



**WRECK-IT RALPH is a July, 2014 LVCA dvd donation to the Hugh Stoupe Memorial Library of the Heritage United Methodist Church of Ligonier, Pennsylvania. Below is Kino Ken's review of that dvd film.**

**10 of a possible 20 points**

**\*\*1/2 of a possible \*\*\*\*\***

**United States 2012 color 101 minutes feature animation  
fantasy Walt Disney Productions Producers: Clark Spencer,  
Monica Lago-Kaytis**

**Key: \*indicates outstanding technical achievement or  
performance**

**Points:**

- Direction: Rich Moore**
- 0 Editing: Tim Mertens**
- 1 Camera: Thomas Baker**
- 0 Lighting: Adolph Lusinsky (Lighting Director);  
Philip Goldstein, Robert Miles, Jorge Obregon, Mark Siegel,  
Chris Springfield, Jennifer Yu (Lighting Supervisors)**
- 0 Screenplay: Phil Johnston, Jennifer Lee**
- Story: Rich Moore, Phil Johnston, Jim Reardon**
- 0 Music: Henry Jackman, Dominic Lewis**
- 2 Art Direction: Mike Gabriel\*, Ian Gooding\***
- 2 Animation: Renato Dos Arjos, Doug Bennett, Mark Mitchell,  
Zach Parrish, Tony Smeed (Supervising Animators)**
- 1 Sound: Gary Rydstrom, John Van Seggern (Supervisors),  
Ronald Roumas, Stephen Urata (Sound Recording),  
Tony Sereno, Kevin Bolen (Sound Mixers)**
- 2 Voices Cast: John C. Reilly (Wreck-It Ralph),  
Sarah Silverman\* (Vanellope Von Schweetz),**

**Jack McBrayer\* (Fix-It Felix), Jane Lynch\* (Calhoun), Alan Tudyk (King Candy / Turbo), Mindy Kaling (Taffyta Muttonfudge), Jo Lo Truglio (Markowski), Ed O'Neill (Mr. Litwak, arcade owner), Dennis Haysbert\* (General Hologram), Edie McLurg\* (Mary), Raymond Persi\* (Gene / Zombie), Jess Harnell (Don), Rachael Harris (Deanna), Skylar Astin (Roy), Adam Carolla (Wynchell), Horatio Sanz (Duncan), Maurice LeMarche\* (Root Beer Tapper), Stephanie Scott (Moppet Girl), John DiMaggio (Beard Papa), Rich Moore\* (Sour Bill), Katie Lowes (Candlehead, girl racer), Jamie Elman (Rancie Fluggerbutter, girl racer), Josie Trinidad (Jubileena Bing Bing, girl racer), Cyndre Walk (Crumbelina de Caramello, girl racer), Tucker Gilmore (Sugar Rush announcer and Glen the Turtle), Brandon Scott (Kohut, Calhoun's second-in-command), Tim Mertens (Brad), Kevin Deters (Clyde), Phil Johnston (Surge Protector), Roger Craig Smith (Sonic the Hedgehog), others**

**2 Creativity**

**10 total points**

**WRECK-IT RALPH, as the title clearly indicates, is a motion picture concerned mainly with destruction. Mayhem is present everywhere --- in an apartment building chronically pillaged by the film's protagonist, in malfunctioning arcade games, in demolition of pavements, wreckage of vehicles, nauseous stomachs, a smashed anniversary cake, squashed cupcakes, pulverized vehicles, ripped finish line banner --- the list could be even further extended. If all this devastation were humorous it might be forgiven. Too often it's presented as accidental, mundane, vindictive, or perversely thrilling. Add excessive toilet**

humor and the result is a movie Walt Disney executives should feel ashamed to foist off on as public entertainment.

The plot concerns an anthropomorphized King Kong who desires recognition and love. In opening scenes, viewers discover he receives neither from co-workers and friends. He's a cinematic orphan and loner with no visible relatives, romantic interests, mentors, children, or friendly co-destructionists.

Leading a repetitive, unrewarding, addictive life consisting solely of deconstruction, daily trips to the taproom after work to share woes with unsupportive root beer publican, and uncomfortable sleep in a makeshift home scooped out of trash heap discards, Ralph dreams of converting himself from shunned, smelly pariah to admired civic hero. Earning such respect is never seriously considered. Stealing it through fraud, camouflage and expropriation is more Ralph's style. Given unwillingness to conform with accepted social norms, lying and cheating are not only credible resorts for the protagonist, they also serve as trademark behaviors.

No role model for child viewers this guy.

Ralph is big, bullying, choleric, gloomy, selfish. Hardly an attractive personality to headline a children's film. By plot's conclusion, he is still enormous. Have his other negative traits suddenly vanished? Of course.

Following the stereotypical grump meets orphaned child storyline, acquaintance with tart sewer-mouth Vanellope von Schwartz, girl princess suffering from unmanageable hyperkineticism, opens his heart to compassion, altruism and buried latent paternal instincts. Since Vanellope is the most repulsive, cynical brat ever conceived by Disney studios, a monumental credibility problem emerges. Why would anyone in his right senses wish to aid the completely selfish quest for fame by a manipulative twerp such as Vanellope? Better not ask.

**Hero Ralph mugs what appears to be a special forces security soldier in order to enter himself in a game he's neither qualified nor warranted to play, Hero's Quest. Hey, if it sounds great, go for it. Despite abysmally inept combat performance, clearly revealing he cannot possibly be war veteran Markowski, Ralph passes unrecognized as an intruder by clichéd Sergeant Calhoun, whose knowledge of her personnel is dwarfed, or obscured, by hatred of cyberbugs. This being complete fantasy, Ralph bungles and cheats his way to a medal, making himself a hero in ornamentation only. Unable to overcome an attacking electronic monster he inadvertently hatches, Ralph and his adversary clamber aboard an escape pod and zoom erratically into another video game called Sugar Rush, a girl's snack-themed racing contest which touts caloric overload and premature tooth decay.**

**After a crash landing results in Ralph's medal getting snagged by a candy tree branch, accompanying cyberbug is tossed out into a swamp. Outsider Sugar Rush inhabitant Vanellope von Schweetz, perceives a potential slug to employ as payment for race entry. Gigantic intruder opponent and relatively midget girl scramble to recover it. Nimble Vanellope seizes her goal, then taunts the loser with a litany of insults, some of which resemble trash talk popular in basketball circles. Nonetheless, she needs a partner to construct a dragster. Ralph is in search of a route to respectability. If they pool their dubious talents, perhaps each can emerge a better person.**

**Cyberbug menace lurks under the surface and a human one above it. For King Candy, ruler at the moment of the monarchy of Sugar Rush, is monomaniac Turbo in disguise, relocated to a less challenging dominion. He has reprogrammed the realm's true governor, Princess Vanellope, whose prior role he electronically deleted from individual memories belonging to her subjects. She, too, suffers from engineered amnesia. Usurper Turbo does not want his victim crossing the finish line of Sugar Rush's auto race,**

for that would lead to abolition of glitching errors, restoration of memory, predictable revolt. So he makes a private deal with Ralph to return the visitor's medal in exchange for his wrecking Vanellope's racer, one Ralph grudgingly helped create.

Will Ralph accept this fiendish trade? Can Vanellope triumph against veteran racing champion Turbo? Does it matter?

This last question is the relevant one. Since neither lead character is invested with attractive personality, there's no reason for viewers to feel any emotional investment in them. Whether they win or lose a race is a matter of total indifference. Obstacles are presented mechanically, either easily vanquished, often by chance, or rendered harmless by inexplicable last-minute interventions from characters conveniently rushed into the limelight solely for such diversions of disaster.

Even more unintelligible is odd couple romantic pairing of reserved, puritanical Fix-It Felix with domineering, salty-tongued Calhoun. Felix isn't likely to be happy or lucky much longer. Consider the fate of Calhoun's first fiancé, devoured at the altar on his wedding day by a gatecrashing cyberbug while stunned bride watched in horror.

A conventional underdog success film builds sympathy slowly for its protagonist by showing incrementally his or her humanity, simultaneously spotlighting misjudgements by surrounding characters who wrongly assume superior integrity and worthiness. Here, twinned underdogs quickly and accurately are portrayed as repugnant losers, by no means undervalued by anyone. Ralph cannot even anchor himself in a self-help group of career villains. He and Vanella are so far outside the limits of any society that only an insane adversary, King Candy / Turbo can make them endurable by contrast. Reasonable pessimism will crush irrational tyranny every time when put to a vote.

Assets of the picture include unique, quirky voices, particularly those of Jack McBrayer as Fix-It Felix, Jane Lynch as voluble,

**barking Calhoun, Ed O'Neill as affable arcade owner Mr. Litwak, Dennis Haysbert as uberpatriot General Hologram, Edie McLurg as sweetly arbitrating Mary, Raymond Persi portraying sarcastic Don, and gratingly scratchy-toned Sarah Silverman as unlovable Vanellope von Schweetz.**

**Also praiseworthy are designs from the art department, convincingly reproducing video game trappings and icons.**

**Sadly, their achievements are diluted by terrible miscalculations in color gradings and matches by lighting technicians.**

**Sound is often reduced to conflicting mix ratios which insure garblings and miscalculated drop-offs into inaudibles or mumblings.**

**Uninspiring, insipid music composed by Henry Jackman and Dominic Lewis does nothing to enrich the movie. It's as hurried, overbearing and empty of content as many of the flashy visuals, which disappear too quickly for observers to inspect.**

**Most character movement, aside from glitches permitted by overindulgent scripting, is handled with finely calculated expertise, successfully aping nature.**

**As evident from remarks above, WRECK-IT RALPH'S dialogue indecisively teeters back and forth between adult standup comedy putdowns and juvenile retorts, too many of which belong to the copycatting response category. A plot threadbare with overuse, despite its unfamiliar setting, hardly justifies revival. What creativity is present traces positively only to scenery and vocal singularities.**

**The dvd version offered is marred by sputterings of projected images and recorded sound at several points. Whether these originated in the studio or developed as a result of ineptitude in video transfer is unclear.**

**WRECK-IT RALPH** has too many liabilities to be recommended by Kino Ken to potential audiences. Those who enjoy auto racing animations are encouraged to investigate Norway's **PINCHCLIFFE GRAND PRIX**, a more pleasant and accomplished alternative containing less repulsive characters. The picture reviewed above has no discernible virtues to commend it as satisfactory adult entertainment. There are better, more socially affirmative animated films to acquaint youngsters with. Use the **LVCA** web site and its recommendations to ferret them out instead of wasting time with this Blu-ray / dvd combo pack release from Disney.