Headline: ‘A Christmas Story House & Museum’ raises spirits

Deckhead: Setting of the classic film brings to life Ralphie and his family

The cult-hit film “A Christmas Story” holds a special place in the hearts of millions of fans who eagerly await Christmas Eve to watch their favorite holiday movie.

The tradition dates nearly three decades and it grows each year. Unforgettable characters and storylines make it one of the best holiday movies of all-time.

Ralphie is determined to get a Red Ryder BB gun for Christmas – even if he’ll “shoot his eye out.” The Old Man curses “the way other artists might work in oils or clay.” And poor Randy is bundled up so tightly for school that he can’t put down his arms.

It truly is an original. It’s unknown the last time Mother Parker had eaten a warm meal. The Old Man comes to life once his “major award” arrives. And Scut Farkus – “what a rotten name” – is a villain unlike any other, staring devilishly with his “yellow eyes.”

The hidden gem, however, is the Parker home. The coaldust-spewing domicile is intimate and old-fashioned. Spigots are built into the walls of the kitchen sink. The radio plays “Little Orphan Annie” and the family makes fond memories inside this humble house.

Fans can learn more about the home by visiting it. The “A Christmas Story House & Museum” is located in Cleveland and is open year-round, seven days a week for public tours and overnight stays are an option.

The Bumpus House, too, is open for overnight stays. Located to the left of the A Christmas Story House, it’s the fictional home of Ralphie’s unruly neighbors and their 785 smelly hound dogs. It has a pair of accommodations: The “Hound Dog Haven” that can accommodate four guests and the “Stolen Turkey” suite that can house as many six guests.

The museum features original props, costumes and memorabilia from the film, as well as hundreds of rare behind-the-scenes photos. Among the props and costumes are the toys from the Higbee’s window, Randy’s snowsuit, the chalkboard in Miss Shields’ classroom and the family car.

And don’t forget about the “major award.” The legendary leg lamp sits in the front window, illuminating “electric …”

Purchase mementos at the museum gift shop. Take home your electric leg lamp or Ralphie’s bunny suit. Figurines, decoder pins and replicas of the Parker tree star also are available – and so is the Red Ryder BB gun.

A visit is a step back in time – to a simpler place. It offers fans an up-close viewing and an opportunity to learn more about the film. It also should inject a burst of holiday spirit – no matter the time of the year.

Spend a long weekend or just make a day of it. “A Christmas Story House & Museum” is well worth the trip.

And don’t forget: Never put your tongue on a flag pole during the winter months.

Cutline: STORY TIME – Fans can visit the house from the classic holiday hit “A Christmas Story” in Cleveland. Image: A Christmas Story House & Museum.