

ARMY ARCHERD

N O BIZ LIKE SNOW BIZ: Universal launched the holiday season early on Wednesday with its gigantic preem of "Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas" at the U Amphitheater and (with your permission, Dr. Seuss) a Wholiday bash for 5,000 guests in a giant tent on U's CityWalk parking lots. There was snow along the Grinch green carpet for fans to snowball fight; at the pic's finale, snow fell from the Amphitheater heavens on guests as they departed for the party. I've emceed some huge

Hollywood (and N.Y.) preems, but this certainly ranked among the biggest — and most spirited, too. Guests were asked to bring books for BookPals and First Book charities to launch children on reading. I saw 10 barrels overflowing with books at various entrances to the Amphi seats; \$224,000 was raised as well. Of course the genius of Jim Carrey was the topic of conversation — also that of director Ron Howard and partner, producer Brian Grazer. Audrey Geisel, widow of Theodore "Dr. Seuss" Geisel, told me it was this trio who convinced her they were the ones to make the film. She'd nixed many offers for live-action Dr. Seuss projects. The last live-



Rose M. Prouser/Reuters

Archerd and Carrey

action Dr. Seuss creation was Stanley Kramer's "The 5,000 Fingers of Dr. T.," directed by Roy Rowland back in 1953, which has become a cult pic. "Grinch" was a 30-minute cartoon by Chuck Jones and Geisel, which first aired December 1966 (and has become a TV perennial and bestselling videocassette). I talked with enthusiastic Mrs. Geisel along with Tim Allen who will star in the next Geisel live-action'er "The Cat in the Hat" (another experience for Allen, who starred in "The Santa Clause," to work in makeup magic). Eddie Murphy, who was there with his wife and two of his children, and who is no slouch in working under Rick Baker's makeup magic, complimented Carrey on this outing. Murphy said he is happy to be working sans makeup in his current "Dr. Dolittle" — he works opposite stuffed animals; live ones come in later with movie magic. But, he reminds, it's not easy acting to a stuffed animal! Under the giant tented party, I talked with Pierre Lescure, Canal Plus chairman and soon to be Universal Studios chairman. He was with Ron Meyer, Stacey Snider and other Universal toppers. Lescure was confident "Grinch" would have universal appeal in any language, and as an annual holiday release. The Whoville party under the big tent was the creation of Merv Griffin Prods., with Mary Micucci's Along Came Mary's merry men making their way through the masses with traysful of Who-lesome (excuse it!) Who-liday food.

J ACK LEMMON RECEIVES UCLA's Spencer Tracy Award for dramatic achievement Nov. 28 at Royce Hall ... Larry Gelbart replaces the late Steve Allen as emcee of the Scopus Dinner honoring Jack Valenti, Dec. 3 at the BevHilton ... Yes, that was Martina Navratilova taping a guest shot on "Will & Grace" Wednesday. She was playing — Martina Navratilova and got a standing ovation from the audience. Airs Nov. 23.