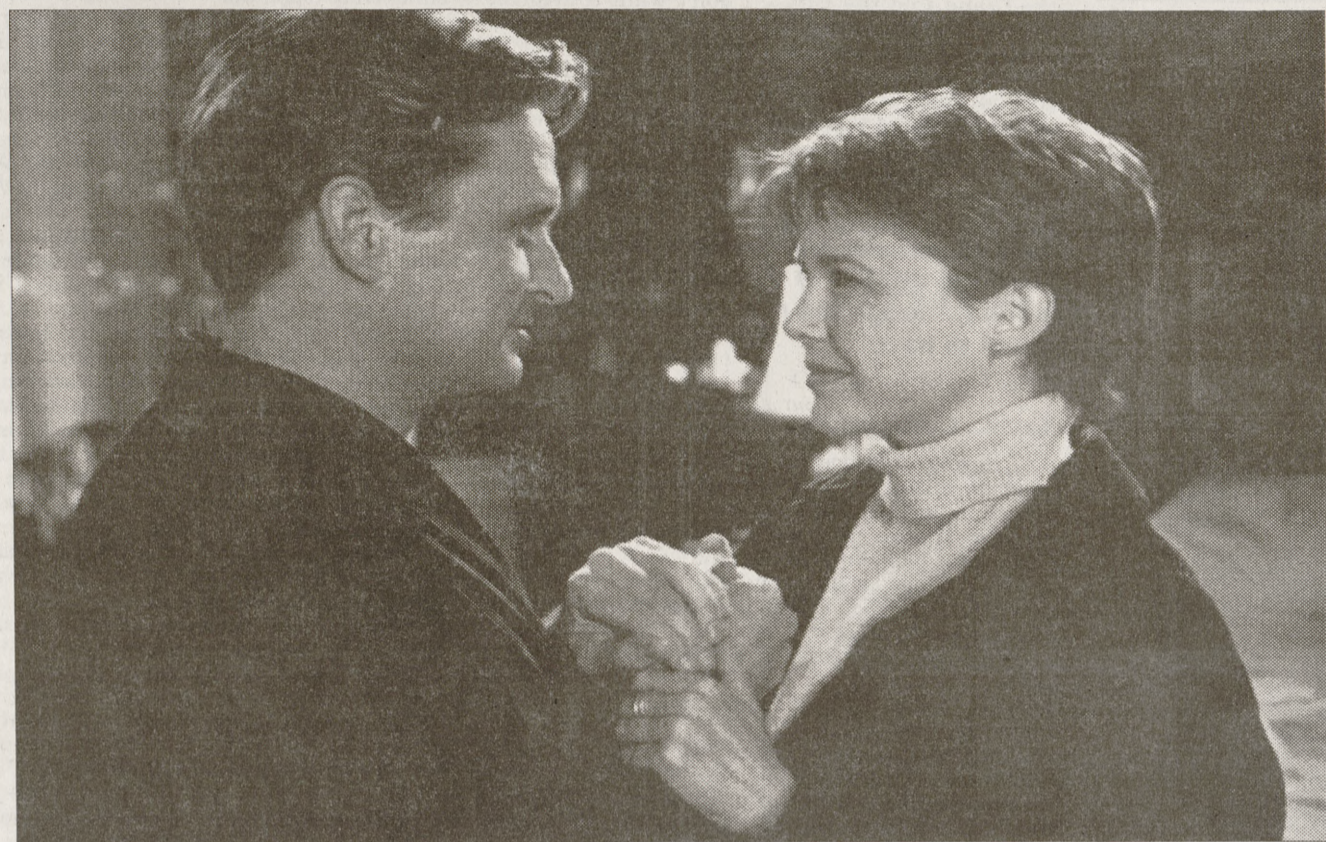


President deserves its growing popularity



Douglas and Bening make film realistic and heartwarming

by Michael Landauer
THE BATTALION

Hail to the chief, he's done it again. Rob Reiner has set himself apart from the Hollywood pack with his ability to tell a story through film.

His film's never seem to drag and always have something poignant to say — *The American President* not only fits this mold, it is one of Reiner's best examples of it.

The film is incredibly realistic — not in the way that it is really possible for any viewers to know. But Reiner and his staff spent party hours in the White House watching President Bill Clinton at work. What results is a casual but stressful portrayal of the presidential character, President Andrew Shepherd (Michael Douglas).

Shepherd, a widower who often takes time out of his schedule to spend with his teenage daughter, finds himself attracted to an environmental lobbyist, Sydney Ellen Wade (Annette Bening).

The initial courting could not be presented in a more charming way. Everything is believable and shows the awkwardness and difficulty that come with the presidential dating scene.

The fairy tale is threatened when the president's new girlfriend spends the night at the White House and the press corps breaks the story.

Senator Rumson (Richard Dreyfuss), a presidential candidate and all-around bad guy, jumps at the opportunity to use the president's romance to attack his character

MOVIE REVIEW
The American President
 Starring Michael Douglas,
 Annette Bening and Martin
 Sheen
 Directed by Rob Reiner
 Rated PG-13
 Playing at Hollywood 16
 ★★★★★ (out of five)

and spin the polls in his favor.

The movie is enjoyable from start to finish. If the audience is not captivated by the romance, it is watching in amazement as the president coolly glides through his duties. In a perfect heroic struggle, Shepherd keeps his proverbial other cheek turned as his reputation collapses around him.

Douglas captures Shepherd's integrity, but brings enough skill to add several other dimensions to his character. One minute Shepherd is posturing himself to be in complete control of his budding romance, and the next minute he is speechless in the face of Wade's sexual advances. Douglas carries it all off without a hitch, adding more humor and life to the role than would actually fit the repertoire of most real presidents.

Although the portrayal of the president may seem to present the greatest challenge, all the characters in this film were handled well. Each role seems as if it was

written for the actor who filled it. For example, Michael J. Fox's portrayal of the president's workaholic advisor is perfect. It's Alex P. Keaton grown up but working for the other side.

Which brings us to politics, something this movie makes no attempt to avoid. Reiner, who played the liberal Michael Stivic ("Meathead" to Archie Bunker) on *All in the Family*, makes heroes out of liberals and villains out of conservatives who are bent to destroy Shepherd's character — sound familiar?

Obviously this aspect of the film will make some people (Mario Cuomo) enjoy it even more and make others (Bob Dole) despise it. However, this film tells such a great story that anyone, with the aide of blinders if necessary, can enjoy it.

The one weakness of the movie is the its all-too-neat ending — a problem shared by the copout ending of *A Few Good Men*. An argument can be made that these movies can't end any other way, but Reiner actually borrows a page from the ultra-cheesy *Dave* at one point. The way the president can captivate the press corps with a moving speech about the country's direction while tying it into his love life is totally unbelievable. Shred it and throw it on salad, but the film can do without it.

Despite this weakness, Reiner delivers another story that entertains audiences with captivating filmmaking. *The American President* is a realistic fairy tale. It's no wonder that it's doing so well in the polls.

Greenpeace

Director visits campus as favor to students

By Amy Collier
THE BATTALION

When Carrie Thompson, president of the Texas Environmental Action Coalition, went to an environmental conference at the University of North Carolina last month, she did not expect to meet someone she admires.

Thompson ran into Barbara Dudley, executive director of Greenpeace, at a luncheon. During their conversation, Thompson was surprised again when Dudley volunteered to speak at A&M.

"It's an incredible opportunity and an incredible honor," Thompson said. "She's just doing it out of kindness."

Dudley is presenting "Building an Environmental Movement for the 21st Century" in 601 Rudder today at 10:30 a.m.

"It's a really good opportunity for this campus," Thompson said. "The more people that attend, the better."

Marcy Hirschfeld, assistant to Dudley, said Dudley will give a brief overview of where the environmental movement used to be, where it is now and where it is going. She said Dudley emphasizes to students that they have the responsibility and power to start an environmental movement.

"I'm sure she just sees it as a wonderful opportunity to reach out to students," Hirschfeld said. "She knows students have a lot of energy."

Thompson, a senior geography / environmental studies major, said she hopes students from all of the major environmental groups on campus go to the speech. She said she wants the speech to help begin a strong environmental movement on campus.

"We hope it will be a catalyst to spark a movement here," she said. "There's a lot to do. Our main goal for now is to start some serious discussion."

TEAC will help to start serious discussion about the environment by hosting an open discussion based on Dudley's speech tonight in 510 Rudder at 8:30 p.m.

"Having a common experience will make it easier for us to have

dialogue on something," Thompson said. "It's one thing they can talk about in common. We're just hoping to get all of the different perspectives. All of the perspectives will help us to build a more meaningful movement here."

Hirschfeld said she hopes environmental groups on the A&M campus will be influenced by Dudley's speech to help the environment.

"A lot of people have a lot of preconceived notions about Greenpeace."

—Carrie Thompson
president of TEAC

"It would be wonderful if they found a shared purpose," she said. "Certainly, they could do a lot together."

Greenpeace is an environmental organization formed in 1971 with the purpose of creating a green and peaceful world. The organization follows the principle that whatever the risk, environmentalists can change harmful practices to the environment by taking an unwavering stance at the scene of environmental harm.

The actions of Greenpeace members sometimes cause the organization to be stereotyped as liberal and radical.

"A lot of people have a lot of preconceived notions about Greenpeace and environmentalists," Thompson said. "I hope people come with an open mind."

Hirschfeld said people should not classify Dudley, or anyone, as a liberal just because they care about the environment.

"There are quite a few legislators in this country who are conservatives and environmentalists," she said. "I think Barbara is simply interested in getting as many students involved in the environmental issues as she can."

"I would encourage students to come with an open mind and just hear what Barbara has to say about environmentalism. The most important thing to do is to get involved now."

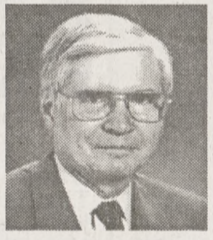
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If you have any thoughts or concerns regarding student life here at A&M, I'm very interested in hearing them. I am Malon Southerland, your Vice-President for Student Affairs and my office is on the 10th floor of Rudder Tower. My door is always open and I encourage you to come by if I can ever be of assistance. Feel free to call me anytime at 845-4728 or contact me through e-mail:
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