

Quilt show

Quilt show to raise money for charity. 3D

Catholic church issues its 'Oscars'

By CARY McMULLEN
N.Y. Times News Service

Hundreds of films stream through local cineplexes and art houses each year. One next month will get an Oscar for Best Picture.

The U.S. Catholic Conference wants you to know which ones are good, in more than one sense of the word.

Readers of Catholic magazines and regional newspapers may know the conference is in the business of reviewing movies. Its Office for Film and Broadcasting screened 240 theatrical releases last year and issued capsule reviews.

Last week — no doubt timed to coincide with the Oscar nominations — the office announced its list of the top 10 movies of 2000.

The office's reviewers employ much the same artistic criteria as most syndicated movie critics, and they can be just as tough. The reviews frequently employ such adjectives as "lame," "forced," "banal" and "vapid."

But the Catholic film office applies another layer of evaluation and uses a different rating scheme than G, PG, PG-13, etc.

The reviewers gave *'Hannibal'* an O, meaning morally offensive, the worst rating they can give a film. It's a designation that was given to 11 percent of movies reviewed in 2000.

This is the sort of thing the U.S. Catholic Conference pays especially close attention to.

For example, here's its review of the movie that is No. 1 at the box office this week, "Hannibal":

"Repelling sequel continues the murderous cannibalism of fugitive Dr. Hannibal Lecter [Anthony Hopkins] as he outsmarts an Italian cop but is ensnared by a vengeance-crazed former victim and comes face-to-face with his FBI nemesis, agent Starling [Julianne Moore]. Director Ridley Scott jettisons depth of character in favor of graphic, grotesque slaughters in a trashy and uninviting tale of human degradation. Excessive violence and gore, crude sexual references, some profanity and intermittent rough language."

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The other ratings are A-I, suitable for the entire family; A-II, for adolescents and adults; A-III, for adults; and A-IV, for adults, with reservations.

The Catholic reviewers are not prudish. Nudity or sex scenes alone would not earn a film an O, though it might get disapproving comments.

However, films that have no moral direction or mock moral standards or religious belief are much more likely to be branded offensive.

So what are the top 10 films of 2000, in the Catholic Conference's view? From one to 10, they are "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon," "Traffic," "Chicken Run," "Butterfly" (a foreign film, set during the Spanish Civil War), "Billy Elliot," "Best in Show," "Remember the Titans," "Cast Away," "The Color of Paradise" (a film from Iran about a blind boy) and "East-West" (another foreign film, about a doctor returning to the Soviet Union after World War II).

The list has some similarities to the Oscar nominations. Two of the five Best Picture nominees are on the list, and four on the Catholic list were represented in one or more major Oscar categories.

Of the Catholic 10, half were major studio releases and half, including "Billy Elliot," were foreign films. Three were rated R and only one ("Chicken Run") was rated G.

The notable omission from the list is

A time to give, sacrifice



Tim Lattner, right, talks about Lent while his wife, Pat, listens. On the left sits Andrew, 6, flipping through the pages of a small book while sitting on a couch at home Wednesday evening. The Lattners are Catholic, and like others, will observe Lent. BELOW: Andrew Lattner reads at home Wednesday.

Family uses Lent to teach its children life's lessons

By MATT EHLERS

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As a child, Tim Lattner always gave up something for Lent. "Ninety-nine percent of the time it was chocolate," he said.

But now that he and his wife, Pat, have two children of their own, Lenten traditions have changed a little. Instead of giving something up, the Lattners encourage their children to share and help others.

"The focus isn't as much on giving up as it is giving of," Pat Lattner said. "That's the focus that we like to take."

Lent begins next week with Ash Wednesday, and with it will come some extra family time in the Lattner house. Members of Holy Spirit Catholic Church, the Lattners believe it's important to emphasize Lent with their children, Andrew, 6, and Ben, 2.

Each evening the couple will discuss Lent with their boys, although Andrew grasps the concept better than his little brother.

The couple has a book that highlights Bible verses and works to explain Lenten ideas on a child's level.

"We really try to relate Christ's journey to his life" when reading with Andrew, Pat Lattner said.

Jesus Christ persevered through the



difficult times in his life, just as the Lattners hope their boys will in theirs.

"The choice Christ would make it to not give up, to keep going," she said.

She wants her sons to come away from the Lenten lessons knowing they should

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Pat Lattner

hold up Christ's life as an example.

"It's something I want these guys to see Lent as — are we living Christ's journey?"

She realizes it can be difficult for young children to completely understand all that's involved with the Lenten season, but the Lattners want to include the children in the tradition.

"I know as a kid it was an out-there concept," she said. "To understand there was a man condemned to death, carried a cross and died on a cross. It's a tough concept to grasp."

The Catholic tradition runs deep in the Lattner family. One of Tim Lattner's uncles was a priest, and his sister is a nun in Chicago.

Originally from Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, the family moved to Tuscaloosa four years ago because Tim Lattner works for Mercedes.

He said that Lent was a time of very

somber reflection when he was a child. "It was a time of restraint," he added, and, "Easter was always a big letting go."

"We always had a meal like Christmas and Thanksgiving combined."

One day the Lattner boys may observe similar traditions with their own families. For now, however, mom and dad will teach them the basics of the Lenten season.

To try and present it on Andrew's level, Pat Lattner said she encourages her oldest son to give of himself during Lent. It's the little things that matter. She encourages him to concentrate on sharing and cooperation while he's in school.

Small acts of kindness such as sharing crayons or being especially nice and helping out are important.

In the evenings, Pat Lattner asks him about his day at school. Each day during Lent she likes him to share one example from his day that shows he thought about the church season.

She said that early on in Lent, Andrew has a difficult time coming up with examples. But by the end, he's bringing it up in the morning before he goes to school, telling his mother how he plans to help others when he gets there.

"Lent is a good time to encourage that," she said.

Local artist paints folk art with dirt, sugar

By MATT EHLERS

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Whoever devised the rule that paintings displayed in galleries aren't for touching forgot to tell Jimmy Lee Sudduth.

Sudduth, 90, earlier this week strolled up to one of his paintings hanging in the art gallery on the Shelton State Community College campus. Looking dapper in a coat and tie and carrying his hat in his hand, he slid a finger in the brown paint that formed a border around the painting of a home.

Then he touched the finger to his tongue and proclaimed the paint to be easy on the taste buds.

"It's sweet," he said, grinning widely and surprising several onlookers.

As part of its Black History Month celebration, Shelton State hosted an installation of Sudduth's work and honored him with an afternoon reception. Sudduth, who lives in Fayette, is an internationally known folk artist famous for incorporating dirt, vegetation and other organic products into his paint.

The paint he tasted was made of dirt that was mixed with sugar to help it stick to the square of plywood.

Sudduth tasted the paint only minutes after he arrived at the reception, reinforcing his reputation as a character.

Everyone who knows him has a Sudduth story or two.

Clara Lamb of Tuscaloosa has been collecting Sudduth's paintings since the late 1970s. She bought most of them years ago and said that she's never paid more than \$25 for one of his pieces.

He once sold her a painting of a car for \$5 on the insistence of his late wife after Lamb inquired about it during a visit to their home. The painting was hanging



Folk artist Jimmy Lee Sudduth talks about creating one of his works, which is on display at Shelton State's National Bank of Commerce Gallery. Sudduth uses natural colors by using clay and mud as media.

above the couple's bed.

Now that's he's a little more famous, his work fetches a hefty price. The 18 paintings displayed at Shelton vary in price from \$200 to \$400.

Sudduth paints what he knows. Titles such as "Flowers in Basket," "Woman with Flowers in Hair" and "Chicken" sum up the kinds of subjects he tackles. A large self-portrait of him holding a guitar is also on display.

Known for collecting dirt from around his home to use as paint, Sudduth was approached after a trip to Washington,

D.C., in the 1970s, where he was honored during a ceremony at the Smithsonian Institution.

Lamb remembered that someone wanted to know if Sudduth had brought back any dirt from Washington to use in his paintings.

"No," he said. "It probably wouldn't be no account, just like those people up there."

Fayette Art Museum curator and director Jack Black said although Sudduth is not as spry as he used to be, he still welcomes people into his home to check out

IF YOU GO

An exhibit of Jimmy Lee Sudduth's paintings is available for viewing in the National Bank Of Commerce Art Gallery at Shelton State Community College.

The exhibit is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. The installation will remain on display until the end of February.

Call 391-2366 or 391-2342 for more information.

his paintings.

Black said that others have intimated that perhaps he should take over as the Sudduth's manager since they've been close friends for years. But if Black handled the business end of it, Sudduth wouldn't be able to show folks around his home, sharing his stories and talking art. "I wouldn't ever take away that traffic," Black said.

Sudduth is an engaging presence, making jokes and telling tales within minutes of walking into the room.

At the reception, he talked about his fondness for parties thrown in Louisiana. But rather than simply using words to share his experience, Sudduth tightened his lips and began belting trumpet blasts. Then he slapped his hand against his knee and did a few steps of a New Orleans jig.

But anyone headed to the Big Easy should be careful about who they dance with, he cautioned. Sometimes your partner might not be who you think they are. "Watch out for who you're dancing with," Sudduth said, grinning. "It could be a girl or a boy. They'll fool you."