

what's at the movies

ATLANTIC CITY (R). Louis Malle's wonderfully vibrant, superbly acted, romantic film about old and young dreamers in Atlantic City.

BUSTIN' LOOSE (R). Richard Pryor and Cicely Tyson in romantic comedy about ex-con helping a schoolteacher transport children from a Philadelphia ghetto to a Washington farm.

THE CANNONBALL RUN (PG). Burt Reynolds is on the road again, challenging the speed limits. With him are Roger Moore, Dom DeLuise and Farrah Fawcett.

CHEECH AND CHONG'S NICE DREAMS (R). What else, man, but dope? That's what Cheech and Chong are all about.

CLASH OF THE TITANS (PG). Animation and live action combine in the adventures of the Greek hero Perseus, son of Zeus, who must overcome many powerful monsters in order to win the hand of the beautiful Andromeda.

EXCALIBUR (R). Sweeping adventure of King Arthur and the knights of the Round Table with Nicol Williamson as the wizard, Merlin.

FOUR SEASONS (PG). Alan Alda and Carol Burnett in comedy about the up-and-down relationships of three married couples during the course of a year.

HISTORY OF THE WORLD, PART I (R). An irreverent look at human history from the gross perspective of Mel Brooks.

LEGEND OF THE LONE RANGER (PG). Western adventure with the Lone Ranger and Tonto recounts the beginning of the legend.

MELVIN AND HOWARD (R). Offbeat comedy about an unlikely folk hero, Melvin Dummar, the gas station attendant who claimed he picked up Howard Hughes in the Nevada desert and then became heir to a fortune.

OUTLAND (R). Sci-fi thriller with Sean Connery enforcing the law at a colony on one of Jupiter's moons.

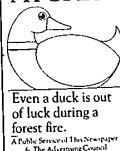
RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK (PG). Produced by George Lucas and directed by Steven Spielberg, this action-packed adventure pits Americans against Hitler's agents in a race to acquire a sacred artifact that gives its possessor invincible power.

SUPERMAN II (PG). The story continues as Superman struggles to save the earth from criminals who survived Krypton's extinction.

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Superman from Krypton is an all-American hero fighting intergalactic archcriminals in "Superman II."



the movies

Louise Snider

The fun continues in 'Superman II'

The hero with the capital S on his chest is back, and this time he has more to contend with than the evil schemes of Lex Luthor, although Luthor is still scheming.

In "Superman II" (PG), however, Christopher Reeve meets three villains with powers equal to his own. General Zod (Terence Stamp) and his two cohorts (Sarah Douglas and Jack O'Halloran) are archcriminals from Krypton, Superman's own planet. They have made their way to Earth, where their immense destructive force has brought all world governments into submission. Can Superman prevail when the odds are 3 to 1? Where is Superman anyway? He is oblivious to what is happening because he and Lois Lane (Margot Kidder) are secluded happily in his Arctic retreat.

Yes, the love story comes to fruition in this movie. Lois Lane did not get to be the Daily Planet's No. 1 reporter by wearing blinders. She figures out who the meekish, klutzy Clark Kent really is.

SHE CONFRONTS Kent/Superman with her discovery and her love. Superman or not, he succumbs to his feelings and suggests they go to his place. Sooner than you can say "whoosh," they are in his crystalline home somewhere near the North Pole.

Meanwhile, General Zod is wrecking havoc in the world, and Luthor (Gene Hackman) has tipped him off about the presence of his fellow Kryptonian, Superman, on planet Earth. In return for his help, Luthor is seeking some beach-front property — Australia.

Everything is set up for the confrontation between Superman and the villains. It's a battle which won't disappoint viewers because "Superman II" sparkles with the same high spirits and spectacular effects that characterized its predecessor.

As with any sequel, the specialness and the novelty have been lost. The movie has gained, however, in humor provided by Ned Beatty and Gene Hackman. Beatty plays Luthor's bumbling pal and is seen in some slapstick episodes at the beginning, before Luthor makes his escape from prison. Hackman shows a lot of finesse in the Luthor role, and he knows how to underplay for maximum effect. When, for example, he enters an office after the terrible threesome have nearly demolished it, he mutters, "When are these dummies going to learn to use doorknobs?"

AS LOIS LANE, Kidder with a deep voice and brash personality makes a fine foil for Reeve as Kent/Superman. Reeve continues to display the strong appeal he demonstrated in the original movie. His Superman exhibits an attractive combination of sweetness and strength, and his Clark Kent is still the bespectacled schlemiel nobody notices (except Lois).

Richard Lester directed the movie with his usual deft touch for balancing heroes and humor, a skill he sharpened in the Beatles' and Musketeers' movies.

The result is a thoroughly enjoyable "Superman II" that is pure, lighthearted escapism entertainment.



Christopher Reeve as Superman and Margot Kidder as Lois Lane find romance and visit his Arctic pad.