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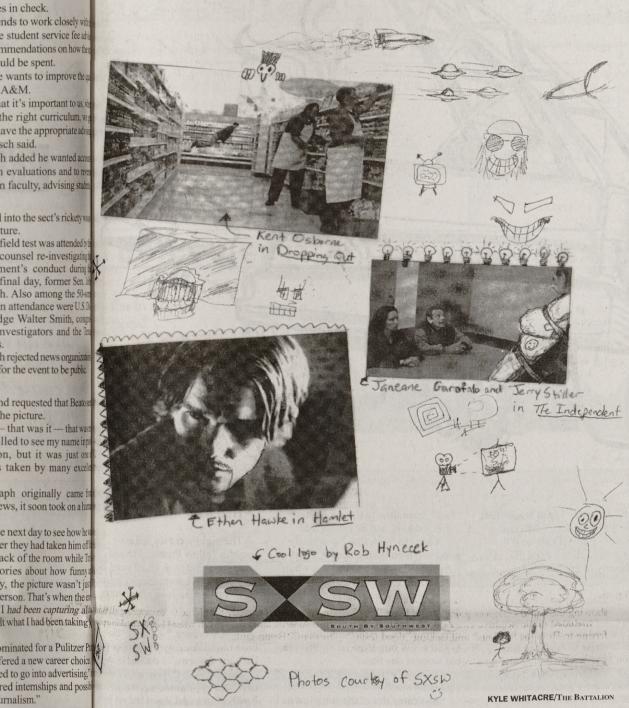
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AGGIELIFE

Monday, March 20, 2000

DOWN and out at South by Southwest



BY KYLE WHITACRE The Battalion PART 1 OF 2

nother year has swept the annual South by Southwest Annual South by Southwest music and film festival into history, which descended upon Austin with all its might and fury this spring break, breaking rules and standards.

and setting T modern culture.

trip began

two-hour burn down Highway 21 and 290, which brought me straight into the heart of Austin and to the Austin Convention Center, the headquarters of this year's festival, where I hosted the filmmaker's lounge for the next five days. Work began early Friday morning, where one of the first things we learned was that the AC thermostat was broken and the lounge would be a brisk 55° F for the next five days. I lamented not bringing anything long-sleeved.

Saturday I hunted down the MSC Film Society execs, who bought badges for their members but ended up using the badges themselves. We began the day by attending the world premiere of the modern day remake of Hamlet, starring Ethan Hawke, Bill Murray and Kyle MacLachlan. It's amazing how well brooding Gen-X actor Hawke can portray Hamlet. The film had excellent night cinematography and musical score but was

marred by horrible day photography and bad acting by Bill Murray. After Hamlet, I headed over to

Journey Through Porn, a funny and insightful documentary about the pornography industry and the

Sunday started out the same as the previous days, with corporate sponsors freaking out about the fact that no filmmakers showed up for the complimentary breakfasts in the lounge while starved volunteers watched pans of eggs and bacon go untouched. When will people learn filmmakers are second only to musicians as the laziest people alive?

In the afternoon, one of the feature conference sessions of the festival took place a conversation with

John Carpenter (Halloween, Escape from New York), Robert Rodriguez (Desperado) and Harry Knowles (Ain't It Cool News). In a conference room fifty people over capacity, the three talked about everything from censorship in film to the revolution in digital filmmaking. Car-

penter reminisced on how censorship '70s

more filmmak-

ers to be more creative with the presentation of violence in storytelling and said that because of more government involvement today in censorship and lawsuits, the same kind of creativity is starting to reappear.

Sunday night also saw the premiere of one of the most anticipated films of SXSW, The Independent. The line for the film stretched the Alamo Draft House for the around an entire block, and I armidnight showing of Rated X: A rived an hour early to take my place

behind a hundred other people already in line.

While waiting with the Film Society crew, we talked with Ann, a Canadian film student who was on an internship that gave her three-all-expense paid trips to three U.S. Film Festivals.

She explained to us why many

U.S. film business is moving to Canada and taking with them bigbudget projects like the upcoming X-Men movie. Apparently the government there does not tax and censor films, but instead supports them financially, gives them tax breaks and funds the education of artists. Impressed by the brilliant ideas of the Canadian government, I told her how most our taxes go to military research, and while most of our creative minds struggle to eat, we could wipe Canada off the face of

We were then let into the theater where Janeane Garofalo and Jerry Stiller introduced the film. What followed was an hour and a half of non-stop comedy centering around the life of fictitious exploitation director Morty Finemann (Stiller), whose films include Acupuncture Academy II: Pointy, Pointy, Pointy, World War III. II and The Justice League of Superfreaks.

Monday, after a boring day in the filmmakers' lounge, Jason Puckett, next year's chair of MSC Film Society, and I headed over to see the animated shorts. All the shorts were amazing, but the best was When The Day Breaks, an animated short from Canada which is up for an Oscar this year.

After the shorts, we met up with everyone else to see the much-anticipated Dark Days, a

See SXSW on Page 4.

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