

TELEVISION REVIEW

'Mad Men'

Reviewed by Paul Osolnick
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

The new season of AMC's "Mad Men" offered a different product than seasons past when it aired on Sunday.



The fourth season premiere of Mad Men — a series based on advertising firms in the 1960s — opened with a question that has many answers: "Who is Don Draper?"

In previous seasons, Draper was a married man ("happily" was left out for a reason), father and a talented creative director at the successful advertising agency Sterling Cooper.

During the Korean War, he was literally a different person, before dying in an accident after which the current Draper assumed his identity.

And now, Don Draper is divorced, sharing custody of his children and working as a partner at the unstable, "scrappy upstart" advertising firm Sterling Cooper Draper Pryce.

The question is asked by a reporter interviewing him about the start of the new company, but when Draper receives the question, he dismisses it with a question of his own.

This sets the tone for Draper throughout most of the episode.

Draper is bitter and out of character as he blows an account with a conservative bathing suit company by offering an advertising campaign much more "sexy" than they had asked for.

His personal life has taken a dive as well, as he goes "home" to a small apartment that is often empty.

(Sometimes he finds his housemaid with a plate of cold pork chops waiting for him.)

After blowing the first interview — a move that cost him and the company bad press — he is told to have another interview with someone at a different newspaper, a better one.

The show ends with Draper holding another interview with a reporter from the Wall Street Journal. Unlike the first time, Draper is eager to talk, mainly about the founding of the new ad agency.

The episode ends with Draper having an entirely different disposition from where the season premiere started.

He is still divorced, but he is calling the shots. He is still a member of an unstable company, but with Draper's talent, it won't be unstable for long. And unlike the grimace the protagonist opens the episode with, Draper is all smiles when the credits roll.

Get ready, America — Don Draper is back.
Grade: A

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'Ramona and Beezus'

Reviewed by Megan Rogers
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

In the words of the one and only Ramona Quimby, "Ramona and Beezus" is "terrific!"

Viewers who had an imagination like Ramona's will long to return to the magical world of elementary school. Those who didn't will get a glimpse into what they missed.

The movie follows Ramona — the spunky youngster with the cut-straight-across bangs all girls suffered through at one point — as she makes her stand against growing up and "coloring within the lines."

Long-time Beverly Cleary fans will delight in seeing the book sprawled across the big screen with its essential themes and characters intact.

Scenes will make you beg to return to third grade — where the biggest problem is taking a horrendous photo on school picture day and the solution to every tough situation is to run away.

Joey King plays the adorable Ramona and Selena Gomez surprises and impresses as older sister Beezus. King and Gomez have a comfortable on-screen relationship that translates to some cute sister moments.

Supporting characters are equally well-cast. Sandra Oh plays the strict but well-meaning teacher. John Corbett is the fun-loving dad. Hutch Dano is Henry Higgins, the other half of Beezus's wonderfully cute yet first-boyfriend-awkward romance.

Though the movie focuses mostly on the antics of Ramona, the other characters' story lines are all developed and add color to the movie.

Sisters will find themselves relating to their on-screen counterparts. Ramona stars as the perpetually annoying yet endearing younger sister. Beezus charms as the young teenage navigating through her first relationship with constant mishaps caused by the pest, Ramona.

As an oldest sister, I can attest that the director gets the sister dynamic down pat: lots of slamming doors, annoying antics and lots of teasing, but some touchy-feely "I've got your back moments" to cause the audience to "aww."

Audience members will be enchanted and enraptured as they hold their breathe to see what farfetched scheme Ramona will come up with next, if Henry and Beezus will get their kiss and, most importantly, whether the family gets the happy ending it deserves.

Travel back to the world of recess, imagination, lemonade sales and scary monsters hiding under the bed. The responsibilities will still be there when you exit the theater, but you'll be more excited to tackle them.

Grade: A

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WORTH LESS THAN ITS WEIGHT

'Salt' proves bland, predictable

Reviewed by Nathan Pipenberg
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

In "Salt," Angelina Jolie plays an American double agent named Evelyn Salt trained as a Russian spy and inserted back into America as part of a plot to kill both the Russian and American presidents.

Or something like that. It's all very confusing, really.

To save us from thinking too hard about the story line, Jolie puts herself through a series of stunts ranging from chilling to absolutely bloodcurdling with gusto.

When she's not jumping from the roof of one speeding car to another, she's escaping from a police cruiser by tasing the driver with his own gun — while handcuffed.

To actually attempt to describe the plot — Jolie plays a CIA agent accused by a Russian defector of involvement in a plot to kill the Russian president and begin a nuclear showdown resulting in the United States' demise.

Thanks to brain scans and lie detectors they run on the defector while she's in the holding cell, the CIA takes this threat seriously.

Soon Jolie is running from every cop in the country, and looking more and more guilty of being the Russian sleeper she was accused of being.

It's impossible to say it's not fun to watch. Like a James Bond movie, "Salt" is best if you forget the plot details that will ultimately go unexplained, and watch the spectacle as it unfolds.

Watching Jolie devise a rocket launcher from a fire extinguisher and some sort of handy chemical she happens across is marvelous. And if you're male, so is the scene where she covers a security camera with her underwear.

Let's see Bond pull out his undergarments from inside a tux.

But when the action lags, the movie

is incredibly dull. In a Jason Bourne-like fashion, we slowly learn about Salt's misunderstood past, dead family members and how she was brainwashed into becoming a killer.

You quickly realize, however, that it's not going to make as much sense as the Bourne trilogy did, and instead forget about it.

Bourne enticed us because, even though he knew how to kill a man in five seconds, he didn't know everything. There were other characters for him to actually talk to and learn from.

In contrast, Salt commits every action with unyielding certainty. There's no trace of ambiguity in her mind. And her self-assuredness makes her boring.

Luckily, the movie doesn't pause for build-up very often. When director Phillip Noyce does, it's usually with a close-up of Jolie's expressive face.

She's a seasoned killer, yes, but when she's staring painfully into the distance, you realize how this lifestyle is affecting her.

Then she crashes a police car over the side of an overpass, and walks away unscathed, mindress-clad hips swinging, as you

cheer her on to keep up the fight.

As the movie careens to an ending, the film's booming soundtrack — an orchestral tour de force — seems unnecessary. Everyone in the audience has either already figured out who the bad guy really is (do you really think it's going to be Jolie?) or didn't care from the beginning.

"Who is Evelyn Salt?" That's the question Noyce begs us to ask, but it never seems like we really need to know the answer.

Grade: C

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THE NECTAR OF THE GODS

New local restaurant impresses

Reviewed by Kathleen Loughran
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Simply stated, the food at Rey Azteca is so good that I suspect the restaurant is not in cahoots with the local King but, rather the Aztec gods.

Rey Azteca, 489 Benner Pike, located next to Uthmaniyah, recently opened in State College.

As a vegetarian I find it somewhat difficult to go out to eat at times. Sure, every restaurant has a salad, but there are only so many times I can have just a salad to dine.

To like a little variety — and Rey Azteca gives me just that. Because I was a section of the menu specifically for vegetarians, the restaurant definitely impresses a few additional times.

The first time I went to Rey Azteca I noticed the vegetarian options. Though he did not have the most extensive list on the vegetarian menu, the variety in the food is still impressive. I ordered the beef burrito and found that the vegetarian burrito was actually better.

My friend said, "Beef burrito, but the vegetarian is so much better than the beef." I was so happy to hear that. I had heard that the vegetarian burrito was better than the beef burrito, but I had never tried it.

On the night, the chef gave me a special treat, a salad that was

complete with onions, mushrooms, zucchini and peppers. Then you have another plate with rice, beans, guacamole and salsa. Finally you receive three small tortillas that are way better than the ones bought at the store.

Though proportionally there are not enough tortillas for the amount of vegetables served, it doesn't matter, because (trust me) three tortillas are enough to make you full. And if for some reason they're not, you can fill up on the chips and salsa they serve you beforehand and continue to refill.

Even though I didn't think the restaurant's salsa was anything special, its chips were pretty good. They tasted extremely similar to the ones I basically lived on while in Mexico this past winter.

If you're not a vegetarian, don't worry — Rey Azteca even has more options for meat lovers. Obviously I've never personally tried any of that particular cuisine, but according to the rest of my dinner party, it's pretty delicious.

Each time I went, my friends — who aren't vegetarians — came along, and they all gave the restaurant rave reviews. And though the restaurant has yet to pass the test of my dad — basically a connoisseur and an extreme-

ly harsh critic — I'm fairly certain he would be a fan of the food.

However I'm not entirely positive he would be a fan of the service. Since the restaurant doesn't take reservations, expect you'll have to wait, for at least a little while, especially on a Friday or Saturday night.

And the first time you go, make sure to factor in time for some chaos, because signing up for a table is also organized. The restaurant uses the same table for people who are waiting for their meal as it uses for people who need to sign in to be seated. As a result, there is definitely some confusion.

Another noteworthy item is that the restaurant has a very casual vibe. It's a great place to kick back and relax, but not the type of place to take your one to if you're dressed to impress.

But my absolute favorite part of Rey Azteca is that most of the servers aren't fluent in English. It just makes the whole experience that much more authentic to hear them speaking Spanish. And hey, if all else fails, it's a great opportunity to brush up on your linguistic skills.

Grade: A-

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