

arts/entertainment

Fishy fifties fad wiggles way into bar, competitor's bellies

By Casey McCabe

One of the 1950's strangest campus fads is staging a comeback.

Sponsored by Lincoln nightspot P.O. Pears, the challenge of live goldfish swallowing will be a regular Monday night contest in hopes that the fad will wiggle its way into the hearts of local competitors.

The idea was brought to Lincoln by Pears' General Manager Rick Clarke. Clarke worked in San Diego at Foggy's Notion, part of the same chain that runs P.O. Pears, where the goldfish eating contests were successful.

nightlife

The rules are quite simple. Whoever eats the most goldfish in 30 seconds wins. Ten goldfish are placed in a pitcher of water and each contestant must scoop the goldfish out of each pitcher and swallow them before going on to the next one. And as Clarke reminds the eager participants before starting, "no chewing" is allowed.

The Monday night debut of the contest was a success, Clarke said. Nine competitors were cheered on by a fervently curious crowd and the spotlights of television cameras from Omaha's KMTV.

Recognizing some hesitation on the faces of the participants as they donned their bibs, Clarke gave a demonstration by swallowing a handful of the slippery critters himself and washing them down

with a beer. Tarter sauce, lemons and salt were provided on the candle-lit table.

Once over the initial skepticism about eating live fish, the main problem for the night was getting the goldfish in the mouth as the elusive little *carassius auratus* often missed their mark.

Taking the first place prize of \$50 in P.O. Pears spending money was John Tomczyk, who downed 26 goldfish to finish ahead of a second place tie between Jack Melott and Janet Brelin who swallowed 25 apiece. Tomczyk's reaction to having 25 goldfish in his stomach? "I'm still hungry," he said.

Brelin decided to take third place honors rather than engage in an eat-off for second place. "At least they're not swimming around," she said. "But my stomach still doesn't feel so good."

Assistant Manager Mary Jo O'Grady said she doesn't anticipate much fallout on the possible inhumane aspects of goldfish eating, though she says P.O. Pears has already received one complaint from a UNL professor concerning the nature of the contest.

O'Grady points out that the fish used are feeder fish, meaning if they don't go down the gullet of some college student, they will likely be turned over to a piranha or similar carnivorous creature.

According to Clarke, the Monday night contests may only last a few weeks before the novelty wears off. At that point he plans to introduce new contests and rotate them similarly. And it's more good news for those of you who thought you'd missed the '50s: Clarke's next idea involves putting a Volkswagen on the dance floor and seeing how many people can pile in.



Photo by Dave Bentz

John Tomczyk demonstrates the form that earned him first place in the first live goldfish swallowing contest at P.O. Pears Monday night. The winning effort was 26 goldfish in 30 seconds.

Reynolds mimicks own self-image in 'Paternity'

By Pat Higgins

Paternity is an amusing movie with an unlikely premise that is both funnier and more serious than typical Burt Reynolds fare.

movie review

Reynolds wants to be taken seriously as an artiste, which is why he alternates his highly commercial good old boy formula movies with attempts at something a bit more thought-provoking (such as *The End*). This is basically analogous to Reggie Jackson wanting to be appreciated for his fielding rather than home runs. At least give Reynolds credit for trying though.

In *Paternity*, Reynolds is poking fun at his own image, as he plays an anti-hero with lines on his face, rather than the Jesus of cool that he usually portrays. This will probably hurt *Paternity* at the box office, because it won't appeal to the basic drive-in audience that

knows and loves *Smokey and the Bandit*. The high-brow crowd, of course, wouldn't deign to have anything to do with Reynolds.

Reynolds plays Buddy Evans, manager of Madison Square Garden, coming up on his 44th birthday and facing a mid-life crisis. Someone should have given Evans a copy of *Passages* by Gail Sheehy. Instead, Evans' friends (played by sit-com veterans Paul Dooley and Norman Fell) decide to inform Evans that he is miserable because he lacks a wife and children. However, Evans claims to be having a fabulous time shooting baskets at the Garden, checking the point spreads with the union men, and being "the most eligible bachelor in New York," as he modestly asserts.

Evans is finally convinced of the biological imperative to reproduce, but he is too cold of a fish to do it conventionally — i.e. love, marriage, house in suburbs. Instead, he decides upon a strictly business proposition; hiring a surrogate mother with, as is frequently repeated, "no emotional involvement."

Evans then auditions a series of women for the job with the typical reaction being stunned disbelief. The highlight here is Lauren Hutton as an interior decorator

who inadvertently stumbles into Evans' office which leads to a wild line of questioning.

Beverly D'Angelo, who was hilarious in the short-run *Honky Tonk Freeway*, plays Maggie, a classic starving artist working as a waitress. Maggie needs big bucks to go to France for her studies, so she takes Evans up on his offer. Maggie also plans on no emotional involvement; but guess what happens, sports fans.

Paternity switches gears as Evans' callousness is less funny the more pregnant Maggie becomes. The ending is wholesomely romantic, which is kind of a surprise after all of the bent humor.

David Steinberg directed and should be credited for the New York sense of humor in *Paternity*. Particularly droll are running jokes concerning Evans' inability to keep plants alive, and a tour of New York that ignores boring landmarks like the United Nations, and concentrates on the fine points of hospital food with the overriding advice to avoid Jersey hospitals. Plus, the only car chase has New York's safest and slowest cabbie crawling along below the speed limit.

For the lack of car chases alone plus a lot of laughs, *Paternity* is worth seeing.

Bisset and Bergen lack rapport in inane film

By Chuck Lieurance

George Cukor (*Philadelphia Story*, *Adam's Rib*, *My Fair Lady*) has been responsible for training such great actresses as Katherine Hepburn and Greta Garbo. Why, then, has he forced Jacqueline Bisset and Candice Bergen to overact and gesture like untalented high school amateurs in his latest film, *Rich and Famous*?

movie review

Bisset and Bergen spend most of the movie with their hands uselessly dangling at their sides and shifting weight from leg to leg in a fashion that would embarrass even the most innocuous prep school performance of *Charlie's Aunt*.

Cukor takes most of his technique from theater, but he has chosen to enlist actresses who are obviously quite uncomfortable with stage mannerisms. Bisset and Bergen play two best friends about as awkwardly as it is possible to play them. There is no indication that either understand the motivations of their characters at all.

There is a point when admittedly, Bisset rises to her fullest abilities, but only when she is far from dealing with the Bergen character. When she meets a young reporter from *The Rolling Stone* (played by this year's model of Richard Gere), Bisset as the unprolific but very talented writer is intensely moving, trying to stay uninvolved but losing her defenses slowly.

Bisset and this reporter are the only two characters that don't react to one another with either whines or orgasmic moans. Candice Bergen is completely inarticulate, screeching and overacting at a level of unbearable obnoxiousness.

Perhaps the Bisset character comes off better because Cukor saw something of Katherine Hepburn in her. He dresses her in high-necked dresses and pushes her hair back into a bun in the perfect Hepburn style. But Bisset doesn't come off as Hepburn, and these selfishly-intentioned efforts on the director's part just make her into a clown.

Plotwise, the film's intentions are almost indecipherable. Where one expects two friends to discover themselves through or with one another, one finds only more reasons to wonder why they are friends at all.

The lines the characters read must have come off better in Van Druten's play than in the film version

where they are caught somewhere between Neil Simon and Alan Alda's *The Four Seasons*. What is amusing is only amusing because it so hammed to death that an audience couldn't help but giggle with embarrassment.

One gets the feeling that the only times the actors come off well is when they are not being what Cukor desired them to be. Bisset can only act well here when she insists on bringing her own personality through the muddle, and drops her Katherine Hepburn routine. But this only leads to further inconsistencies, as the same character appears to be a completely different character from one scene to the next.

One can hardly believe that the character that has selfishly whined and hooted through the first hour of the film is also the character that becomes wise and profound in the end. Bergen had all the wisdom of a truck stop waitress, up to the point where Cukor felt she needed to have more in order to be her friend's savior.

No one in *Rich and Famous* seems to know who they are or why they are where they are. This makes for one of the most inane films to come out in some time, which wouldn't be terribly offensive except that Cukor, Bisset and Bergen take the whole thing so seriously.