



ANDRE is a film generally regarded as family-friendly. Is it really? Here's Kino Ken's review of that dvd film.

13 of a possible 20 points

1/2 of a possible **

United States / Canada / Australia (Tasmania) color 94 minutes
 live action feature family dramedy Paramount Pictures /
 The Kushner-Locke Company Producers: Sue Baden-Powell, Dana Baratta,
 Annette Handley Chandler, Adam Shapiro

Key: *indicates outstanding technical achievement or performance
 (j) designates a juvenile performer

Points:

- 2 Direction: George Miller 2nd Unit Direction: Ernie Orsatti
- 1 Editing: Harry Hitner, Patrick Kennedy

- Montage Editing: Charlie Bowyer Montage Design: Dana Baratta
- 1 Cinematography: Thomas Burstyn
- Still Photography: Jack Rowand*
- 1 Lighting: Einar Hansen and Chris McGuire
- Color Timing: Ricardo Oliveira
- 0 Screenplay: Dana Baratta, based on the book *A Seal Called Andre* by
Harry Goodridge and Lew Dietz
- Script Supervision: Jessica Clothier
- 2nd Unit Script Supervision: Jackie Gondrella
- Music Supervision: Harold Bronson and Spencer Proffer
- Music Editing: Mark Heyes, Stan Jones, Carl Zittler
- Music Mixing: Robin Gray
- 1 Music: Bruce Rowland Orchestrations: Nerida Tyson-Chew
- 1 Production Design: William Elliott
- Art Direction: Sheila Haley 2nd Unit Art Direction: Nick Rippon
- Set Decoration: Barry Kemp
- Set Dressing: Gordon Clapp, Denise Hutniak, Chuck Robinson, and
David Paul Hewitt White
- Costume Design: Maya Mani
- Makeup: Beverley Keigher, Donna Spahn, Jacky Wilkinson
- Props: Mark Francis
- 2 Sound Editing Supervision: G. Michael Graham
- Sound Editing: Bill Bell, Mike Dickeson, David Eichhorn, Mark Friedgen,
Gary Macheel, Mark Steele, Richard Steele
- Sound Effects: Steve Copley, John Sievert, Frank Welker*, Tim Chilton,
Nelson Ferreira
- Sound Mixing: David Appleby, Michael McGee, Scott Purdy
- Casting: Annette Benson, Lindsay Walker, James Forsyth (extras)
- 2 Acting
- 2 Creativity
- 13 total points

Cast: Tina Majorino (j)* (Toni Whitney, sister to Steve and Paula),
Chelsea Field* (Thalice Whitney, mother of Steve, Paula, and Toni),
Shane Meier (j) (Steve Whitney, brother to Toni and Paula),

**Aidan Pendleton (Paula Whitney, sister to Toni and Steve),
Shirley Broderick (Mrs. McCann), Keith Carradine*
(Harry Whitney, father of Steve, Paula, and Toni; husband of Thalice),
Andrea Libman (Mary May), Keith Szarabajka* (Billy Baker), Joshua Jackson (j)*
(Mark Baker, son of Billy), Jay Brazeau (Griff Armstrong), Bill Dow (Ellwyn),
Joy Coghill (Betsy), Stephen Dimopoulos (Dan Snow), Frank Turner
(John Miller), Kristian Ayre (Gerald), Gregory Smith (Bobby),
Ric Reid (Henry White), Duncan Fraser (Jack Adams), Gary Jones
(Lance Tindall), Teryl Rothery (Jennifer Fife), Douglas Newell (Lou),
Annette O'Toole (Toni's adult voice)**

Filmed in various coastal regions of Canada, the United States, and Australia, ANDRE is a globetrotting production featuring as its star a sea lion masquerading as a seal. Essentially trading on the cuteness of its prominent swimmer, the movie depicts the its early years as a domestic fixture, highlighting the effects it has on a community which ultimately adopts it as a kind of mascot.

An especially intimate bonding occurs between seven-year-old Toni Whitney and orphaned seal pup after the animal's mother swims into a trawling net in 1962 off the coast of Maine. It subsequently drowns while struggling to free itself. Editing passes quickly over lamentable details here. Youngsters watching may not grasp exactly what's happening.

This unfortunate accident leaves baby Andre motherless at a time it's still nursing. For a while, the lost pup swims around aimlessly. Later, it decides to follow in the wake of a boat belonging to Rockport's Harbor Master, Harry Whitney.

Animal enthusiast Harry deduces what has happened. He decides to attempt preserving the seal's life by fabricating out of old wetsuit material a substitute mama for it. Try though he does, the Good Samaritan is unable to keep his barn guest very long out of view and hearing of other family members. Such as delightedly curious daughter Toni and long-suffering wife Thalice. Those two allies volunteer to become part of a rescue mission designed to insure survival for the latest arrival at the Whitney animal hospitality center.

Toni is a shy child, far more readily communicative with wild animals than classmates or teachers. She floats the alluring prospect of skipping school to

supervise Andre's recovery past her dad. Harry gently nixes it. He appears to have a much closer affinity with Toni than with the girl's older siblings Steve and Paula, who operate independently of parents as much as possible, engaging daily in ridiculing and vexing each other. This makes a lousy example of internal family sniping and squabbling for young audiences.

While obviously tending to Andre's needs, Harry ignores such primary job tasks as inspecting moorings to be sure they aren't snagged, preventing disastrous slides in fish market sale prices, and running up warning signals when storms approach. The latter neglect occasions the film's climax, where Toni is placed in jeopardy by a raging sea which causes her loss of two dinghy oars swept overboard by wind-whipped waves.

Before that crisis develops, the plot weaves through various domestic problems of the Whitney household. Such as a smoking adventure by high school senior Paula, Steve's ill-considered Halloween prank which terrorizes a detested neighbor, and two wrestling bouts between Billy Baker, who blames Harry for poor fish harvests, and Toni's erratically attentive-to-duties father. Director and screenwriter invent this grumpy critic as a foil to easygoing Harry, whose failure as both disciplinarian and fishermen's friend is presumably cancelled by concern for Toni and Andre.

Older children get no such close watch, leading them into paths of recklessness.

Paula is incensed and smarting when Harry's absent from the audience when she's crowned Miss Liberty. She's further goaded into revolt when he curtly forbids further companionship with smoking partner Mark Baker.

What's the obvious solution? Run away from home. No one there understands or appreciates her. Seething with anger at a perceived double injustice, Rockport's new queen betakes herself to the royal bedroom where she sulks and contemplates a variety of desperate actions.

When Thalice pays a visit in order to console her, the petulant monarch manages instead to only generate aggravation by blurting out how she hates her father and wishes she had never been born. That repugnant declaration earns a tongue-lashing from irate Thalice, leaving both parties upset and disconnected.

Mark, banned from Whitney property but not taking that submissively, retaliates by renewing contact with Paula surreptitiously. Tired of hearing

complaints about Andre from fellow fisherman, and from his heartthrob as well, the young fisherman claims to know a foolproof method of dumping troublesome Andre somewhere unfamiliar at sea where he won't be able to get his bearings and return to monopolize attention of folks back home.

How come he's the one to get star treatment from Ed Sullivan? It's so unjust and unmerited.

Paula miserably agrees. The two of them should give Andre the boot, once and for all. He has no business wriggling his way between the elder Whitneys and their adolescent children. She will take the offensive herself now and find out how mister seal likes being on the receiving end of unfairness.

So the aggrieved teens lure Andre into Mark's boat. Off they head for Rocky Point. There an argument breaks out. For Mark's instant solution involves a shooting.

Paula, though no supporter of gun control, isn't as wrathfully disposed as her fellow conspirator towards an unarmed seal. She tries to block its unanticipated killing. While the two malcontents struggle together a rifle Mark's holding fires. At the same moment, Andre slips into the ocean.

Back on shore, Thalice finds out from Toni about the departure of boy and girl plotters with the Whitney family pet. She commands couch potato Steve, glued to a television program, to supervise his kid sister. Mom is heading for the harbor. Steve agrees to do this, but never removes his eyes from the screen. Seeing how preoccupied her brother is, Toni waits until her mother's out of sight, then quietly removes herself from Steve's vicinity and heads for a dinghy, hoping to stage a last-minute rescue of her beloved friend.

Can she manage it without assistance? Why not get your hands on this dvd and find out?

If these events sound a bit darkly oppressive for family fare, that's because they are. Rebellious teenagers flaunting responsibilities and parental orders, suggested and spoken profanities, adults engaging in wrestling matches, inattentiveness to jobs, disrespect for school, treatment of lies as acceptably natural dodges, defiance of government authority – all these highly questionable behaviors are present, seldom drawing any kind of censure beyond the tsk-tsk level at best.

At its core, ANDRE shows a family in turmoil, with parental laxness leading to almost fatal calamity for one of its members. The issues are not beyond the

boundary of sensible treatment in a family film. However, the manner in which they are handled in this picture leaves much to be desired. Parents and guardians be warned.

Though teens can probably differentiate between good and bad courses of conduct shown, younger viewers are more likely to be tantalized by liberties Paula and Steve take.

ANDRE does offer screeners several rewards. Bruce Rowland's music score blends agreeably with pop hits from the sixties.

Acting by the principals shouldn't be overlooked.

Tina Majorino is adorably sensitive poppet Toni, quite believable as a fantasizer who escapes into nature whenever academic and socialization pressures overwhelm her. Keith Carradine plays irresponsible, semi-articulate Harry Whitney with gusto. As his spouse Thalice, Chelsea Field is engagingly nurturing of her lesser half, a frequently demanding interloper, and the trio of wayward children who more often antagonize than support each other. Her customarily suppressed anger is unfettered during one of the film's most notable scenes, allowing audiences to glimpse powerful violence lurking underneath a veneer of self-sufficiency and unflagging confidence. Joshua Jackson is quite charming as a tentative suitor scouting romantic territory for the first time while trying to prove himself an individual in no one else's shadow. Rounding out top acting achievements is Keith Szarajka, whose Billy Baker is crusty, aggressive, alternating between sneaky and disgustingly direct, yet a level-headed leader when an emergency arises at sea.

Secondary characters fare less well. Stereotypes abounding in characters like the harbormaster's sidekick, cynical waitress, priggish schoolmistress, and café proprietor whose limited supply of cornball jokes gets continually recycled.

Cinematography is adequate. Ditto for lighting. Art direction recreates efficiently a small town Swinging Sixties community more receptive to comical dances than West Coast surfbeat, content to remain ignorant of a developing cultural revolution.

There are no bonus features of note on this Paramount dvd release of ANDRE.

Though based on actual events, the movie adaptation adds storms, a heavy ripe for reforming, and locations as far removed as Vancouver and Tasmania

from actual New England coastal waters swum through by its eponymous traveler annually until his death at the age of about twenty-five.

ANDRE is a not unpleasant ninety minutes or so of summer entertainment for teens and adults with several distinctive acting accomplishments guaranteeing sustained watching.