

Star Wars spinoff film drawing board

As I sat in the theater, the subtitle of the new Star Wars film “The Force Awakens” didn’t seem that fitting to me. “A Used But In Good Condition Hope” would’ve been more accurate, but would’ve been crammed onscreen during the iconic opening title sequence. “The Box Office Awakens” would’ve worked just fine.

Watching the new Star Wars film is much like watching The Beach Boys on the county fair reunion circuit; sure they are performing all the familiar hits you know and love, but there’s something rather crass and greedy about seeing the original members sans Brian Wilson self-congratulatorily parading through the band’s catalogue, content on rehashing the past rather than build upon the band’s legacy.

Of course the Brian Wilson in this analogy is George Lucas. Sure, both Wilson and Lucas made missteps in their careers, but each was a driving artistic vision in regards to their respective projects.

Now that Lucas has no hand in steering the much loved space opera he created, the Walt Disney Company is free to mine the franchise for sequel films and merchandise (“Hello, Star Wars Pendleton blankets!”) into perpetuity. In his much ballyhooed interview with Charlie Rose conducted late last year, Lucas stated that filmmakers in the United States have less creative freedom than filmmakers under communist rule in the Soviet Union. Rather hyperbolic to be sure, but what he meant to say was that Hollywood filmmakers are pressured to sacrifice a film’s plot for the sake of marketability. In the case of the “Star Wars: The Force Awakens” this means recycling all the major plot points from “A New Hope”; orphan protagonist on desert planet whisked out of their humdrum life by a fugitive droid (check), oppressive regime builds instrument of planetary destruction to be later destroyed by a group of ragtag rebels (check), antagonist with familial ties to protagonist kills sage figure (check).

As clumsy as Lucas’s prequel trilogy was, to his credit, he at least concocted an original storyline. In spite of how visually satisfying “The Force Awakens” was, the overall experience carried no suspense or surprises since you could see them coming from light years away. The reemergence of familiar characters, not unlike Leonard Nimoy’s appearance in J.J. Abrams’s Star Trek reboot, were cameos that relied on viewers’ knowledge of the previous films to feel significant. They only left me pining to watch the original films. Why subject myself to an inferior replicant?

In the off years between the sequel trilogy film releases, Disney intends to release “anthology” films that follow characters tangential to the Star Wars saga. Presumably these spinoffs will not have the audacity to directly rip off the plot of the “Return Of The Jedi” (how many times do we need to see the Death Star blown up?). I’m offering these slightly original film treatments up to Disney, free of charge, in case they care to pilfer their films’ plots from outside the Star Wars universe:

My Dinner With Chewbacca — Composed of one continuous scene taking place at space bar and grill orbiting the planet Bepsin, Han Solo and Chewbacca reunite over dinner after being separated for many years. A long, philosophical conversation ensues between the two touching upon the nature of life, spiritual experiences, and the hazards of space smuggling.

Fifty Shades of Hutt — The erotic tale of a recent college graduate developing a romantic relationship with her employer, the enigmatic space gangster Jabba the Hutt. Moody in tone and set to sensual soundtrack as performed by Figrin D’an and the Modal Nodes, the film explores the taboo practices of bondage and sadomasochism, but not too deeply, because an NC-17 rating would severely hamper the film’s marketability in more conservative markets.

The Fugitive: Flying Solo — In this suspense-thriller, Han Solo, wrongfully convicted of murdering his wife, escapes from custody and sets out to prove his innocence with bounty hunter Boba Fett in hot pursuit. In what is sure to be an iconic scene (and great to insert in the trailers) Solo leaps off the face of a dam in order to escape Fett.

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J.D. KINDLE Comment

Tamastslikt shows off youth artwork

ArtWORKz submissions accepted through Jan. 18

East Oregonian

A popular youth art show and competition will open Saturday, Jan. 23 at Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute in Mission.

In its fifth year, ArtWORKz 2016 will feature a variety of mediums, including sculpture, painting, drawing, printmaking, glass, mixed media, photography, computer-generated art and fiber art. In addition, traditional tribal work such as beadwork, weaving and parfleche painting will grace the walls and display cases.

Open to both tribal and non-tribal youths, the event showcases regional youth with submissions received from Umatilla and Morrow counties, as well as Arlington and Richland, Washington. Both individual efforts and collaborative projects are featured. The show has grown each year since its inception, including 90 participants in 2015, said Randall Melton, Tamástslíkt’s collections curator.

“Young artists are excited to display their artwork in a true gallery setting,” he explained.

Judging, which is based on



Photo contributed by Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute

ABOVE: Viola Minthorn and her niece, Azalea Minthorn, view the ArtWORKz 2014 exhibit at Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute in Mission. **This year’s youth art competition and show opens Jan. 23.** **RIGHT:** Carson Oyama won the 2015 ArtWorkz Award of Excellence in the 1-10 age category for his piece, “The Dreary and Frightful Night.”

artistry, creative vision, technical merit and presentation, includes three divisions — 10 and under, 11-14 and 15-18. Each artist is limited to entering one piece, which results in the young artists presenting their best work.

A judging panel of professional artists will determine grand prizes, awards of excellence, awards of merit and honorable mentions. Staff at Tamástslíkt will choose



the Best Emerging Artist. Also, participants in the show will recognize one of their peers with an Artists’ Choice award. The public is invited to attend the Awards Reception Saturday, Feb. 6 at 1 p.m.

There is still time for area youths to enter a piece for the competition and show. For more information, including entry forms, visit www.tamastslikt.org/exhibits.cfm. The

submission deadline is Monday, Jan. 18. There is no entry fee.

ArtWORKz 2016 is Jan. 23 through Feb. 27. Gallery hours are Monday through Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For more information, contact Randall Melton at 541-429-7720 or randall.melton@tamastslikt.org.

Festivals

Eagle Cap Extreme Sled Dog Race

•Jan. 20-23
•Ferguson Ridge Ski Area, Joseph
•Race Central, Joseph
www.eaglecapextreme.com

No charge for spectators. Shuttles are available to the ski area. In addition, Race Central — the Joseph Community Center — features the latest race information, treats and hot drinks, information on sled dogs and mushing, DVDs, and kids’ corner with activities, books, and scheduled kids’ events. There is a charge for the Saturday night banquet of \$20 for adults, \$8/youths 5-12.

Robert Burns Supper

•Saturday, Jan. 23; 2 p.m.
•Condon Elks Lodge, 117 S. Main St.
\$17/single, \$30/couple. A celebration of Condon’s Scottish heritage — coinciding with the birthday of Robert Burns, Scotland’s beloved bard — featuring music, recitations, shortbread contests, Scottish trivia contest, oral family histories, food, merriment and more. The event continues into the night. Contact 541-384-2421 or times-journal@jncable.com for more information.

Melonville Comedy Festival

•Saturday, Jan. 30; 8 p.m.
•Hermiston Conference Center, 415 S. Highway 395
www.melonvillecomedy-festival.com
\$35. Features stand-up comedians Greg Hahn, Drew Barth and Travis Nelson.

Art & Museums

American Art Masterpieces

•Monday-Thursdays; 11 a.m.-7 p.m.,
•Friday-Saturdays; 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
•Hermiston Public Library, 235 E. Gladys Ave.
www.hermistonlibrary.us
Provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities, artwork by John James Audubon, Norman Rockwell

and others are on display through the month of January.

BMCC Faculty & Staff Art Show

•Monday-Thursdays, 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.
•Betty Feves Memorial Gallery, Blue Mountain Community College, 2411 N.W. Carden Ave., Pendleton.
Free. Gallery also open by appointment by calling 541-278-5952. The exhibit runs through Feb. 4.

ArtWORKz 2016

•Opens Saturday, Jan. 23
•Monday - Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
•Tamástslíkt Cultural Institute, near Wildhorse Resort & Casino.
www.tamastslikt.org
\$10/adults, \$9/senior citizens, \$6/youths, free/5 and under or \$25/family of four. Youth art show and competition features original artwork from area youths. Prizes presented Saturday, Feb. 6 at 1 p.m. during an Awards Reception. Runs through Feb. 27.

Heritage Station Museum

•Tuesday-Saturdays
•10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
•108 S.W. Frazer Ave., Pendleton
www.heritagestationmuseum.org
\$5/adults, \$2/student, \$4/seniors, \$10/family.

SAGE Center

•Monday-Saturdays
•10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
•101 Olson Road, Boardman
www.visitsage.com
\$5/adults, \$3/students, seniors, free/under 5. An interactive visitor center highlighting sustainable agriculture and energy. On-site store features local art, jewelry, food, wine and gifts.

Music

Funk Factory

•Saturday, Jan. 2; 9 p.m.
No cover
•Wildhorse Sports Bar at Wildhorse Resort & Casino, off Highway 331, Mission.
Thunder Cover
•Friday, Jan. 8; Saturday, Jan. 9, 9 p.m. No cover
•Wildhorse Sports Bar at

WHAT TO DO

Wildhorse Resort & Casino, off Highway 331, Mission.

Country Hoedown

•Saturday, Jan. 9; 1-4 p.m.
•Milton-Freewater Neighborhood Senior Center, 311 N. Main St.
\$2/admission. Live music, dancing and singing. Refreshments available for purchase.

Oldies Night in Milton-Freewater

•Saturday, Jan. 9; 7 p.m.
•Wesley Methodist Church, 816 S. Main St., Milton-Freewater.
Free. BJ the DJ celebrates the 10th anniversary of Oldies Night by spinning tunes of 1956. Get ready to hear Elvis, The Platters, Bill Haley, Little Richard and more.

Cabin Fever Concert

•Saturday, Jan. 16; 6 p.m.
•Hermiston Conference Center, 415 S. Highway 395
\$38/admission. Advanced tickets required. Includes Dutch oven dinner by Sharon’s Sweet Treats. John Wambecke & Friends provide an evening of music and humor. Tickets available at The Cottage.

Founders Night

•Wednesday, Jan. 20; 5-9 p.m.
•Nookies/Hermiston Brewing Co., 125 N. First St., Hermiston

James Dean Kindle & The Eastern Oregon Playboys
•Saturday, Jan. 23; 7 p.m.
•Hamley Saloon, 8 S.E. Court Ave., Pendleton
www.facebook.com/events/929270377163726
\$5. Join Kindle & the Playboys for a concert that includes a film crew for a future documentary of the band. Rounding out the musical trifecta are Brian Bovenizer & The Koala Cowboys of Astoria and Misty Mouth of Pendleton for a night as decadent as the walls of the Slickfork Saloon.

DJ music
•Saturdays, 8 p.m.
•The Pheasant, 149 E. Main St., Hermiston

Night life

Sunday Fundays
•Sundays; 4 p.m.
•Riverside Sports Bar, 1501 Sixth St., Umatilla

No cover. Food/drink specials.

Whiskey Wednesday Game Night

•Wednesdays; 3-7 p.m.
•The Pheasant, 149 E. Main St., Hermiston

No cover. Drink specials and games, including Xbox 360, Nintendo Wii, PlayStation 3 and Nintendo 64.

RockKaraoke

•Third Wednesdays, 8 p.m.
•Wildhorse Sports Bar, Wildhorse Resort & Casino, off Highway 331, Mission.

No cover. Live band karaoke the third Wednesday of each month through December.

Thursday Night Comedy

•Thursdays, 8 p.m.
•Wildhorse Sports Bar, Wildhorse Resort & Casino, off Highway 331, Mission.

Mac’s Trivia Night

•Thursdays, 8 p.m. No cover

•Mac’s Bar & Grill, 1400 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton 21 and older. East. Drink. Think. Teams of 2-8 compete in trivia contest with other teams. Live host and prizes. Series runs through Feb. 25.

Digital Karaoke

•Thursdays and Fridays, 8 p.m.
•The Pheasant, 149 E. Main St., Hermiston

Wine tasting

•Fridays, 4-8 p.m.
•Sno Road Winery, 111 W. Main St., Echo.

Open Mic

•First/third Friday each month, 8 p.m.-midnight
•The Packard Tavern, 118 S.E. Court Ave., Pendleton
www.facebook.com/groups/pendletonopenmic

Karaoke

•Fridays 8 p.m. (9 p.m. if game on)
•Riverside Sports Bar, 1501 Sixth St., Umatilla

Stage & film

Dancing with the Hermiston Stars

•Saturday, Jan. 9; 6:30 p.m.
•Hermiston High School auditorium, 600 S. First St.
www.desertartscouncil.com

\$40/adults, \$22.50/youths (\$5 discount if purchased in advance). Desert Arts Council presents the event with professionals with the Utah Ballroom Dance Company working with six local “stars” as they raise money for local charities and compete for the mirrored ball trophy.

“Flashdance the Musical”

•Friday, Jan. 22; 7 p.m.
•Windermere Theatre, Kennewick
www.yourtoyotacenter.com

\$42-\$67 (tickets via www.ticketmaster.com). The pop culture phenomenon takes the stage. It features a score that includes hit songs from the movie, as well as 16 new songs written for the musical with music by Robbie Roth and lyrics by Roth and Robert Cary.

“Having It All”

•Sunday, Jan. 24; 1 p.m.
•Power House Theatre, 111 N. Sixth St., Walla Walla
www.phtw.com
Ticket information to be announced. A documentary screening about three women who set out to live their dreams of balancing career, marriage and children. Each learns what “having it all” really means.

Hot tickets

•**Black Sabbath: The End.** Feb. 6, Tacoma Dome. Tickets (\$35-\$150) available via www.ticketmaster.com

•**The Illusionists - Live from Broadway.** Feb. 12, Windermere Theatre, Kennewick. Tickets (\$42-\$67) available via www.ticketmaster.com

•**The Tenors.** Feb. 13, Rivers Event Center Wildhorse Resort & Casino. Tickets (\$89/with dinner; \$59/premium seats, \$49/general admission) available via www.wildhorseresort.com or Wildhorse gift shop
•**Harlem Globetrotters.** Feb. 21, Toyota Center, Kennewick. Tickets (\$80.50-102.50) available via www.ticketmaster.com

Want to get your event listed in our calendar? Send information to tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com, or c/o Tammy Malgesini, 333 E. Main Street, Hermiston, OR, 97838.

TV REVIEW

‘Making a Murderer’ depicts justice gone awry

By FRAZIER MOORE
AP Television Writer

NEW YORK — “Making a Murderer” is the latest series to demand you not just watch, but binge.

But since its Netflix debut on Dec. 18, it’s become even more encompassing: a Thing, a budding cultural phenomenon, whose subject is emerging as a painful cause celebre.

Few series pack a punch like this, and, further stoking your moral outrage, the tale this 10-hour docuseries tells is real.

“Making a Murderer” chronicles the hardship of Steven Avery, an otherwise obscure member of a salvage-yard family in Wisconsin’s rural Manitowoc County.

It begins in 2003 with video of Avery returning home after 18 years’ imprisonment for sexual assault, a crime of which he was belatedly exonerated thanks to DNA evidence proving him innocent.

A stubby overgrown elf with a bushy beard and a beaming smile, Avery, at 41, claims to have left any anger at this miscarriage of justice at the jailhouse door. Calling himself “the happiest man on Earth,” he now is eager to resume normal life.



Netflix via AP

This image released by Netflix shows Steven Avery, right, in the Netflix original documentary series “Making A Murderer.”

If only.

Early buzz for this series has spiked into a roar. Online petitions have sprung to life on Avery’s behalf while passionate comments punctuate social media.

The less you know about Avery’s ordeal, the more you will be rocked by “Making a Murderer.” Suffice it to say, the series depicts a systemic vendetta waged against him by police and the courts. And it only heated up after his rape conviction was overturned.

Law enforcement “despised” him, one observer declares in the series’ first moments. “Steven Avery was a shining example of their inadequacies, their misconduct.”

And a member of Avery’s family recalls her advice upon his release. “Be careful,” she says she cautioned him. “They are not even close to being done with you.”

Make no mistake, Steven Avery is no angel. As a teen, he had his scrapes with the law. “I was young and stupid,” he acknowledges.

“Making a Murderer” spans more than 30 years, up through 2015, as a gripping thriller of repeated hope and setbacks. Filmmakers Laura Ricciardi and Moira Demos draw on archival video, commentary by Avery, footage from courtrooms and police interrogations, and interviews with key figures (including Avery’s supportive, long-suffering parents).

The series eschews recreations and other docu-gimmickry, while seizing on a potent visual device: Many audio sequences play over scenes of rusting carcasses in Avery’s Auto Salvage yard. It’s as if to say, the Avery family deals with wreckage in plain sight, rather than the wreckage of a legal system fiercely kept under wraps by its custodians.

In the face of what seems, at minimum, reasonable doubt surrounding Avery, now 53, as well as his nephew, the series may offer a broader message: “We can all say that we’re never gonna commit a crime,” says Jerry Buting, one of Avery’s defense lawyers. “But we can never guarantee that someone will never ACCUSE us of a crime.”

“And if that happens,” he warns, “then good luck in this criminal justice system.”