

This week's DVDs

By MICHAEL GILTZ



Paramount Pictures

Cheers/Frasier: Complete Third Seasons ★★★★★
 Paramount, \$49.99 each

It simply doesn't get much better than the hilarious bickering of Sam and Diane on "Cheers" and the fussy snobbery of Frasier and Niles in "Frasier." It's appropriate that they're being released simultaneously, since the third season of "Cheers" introduced Dr. Frasier Crane. Extras include a tribute to the last season of Coach (Nicholas Colasanto) and a tour of the bar on "Cheers," and closeups on Bulldog and Maris on "Frasier."

Dracula — Pages From a Virgin's Diary

★★★★1/2

Zeitgeist; \$29.99

Like so many classic characters, Dracula provides inspiration for every generation. The bloodthirsty vampire is on screen right now in the frantic "Van Helsing." In this marvelous DVD, a Canadian troupe performs a brilliant dance piece, captured on film by cult director Guy Maddin. And those looking for the classic version should feast on "Dracula: The Legacy Collection" (Universal; \$26.98), a bargain loaded with the 1931 original, three sequels, a Spanish version, documentaries and audio commentaries.

Northern Exposure: The Complete First Season

★★★★1/2

Universal, \$59.98

"Northern Exposure" was one of the most delightful TV shows of the last 20 years, especially during its first two seasons, when no one expected anything from it. Creatively, season one deserves four stars, but this packaging of a measly eight episodes and some extras for \$60 is absurd. They should have given us seasons one and two for \$40. Shame on them.

The Weather Underground

★★★★1/2

DocuRama, \$24.95

This sobering documentary narrated by Lili Taylor depicts the turbulent Vietnam War era, when radical groups like the Weather Underground believed they needed to resort to violence to affect political change. Not laudatory, but not condemning either, this is fascinating stuff. With audio commentary from Weather Underground leaders Bernadine Dohrn and Bill Ayers, director Sam Green and more.

Saving Private Ryan: D-Day 60th Anniversary Edition

★★★★

DreamWorks, \$26.99

A terrific World War II drama in the classic tradition, but Steven Spielberg comes up short in the extras department. The 90 minutes or extras are good, but most of them seem to have been shot on the set, so you have to wonder why they weren't included the first time around. In short, if you already own this movie, there's no reason to buy it again in the form of a poor excuse for a special edition.