

FRONT PORCH PERSPECTIVE: Film Critic

By **Stephen Somerville**

I was all set to write about voter turnout and how many votes it took, based on the last three elections, to get on Aurora Council, but this can wait.

It is almost the holiday season and there are lots of different movies on television or in the movie theatres for us to enjoy.

For those who like romantic comedy you don't even have to leave your home as the W Network, based on the millions of commercials that we have been bombarded with, is showing a virtual cornucopia of their new Christmas movies.

The plots seem pretty well the same for all these type of flicks. Woman, usually an architect or newspaper columnist, comes home from the big city to be with her family for the Christmas season and meets an old flame, and after some friction and conflict, the movie usually ends up in with the two protagonists kissing in front of the good ole' Christmas tree.

For the kids (and adults like me) *Wreck it Ralph II, Ralph Breaks the Internet*, just came out. While I tremendously enjoyed the initial movie when it came out six years ago, this one did not seem to live up to the first.

The plot of the movie was interesting enough as the two central characters Ralph and Venelope had to circulate through this mysterious new device called ?WIFI? to obtain a part for Venelope's game.

However, the pacing was a little too pedestrian for my linking.

My rating would be a six out of ten.

The trailers for the new Lego movie, which comes out next February, seem very good as does the trailer for *Toy Story IV*, which comes out in June 2019.

There are also two movies that come out on television every year that I enjoy watching for very different reasons.

The Irving Berlin Classic, ?White Christmas? is special because I always used to watch it with my mother and it makes me think of her.

The Polar Express, an animated movie for kids starring Tom Hanks is another favourite of mine. The colours and story line are great, but what does it for me is that the movie came out in 2004 when my son was 1 year old and he would sit in his high chair and enjoy seeing the movie running over and over again.

For some reason I have gravitated lately to old films.

Some of my favourites included *Goodbye Mr Chips*, *Casablanca*, *Shoes of the Fisherman*, *Roman Holiday*, *Contact*, and *Midway*. I think the reason that I like these old movies is that at the time there was no great special effects. It was all about the acting, the great characters and the storylines.

They don't seem to make too many movies like that anymore.

Some of the more recent films that I have enjoyed include ?The Post?.

Tom Hanks stars as Ben Bradlee, the editor of the Washington Post in the early 1970s and Meryl Streep as Washington Post owner, Katherine Graham.

Both of their performances were wonderful.

The movie opens with Daniel Ellsberg, who is young U.S. army officer, involved in a firefight in Vietnam. After a tour of duty he leaves the army and goes to work for the Rand Corporation, which is a U.S. Defense Think Tank.

He accompanies U.S. Defence Secretary Bob McNamara on a fact-finding Mission to Vietnam and tells the Secretary that he does not feel progress is being made, which is contrary to what a number of the advisors to McNamara believe.

Ellsberg is very concerned about the state of the war and decides to photo copy and leak to the press a 7,000 page document that McNamara commissioned about the U.S.'s involvement in Vietnam since 1945. This document becomes better known as the Pentagon Papers.

The rest of the movie deals with the competition between the Washington Post and the New York Times over Vietnam related stories and if the Washington Post will release the Pentagon Papers when the New York Times faces an injunction for trying to do so.

The pace and excitement of the movie was wonderful. The movie really made you think about the key issue of freedom of the press and whether releasing historical information about the Vietnam War put the then current Vietnamese war effort in jeopardy.

The U.S. Supreme Court voted 6-3 in favour of the release of the Pentagon Papers.

I would give this movie an eight out of ten. Then again, I gave Clint Eastwood's ?Fistful of Dollars?, and the movies ?Midway? and ?Contact?, also a nine.

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