Reel Reviews

Capital Film presents... *Chuck and Buck*

Jenn Brayton

The Brunswickan

If you're losing faith in the creativity of screenwriters, and are bored with the pabulum being offered as movie fare from Hollywood, *Chuck and Buck* should be an eye opener. This cleverly conceived independent American film by Miguel Arteta could be called a new twist on the old theme of sexual obsession.

The film is about two men, Buck and Chuck, who were once childhood best friends. While Chuck has moved away, Buck has stayed in his same home town, living with his mother. After she dies, he meets his old and dearest friend Chuck, whom he hasn't seen in 16 years. Chuck (played by Chris Weitz who wrote and directed American Pie) has become Charles, a straight-laced man living in LA with a BMW, a fiancée, a white-collar job. The problem is that Buck has never truly grown up and has remained a child emotionally. And Buck still believes deeply that the two were meant to be friends for life. As a result, Buck moves to Chuck's hometown, regularly stalks him, calls him incessantly, continuously shows up at his home, and finally produces a play revealing the unknown truth at the heart of their childhood friendship.

Buck may be the strangest character in movie history. Brilliantly played by screenwriter Mike White (who writes for Dawson's Creek and Freaks & Geeks), Buck has emotionally never left his childhood behind. At 27, his bedroom is still filled with every childhood accessory: piles of boxed board games, stuffed animals, matchbox cars, and the persistent motif, an illuminated plastic globe that displays lollipops. His chronically half-open mouth and shock of red hair are both boyishly comic and oddly endearing. Yet set against his extreme obsession with his old friend, and his stalking behavior, Buck is also eerily intense and scary.

Filmed using digital video, *Chuck and Buck* makes effective use of the texture to give the film a voyeuristic and intimate quality comparable to watching a home video. Like *Happiness, Blue Velvet, or Welcome to the Dollhouse, Chuck and Buck* is simultaneously humorous, thought provoking, and disturbing. It challenges the audience to think in new ways about the nature and taboos of friendships, relationships, maturity, childhood sexuality, and the fluidity of sexual identity. It will stay with you long after the credits roll and the lights go on.

Chuck and Buck is rated R in North America for sexuality, controversial subject matter, and language. The official web site is: www.chucknbuck.com

Please check out the web site if you want to encounter more of Buck and his childlike world. You can visit his bedroom, send postcards, read over his play, look at his scrapbooks, and in general, experience Buck's man-child mind at work.

CD contest !

This week we have the latest from Robbie Williams and The Moffats. To win, write down six reasons why cats are better than dogs, and drop them off in The Contest Box, Room 35 SUB. We need your student number and phone number too. Enter - It's so damn easy!

Almost Famous

Nick Logan

The Brunswickan

Leading the pack of this year's Oscar hopefuls is Cameron Crowe's long-awaited follow-up to his 1996 hit (and best picture nominee) *Jerry Maguire*, *Almost Famous*, starring: Patrick Fugit, Billy Crudup, Kate Hudson, Phillip Seymour Hoffman, and Frances McDormand. This movie essentially does for musicians and groupies what *Maguire* did for sports agents: both humanizes and glamorizes without being unimaginable. It is also a quintessential "road movie" in which more and more unique characters get picked up along the way, making the story that much more original and entertaining.

William Miller (Fugit) is a shy fifteen year-old scholastically advanced yet socially inept music freak. Eighteen year-old Fugit is a refreshing face among young actors who are wasting their talent in the onslaught of teenybopper flicks. He gives a very smart and strong performance and holds his own with the eclectic ensemble of actors which Crowe has assembled. William's love for the art is born after his rebel sister, Anita (Zooey Deschanel), runs away from home leaving William (circa 1969) her forbidden stash ofd rock and roll records. Anita flees from home with her boyfriend to become an airline stewardess, unable to live under the wholesome values of her mother, Elaine (McDormand), who (like many other parental units of the time) considers rock music to be the root of all evils. McDormand is fantastic as the domineering, but tormented, Elaine and she gives her best performance since she won her Oscar for *Fargo* in 1996; this performance will no doubt give her a chance at a second. Having failed with her daughter, she is bound and determined to save William, however the bug has already bit him. Fast forward to four years later, when rock is said to be in its "death throes," William yearns to get the chance to be a music journalist. His writing catches the eye of Lester Bangs (Hoffman), the editor of *Creem* magazine. Lester admires William and takes him under his wing. His first assignment is to get backstage and interview legendary rock group *Black Sabbath*. Unfortunately, not that many fifteen year-olds are accepted as journalists and he gets the boot before he even gets in and is banished with the rest of the groupies. But wait, the girls that are about to welcome William into their überfan collective are not groupies, they are "Band-Aids;" they are proverbial "about the music" not the sex, or at least nothing more than blow jobs, so they say. These anti-groupies are led by a fairy-godmother of sorts, the be all and end all of Band-Aids, the illuminous Penny Lane (Hudson). This is truly Hudson's big break performance. The beautiful wunderkind, the spawn of Goldie Hawn, is comical, endearing, and even provocative in her portrayal. Lane and her transient followers, which include the likes of Polexia Aphrodesia (Anna Paquin) and the vixenous Sapphire (Fairuza Balk), have the power to get William in with the bands, but not necessarily in the door. Again, he gets left in the dark, but his lucky break comes when the opening act, *Stillwater*, takes a liking to him and invites him in for the show; not because he is a journalist though, they hate journalists, but because he is a writer who is actually a fan. The band is led by raucous singer Jeff Bebe (Jason Lee), but the real star is guitarist Russell Hammond (Crudup). Billy Crudup has been one of Hollywood's best kept secrets for a few years now, but Crowe puts his talent on display for all in this film, giving him a role that was once intended for Tom Cruise. Crudup was the better choice; he genuinely captures Russell's young-hearted arrogance and angst.

William has the experience of his life and gets the OK to hang with the band any time he wants. His fantasy-come-reality becomes more surreal when *Rolling Stone*, unknowing of his age, offers him the chance to travel with *Stillwater* and write an insider take on the life of these would-be rock 'n' roll gods and surviving in "the Industry of Cool." He leaves behind his school, his life, and his heartbroken mother for his big chance. He's off on tour with *Stillwater* (and of course the Band-Aids) to see all of the stardom and scandal for himself — the old fashioned sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll! The party never ends for William, but both the magazine and his mother's deadlines are arriving and passing before he gets to all of the truths from behind the scenes.

This terrific movie shouldn't be missed by anyone. It is a poignant comedy for both young and old. Writer/director Cameron Crowe should be commended for creating such bold and entertaining characters as well as a story that is fresh, intelligent, and passionate. *Almost Famous* is almost *perfect*.

Knowhere to go?

by K Brookland

Screening a film? Presenting a play or a concert? Holding an art exhibit? Own a business that hires musicians to entertain your clientele? We can help you publicize your event free of charge! All you have to do is e-mail bruns@unb.ca (please put "Attention K" in the subject line), or fax 453-5073 (again, Attention K) to let us know what you have planned. Our deadline to include your events is 5:00 p.m. each Tuesday. In alphabetical order:

*Bugaboo Creek Pub (*formerly *Rye's Deli)* on Queen Street, will be hosting the annual Forestry Woodmen's competition banquet for UNB Forestry Saturday (Oct. 14th). This is an evening no forester will want to miss!

The Capital on Queen Street, welcomes Mackinaw tonight and Saturday (Oct. 14th).
And don't forget, every Monday night go listen to some amazing jazz with The Time Beings. Get out and support your local musicians!

The Cellar has Caution Jam back for an encore performance of their groovin' tunes tonight and Saturday. Don't miss these guys.
On Thursday, October 19th, Toronto's Chuck is Dead will be there with their cool mix of jazzy, funky, country stuff.

The Chestnut on York St. welcomes The Salteens, an alternative rock band from Ontario tonight. Tomorrow night (Oct. 14th) Parts Unknown and More Plastic, from Ontario will be there with even more alternative music. This venue is getting a reputation as Fredericton's home of alternative music, something that's been sorely missing in this town. Hats off to the Chestnut!

Dolan's Pub on King Street has the Boys Next Door tonight and Saturday
And on Thursday the 19th, back by popular demand - it's Fortune's Hand! Both of these groups provide great pub entertainment...be there!

Gallery 78 is saluting artists who participated in the Marion McCain Juried Art Exhibition entitled "Artists in a Floating World." A selection of works by 15 Fredericton-based artists will be exhibited from October 15th to November 12th. Gallery 78 is located in the historic Crocket House, across from Christ Church Cathedral on the corner of Church and Queen Streets.

Mexicala Rosa's, better known as Mexi's, on King Street, has live entertainment each and every Margarita Monday!

The *SUB Cafeteria* is the locale of India Night this year from 5:30 to 11:00 p.m. Saturday, October 21st. Enjoy the East Indian cuisine and cultural programme. Tickets are $15 for adults, $12 for students, $6 for children aged six to 12. There is no admittance fee for children under six. For tickets please call 459-1124 or 457-7086.

The *Upper Deck* on King Street has The Rik & Brendan Band, with Chris Colepaugh on drums tonight, Saturday and Sunday night.
This venue has live entertainment almost every night of the week so check it out!

