

Friendship with wolves

Disney film documents relationship between man and wildlife

by Christi Luden
The Collegian

The story of a boy and his dog is definitely an old and trite theme. Walt Disney, however, under the direction of Randal Kleiser, transforms that commonness into a crisp and vibrant new film.

White Fang is set in the Gold Rush days and stars a young man (Ethan Hawke) looking for his father's fortune. Along the road, he finds manhood, hardship, and life-long friends.

When Jack Conway (Hawke) first approaches Alex (Klaus Brawndauer) and asks to go along on this next journey, Alex grudgingly refuses. After being persuaded by a jolly old friend of Jack's father, Alex finally agrees to take the boy along.

Jack's first mountain-man experience isn't a good one. He is made fun of because he reads, overturns a huge sled with a casket containing a body and falls into an ice cold river. Nearly dying from hypothermia, Jack is saved by the old man and a fire made with his

precious books.

The hardships continue as the three men are approached by starving wolves. The old man is mauled to death (off screen of course. . . it is Walt Disney) and the other two fall asleep only to be awakened by beady eyes and snarling teeth. This is the first of many confrontations with these savage beasts.

While Jack and Alex are journeying through the cold wilderness, a young cub, half dog and half wolf, is trying to make it on his own. After his mother's death, White Fang is left alone to fend for himself. The first scenes with the cub are extremely similar to last year's film *The Bear*. White Fang is then caught by an Indian and brought out of the wilderness to become a work dog. Jack's first formal meeting with White Fang is when he and Alex visit the Indian. Love at first sight is the best way to describe the relationship.

Young White Fang is later taken by a mean, money-hungry man interested in "training" him

to be a fighter. The training consists of beating, teasing, and ridiculing White Fang until he becomes a vicious creature ready to tear anything and everything apart. These sad scenes go on until young Jack visits the show and saves White Fang from his death.

This is where their relationship starts. Jack and Alex take White Fang to Jack's father's cabin where they are going to pan for gold. It is here that Jack succeeds in taming the vicious dog, Alex succeeds in turning Jack into a man, and both men succeed in finding their fortunes.

One thing that makes this film extremely worthwhile is the gorgeous scenery. The wintery landscape shots are breathtaking and the size of the movie screen only makes them more ominous.

The two young characters (Jack and White Fang) have a lot in common. Both are left in a cruel world without guidance from parents. Both have to learn hard lessons in order to survive. And both end up finding a true friendship that lasts a lifetime.

May I have this dance?



Jim Pierdomenico/The Collegian

That's gotta' hurt: Two members of the Erie Bayfront Ballet perform a scene from "The Dream Lives On" Friday evening in the Wintergarden.

Up Close With...



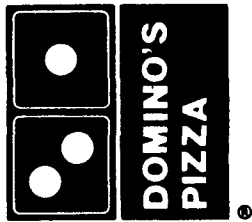
Maureen A. Finn

Name: Maureen Finn
Birthdate: February 15, 1966
Birthplace: Pittsburgh, PA
Current job position: Coordinator of Student Organizations and Program Development.
Very first job: Babysitting a couple of children in the neighborhood.
Secret vice: The Simpsons
Three things that can always be found in your refrigerator: Chicken, frozen yogurt, and grapefruit juice.
Movie you could see again any time: Anything with Dustin Hoffman in it.
Book you could read again any time: "A Tale of Two Cities."
With whom would you most like to have dinner?: Harrison Ford
Your ultimate dream vacation: Going on a cruise to Alaska in the summer.
What actor would you have portray yourself in a movie based on your life?: Meg Ryan
Behrend's best kept secret: How beautiful the campus looks each season.
Accomplishment you are proudest of: I graduated cum laude, and I managed to make it through my undergraduate and graduate years without "pulling an all-nighter."
People may be surprised to know that... As a child, I gave my kindergarten teacher a lot of grief.
Things you could do without: People who have a negative attitude.



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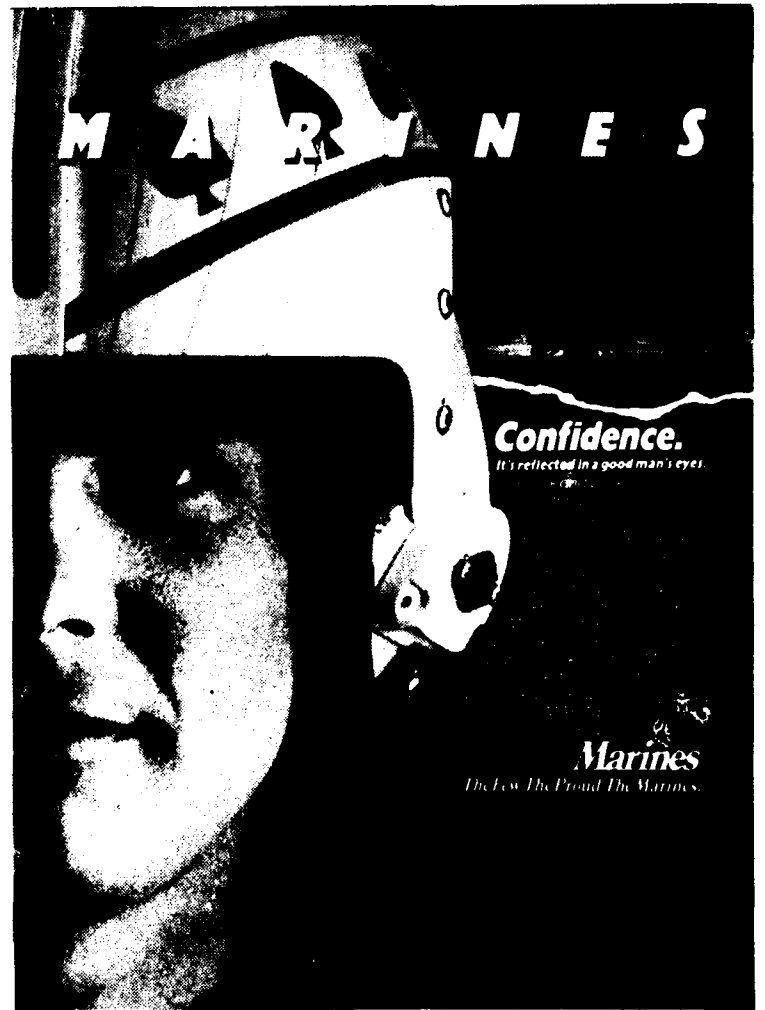


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