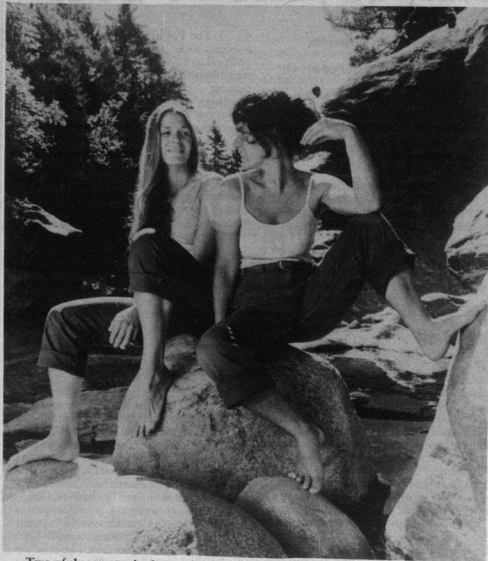


ARTS



Two of the soon to be famous Secaucus Seven

The Secaucus Seven are coming

by Karen Redford

The Return of the Secaucus Seven may be the best movie ever made about the lost art of "hanging out."

Seven friends who shared the sit-ins, the drugs and the political jail cells of the sixties meet again ten years later for a weekend of home-cooked meals, charades, skinny-dipping, thumb- and tongue-wrestling.

The director, John Sayles, seems able to hang out with the best of them. His home-movie style includes the cut-off heads, high angles, off-centre photography and gritty realism so familiar from European film, especially the French.

But the cinematic style that Sayles uses in this film does not just reflect a well-used style or the low budget; it is integral to the low-key mood and familiarity that both the director and the audience come to feel for the characters in the film.

The real endearing gift of this movie is its ability to let us know each one of the characters that we meet in a very close way without pigeon-holing them by use of clichés or coasting over their eccentricities.

Few of the Secaucus Seven or the other characters are attractive in the Hollywood style that we have become familiar with, but halfway through the film we come to like them and find them beautiful in the way one does with people that one meets. Sayles' "amateur night" photography is a very thin cover for the brilliant subtlety of his editing. The film conveys a deceptively unfinished look.

The director's use of angry, brutal editing and fast chopping works to enhance the dramatic appeal of the film. The quick cutting is a bit distracting at first, but one quickly grasps the point for it.

Switching back and forth between conversations counterpoints them nicely, and vivid effects are achieved as in the scene near the end where a conversation is interplotted with shots of Jeff, one of the Seven, chopping wood furiously.

Very effective use is made of sound in the film as well, for example the hard breathing in the basketball sequence.

Director Sayles approaches his script with the same gentle wit the characters have for each other and life. This gentle wit really represents Sayles' whole approach to

the sixties and the people whose lives were formed by it.

"Not another betrayed idealist", you say at the beginning of the movie, "showing with merciless cynicism what has happened to the flower children of the Age of Aquarius, how they have compromised their ideals in coping with middle age and the Me generation."

In fact, Sayles' touch is much lighter. After about the first ten minutes, the writing picks up to a snappy pace. There are amusing devices like the charades scene, and a man talking about working within the system while rubbing suntan lotion on his nose.

Jump Cuts

by Jack Vermeé

This is a column about film. God (and my editor) willing, it will appear in this rag every Thursday; just in time to influence your weekend movie choices.

Generally, it will consist of two sections: the first dealing with a specific topic (perhaps a review, or a discussion of directorial styles, or a personal attack on some other critic, etc.) and the second concentrating on a preview of upcoming movies that I think you, as a film lover, may want to view.

As well, the second section will list some films that you may overlook if you confine your quest for the ultimate film experience to movies listed in our city's two daily papers (one of which has ceased to carry movie listings during the week. Guess which one).

This format may change as I discover the advantages and limitations inherent in writing a weekly column. About the only thing I can guarantee is that something will be said about some aspect of film every week...unless, of course, I miss the deadline...

Introduction overwith, I'd like to briefly mention a problem that I see quite regularly in film criticism.

Often, readers have a tendency to describe film critics as stupid, biased, wholly subjective assholes who wouldn't know a good film from poop.

In some cases this may be true, but I think (hope?) that part of this tendency arises out of the reader's unfamiliarity with the critics frame of reference.

That is, critics often fail to describe to their readers just what it is they look for in a film and when they do, readers often fail to understand or accept these critics' set of evaluative criteria.

Director John Sayles actually plays a role in the film, and the part draws the viewer's attention. This makes for a perfect combination of directing style and content; the director is in the film in every way.

The audience also feels as if it was right there being introduced to the characters. The film explores the relationships and ambitions of genuine, life-like people.

More movies like this are necessary to give people an appreciation for the fine arts of "hanging out" and living casually.

Next week I'll babble about two brilliant and influential film critics, Pauline Kael and Andrew Sarris, focussing on what they consider important when they answer the question: "Neato, but is it art?"

Upcoming films definitely worth your time and money, for one reason or another:

Return of the Secaucus Seven (1980) — critic Richard Corliss calls this film a "going-away party for the angry idealism of the Nixon years". Pseudo-radicals reunite ten years after and face middle age. Sept. 16 (9:00 pm), 17 (7:00 pm), and 18 (9:30 pm) at the Princess Theatre. Also Sept. 20 (8:00 pm) at SUB Theatre as part of the EFS international series.

Small Change (1976) — director Truffaut is always warmly sympathetic to the problems and dilemmas of human experience. Here he looks at the world through the eyes of children age 2 weeks to 14 years. Sept. 16 (9:30 pm), 17 (7:30 pm), and 19 (7:30 pm) at the National Film Theatre (NFT).

The Night (1962) — In the early 60's director Antonioni created films that reflected the emptiness and isolation of upper-class Italian life. Encompassing "interior loneliness, boredom and emotional exhaustion" (Bosley Crowther) this film should be both depressing and fascinating.

The Big Sleep (1946) — Murder most foul sets the stage for this classic Bogart-Bacall match-up. Sept. 19 (7:00 pm) at the Princess.

Lenny (1974) — a stark portrayal of the life and death of comic Lenny Bruce. Dustin Hoffman in the lead role makes this an unforgettable film. Sept. 21 (9:30 pm) at the Princess.

Up and Coming

I had a special request for an advance notice today: be sure to see *The Cameron* at SUB Theatre Sept. 21. See page 16 for details.

Basic human writes



Incredible new Precise Ball Liner.
Helpful, enlightening Fluorescent Spotlite.
Handy stand-by Fineliner.
Magnificent Mechanical Pencil.
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PILOT
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