

PREVIEWS

Flicks range from energy consciousness to debauchery

by Stan Kawalski

Okay, so here's the story. Every week or so, from here on, depending on the drug situation, I'm going to try and get out a column dealing with the movies, to see or miss, in the week ahead. What I'll be writing are previews, not reviews. The movies I'll be covering are those that are only here one night at a time, like the showings of the **Wormwood Dog And Monkey Society**, the **Rebecca Cohn Sunday** nighters, and the **Mystery Movies**, anything that would be useless to review otherwise because it won't be back for six months.

I'll start off with the **Wormwood**. They usually have classical or cultural movies on Friday and Saturday nights, but this week they have something interesting instead. The reason for this unusual good fortune is that their theatre, the NFB on Barrington, is showing a **Safe Energy Film Festival**. To spice up the boring agenda of alternative energy and "let's shit on nuclear power" movies, they have brought in some real films. The first, on Friday night at 7:00 and 9:30 p.m., is **The China Syndrome**. This timely film on possible nuclear disaster was released about the same time as the radioactivity of Three Mile Island. It's a bit more of an environmentalist/protester's wet dream than reality though. Jane Fonda (who else but) plays the heroine, dedicated reporter type, facing the loss of life or limb for the big

story: **THE TRUTH**. Covering her back is her faithful sidekick Tonto, no, Robin, no, actually it's Michael Douglas. After bumbling across the moment of mishap on tour of a nuclear reactor, the two decide to figure out what really is going on. To do this they get the help of Jack Lemmon, a nuclear man with a bad conscience. But they are up against the ultimate bad guy: the government. Will our heroes be able to warn the common folk in time, or will the big bad government maintain its mind control? If you can get by the cliché plot, aimed at the 35-year-old ex-hippy (it's truth, liberty, and justice vs. the U.S. government), the movie is worth a buck or two. The acting is well done, if not overdramatic at points, and the movie is good for the old nuclear heebie-geebies.

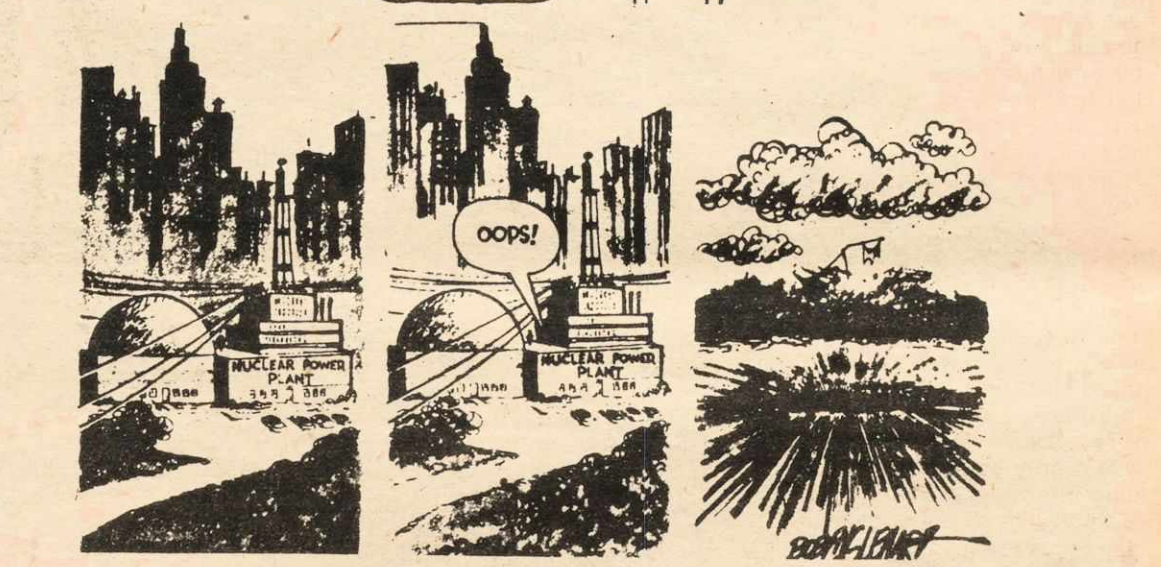
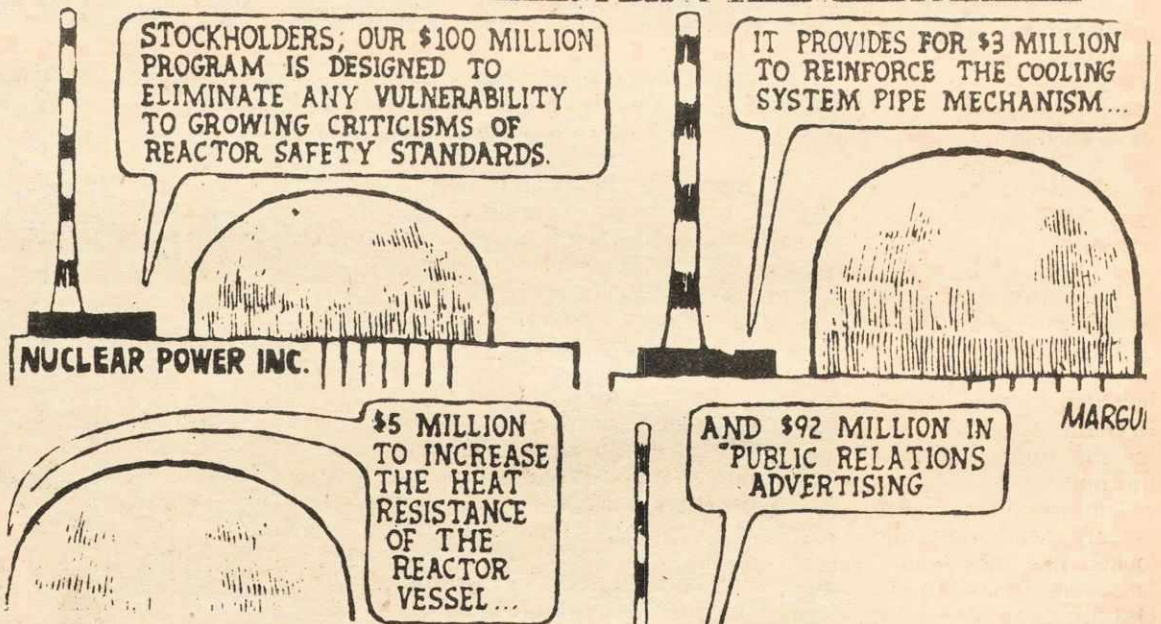
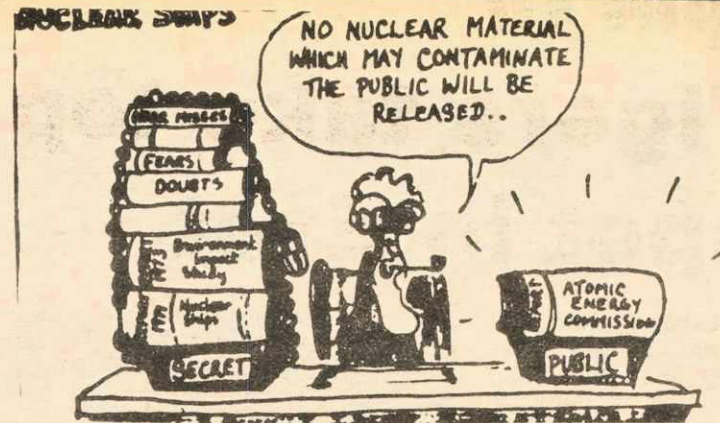
The next night, there is a slightly lighter touch about the other side of the nuclear coin, the bomb. **Dr. Strangelove** is a black comedy satirizing the big bomb, and what it means to so many. The plot is basically about a gung-ho general who starts WW III to preserve his natural bodily fluids from that Commie flouridation. He sends off the boys to bomb the Rusksies, and when the Pentagon finds out, it does everything it can to get them back. Unfortunately, they don't succeed. Sounds like your typical light-hearted situation comedy. Well, what makes it are the characters produced. The

movie takes a very satirical look at the madmen behind the bomb. These "stretches of reality" are well portrayed by such biggies as George C. Scott, Sterling Hayden (you don't know who Sterling Hayden is? He's just the biggest pot head in Hollywood), and Peter Sellers (in three roles as usual). The genius that turns this acting talent into the incredible characters is none other than Stanley "never fails" Kubrick. In this, his funniest film, he draws laughter from the darkest moments. It too is at 7:00 and 9:30, but on Saturday.

One thing about the NFB cinema, it's a small one and the best seats go fast, so it's better to be a bit early than a bit late.

Our last movie of the week is on Sunday night at the Cohn. These Sunday nighters have a habit of being "classics", i.e. they're what some intellectuals from their burrows in library have decided were classics. They usually fall under one of three categories: old and boring, foreign and boring, or confusing and boring.

Let's draw the line right here. If you are into the intellectual/classical/cultural (and I use the terms



loosely) scene, read on. If you just go to the movies for fun, and leave your brains at home, turn to the sports page, there's nothing for you here.

Okay, now that we have gotten rid of the jocks and engineers, let's talk about **400 Blows**. It's a nouveau classic (French, weird, and boring), and what makes it so is that it is Francois Truffaut's (the breakwater of the old French New Wave) first major film. It is also the first in what was to be a series of semi-autobiographical films based around the same character, Antoine Doinel, played continuously by Jean-Pierre Léaud. This, being the first, naturally deals with his childhood. Right off we see the guy is not destined to enjoy his celluloid existence. As Truffaut himself said, "I wanted to express this feeling that adolescence is a bad moment to get through." Depressing, but then again it is French, where things seem to have little value if you cannot shit on them. So anyway, Antoine starts off at school, where he does not take to the tyrannical rule of his teacher, a true bastard. Home is not much better. All he wants to do is screw his mother, but she's too busy getting it from the rest of


Paris, which her husband tamely accepts, being the cockold he is. Between rare moments of family bliss, the parents are too busy fighting or fucking to pay Antoine much need. Faced with this dim existence, he seeks to escape it to freedom, and spends the rest of the movie escaping from such things as jails and reform school. He escapes them all, only to find that the orgasm of freedom through isolation is non-climactic.

Along with this depressing tale goes a style that's its equivalent. A flat quasi-documentary style of filming filled with boring reality. But rather than distract, this enhances the film in such a way as to bring across the depressing empathy the film is meant to depict.

I, myself, do not see much purpose in a truly depressing film. I don't deny that it creates these feelings, I just wonder why anyone would want to feel this way. But if you're into having your emotions twisted, or feel culture-bound to see "life's great moments on film", or just like to wear classical movies like medals on your chest, here's a star for your collection. Show time is 8:00.

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