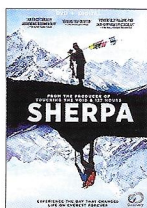


eral victims. *She Who Must Burn* is obviously a committed work that boasts some crude visceral power, but its utter lack of nuance ultimately undermines its dramatic potency. Not a necessary purchase. (F. Swietek)

### Sherpa ★★★1/2

Lionsgate, 96 min., not rated, DVD: \$19.98



The image of the smiling sherpa was fixed in 1953, when Sir Edmund Hillary and his trusty guide Tenzing Norgay conquered Everest in their successful climb to the mountain's peak. Since then, scores of sherpas have made the trip, and a thriving tourist industry was born. Filmmaker Jennifer Peedom's documentary addresses a disastrous 2014 accident in which an avalanche at the deadly Khumbu Icefall killed 16 people, many of them sherpas. Even before the tragedy, tension had been building between climbers and sherpas, culminating in all-out brawls between the two groups in 2013. Contemporary, better educated sherpas feel that they are undervalued and underpaid, especially since they take most of the risks. Climbing is a "bucket list" ambition for many Westerners, resulting in traffic jams along the trail, and many climbers demand creature comforts, which have to be carried by the sherpas. *Sherpa* examines the events leading to the avalanche, subsequent rescue efforts, and the ensuing (and often heated) debate over whether to cancel the rest of the season (an even deadlier disaster occurred in 2015, when an earthquake struck). Sherpas—who take their name from their community's ethnic identity—view the mountain as a holy place, and are motivated by respect, along with the need to support their families. Airing the concerns of both the Nepalese sherpas and the climbers, and backed by gorgeous cinematography highlighting the beauty of Mount Everest, this is highly recommended. (S. Rees)

### Sneakerheadz ★★★

FilmRise, 73 min., not rated, DVD: \$14.95

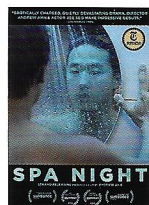


Future social scientists will surely look with wonder at the bizarre phenomenon of sneaker madness, in which a few branded tie-ins between sports figures and their customized shoes in the 1980s would launch a marketing juggernaut that became, for some, an obsession. Tracing the history of sneakers back to their origins in the early 20th century, filmmakers David T. Friendly and Nick Partridge note how style elements emerged in shoe designs tied to star athletes, especially the arrival of Air Jordans (associated with basketball legend Michael Jordan). The early mainstreaming of hip hop artists, including Run DMC and Wu Tang Clan—and

subsequent merging of music with sports—helped to create a pop culture product that consumers would wait in line to purchase. Interviews with multiple designers and collectors provide further insights into the glory days, when aficionados had to travel a circuit from New York to Baltimore, hitting stores that carried the most desirable and expensive shoes coveted by wild-eyed customers. The arrival of the Internet leveled the playing field for would-be collectors in flyover country, but also fed what one therapist refers to here as "obsessive consumption disorder." Indeed, we meet some guys (and, really, it's guys) who own well over 1,000 pairs of sneakers, kept in temperature-controlled rooms (one keeps his collection in a home version of a walk-in bank safe). Why? Well, they don't know how to stop. Mostly brisk and playful, *Sneakerheadz* also touches on the darker side of sneaker subculture (a *GQ* article claimed that more than 1,000 people are killed annually over their shoes). Recommended. (T. Keogh)

### Spa Night ★★★

Strand, 93 min., in Korean w/ English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$27.99



Andrew Ahn's debut feature tells a gay coming-of-age story with uncommon subtlety and an exceptionally strong sense of place. The protagonist is David Cho (Joe Seo), a shy young Korean-American living in Los Angeles who is clearly under the thumb of his parents. When the family's small restaurant fails, David resists his mother's insistence that he enroll in college—especially after spending some time with the son of a family friend at USC and finding his incipient feelings for other men aroused by the experience. While pretending to devote all his energy to preparing for the SAT, David secretly takes a job at an all-male spa, where he not only witnesses assignations occurring between customers upstairs but is asked by his boss to ensure that such things are not allowed to happen. This doesn't stop David from experimenting, a decision that leads to discovery and shame. Meanwhile, David's dejected father becomes an alcoholic, threatening to destroy his own marriage. *Spa Night* skillfully sidesteps any hint of sensationalism, taking a restrained approach that seems as interested in providing insights into Korean-American culture as in detailing David's path of self-discovery. Although some might be put off by the film's deliberate pacing and subdued style, this is an assured, mature debut. Recommended. (F. Swietek)

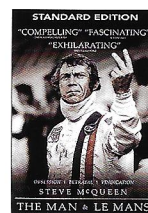
### Steve McQueen: The Man & Le Mans

★★★

FilmRise, 102 min., not rated, DVD: \$19.95

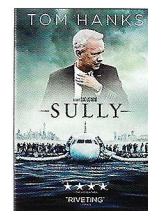
The 1971 feature *Le Mans* is mostly notable as one of actor Steve McQueen's rare commercial flops. Filmmakers Gabriel Clark and John

McKenna's documentary on the making of *Le Mans* offers an intriguing look at why it failed, with most of the blame placed on the star. Initially hoping to be an on-camera participant in the celebrated 24-hour auto race, McQueen was forbidden to drive by the production company's insurance brokers. And when McQueen crashed his personal car during a reckless drive in an evening rainstorm, his personal assistant Mario Iscovich (who broke his arm in the accident) took responsibility (and later lost his job on the film). Two accidents marred *Le Mans* during production: driver Derek Bell's auto caught fire and left him with facial burns, while driver David Piper lost a leg following a crash. McQueen's behavior became more erratic while on location, including adultery that ultimately derailed his marriage to singer Neile Adams, coupled with a wave of paranoia after learning that he was on the Manson Family's hit list. He also began exerting strong opinions on how to film the Le Mans race, much to the chagrin of director John Sturges. Combining rare behind-the-scenes footage, interviews with surviving members from the production, and archival audio interviews with McQueen, this intriguing look at a doomed film is recommended. (P. Hall)



### Sully ★★★

Warner, 96 min., PG-13, DVD: \$29.98, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$35.99



What you think you know about how Captain Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger skillfully glided his disabled U.S. Airways Flight 1549 onto the Hudson River on January 15, 2009, is only the beginning of this tense and exciting story. Which is why director Clint Eastwood begins *Sully* with a harrowingly realistic and compelling re-creation of the "Miracle on the Hudson" that made Sully a national hero. Although it was kept secret at the time, skeptical members of the National Transportation Safety Board seriously questioned Sully's judgment, accusing him of needlessly endangering his crew and passengers with a forced water landing. Based on sensor readings of the A320's left engine, computer simulations showed that the commuter jet could have safely returned to New York's LaGuardia Airport or made an emergency landing at Teterboro Airport in New Jersey. So it's up to Sully (Tom Hanks), backed by his co-pilot Jeff Skiles (Aaron Eckhart), to prove that his judgment was correct. Under Eastwood's astute direction, Hanks effectively embodies this modest veteran aviator, while Laura Linney captures the angst of his wife Lorrie in California. Based on Sullenberger and author Jeffrey Zaslow's book *Highest Duty*, the film