

Movie review

The Last Starfighter

by TERRY DUPUIS

Science fiction and fantasy have enjoyed quite a significant revival in recent years, thanks to George Lucas and Star Wars. Ever since Lucas released his imaginative 1977 space adventure, numerous other film makers have been exercising their imaginations as well.

Sometimes the results have been disastrous, but quite often they have been quite pleasing and have produced a worthwhile motion picture such as E.T. or War Games.

Right up there with the best of these intergalactic adventure movies is the latest entry in the field called *The Last Starfighter*. It combines elements from many earlier films, but these are not thrown together haphazardly. Instead they have been assembled into a unique blend all its own. *The Last Starfighter* is not a potboiler.

It can stand on its own merits as a piece of superior summer movie entertainment without apology to Lucas, Spielberg and company.

A young actor named Lance Guest portrays a lonely teenager named Alex. Alex lives in a trailer camp with his mother.

His existence is a monotonous one. He feels that life is at a dead end for him. He would like to do something special with his life, something heroic.

To pass the time he plays a lot of video games. The trailer park where he lives has a video game called "Starfighter", and one night Alex is thrilled when he breaks the record.

The next night a stranger drives up to Alex in a startling looking car. He introduces himself as Centauri and he gives Alex a ride. It turns out that Centauri is from another planet. He has planted the Starfighter game around the universe on various planets.

It seems that "Starfighter" is more than a game. It is a test, designed to find pilots who can be recruited to take part in an interstellar war which is being waged.

Like George Lucas's *Star Wars*, *The Last Starfighter* is a boys' space adventure. Like Luke Skywalker, young Alex dreams about the stars and ends up becoming a pilot who takes part in outer space battles.

There are dogfights and elaborate special effects. And as in *Star Wars*, *The Last Starfighter* contains an assortment of imaginative looking creatures. The audience's favourite seemed to be Alex's alien navigator, an individual who has a sunny disposition and turtle-like skin. This role is winningly played by veteran actor Dan O'Herlihy.

Another veteran actor, Robert Preston, adds to the picture's quality with his portrayal of Centauri, who is a sort of outer space con man. It has some resemblance to Preston's famous *Music Man* role, and it's a part which he plays very well.

The young actor, Lance Guest, who plays Alex also does a good job maintaining audience interest in *The Last Starfighter*. His performance seems natural and unaffected.

Catherine Mary Stewart plays his girlfriend in the story, and even the romance in the story does not bog the film down at any point but rather it adds to it.

It is a tribute to the scriptwriters of *The Last Starfighter* that even the scenes which take place on earth are interesting and charming. The depiction of Alex's life in the trailer camp has some nice touches to it. Of course, it is the scenes which take place in outer space which will appeal more to the younger members of the audience, but the earth scenes are exciting too, since Alex's robot double has to contend with various assassins who are sent to earth to eliminate him.

The Last Starfighter is this summer's *War Games*, an exciting and suspenseful tale.



PIX FROM PAST: It's been 15 years since the Garrick Freeman Group from North Simcoe performed last. The guys will be opening with some of their friends for David Wilcox this Saturday from 10 a.m. to noon at the Maple Valley Festival. Their story will appear in Friday's paper.

\$91,000 shot in arm for Barrie Ambulance
 GEORGE W. TAYLOR,
 Q.C., M.P.P.
 Simcoe Centre
 Solicitor General

George Taylor, MPP for Simcoe Centre, announced last week, Barrie Ambulance Service will receive \$91,000 through the Ministry of Health.

Royal Victoria Hospital will be able to hire additional staff to extend full-time ambulance service on weekday evenings and during the day on the weekends.

Hon. Keith Norton, minister of health said, "Ontario's 1984/85 emergency service expenditures will total \$127 Million. This year's funding increases are part of the Ministry's comprehensive effort to expand the emergency health services network in the province. There is no question that Ontario's goal is to excel in all aspects of the health care field."

Taylor said, "I know that the people of Simcoe Centre will be pleased that this crucially needed service is being improved. The increased availability of ambulance care can make a great difference in life threatening situations."

The loot included...

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ROXY 2 Held Over 7 and 9:15
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PEN TWIN PENETANG 549-2953

PEN 1 Held over Friday 7 and 9:15
 Sat. Matinee 1:30
THE LAST STARFIGHTER
He didn't find his dreams...his dreams found him.

PEN 2 Starts Friday 7 and 9:15
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