

Weekender Entertainment



Weekender Movie Scene

Gutsy kids fill the screen

By IAN BAILEY

FRIGHT NIGHT: Going to the movies these days is like watching a children's crusade. An endless parade of "gutsy kids" seem to be dominating Hollywood movies.

After all, we've had one gutsy kid go back in time (Back to the Future). Another has challenged the military (D.A.R.Y.L.) while another has travelled to another dimension (Return to Oz). Groups of gutsy kids have taken on the law (The Legend of Billie Jean) and gone to the stars to confront jokester extra-terrestrials (Explorers). In Fright Night, Charlie (William Ragsdale) is a gutsy kid with a rather local problem. His new neighbour is a vampire.

As played by Chris Sarandon (last seen in Protocol), Jerry Dandrige, as the monster calls himself, is a droll, stylish fellow with a matching hunger for fresh fruit and fresh blood, the latter being drawn from a succession of prostitutes he lures to his house.

During one of these sessions, Charlie spies Jerry in supernatural action. Jerry sees Charlie and, with that, the kid is a marked man. Jerry may seem pretty plain on the surface but cross him and he sprouts fangs, talons, and ruby red eyes. He's inhumanly strong, flies, can raise the dead to do his bidding, and he has two goals: making Charlie's girlfriend Amy (Amanda Bearse) his bride and murdering Charlie.

Of course, everyone thinks Charlie has gone nuts as he starts to take supernatural precautions. His only ally is the cynical host (Roddy McDowell) of the late night movie show at a local TV station, a washed out actor who starred in many of the bad horror movies he screens.

Fright Night's director and writer, Tom Holland (writer of Psycho II and Cloak & Dagger) seems to have set out to put the hoary vampire myth through the same creative wringer that Robert Zemeckis applied to time travel in Back to the Future.

The result is a movie that effectively veers between spoofing its villain and drawing him as a terrifying antagonist. Chris Sarandon proves that he is the perfect performer for this as his vampire is superbly suave on one hand and downright feral on the other.

He is helped here by the film's high-powered special effects from Richard Edlund, the technician behind Ghostbusters.

Sarandon may be a few years removed from Ragsdale, the gutsy kid at the centre of the film, but he is the most interesting performer on screen. The other older character, Roddy McDowell, wrings his hands a lot and sweats as he confronts his worst nightmares in Dandrige. But for all his

nically depicted fear, his character is never really developed.

Although Ragsdale holds attention as Dandrige starts his campaign to murder him, it soon becomes evident that he lacks the presence to hold the film together.

The same can be said about co-stars Amy Bearse and Stephen Geoffreys, as a youth who becomes a disciple of Dandrige's and whose final fate is one of several plot holes in the movie.

None of these things really ruin the picture, however. They just blunt the edge on a film whose handful of riveting scenes makes it one of the more striking gutsy kid stories this summer. (AA) **½ THORNHILL SQUARE

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E.T. (The Extra-Terrestrial): A re-release of Steven Spielberg's 1982 classic about the most unusual best friend a kid ever had, and also the most popular space traveller in movie history. (PG)****

SILVERADO: An energetic Western epic about four men travelling to a town called Silverado in 1880. Good chemistry between the four stars — Kevin Costner, Scott Glenn, Danny Glover, Kevin Kline — makes up for a sometimes confusing plot. (PG: Violence) **½

MARKVILLE

THE GOONIES: Kids will have the most fun with this so-so adventure about seven kids searching for buried treasure in caverns beneath their hometown. (PG) **½

MAD MAX BEYOND THUNDER-DOME: A gripping combination of science fiction and action that puts Mad Max (Mel Gibson), the Rambo of Australia, between two groups of World War III survivors — a group of bizarre misfits and a colony of kids. (AA) ****

NATIONAL LAMPOON'S EUROPEAN VACATION: This comedy about a loony American family (Chevy Chase, Beverly D'Angelo, Dana Hill, and Jason Lively) who take a tour of Europe, occasionally travels on the low road in the pursuit of laughs, but the jokes and situations are whipped off with reckless speed and reinforced with an occasional malicious wit. Chase and company make the most of their material. The European locations help. (AA) **½

SESAME STREET PRESENTS: FOLLOW THAT BIRD: A film featuring some of the characters from the popular children's TV show. Big Bird stars with Oscar the Cookie Monster, Ernie and Bert, Mr. Snuffle-upagus plus John Candy and Chevy Chase. (F)



Roddy McDowell stars in Fright Night as a former horror film actor who finds out that vampires really exist. The movie vacillates between horror and spoof and has many powerful moments.

Talented acts wanted for annual talent show

The third annual Markham Economist and Sun search for talent is on. Every year the newspaper organizes a talent contest for the Concerts at the Pond, which are being held every Sunday night at Toogood Pond in Unionville. This year the Talent Contest will be held Aug. 18.

Lorne Hillier, from the newspaper's advertising department is co-ordinating the contest this year, and he urges anyone with an act to apply. He is looking for a variety of acts including break dancers, garage bands and comedians.

Depending on how many people enter the contest, there may be auditions. Two years ago auditions were held, but last year the contest only drew five entries.

Mr. Hillier will chose five acts from all the applicants. Each will be expected to

have a 15 to 20 minute program. Prizes, which have yet to be announced, will be awarded to the top acts. The judges will also be announced at a later date. Groups should have as much as their own equipment as possible.

The deadline for all entries is Monday, Aug. 12. There is no entry fee. For further information contact Mr. Hillier at 294-2200.

The Concerts at the Pond are held every Sunday night at 7:30 p.m. The events are sponsored by Fred Cox of Unionville Broadloom and Interiors Inc., and Murray Edmunds of Roofing By Edmunds and Co. Ltd., in co-operation with the Town of Markham and the Music Performance Trust Fund.

Tomorrow night Lillian Johnson will entertain by the pond.

Antique cars are featured

The Witchurch-Stouffville Museum is sponsoring its annual Antique and Classic Car Show, Aug. 11 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. There is no driver's fees and each driver will receive a dash plaque, plus the chance of winning a Peoples' Choice or Drivers' Choice plaque. There will also be runners up in both classes.

Local Bluegrass bands will be playing country music throughout the day, and a Hootenanny will be featured with any musician welcomed to join in.

There will be steam and gas engine demonstrations as well as craft demonstrations. The Bogartown Women's Institute will be holding a bake and craft sale.

There will be tours of the museum available.

Food and refreshments will be served and the children can play at the nearby park.

Admission is \$2 for adults and children under 12 are free. If it rains, the event will be postponed until Sunday, August 18. The Witchurch-Stouffville Museum is located on Woodbine, north of Bloomington Rd., in Vandorf.

For further information call 727-8954.

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