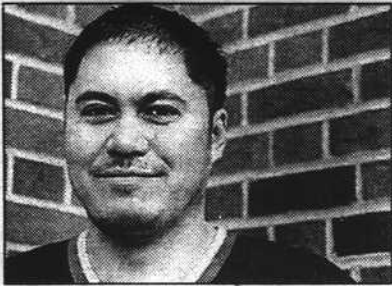


STAR WARS

Episode VII

May The Farce Be With You

It has been 15 years since the evil Empire fell to the hands of left-wing fanatics and a tribe of Ewoks. Now, as the trilogy makes a second trip to nationwide movie theaters, can either the Rebels or the Empire survive the ink of the Daily Nebraskan opinion pages....



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By the time you read this, I will most likely already be standing in line — you know, to see “Star Wars.” But this isn’t the same “Star Wars” that we have been watching over the years.

After all, director/writer George Lucas has added around five minutes of new footage and also cleaned up a lot of the original scenes.

But unlike most things these days, the “Star Wars” trilogy is not being re-released to make money. Sure, it will make a ton of cash (as green as the forest moon of Endor), but if Lucas really wanted to make money, he would just let the movies play in theaters until the crowds stop coming. But the trio of films will only play on the big screen for three, two and two weeks, respectively.

The real reason the movies are being shown in theaters again is that Lucas is a perfectionist. He wants to give audiences a chance to see what “Star Wars” would have looked like if he had had the money and the technology back then that he possesses today.

Naturally, since I work for the journalistic mega-power the Daily Nebraskan, I was invited to the Lucas estate for a private screening of the revamped “Star Wars” (as an appetizer, he served these tiny salmon patties shaped like Yoda).

So now I know all of the new stuff in the movie and I am ready to share it with you, but please, don’t keep reading if you don’t want to know about the new ending where Darth Vader is in his personal Tie-Fighter careening out of control, only this time he doesn’t just sit there spinning around, but instead he yells “And I would have got away with it too, if it wouldn’t have been for you meddling Rebels! And don’t you worry, I’ll track you down no matter where you go, even if it’s an icy planet like Hoth. Wind-chill doesn’t even phase me, baby!”

If you’re still reading, I can only assume that you want to know about more of the newly added footage. So here you go:

■ In the original “Star Wars,” Luke and Obi-Wan get in a bloody scuffle at the Mos Eisley Cantina, but the fight doesn’t seem justified.

In the new version, Luke and Obi-Wan sing a pathetic karaoke version of “New York, New York,” clearly showing why the guy who looked at the Wolfman was so pissed off. To make the scene more visually realistic, however, the Wolfman is taken out and replaced with Quentin Tarantino, who I think we can agree, is much scarier than a guy in a werewolf costume.

■ In the first version, Princess Leia spends the first half of the movie in a detention cell on the Death Star, but she doesn’t really do anything most of that time. In the new version, there is a sequence with Leia doing a sweaty, grueling aerobic workout. The most memorable part of this footage is best summed up in two words: toe touches.

■ We have seen the Force used for many things, from choking opponents to persuading weak-minded aliens to obey commands, but there are so many more possibilities. In the new “Star Wars,” there is a scene in the Death Star Bar where Darth Vader uses the Force to (in his words) “pick up chicks.” Among the soon to be famous lines in this sequence are “wanna play with my lightsaber?” and “ever do a Jedi knight?”

There is a lot more great new footage that isn’t mentioned here, including the very sensuous oil bath sequence involving C-3PO and R2-D2, but I don’t want to spoil the whole movie for you. So if you want to know about every single new thing in the movie, just come talk to me this afternoon. I’ll be standing outside the Stuart Theater in a Wookiee costume. Really, I will.



It seems once people reach the number of years it takes to have “good old days,” they immediately begin to pine for them. My father pines for Elvis’ censored hips on Ed Sullivan. Al Bundy pines for the high school football field. And what first-grader doesn’t pine for the glorious cookie breaks and nap times of kindergarten?

I pine for the summer of 1977. My memory for such nostalgia doesn’t encompass what perhaps tugs other people’s heartstrings of remembrance. That cocaine-like, Jimmy Carter-run season of unbridled disco-ness is a vague blur to me, not because I was a happenin’ swinger, but because I was 3 years old. The event that gets my pine juices circulating was projected on a giant silver screen and was purported to have happened “a long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away.”

In recent years, as the day of the “Star Wars” re-release drew closer, it became quite apparent that my nostalgia for this film was an almost universal trait carried by people my age. We might not remember much from that polyester decade, but “Star Wars” has been laser blasted on our collective minds.

It has also blasted itself on the brains of a new generation of Hollywood hopefuls. Actors, writers, gaffers and key grips alike are scrambling through the Hollywood hills trying to get their resumes to the right person, all hoping to work on the new trilogy. To them I offer my heartfelt discouragement — and a heaping spoonful of resentment to anyone who does succeed.

The following is a list of reasons why it would suck to be involved with “Star Wars.” By the way, don’t become dizzy as I switch from real situations to those that involve fiction. In this tabloid-journalism age, fantasy and reality are indistinguishable to the journalist as well as the journaled.



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1. It would suck to be Mark Hammil a.k.a. “that guy who played Luke Skywalker and then did nothing else.” I’ll never forget the night I was watching wee-hour Cinemax only to be traumatized by the sight of Mr. Skywalker’s bare heinie doing the bump and grind on some low-budget porno set. My childhood ended that very evening.

2. It would suck to be an Imperial Stormtrooper. You wear all that sweaty armor and it still does no good against simple laser blasts. While you may look like a total stud, your clacking boots allow rebels to hear you coming from a mile away. You stick out like a sore thumb in the forest where Ewoks pelt your shiny, white venter with rocks and sticks, proving once again that you’re wearing substandard protection. And you can’t shoot worth a damn either.

3. It would suck to be the Emperor. Yeah, you’ve mastered the Force and you have lots of minions, but when do you think the man was ever intimate with a woman? Don’t kid yourself.

4. It would suck to be Ben Kenobi. The only conversations you could have would be with Luke and other ghosts. People would constantly interrupt your conversation and stand where your apparition is. And who wants to hang out with Yoda? He takes one bite of your Slim Jim and then tosses it into the swamp.

5. Finally, it would suck not to be a “Star Wars” fanatic right now. There you will be, waiting in line for six hours, bearing the frigid January temperatures, and surrounded by a horde of freaks. (Myself included.) I imagine it might be difficult to cope. Here I offer advice. Come knowing at least some lyrics to the many popular “Star Wars” folk songs. I’ll get you started.

Please sing the following to the tune of “Kumbaya”:

“Chewbacca, my Lord,
Chewbacca!”
“Chewbacca, my Lord,
Chewbacca!”
“Chewbacca, my Lord,
Chewbacca!”
“Oh Lord, Chewbacca.”



MEHSLING