

Review

‘The Force Awakens’ Lives Up To ‘Star Wars’ Hype

BY JOHN HODSON
For the Press & Dakotan

Not since Marvel’s original “Avengers” movie have I seen hype so big and frenetic as it’s been for “Star Wars: The Force Awakens,” the rebirth of the epic space franchise. Out of all the opinions I have read since the “Star Wars” franchise was acquired by Disney. Half have been terrified that the franchise would sink to the bottom of the ocean, with the other half hoping the new movies could only go up from the bar that was set by the unloved prequels.

So how is it, really?
Here’s the set-up: Since the end of “Return of the Jedi,” a new faction has arisen called the First Order and it’s hunting down the missing Luke Skywalker. Being led by a new villain, Kylo Ren (Adam Driver), the Order discovers that a resistance member has left a map to Skywalker’s location in the small droid BB8. This droid finds its way into the kind hands of a woman named Rey (Daisy Ridley) who in turn runs into another resistance member named Finn (John Boyega). The two must get the droid to the leader of the Resistance while preventing the First Order from discovering Skywalker’s location.

There are a number of parallels to a “New Hope” — the new subtitle for the 1977 original — from a robot containing important info to characters meeting in a desert, but it all works. The story may pay tribute to the older films, but it does contain its own themes, twists and turns that help set it apart from the rest of the series. This kind of storytelling makes the universe feel familiar to old fans while also welcoming the new ones.

The environmental designs are some of the best I have seen in a long time. Director J.J. Abrams wanted to make the movie as close to the designs of the original trilogy. This meant that, rather than using mostly green screens and CGI, he went back to creating sets,



PHOTO: LUCASFILM/TNS
Daisy Ridley and John Boyega star in “Star Wars: The Force Awakens,” a revival of the epic science fiction franchise, this time by Disney.

filming on location, building costumes and even creating a functional BB8. The lack of pure CGI creations (which were used a lot and to much ridicule in the prequels) helps to make the overall environment feel authentic and makes the scenes where there is a lot more CGI look more realistic by comparison.

It’s worth mentioning that the musical score helps sell this movie as a true successor to what George Lucas created. The legendary John Williams and the result is beautiful. The call-back music to the originals is still amazing. The problem here is the old music outshines the new tracks made. At the time of this writing, it is difficult to recall anything new.

As for the acting, everyone does a great job. John Boyega, Daisy Ridley and Adam Driver are the newcomers to the franchise and help propel the movie. Each of them brings their characters to life and makes them real in a way that was lacking in the prequels.

Returning to their roles of Leia, Luke and Han Solo, Harrison Ford, Carrie Fisher and Mark Hamill (respectively) slip into their old roles like a glove.

What makes it click is how well the actors work off each other. This was a big concern for a lot of people. There were fears that either the older actors would be unable to keep up with the youngsters or that the experience of the old crew would make the new actors look like amateurs. Thankfully, that was not the case, and the two groups work off each other really well.

Considering everything that could have gone wrong, “Star Wars: The Force Awakens” is an amazing film. It truly is the future of the franchise and shows the audience what can be expected in the future, while also paying homage to the past. From the story, the effects and the acting, “The Force Awakens” soars from start to finish and should please both hardcore and casual fans alike.

Car Talk

Sometimes An Engine Fire Is All You Can Hope For

BY RAY MAGLIOZZI
King Features Syndicate, Inc.

Dear Car Talk:
I have a 2001 Ford E250 van with a 5.4-liter motor. When you step on the gas and then let your foot off the pedal, the throttle drops very slowly. I’ve replaced the EGR, the throttle position sensor and the idle air-control valve, and I’ve cleaned the throttle body. I don’t know what’s wrong or how to fix it. Can you help? — Skip

I don’t think so, Skip. You’ve tried most of the things I would have suggested.

Let’s assume you did all of that stuff correctly, and that you didn’t notice any scaring or wear and tear inside the throttle body that could cause the butterfly valve to get hung up. The next thing I’d look for would be something even more simple that got overlooked, like a sticky throttle cable.

You can check that by disconnecting the throttle cable from the throttle itself, and then operating the throttle by hand with the engine cover off. If the van returns to idle normally without the throttle cable connected, then you know it’s the cable, and you can replace it.

If it’s not that, the next thing I would hope for is a good, old-fashioned engine fire. You’d be surprised how many mechanical problems an engine fire can solve, Skip. Good luck.

Auto repairs can be costly! Save money by ordering Click and Clack’s pamphlet “Ten Ways You May Be Ruining Your Car Without Even Knowing It!” Send \$4.75 (check or money order) to Car Talk/Ruin, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803.

Got a question about cars? Write to Car Talk in care of this newspaper, or email by visiting the Car Talk website at www.cartalk.com.

© 2015 By Ray Magliozzi And Doug Berman



Ray
MAGLIOZZI

Local Teen Named Youth Of The Year

On Saturday, Dec. 12, Jasmine Brant was named the Boys & Girls Club of Yankton Youth of the Year. Jasmine and Janya Kendall were nominated by Club staff for this award because of their outstanding character and strong leadership skills.

At the event, awards were given to local youth that won at for each Club that was represented, as well as an overall Youth of the Year. The Youth of the Year process included a detailed written application including three essays, three reference letters, and multiple rounds of interviews with the volunteer judges, and a public speech. All participants

are kids that are actively involved in their local Club, are leaders in their Club and community, and are working toward long term academic success. Other qualifications to participate included Club membership for at least two years, and having to be at least 14 years old.

All competitors will get a free full Club membership including entry to special events, dances, field trips, and an activity pass. All local Youth of the Year award winners will receive a \$250 scholarship.

The annual Youth of the Year competition was held at the Boys & Girls Club Teen Center in Brookings. Partici-

pants from Yankton, Moody County, and Brookings competed to be named Youth of the Year. There were 8 total competitors representing all three of our communities, with 2 participants being from Yankton. Jasmine Brant was chosen as the Yankton Youth of the year. Other competitors Carolyn Blatchford, Jordan Crawford, Miguel Escamilla, Tanner Wulf, and Lexi Langenhorst from Brookings, Desteny Levitz from Moody County, and Janya Kendall from Yankton. Carolyn Blatchford from Brookings was awarded overall Youth of the Year and will now go onto the state Youth of the Year event in

February. If she also wins this competition she will move on to the region, then national level.

Thank you to the volunteer judges who had the most difficult job of the day, picking winners: Michelle Osmanski, Jeff Weldon, Gary Isenberg and Mary Beth Fishback. All the judges were volunteers from the community and had some affiliation with the Boys & Girls Club.

For more information, please contact Kelsie Thoreson, Unit Director of the Boys & Girls Club of Yankton. Kelsie can be contacted by phone at (605) 668-9710 or through e-mail at kelsiethoreson@greatfuturesd.org.

Study: Increasing High School Graduation Rate Key To SD Job Creation, Economic Growth

WASHINGTON — New data released recently by the Alliance for Excellent Education demonstrates how graduating more students from high school in South Dakota creates new jobs, increases consumer spending, boosts tax revenues, and increases the gross domestic product.

This “Graduation Effect” data is available for the United States as a whole, all 50 states and the District of Columbia, and more than 200 metro areas nationwide, including Sioux Falls, at impact.all4ed.org.

“The eyes of the world are watching today’s Federal Reserve meeting, but there’s an equally important economic event today that will get much less attention—more than 4,000 students, including nine in South Dakota, will drop out of high school,” said Bob Wise, president of the Alliance for Excellent Education and former governor of West Virginia. “As the Alliance’s analysis shows, these individuals represent tremendous untapped eco-

omic potential for local and state economies, as well as the nation as a whole.”

The national high school graduation rate is at an all-time high, but one in five students still fails to earn a diploma on time. Increasing the national high school graduation rate to 90 percent would likely have the following positive effects on the national economy:

- * Create 65,150 new jobs
- * Boost gross domestic product by \$11.5 billion annually
- * Increase annual earnings by \$7.2 billion
- * Increase annual spend-

- ing by \$5.3 billion
- * Increase federal tax revenue by \$1.1 billion
- * Increase home sales by \$16.8 billion
- * Increase automobile sales by \$800 million
- For South Dakota, increasing the state’s high school graduation rate to 90 percent would likely have the following positive effects on South Dakota’s economy:
- * Create 90 new jobs
- * Boost gross regional product by \$18 million annually

- * Increase annual earnings by \$13 million
- * Increase annual spending by \$10 million
- * Increase federal tax revenue by \$2 million
- * Increase state tax revenue by \$1 million
- * Increase home sales by \$23 million
- * Increase automobile sales by \$1.8 million
- Visit impact.all4ed.org to explore the findings and see additional information, including technical notes and frequently asked questions.

Thank You

A sincere thank you to our family and friends for remembering us on our 60th wedding anniversary. We will remember it always.

Alvin and Carol Block



This beautiful lady, Helen Simpson, turns 85 on December 27, 2015!

Happy Birthday from your kids & grandkids!

Birthday wishes may be sent to:
**31051 430th Avenue
Tabor, SD 57063**

Doris Gall 80th Birthday Dec. 22, 2015

Please help us give her a birthday to remember by filling her mailbox with birthday wishes.

904 W 10th St., Yankton, SD 57078

Love, Your Family

Happy 40th Anniversary Dad and Mom! AKA Papa and Grammy



Here's
cheers
to 40
years!

We love you so much and wish you many more happy years together!

Chad, Stacey, Lainey, Ashton, Tucker, Jason, Mindy, Cadi, Cami, Bella

Congratulations Charlie and Nancy Larsen

USD Computer Science Students Advance To World Finals In Thailand

VERMILLION — A team of three University of South Dakota computer science students will compete next spring in Thailand with some of the most prestigious schools in the world, including Harvard and Stanford universities and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

USD is among 23 universities that will represent the United States and Canada at the 2016 World Finals for the ACM International Collegiate Programming Contest (ACM-ICPC) May 15-20 at Prince of Songkla University, Phuket, Thailand.

“This is the best achievement for our students so far. It shows that our students work hard and have the ability to compete with the elite group

of universities around the world,” said QuocNam Tran, Ph.D., professor and chair of USD’s Department of Computer Science.

USD sponsored three teams that took part in the 2015 ACM North Central America regional contest, which represents the area of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Western Ontario, Manitoba, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

The USD team — comprised of Kurtis Van Gent of Sheldon, Iowa; Ben Ericsson of Slayton, Minnesota; and Mitchell Peterson of Centerville — solved five problems, which put it in the top four universities among 223 teams and qualified USD for the international competition.

I know his illness is not his fault, but I did not expect our future to be like this. I don't know how to handle this. He did everything. I need help.



I think I will call CAREgivers and speak to the Caregiver Case Manager. 800-360-6161

It is a free and confidential service.

CAREgivers
by Active Generations

2300 W. 46th St. • Sioux Falls, SD 57105
800.360.6161 • www.caregiverssd.org