

LEISURE AND ENTERTAINMENT

Research will help families get the most from their video buck

FINDING MOVIES THAT MAKE THE GRADE

The Little Mermaid was my favourite, lots of characters, good guys and bad guys. The good guys won in the end. Ursula, the bad one, was funny. It's a little kid's romance.

MICHELLE RATCLIFF, 16



The Little Mermaid. I like when she goes to the town after turning into a people from a mermaid.

MEAGAN NORMANDEAU, 5



I liked *Star Wars* the best because of all the hype and everyone knew about it. I also liked the special effects and the graphics. It was cool how the three before came out after *Episode One*.

EVAN CLARKE, 13



I liked what they did in *Big Daddy*. Every time the boy peed, he covered it with newspaper. He got a night light. It was really a sign for a store. It was really funny.

SHAHIN DASTOUM, 7



I liked the special effects in *The Matrix*. I like when they jump across the walls and run on the walls and when the agents go so fast you can't even hit them with a bullet.

JEFFREY NORMANDEAU

FROM PAGE 15

One staff member is the designated expert on family movies and regularly takes a stack of the new releases home to try out on her family. She then makes a detailed report to the rest of the staff, who can then recommend, or steer customers away from, seemingly good family viewing.

"I've watched a lot of movies rated G (general viewing) and once you've finished seeing them, you pretty much decide PG would have been a better rating," said Lister. "Most often, it's because of language, and sometimes, violence."

"You just can't trust the ratings alone," she warns. "They use guidelines that are fairly general. The bottom line is what your family is comfortable with seeing."

When they get customer feedback that contradicts the rating, Sayers and the staff will put their own sticker on the movie, warning that it "may not be suitable without parental guidance."

Ratings aside, finding a good family movie can be a tough chore.

Movies that make the grade in Sayers' home have "a solid plot, good characters and good messages."

"We have a chance to preview a lot of movies and there are a lot of them that we just stop and rewind because we just don't feel they are appropriate."

So, where do you go to find a movie that everyone will enjoy?

First of all, trust the staff at your local video store. They, like Sayers, know their stock. Friends and family are other good sources.

There are also new commercial symbols popping up on video boxes, which help assure families they are on to a good thing.

Among the most popular is the Dove Foundation "family-approved" symbol. The blue rectangle, featuring a stylized white dove points the way to movies that

are rated suitable for any age, or for those over the age of 12. The symbol can be found in nearly 1,000 video stores across Canada and the U.S.

Current videos that have earned Dove's seal of approval include *The King and I*, *Baby Geniuses*, *Shiloh 2*, *Prince of Egypt* and *My Favorite Martian*.

For some families, movies have replaced television altogether.

Janet and Ian Rodger of Newmarket moved the television out of the living room last Christmas to make way for the tree.

Once it was gone, they found they didn't miss the television's domination of the living room. They moved it into their spare room, but could only pick up one channel clearly on the antennae.

So they hooked up their VCR and made the TV a movies-only machine.

"Now, we watch movies together," said Janet. "We don't really miss the television. We read the paper every day for the news and, as it was, we were down to very few hours of television. Now, we are reading more and it's been good."

The Rodgers love renting clas-

sic movies, especially black and white ones. They love their musicals, too. *An American in Paris* is a particular favorite, as is *Sabrina*, starring Audrey Hepburn.

Although most video stores carry a wide selection of classics, many can also be found in the public library.

"I really like it when I can find the video of a book they have been reading, like the black and white version of *A Christmas Carol* or the musical *Oliver!*, which is based on *Oliver Twist*. It's a really neat tie-in — they can see what they have been reading."

Of course, even some classics aren't appropriate for younger children.

Sayers cautions parents against renting movies that might frighten children.

"Watching a movie is supposed to be fun," she explained.

"If a child gets scared by a movie, it can take a long time to help them get over it. When people come in asking for scary movies for a slumber party, I usually recommend something like *Gremlins*. There's a comedic take on the horror."

With any movie you haven't seen before, stay in the room while your children are watching it.

And tell the video store staff. They need to know what their customers think.

For example, we have been getting overwhelming positive feedback on *Ever After*, with Drew Barrymore. People love that movie. It is a good family movie with a strong female heroine," said Sayers. "I would never recommend *Dr. Doolittle* with Eddie Murphy. The humour was just a little too base."

Whatever you pick as family viewing, take some time to talk about the movie afterwards. Encourage the kids to offer their views. Home is a safe and nurturing place to develop a discerning cinematic palate.

The Lion King — I like the "rahhhhhrrrrr".

RYKIE-LEE BARROW, 5



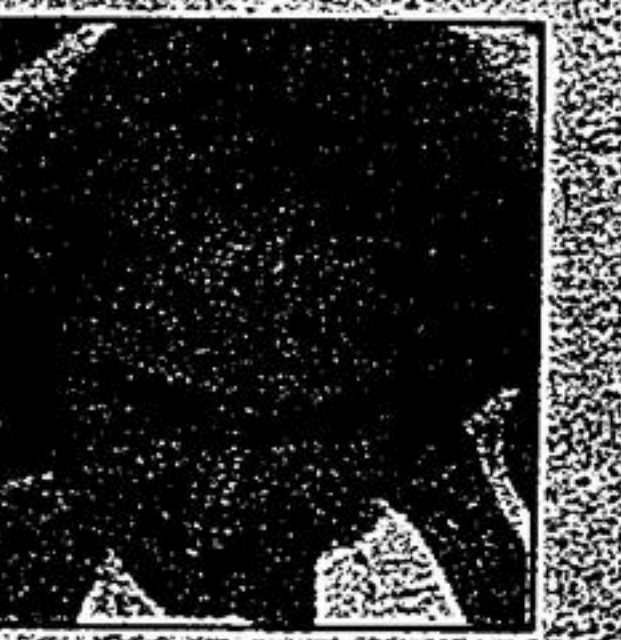
My favourite movie is *Star Wars*. I liked it because of the light saber parts.

JORDAN LYNG, 9



Austin Powers — I like how he's an idiot. He's really funny.

CHRISTOPHER NORMANDEAU, 11



Arnie. I liked the songs.

DEVYNN HALL, 4



I liked *The Fox and the Hound* because it proves that you can be different and still be friends.

ELIZABETH CAREY, 16



My favourite movie is *Tarzan*. I liked the jungle and the girl in the movie.

MELANIE WONG, 5

MOVIE NIGHT MUNCHIES

Here's a collection of recipes for great movie night snacking. They come to us from the Rodgers family of Newmarket, who like classic movies and other things in good taste. Janet is a professional baker and Ian is a chef.

GRILLED CHEESE, '90S STYLE

Ingredients:
Olive oil
Soft tacos
Cream cheese

Fillings: ham and pineapple, roasted bell peppers, black olives, onions (use your imagination, but make sure the fillings are fairly dry or the whole thing will fall apart)

Preheat oven to 350F.
Warm cream cheese in the microwave for 20 seconds on high to make it easier to spread.

Spread cheese on two shells, coming within a 1/2-inch from the edge all around.

Arrange fillings on one shell and top with the other. Press down and seal the edges.

In a non-stick fry pan, heat a bit of olive oil and let the pan get hot. Quickly brown one side and repeat on the second.

Transfer to a baking sheet and back for about 10 minutes. Cut into wedges and serve warm.

MICRO S'MORES

Ingredients:
milk chocolate bar (Jersey Milk or Hershey bar), broken into squares
marshmallows
graham crackers

Method:
Top one cracker with chocolate square. Top chocolate with marshmallow. Microwave on high for 20 seconds. Top with second graham cracker. Let it cool a bit, marshmallows get very hot in the microwave.

SUPER QUICK CHICKEN SOUP

Ingredients:
2 litres of chicken stock (homemade or made from frozen concentrate or bouillon cubes)

1/2 cup uncooked rice
Cooked, cubed chicken (in a pinch, use thickly sliced rolled chicken breast from the deli counter)
2-3 small onions
1 rib of celery

Method:
Bring stock to a boil, add rice and simmer until the rice is half cooked. Peel carrots and cut them into thin rounds. Dice celery. Add both to soup. Add chicken.
The soup is ready when the vegetables are tender. Add parsley prior to serving, if desired.

Families share their winning ideas

York Region Families ran two reader contests in July, one about beating the blahs with great activities and one about getting kids ready for back-to-school time. These are the winners of four passes to AMC Interchange 30 Theatres in Vaughan.

Marisa Deschamps, King City
The Harvey Family, Newmarket
Heike Beckemeyer, Unionville
Anna Cowan, Bradford
Tina Murphy, Town of Markham
Judith Mullen, Maple
Congratulations and thanks for participat-

ing. Winners can claim their prizes by calling Brenda Larson at (905) 853-8888.

Here are some of the boredom-beating ideas our readers shared:

• When the children are bored to tears and whining and moping around the house, why don't you go to your local fire station for a visit? Call your local department to find out about drop-in visits or organized tours.

• Why not bake cookies together? Anna Cowan of Bradford makes cookies with her two sons, ages 9 and 11, and they get to sample their efforts. She says she also hears them

laughing when they're on cleanup duty.

• The Harvey family of Newmarket packs up a picnic and heads to Centennial Beach in Barrie, where there is lots to do — swimming, waterpark for the kids, a paved trail for rollerblading, mini golfing, paddle boating and snacks available. They also like to spend time at the Lois Hancey Wave Pool in Richmond Hill.

• Marisa Deschamps says her kids love to pick wildflowers with her, run through the sprinkler, play dress-up with her, visit the pet store and visit the public library.

INSIGHT INTO EYESIGHT

DR. H.H. WALJI, (Hons., B.Sc., M.Sc., O.D., F.I.C.S.), OPTOMETRIST

READ BETTER, LEARN BETTER

Learning, in general, and reading, in particular, requires the integration of the following eight different vision skills:

(1) Visual Acuity is the ability to see

- objects clearly when reading.
- (2) Visual Fixation is the ability to aim eyes accurately.
- (3) Accommodation is the ability to adjust the focussing of your eyes as the distance between an individual and the object, such as reading material, changes.

- (4) Binocular Fusion refers to the brain's ability to gather information received from each eye separately and form a single, unified image.
- (5) Convergence is the ability to turn the two eyes toward each other to look at the reading material.
- (6) Stereopsis is the ability to have critical judgement of the relative distance between two objects.
- (7) Field of Vision is the area over which reading vision is possible.
- (8) Visual perception is the total

process responsible for the reception and cognition of visual information while reading. Each one of these eight visual skills are necessary for your reading and learning. Call our Practice Today for your Comprehensive and Thorough Eye Examination.

Dr. H.H. Walji
6633 Hwy. 7 at Ninth Line
(905) 471-EYES (3937)

