## 'How to Be Single' is raunchy, rote and not romantic

BY ANN HORNADAY THE WASHINGTON POST

reconcile

Dakota Johnson makes for an oddly recessive heroine in "How to Be Single," an earnest but awkwardly misshapen attempt to

**FILM REVIEW** 

the archaic conventions of romantic comedy with the 21st century values of independence and sexual self-determina-

Cut from the same cloth as "Sex and the City" and "Bridget Jones's Diary" both explicitly quoted with a dash of "Girls" thrown in for whiny, selfdefeating good measure, what should be a fizzy comedy of contradictory manners instead comes across as dutiful and unforgivably dull. Rarely has a portrait of someone getting her life together been so lifeless.

Johnson plays Alice, who upon graduating from college decides to take a break ries of stagey meet-cutes,

from her long-term boyfriend, move to New York and explore life unattached. Sleeping on the couch of her obstetrician sister Meg (Leslie Mann), Alice gets a job at a law firm and immediately makes a new friend in Robin (Rebel Wilson), a promiscuous party animal who tutors the wide-eyed Alice in the seductions, one-night stands and hangovers that lie beyond the looking glass of Tindr-era Manhattan.

Johnson doesn't possess the guileless comic timing of mother, Melanie Griffith, though she brings sleepy-eyed believability to Alice, who moves through the movie's rote set pieces with the dazed docility of a heifer being led to slaughter. But if Johnson lacks fizz, there's something quietly heroic in her refusal to give in to rom-com expectations. She's adamantly unfazed by her surroundings, no matter how hysterically pitched.

Alice meets men in a se-

NEIL HALL | REUTERS

Cast members (from left) Leslie Mann, Dakota Johnson, Alison Brie and Rebel Wilson pose for photographers at the European premiere of the film "How to be Single" in London on Tuesday.

but the subject of "How To Be Single" is really women, who range from neurotically self-deceiving (the adamantly non-baby-crazy Meg) to desperately needy (a com-

pulsive Internet dater named Lucy, played with irksome overstatement by Alison Brie).

Directed by Christian Ditter with a close-up-heavy vi-

sual design readymade for Holm during its opening moairplane viewing, "How To ments. Be Single" claims the mantle of feminism — at least in its hastily cobbled-together final act — but it's a burlesque on female selfhood and solidarity. On close inspection, the film reserves most of its sympathy for its male characters, whose foibles are mild, if they're present at all. Damon Wayans Jr., Anders Holm, Nicholas Braun and Jason Mantzoukas are on hand for those honors, with Jake Lacy playing what has become his stock character since his breakout role in 2014's "Obvious Child": the Stoic, Patient Dream Guy.

In fact, everyone plays a stock character in "How To Be Single": Mann is edgy, high-strung and too selfaware for her own good; Wilson is the sexually aggressive, slightly sloppy goodtime girl — she's responsible for the movie's most raunchy humor, except for a graphic sight gag involving

As for Johnson's vague, slightly spaced-out character, she's not nearly as dynamic or legible as the ambivalent masochist of "Fifty Shades of Grey." She comes into focus slowly, and only with the help of some "Look, just hear me out" speeches instead of compelling, clearly motivated action. Ultimately, "How To Be

Single" feels reverse-engineered to justify its ending, which while admittedly gratifying, can't accurately be described as happy. For that, it would have to be worth the contrivances, cliches and tedium that have gone before.

One star. Rated R. Contains obscenity and sexuality. 104

Ratings Guide: Four stars masterpiece, three stars very good, two stars OK, one star poor, no stars waste of time.

## Things to Do

BANGOR, ELLSWORTH -Bangor YMCA's Vegas to Camp adult prom, 8 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 13, Bangor YMCA Wilderness Center at Camp Jordan, 101 Camp Jordan Way, on Branch Lake. Open to ages 21 and older, featuring DJ Disco. an hors d'oeuvres buffet and a cash bar in the Wilderness Center's King Dining Hall; doorto-door shuttle service by reservation. \$35 per person; \$50 per couple; \$250 for table of 10. Tickets available in advance only at the Y, 17 Second St., Bangor, or at www.BangorYM-CA.org. Proceeds support Y programs and services.

BANGOR - Valentine's Day card making session, 2-4 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 13, University of Maine Museum of Art, 40 Harlow St. Free and open to all. Materials provided. 561-3360.

BANGOR - Chinese New Year parade to celebrate Year of the Monkey, 1:30-3 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 13, Bangor Mall. Registration, 1:30-1:45 p.m.; parade, 2 p.m. Includes lion and dragon dances. Crafts activities for children available before and after parade. Open to all, 944-8000 or info@mainechina.org.

BANGOR - Bangor Historical Society Victorian Valentines crafting session for children, 10 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 13, Thomas Hill House, 159 Union St. \$5; free to children with a family museum membership. To register, 942-1900 or bangorhistoricalsociety.

BANGOR - Penobscot County 4-H Leaders' Association's annual 4-H Silent Auction, 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 13, Bangor Mall, near J.C. Penney entrance. Proceeds benefit scholarships and programs for 4-H members in Penobscot County.

BATH — Free admission for ages 12 and younger with a paid adult during school vacation, Feb. 13-20, Maine Maritime Museum, 243 Washington St. Special morning of children's activities, 9:30-11:30 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 18. Alison Freeman performing sea chanties,10 a.m.; movie "Around Cape Horn," 11 a.m. www.MaineMaritimeMuseum.org or 443-1316.

BELFAST - Habitat for Humanity of Waldo County Have a Heart for Habitat dinner, 5:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 13, First Church, 8 Court St. Entertainment, 6:30 p.m. Tickets \$20 each, available at Mailloux & Marden law offices, 151 High St.; Camden National Bank, 156 Main

St.; Belfast Chamber of Commerce office, or 338-2344. Chem-free event. Benefits Habitat for Humanity of Waldo County. mandie@waldocountyhabitat.org.

BELFAST — Valentine's Day craft fair, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 13, in Abbott Room, Belfast Free Library, 106 High St. Jewelry, pottery, cookies, candy, scarves, felted wool and more. Anne Saggese, 322-

BREWER - Bangor Singles Club dances, 8 p.m.-midnight Fridays, Brewer Eagles Club, 22 Atlantic Ave.: Country Mist, Feb. 12; Prairie Dogs, Feb. 19; Wildwoods, Feb. 26. Marilyn, 827-5751.

BREWER - Brewer Firefighters Union "A Night of Laughs" comedy show featuring three Boston comedians, 8 p.m. Friday, Feb. 12, Jeff's Catering, 15 Littlefield Road. Benefits firefighter education, youth athletics and scholarships. Tickets available by donation. 221-2995 or brewerfirefighters2016@gmail.com.

DEXTER — Contradance with caller John McIntire and live music by Some Reel People, 7-10 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 13, First Universalist Church of Dexter, Route 7. All dances taught; all ages welcome. \$7 singles; \$12 families. Jim Bunn,

924-3925, or Georgia Prickitt, 277-3961.

ELLSWORTH — Gilbert and Sullivan Society live production of "Patience," 7 p.m. Friday, Feb. 12; 3 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Feb. 13-14, The Grand. \$21; \$19 seniors and students. The Grand box office, 667-9500 or grandonline.org.

ELLSWORTH -Downeast Dancers Valentine's dance, 7:30-10:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 13, Ellsworth YMCA gymnasium. Music furnished by big band Sentimental Journey. \$12; \$8 seniors and students. 664-

HAMPDEN — Hampden Kiwanis Club monthly Texas Hold'em Poker Tournament, 11 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 13, Hampden Kiwanis Civic Center, Main Road. Doors open 10:30 a.m. Limited to 100 players. \$103. Benefits Hampden Kiwanis charities. Keith, 356-9949.

PITTSFIELD — Concert and talent show, 7 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 13, Pitts-



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SHOWTIMES VALID 1/8 thru 1/14 ALL SHOWS EVERYDAY HOLLYWOOD CINEMAS

3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00 ZOOLANDER 2 (PG-13) DEADPOOL (R) 6:45 8:45 12:45 2:45 4:45 JANE GOT A GUN (R) 11:40 1:30 3:20 5:10 7:20 9:10 HOW TO BE SINGLE (R) 12:30 2:40 4:50 7:00 9:10 KUNG FU PANDA 3 (PG) 11:40 1:30 3:20 5:10 7:00 8:50 DADDY'S HOME (PG-13) 11:40 1:20 3:10 5:00 7:10 9:00 THE GOOD DINOSAUR (PG) 11:55 1:45 3:30 5:15 7:00 8:45

**WATCH FOR OUR NEW ULTRA MAX THEATER EXPERIENCE** \$5 Matinees/\$7 after 6pm. \$5 all day for under 12 & Sr. Citizens. Children under 2 FREE! Super Tuesday \$3 all day, all ages! ★ SAVE 30% – 50% on concessions at Hollywood Cinemas! ★

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MAX

SHOW

Shameless Frank helps

field Community Theatre, 137 Main St. Performances by Riff Johnson, NB13, LoveNeverDies, RockTheOrange and The Resistance. Benefits Nolan's H.E.R.O. Foundation. \$7; \$5 students.

PORTLAND -

"Focus:Printmaking," invitational group show featuring Maine printmakers, through Feb. 27, Greenhut Galleries. Artists talk and demonstrations, 1:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 20, at the gallery. 772-2693 or info@greenhutgalleries. com.

ROCKPORT - "Telling Our Stories: A Retreat for the Grieving" workshop, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 13, The Riley School, 73 Warrenton Road. To develop transformative stories of loss and love, build community and cultivate compassion for the grieving in others in an intimate group setting. Limited to 10. \$50 includes coffee, tea, pastries and vegetarian soup lunch. Kali Bird Isis, 602-0872 or abrushwithfire@gmail. com.

SEDGWICK - Penobscot Marine Museum's traveling exhibit of historic photographs, "Hancock County Through Eastern's Eye," on display during February, Northeast Harbor Library, Sedgwick Town Meeting House, 574 North Sedgwick Road. Opening reception and gallery talk by Penobscot Marine Museum photo archivist Kevin Johnson, 5:30-7 p.m. Friday, Feb. 12. 276-3333.

STEUBEN - "Megamind," 6 p.m. Friday, Feb. 12, Henry D. Moore Library and Community Center, 22 Village Road. Free. Refreshments sold by donation. moorelibrary.

org or facebook.com/ HenryD.MooreLibrary.

YARMOUTH - North Yarmouth Events Committee will hold its first North Yarmouth Cribbage Tournament, 9 a.m.-noon Saturday, Feb. 13, North Yarmouth Memorial School, 120 Memorial Highway (Route 9). \$10 for the adult division; \$5 for junior division. Cash prizes. Proceeds benefit North Yarmouth Veterans Memorial Park. Register at www.northyarmouthveteransmemorialpark.org/events/ cribbage; Steve Palmer, 829-5004 or spalmer@ northyarmouth.org; or at the town office. Palmer, Darla Hamlin at 831-831-0160 or Audrey Lones at 829-4171.

For a complete listing of calendar items or to submit your event, visit www.bangordailynews.com.

Friday prime time MOVIES 7 PM 7:30 8 PM 8:30 9 PM NBC 207 Dateline NBC (N)[편품 2 Grimm (N) (HD) Inside Ed. Caught on Camera News CBC marketplace Hello 4 the fifth estate (N) The National (N) CBC Coronation Backstage Hawaii Five-0 (N)₩ CBS Big Bang The Amazing Race (N) Blue Bloods (N) (HD) Broke Girl CW Family Guy 52 The Vampire Diaries (N) The Originals (N) (HD) News Family Guy Cougar 6 NBC 207 Inside Ed. Caught on Camera Grimm (N) (HD) Shark Tank (N) (HD) (:01) 20/20 (N) (HD)配 7 ABC Wheel Jeopardy! Charlie Brown Valentine WARM FOX The Insider Ent. Tonight | Sleepy Hollow (N) (:01) Second Chance (N) News Big Bang Big Bang 8 ABC Wheel Jeopardy! Charlie Brown Valentine Shark Tank (N) (HD) (:01) 20/20 (N) (HD)醛 PBS | PBS NewsHour (N) (HD) Washington Charlie IND Blue Bloods (N) (HD) The Amazing Race (N) Grimm (N) (HD) 9 News-Lisa CTV News Big Bang CBS Ent. Tonight The Insider Hawaii Five-0 (N) 13 The Amazing Race (N) Blue Bloods (N) (HD) FOX Mod Fam Sleepy Hollow (N) (:01) Second Chance (N) FOX 22 News at 10 (N) IND M\*A\*S\*HE Andy Griffith Andy Griffith Happy Days Laverne Hogan Hero Hogan Hero 33 C. Burnett 38 IND Big Bang Big Bang Bones (HD) Bones (HD) WBZ News (N) (HD) Full House Full House Full House Friends NICK Paradise Monster High: Great Scarrier Reef (N) DISN Bunk'd (N) Girl Meets Gravity Falls | Gravity Falls | Best Fr. Descend FREE \*\* Dear John (2010, Romance) Channing Tatum, (PG-13) Shadowhunters 2 700 Club Notebook HIST Cnt. Cars Cnt. Cars Cnt. Cars Cnt. Cars Counting Cars Cnt. Cars Cnt. Cars Cnt. Cars Gold Rush DISC Gold Rush Gold Rush: Pay Dirt (N) Gold Rush (N) Deadliest Job Interview Say Yes Say Yes Say Yes Say Yes Say Yes Love; Lust First Swipe Say Yes A&E Duck Dynasty Duck D. Duck D. Duck D. Duck D. Jep Duck D. ANPI Treehouse Masters Treehouse Masters Treehouse: Out on a Limb Treehouse Masters (N) Treehouse **CSNE** Sports NBA Basketball: Clippers at Celtics Check Quick College Basketball UCLA at Arizona. (N) ESPN NBA Basketball All-Star Celebrity Game. (N) SportCtr ESPN2 College Basketball Dayton at Rhode Island. (N) SEC Storied E:60 Profile Nation Skiing NBCSP (6:30) College Hockey Maine at Notre Dame. (N) Curling (N) NESN College Basketball College Hockey Northeastern at Massachusetts. (N) CNBC Undercover Boss Undercover Boss Undercover Boss Undercover Boss Undercover CNN Erin Burnett OutFront (N) Anderson Cooper 360 EG CNN Tonight Democratic Debate FNC Greta Van Susteren The O'Reilly Factor (N) The Kelly File (N) FOX News: Voter Revolt O'Reilly **MSNBC** All In With Chris Hayes Rachel Maddow Show Hardball Chris Matthews AMC Walk: Dead The Walking Dead (ESP) The Walkin (6:52) \*\*\* The School of Rock (2003) Jack Black. PG-13 Housewives The People's Couch (N) Couch CMT Last Man Last Man \*\* Grumpy Old Men (1993, Comedy) Jack Lemmon. PG-13 (7:55) Saturday Night Live (8:57) Saturday Night Live South Park COM E! News (N)환경 \*\*\* Sleepless in Seattle (1993) Tom Hanks, Meg Ryan. PG Kardashian E! News FG **FOOD** Diners Diners Diners Am. Diner Diners Diners Vacation X-Men Origins: Wolverine \*\* Battleship (2012) Taylor Kitsch. Earth comes under attack from a superior alien force. GAC Top 20 Countdown Flea Market | Fl HALL Last Man Last Man Love in Paradise (2016, Comedy) Luke Perry. NR The Middle The Middle Golden Girls HGTV Love It or List It, Too Love It or List It 🗃 Love It or List It LIFE The Rap Game Bring It! (N) Bring It! (N) (:02) The Rap Game (N) Little MTV Lip Sync Lip Sync Lip Sync Lip Sync Lip Sync Lip Sync Ridiculous. Ridiculous. Ridiculous YXC \*\*\* There's Something About Mary (1998) Cameron Diaz. (R) SPIKE Cops 2 Cops Cops 🗱 Cops 🔆 Cops 2 Cops 🐰 Cops Cops 🐰 SYFY \*\*\* Men in Black (1997) Tommy Lee Jones. ★★ Men in Black II (2002) Tommy Lee Jones Hal Lindsey End/ Age TBN Potters Supernat. Perry Stone Praise the Lord Seinfeld 26 Seinfeld E **Broke Girl** Broke Girl Broke Girl Broke Girl \*\* The Pacifier (2005) Vin Diesel. PG **TCM** \*\*\*\* Tootsie (1982) Dustin Hoffman. PG (5:45) ★★★ Marooned \*\*\*\* Kramer vs. Kramer (1979) TMC (6:15) \*\*\* St. Vincent \*\*\* World Trade Center (2006) Nicolas Cage. (:10) \*\* Stolen (2012) Nicolas Cage. \*\*\* Collateral (2004, Suspense) Tom Cruise. (R) NBA Basketball 2016 BBVA Rising Stars Challenge. TRAVEL Mysteries at the Castle Mysteries at the Museum Mysteries at the Museum Mysteries at the Museum Mysteries at TRU Those Who Those Who Funniest Funniest TVL Andy Griffith Andy Griffith \*\*\* Love Actually (2003, Romance-Comedy) Hugh Grant, Laura Linney. (R) NCIS (Part 1 of 3) NCIS (Part 2 of 3) USA NCIS NCIS (Part 3 of 3) NCIS: LA VH1 Flavor, Love (:25) The Flavor of Love 12 The Flavor of Love 12 The Flavor of Love ™ WGN-Person of Interest Person of Interest \*\* Next Friday (2000, Comedy) (ESP) | (:40) \*\* All About the Benjamins (2002, Action) (ESP) | (ce Cube, Mike Epps, Justin Pierce. (R) | ice Cube, Mike Epps, Eva Mendes. (R) (6:05) \*\*\* 22 Jump Street **ENC** (2014) Jonah Hill. (R) \*\* Run All Night (2015, Action) (ESP) Liam Neeson, Real Time With Bill Maher Ed Harris, Joel Kinnaman. (R) (:10) VICE Special Report: **HBO** \*\* Taking Lives (2004, Suspense) (.20) \*\* Black Knight (2001, Comedy) Angelina Jolie. (R) (ESP) Martin Lawrence. (PG-13) \*\*\* X-Men: Days of Future Past (2014) (ESP) Hugh Jackman. (PG-13) (6:35) \*\* Taking Lives (200 (ESP) Angelina Jolie. (B)

Billions Axe faces a be-

Meru (2015) Three elite climbers strug-

gle to climb Mount Meru. R

(6:35) \*\*\* Avengers: Age of Ultron (2015, Action)

ESP) Robert Downey Jr., Chris Hemsworth. (PG-13)

Global warming leads to worldwide natural disasters. Sails