

Television network from hell offers little entertainment



"Stay Tuned"



By Gerry Beltz
Staff Reporter

Does anyone remember that se-

Movie that asks viewers to 'stay tuned' makes them tune out

quence from the 1987 movie "Amazon Women On The Moon" where the husband of a retired couple gets sucked into his television and is subsequently thrown into a few humorous situations?

He finds himself on the Weather, Disney and Playboy channels, and he becomes a running gag throughout the film.

Director Peter Hyams ("The Precidio" and "Running Scared") tries to stretch this brief piece for more than 100 minutes with his latest release, "Stay Tuned" (Plaza 4, 12th and P

streets).

A mysterious, black-jacketed salesman named Spike (Jeffrey Jones) manages to sign up couch potato Roy Knable (John Ritter) for a trial period of a fantastic satellite system with 666 channels, including the "Home Shoplifting Network" and "Beverly Hills 90666."

Soon, Roy and his wife, Helen, (Pam Dawber) are sucked into the system during a marital spat and learn that they can escape if they survive for 24 hours in the system. Otherwise, they forfeit their souls to you-know-

who.

Meanwhile, on the outside, Roy's son, an electronics wizard, frantically works to get them out of the television set.

The goal of the film is camp and satire, but it is way off the mark. Sequences meant to be amusing or suspenseful fall flat.

Ritter, Dawber and Jones are average in their roles and bring little life or laughs to any of their scenes.

The only redeeming quality in this picture is the sarcasm aimed at movies, television shows and commer-

cial. Some potshots include "Duane's Underworld," "Three Men and Rosemary's Baby," and "Driving Over Miss Daisy." Because this network is programmed from hell, it seeks a macabre humor.

Two somewhat amusing parts show the Knables stuck in a quasi-"Tom-and-Jerry" cartoon and Roy trapped in an episode of "Three's Company" (Ritter's former television show in which he played the bumbling Jack Tripper).

Rated PG for general hell-related themes, it may be a bit much for the very young viewers.

The best bet, though, is to tune out of "Stay Tuned."

Fall video releases offer fresh alternative to below-average summer movie season



By Anne Steyer
Staff Reporter

Mediocrity was the name of the game for the summer fare, but luckily the first fall home video releases beat that rap.

"Memoirs of an Invisible Man" (PG-13) Chevy Chase is Nick Halloway, a securities analyst who becomes invisible after a high-tech accident.

On the run from CIA agents who want to turn him into a guinea pig, Nick enlists the aid of documentary filmmaker Daryl Hannah to find his lost molecules.

This is a silly little movie, but it is not without merit. Chase does some of the best acting he has done since "Fletch," and Hannah is not nearly as irritating as usual.

Director John Carpenter employs

some innovative and interesting special effects that are worth seeing, though they wear a little thin the third and fourth time around. (Available now.)

"Medicine Man" (PG) Sean Connery is a brilliant, reclusive and eccentric scientist who thinks he has found the cure for cancer in the heart of the Amazon jungle.

Unfortunately, he cannot reproduce the serum.

Lorraine Bracco ("Goodfellas") is the headstrong biochemist sent to check up on his progress. Initially repulsed by his attitudes and lifestyle, Bracco finds herself drawn to him and anxious to help him in his search.

They experience unique confrontations with both the natives and the industrialists preparing to ravage the land. In that way, the film is not only a romantic adventure but it also carries an environmental message — industrial developers are burning the rain forests that may hold the key to the cure for cancer.

Scripted by Oscar winner Tom

Schulman ("Dead Poet's Society"), the story falters a few times, but the breathtaking cinematography compensates for those moments, as does the ending, which refuses to succumb to typical Hollywood routine. (Available now.)

"White Men Can't Jump" (R) Written and directed by Ron Shelton, creator of "Bull Durham," this movie trades the baseball diamond for the basketball court in another story about the complexity of life.

"Cheers" Woody Harrelson and "Jungle Fever's" Wesley Snipes star as Billy and Sidney, two hustlers on the take on the courts of L.A. (Available now.)

"Fried Green Tomatoes" (PG-13) Oscar winners Kathy Bates and Jessica Tandy are Evelyn and Ninny, two women who become fast friends. Ninny passes the time telling Evelyn the story of two other women in a small, Southern town.

Her story involves Idgie (Mary Stuart Masterson) and Ruth (Mary Louise Parker), two young women who ran the Whistle Stop Cafe years before. (Available now.)

Sci-Fi authors compile shared-universe book



"Battlestation: Book One" Edited by David Drake and Bill Fawcett
Ace Science Fiction

Anyone familiar with the military science fiction genre will immediately recognize the name of David Drake. His "Hammer's Slammers" series practically created the genre and made him its pre-eminent master.

"Battlestation" is a shared-universe book, becoming more common these days. An author creates an outline for a background and gets other authors to share in that universe through short stories.

"Battlestation" falls in between, leaning to the well-done end of the scale.

The background is fairly straightforward. Fifty years after an interstellar war between various factions of

humankind (see Drake's "The Fleet" series, Books One through Six), a new species makes its presence known by systematically destroying planets. The Ichtons are an insectoid race, with a hive mentality and a ravenous appetite for raw materials.

The Alliance considers them a threat and in response begins construction of the Stephen Hawking, a Death Star-like mobile base for 10,000 troops. And the war is on.

Drake himself penned a story for the collection, "Facing the Enemy." Other noteworthy entries are Robert Scheckley's "The Stand on Luminos," a light comic tale of greed and one race's refusal to believe the threat. S.N. Lewitt's "The Eyes of Texas" is a tidy puzzle piece in the tradition of the early masters. Steve Perry adds "Blind Spot" as a murder mystery, reminiscent of "Double Indemnity." Diane Duane (author of several "Star Trek" novels) gives a realistic account of a planetary assault in "Killer Cure."

On the whole, "Battlestation" is a good book to pick up and read on a weekend.

— Sam S. Kepfield

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