

summer movies

This month proves to be a wonderful one on the big screen. On May 2, one of my favorite comic book characters, Iron Man,

made his film debut. On May 9, my favorite cartoon character, Speed Racer, did the same. And on May 22, audiences will be able to see one of their favorite movie characters back on the silver screen as Indiana Jones returns to explore the “Kingdom of the Crystal Skull.”

Even though I really don't go to the movies anymore, what with a job, kids and more jobs, I do plan on making three treks this month to indulge in popcorn and escape. However, as summer approaches, it seems fitting to return to our cinematic roots and examine in detail those movies that are particularly apt for summer viewing.

10) “Meatballs” (1979). A goofy comedy about lovable losers at a summer camp. It stars Bill Murray. Need I say more?

9) “What About Bob?” (1991). Another underrated Bill Murray comedy. Here he plays Bobby Wiley, a fellow with more than a few problems. Hilarity and hijinx ensue when he crashes his shrink's (a grumpy Richard Dreyfus) summer house.

ENJOY A BLEND OF BLOCKBUSTERS AND CLASSIC CHARACTERS

BY MARK LUCE

8) “Kill Bill Volume 1” (2004). The Deadly Vipers Assassination Squad, the Crazy 88s, martial arts mayhem, gallons of spurting blood, sword play and Beatrix Kiddo, the baddest of all bad chicks.

7) “Who Framed Roger Rabbit” (1988). On some level it's the human detective Eddie Valiant (played by Bob Hoskins) that makes this half-animated movie so darn entertaining. Of course, one could equally argue that it's the buxom Jessica Rabbit that gives the movie its “va-va-vavoom.”

6) “Terminator 2” (1991). I'm not sure which is better — the T-1000 jumping from the motorcycle to the helicopter or his recombination from blobs of liquid metal.

5) “The Matrix” (1999). Other than Bill and Ted, probably the only Keanu Reeves movie I like, mostly because he plays himself — an addled dufus who constantly says “huh?” The slow-mo gun battles totally changed movie-action sequences, and Agent Smith still creeps me out.

4) “Top Gun” (1986). OK, I admit it, I am a sucker for this movie despite the theme song, despite Tom



Cruise, shirtless volleyball and the now oh-so-tired rendition of “You've Lost That Lovin' Feeling.” The flying scenes, though ... they're still aces.

3) “Jaws” (1975). It was terrifying then. It's just as terrifying now. Don't go near the water.

2) “Die Hard” (1988). The first of the smart-aleck action pictures featured a barefoot John McClane running across shattered glass, ferocious action and one of the best bad guys around — Hans Gruber.

1) “Raiders of the Lost Ark” (1981). I saw this in June of my 11th year at the Mid-Sate Cinema in Salina, Kan., and have never forgotten the unmitigated joy of this movie. Whether Indy is just shooting the sword dude, or evil Arnold Toht's face melting, there's no topping this homage to Saturday morning serials.

Happy viewing.

Mark Luce lives in Kansas City, Mo., where he spends his free time trolling TV channels for movies that make him laugh.

GOLFDOM (ISSN 1526-4270) is published monthly (12 issues per year) by Questex Media Group, Inc., 306 W Michigan Street, Suite 200, Duluth, MN 55802. Corporate office: 275 Grove St., Suite 2-130, Newton, MA 02466. Accounting, Advertising, Production and Circulation offices: 306 W. Michigan St., Suite 200 Duluth, MN 55802-1610. Subscription rates: One year \$39 (U.S. and possessions), \$59 (Canada and Mexico) and \$89 (all other countries). Air expedited service is available in countries outside the U.S. and Canada for an additional \$75 per year. Current issue single copies (prepaid only) \$5 (U.S. and possessions), \$7 (Canada and Mexico) and \$8 (all other countries). Back issues (if available, prepaid only) \$10 (U.S. and possessions), \$14 (Canada and Mexico) and \$16 (all other countries); add \$6.50 per order shipping and handling for both current and back issue purchases. Periodicals postage paid at Duluth MN 55806 and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to GOLFDOM, P.O. Box 1268, Skokie, IL 60076-8268. Canadian G.S.T. Number: 840033278RT0001, Publications Mail Agreement number 40017597. Printed in the U.S.A.

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