

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

**Neeson describes life with Star Wars**

NEW YORK (AP) — Despite the hype that had fans lined up to catch a two-minute trailer for the latest *Star Wars* installment, Liam Neeson says the movie is not changing his life.

The 46-year-old Irishman told *Movieline* magazine he can remember braving a dangerous explosion of Belfast years ago to be the original *Star Wars*. Then a young theater actor, Neeson said he found the film "breathtaking."

"It's a simple story, yet with all the complexities of myth. The technology was so understated," Neeson said. "I thought George Lucas was an amazing director who had created this totally believable world."

That memory was part of what made Neeson jump when offered a chance to meet Lucas in London two decades after *Star Wars*. Now he is playing the part of Yoda's son, a Jedi master in the coming *Star Wars: Episode I The Phantom Menace*, set for release May 2.

But asked whether being part of another potential blockbuster has changed him, Neeson said simply: "I'm 46 years of age. I'm married with two kids. I love to fly-eyes of a death. That will never change. At the end of the day, you know something? It's just a movie."

**Abrahams speaks at film festival**

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — Jim Abrahams, who co-directed *Naked Gun* and *Airplane*, is ready to reveal his secrets to making people laugh.

Rule No. 1? "Be funny." Another rule is: "There are no rules."

"What makes one person laugh doesn't make another person laugh," Abrahams said. "Even with the rules, all you're doing is taking your best guess."

Abrahams, a Milwaukee native and University of Wisconsin-Madison graduate, will speak Sunday at the Great Wisconsin Film Festival.

Abrahams said he is working on a couple of new scripts — his favorite part of the movie-making process.

"If you have a bad day writing, nobody cares. You push a button and it all goes away," he said. "That's really when the ideas first happen, and the rest of the time is the battle to get them up on the screen."

**Rembrandt works found at market**

AMSTERDAM, Netherlands (AP) — A secondhand book bought at a flea market turned out to be more than a worthwhile purchase when the owner found two sketches by Rembrandt between its pages.

Local media reported Thursday that after returning from the market, the buyer — whose name was not given — paged

through her new \$1 book and found three drawings valued at more than \$50,000 total.

Two of the sketches, which were not described, were original Rembrandts and a third was drawn by one of his students. An art expert authenticated them.

**Voters let Wright library stay open**

SAN RAFAEL, Calif. (AP) — The last major work designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, Marin County's main library, will stay open for now despite pressure to close it down to save money.

The Marin County Library Commission voted Wednesday night against recommending closure, opting instead to support a sales tax increase.

The final decision is up to the county board of supervisors.

The library, with its domed blue roof and tall spire, is the centerpiece of the civic center completed after Wright's death in 1962. The architect regarded it as the heart of the project, forever linking the "center of knowledge" to the "center of government."

"We're heartened by the commissioner's actions not to shut down this stunning facility," said architect Marielle Rutherford. "But we'll need to work hard to gain support for a sales tax increase. It was Frank Lloyd Wright's vision to have a library here, and it's ours too."

The closing was proposed to help offset a \$1.4 million deficit in the library system.

**Pokemons discouraged in New York schools**

PELHAM, N.Y. (AP) — Pikachu, Jigglypuff and the other rotating monsters on the Pokemon juggernaut are running into roadblocks at grade schools around the country.

The hot-selling trading cards at capitalize on the Japanese cartoon phenomenon have been banned, restricted or discouraged at some principals in New York, New Jersey, Washington and elsewhere because they are distracting the early-reading set.

In Pelham, just north of New York City, all four grade schools have come down in some fashion on the cards, which have sold in millions since they came out in January.

"They seem to be the latest craze and the children are beginning to become obsessed by them," said Gerard Finelli, the principal at Colonial school.

Finelli has banned trading between pupils "because some of our younger kids were getting tickered out of their more valuable cards."

The cards are banned entirely at Prospect Hill school, where principal Richard Limato said, "We were having instances in which the children were losing them and then getting very upset."

Kevin Wolski, a second-grader at Colonial, has about 60 of the cards, a poster illustrating all 150 of the sometimes cuddly, sometimes scary monsters, a Pokemon comic book, a T-shirt and a pin.

The 7-year-old does not bring

his cards to school anymore because "the teachers don't like it and the principal said he'd better not catch us trading."

Besides, he said, wide-eyed, "Somebody was stealing them!"

Like millions of other kids, Kevin jumps out of bed to watch the Pokemon cartoon each morning and can converse rapidly and

among the big-eyed human characters, "boys and girls are equally powerful."

The Pokemon phenomenon originated in Japan three years ago as a Nintendo Game Boy game.

Until recently, it was best-known for the cartoon episode that sent 700 Japanese viewers to hospitals when they viewed.

Some with epilepsy-like spasms, to a scene that flashed bright colors in rapid succession. Undaunted, Pokemon quickly expanded into cartoons, comic books and the trading cards, which are made by Seattle-based Wizards of the Coast under a license from Nintendo.

Wizards spokesperson Carol Rogalski said the targeted age for the cards was eight to preteen, but kids five and six have been collecting the cards as well.

"It's just turned into this hottest thing," she said, and the cards are headed for a fifth printing.

The rarest cards sell to collectors for more than \$50, but a starter set with 61 cards has a suggested retail price of \$7.99. Other packs have list prices of \$2.79 to \$9.99, but there have been markups to \$20 or so, Rogalski said.

Wizards also makes "Magic: The Gathering" cards, which sparked a federal lawsuit against the Bedford Central schools when some parents thought they were satanic and should not be allowed on school grounds.

**"The children are beginning to become obsessed by them."**

— Gerard Finelli  
Principal,  
Colonial School

astutely about the details of the trading-card game.

He tells about the goldfish Magikarp, who can evolve into the powerful sea serpent Gyarados; about Psyduck, whose powers increase "if he has a really bad headache"; and about Kadabra, "who can hypnotize lightning bolts when his eyes light up."

Kevin's mother, Linda, has no objections to her son's new obsession, noting that the cards encourage kids to read, the game requires some arithmetic skills, and the cartoon takes pains to teach lessons, "like making fun of the vanity of the villain."

Kevin's father, Mike, likes that

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