

GIRLS ON FILM

THE ADVENTURE ISSUE



The Blues
Brothers

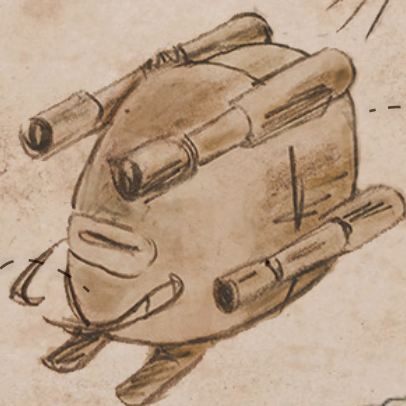


Romancing
the Stone

The
Goonies



Innerspace



Back to the Future



Solarbabies



Adventures in
Babysitting



Treasure of
the Moon
Goddess



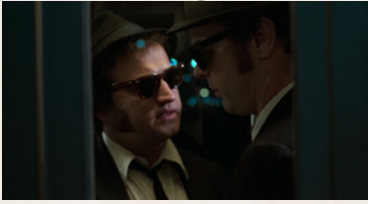
The Goonies (1985)

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Come with me. And you'll be. In a world of pure **imagination...**

Ahoy, mateys! Welcome to the 21st issue of *Girls, on Film*, the zine that is hopelessly devoted to 80s movies. For each issue, we discuss eight movies released between 1980 and 1989 that relate to a particular theme. Past themes include: music, sports, food, role-reversal movies, animated films, creature features, adaptations and true stories, road trip movies, and films about high school and college life in the 1980s.

We cover all kinds of movies in this zine, from the good to the bad, to the boring and the complete head-scratchers. In this issue, we discuss eight adventure films from the 1980s, summarized below.

Drop the pin!

The Blues Brothers. Jake and Elwood are on a mission from God to put the band back together and save the orphanage.

Romancing the Stone. A tame romance novelist gets mixed up with thieves and a two-timing ex-Pat in search of an emerald hidden in a Colombian jungle.

The Goonies. A group of kids trying to save their homes from foreclosure follow an old map to find a pirate's treasure.

Back to the Future. Teen time traveler Marty McFly is in a race against time to save the future in the past.

Solarbabies. A group of scrappy roller-skating teens and their magical sky ball try to stick it to the man.

Adventures in Babysitting. A night of babysitting spirals out of control after Chris has to rescue her best friend at a Chicago bus station.

Innerspace. An insubordinate Navy pilot is miniaturized and injected into a skittish hypochondriac, launching a hilarious, sci-fi escapade and a lifelong friendship.

Treasure of the Moon Goddess. Like Ponyboy, this moon goddess treasure stayed gold.

Behind the zines.

Girls, on Film was founded in 2017 by Stephanie McDevitt and Janene Scelza. We publish quarterly. Digital issues are free. Color prints are available for purchase online, at select bookstores, and at festivals. Visit girlsonfilmzine.com.

Many thanks to the contributing writers and guest writers who contributed to this issue! If you love 80s movies and want to guest write with us, please send a bio and writing sample to info@girlsonfilmzine.com.

Founders/Editors

Stephanie McDevitt. Stephanie's one big disappointment in life is that she wasn't old enough to fully appreciate popular clothing styles in the 1980s, as she was mostly attired in paisley sweatsuits. A full-time editor and occasional freelancer, Stephanie looks nostalgically back on 80s films such as *Ernest Goes to Camp*, *Adventures in Babysitting*, and *Can't Buy Me Love* and wishes she could pull off the hairdos of Cindy Mancini and her friends.

Janene Scelza. Janene has made loads of zines over the years. She spent her teen years combing musty video stores and public libraries in Central Florida for all the 80s movies she could find. Janene's got plenty of favorites from the decade, but it's stylish indie films like *Desperately Seeking Susan*, *Repo Man*, and *The Terminator* that she loves best.

Contributing Writers

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ball Bowl-O-Rama, *Nightmare Sisters*, and *Reform School Girls*. She had a pink laminated Video Time Video rental card at 9 years old and she never looked back. Or forward, really; she still loves her VHS and sweet, sweet VCR. And let it be known: the scrunchie never died for Rhonda: she STILL wears one proudly!

Matt Scelza. Matt loves to dissect and analyze everything. He co-writes essays for the zine with his sister, Janene. He has also logged a lot of hours at the same video stores and public library film collections with Janene in search of odd and unusual titles. However, he's got too many favorites to name.

Guest Writers

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Ellen Muller. Ellen is a Melbourne-based freelance writer. Named after the girlfriend from *Family Ties* her favourite 80s movies are *Spinal Tap* and *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*. She also has stellar Ripley from *Aliens* tattoo. You can read more of her writing at ellenmuller.com.



A Mission from God: THE BLUES BROTHERS

BY: STEPHANIE McDEVITT

The Blues Brothers was the first movie adapted from a *Saturday Night Live* sketch. It came out in June 1980, which was before I was born. However, I had a super cool band teacher in high school who told us to watch this movie. I figured if he liked it, it had to be pretty good. And, even though I wasn't familiar with the *SNL* sketch, I loved this movie the first time I saw it, and the dry humor, car chases, and musical performances still hold up today

The Blues Brothers musical act came to be in the mid 70s, while Aykroyd and Belushi were starring in the early seasons of *SNL*. According to an article in *Vanity Fair*, Aykroyd based the idea "on two classic recidivist American characters. It's based on a love of the city of Chicago and the music that came out of there" [1]. The Blues Brothers played live gigs, and eventually Lorne Michaels let them perform as a warm-up act before the live tapings of *SNL*.

The Blues Brothers first appearance on air came in a 1976 sketch that combined their act with a popular *SNL* sketch about killer bees. It's strange because it's pretty much just a Blues Brothers' performance but they're dressed in bee suits. You can easily find it online if you want to watch it. Their first performance as the musical act we know now wouldn't come for another two years, when they appeared on an episode hosted by Steve Martin [2].

Three months after that performance, *Animal House* came out and made Belushi a star. Shortly thereafter, Steve Martin asked The Blues Brothers to open nine shows for him at the Universal Amphitheater in L.A. At this point, Aykroyd and Belushi turned to *SNL* band leader Paul Schaffer to help them put together a full band. Schaffer recommended a bunch of professional musicians, and they all eventually gave in to Belushi's insistence that they form a band [3].



Three cool cats.

These gigs, which they apparently crushed, led to a record deal with Atlantic Records, who put out a live album of one of these shows. Belushi's friend Mitch Glazer wrote the liner notes for this album, which say that the brothers were raised in a Catholic orphanage and the janitor, Curtis, taught them the blues [4]. *Briefcase Full of Blues* went double platinum and "on January 24, 1979—his 30th birthday—Belushi hits an unprecedented trifecta. The previous year he'd had a No. 1 album, a No. 1 TV show, and a No. 1 movie" [5].

At this point, both Aykroyd and Belushi decided to turn their act into a movie. Based on their previous success, Universal Studios agreed to produce the movie and John Landis agreed to direct it before Aykroyd had even written the script. Aykroyd had never read or written a screenplay before, so the first script he wrote was over 300 pages, which was three times longer than a standard screenplay [6]. Landis spent a few weeks editing and shaping it, and in July 1979, they began filming in Chicago.

The movie stays true to Glazer's album notes and begins as Jake Blues (John Belushi) gets out of prison. Elwood (Dan Aykroyd) picks him up and they go visit the Catholic orphanage in which they grew up. Jake doesn't want to see Sister Mary Stigmata (Kathleen Freeman), who they call The Penguin, but Elwood reminds Jake that he promised he would visit her as soon as he got out of jail, and you cannot lie to The Penguin. Sister Stigmata tells the brothers that the orphanage is \$5000 behind in taxes and unless they get



Pig statue for the win!

the money, they will have to close.

Jake and Elwood also meet with Curtis (Cab Calloway), the janitor that taught them about blues music. They discuss the sad financial state of the orphanage and Curtis tells them they need to go to church. He sends them to Triple Rock Baptist Church to hear a sermon from Reverend Cleophus James (James Brown). During the sermon, Jake sees the light and figures out that they need to get the band back together, play some gigs, and make money to save the orphanage.

Unfortunately, Jake soon learns that Elwood didn't keep in touch with the band members while he was in prison. So, now they will need to track down all the guys, convince them to come back to the band, and then find some shows to play. While they are discussing their plan, Elwood gets pulled over for running a red light. When the police officer runs his license, he sees that Elwood has many traffic violations and his license had actually been suspended. When the police officer asks Elwood to get out of the car, he hits the gas, takes off, and starts one of many car chases in this movie.

Once the Blues Brothers escape the police, they start visiting the guys in the band. As they travel from place to place, the brothers need to avoid the police and all the other people they manage to piss off throughout the movie. At any given time they're being chased by The Illinois Nazi Party, a country band called The Good Ol' Boys, and a mystery woman who uses military grade



You better think!

weapons to try to kill Jake. In the end, they have to find a way to put on a successful show, evade all of their enemies, and get the money to the tax assessor before the orphanage is closed.

The movie is full of amazing cameos. In addition to James Brown and Cab Calloway, Aretha Franklin, Ray Charles, John Candy, Carrie Fisher, Twiggy, Frank Oz, and Steven Spielberg all appear. There are even brief glimpses of Chaka Khan and a pre-Pee-wee-Herman Paul Reubens. Apparently, the studio wanted contemporary music acts in this movie, and it's crazy to think that Aretha Franklin, Ray Charles, and James Brown wouldn't be a box office draw. But, at the time, they weren't popular acts. Thankfully, Aykroyd refused to replace them [7].

In addition to pushback from the studio, the production had a ton of other issues. Landis came in about \$10 million over budget, and part of the problem was Belushi. At this point, Belushi was in the throes of a serious cocaine addiction. He was often late or unable to perform. Then, right before they filmed the big concert scene, Belushi severely hurt his knee trying to skateboard. The producers got an orthopedist to wrap him up and shoot him full of steroids just to get through the scene so they could finish the movie [8].

Filming was complete, but the problems didn't end there. Major theater owners told Landis that he made a black movie, and white people wouldn't see it. Tedd Mann, one of the top theater owners at the time, said he wouldn't show



Love the prison-issue denim.

the movie in certain theaters because he didn't want black people going to theaters in white neighborhoods [9].

In the end, *The Blues Brothers* was originally released in only about 600 theaters (usually a movie of this scale would have been released in 1,400 theaters). The first week, it made just under \$5 million, coming in second for the week behind *The Emperor Strikes Back*. Eventually, it made about \$57 million in the states and \$58 internationally, for a grand total of \$115 million. It was a hit for Universal, and it is the second most profitable movie based on an *SNL* skit (right behind *Wayne's World*) [10].

The release of the movie soundtrack marked The Blues Brothers second album, which went Platinum in the US. Unfortunately, John Belushi died from an overdose in 1982. The Blues Brothers performed with other singers after his death, and in 1998 they made a sequel starring Dan Aykroyd and John Goodman. It didn't do well in theaters. I saw it a long time ago and I was underwhelmed.

The original iteration of The Blues Brothers will always be the best version. Belushi might not have been the best singer, but what he lacked in talent he more than made up for in showmanship. It's sad to think about what could have come of The Blues Brothers (and the rest of Belushi's life), but at least we have this movie to see a glimpse of what could have been.



Call of the Wilder: ROMANCING THE STONE

BY: JANENE SCELZA & MATT SCELZA

It is was by sheer coincidence that we opted for two films to discuss in this issue that had in common one of the 1980's most famous adventure-makers: writer/director Robert Zemeckis. These two films in particular, the romantic comedy adventure *Romancing the Stone* (1984) and the time travel comedy adventure *Back to the Future* (1985), chart Zemeckis's progression from utter flop to the tippy top.

Zemeckis's career was in absolute peril after back-to-back failures when the wartime comedy, *1941*, and black comedy, *Used Cars*, both co-written with Bob Gale, bombed. Supposedly, it also took a single frame from the *Stone* dailies to get him fired from *Cocoon* (1985), while the movie was in pre-production (Ron Howard wound up directing) [1].

Alas, *Romancing the Stone* became a huge finan-

cial success—it was one of the highest grossing movies of 1984—thereby putting egg and the industry's collective face in alignment. Most importantly, *Stone* being a hit got Zemeckis the greenlight from Universal to make what would become one of the greatest movies of the 1980s—if not one of the best franchises of all time—*Back to the Future* [2].

Romancing the Stone wasn't just testing ground for Zemeckis. There were several careers staked on (and eventually made) on this adventure, including the 25-year old waitress from Malibu (Diane Thomas) who wrote the script and hoped to break into the biz; Kathleen Turner, who previously turned heads in *Body Heat* (1981) (but had to wait until ubiquitous female casting choice, Debra Winger, declined); newcomer composer and subsequent lifetime Zemeckis collaborator, Alan Silvestri; and producer Micheal Douglas,



The call is coming from inside the yacht.

who wasn't yet leading man material nor an action star [3]. The movie was his baby.

Romancing the Stone is that classic *Treasure of the Sierra Madre* serial style of adventure. It's got romance and comedy and, of course, action and adventure as our characters go traipsing through the jungles of Colombia in search of exotic riches. Kathleen Turner and Michael Douglas even do the old Hollywood mash-mouth movie kissing! It's a pretty entertaining film, though a little schlocky and, at times, embarrassingly off-color.

It's the age-old fish-out-of-water romance between pampered city girl and her seasoned outdoorsy escort, but sparing on the genre's usual condescension. This is, presumably, a gal's adventure film first - with Turner, briefly a bumbling idiot, as a capable dame who doesn't pointlessly bare all, save for a brief sex scene with co-star Douglas. Douglas, too, as the rugged ex-Pat companion who haphazardly comes to her aid, bucks convention by not being much of a curmudgeonly asshole.

Despite neither of the leads being the studio's first choices for their parts, Turner and Douglas have, as just about everyone has noted, great on-screen chemistry. In fact, the pair reunited the following year for the ill-fated sequel, *Jewel of the Nile* (1985), then with co-star Danny DeVito for his film, *War of the Roses* (1989), and more recently, episodes of *The Kominsky Method*.

The titular stone at the heart of the film (pun in-



Zola, looking like Carl DeRone.

tended) is a hefty green emerald coined El Corazon ("The Heart"). Cue up the Dusty Springfield because everyone wants a piece of it. Actually, a bunch of jewel thieves and the exPat are eager to get their hands on it. Turner's character—the romance novelist heroine of the tale—has the map to the coveted stone, but little interest in either until the search becomes a fun first date of sorts with said exPat. Perhaps indifference is to be expected of a best-selling romance novelist who doesn't seem to be for want, at least money-wise?

The romance novelist pens tales of sexy, daring heroines of her stories that avenge the men who turn their lives into country music lyrics. The finale of her latest story, a steamy western, plays out in the opening of the film. The heroine gets the upper hand on the man who killed her father, raped and murdered her sister, burned her ranch, shot her dog, and stole her Bible. But Turner's Joan Wilder is nothing like that. She celebrates completion of her latest manuscript in a modest, pastel apartment with smooth jazz and a loyal cat.

The good times are quickly interrupted by a phone call from her sister, Elaine (Mary Ellen Trainor), who is being held ransom in Colombia by two dopey antiquities thieves (Zach Norman and Danny DeVito), who want Joan to deliver the treasure map.

Her editor (Holland Taylor) tries to dissuade her, worried about her poor temperament for adven-



Alfonso Arau cuts corners.

ture. Naturally, gringo Joan instantly, literally, and stupidly derails a simple bus trip to Cartagena to deliver the map. Luckily, the exPat offers to escort her for a cool few hundred in traveler's checks. Along the way, they get a little sweet on each other and gringo Joan transforms into daring heroine, even doing a Peter Pan off a waterfall (some of the old OSHA-probably-not-approved stunt work still looks great).

The pair encounter all kinds of classic adventure movie terrain, and of course, during the rainy season: downed drug planes, big ass snakes, and gun-toting outlaws at seemingly every turn. (We love how absurd this becomes with no one even attempting to hold a gun with any concern for safety). The supporting cast, wonderful as they are (a full-length Kathleen Turner-Holland Taylor gal-pals-in-NYC movie would have been great), don't get much to do. Zach Norman brags to Trainor about his alligator pit. Devito offers some Stooze-esque comic relief. Alfonso Arau as the leader of a criminal compound that love Joan's books is an endearing, but unfortunately brief presence. The best of all is Manuel Ojeda as the formidable dirty cop, Zola, who meets a surprisingly violent end.

Had it been made today, *Romancing the Stone* might've made a great Guy Ritchie folly, or maybe a Cohen Brother's movie where the various characters meet some hilarious Biblical fate. Still, it's a fun little adventure film with a solid cast, a few laughs, and some great action sequences (we were wowed by the stuntwork on this film



Kathleen and Michael cut a little rug.

and Joe Dante's *Innerspace*, discussed later in this issue).

Romancing the Stone hit theaters in March 1984 alongside *Police Academy*, *Spinal Tap*, *Splash*, *Blood Simple*, and...*Voyage of the Rock Aliens* (featured in our debut issue) [4]. Critical reviews seemed to be positive-to-middling, with some accusations about ripping *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. Still, audiences were all for it (the movie even picked up some Golden Globes).

Naturally, Fox rushed through a sequel, *Jewel of the Nile*, that seemed like few folks enjoyed making, much less watching. Zemeckis fled the scene and Kathleen Turner, who hated the script, would have followed had Fox not threatened to sue for \$25 million. The 25-year old waitress/screenwriter (Diane Thomas) did break into the biz after the first movie, and was already committed to Spielberg's romantic fantasy film *Always* (1989) when *Jewel* was in the scripting phase. She never saw what became of Joan and Jack's story, anyways, having died in a car accident in the Porsche Michael Douglas gifted to her after the success of the first film six weeks before the film's release [5].

Roger Ebert, in one of the more positive reviews of the sequel, encouraged Turner and Douglas to keep working at it and do an 80s version of the Bing Crosby/Bob Hope *Road to...* movies. Attempts have been made [6], though nothing has materialized. Knock on wood.



Never Say Die: **THE GOONIES**

BY: ELLEN MULLER

Part of the excitement surrounding last year's seminal fantasy film, *Everything Everywhere All At Once* (2022), was that it marked the return to acting of 80s child-actor and *Goonies* star, Ke Huy Quan. Quan—who was fourteen when he played Data in *The Goonies* (1985), just a year after his breakout role in *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1984)—had not been to an audition for more than 25 years. And, funnily his contract for *Everything Everywhere* was negotiated by fellow Goonie and now entertainment lawyer, Jeff Cohen or Chunk. Quan mentioned in The Hollywood Reporter's Actor Roundtable, "When the producer of our movie was trying to make my deal, he said he never imagined that he'd have to talk to Chunk to get Data to be in his movie"[1].

While this connection may seem like the only thing *Everything Everywhere* and *The Goonies* share in common, the dark comedy about infinite alternative realities has a magical and ab-

surdist quality that's definitely comparable to the coming-of-age, booby-trap heavy, adventure cult-classic, that is somehow irrefutably a pirate film despite featuring no alive pirates. Like *Everything Everywhere*, *The Goonies* was an instant box-office hit, grossing \$61 million upon its release (three times its \$19m budget) [2], with *The New York Times* review predicting, "There isn't a child in America who won't want to see *The Goonies* this summer" [3].

Similarly, much like how reviews of *Everything Everywhere* noted that it felt like "... a movie about everything"[4], *Goonies* reviews remarked on the film's use of "every imaginable funhouse flourish." Often described as the kid version of *Indiana Jones* [5], *The Goonies* follows a group of teen and middle-school outsiders who are trying to save their family homes from foreclosure. As they're rummaging around Mikey's (Sean Astin) parents' attic, they come across an old treasure



Ye intruders beware!

map that apparently leads to the treasure of One-Eyed Willy, a seventeenth-century pirate.

The kids decide that the treasure is their last chance to save their homes from the expanding country club. So, they head out to an abandoned restaurant on the beach as the map instructs. Unfortunately for the Goonies, they have stumbled upon the hideout for the Fratellis, a mother and her two sons who recently escaped from prison (the Fratelli matriarch was played brilliantly by Anne Ramsey). Once the Fratelli's leave the restaurant, the Goonies break in, find a hidden tunnel in the basement, and decide to follow it.

Meanwhile, Chunk (Jeff Cohen) leaves the restaurant to tell the police that they have found the Fratellis. However, the police don't believe Chunk and Fratellis find and interrogate him. Chunk eventually breaks and tells them that the kids have the treasure map and are looking for pirate gold. The Fratellis decide to follow them through the tunnel to steal the treasure from them.

What ensues is an adventure any kid would love. As the Goonies follow the treasure map and make their way through the tunnels, they must maneuver 17th century booby-traps, befriend a gentle physically disfigured 6-foot-8 man called 'Sloth' (a part of the movie that really hasn't aged well) and evade the Fratellis, who are hot on their heels.

The Goonies is set in the 'Goon docks'—a fictional version of Astoria, Oregon—and inspired by



Trust in your old momma, boys!

a real legendary 1693 shipwreck off the Oregon coast [6]. The screenplay, which was written by Chris Columbus, who would later direct the first two *Harry Potter* films, was developed from a basic idea of Steven Spielberg's (who later produced the film) for a movie about "what a bunch of bored kids get up to on a rainy day" [7].

As well as *The Goonies*, Spielberg's production company, Amblin, produced other 80s classics such as *E.T.* (1982), *Gremlins* (1984), *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (1988) and the *Back to the Future* franchise (1985 – 1990). Like *Goonies*, these were all films that targeted a younger audience, and were distinguished by their ability to be more adult and explore darker themes. Roger Ebert sums this up in his *Goonies* review saying, "There used to be children's movies and adult movies. Now Spielberg has found an in-between niche, for young teenagers who have fairly sophisticated tastes in horror" [8].

The young Goonies gang included Mikey (Sean Astin, aged 14), Brand (Josh Brolin, 17), Mouth (Corey Feldman, 14), Chunk (Jeff Cohen, 11), Andy (Kerri Green, 18), and Stef (Martha Pimp-ton, 15) [9]. A comparable dynamic to the adolescent gang in Stephen King's novel *IT* (which the film predates by a year), *The Goonies* was immature and whimsical with dark elements: a kid's film which included elaborate gadgets and underground labyrinths but also a dead body in a freezer, a poor deformed "monster" kept chained in a basement, and an interrogation where Chunk's right hand is very nearly forcibly blended in a blender!



Confessions of a teenage Chunk.

In a short making-of documentary, Goonies director Richard Donner, spoke of how the energy of the young cast gave the film an excitement that couldn't be contrived, "They're wonderful, they're nuts...when you get them all together it's mind-blowing" [10]. Likewise, as an adult Quan later reminisced, "On *Indiana Jones* I was the only kid, so I got all of the love and attention. On *The Goonies*, I was one of seven, so I was constantly fighting for attention....It was a lot of fun, especially those amazing sets. Going to work was like going to the playground" [11].

One way Donner further cultivated this energy was by banning the cast from seeing One-Eyed Willy's pirate ship, *The Inferno*, until it was time to shoot the scene in hopes of capturing the actors' real reactions (however Josh Brolin let an s-bomb slip, so the scene needed to be reshot).

As well as the age of the characters, the group being outsiders, who are rescued by an outsider (Sloth) and who ultimately regard the long deceased One-Eyed Willy as a fellow Goonie/fellow outsider, is also a pivotal underlying theme. The wacky quest is poignantly described by Mikey as 'our time', comparable to how *Everything Everywhere* is able to explore universal feelings and experiences through a surreal, comic-book style quest.

The perspective of the outsider is cornerstone to *The Goonies*, and it was no doubt an influence in choosing an eccentric singer like Cyndi Lauper to produce the Goonies' theme song, "*The Goonies 'R' Good Enough*." Featured momentar-



A most msagnificent reveal.

ily at the beginning of the film, "*The Goonies 'R' Good Enough*" has a two-part music video that is like a weird Goonies alternate reality.

In the music video, Lauper is trying to save her family's 'Mom & Pop' gas station from a group of creditors wearing frowny-face badges, and it stars several famous pro-wrestlers, a cameo from Steven Spielberg and the young *Goonies* cast, as well as a reference to a giant octopus scene, which was ultimately cut from the film (this scene had its own song and music video, "Eight Arms to Hold You," which was included on the original soundtrack despite being cut) [12].

In 2012, Lauper created and performed a parody of the theme song called 'Taffy Butt' for an episode of *Bob's Burgers*, 'The Belchies' (S02E01), which satirized *The Goonies*. By paying homage to *The Goonies*, the animated show was affirming how the characters in the show are also outsiders in their own right. *The Goonies* legacy is also seen in *Stranger Things* [13] as well as in Astoria, Oregon where June 7th is officially "Goonies Day"[14].

Quan's acting comeback as well as *Everything Everywhere* are both part of this legacy; and when Quan won the Oscar for Best Supporting Actor, he not only reflected on his experience as an 'outsider' in Hollywood and achieving the American Dream, he thanked his "Goonies brother for life, Jeff Cohen"[15].



Ad Infinitum: BACK TO THE FUTURE

BY: JANENE SCELZA & MATT SCELZA

It's amazing how much the deck was stacked against Robert Zemeckis before he knocked it way, way out of the park with *Back to the Future*. Supposedly it took only one executive somewhere to look at the dailies for *Romancing the Stone* (1984) and fire him from *Cocoon* (1985) [1].

Alas, the stars finally aligned when *Stone* hit theaters, and Zemeckis got a blank check for his next project, a script that he and Bob Gale wrote years earlier but was shelved after being rejected by seemingly everyone in town, supposedly for not being raunchy enough (damn you, *Porkys!*). The project, of course, was the Hail Marys of Hail Marys, *Back to the Future*.

For us, the movie is, much like Mary Poppins, perfect in every way. For the tragically unaware, the time travel adventure comedy trilogy follows teenager Marty McFly (Michael J. Fox), and his nutty scientist friend, Doc Brown (Christo-

pher Lloyd), as they travel through time (and to alternate timelines) in Hill Valley. In the first *BTTF* installment, Doc's big unveiling of the DeLorean-cum-time-machine goes terribly wrong, and Marty is transported to the year 1955. There, Marty bumps into his parents, Lorraine (Lea Thompson) and George (Crispin Glover), now high school students.

Marty learns the most important tenet of time travel: intervening in the past could seriously alter the future. More specifically, intervening in his parent's lives could seriously alter his and his siblings' future. That is...erased...from existence! This erasure is cleverly demonstrated by a fading photograph of the McFly kids and the real-time fading of Marty McFly.

What was great about *Back to the Future*, and indeed, the whole damn trilogy, was that the complexity of time travel took a backseat to the sto-



Parents just don't understand.

ry's humanity, comedy, and many great action sequences (blessed is Christopher Lloyd's eyebrow acting). It's just enough to know that a flux capacitor fuels the time machine, that the time machine needs to get up to 80 miles an hour, and the Butterfly Effect stuff about not messing around too much with other times.

Marty does something that George, according to family history, should have done. In turn, Marty meets flirty Lorraine instead of George, and she's instantly smitten. Great Scott! Once Marty discovers how this could alter his future, he is forced to play matchmaker so his parents go to the school dance together, fall in love, and do all the things they're supposed to do up until that point in Marty's life.

It's no easy task. Aside from Lorraine having eyes for Marty, Marty's parents seem incredibly mismatched. Lorraine is rather promiscuous (more tame rebel than 80s sex pot) while George is incredibly awkward, and wrangling the pair is comically frustrating at times. Even worse, his efforts are frequently thwarted by the classic 80s bully, Biff (Thomas Wilson Brown), and his goons (including Casey Seizmasko and Billy Zane), who in everyone's business at all times.

Meanwhile, Marty enlists the help of 1955 Doc Brown to help fix the time machine so he can get back to good ol' 1985. A lightning storm due to hit Hill Valley on the same night of the dance is precisely what they need to power up the DeLorean. It makes for a wonderfully intense finale (beautifully punctuated by John Williams' score).



What are you looking at, butthead?

It's a great concept for a film: what would it be like to encounter the people you know when they were younger? Screenwriter Bob Gale got the idea for the story when he ran across his father's yearbooks and noticed that his achievements included class president, something Bob Gale didn't know about his father. Bob Gale said he hadn't really known the president of his own high school class all that well and wondered if he would have been friends with his Old Man had they known each other when they were both teenagers [2].

Marty's clearly frustrated with his nerdy dad, but then we see the similarities (i.e., synchronized movement in the cafe). In a sweet moment between the two, Marty learns that teen George enjoys writing sci-fi stories, but, like Marty, the rock n' roller, worries that he's not good enough.

But, Marty isn't just privy to younger versions of the people he knows in Hill Valley when he lands in 1955. He witnesses what Hill Valley itself looked like in its heyday; a suburb fresh and new and full of post-war optimism (albeit, this romanticization was predominantly white). Doc Brown lives in a swanky Frank Lloyd Wright-style home. Lorraine's family excitedly watches an episode of *The Honeymooners* on their first TV. A young guy working in a coffee shop happily imagines himself as mayor. The optimism carries over, too, to the film's young high school characters who seem to have the world ahead of them...except for Biff, who seems content to be an asshole forever.



Marty "Calvin Klein" McFly.

The original 1985 Hill Valley we are introduced to in the beginning of the first film is worse for wear, with low-rent storefronts and graffiti sprawled on the entrance to the development where the McFlys live.

Marty's family is similarly worse for wear. His siblings have (presumably) shitty jobs and live at home. George is a pencil pushing dweeb still bullied by Biff. Lorraine is a heavy drinker for whom all the romance had been sucked out of the marriage years ago. Though, it's never played as comically pathetic as say, Charlie Bucket's clan, in the *Willy Wonka* stories. Black sheep Marty is perfectly poised to be the hero; he's cool and easy-going and encouraged by his loving, grounded girlfriend (Claudia Wells). (Michael J. Fox was casting perfection, replacing moody Eric Stolz six weeks into the picture) [3].

Zemeckis & Co. were so thoughtful about designing the Hill Valley universe and how a whole town might transform over time and in alternate timelines. The trilogy is peppered with continuity Easter eggs (probably easier to do with sequels filmed at the same time). An oft-cited example is a pine tree farm that Marty plows through in the DeLorean when he first arrives in 1955. Later, the same location, then a shopping mall, is named Lone Pine. There's a few running gags, too, as history tends to repeat itself.

Marty's parents do fall in love, of course, though their facilitated romance results in a better 1985 Hill Valley as a whole--the neighborhood, the house, and his family. His siblings are successful



Fortunate timing.

(though they still live at home for some reason). Biff is a leisure suit loser. Marty's father is a successful sci-fi writer (and much better dresser), and his parents are in love. But, it's quickly interrupted by Doc for that segue to the sequel about Marty needing to help his kids. Don't worry! It's not one of those lame 80s sequels that just rehash the first film; *Part II* has a lot of fun with past timelines and alternate timelines!

Back to the Future is a timeless time travel adventure. It's madly fun, full of charm, and as Ebert noted, has a kind of Capra-esque wholesome-ness [4], even with the whole Lorraine having the hots for Marty thing. It felt to us, as kids at the time, magical, and it never bores us for a minute, as many times as we have seen it since. (PS: we recommend The Deep Dive's excellent commentary [5]).

Unsurprisingly, the film was the highest grossing movie of 1985, receiving the Academy Award for Best Sound Effects Editing and nominations for Best Original Screenplay, Best Sound, and Best Song ("The Power of Love" by Huey Lewis and the News). It followed with two sequels (*BTTF Part II* is also one of our all-time favorite films), an animated series, an excellent simulator ride at Universal (now based on *The Simpsons*), preservation in the Library of Congress (sidenote; *Girls, on Film* is also in the LOC!), a Broadway musical, and bad church plays [6], among other things. The movie is also the source of countless pop culture references, reunion specials, DeLorean sales, fanboy love letters and on, and on, ad infinitum, Amen!



Survive, But Not Thrive: **SOLARBABIES**

BY: DR. RHONDA BAUGHMAN

Unlike the minimal (but generally negative) online review chatter for *Treasure of the Moon Goddess* (1987) (also reviewed in this issue), numerous and passionate commentary abounds for my beloved *Solarbabies* (1986)—and on both sides of the scoreboard. Ignore any nasty online reviews and definitely ignore critics' words when the film was released. My position on the film remains firm—I am a Solarbaby forever. What does it matter, the opinions of those who couldn't understand the bewitching elfin chin of Terra (Jami Gertz) or the fetching, gentle slope of Metron's (James LeGros) lower lip? How could I expect naysayers to ever comprehend this sensory experience? This rich, metaphorical narrative featuring the adventures, loves, losses, and secrets of a futuristic Armageddon water-liberating skate team named the *Solarbabies*?

This ... film clearly inspires hyperbole within adult me and yet imprinted so deeply into my young psyche that I'm not so sure that my

words are all that hyperbolic in the end. *Solarbabies* might seem silly, even naïve to the average viewer but I remember the impact director Alan Johnson's film [1] sculpted onto my retinas and onto my vision of the future: I was going to be prepared to do whatever it took to make sure the best of mankind survived be it roller-skating for my life, determinedly digging under an unyielding sun, saving a mystical orb that I telepathically communicated with, or simply strategically revolting against punitive, far-reaching and grasping authority.

Fangirl gushing aside, the film holds up surprisingly well for a mid-eighties genre mixer [2] (sci-fi, action adventure, political allegory, family-friendly) that I loved as a child and still as an adult. Combined with an all-star cast, *Babies'* foundation is a synchronistic, symbol-heavy, post-capitalist, and magically-conscious script whose relevancy in the current era should not be underestimated. Let's be honest, I've had to



Night games.

live several full and witchy decades to be able to grasp many of the more advanced messages buried within *Solarbabies*.

Young me must have intuitively sensed there was more to this film than just my surface enjoyment of the shenanigans of a ragtag team of orphaned roller-skating underdogs destined to stick it to the man and replenish a parched earth's water supply; however, only the most recent viewing helped turn that unconscious, diaphanous sense into a more concrete realization. That is, if we're not careful and ready to make sweeping geo-political and economic changes here in the present day, there will be no lush Smokey Robinson song to accompany our victory, no slow-motion jubilant jumping from vast, shimmering seas, and certainly no *Solarbabies* to save us from our destructive ways.

The film's concept itself sounds simple enough, but those can be deceiving of course: in an orphanage (maintained by Warden, played by a forever favorite Charles Durning) on the wasteland border, teens live within a dismal, strict system overseen by the power-mad Brock (Richard Jordan). The teens scrounge for pockets of hope however they can since otherwise they're trained and conditioned to one day serve an authority that controls the earth's water [3]. Even in the future, teens are rationed water and fed a pull yourself up by your bootstraps mentality with the additional line that if they only obey and work hard, they can "achieve a decent lifegrid." In other words, our plucky *Solarbabies* will be allowed to survive, but not thrive.

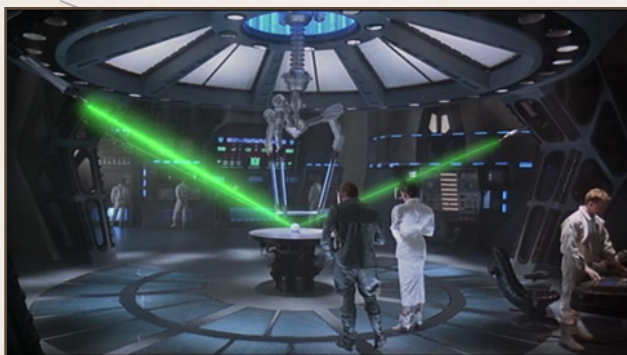


Heavy leather in a heatwave.

From the opening scene, it's clear there's even a caste system within the class system once the rival skate team the Scorpions (in full fascist [4] bad guy gear) challenges our Babies (in home-made w/love gear) to a game offsite, away from official rules. But the game is interrupted, and our Babies must flee! All Babies (Gertz and LeGros; Jason Patric as Jason; Claude Brooks as Rabbit; and Peter DeLuise as Tug) roller-hoof it back to the orphanage—as does voyeuristic, Tchigani loner Darstar [5] (Adrian Pasdar), but wee *Solarbaby* Daniel, (Lukas Haas), is sent skating for his young life to the nearest cave. It's in this cave that Daniel [6] discovers their destiny in the form of the Sphere of Longinus [7] aka "Bodhi".

Bodhi (a Sanskrit word for "enlightenment" and awakening") is a sentient, telepathic magical glowing sphere from the stars [8] and he's just one of the circles symbolically ensconced throughout the film—so many, I'd recommend not making a drinking game of trying to catch all the geometric syncs. But from the moment of the mighty orb's arrival, the *Solarbabies* are abuzz, polarized even, but so desperate for change that they'll follow a radiant orb anywhere after a few magical demonstrations, the seeing is believing approach, because there's no other explanation for Bodhi's origins and intentions.

Terra and Jason seem eager to follow Bodhi's call and for not dissimilar reasons: Terra knows all their classroom lectures at the orphanage are "dog-squeeze" and Jason admits he "can't accept the way things are." Neither Terra nor Jason know precisely who they are or where they're



Water, water everywhere...

from but they're willing to run away from the orphanage, leaving behind the only stability they've ever known, because they're confident Bodhi will show them their true paths, true destinies; however, Darstar absconds with Bodhi, in hope that Bodhi's magic will somehow mesh with his own (although to what end is never made clear). The Babies are off on their adventure, ready to change their lives and the world, and to certainly rescue the beloved Bodhi! Frankly, both young me and current me would also leave behind my illusion of security and safety for the chance to retrieve Bodhi. My unorthodox proclivity toward believing there are no insentient items on earth somehow escaped my childhood mostly unscathed and comfortably accompanies me throughout even the most mundane of adult situations.

Unfortunately, Bodhi falls into even more nefarious hands after Darstar and his new Tchigani bud, Ivor (Terrence Mann) attempts to sell him and will be destroyed by the Terminack (a robot that has been programmed to take pleasure in the destruction of cute widgets like Bodhi). Most attempting to destroy Bodhi wish to do so because he has power, but Bodhi has only ever shown his potential to the Babies (i.e. those worthy): "playing" skateball with the Solarbabies at the offsite arena; flowing through the teens' palms/upper torsos (their heart chakras) in a sacred, circular ritual; curing Daniels' deafness; showing the Babies rain and thunder for the first time; and offering a brief future flash of how could be if only the Babies follow their hearts and believe in themselves and their own potential. Techni-



Can Bodhi do a Floyd laser light show?

cally, Bodhi might be a silent instructor, but he nonetheless has a lot to say and more to teach, but even so, the Babies must risk their own lives, place their own futures on the line to rescue Bodhi from obliteration.

As a kid watching *Solarbabies*, I mostly focused my attention on the captivating Bodhi but I also appreciated the chemistry of Jason and Terra [9], and wondered how Metron was single throughout (which said a lot about my later dating choices). I was also able to catch some of the film's more facile themes like "take a risk/don't remain stagnant"; "leave your comfort zone if you want to evolve"; "don't be a jerk"; and "bullies should get what they deserve"; however, watching this film decades later, I realized I soaked up quite a bit more of Bodhi's coaching than I realized.

Younger me may not have specifically known much of the footnoted information in this review that adult me knows, but even long ago, I could feel there was something more to *Solarbabies* that kept drawing me back—something allowing me to use the film as a foundation for research, something I couldn't quite see but knew enough not to stop looking. Even now, as I can add a more comprehensive lesson to the brain pile—"follow your own gut, Rhonda, as you would have followed Bodhi, and if you must follow anyone be sure they're worthy of you"—I would bet that if I watch *Babies* again, a decade from now, I will be able to parse many more new and synchronistic life lessons I picked up from those scrappy roller-skating teens and their magical sky ball.



So Cool: ADVENTURES IN BABYSITTING

BY: STEPHANIE MCDEVITT

Adventures in Babysitting is a fun movie about a night of babysitting that goes horribly awry. Much like *The Goonies* and *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, this movie puts kids at the center of the action and allows them to outsmart the adults at every turn. What I love about this movie is that the main character is a girl, which was not often the case in 80s adventure movies. Overall, I loved this movie as a kid, and I think it mostly holds up today.

The adventure starts as high school senior Chris (Elisabeth Shue) gets ready for an anniversary date with her boyfriend Mike (Bradley Whitford). Unfortunately, Mike cancels on her because his younger sister is sick and he needs to stay home with her. While wallowing over her canceled date with her best friend Brenda (Penelope Ann Miller), the Andersons call and ask Chris to watch their daughter, Sarah (Maia Brewton). With nothing else to do, Chris borrows her

mom's car and heads out to spend her Friday night babysitting.

When Chris gets to the Anderson's, both Sarah and her older brother Brad (Keith Coogan) greet her. Brad has a huge crush on Chris, and despite having plans to sleep over his friend Daryl's (Anthony Rapp) house, Brad decides to stay home and spend time with Chris. Shortly after the Andersons leave for their party, Brenda calls and tells Chris she ran away from home and is stranded at the bus station with no money. Brenda begs Chris to pick her up. Chris agrees to make the trip into the city to get Brenda, and as they're all getting into the car, Daryl shows up and threatens to tell his parents that Chris took the kids downtown unless they let him go too. So, all four of them pile into Chris's mom's station wagon and head out to rescue Brenda.

Once they're on the highway, they get a flat



Get out of my house!

tire, and they're stuck on the side of the road. Chris realizes she forgot her purse back at the house, so she has no money to get the tire fixed. While they're trying to figure out what to do, a tow truck pulls over and offers to help. The tow truck driver introduces himself as Handsome John Pruitt (John Ford Noonan). The kids are all nervous, but they have no choice but to let him help them.

As they drive to a mechanic that will fix their tire, Pruitt gets a call on his radio that tells him his wife is cheating on him. So, he detours to his house to catch the guy with his wife, and a shootout ensues. Chris and the gang jump out of the tow truck and hide in another car. Unfortunately for them, there is a car thief hot wiring the car, and he drives all of them to a chop shop in a bad part of Chicago. Thus begins a crazy night that includes getting caught in the middle of a gang fight, running on stage at a blues club, meeting some new friends at a college party, and losing Sarah in the city. While running all around Chicago, Chris has to figure out how she is going to get her mom's car back and get those kids home by 1am. This movie is tons of fun, and as a kid it always made me wish I had more adventures with my babysitters.

Adventures in Babysitting was Chris Columbus's directorial debut. He would eventually go on to direct movies like *Home Alone*, *Mrs. Doubtfire*, *Rent*, and two of the *Harry Potter* movies. According to a Hollywood Reporter brief, "Columbus read more than one hundred scripts over the



On a train to nowhere.

course of two years and chose the film as his directing debut because the story was on a small enough scale that [he] felt comfortable with it" [1]. Producers Lynda Obst and Debra Hill took the movie to Paramount, but they refused to do it unless Molly Ringwald played the lead. So, eventually Touchstone Pictures produced the movie with funding from Disney.

Adventures in Babysitting also marked the screen debut for Keith Coogan, Anthony Rapp, and Maia Brewton [2]. For the role of Chris, over 150 actresses auditioned, and when Elisabeth Shue was cast, she was a student at Harvard. Shue had a handful of acting credits prior to this movie, including 1984's *The Karate Kid* in which she played Ralph Machio's girlfriend.

In a 2022 interview with *The Today Show*, Shue said she loved this movie. She said, "What's interesting for me, too, is looking back at the few great roles that I feel like I've had, and I think there are a few, and I really do believe in my heart that is one of them because she gets to carry the movie." Shue also commented on the scarcity of lead roles for women. She said "There weren't too many lead roles for women at the time, for sure, so I think the fact that the film had to have a girl, because most babysitters were girls at the time, that's kind of nice" [3].

Weirdly, Shue went on to note that she didn't think she would have been cast in *Leaving Las Vegas*, a role for which she scored a Best Actress Oscar nomination, without doing this movie.



She's got the babysitting blues.

She said, "I do know that without *Adventures in Babysitting*, I wouldn't have gotten *Leaving Las Vegas* because (director) Mike Figgis said that that was one of his favorite movies, oddly enough. So, I'm grateful for that" [4].

While *Adventures in Babysitting* kickstarted the careers of Shue, Columbus, and the other actors, it actually didn't get great reviews. Siskel and Ebert didn't love it, and they both agreed that it had a lack of social awareness [5]. Their issue was that these four white kids from the suburbs get lost in the bad neighborhood and they mostly interact with black characters, and they are, at least initially, scared of these characters. Furthermore, those black characters were mostly one dimensional and played parts like car thieves, gang members, and blues musicians.

Albert Collins, a black blues musician who played himself in the movie, argued that because his character protects the kids, the movie actually shows race relations in a positive light. Collins's agent also stated that since the filmmakers hired actual Chicago blues magicians to play in that scene, instead of a bunch of actors, their intentions were good [6]. I'm not so sure about that. I think that the white suburbs vs the scary city with people of color was a running theme in the 80s (and still is at times today).

While the black characters do help the kids at times, it's three white men who actually end up "rescuing" the kids. Dan (George Newbern), a white guy they meet at the college party, collects



All hail the mighty Thor!

enough money to help them get the tire fixed on the car, Handsome John Pruitt gets their car to the mechanic, and Dawson the mechanic (Vincent D'Onofrio) fixes their car and gives it back despite the fact that they are a bit short on money. So, overall, the depiction of the black characters in this movie isn't great, but it might have been slightly better than some other movies that came out in the 80s.

And, as with a great deal of 80s movies, there are remakes! In 1989, a television pilot for an *Adventures in Babysitting* sitcom aired on CBS. It starred Joey Lawrence and Brian Austin Green, but it didn't get picked up. In 2010, Disney announced it was going to remake the movie starring Raven Symone, but she pulled out of the project. There were rumors that Miley Cyrus was attached to the movie at one point, but in 2015 Disney announced that Sabrina Carpenter and Sofia Carson would star in the movie as competing babysitters [7]. It aired on the Disney Channel in June of 2016, and, frankly, it sounds pretty bad.

Adventures in Babysitting streams on Disney+ for free with your subscription. However, if you watch it there, be forewarned, it is censored. There aren't too many curses (it is a Disney movie after all), but they do bleep the best line in the whole movie. When faced with the prospect of getting caught in a gang rumble, Chris yells, "Don't fuck with the babysitter!" Disney ruined it, but I still recommend watching it.



A Silicon Valley Bromance: **INNERSPACE**

BY: CANDACE JANE OPPER

Like many movies I saw before being old enough to understand its nuanced humor, *Innerspace* played incessantly on cable throughout my childhood. Though it can be classified as adventure/comedy/tech-fi, I mentally group it into three sub-categories: miniaturization gone wrong, textbook Meg Ryan, and movies from which the moment I recall most features a grown man's naked ass.

Joe Dante's 1987 science fiction comedy *Innerspace* opens with the cocky and belligerent Lieutenant Tuck Pendleton (Dennis Quaid) breaking up a black-tie Navy affair by getting into a drunken brawl with his compatriots. Tuck's date-and-sometimes-girlfriend Lydia Maxwell (Meg Ryan) drags him back to his apartment and is wooed into spending the night by way of Sam Cooke's "Cupid." The next morning, angry at herself for being so easily tricked into Tuck's

bed, Lydia dramatically breaks it off with him, closes his bath towel in a taxi door, and leaves him standing naked in the street (hence the aforementioned man's ass).

Having parted ways with the Navy, the reckless Tuck takes an experimental Silicon Valley gig in which he will be miniaturized to pilot a vessel through the insides of a lab rabbit. The experiment is going smoothly until rival scientist Margaret Canker (Fiona Lewis) crashes the procedure, stealing one of two microchips essential to the miniaturization process. The experiment's lead scientist Ozzie (John Hora) escapes with the miniaturized Tuck inside a syringe. He is chased into a busy shopping mall where Canker's heavy, a man with one roboticized hand, shoots him in the stomach. Ozzie injects Tuck into a random bystander before dying unceremoniously in the arms of some mall mascots.



Diagnosis: it ain't demonic possession.

Enter Jack Potter (Martin Short), grocery store employee and nervous hypochondriac. Jack's doctor has advised him to take a vacation and get some rest and relaxation. This remedy is foiled now that he is acting as a bodily host to Tuck Pendleton, who utilizes his miniature vessel's technology to attach a device to Jack's eardrum, enabling them to communicate. (In one of the film's funniest scenes, Jack tries to figure out where the voice is coming from and deduces that he's demonically possessed.)

Jack reluctantly joins forces with Tuck to retrieve the stolen microchip and re-enlarge Tuck before his oxygen runs out. He enlists the help of Lydia, incidentally an intrepid journalist, who thinks Tuck has merely been kidnapped. Turns out Lydia has been following Silicon Valley crime through a character called "The Cowboy" (Robert Picardo), an international henchman who has been hired by Canker and white-collar criminal Victor Scrimshaw (Kevin McCarthy) to steal the second microchip and sell the technology to foreign powers.

Over the next 24 hours, Jack and Lydia face a series of abductions, near-fatal misadventures, and more bizarre miniaturization technology (including facial transfiguration). Jack begins to fall for Lydia and, in one of those hasn't-aged-well moments of man-to-man false consent, Tuck agrees to turn off his signal so Jack can have a moment alone with her. In a rare burst of mojo, Jack kisses Lydia, unknowingly passing Tuck



Tuck gets a transfer.

into her body via saliva. Tuck becomes aware of the relocation when he travels through Lydia's reproductive system and sees a fetus, realizing that he has impregnated her.

After their wild ride through the world of techno-crime, Jack and Lydia recover the stolen chip and re-enlarge Tuck with moments to spare. Tuck and Lydia reunite, and the movie ends with a (presumably) shotgun wedding where Tuck wears the microchips as cufflinks. When Jack realizes The Cowboy is driving their limo, he hops in Tuck's convertible and heads off on his next adventure.

Writer Chip Proser's idea for *Innerspace* began as more of a sci-fi, *Fantastic Voyage*-esque adventure. Jeffrey Boam's (*The Dead Zone*, *The Lost Boys*) rewrites transformed it into a comedy that focuses less on the science fiction aspects than the humorous interplay between two polar opposites [1].

Director Joe Dante (*Piranha*, *Gremlins*) initially rejected the idea, but signed on to the comedy, which he described as "what would happen if we shrank Dean Martin down and injected him inside Jerry Lewis" [2]. Steven Spielberg eventually signed on as an executive producer, granting Dante the freedom and fringe benefits of working with his company, Amblin Entertainment. "You got all the best equipment and all the best people and all the toys you wanted to play with" [3].



Hit me with your best shot.

Dante had access to more toys via Industrial Light & Magic (ILM) who created the film's visual effects. In an era pre-CGI, ILM constructed scale sets of Jack's internal organs which were photographed and then combined with footage of rod-puppeted submersible pods [4].

The result is an "inner" space that also reflects outer space, with Jack's internal pathways having a sort of interplanetary quality. The visceral textures are remarkable and grossly gastronomic, blood cells resembling pillowy red hots and organ walls like vintage Jell-O salads. It's no surprise that ILM took home the 1987 Academy Award for Best Visual Effects.

While this movie has a lot (and at times too much) going on, at its core it tells the story of three parallel journeys. The most obvious and plot-driven is Tuck's literal voyage into Jack's anatomy. Other than his seemingly inherent impetuousness, we aren't given a reason why Tuck volunteers to be injected into a lab rabbit; at the very least, he is simply eager and willing to experience life's extremes. It's unclear whether he learns anything on this voyage, but it does offer him 24 hours of (mostly) sobriety, during which he realizes he does actually care for Lydia and, ahem, that she is pregnant.

The more poignant journey is Jack's adventure toward courage. Influenced and literally embodied by Tuck's audaciousness, Jack is able to, with some guidance, face a string of daunting situ-



Jack Putter to the rescue!

ations, from knocking out an international spy to kissing an attractive woman to jumping from the back of a moving truck. Perhaps the biggest obstacle he overcomes as a hypochondriac is acting as host to a kind of parasite that demands he conquer his greatest fear: moxie. In the end, his bromance with Tuck inspires him to quit his cashier gig, tell his doctor he's cured, and embrace a life of recklessness.

The most underrated adventure is, of course, Lydia's odyssey through a series of men who want things from her. Tuck wants her to endlessly put up with his drunken bullshit; Jack, kind-hearted as he is, wants her to leave Tuck in favor of his underdog charm; The Cowboy wants to fuck her. All the woman wants is to write a hard-hitting piece of journalism on Silicon Valley corruption, and she ends up pregnant and married: a testament to the 1980s version of a happy ending.

Despite the pitfalls to which it inevitably succumbs, *Innerspace* has become a comedy cult classic, combining Martin Short's showbiz shtik with the absurdity of international tech fraud and the innate delight of watching a tiny human navigate comically large surroundings. Like *Honey, I Shrunk the Kids* but with sex and espionage.



Stay Golden: TREASURE OF THE MOON GODDESS

BY: DR. RHONDA BAUGHMAN

The internet never ceases to amaze me: zillions of sites including hundreds, thousands, sometimes millions of pages single-mindedly devoted to the same thing – and by “thing”, I mean any: politics, fashion, music, animals, vegetables, minerals, and yes, favorite films from youth that you’re positive only YOU remember! Surfing about often proves there are others out there like you! Others who loved an obscure film so much that they passionately dedicated words and time to a site, page, or tenth of a column inch on a personal blog that only 11 people have visited since 2001, but so what? They understand your fanatical commitment, too! Except for *Treasure of the Moon Goddess* (1987), perhaps.

In the case of Rhonda vs obsessive internet love chatter re: *Moon Goddess*, I find only guilt – as in my thorough online research yielded little relevant [1] data (no matter, I’ve been down this road before [2]). Besides, I don’t need the internet to

tell me the plot of *Moon Goddess* is a messy bit. The film itself still contains a few scenes worthy of attention once more, as well as possessing the honor of generating personal “ahh” revelations like “ahh, now I get that attempted inappropriate joke”; “ahh, now that fashion obsession makes sense”; and “ahh, now I see why I’m a little weird” [3] – it’s that last “ahh” that during rewatch had me fondly smiling at the memory of a young girl who obsessively rented this movie at least 100 times from her local video store.

The plot hole didn’t really exist when young Rhonda watched beloved films. Well, it may have been there in reality, gaping and bottomless, but as a kid, I could shovel imaginative cohesion into a movie’s missing patches like a tiny bulldozer. *Moon Goddess* is one of those movies that makes little sense when viewed objectively as an adult, but there’s no enjoyment for me in viewing a beloved film with only a critical eye and then tear-



Harold gets his marching orders.

ing apart the flimsy frame piece by bit [4]. All the viewer needs to know is genre, that we're watching an action-adventure!

Easily, viewers can follow the general ideas: bad guys like Diaz (Danny Addis), through various nefarious and vague schemes, wish to lure singer Lu (Scream Queen Linnea Quigley) to the jungles of Central America, counting on her pervy good-guy manager Harold (Don Calfa) to get her there, and all because she resembles an indigenous tribe's moon goddess. Lu and Harold stumble about, battle pirates, become lost, hit quicksand, jump off boats, get captured and tied up, before becoming lost again but along the way they meet new friends, Sam (Asher Brauner) and Brandy (Joann Ayers); eventually everyone stumbles into treasure deep within the Temple of Ixel [5].

But overall, plot didn't matter to young Rhonda. No, she instead wondered if Linnea was really singing in that mysterious, smokey nightclub scene (the one with the little person, the girl smiling cryptically close-up, and the pigs and chickens); wondered if Linnea had been allowed to choose that fabulous '80s wardrobe [6] she rocked throughout; wondered if she'd ever get to see Mazatlan for real [7]. So naturally, older Rhonda is now questioning beyond the aesthetics, such as the reasoning behind the Calfa voice-over and overall frame story set up choice, which is also poorly dubbed/looped in spots and a death knell for narrative flow. Harold ogles a woman taking dictation, presumably for his book; his flamboyantly charming manservant cracks wise; unnecessary edification ensues over seemingly random poolside scenes; and the eventual reveal



The Moon Goddess needs a new manager.

that Harold and Lu married is wholly unconvincing. I would have preferred my attention drift to more frivolous film aspects, such as the underlying magical dialogue like "transmutation" and the double-entendre "star-quality" or even the multiple bikini babes and silly synchronicities of Lu's multiple bathroom breaks. Ah, but no – I'm instead jammed up pondering the mystery of why didn't the film just GET TO and GO ON the adventure already – why the gawky beginning and the additional, interruptive accounts? Was it merely to flesh out run time? A trick to help viewers adapt to the film's meandering, awkward pacing and choppy transitions between loosely-interconnected scenes?

Speaking of scenes, Treasure's mixed bucket ranging from goofy and endearing, to cringey and rambling, were honest and unmalicious if nothing more. The Mazatlán sets are gorgeous, often lush, occasionally unsafe-looking and while there's not going to be awards won for editing or acting, everyone looks like they're having fun and trying really hard. I appreciated the clever metaphor of each character looking for treasure one way or another in the film: actual treasure, of course, and treasures in the form of a music industry career; lasting relationships and true love; power in the form of leadership or promise thereof; and well, side booty.

I simply enjoyed the barely R-rated exotic and over-the-top cinematic quest for what it was – the film's 10 minute musical dead stop [8] didn't even faze me – yet I couldn't help but find it funny that the film's abrupt ending with the nebulous hint of a sequel still confounds me. We find out more



Not this shit again!

from Harold at the very end, post-adventure, that Lu has left him and he's now hiding out as a server in a swanky restaurant, presumably not only to catch up with and entice Sam and Brandy into another wacky escapade, but to work another mark at a nearby table. The previous 90 minutes were already difficult to follow, so this slapped-on-at-the-very-end scene felt more like an afterthought, an attempt to tie up half a dozen loose ends.

Finally, some of the “ahh” revelations upon adult re-watch do reveal some problematic components that the more zealous advocates for cancel culture would immediately zero in on, forgetting even that the film was made in 1987 (it really was a different time) and with more mischievous intent (than spiteful, for example). With that wind up, here's the pitch: there are jokes made at the expense of everyone, regardless of sex/gender, sexual preference, race, age, ethnicity, and culture, but the introduction, depiction, treatment, and overall story behind the indigenous tribe who worship the moon goddess will cause some viewers to flinch.

And I could be wrong, but perhaps this cultural misappropriation might be a reason why only the top ten stars are listed both online AND in the end credits of the original VHS release [9], when in fact, there are at least a hundred people in this film – wandering around in the background/foreground in multiple scenes, some folks seemingly oblivious to being filmed, others clearly aware of the cameras, and of course, there's a number of people in the indigenous moon goddess-worshipping tribe (covered in mud and/or paint). Who are all of these people? I don't know and I can't seem



Lucky for them, the chief speaks English.

to find out – but to ease my irritation, a gift arrived in the form of a beautiful, heartfelt message! One *Treasure* cast member heard my desperate interview plea and although in pre-production for his new film *Saludos* (2023), Rene Pereyra (as Carlos in *Goddess*) took the time to answer. He was so kind, so personable – and had this to say:

“Somewhat difficult to recall many things that happened during the shooting – it was a long time ago and one of my first acting jobs, but I do remember very well, very clearly, was the great attitude of Mr. Don Calfa. Very gentle man, excellent actor, and a great person to work with. During my time on the set, I was the only Mexican working there, and I, sadly, do have some bad memories of a few people who were not as nice as Don Calfa. But more importantly, I do remember, vividly, the beauty of Mazatlán, and of course the great support of the director [José Luis García Agraz]. I really appreciate you contacting me. God bless you.”

Not bad at all for a 35-year-old film remembered only by its remaining cast/crew and a few hardcore fans. Though, I couldn't help but feel this long-forgotten '80s gem was unearthed for a bigger reason, and more than just a nostalgic memory spoke of cherished films from my youth that perfectly fit this issue's theme. Perhaps it was no accident after all that I re-watched *Treasure* during the evening of a New Moon. Personally, I'd like to think it was so I could honor my own inner moon goddess and quietly, but gratefully acknowledge all the many treasures within my own strange but appreciated little writerly life.

Endnotes

A Mission From God: The Blues Brothers

Release Date: June 20, 1980

Written by: Dan Aykroyd and John Landis

Directed by: John Landis

Essay by: Stephanie McDevitt

[1] "Soul Men: The Making of The Blues Brothers." (Vanity Fair, 2012) <https://tinyurl.com/2wrjtdzy>

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Miami Mitch Glazer's liner notes for The Blues Brothers Briefcase Full of Blues, <https://tinyurl.com/3993c2pa>

[5] "Soul Men: The Making of The Blues Brothers." (Vanity Fair, 2012) <https://tinyurl.com/2wrjtdzy>

[6] "The Blues Brothers (Film)." (Wikipedia) <https://tinyurl.com/5fn45nbv>

Ibid.

[7] "Soul Men: The Making of The Blues Brothers." (Vanity Fair, 2012) <https://tinyurl.com/2wrjtdzy>

[8] Ibid.

[9] "The Blues Brothers (Film)." (Wikipedia) <https://tinyurl.com/5fn45nbv>

Call of the Wilder: Romancing the Stone

Release Date: March 30, 1984

Written by: Diane Thomas, Lem Dobbs, and Howard Franklin

Directed by: Robert Zemeckis

Essay by: Janene Scelza and Matt Scelza

[1] How Romancing The Stone Got Robert Zemeckis Fired From Cocoon (SlashFilm, 2022) <https://tinyurl.com/3hfbjsvs>

[2] Ibid

[3] [VIDEO] PT.1 - ROMANCING THE STONE: Back-story (2002) (FlyingBearFilmMorgue) <https://tinyurl.com/e3xb9wdw>

[com/e3xb9wdw](https://tinyurl.com/e3xb9wdw)

[4] Domestic Box Office For 1984, <https://tinyurl.com/3x544r7d>

[5] [VIDEO] PT.1 - ROMANCING THE STONE: Back-story (2002) (FlyingBearFilmMorgue) <https://tinyurl.com/e3xb9wdw>

[6] The Jewel of the Nile (Roger Ebert, 1985) <https://tinyurl.com/24k6udrk>

Never Say Die: The Goonies

Release Date: June 7, 1985

Written by: Chris Columbus

Directed by: Richard Donner

Essay by: Ellen Muller

[1] "Austin Butler, Colin Farrell, Brendan Fraser, Jeremy Pope, Ke Huy Quan, Adam Sandler and THR's Actor Roundtable" (The Hollywood Reporter, 2023) <https://tinyurl.com/mrx3p33>

[2] "How the Goonies helped to create a modern franchise" (The Ringer, 2020) <https://tinyurl.com/yc6z5ezk>

[3] "SCREEN: 'THE GOONIES,' WRITTEN BY SPIELBERG" (1985, The New York Times) <https://tinyurl.com/55myrzb3>

[4] 'How Hollywood's Weirdest Filmmakers Made a Movie About Everything' (The Atlantic, 2022) <https://tinyurl.com/vuswawf4>

[5] "SCREEN: 'THE GOONIES,' WRITTEN BY SPIELBERG" (The New York Times, 1985) <https://tinyurl.com/55myrzb3>

[6] "Missing 17th-century ship that inspired 'Goonies' found in Oregon" (New York Post, 2022) <https://tinyurl.com/mrvp6bfj>

[7] "How the Goonies helped to create a modern franchise" (The Ringer, 2020) <https://tinyurl.com/yc6z5ezk>

[8] "Reviews: The Goonies" (Roger Ebert, 1985) <https://tinyurl.com/2p89vhrc>

[9] "How Old were the Actors" (A Smooth Sea) <https://tinyurl.com/mr3c8yah>

[10] "Behind The Scenes: The Making Of The Goonies (1985)" (Youtube) <https://tinyurl.com/4tukbwbr>

[11] "'I didn't have a single audition for a year': Goonies and Indiana Jones child star Ke Huy Quan on finding fame again" (The Guardian, 2022) <https://tinyurl.com/3tnnh897>

[12] "Eight Arms to Hold You" (The Goonies Wiki) <https://tinyurl.com/4kkh6xv2>

[13] "The Goonies Easter Eggs hidden in Stranger Things" (Live For Film, 2022) <https://tinyurl.com/39v-c46yy>

[14] "Astoria Celebrates National Goonies Day 38 Years After Film Debuted in Theaters" (The Oregon Life, 2023) <https://tinyurl.com/3eanv4d4>

[15] "Ke Huy Quan Accepts the Oscar for Supporting Actor Transcript" (Rev, 2023) <https://tinyurl.com/yppac4vu>

Ad Infinitum: Back to the Future

Release date: July 3, 1985

Written by: Bob Gale and Robert Zemeckis

Directed by: Robert Zemeckis

Essay by: Janene Scelza & Matt Scelza

[1] How Romancing The Stone Got Robert Zemeckis Fired From Cocoon (SlashFilm, 2022) <https://tinyurl.com/3hfbjsvs>

[2] "The Making of Back To The Future was a Sh*t Show" (It Was a Sh*t Show, 2021) <https://tinyurl.com/mvkeevv9>

[3] Ibid.

[4] "Back to the Future" (Roger Ebert, 1985) <https://tinyurl.com/bdfckz2a>

[5] "BACK TO THE FUTURE BREAKDOWN: Every Detail You Missed | Deep Dive" (The Deep Dive, 2023) <https://tinyurl.com/2p9ekj8v>

Survive, But Not Thrive: Solarbabies

Release Date: November 26, 1986

Written by: Walon Green and Douglas Anthony Metrov

Directed by: Alan Johnson

Essay by: Dr. Rhonda Baughman

[1] Regrettably, Johnson passed away in 2018 or I would have doggedly ferreted him out for an interview (he was actually best known for his choreography work); moreover, after reading the Wiki that details a few behind-the-scenes production foibles, it's difficult to fathom that Solarbabies was finished and released at all.

[2] I re-watched streaming on Tubi and found the film much clearer (literally and thanks to subtitles) than my own clamshell VHS copy (of which my DVD transfer seems similar).

[3] In sync, this Pisces would review Tank Girl (1995) for the Canton Repository, another apocalyptic film where warriors are on the quest to free the world's water supply.

[4] Subtitles provided totalitarian dialogue like "give raw power to the cause of order" and "... pleasure in use of ultra e-tech weapons ... pleasure in the chase and stun".

[5] On the magical motif, Darstar creates symbols in the sand to summon birds; uses "66" as his locker combo (a number often associated w/both harmony and weakness) and is referred to sarcastically by evil Scorpion-leader Gavial (Peter Kowanko) as "Mr. Magic" and a "total moon" before slaying Darstar's owl/familiar.

[6] The biblical name Daniel was not lost to me – and he's also the subject of a 'child shall lead them'. Quickly, too, additional magical/biblical concepts appear, some examples include Luke "ask and ye shall receive"; the theme song "Love Will Set You Free" (Smokey Robison) directly quotes Jesus's sermons; Metron is a "sphere of influence" and truly, most character names come from myths and legends from various cultures. Easily an entire essay could be dedicated to the film's symbolism and religious references. In that essay, after names, I'd go right for the tree mythology, Kabbalistic and otherwise.

[7] Possibly alluding to the Holy Lance (<https://tinyurl.com/mvzrnmb9>) and still perhaps alluded to here: <https://tinyurl.com/575ejv5w>. However, I noted many film references to Thelemic Magick as well: specifically that the Babies are in the Aeon of Horus and once free of their conditioned fear can now begin again within a more enlightened collective consciousness.

[9] When younger, as much as I would have loved to

have my very own Uncle Impy from Sorority Babes in the Slimeball Bowl-O-Rama (1988), I also really wanted a Bodhi BFF. In my era, many kids wanted a My Buddy doll. I wanted a Bodhi.

[10] Who would team up again as Michael and Star in The Lost Boys (1987).

So Cool: Adventures in Babysitting

Release Date: July 3, 1987

Written By: David Simkins

Directed By: Chris Columbus

Essay By: Stephanie McDevitt

[1] "Adventures in Babysitting." AFI Catalog. <https://tinyurl.com/55sxp39s>

[2] Ibid.

[3] "How the '80s classic 'Adventures in Babysitting' directly led to 1 Oscar-nominated role." (Today.Com, 2022) <https://tinyurl.com/3j4f55vf>

[4] Ibid.

[5] "Adventures in Babysitting" (Wikipedia) <https://tinyurl.com/4ts8vd8k>

[6] "Adventures in Babysitting." AFI Catalog. <https://tinyurl.com/55sxp39s>

[7] "Adventures in Babysitting" (Wikipedia) <https://tinyurl.com/4ts8vd8k>

A Silicon Valley Bromance: Innerspace

Release Date: July 1, 1987

Written by: Jeffrey Boam & Chip Proser

Directed by: Joe Dante

Essay by: Candace Jane Oppen

[1] "The Underrated Brilliance of Joe Dante's Innerspace." (Den of Geek. 29 June 2018) <https://tinyurl.com/aabpte8c>

[2] "Exclusive: Joe Dante Discusses Innerspace." (Cinema Retro, 2015) <https://tinyurl.com/4tk6s4s2>

[3] Ibid.

[4] Industrial Light & Magic, <https://tinyurl.com/w2zytar2>

Stay Golden: Treasure of the Moon Goddess

Release Date: December 19, 1987

Written by: Eric Weston, JP Dutilleux, and Asher Brauner

Directed by: José Luis García Agraz

Essay by Dr. Rhonda Baughman

[1] I can find a few plot regurgitations; a couple of mean sentences aligning with "bury this treasure" and "avoid this Indiana-Jones rip-off"- nothing germane to my style or vision of writing.

[2] See Medium Chill issue 7 for the fruits of my labor attempting to locate Mitchell Cohen aka the first Toxic Avenger (in makeup) of the series beginning in 1984.

[3] Let's be honest: there's a LOT of films I can blame for the weirdness. But I have no regrets.

[4] I will leave this critical eyeballing for Medium Chill issue 9, re: Less than Zero (1987) – a Zoom party analysis by myself and author Douglas E. Winter.

[5] Re-watched on my own original Vidmark VHS release, since it's not available on DVD (and why not? Rumor has it, Hemdale may have helped fund it); it's not legally streaming anywhere; the illegal upload is barely audible; an old screener is at least \$20.00 w/ shipping, but! I could have a gorgeous copy in its own box, almost as nice as mine, for \$80.00 from Amazon.

[6] In a brief IG exchange, (March 2023) Linnea indicated that she, like me, had a deep abiding love for her wardrobe in the film.

[7] I did – in 2006, on assignment from Tucson Lifestyle Magazine. It is beautiful – and also dangerous.

[8] Forward plot momentum, narrative drive comes to a halt so someone can dance and sing like in a music video – I covered this in Exploitation Nation issue 4. In Treasure's case - Linnea's club scene.

[9] Also might be why the film is hardly mentioned on the internet despite there being a big Linnea fan-base.

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