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Bug lights, bucks, bad breaks

Filmmaker says 'C'est la vie' to life's little disasters

By Mike Sweeney

The scene looks like countless others. The girl and boy, out on a date, sip drinks and talk in a darkened corner of a downtown Lincoln bar. She wears an expensive dress and a corsage; he, a brown suit and tie.

But you don't have to look too close to see what sets this scene apart from others—the 100 watt bug light overhead and the camera rolling a few feet away are a dead giveaway.

The scene is one of many in a film written, directed and produced by University of Nebraska-Lincoln student David Graupner for an independent study class.

Graupner and five other students are creating films for a 16-millimeter film class, offered this semester for the first time.

According to Graupner, the class is loosely structured. The students aren't given any lectures or tests, and have one textbook.

Instructor Edward Azlant said the class is not totally independent study. He said the students work together and critique each other's work. All the students had taken a class in super-8 film making.

Graupner said Azlant helps them solve problems and improvise on their films.

The purpose of the class is to have students blend sound and pictures into a short ten-minute film, Azlant said. The films are made silently, and sound is edited in.

The bar scene is the perfect end of a not-so-perfect day detailed in Graupner's film "C'est La Vie."

The film, Graupner said, is about one of those days when everything that can go wrong does go wrong.

In one day, the main character, played by Paul Schmieding, manages to spill coke and coffee on his term paper, get a speeding ticket as he rushes to get to campus and is late to class, Graupner said.

That night, at the bar, the main character is tremendously excited about his date while she is bored, Graupner said. The crowning moment comes when he takes his date home, and hoping for a goodnight kiss has the door shut in his face.

"The film says if we have all these problems, just say 'c'est la vie,'" Graupner said. "If you dwell on the problems it does nothing for you at all."

Films by the other students include a documentary on Nebraska artist Robert Weaver, a docu-drama about an eight-year-old girl and what she thinks about the world, and a comment on the nature of romance.

Graupner said he got the idea for his film from experience.

"It's a little bit introspective," he said. "The last four months of my life have been the pits."

Like the character in the film, Graupner said he has had many things go wrong since he began filming.

Graupner said more than 300 feet of his film was destroyed during processing. Reshooting the film posed several challenges.

For example, he said he allowed clothes and garbage to collect in his bedroom for one scene shot there. After he filmed that scene, he cleaned up. However, part

of the scene was destroyed and part was not.

When he went to re-shoot the part of the scene that was destroyed, he had to carefully re-dirty his bedroom so it would look exactly like the original scene.

"We ran into problems we didn't realize existed until we started shooting," Graupner observed. But he said dealing with the problems was good experience, because people have film ruined in the real world.

Another unexpected problem arose when Graupner attempted to film Schmieding walking through the Union, he said. In a daze, the character was supposed

to walk into the girls' restroom by mistake.

With the cameras rolling, Schmieding entered the restroom, and a woman who didn't know a movie was in the making unknowingly followed him a few seconds later.

"I wish we had sound, because she let out a shriek," Graupner said. "It was a natural scene."

Mark Goldfien, another student in the class, said he also had problems with his film.

"My film has been one constant disaster from start to finish," Goldfien said. "But I've been told some of the best movies

ever made went through pure hell to get out. That's encouraging."

One of Goldfien's cast members suddenly died last month, so he had to begin shooting again, he said. Then, a few weeks later, his sister, who is part of the cast, passed out in the middle of a scene and had to be taken to the hospital.

The six student films range in cost from about \$450 for Goldfien's film about romantic fantasy to more than \$1,800 for Steve Porter's film, the documentary about the artist. Graupner said his film will cost about \$1,200.

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Photo by Mark Billingsley

On location at Barrymore's filming "C'est La Vie?" from left to right are Mark Pratt, Dave Graupner, Alyce Nelson, Steve Porter, and Paul Schmieding as the hard luck hero.

Candidates debate senate relationship

By Shelley Smith

Although the two ASUN presidential candidates differ in opinions and philosophies, both said they believed good voter turn-out in the run-off election is vital to the credibility of the senate.

Bud Cuca with the Students of the University of Nebraska (SUN) party and Joe Nigro with the Students Organized for Active Representation (SOAR) party will compete April 11.

Both said they want to win the election, but added it more important that the winner be elected by a large number of voters.

The NU Board of Regents won't take the ASUN president seriously as a student regent unless it is assured he has the support of the students, both candidates said.

Nigro, a 22-year-old history and political science major said it may be hard to spark interest in the election because it is a run-off election.

Mismarked ballots

The extra election is being held because of a newly adopted regent rule that required ASUN executive officers to be elected by a majority vote.

A balloting system designed to attain a majority vote failed because some voters mismarked ballots. Nigro and Cuca were the top two remaining candidates.

Nigro said most of the election attention was geared to the first election day, and when a president was not chosen, "we were really drained."

Cuca, a junior business administration major, agreed and said that he hopes people will become interested again and "look objectively at the two candidates."

Nigro said his experience as an ASUN senator and Abel Residence Hall president, better qualify him for the position.

However, Cuca who works with the Nebraska Human Resources Research Foundation, argued that sometimes experience can become so obsessive that the person becomes engulfed.

Marienu chooses

"Joe has ASUN experience, fine, but I have experience with people," he said.

Current ASUN President Ken Marienu has decided to support Nigro, claiming Nigro's experience with ASUN is vital to being an effective president.

"Both candidates have excellent potential," he said. "It would be difficult for a person who hasn't ever worked with ASUN to come in and assume a leadership role as the president."

Nigro said he believes that because two-thirds of the senate and both vice presidents are from the SOAR party, he is better equipped to provide a smooth transition into the presidency.

"There is no question that I'll be able to

work with these people," Nigro said.

"There is the possibility that Bud (Cuca) won't be able to work with them because he has different perspectives," he added.

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Candidates to debate Monday

A presidential debate sponsored by the UPC Talks and Topics Committee is scheduled Monday between the two ASUN presidential candidates in the run-off election.

Bud Cuca with the Students for the University of Nebraska (SUN) party and Joe Nigro with the Students Organized for Active Representation (SOAR) party will field questions about campus issues and their qualifications for president.

Both candidates will answer questions from Bob Gleason, a former SOAR party senator, Willie Watters, campaign manager for the SUN party, and Shelley Smith, a Daily Nebraskan reporter.

The debate will begin at 1:30 p.m. in the Nebraska Union main lounge.

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