

FOCUS ON: REVIEW

Movie belongs on Saturday afternoon TV

Titans' clash not worth the money

By Cathy Saathoff
Battalion Staff

If I had known just what titans were, I wouldn't have gone to see them clash.

"Clash of the Titans" brings back all those horrible movies you watched on Saturday afternoons when you were little, movies with names like "The Creature That Ate (fill in name of city)" and "The Creature From the Black Lagoon."

The clashing titans are Medusa, the snake-haired woman with a green stare that turns people to stone, and the Kracken, a.k.a. a distant ancestor of the creature from the lagoon.

Movies like "Star Wars" and "Star Trek" have given rise to a myth that special effects in today's movies are really something special, worth millions of dollars to produce and \$4 to see.

"Clash of the Titans" destroys that myth and sets the movie-making world back about 30 years. Maybe 40.

The plot is based on classical Greek mythology. (Remember Junior English in high school?)

MOVIES

It's actually a pretty good idea for a movie, but the effects (without *special* in front) destroy what could have been a thrilling adventure film.

The story is about Zeus and his harem of goddesses, and the mortals they use as chess pieces. If the movie has a message, it is that the gods don't play fair, something you have probably already learned.

Perseus and Andromeda are the lucky pieces, caught in a tug-of-war between the gods.

Sir Laurence Olivier (or Larry, as I shall call him, because that name better fits a person who would take this role) plays Zeus, the powerful ruler of all that he sees. Since he sees all, he has a lot to rule.

Larry is out of place among all the unfamiliar faces that make up the cast of "Clash of the Titans," and he does nothing to distinguish himself from the others, except for having a blue light shine from behind his head. An effect hardly worthy of Larry's reputation, but we all make mistakes.

Burgess Meredith is the only other name-brand actor in the film. He plays an adviser-friend-leader of Perseus. It's basically

the same character he played in the "Rocky" movies, only in "Clash of the Titans" he wears a robe.

The real star of the film is a mechanical owl made by one of the goddesses to guide and protect Perseus. The invincible little creature flies around twittering and turning somersaults, bringing a bit of relief from the oppressively bad monsters that otherwise fill the screen.

His master Perseus, played Harry Hamlin, is a wide-eyed invincible innocent. He's not too bright a lot of the time, and very forgetful. But brave, gallant and all the other things the hero should be.

Perseus would be right at home on Saturday afternoon television as he battles giant scorpions, giant sea monsters

and giant vultures. (I could swear I've seen that bird before. Maybe they save the animals and use them in different movies.)

Of course, there is a reason for Perseus's braveness — The Beautiful Princess Who Will Be Sacrificed To The Monster If The Hero Doesn't Save Her In Time.

Will Perseus make it? Will he get Medusa's head without catching her stony glare? Will he kill the Kracken? Will the witches eat him? Will he be burned at the stake? Will he find the answer to the riddle? Does anybody care?

For the answers to these and many other thrilling questions, tune in on Saturday afternoon. Don't pay your money to see the same old story in a different setting.

COLLAGE

Take that, vile sidewalk!

STEVENS POINT, Wis. — Is walking on the grass enjoying nature or destroying it?

That debate is underway at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, where a student group calling itself PATHS (People's Alternative to Hard Sidewalks) is dedicated to preserv-



ing grass footpaths on campus and to fighting those who want to eliminate them.

"Members of PATHS are fighting against oppression," said Charlotte Smith, a co-founder of the group. "Anti-PATHS people are trying to curb a natural inclination to walk on the earth."

That inclination may be sorely tested at UWSP, where university personnel have considered planting thorn bushes and building large dirt mounds in front of grass paths to force students onto sidewalks. That offends die-hard PATHS members, who say it is unnatural to be separated from the earth by a slab of concrete. They also point to lower construction and maintenance costs and the fact that sidewalks ultimately kill more grass than simple paths.

— Collegiate Hedlines

Farmer says sprouts are crop of the future

United Press International
SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Robert Smotherman is an urban farmer who likes to harvest his money-making crop before it gets much taller than the top of his shoes.

He doesn't have to toil in the sun or get his hands very dirty either.

Smotherman is part of an \$8.5 million California "cottage" industry raising alfalfa sprouts. The business is thriving with the help of changing American tastes, increasing mechanization and a pesticide-free environment.

"In the beginning people thought it was hippie food, a fad or something like that," Smotherman said of his cash crop grown on a 5,200 square-foot "farm" in a downtown Sacramento building a few blocks from the state Capitol.

"Now, they've grown in popularity and so's the demand. Even Jack in the Box is beginning to use sprouts, and I consider that a success."

Every week, Smotherman and workers pitch about 8,000 pounds of alfalfa sprouts into huge green-flecked white mounds for handpacking into packages of four ounces or larger. The sprouts are distributed to stores, restaurants and sandwich shops between

Bakersfield, Calif., and Reno, Nev.

"We use 2 million pounds of seeds a year," he said, noting that alfalfa seeds have a 1 to 8 production ratio. "We started out really small, and now we're banging on the walls here."

Smotherman has become so successful that he is looking for land to put up a building that would house a sprout factory, where he could experiment with seeds other than alfalfa.

"Peanut sprouts are just excellent and so are sunflower sprouts," he said.

Smotherman quit his full-time job seven years ago to give all his attention to growing sprouts, an activity he calls farming although "we don't have the hail and snow problems that other farmers face."

He also has gone through two partnerships that broke up and yielded two new competitors.

The weather of his urban farm is regulated with the help of the electric company and water district. The four-day growing season of alfalfa sprouts begins with soaking 20 pounds of seeds in water for six to eight hours.

Later, the seeds are transplanted to a rotating drum where they are sprayed with water. The crop then is halved and placed into two similar drums for another day. The seeds finally are transferred to a finishing tank, where they remain until the green-tipped sprouts are harvested.

Smotherman said electricity bills for heating and light at the sprout farm run "a couple hundred dollars a month in the winter." Water used to grow 1,000 pounds of seed a week is less than the amount used by two families of four.

"It's a different kind of factory," he said. "It's what is needed in the future. Lettuce growers have the technology but transportation costs for shipping produce from Salinas to New York are growing, growing, growing. Sprouts can grow anywhere and use less energy."

He estimated that he could keep sprouts for a month in his refrigerator as long as they never warm up.

"But it's really hard to give a shelf life because a little grocery store in Lovelock, Nev., might complain even after the sprouts have been handled by distributors 10 to 12 times," he said.