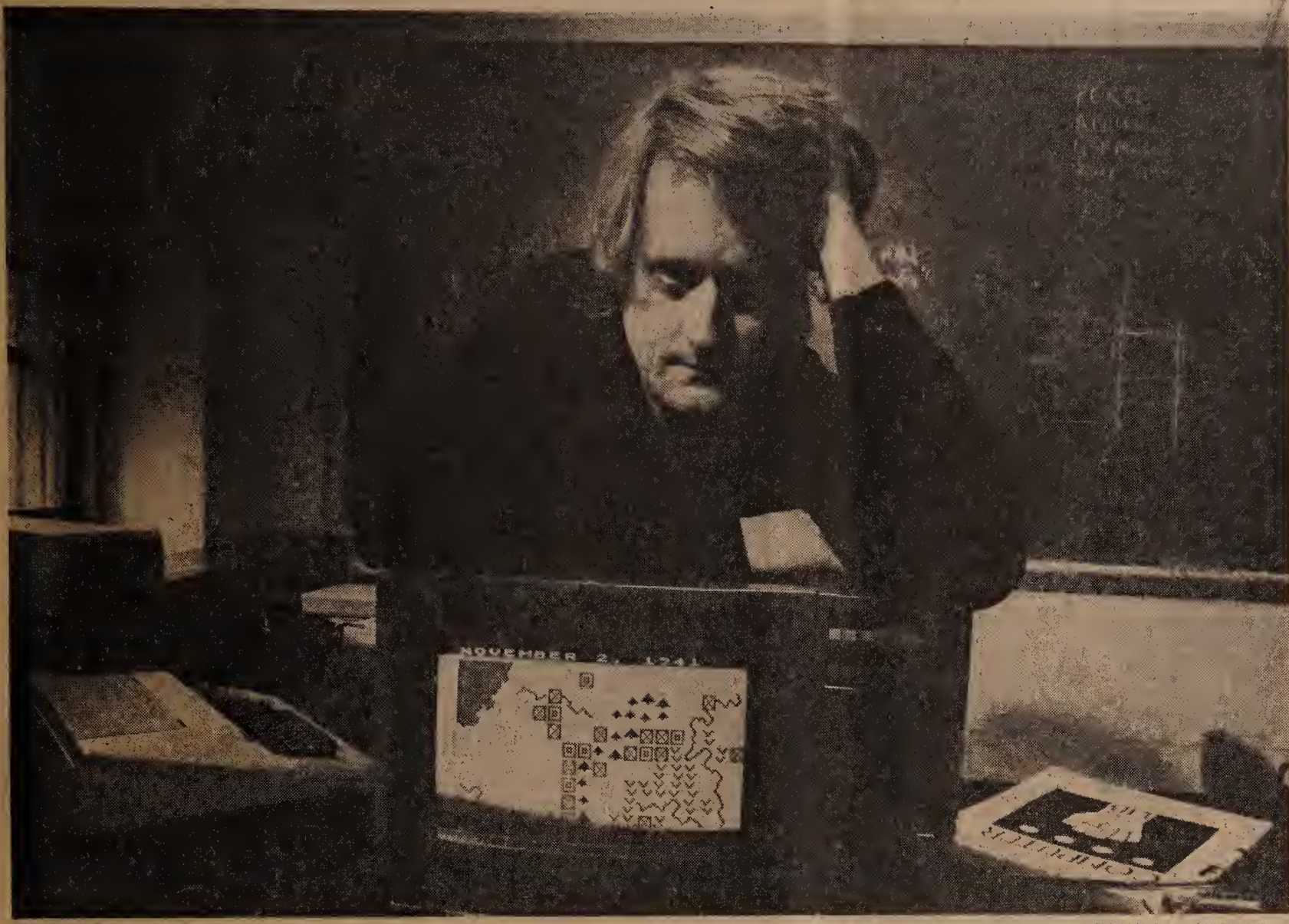


## 'Rogue intellectual'



A game is displayed by Ted Nelson on the computer that he is using to develop a program to help teach trigonometry at Swarthmore

Philadelphia Inquirer / MYRNA LUDWIG

## His McDonald's would be a fast-feed computer network

In *Xanadu* did Kubla Khan  
A stately pleasure dome decree:  
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran  
Through caverns measureless to man...  
— Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 1798

By Dick Pothier  
Inquirer Staff Writer

Ted Nelson of Swarthmore is regarded by some as a semi-mad computer genius, and by himself as a "rogue intellectual." What he plans to do, basically, is to take you to his kind of Xanadu.

And he wants to take you there with a computer — more precisely, a nationwide, mass-access network of computer "dream machines" called Project Xanadu.

Nelson, 44, has been planning and scheming and working on Project Xanadu for more than 20 years. (He has also been, in some of those years, a computer consultant to organizations as diverse as the CIA and Walt Disney Studios.)

Nelson, son of actress Celeste Holm and

### Americana

director Ralph Nelson (*Lilies of the Field*, *Charly*, *Requiem for a Heavyweight*), says he is often asked why he is not in show business.

"Some people think I am in show business," he answers. "Computers, as millions of kids know, can be highly entertaining."

One problem he faces is that his dream, Project Xanadu, is so different from anything else in the world that it's hard to explain it.

But Nelson, who graduated from Swarthmore College in 1959 and has been a Swarthmore consultant and familiar figure around the campus ever since, never stops trying. He often uses cryptic aphorisms:

"If computers are the wave of the future, computer displays are the surfboards."  
Or "The computer should be a Thinker-

toy, not the deep, dark, mysterious thing that computer 'technoids' make it out to be."

Xanadu, as he envisions it, will be a national network of computers, attached to big-screen, TV-like displays that will contain not only most of the world's literature but also photographs, art, games, music, maps, comic books and just about anything else that can be put into words, pictures or sound.

Project Xanadu would be accessible through home computers, or through a nationwide series of franchised "SilverStands," futuristic, comfortable, pleasant Xanadu centers that could one day be as common, Nelson hopes, as McDonald's restaurants.

Nelson says that Xanadu could replace the written word for millions of Americans and give those same users access to worlds of entertainment, communication, art and literature that they never could reach on their own.

In Xanadu, priceless family photographs could be stored and recalled instantly or transmitted to an uncle in California. The layers of a 3-D drawing of a dinosaur could be removed one by one, until just the skeleton remained.

The control panel could "zoom" in one section of a great painting. In fact, the contents of the world's museums could be seen in three-dimensional, big-screen images. Electronic mail could be sent instantly to anyone in America. Someone could even "fly" over the globe, with a Superman's-eye view of the earth below.

And while doing all this, lunch could be ordered on the computer and a SilverStand waiter would deliver it.

As crazy as all of this may sound, the computer programs that would underlie Project Xanadu already exist and will soon be ready to be marketed to some business and home-computer users, Nelson says.

Is Ted Nelson for real? Or is he one of (See XANADU on 3-F)

### Newsmakers

## Wales has both boos and bravos for royalty

A mixed reception — stink bombs and bouquets of flowers — greeted Prince Charles and Diana, princess of Wales yesterday as they began a state visit to Wales. The royal couple was greeted in the nationalist stronghold of Bangor with flowers from flag-waving well-wishers and with stink bombs from Welsh nationalists shouting, "Go home, English prince." Demonstrators scuffled with police and shook metal barricades as Charles and Diana greeted crowds a few yards away. Four protesters were seen being carried away by officers as police and agents of Scotland Yard's Special Branch moved in to protect the royal couple. There was no official word on arrests or injuries.

Earlier, as the prince and princess arrived at Caernarvon Castle, where Charles was installed in 1969 as prince of Wales, a woman leaped from the crowd and sprayed white paint at the black limousine in which the royal couple were riding. Detectives quickly apprehended the woman, whom they did not identify. No motive for the attack was disclosed, but Caernarvon is also a center of Welsh nationalist spirit. Security was tight along the royal couple's route through Wales. Sharpshooters from police anti-terrorist units and the British Army's crack Special Air Service regiment were stationed on rooftops. The day before, an IRA bomb killed a man in London and an incendiary device was discovered in Wales near where the royal couple will appear tomorrow.

### Different Hollywood

Ginger Rogers, 70, winner of a 1940 Academy Award and silver screen partner of Fred Astaire, doesn't like today's movies because they have too much violence, sex and profanity. "I have been offered many film scripts," she said while visiting Cleveland, "but I never found one I could accept. They emphasize permissiveness and violence and dialogue I wouldn't repeat. ..." She recalled actor Ronald Reagan. "In 1950, he and I co-starred in a film called *Storm Warning*, and I found then that he always gives everything he has to what he's doing. Last March I was a guest at the Gridiron Club dinner in Washington. President Reagan was the last speaker. During his speech, he looked at me on the dais and said: 'Ginger Rogers, I'm glad you're here here tonight. You and I appeared together in the film *Storm Warning*, and I never knew what the title meant until I met Tip O'Neill.'"

### Ousted directors

Pamela Mason, 65, ex-wife of actor James Mason, and her son, who is a special adviser to President Reagan, were ousted Monday from the board of directors of Illingworth Morris, an English textile manufacturing group founded by her father. Loud cheers and applause rang out as the firm's shareholders voted to oust Mrs. Mason and her son, Morgan Mason, 31, a special assistant for political affairs for the President. The move came at a shareholders' meeting at company headquarters in Shipley, England, and followed a bitter two-year boardroom battle. Neither Mrs. Mason nor her son was there, but they were represented by lawyer Gerard Gent, who said afterward: "Mrs. Mason will be disappointed at the result." Mrs. Mason, who holds 46 percent of the company's voting shares, lives in Los Angeles and joined the board on the death of her father in 1976. She had tried unsuccessfully to fire chairman Donald Hanson and chief executive Peter Hardy because she was angry at company losses, which last year reached \$4.32 million. They countered by proposing that she and her son be removed from the board.

### 'Never remarry'

Several weeks before her husband, Anwar Sadat, was assassinated, Jihan Sadat said that she feared he would be killed and that she "would never remarry" if it happened. "But life is not only a man. Life is keeping busy, enjoying your time, then you will never be lonely," she said in an interview with a British magazine that was published yesterday.

### No contest

British actor Oliver Reed, who often plays the role of the tough guy, has made amends for the barroom brawl that resulted in his arrest earlier this month in the ski resort of Stowe, Vt. Reed, 43, who has played swashbuckling rogues in *The Four Musketeers* and *Lion of the Desert*, decided to change his not-guilty plea to no contest yesterday and pay a \$1,200 fine, lawyers said. Reed also made a \$1,000 donation to the Stowe Rescue Squad, an all-volunteer ambulance operation. "He likes the idea of a nice gesture, something that will help provide some service to the community," said his lawyer, Alan Thorndike.

— Bill Thompson

## 'Gallipoli' director: Story comes before message

By Jack Mathews  
Knight-Ridder News Service

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. — Australian director Peter Weir was on the ninth day and maybe the 20th interview of his two-week visit to the United States to promote his new film, *Gallipoli*, and though he was visibly exhausted, he hadn't lost his sense of humor.

"I was talking with this young American actress the other day and told her that what I wanted to tell was a great love story," said the soft-spoken Weir, as he slumped back in a patio chair at his Beverly Hills hotel.

"She said, 'Well, that's nice, but that's not my approach to my craft. I've got to take on roles that elevate the consciousness of my audience.' I thought that would make great material for Monty Python. I can see John Cleese holding up a measuring stick saying, 'We have a three-foot consciousness elevation today. Well done.'"

Weir, 34, isn't against elevating the consciousness of his audience, he just doesn't think that's the starting point of filmmaking. The starting point for him, and for most of the bright young Australian directors suddenly emerging as influential international filmmakers, is to tell a good story.

"I think you people here invented storytelling in films and have perhaps lost your way from time to time. We have a great advantage in a way because we have so many stories that haven't been told yet."

Until 1972, there was no Australian film industry to probe that country's rich social and political history, and until recently American audiences didn't even know that it had begun. But with the importation of such critically acclaimed films as *Breaker Morant*, *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith*, *The Getting of Wisdom* and *My Brilliant Career*, "Australian" has started to take on the meaning of quality.

### Interview

A hasty judgment, Weir says. "Believe me, there are more bad Australian movies being made than good ones. There have been 150 or so films made in the last eight years. What you've seen here is the cream of the crop.

Nevertheless, the fledgling Australian industry is rapidly gaining respect. The American distribution companies — air-traffic controllers of the world's film supply — are taking a long look at films being made Down Under.

Weir's \$3 million *Gallipoli*, the most expensive Australian film, is the first to connect with a U.S. distributor. Paramount Pictures is giving it major-movie treatment, having opened it in prestige theaters in New York, Los Angeles and Toronto before sending it on its way into wide release.

*Gallipoli* is a five-years-in-the-making departure for Weir. In his previous films, *Picnic at Hanging Rock* and *The Last Wave*, he experimented with a lot of surrealistic tricks. In this one, it's a bare-bones narrative drama, using the friendship between two Australian youths to tell the story of an ill-fated British-Australian-New Zealand assault on the Turkish coast in 1915.

Australia and New Zealand, which had a combined expeditionary force, the Anzacs, were the only combatants in World War I with an all-volunteer force, and lost 60,000 men. Weir says he thinks they were a special kind of man, and that belief is both the reason for and the focus for the movie.

"They say Gallipoli was the birth of the nation, and every April 25 we celebrate 'Anzac Day' — the day of the landing at Gallipoli. I've always wondered how a nation can be born in a bloody and hopeless battle that

cost it so many of its best people."

Weir said he set out to do a movie about the kind of Australian men at Gallipoli, but after interviewing surviving veterans, studying historical documents and letters and recreating the battle, he and writer David Williamson realized they were preparing a documentary.

"We were really burdened with factual material, so we said, 'Let's get back to the trade we know as storytellers and find a story that can work independently from the war, that could have gone on to some other setting.' Having done that, we put the war back in."

Like *Breaker Morant*, which had parallels with the My Lai incident, *Gallipoli* issues echoes of Vietnam. It is a story about men committed to abstract ideals fighting unknown enemies for vague reasons in a land thousands of miles from home.

Weir admits his own feelings about Vietnam influenced his interest in examining the mythology of Gallipoli. He said he was part of a strong Australian Vietnam protest movement and it would have been difficult to come out of that without wanting to examine his own country's myths.

"I didn't set out to do an anti-war film as such," he said, "partly because everybody is anti-war these days — even the bad guys. But I also think some wars are necessary. I wouldn't have been a pacifist during World War II."

Weir, who had planned to go into his father's real estate business until a 1966 tour of Europe opened him up to other interests, said he and other Australian filmmakers may be emphasizing content over style because they're still learning.

"Growing up, I had no concept of filmmaking... There were great film festivals and things like that and I always enjoyed them. I just grew up on Saturday afternoon flicks like everybody else."



Special to The Inquirer / CON KEYES

Australian Peter Weir: He makes high art Down Under

