beneath the Stars," and "A Natural History of the Tufted Puffin."

Jensen was born and raised in Brooklyn, N.Y. He has two other published books which include "This Book is Not a Mask for Tear Gas" (1970), and "When Waves Sprout Birds (Twenty Years of Poetry: 1965-1985)."

Muller, who has worked as a farm hand and nurse's aid, is an editor of "Fireweed." His books include "The Rainfall Regime," "Full Moon" and "Entering Eastside."

As an artist and illustrator, Applegate teaches art at Maude Kerns Art Center in Eugene. She is also married to Jensen and they have a son named Daniel.

During the readings, the audience remained very attentive and eager to hear what the poets had to say.

From Jensen's solitary poem, "Pacific Yew" to Johnson's memorable "Plundered by Nostalgia," the poets all had personal experiences and memories to offer and share with listeners.

"We have to offer our personal reactions. This whole idea of connecting the speaker and listener is a challenge. I think that is the magic of poetry," Muller concluded.

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--Erik Muller

leagues, Muller, who began writing seriously at about the age of 18, teaches an English composition class. Although he said that he had never taught any poetry writing classes, he does teach an introduction to poetry class, which is a course designed to help the student read and understand poetry and analyze the meanings.

The three poets read some very meaningful works from their recent book, "Confluence."

New Depeche Mode release: their best yet

Music reviews

by Tyson Morrow
Staff Writer

LOW POP SUICIDE

On the Cross of Commerce

On a plain of existence somewhere between Prong and the Pixies lies the politically-charged threesome Low Pop Suicide. "Are your sins original?" they ask in the liner notes -- well, theirs certainly are. I'm sure Rick Boston, the lead screamer, has some form of musical talent deep within him, but none of it shows up on the vocals or guitar chords somewhat contained in the eleven tracks on *On the Cross of Commerce*. However, Dave Allen shows great promise on bass ... the verdict? Wait for the next one.



low pop suicide

FASTBACKS

Zucher

With an equal grasp of the profound and the disposable, Seattle's long-serving Fastbacks meld the liberating joy of classic top-40 pop with the do-it-yourself fervor of garage rock. Guitarist Kurt Bloch writes songs that maintain good cheer in the face of crushing disappointment, and his bandmates Kim Warnick and Lulu Gargiulo sing them in proudly girlish voices whose matter-of-factness makes a more cogent feminist statement than a barrel of Madonnas. *Zucher*, the latest of the Fastbacks' all-too infrequent albums, may just be their snazziest yet, with giddily-barbed originals like "Believe Me Never" and "Save Room For Me," and a fine cover of the Bee Gee's "Please Read Me."

DEPECHE MODE

Songs of Faith and Devotion

Let's face it -- Dave Gahan has the most haunting voice in today's pop music culture. Depeche Mode's new release, *Songs of Faith and Devotion* is their best yet, and also serves as a sonic resume highlighting a vocal talent not seen since Mystery Girl. It makes me ponder the question, can this group get any better? Can they get any different? This album is a million miles from Violator's mechanical indifference. It is filled with spiritual feeling and a definite 70s retro-groove. Don't walk, run.

RINGO STARR

Goodnight Vienna

It seems that after the Beatles went their separate ways, they still wanted to record together, but only two at a time. John Lennon wrote the title track for Ringo Starr's *Goodnight Vienna* while Paul McCartney contributes an extended version of "Six O'Clock" and George Harrison adds a bassline or two. This album was recorded in 1973-74 and contains a few gems, such as Elton John's collaboration with Bernie Taupin "Snookeroo" and Ringo's chart topper "Only You (And You Alone)."