

Sci-fi flick with a heart touches kids of all ages

By Louise Okrutsky
staff writer

It was a pretty typical summer afternoon. They were willing away the time by zapping ghosts and rescuing maidens from deranged gorillas. Squinting into the flickering, electronic glow of the screen, they prepared to jump over barrels, climb ladders or gobble up the red cherries worth extra points.

But most of the young aces hunkered over Pac-Man and Donkey Kong hadn't come just to claim lordship over a

maze full of ghosts.

Beating the heat in the cool lobby of the Old Orchard Theater, Farmington Hills, the youngsters waited to see what is possibly the only movie alien ever likened by critics to a visiting elderly relative wrapped in a bathrobe.

As a movie, "E.T. (The Extra-Terrestrial)" may have more in common with "Lassie Come Home" than with "Alien." But young moviegoers recognize him as the sort of secret childhood friend many would like to know.

Even better, they'd like a chance to keep him around.

"I'D KEEP him. When my brother moves out I'll put him in my brother's room," said Joey Kieffer, 7½, Livonia.

"This is the second time I've seen the movie. I want to keep on seeing it," he added as he stood in front of the Donkey Kong machine.

"Yeah," sighed Kim Shay, 12½, Livonia, when asked if she'd like to keep E.T.

"My mom saw it. She said it was about a little boy who falls in love with an alien, and that I'd like it."

Not everyone was enthusiastic about taking in a boarder from a civilization three million light years away. There's bound to be a few cultural differences. "I might freak out," said Brian Moore, 13, after a moment's thought. He was among a trio of West Bloomfield boys who nonchalantly played Pac-Man minutes before the movie began.

"I wanted to see it when I saw the previews the time I came to see 'Rocky

III.' It looked pretty good," said Bill Steinhach, 12, West Bloomfield.

"Yeah, it seemed pretty good," said Trey Herrington, 10, also of West Bloomfield.

EVEN OLDER kids seemed to get into the E.T. spirit. John Stokes and his friends stood next to a wall covered with a few of the sparkling helmet-shaped antennas the theater was selling.

"It's such a good movie. There's just something about it," said the Farmington Hills resident, who wasn't too old to confess he'd want to keep E.T. in his closet.

Kim Sung, West Bloomfield, had seen the beginning and the end of the movie before. She missed the middle due to a tornado warning and recently decided to find out what happened on the screen while she was under cover.

In spite of the fact they had seen it, Stokes and Sung hadn't told their friend Cheryl Pfaffmann of Farmington Hills anything about the movie.

"I'm the only one who hasn't seen it," she moaned.



John Stokes

Tim Sullivan

Cheryl Pfaffmann

She hesitated about keeping E.T. "I don't even know the guy yet," she said.

Tim Sullivan, 12, Farmington Hills didn't have any reservations about reserving a spot in his home for E.T.

"I'd keep him as a friend. I wouldn't show him to the world," said Sullivan, who was making his second visit to the

film. "I'd hide him," agreed Kathy Korky, 12, of Farmington Hills.

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