

Lucas launches 'Star Wars' here

Not far, far away -- at the Museum of Science & Industry

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For **George Lucas**, the best thing about having created the "Star Wars" phenomenon is knowing that the film franchise has inspired the imaginations of millions. "That's one of the reasons why I went into it in the first place," Lucas -- here to support the opening of the "Star Wars" exhibit at the Museum of Science & Industry -- told me Friday night.

Joined by museum board member **Melody Hobson** (a key reason Lucas was lured to town for this past weekend's festivities), the iconic filmmaker said he loves the fact that "so many adults will tell me, 'Star Wars' changed my life.' It's what got me into the film business. ... That goes for everyone from filmmakers I respect, to astronauts, to all kinds of businessmen -- and even to politicians."

•• As for the long-expected TV versions of "Star Wars," Lucas told me, "I'm working on the live-action show, and the first season of the animated series is just about finished and hopefully will be out by the end of next year. It's called 'The Clone Wars,' and is about what takes place between Episode 2 and Episode 3. It's a dramatic series -- even though it's animated -- but still has humor and a lot of excitement."

•• Asked about his upcoming fourth "Indiana Jones," Lucas was far more reticent, only admitting he's about to join director **Steven Spielberg** for the final week of filming. "I won't spoil the surprise for you -- like I wouldn't tell you about your Christmas presents in advance," quipped Lucas. "Though in this case, Christmas will come early for 2008 -- you'll only have to wait until May [when "Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull" opens]."

•• As for Lucas' relationship with the brainy Hobson, president of Chicago-based Ariel Capital Management and regular financial contributor to "Good Morning America," all is well. "Things couldn't be better," said Hobson with a big smile Friday night.

TAKE A 'LOOK': A bit of Hollywood hit Our Town Friday, as "Heroes" star **Ali Larter** joined boyfriend **Hayes MacArthur** for the Chicago International Film Festival premiere of "Look," Chicagoan (and longtime MacArthur pal) **Adam Rifkin's** intriguing new film told entirely from the vantage point of surveillance cameras. MacArthur co-stars in the film, but his many graphic sex scenes in the flick made his mom, **Shelley Farley**, "very nervous, to say the least. It sure is a lot different than 'The Game Plan!'" laughed Farley, referring to her son's role as a dumb pro football player in Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson's new Disney comedy.

Before the festival screening of "Look" at AMC River East 21, Farley and husband, Bill, hosted a special reception at their East Lake Shore Drive home for Rifkin's alma mater, the Chicago Academy for the Arts -- where Larter laughed about her current Cosmopolitan cover story.

"I learned a lesson from that -- I've got to be a bit more careful when I talk to reporters," joked Larter, giving *this* reporter a big wink. She was talking about being very candid with Cosmo about her relationship with MacArthur.

While there's no engagement -- yet -- the way these two young people look at each other, I'll bet that may not be far off.

•• In the meantime, Larter continues with her hit NBC series, calling her "Heroes" gig "the best job in television." ... Speaking of NBC, MacArthur has sold the Peacock Network a pitch for a new sitcom. Still untitled, the show would be about two twentysomething guys whose recently divorced father moves in with them. "Now *that* storyline makes me a little nervous," joked **Bruce MacArthur** -- father to both Hayes and **Scott MacArthur**, who recently has moved to L.A. and started acting himself.

There's a reason the senior MacArthur is a bit worried. His two sons actually do live together in Hollywood now -- and likely will star in this new NBC project.