



SOUTH CENTRAL STATES BULLETIN

FALL
2009

Louisiana Association of Theatre Operators • National Association of Theatre Owners of Oklahoma
National Association of Theatre Owners of Texas • National Association of Theatre Owners of Arkansas



Industry Statistics Provide Optimistic Picture

By Patrick Corcoran

National NATO Director of Media & Research

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Two months into the summer season the movie theater industry is continuing the remarkable performance that began last summer.

As of July 9, box office was running 10.6% ahead of 2008 on a calendar basis and admissions were running 7.1% ahead. Let's take a look at how we got here. (See Slide 1)

The story of the year has been the stunning over-performance of the winter box office. (See Slide 2). In the first three months of 2008, only one film opened that grossed more than \$100 million. Through the first week of April 2009 five \$100 million-plus grossing films had opened. Additionally, two films that were released in December 2008,

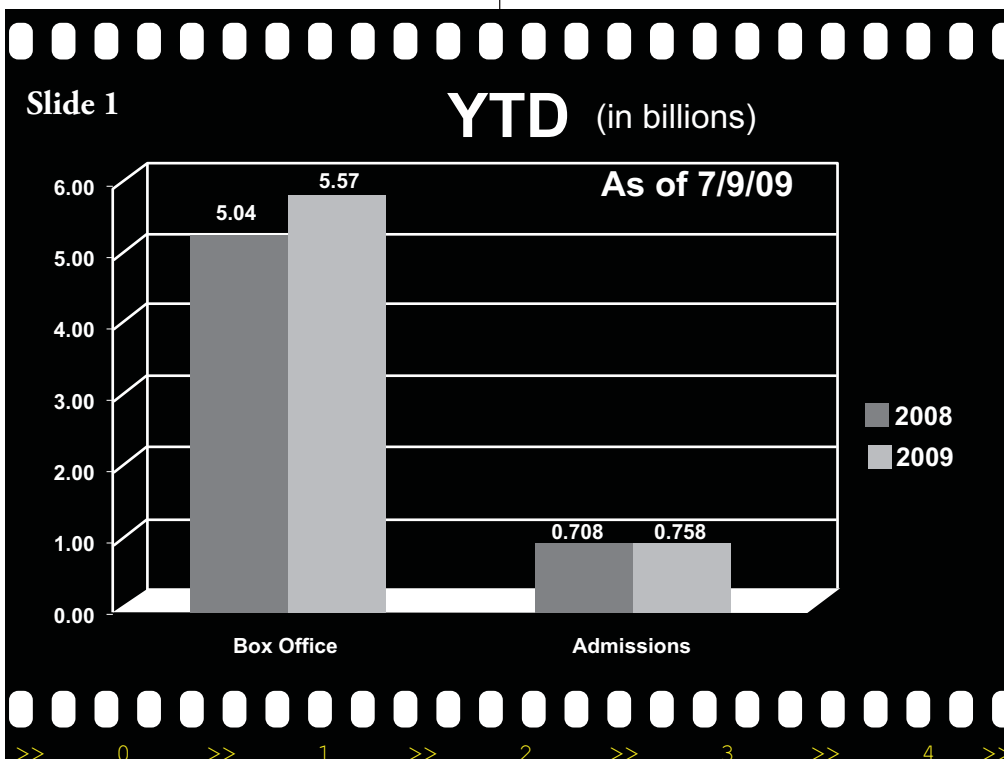
Slumdog Millionaire and Gran Torino, grossed more than \$100 million in 2009. Gran Torino grossed more than \$100 million in January alone. Traditionally a dumping ground for films the studios had little faith in, in 2009 the winter turned into a mini summer.

The economy seems to have something to do with it, too. From the third week of September 2008, when the credit crunch hit with full force, through the first week of December box office was running 15% ahead of the same period the year before and admissions were up nearly 10%.

Following a brief lull before Christmas, box office continued on its torrid pace right through the current summer. Aside from more

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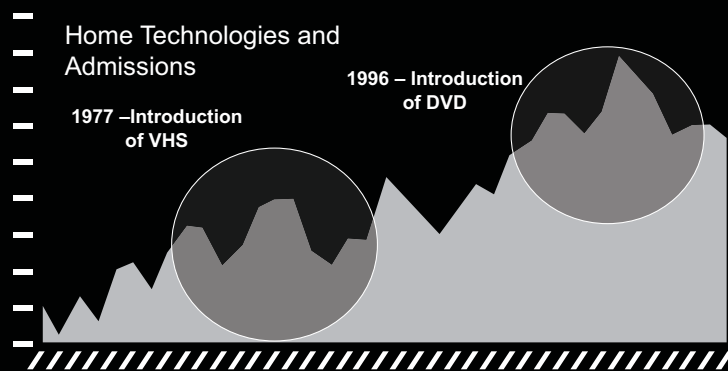
What Season is This?

2009 Releases				2008 Releases			
Release Date	Title	Distributor	Gross (as of 4/19/09)	Release Date	Title	Distributor	Gross (full run)
3/27/2009	Monsters vs. Aliens	Paramount	\$163,063,465	3/14/2008	Horton Hears A Who	20th Century Fox	\$154,529,439
1/16/2009	Paul Blart Mall Cop	Sony	\$144,689,133	3/7/2008	10,000 B.C.	Warner Bros.	\$94,784,201
1/30/2009	Taken	20th Century Fox	\$142,088,804	3/28/2008	21	Sony	\$81,159,365
4/3/2009	Fast & Furious	Universal	\$136,205,795	2/14/2008	Jumper	20th Century Fox	\$80,172,128
3/6/2009	Watchmen	Warner Bros.	\$106,848,750	1/18/2008	Cloverfield	Paramount	\$80,048,433
2/6/2009	He's Just Not That Into You	Warner Bros.	\$93,409,454	1/18/2008	27 Dresses	20th Century Fox	\$76,808,654
2/20/2009	Tyler Perry's Madea Goes To Jail	Lionsgate	\$90,485,233	2/22/2008	Vantage Point	Sony	\$72,266,306
2/6/2009	Coraline	Focus Features	\$74,800,029	2/14/2008	Spiderwick Chronicles, The	Paramount	\$71,195,053
3/20/2009	Knowing	Paramount	\$73,795,283	2/8/2008	Fool's Gold	Warner Bros.	\$70,231,041
1/16/2009	Hotel For Dogs	Summit Entertainment	\$72,354,570	2/1/2008	Hannah Montana/Miley Cyrus: Concert Tour	Disney	\$65,281,781
			\$1,097,740,516				\$846,476,401

SLIDE 3

Slide 3

39 Years of Admissions



compelling films, particularly in the fall of 2008, a major reason that box office has proved resilient is that movie theatres remain the least expensive form of out of home entertainment.

Nothing could make the case more clearly than the performance of home video during the same period. In 2008, DVD revenues dropped nearly 9%. People plan their home entertainment and out of home entertainment budgets separately. The price of a movie ticket is compared to other out of home entertainment; DVDs are compared to other things people can do with their at home time. Video rentals are up. Netflix streaming (a no cost add-on to existing subscriptions) is up.

Home entertainment has never been the competition. (*See Slide 3*) In the ten years following the introduction of VHS in 1977, admissions (the number of tickets sold) reached two separate peaks followed by troughs before peaking again and continuing on a fairly steady upward trend. In the eight years following the introduction of DVDs, two nearly identical peaks occurred, culminating in a modern admissions record in 2002.

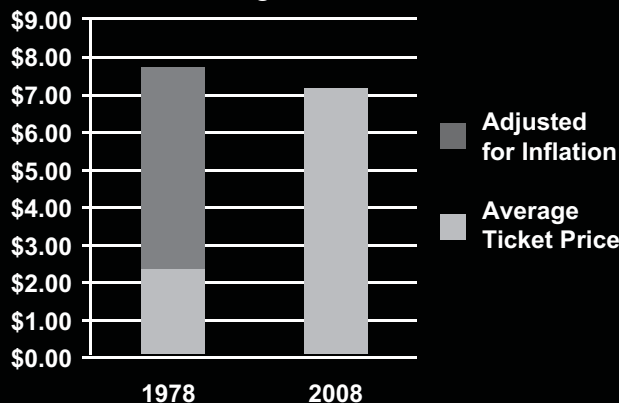
The fact that, adjusted for inflation, the average movie ticket price is less expensive than it was thirty years ago (*See Slide 4*) also drives home the value proposition that movie theatres offer at all times, but never more clearly than when consumers are pinching pennies. The \$2.34 average movie ticket in 1978 would cost \$7.73 in 2008 dollars – over 50 cents more than the 2008 average of \$7.18.

Mr. Corcoran's entire Membership Meeting Power Point Presentation, which has been updated through July 9th, can be found in the Seminars and Meetings section of our website, www.NATOCaINev.org.

SLIDE 4

Slide 4

Average Ticket Price





CLAPBOARD

11th Annual Cine'Show Moves Back to "Big D" for an Educational Experience

By **Rein Rabakukk**

Executive Director of South Central States NATO

By the time you read these words, schools will be open again and your box office probably will have cooled down by a couple degrees, resulting in some free time that will allow you to complete and mail in your registration for CinéShow in Dallas (Addison) on September 29 – October 1. If you cannot locate the brochure/registration form you received, there are several ways we can quickly have another in your hands.

CinéShow now has a website, naticineshow.org, where you can print out a copy, or you can e-mail requesting a copy, scnato@earthlink.net. Of course, general standby format of communication - a simple phone call to 817/226-1690 – will produce the same results.

Our convention format for 2009 remains basically unchanged from the past few years. Tuesday evening there will be a welcome casino party with possible prizes for those lucky gamers with any play money left. Your regular attendees will remember the format from 2006 and 2007 conventions at the Doubletree Hotel in North Dallas.

Wednesday a.m. will be film company presentations at the Movie Grill Prestonwood in Addison. Also, Kevin Casey, MPAA Anti-Piracy Operations, will present information on new technology used to detect camcording, highlights of some of significant cases, and the best practices in dealing with camcording in your theatres. Again, all of you "old timers" will be familiar with this theatre, as we have used it for our film presentations numerous times before.

Wednesday's luncheon, sponsored jointly by BARCO Digital Cinema & Texas Instruments DLP Cinema, will showcase a special announcement by BARCO and this year's keynote speaker, G. Kendrick Macdowell, NATO Vice-president, General Counsel & Director of Government Affairs. With a new administration in Washington, DC, much has happened. This will make Kendrick's report most interesting to us all.

Wednesday afternoon at the Crowne Plaza Hotel we have three seminars scheduled. To lead off, Larry Etter, Vice-President, Concessions, Malco Theatres will present "Concessions Promotions & Incentives in a Down Economy." It is more important than ever to capture concessions revenue from as many customers as possible. Larry will discuss ways to promote sales through contests, incentives, suggestive sales, new product promotions, and other activities to market your product.

Larry will be followed by Stan Reynolds, Vice-President of Reynolds & Reynolds, who will cover the pitfalls of accident claims. How the process really works and how you can survive after a claim. Also, disaster plans. Do you have one?

And batting clean up will be Steve Zuehlke, Vice President, Operations, Cinemark USA, whose subject will be "Green Screen – Practical Environmentalism." Simple steps, cost effective, yet

impactful – both for the environment and the bottom line – theatres can take. This program undertaken by a theatre can become a goodwill public relations bonanza in your community.

Wednesday evening is the usual trade show offering refreshments, hors d'oeuvres and cash prizes for lucky attendees. This is the time for vendors and theatre owners/managers to meet, socialize and learn of new products and services offered.

Thursday morning early is the time for member states to have their membership meetings. A board meeting also has been tentatively set for Arkansas, Louisiana & Oklahoma.

In conclusion, let me alert you that you must make your room reservations before September 11 to receive the special room rate of \$149.00 established for the convention attendees.

Hopefully you all enjoyed the fruits of the summer season at your box offices and we can expect to greet you in person at CinéShow 2009 in Dallas on September 29. 🎬



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Spotlight on... DON SNYDER

Celebrating 60 years

(In a continuing series, the SCS Bulletin is proud to feature a business profile on one of its honorable members. If you would like to recommend a member to be profiled, don't hesitate to throw a name in the hat. All votes remain confidential. Please email the editor at your convenience.)

How did you get your start in the theatre biz?

My very first theatre was the Lyric Theatre in Big Spring. I started there in 1950. I was 15 and I thought it would be a good summer job. I trained as a projectionist. In those days we had to train for 500 hours but after only 300, my boss got drafted into the Army, and at only 15 I inherited the Lyric booth. I never sold a bar of candy. The only connection I had with the concession was the candy girl. I worked for J.Y. Robb at that time and when his son Ike returned from college, he took over the Big Spring theatres. They closed the Lyric in 1955 and I was transferred to the Jet D/I until I joined the Army in 1957. I thought my (career in) show business was at an end but when I reported to my new base in Germany I took over the theatre.

What was the progression of your theatre career?

After my release I went back to Big Spring and after a few years I joined Frontier Theatres and took over the big indoor theatre and drive-in in Crane, TX. After a couple of years, United Artists called and asked me to come to Dallas. I managed the Hampton Road D/I and the Texas Theatre in Oak Cliff. John Rowley, who was a good friend wanted me to transfer to Sweetwater to manage the Texas Theatre, the Rocket and the Midway D/I. After living in Dallas the thought of moving to Sweetwater was like a nightmare, but as a favor I took the trek back to West Texas. After the longest nine year of my life, John Rowley asked me to take over a brand new six-plex in Abilene. In 1979, I moved to Abilene and the six-plex grew into an eight-screen and then a 10. I just celebrated 30 years in Abilene.

What is your favorite memory / best theatre experience?

As I look back over the last 60 years, my favorite memory was all the changes that started in 1952. I ran the first 3D movie (BWANA DEVIL), the first Cinemascope movie (THE ROBE) and the first stereo movie. It was an exciting time to be in the business. We didn't just open the box office and sell tickets, we had stage shows, midnight shows and sneak previews which were REALLY sneak previews.



Don Snyder circa 1951.
A young lad working at the Lyric Theatre in Big Spring, Texas.



Present day Don Snyder,
Managing Director at the Premiere 10 - Abilene, Texas.

NAME: Don Snyder

HOMETOWN: Born in Ranger, Texas but I call Big Spring my hometown

CURRENT POSITION: Managing Director – Premiere Cinema 10 in Abilene, TX

NUMBER OF YEARS IN THE BIZ: 60

THEATRE LINEAGE: The Lyric – Big Spring, TX; Jet Drive-In – Big Spring, TX; Indoor and Drive-In - Crane, TX; Hampton Road Drive-In – Dallas; Texas Theatre – Oak Cliff; Texas Theatre, Rocket and Midway Drive-In – Sweetwater, TX; UA Cinema 6 – Abilene, TX

60 years is a long time. Have you met many stars? Who is your favorite movie star?

The very first actor I worked with was old Gabby Hayes from Republic studios. I watched make-up being applied to Glenn Strange, who played the Frankenstein monster in the later Universal pictures. I hung out with my favorite cowboy hero, Wild Bill Elliot. But of all the movie stars I met, the best was Ben Johnson and Harry Carey Jr. who we brought to Abilene for a film festival.

What is your favorite all-time movie?

My favorite movie is the MGM classic SCARAMOUCHE, which came out in 1952. I still watch it on DVD. It starred Stewart Granger, Eleanor Parker and Janet Leigh.

What is your favorite concession items and why?

I hate to admit it, but after smelling popcorn popping since I was 15, the concession does little to turn me on. But I love to see the customers line up to get that tasty treat.

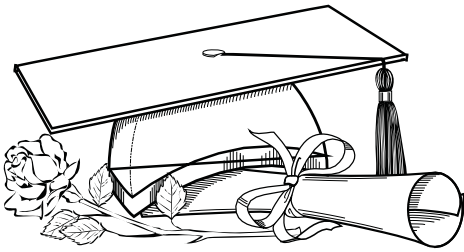
Is retirement a part of your plan or are you hooked for life in the biz?

Retirement hasn't entered my mind yet. We have a really sweet theatre in Abilene, and since Premiere bought us out six years ago, and did a complete upgrade with stadium seating, it has kept me all the more interested. Three months ago we went 100% digital. Just like Cinemascope 56 years ago, we have a new toy to play with. 🎬

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 10TH ANNUAL CINE'SHOW 2008

Cine Show 2008





2009 SCS NATO SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS OFFER ADVICE ON MAINTAINING BOFFO BOX OFFICE BIZ POST RECESSION

When you're rolling in the long green it's easy to lose sight of reality. Or as your stockbroker would tell you, "Don't confuse brains with a bull market." It's true. While other businesses have been sinking, the theatre biz has been swimming the English Chanel like a lap pool. Recession-proof we are, but what happens when the party ends. Our scholarship winners offer suggestions to keep the customers coming back when times get tough.

Myia McBride of Arkansas sticks to the basics. "A clean environment, nice and polite customer service, and a pleasant atmosphere in the auditorium are essential factors in keeping the customer content and willing to come back again."

How true. Natalie Woody from Conway, Arkansas believes food-and-film tie-ins are a way to keep some heat in the seats. "Selling doughnuts for a police film or 'blood-red' slushies for the TWILIGHT series are just the beginning for operational ideas."

Other scholarship winners think the way to gain customer loyalty and repeat business is through their wallet. Jacob Broussard of Louisiana says "theatres should advertise combos that families can purchase to make it cheaper on their pocket-book."

As a life-long employee of the Beacon Drive-In in Guthrie, Oklahoma, Robert Powell has a novel approach to keeping his customer base. "We have an area at our theatre that we will let groups book for cookouts. We provide the grill, tables and chairs. You would think this would hurt our concession sales, but most people are ready for popcorn and candy by movietime."

Promotions, promotions and more promotions were a recurring theme in many essays. Nathan Gentry of Plano thinks a Frequent Movie Watcher Card especially for "Tweens" will entice that age group to attend more often. Lorenzo Rubio of El Paso wants to use a reward system for customers where "every 100th ticket sold every day would result in a free popcorn or movie pass."

Finally, Michelle Clark believes her Cinemark theatre in College Station has already found a way to keep the Aggie customer excited about the movies. "We accommodate the college football team before every home football game: A unique appeal to 150 celebrities, who not only become loyal patrons but also provide a surprise treat for other guests in the theatre when the players arrive."

South Central States NATO is proud to introduce the 2009 Scholarship winners. Many thanks to all the applicants and their excellent essays.



Myia Joy McBride



Natalie Woody



Jacob Broussard



Sara Maxwell



Robert Powell

NATO OF ARKANSAS (\$500 per recipient)

Name: Myia Joy McBride

Theatre: Rave Colonel Glen 18 – Little Rock, AR

College: Henderson State University

Educational Goal: I am entering this fall with an undecided major because my interests vary. While I have an interest in law, I am also interested in medicine. Through my work experience at the movie theatre, I have further gained a sense of drive, hard work and self-discipline.

Name: Natalie Woody

Theatre: Cinemark 6 – Conway, AR

College: Arkansas Tech University

Educational Goal: As an incoming freshman, my major is currently undecided. I am leaning toward fashion and design. I also plan to at least minor in business.

LOUISIANA ASSOCIATION OF THEATRE OWNERS (\$500 per recipient)

Name: Jacob Broussard **Repeat Winner**

Theatre: Celebrity Theatre/Broussard

College: Univ of Louisiana at Lafayette

Educational Goal: I am majoring in Athletic Training. In the fall, I will begin my fourth year of college and second semester of clinicals. I currently have a 3.49 GPA and have been a Dean's List recipient for three straight years. After graduation, I plan on obtaining my certification in Athletic Training and then become employed by a local area high school.

NATO OF OKLAHOMA (\$500 per recipient)

Name: Sara Maxwell **Repeat Winner**

Theatre: Cinema Centre 8 / Shawnee

College: University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond

Educational Goal: I am a senior majoring in Psychology with a minor in History. Once I graduate, I will go on to get my Masters in either School Psychology or Counseling Psychology.

Name: Robert Powell **Repeat Winner**

Theatre: Beacon D/I – Guthrie, OK

College: Oklahoma State University

Educational Goal: I am a senior at OSU finishing my degree in Agribusiness. I will graduate in May, Summa Cum Laude. I have been actively involved on campus and am serving as the student representative for the University Planning Council. I have also been involved with the Student Government Association and continue to be on the Student Alumni Board, Orange Peel and Homecoming Steering. After graduation I hope to attend Law School at University of Oklahoma.

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Michelle Clark



Christopher Frick



Nathan Gentry



Lorenzo A. Rubio, Jr.

NATO OF TEXAS (\$2500 per recipient)

Name: Michelle Clark
Theatre: Cinemark Star Creek – Allen, TX
College: Texas A&M
Educational Goal: To graduate from Texas A&M in 2011 with my BA in International Studies, with a concentration in Latin American politics. Work for or found a nonprofit organization that helps Latino immigrants to understand US culture, gain English proficiency and navigate the logistical challenges of resettling in a new country.

Name: Christopher Frick
Theatre: Rio Cinema 4 – Bay City, TX
College: University of Houston
Educational Goal: I am a double major in Health and Exercise Science. I want to teach people how to be happy and healthy throughout their lives.

Name: Nathan Gentry
Theatre: Cinemark West – Plano, TX
College: Moody Bible Institute in Chicago
Educational Goal: I am the oldest of five children and plan to pursue a degree in biblical studies in hopes of being a youth minister or pastor.

Name: Lorenzo A. Rubio, Jr.
Theatre: Premiere Bassett 18 – El Paso, TX
Attending: University of Texas at El Paso
Educational Goal: I will be a senior at UTEP and will be graduating next May with a Bachelor's degree in History. Upon graduating, I plan to obtain a Masters in either comparative literature or school administration so that I may have the option of becoming a school principal one day. 🎬



FILM PREVIEWS

Cameron's "AVATAR" Will Set the 3D Bar Even Higher

By **Tim Patton**, President of Cinema Service Company



A recent trip to Los Angeles unearthed an interesting observation and near future forecast. Now I realize the City of Angels has its share of devils. Usually they are in the form of film hucksters cleverly disguised as professional motion picture pitchmen. "Step right up, sucker film buyers! Come and marvel at the latest, greatest and newest, most fantastical film ever to illuminate your silver screen." Yeah, right. Blah, blah, blah. After 27 years I've heard it all, and from some con men that make Bernie Madoff look like an amateur version of Billy May.

So when our friends at Fox twisted our wrist and wallets, and said you really need to come out here and see this footage, even if it's only for half a day, we were skeptical to say the least. (Most film buyers are a jaded bunch anyway, particularly the older ones.)

I suppose the lure of James Cameron's AVATAR should have been enough for us to jump on a plane in the first place. After all, the guy hadn't directed a movie since TITANIC nine years ago. What the heck has he been doing anyway? Counting all his money? He is the "King of the World", right?

Well, Mr. Cameron has been busy. Very busy, indeed. In fact, he's been working on AVATAR for more than nine years. He simply was waiting for the technology to catch up with his imagination before he could begin shooting this soon-to-be masterpiece. And he and his brother invented much of the technology utilized in production of this film.

Cameron showed us 22 minutes of AVATAR. Twenty-two amazing minutes. It left all of us wanting more. December 19th can't get here soon enough. The 3D was superb. This 3D technology does not break the plane of the screen and keeps the viewer locked into the narrative of the story, much like the technology used by Jeffrey Katzenberg in MONSTERS VS. ALIENS.

But the technologically that stood out for me was the CGI used on the planet Pandora and the native folks that inhabited said planet. Wow! The characters looked like actors in makeup, and the planet looked like it was filmed on location in some remote and exotic part of New Zealand. Not so. All CGI. But it appeared very different from any CGI effect I had ever seen before.

Cameron is an affable fellow. Engaging, smart, good sense of humor. He doesn't have to sell you on anything. He simply delivers the goods. For a Hollywood-type guy, he's really very down to Earth, just like us. Only he works at a level that's about four or five tiers higher and faster than me.

I won't spoil it for you by writing about the plot and characters in the movie. You can pick that stuff up on the Internet by Googling AVATAR and I'm sure there's plenty to read. Suffice it to say the self-appointed "King of the World" is back. And his new ship will not be sinking. As for that future forecast.....3D is no fad. It's here to stay. James Cameron is counting on it.

Now, let's have a look at a few fall titles of interest:

• JENNIFER'S BODY (FOX) 9/18 – Hollywood's new Hottie has her first starring role in this horror / thriller where she does her best impersonation of Mila Jolovich in SPECIES, devouring her friendly prey like a love-starved teenager. And who wouldn't want to be devoured by Megan Fox if you're a guy.

• CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF MEATBALLS (SONY) 9/18 – The charming children's book comes to life in 3D. Living in a town where food falls from the sky sounds too good to be true. A quality family film in September also sounds too good to be true. Yet, here it is. Thank you.

• WHIP IT (FOX) 10/2 – Directed by Drew Barrymore, this girl-comedy has "cool" written all over it. Ellen Page plays a small town Texas misfit until she gets interested in a roller derby league in Austin. Fun and funny, the film has all sorts of breakout potential.

• WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE (WB) 10/16 – Yet another classic children's book comes to life, this time from the bizarre and bent mind of director Spike Jonze. This film has been riddled with rumors of a troubled production including over-budgeting problems. But at the very least, it's another family film in the fall. Hurray!

• A CHRISTMAS CAROL (DIS) 11/6 - An animated retelling of the classic Dickens tale through the eyes of POLAR EXPRESS director Robert Zemeckis. Early footage is visually stunning. Hopefully, Zemeckis connects emotionally with the material, but the Disney moniker insures a megahit.

• NEW MOON (SUM) 11/20 – The TWILIGHT saga continues with a new director at the helm. Hollywood heartthrob Robert Pattinson now has some competition for Bella's affection from Jacob Black, the Indian kid and protector. Should easily be in the top five for the holiday season.

• PLANET 51 (SONY) 11/20 – The animated / family film fare is most crowded this holiday season with CHRISTMAS CAROL, PRINCESS AND THE FROG and ALVIN leading the way. Sony's entry is a little known CGI with big hopes. An astronaut lands on Planet 51 thinking he is the first human to step foot on it. Guess again.

• AVATAR (FOX) 12/19 – 'Nuff said. 🎬

NEW MEMBER:
TEXAS
Carol & Curtis Creswell
Double C Cinema
Decatur, TX



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OF THEATRE OWNERS
SOUTH CENTRAL STATES
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Article Contributions Welcome
This is your newsletter. We welcome your comments and invite you to send us any information you wish to share with other members.



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