

# AGGIELIFE



Marilyn Lovell (Kathleen Quinlan) holds her children and waits with friends for the final word as the Apollo 13 crew re-enters the Earth's atmosphere

# APOLLO 13

## Howard uses powerful cast to capture NASA's 'finest hour'

By Michael Landauer  
THE BATTALION

Everything went wrong aboard Apollo 13. But immortalizing the near-disaster in film has proven to be a much smoother and more successful mission.

It would seem impossible to recreate the drama of the Apollo 13 mission. No film could be expected to capture what people were feeling when they faced NASA's worst nightmare. But it appears that director Ron Howard has done it.

The story has been told before. Jim Lovell (Tom Hanks), the space program's most experienced astronaut, was in command of the ill-fated Apollo 13 which was traveling to the moon to collect rocks and scientific data. After an oxygen tank explodes, Lovell has to give up his dream of walking on the moon and focus on how his ship is going to get back home.

We should know how the story ends. NASA has touted the "successful failure" as its brightest moment. But somehow *Apollo 13* doesn't seem predictable.

This film offers more than a great story.

Audiences that have flocked to the film since it opened last Friday may have expected to see Howard's trademark flag-waving sappiness. The fact that it opened over the Fourth of July weekend also would seem to prepare audiences for a dose of patriotism. But that is not what this movie is about, and what could have been a major problem is avoided.

Howard puts the

audience in the story. In such a heroic tale, sappiness was never needed. Rarely can a director keep a film based on history so focused.

"I think real life delivers better stories than anybody could possibly think up," Hanks said in a press release.

### MOVIE REVIEW

**Apollo 13**  
Starring Tom Hanks, Kevin Bacon and Bill Paxton  
Directed by Ron Howard  
Rated PG  
Playing at Hollywood 16  
★★★★ 1/2 (out of five)

Since the incredible story was already there, this film focused on the people who lived through seven of the most tense days the space program has ever seen. Howard does a good job showing every perspective. Whether the audience is seeing Lovell's son hold vigil with his military school peers or the mission control director, Gene Kranz (Ed Harris), take out his frustration on engineers, the audience can actually feel what the people must have been feeling.

Although this film could have slipped off its focus with scientific jargon, Howard kept simple the complicated reasons for the mission's failure.

The film makers actually trained like astronauts for the use of NASA's weightless training plane, and their experience made the movie run smoothly. Although no actor outshines the others, the entire cast was believable. From the looks on the faces of extras to the frustration in every NASA employee's voice, this film captured the moment. Lovell's words - "Houston, we have a problem" - made the Apollo 13 mission stand out in America's history in space. But it is the absence of problems in this film that will make *Apollo 13* stand out in the minds of summer audiences.

## Apollo 13 takes off at box office

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Tom Hanks has outdone *Forrest Gump*, and moviegoers have outdone themselves.

Led by a \$38.5 million debut for *Apollo 13* - Hanks' best opening weekend ever - audiences spent a record \$154.6 million at the box office over the five-day holiday weekend.

*Apollo 13*, which recounts the near-tragic 1970 space flight, easily defeated the other new films in wide release, Sylvester Stallone's *Judge Dredd* and *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers: The Movie*.

The other Top 10 holdovers were *Congo*, *The Bridges of Madison County*, *Casper*, *Braveheart* and *Die Hard With a Vengeance*.

The Independence Day take surpassed the previous five-day record of \$140 million from Thanksgiving in 1992. The last time the Fourth of July fell on a five-day weekend, in 1989, film patrons spent \$135.6 million.

Before *Apollo 13*, Hanks' best opening came from 1994's *Forrest Gump*, which made \$24.4 million in its first weekend of wide release. Counting only the first three days of the holiday weekend, *Apollo 13* beat that record, making \$25.4 million.

# WEEKEND PREVIEW



The Killer Bees, a reggae band from Austin, is playing at The Dixie Theatre Friday night.

### THURSDAY

**Head West**, a local alternative band, is playing at The Tap.

**Ty and the SemiAutomatics**, a local alternative band, is playing at Northgate Cafe. **Bobby Hall** is also playing.

### FRIDAY

**Crystal Sea**, a local jazz band, is performing at Sweet Eugene's House of Java.

**Extreme Heat**, a funk band, is playing at 3rd Floor Cantina.

**Peeping Tom**, a local cover band with a few original songs, is playing at The Tap.

**Ken Ryan and Crossover**, a country band, is at The Texas Hall of Fame.

**Soma**, a local alternative band, is playing at Northgate Cafe. **God-like Animals** and **Battlecow**, two local bands, are also playing.

### SATURDAY

**Mike Cancellare**, an acoustic musician from Lockhart, is performing at Sweet Eugene's House of Java.

The TAMU Caribbean Association and the TAMU Puerto Rico Association are sponsoring a **Caribbean party** at 3rd Floor Cantina. A Jamaican and Puerto Rican D.J. will alternate every 30 minutes.

**Jesse Dayton**, a country performer from Houston, is at The Dixie Theatre. See related story.

**Fondue Monks**, a local rock band, is playing at Northgate Cafe. Opening is local rock band **Cain Wolf**.

**Spin F/X**, a cover band from Austin, is playing at The Tap.

**The Texas Playboys**, a country band, is playing at The Texas Hall of Fame.

## Lacking direction, *First Knight* is no first choice

By Wes Swift  
THE BATTALION

The problem with *First Knight* is that it can't decide which way it wants to go. This film is stuck between being a historical epic and putting a new spin on the tale of King Arthur and Camelot.

Set against the backdrop of war between Camelot and the forces of the evil Prince Malignant, *First Knight* focuses on the love triangle between Arthur, the legendary king of England, his queen Guinevere and the rogue knight Lancelot.

The story begins as Malignant (Ben Cross) raids a village in Leoness, Guinevere's small kingdom caught between the two warring parties. Shortly after the raid, Guinevere

(Julia Ormond) agrees to marry Arthur (Sean Connery) in order to protect her kingdom.

But on her way to a rendezvous with the king, Guinevere's convoy is

### MOVIE REVIEW

**First Knight**  
Starring Richard Gere, Sean Connery and Julia Ormond  
Directed by Jerry Zucker  
Rated PG-13  
Opening at Hollywood 16 Friday  
★★ 1/2 (out of five)

ambushed by Malignant's troops. Guinevere is saved by Lancelot (Richard Gere), a swordsman who

wanders through the countryside and fights for money.

The sparks start to fly between the macho Lancelot and the future queen. Lancelot returns Guinevere to her escort and disappears into the forest, but not before promising her that they will meet again before she becomes queen.

After Lancelot impresses both the king and his future queen with his skills, the rest of the film spends its time on the characters' inner battles between loyalty and true love.

The acting in *First Knight* is solid, if not memorable. Connery carries the same regal quality that he brings to every role, and Gere plays a strong, perhaps overly sensitive, Lancelot. Julia Ormond delivers a performance as strong her portrayal

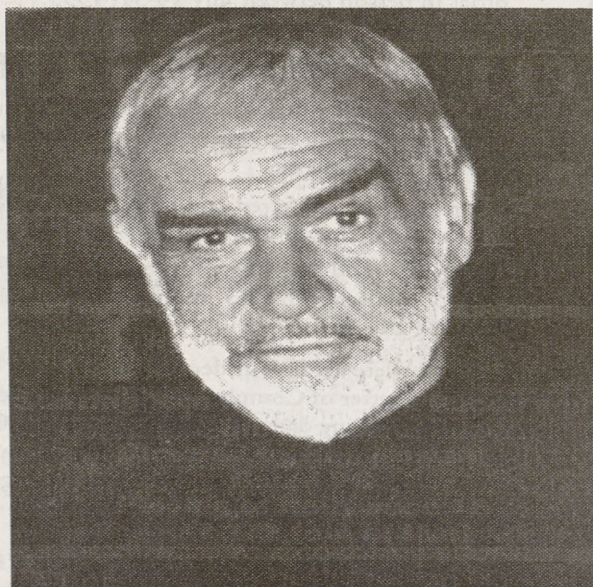
of the love interest in *Legends of the Fall*, complete with the crying.

*First Knight*'s plot has some amazing shortcomings. Director Jerry Zucker seems a bit confused about which direction he wants to take the story. At times he makes everything a fairy tale, going so far as to make all the bad guys wear black.

At other times, he wants to pump new life into the weary Arthurian legends, turning Lancelot into a rogue that few stories ever approach.

This confusing lack of direction takes away from the film's enjoyment. *First Knight* shifts back and forth between the two directions, leaving audiences scratching their heads.

Zucker should have decided on one motif or the other. But he didn't and his film suffers because of it.



Sean Connery