

## A View from the Rear Pew #103

Movies. I have always enjoyed going to the movies.

As a boy, I spent many a pleasant Saturday afternoon at the Tower Theatre in downtown Yorkton, Saskatchewan. The matinee ran all afternoon in a continuous loop. You could go to the show anytime between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. and if you joined the movie in the middle, you would just sit through the next showing until you came to the same scene again. Movie plots were fairly easy to follow as there were only 3 main versions.

Version 1 was the western. An evil saloon owner secretly discovers oil, gold or water on a widow's ranch and encourages her to sell it by running off her cattle, burning her barn and dynamiting her windmill powered water pump. The hero falls in love with the widow's feisty daughter and chases off the villainous saloon owner and his evil gang in a climactic gun fight after an escalating series of conflicts including saloon brawls, horse trough fights and dynamite stick throwing. The hero sings romantic songs to his girlfriend and has the smartest horse in the world. You could always count on the bad guys being really poor shots with sneaky black moustaches and fancy brocade vests.

Version 2 was the historical action flick. The young hero joins the French Foreign Legion and is assigned to a remote outpost. Only the audience and the aged Colonel know that he is really an undercover agent trying to find out which members of the garrison are selling rifles to the local Bedouin Sheikh. His strange sneaky behaviour, including nocturnal visits to the rebel camp, causes his platoon colleagues to think that he is a cowardly traitor, until the end of the movie when he helps fight off a major assault, saves the fort's flag and becomes engaged to the colonel's beautiful daughter. You could always count on the Arabs being really bad shots with sneaky black moustaches and goatees and fancy brocade robes with pointy shoes.

Version 3 was the Sinbad the Sailor travel adventure. Sinbad sails his dhow in a quest to find the Golden Fleece, and encounters many strange animated creatures along the way. Sinbad is a great sword fighter in spite of his strange curvy sword and always has two sidekicks – a dim witted but loyal and strong man who can bend prison bars with his bare hands, and a cute little monkey that can steal keys. The cast was usually made up of dark complexioned Greeks or Italians and the lip synchronization wasn't that great. Still, when one is being chased by 150 foot high, one eyed plasticine monsters, one cannot really be that fussy. You could always count on the monsters being easily fooled, with most scenes ending with the frustrated Cyclops throwing huge boulders at the hero's ship as it makes for the open sea. The monsters were always really bad shots and Sinbad wore a brocade vest and pointy shoes.

This brings me to my most recent trip to the local Cineplex to see a movie entitled "Interstellar". The plot involves a team of explorers apparently undertaking the most important mission in human history, traveling beyond our galaxy to discover new homes among the stars. Are you with me so far? No saloons, trick horses, French Foreign Legion forts or plasticine monsters. This is a very sophisticated and message-filled plot with stunning special effects.

The movie starts on a farm somewhere in Iowa or Kansas where a former NASA astronaut is growing corn and driving a rusty, old pickup truck, and living in an old farm house that hasn't seen a coat of paint since Herbert Hoover was President. He says that he loves his two children, but spends most of his time drinking beer and watching his robot combines smash about in his corn field. Some disease is killing off vegetables ( a good thing in my grandson Henry's opinion) and the family meals consist only of corn on the cob, corn fritters, and corn pops ( also a good thing in my grandson's opinion). Thanks to a mysterious coded message on his daughter's dusty bedroom

floor, the hero discovers a huge underground NASA complex under a nearby abandoned fertilizer plant. Next thing we know, he has been selected to pilot a space probe through a wormhole to determine if one of three planets is suitable for human life. Are you with me still? Teams have already been sent ahead to each of these three prospective worlds and our hero and his mates must select which planet is going to work best (based presumably on his corn growing, beer drinking and truck driving expertise). In the meantime, the scientists in the underground complex are working on some physics formula that, when solved, will move the people of earth to the new planet before the current corn crop fails.

The hero has to say a sad goodbye to his children and promises to return the pickup truck after blast off.

After this, the plot began to get complicated with the theory of relativity, black holes, the fifth dimension and artificial worlds around Saturn. The hero does meet his daughter again but she is now 124 years old and he has missed out on her teen years including creepy boyfriends and driving lessons. He doesn't seem that upset about it.

The truth is that I really didn't understand the plot that well and became totally confused somewhere between the corn fritters and the water planet with the giant Tsunami waves. The evil scientist on the planet that looked like Alberta in November didn't have a sneaky moustache and there was no brocade on his space suit.

I don't know if they are now paying the Hollywood screen writers too much or too little. In my opinion, they should forget the wormholes and focus more on the water holes. Creative genius just isn't what it used to be. If you walked into the middle of Interstellar, waiting to see the first half wouldn't help you understand the plot. Maybe I am just a Walt Disney kind of guy? See you at the movies!