



Matthew Broderick is David Lightman, a young computer genius, who shows a friend, played by Howie Allen, how a videogame should be played.

the movies
Louise Snider

Videogames lead to 'War Games' in engaging spoof

If "War Games" (PG) doesn't create a demand for microcomputers among thousands of teenagers, I'll eat my floppy disks. Using his home computer, the teen-age hero of this film not only plugs into the master computer system of the North American Air Defense Command, he accesses the computer in his high school and changes his failing biology grade to passing. Now that's something.

The incident also exemplifies one of the greatest assets of this movie. It maintains a near-perfect balance between humor and suspense, between the trivial and the significant, between real people and comedic stereotypes.

Director John Badham has given us a much more interesting film than his other project on the screens this summer, "Blue Thunder." "War Games" is a high-technology thriller, but unlike "Blue Thunder," hardware never becomes the star of the film.

FROM THE TAUT beginning of "War Games" to its tension-filled conclusion, human beings are important. The first part of the film firmly establishes that primacy, as we are introduced to David Lightman (Matthew Broderick) and his environment — his school, his parents, his home, his room and his friend Jennifer (Ally Sheedy).

It is admittedly less exciting, but because of its perceptiveness, it is just as entertaining as the countdown to Armageddon in the NORAD command room.

If the scenario of "War Games" seems far-fetched, its topicality is as current as the evening news. It grabs our attention immediately and holds it with the fast tempo of the action and the engaging quality of the leading characters.

David is a bright 17-year-old with an aptitude for computers and an antipathy for school. One afternoon, while trying to plug into a software manufacturer's new video game, he accidentally and unknowingly accesses WOPR, the war games computer of the North American Defense Command in Colorado.

When WOPR displays a list of the games it plays, David opts for the big one, Global Thermonuclear War.

THROUGH SOME electronic glitch, the computer causes the display screens at NORAD to indicate a Soviet missile strike against the United States. The suspense builds rapidly as the level of the military's response to the phantom threat escalates.

Although the film begins in a lighthearted vein, with David exhibiting his computer expertise, it concludes on a note that is as much anti-computer as it is anti-nuclear. But don't worry about being bogged down with a "message." Any way you look at it, "War Games" is an enormously entertaining film that takes a clever premise over an exciting course to a clever conclusion.

Buses and trains going to fireworks

The Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA) will provide both Park and Ride bus service and Silver Street train service to the riverfront for the International Freedom Festival Fireworks display.

The fireworks will be held Thursday, June 30. In case of rain, the display will be held Friday, July 1.

Park and Ride bus service will be offered from suburban locations to the display including: Oakland Mall, lot 1, sections 3 and 4; Southland Center, lot 5; Pontiac Mall, lot 1, sections 3 and 4; Southland Center, lot 5; Pontiac Mall, lots 2 and 3; Ford Field in Livonia, SEMTA bus stop; Macomb Mall, SEMTA bus stop; and the Dearborn Youth Center, SEMTA bus stop.

Buses will depart at 7:30 p.m. and will leave downtown Detroit 25 minutes after the conclusion of the fireworks. Round-trip fare for the "Firecracker Special Bus" is \$3 per person.

CHILDREN UNDER 5 and not occupying a seat ride free. Tickets must be bought in advance.

Round-trip special train service also will be provided that day. Train departures are from the Pontiac Transportation Center at 8 p.m.; Bloomfield Hills-Long Lake/Kensington at 8:08 p.m.; Birmingham-Eton/Maple Road at 8:16 p.m.; and Royal Oak-11 Mile/Sherman at 8:28 p.m.

The train will depart 45 minutes after the conclusion of the fireworks. Round-trip fare is \$4.75 per person. Children younger than 5 not occupying a seat ride free.

Tickets for both services are on sale at SEMTA's Transit Centre in the lobby of the First National Bank Building, 660 Woodward in Detroit, weekdays

from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Mail orders will be accepted up to Monday, June 20.

Tickets for the Park and Ride bus service are available at SEMTA's Shelby Ticket Office, Hudson's Ticket Service at Oakland, Southland and Pontiac Malls; Livonia City Hall, fourth floor; SEMTA's Macomb Terminal, 22900 E. 15 Mile, and Muirhead's Department Store in Dearborn.

NO TICKETS will be sold on the day of the event. Passengers must have tickets to board. Only a limited amount of tickets for train passengers remain. Checks or money orders should be mailed to SEMTA's Transit Centre, 660 Woodward, Detroit 48226. Orders should specify train or bus tickets and boarding location.

For additional information, call 962-5515 or toll free 1 (800) 462-5161.

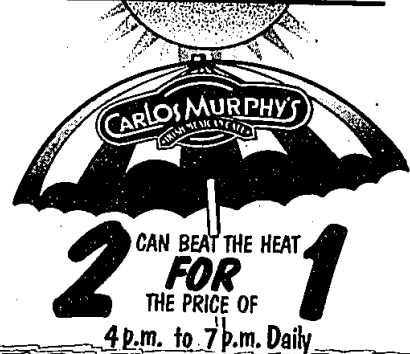
County festival offers variety

A County Music Festival on Saturday-Sunday, June 25-26, will benefit the Oakland, Wayne and Macomb counties Special Olympics programs.

The festival will run 9 a.m. till 9 p.m. at the Antique Village on Joslyn Road, three miles east of I-75 (six miles north of Pontiac Exit 63), in Orton Township. The festival will include Grand Ole Opry stars Connie Smith and Jack Greene.

All proceeds will go to the Oakland, Wayne and Macomb counties Special Olympics programs. For tickets and information, call Judy McWilliams at 651-5267.

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RAVE REVIEWS by

- * the WASHINGTONIAN Robert Shaffer May 1, 1978
- * the WASHINGTON POST'S Phyllis Richman April 24, 1977
- * the WASHINGTON STAR'S John Rosson Nov. 14, 1976
- * the PENTAGRAM NEWS October 12, 1978
- * the NORTHERN VIRGINIA SUN'S Larry Frommer April 27, 1979
- * the MARKETPLACE'S JoAnn Jones March 3, 1979
- * the NAVY NEWS Thursday October 5, 1978

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Dabney Coleman is McKittick, director of computer control at NORAD headquarters, who meets a real challenge when teen-ager Lightman plugs into the defense system's computer.