THE CampChuck REVIEWER

A nonprofit subsidiary of CampChuck

Woody Allen Beats Meryl Streep at Tennis　　　　　　　　　page 9

The 78th ANNUAL ACADEMY AWARDS Nominations

Oscar Night: Sunday, March 5

Best Picture	Best Director
Brokeback Mountain	Ang Lee
Capote	Bennett Miller
Crash	Paul Haggis
Good Night, and Good Luck	George Clooney
Munich	Steven Spielberg

Best Actor

Philip Seymour Hoffman	*Capote*
Terrence Howard	*Hustle & Flow*
Heath Ledger	*Brokeback Mountain*
Joaquin Phoenix	*Walk the Line*
David Strathairn	*Good Night, and Good Luck*

Best Actress

Judi Dench	*Mrs. Henderson Presents*
Felicity Huffman	*Transamerica*
Keira Knightley	*Pride & Prejudice*
Charlize Theron	*North Country*
Reese Witherspoon	*Walk the Line*

Best Supporting Actor

George Clooney	*Syriana*
Matt Dillon	*Crash*
Paul Giamatti	*Cinderella Man*
Jake Gyllenhaal	*Brokeback Mountain*
William Hurt	*A History of Violence*

Best Supporting Actress

Amy Adams	*Junebug*
Catherine Keener	*Capote*
Frances McDormand	*North Country*
Rachel Weisz	*The Constant Gardener*
Michelle Williams	*Brokeback Mountain*

(Underlined nominees equal CampChuck predictions)

Supplemental Viewing

Seeing movies in a theater trumps seeing movies at home. Still, I don't mind extolling my first full year on Netflix, an impressive movie delivery mechanism. OK, what does a movie maven select for his first 97 Netflix choices? Since the slant is movies, it's important to qualify that from the 50,000 available titles, several are television shows: "Seinfeld," Season 1 kind of thing or some comic doing a 2 hour show for HBO or watching Ken Burns's 10 part public television series, *Baseball*.

About half the films I saw through Netflix were first-time viewings for me. I discovered that Quentin Tarantino's *Kill Bill, Vol. 2* only had about 7 worthwhile minutes in it. I'm out of popular synch thinking that *The Bourne Identity* would be better called the "The Bored Identity." And I was quite surprised that one of the highly revered films of all time, *The Bicycle Thief*, seemed so lacking to me.

On the other hand, I thought that Quentin Tarantino could learn something about cool from *Waking Life*. I was sucked in by the brutal sustenance depicted in *Fight Club*. And I was warmly engaged by the cross-cultural tale of an aged Omar Sharif and a sprouting teen in *Monsieur Ibrahim*. Also, opportunities to see documentaries such as *Born into Brothels*, is a part of the great breadth of Netflix.

Best Supporting Actor

well-written tale of an ideal family man and owner of a small town business. One of the best realized screen efforts of 2005, maybe more people will see this rough film now, because of and despite Hurt's off-beat inclusion.

Matt Dillon plays a prejudiced cop in *Crash* whose behavior is unacceptable. That same bad apple is a devoted son caring for his ailing father and a veteran civil servant still ignoring his own safety in the line of duty.

Since the pervasiveness of prejudice colors every scene in *Crash*, giving a best supporting actor award to any one of the several fine performances undercuts the theme. Matt Dillon will have to be satisfied with a nomination.

George Clooney is nominated for *Syriana*, not for *Good Night, and Good Luck*. Impressive in both, it most certainly is a good year to take this *Oceans Eleven* and *O Brother Where Art Thou* actor seriously.

Syriana cynically swipes at the oil-mucked power politics that reigns over every chess piece on the board. Clooney's character, an effective operator in this world, experiences the similarities between knights and pawns. *Syriana* dares to pace itself in a noncommercial way. Look for Clooney to ply more than a rakish smile in years to come. His daring is playing well, but not yet as far as Oscar gold.

It's apples and oranges between Gyllenhaal and Giamatti, but Giamatti's got the "poysonality" and Oscar is slower to slap gold on younger actors.

Manufactured Mailbag

Dear Editor,

Did you notice that there are 21 double letters in the big five people categories this year? Director Bennett Miller, alone, has 3 double letters in his name. All five Best Supporting Actor nominees have double letters including double doubles for Jake Gyllenhaal and Matt Dillon.

 Hatty Madderthrall, Billings, MO

Dear Hatty,

You are dangerously close to unearthing classified code. Don't lose faith.
                                        Ed.

Dear Editor,

Netflix is a pox on purist devotions to film viewing.
                    A friend, Los Angeles

Dear friend,

Pox be with you.
                                        Ed.

Dear Editor,

How come, on television, they can be so insulting as to scrunch the film credits alongside a rush to the next commercial?

    Inga Sven, Calgary, Alberta

Dear Inga,

Such crass commercialism won't happen if you see the movies in a theater, although theaters already make us suffer commercials before the film, eh?
                                        Ed.

Dear Editor,

I repeat my question from last year, since I so appreciate you including a top ten list. Doing it again?

    Lindy Warne, Roseburg, OR

Dear Lindy,

1. *Brokeback Mountain*
2. *Good Night, and Good Luck*
3. *Junebug*
4. *A History of Violence*
5. *Crash*
6. *Breakfast on Pluto*
7. Documentary Films including *The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill*; *Mad Hot Ballroom; Enron*; *Murberball*; and *March of the Penguins*
8. *Pride & Prejudice*
9. *Me&You& Everyone We Know*
10. *Yes*

Contenders for the top ten include *Munich* and *Downfall* and *The Upside of Anger* and *Cinderella Man*. A few characterizing words hint about each of the top ten.

1. story-rich, character-rich; Ang Lee knows relationship angst
2. taut, telling docu-drama
3. a stereotype underminer
4. story grabs you all the way
5. in your face mesh of prejudice
6. strangely innocent, waifly tale
7. great alternative for seeking satisfaction at the movies
8. top notch period piece
9. odd genuineness grows on ya
10. a poetic, sensual, intelligent, film experiment

Shoot the Moon

In the sweeping resonance of *The World Is Flat* (on the New York Times best seller list for the past year), it makes brief reference to sustainability. Most saliently, it includes the most palpable mechanism of hope in our (soon to be, if not already, post) modern world. We need a well-led moon-shot-style national commitment to energy independence, and more fully, sustainability in general. John F. Kennedy led a 10-year galvanized commitment. An analogous commitment to energy independence is more than inspiringly possible; it would stoke economic strength and defuse ticking instabilities.

One reason that CampChuck supports the Rocky Mountain Institute so enthusiastically is that they pursue a non-partisan quest for sustainable economic practice. Here is a quote from what RMI calls its politics: "…entering, in a friendly and open spirit, into the midst of even bitter controversy. Handling conflict with integrity, respect, and sincerity, we've found, can often turn it into an opportunity for mutual learning, trust-building, and resolution."

CampChuck continues as it has **since 1992, matching every subscription dollar for dollar**. All subscriptions -- more than $22,000 plus CampChuck's 100% match of $22,000 -- have funneled through CampChuck to RMI and Food Banks. Whether you subscribe at the official $5 level or the average participation of $30, think sustainable economic practice and the golden rule. And think access to CampChuck's newsletters.

Question for Amory Lovins et.al. at RMI:

Might you partner your profound systemic guidance with Thomas L. Friedman's insightful and best selling authorship?

Stacking this deck to shoot the moon isn't cheating.

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CampChuck Predictions (as also indicated by underlined nominees on page one)

Director Ang Lee's *Brokeback Mountain,* the best story tugging at the human condition this year, will beat the taut political pressure cooker that is *Good Night, and Good Luck*. Everyone's a more interesting choice than Reese Witherspoon, but her pop entertainment peppiness will watch the other nominees cancel each other out. Philip Seymour Hoffman's affectations will beat the narrower excellence struck by David Strathairn. Paul Giamatti's total resume will inch him past Jake Gyllenhaal's impressive role. Amy Adams will defy the odds.

Picture and Director:	*Brokeback Mountain*		Ang Lee	*Brokeback Mountain*
Actress and Actor:	Reese Witherspoon	*Walk the Line*	Philip Seymour Hoffman	*Capote*
Supporting Actress & Actor:	Amy Adams	*Junebug*	Paul Giamatti	*Cinderella Man*

Best Supporting Actress

Best Supporting Actor

Rachel Weisz leads any betting on Best Supporting Actress because she represents the soul of her film, *The Constant Gardener*. Weisz plays a sophisticated Earth-mother probing headlong into deadly trouble. She makes you understand why her timid husband loves her so much. She makes you understand why the timid good people of the world must act against exploitation and injustice and why they don't.

In the irrelevant declarations of Best Acting, Weisz had a relatively easy job. The world is so filled with bad and she was so spot-on, riskingly good.

By contrast, the activism that Frances McDormand portrays in *North Country* is more practical. You feel the long-haul commitment of this woman, who has worked tough years in the mine and worked as a union representative for every worker's rights. The savvy positivity is well suited to turning the key of social change.

There's an effective story contrivance that is both the reason McDormand could win and the reason why voters may turn past this role to the subtler triumph that won her an Oscar for *Fargo*.

If *Capote* chose to be more about the deep friendship between Truman Capote and Harper Lee – who wrote *To Kill a Mockingbird* – it would have been a more interesting story. What ticks inside their shared history?

Instead and impressively, Philip Seymour Hoffman lords over the film experience in the title role.

Consequently, Catherine Keener while interesting and effective as Harper Lee is an also-ran for Oscar.

Unlike *Capote*, *Brokeback Mountain* satisfies thoroughly as a story because of the counter-balances between the characters. Michelle Williams suffers from her man's secret. More than that, she suffers because her man's only passion in life does not include her. Nonetheless for Oscar voting, this is more a subordinate role than a supporting role, but hats off to Williams for helping the year's Best Picture tell so well.

The hidden treat amongst all the nominations this year is Amy Adams. Not only does her performance jump above the other four estimable Best Supporting Actress nominees, but her film, *Junebug*, is a gem.

Playing a 9-months pregnant wife of a sub-ordinary husband, her needs and hopes are so electric, you are first charged with laughter. She seems so real and unlikely, yet Adams makes it impossible not to appreciate her humanity.

In *Junebug*, a sophisticated woman visits the semi-rural, lower-middle class home her new husband moved away from. His sister-in-law (Adams) and brother live with his mom and dad. The story is small. The characters are a precious movie opportunity, and stereotyping becomes richly beside the point.

Although a long shot my money is on Amy Adams, out of respect for the best performance in any of the categories.

Last year, Morgan Freeman won Best Supporting Actor playing the right-hand man in the boxing movie, *Million Dollar Baby*. Will Paul Giamatti, playing a right-hand man in a boxing movie, *Cinderella Man*, win this year?

Yes. Voters will note that Giamatti stamps a unique yet identifiably human mark in role after role. He made *Sideways* better than it deserved to be. He made *American Splendor* a must-see, nerdoid triumph. With fame accumulating, he'll be noticed in bunches of earlier roles, "Hey, that's … that guy. He's good."

Jake Gyllenhaal is Giamatti's only real competition in this year's slate of nominees. Gyllenhaal could benefit from the trick of running him in the best supporting category when he really shares the lead in the most prominent film of the year, *Brokeback Mountain*.

It's almost unfair. The ripping story of passion works because of the heat both Heath Ledger and Gyllenhaal generate. Maybe that is why the nomination won't quite win. It's the pairing that draws you and the movie as a whole that paints the compelling reality. Also, Gyllenhaal seems less tor-tured, so the turmoil of Ledger's character plumbs more deeply.

Was *A History of Violence* rewritten when William Hurt took a supporting part and made it his own? It's a crisp caricature, but it disrupts the heavy extremes in a

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Best Picture / Best Director

What makes a Best Picture? It is not the eyebrow raising buzz and inevitable shrug about "gay cowboys." It is the substantive accomplishment of fine storytelling. It is the intensity of the love story, not the gender of the lovers that will make *Brokeback Mountain* the Oscar winning Best Picture. Granted, the gay cowboy thing hasn't been done before, but it is the heart wrenching tugs of human relationships that assure this story.

Brokeback Mountain is not like *Philadelphia*, where the story is discrimination against gays. That "issue" picture works because Tom Hanks plays an exemplary human being, a top notch professional and a devoted family man. Justice about the "issue" in *Philadelphia* speaks in a court of law.

Brokeback Mountain is just about two guys, two rural, no account guys, two guys who don't mean to make much of their lives. There's no issue. Except the one that's hidden under the spacious skies of Brokeback Mountain's majesty. Director Ang Lee deftly mixes in views of America's beautiful Big Sky country. (Never mind the teensy irony that it was actually filmed in Canada.)

There's no issue. Except the one that's hidden in passionless marriages. Director Ang Lee has a strong track record with faceted relationships, including the Oscar nominated Best Foreign Language film, *The Wedding Banquet*, and the Oscar nominated Best Picture, *Sense and Sensibility*. This time, Lee's cinematic sense and sensibility will be awarded Best Director and Best Picture.

The substantive accomplishment of fine storytelling takes many forms. *Good Night, and Good Luck* lives in claustrophobic corporate spaces. Its story is nationwide political intimidation in the era of Senator Joseph McCarthy and a milestone in television broadcasting.

Edward R. Murrow, the standard bearer of TV journalism, stood up to Sen. Joseph McCarthy by integrating facts and ideas with a keen sense of reserve. Director George Clooney made excellent choices to present that meticulous reserve. His black-and-white film works like amber, suspending Edward R. Murrow's news team in palpable tension. Choosing black and white also allows video footage of Joseph McCarthy to make him a character not played by an actor.

Amidst the heated political climate in the beginning years of the 21st century, a cool film like *Good Night, and Good Luck* offers stiff competition for Oscar's golden mark of respect.

The substantive accomplishment of fine storytelling takes many forms. *Crash* overloads its story with the interweaving of separate lives – too much interweaving. Yet, director Paul Haggis makes this overloading work. Scene after scene stains us with the prejudice that everybody wears.

The violence and noise and damage of a crash, the breakdown of a crash, has more subtle features and definitions than we are tuned to examine. Haggis pushes people and cultures together and mooshes the subtleties in our face. Haggis mooshes dualities in our face.

A large and impressive ensemble cast delivers Haggis's vision. Cop this and Black that, Rich this and Asian that, Latino this and criminal that. To its credit, the elements of this film cannot be summarized well. For that very reason, the effective overload of *Crash* makes for an Oscar contender that is not easily dismissed. For the same reason, it will not win.

The substantive accomplishment of fine storytelling takes many forms. No filmmaker knows this in a more fully realized way than Steven Spielberg. Like a sports champion, one reason he is the best is that he's better than almost everybody even when he's not playing his best. He can slump through narrow special-effects money making with *War of the Worlds* and give us *Munich* in the same year.

Munich is a bit ungainly, but Spielberg made ambitious choices in a story about revenge after the murderous raid on Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics. Avengers, secretly sponsored by the state

of Israel, responded to this travesty. Spielberg chose to make this a more mundane story of men with jobs to do, jobs they had to go to day after day after day, difficult jobs where mistakes happen and motivations grind. This film shows that some things must be done and that these things are never done.

Munich is not a glamorous adventure flick, although it plays in that popular arena. *Munich* plods intently, weighing down righteousness, but weighing down the storytelling a bit, too.

Further off the mark of fine storytelling, it may not be fair to say that *Capote* is all about Philip Seymour Hoffman's masterful performance. But it is. (See Best Actor, page 7.) Capote, the man, was a peculiar phenomenon. Making a successful film depends hugely on how this phenomenon is

rendered. This is a successful film, even though it is all about a man you will not like.

To win a Best Picture Oscar, Truman Capote would have had to have been a different person. To win Best Picture, *Capote* would have had to spend more time showing why Harper Lee, who wrote *To Kill a Mockingbird*, had such a devoted connection to this man. This film skips past the notion that a phenomenon like Truman Capote should actually be explained. Director Bennett Miller was faithful to his vision, but it's not an Oscar winning vision.

See *Capote* for Philip Seymour Hoffman's performance, not for what's so chilling about the story that became *In Cold Blood*. For that, read the book.

Boost Those Documentary Numbers

Documentary films deserve a collective Best mention. Last year hosted a very satisfying uptick for this film specialty that almost no one sees.

It's not about the numbers. Nonetheless, the average documentary earns about $3.2 million. Subtract last year's hit, *March of the Penguins* ($77 million) and 7 other films in the history of documentaries (including $120 million from *Fahrenheit 9/11*) and the average earnings plummet 50% to $1.6 million. This doesn't pay for meals on blockbuster films.

See *Mad Hot Ballroom* ($8m), a more than cute story about 5th graders headed for a dance contest. See *The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill* ($3m), a peculiar bit of positivity about an unlikely man caring for unlikely city birds. See *Enron: the Smartest Guys in the Room* ($4m), lest we forget how callous travesty touches our pocketbooks and our psyches. See *Murderball* ($2m), about the inspiring assertiveness of quadripalegic athletes.

Ask for documentaries. Even these "successful" examples barely show on the radar screen. It's a great alternative movie satisfaction to promote.

Supplemental Viewing

I reconfirmed that *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* was a sincere attempt but still too messy to buy into. My second viewing of *The Manchurian Candidate* confirms that it is simply too much of a contrivance, notwithstanding its pithy concept. And whatever hugely impressed me about *Shampoo* decades ago only engaged me moderately this time.

Mostly, picking movies one has seen repeats very satisfying viewings. I was charged again by *Stand and Deliver* about a high school calculus class and *Spellbound* about the national spelling bee. I've seen *Billy Jack*, like, six times, and it's still a cornball triumph of spirited violence and spiritual non-violence. John Sayles makes such character-rich yarns, and *The Secret of Roan Inish* and *Brother from Another Planet* pulled me in again. *The Triplets of Belleville* is wonderfully bizarro, animation. *Frida* is richly dramatic and arty. *Saving Private Ryan* is intensely big, and *The Piano* is intensely small.

I'm constantly pumped by my dozens-long queue of Netflix picks, but I still prefer the movie house.

The one sure-fire Oscar this year is Philip Seymour Hoffman, playing the title role in *Capote*. The film works because of how fully Hoffman reincarnates one of the most peculiar celebrities ever to contort the proportions of fame.

Truman Capote wrote *In Cold Blood*, perhaps his only literary work that resonates more memorably than his aura of personal genius. The movie, *Capote*, constrains itself to the six years Capote spent researching and writing a new kind of book, dubbed "nonfiction novel" writing. He committed himself to journalistic truth in his storytelling. Yet he became intimately wrapped in knowing the story of two heartless murderers.

Capote is an obnoxious, grating man. And yet he compels a kind of crawling, gawking attention in the way a highway accident compels attention.

Philip Seymour Hoffman is so good portraying this larger than life twerp that he makes you care about his committed ways while you dislike him for his self-involved core. Hoffman avoided the pitfalls of making Capote seem like a caricature. Hoffman's disarming way makes him the kind of actor that actors respect. Without fitting any movie star mold, his acting star is rising.

David Strathairn has been around twice as long as Hoffman. Like Hoffman, Strathairn deserves to be talked about as the kind of actor who makes his films and his fellow actors look better. Unlike Hoffman, Strathairn's acting star has been more steady than bright – until *Good Night, and Good Luck*.

Strathairn's role will be seen as less complex than Hoffman's, but Stathairn's long suit has always been strength in reserve. Both strength and reserve are critical to playing out the courage under pressure of TV journalist Edward R. Murrow. Curiously, his legacy of roles usually involves less accomplished characters, which in many ways is harder to play. The good news is that this stalwart actor will receive a boost from this nomination if not an Oscar.

Heath Ledger oozes the complex truth in a simple point. "I ain't queer," his character says. Although he is intensely in love with a man and acts on it for 20 years, he ain't queer, because, well, it ain't healthy to be, ain't right to be. It ain't what his life is, except for the one guy he can't help it with, the couple, few times a year that it happens.

In large part, the story of *Brokeback Mountain* works because Heath Ledger holds so much in. He doesn't say much and almost seems to cough out what he does say. Sexiness aside and gayness aside, he's just a guy. He's just a guy with a kind of insufficient life that has to be lived without thinking there's too much he can do about it. Many things make *Brokeback Mountain* the Best Picture of the year, but for Best Actor voting, Heath Ledger's excellence will get unfairly slotted as hunkish, especially next to the likes of Truman Capote.

Walk the Line possesses an infectious, pop entertainment rhythm while chronicling much of the colorful life of icon, Johnny Cash. Although Joaquin Phoenix inhabits this persona thoroughly, including the singing and strumming, *Walk the Line* lacks the depth and ambitious artiness of *Ray*. By comparison, Cash is a coping journeyman and Ray Charles is a transcending genius. Joaquin Phoenix was play acting. Jaimie Foxx was serious acting.

Terrence Howard deserves much credit as the hub of a wheel in *Hustle & Flow*. As a cut-rate pimp with aspirations to become a Hip Hop star, this is an American Dream movie in a bad neighborhood. The storytelling is roughly sturdy and touching. It's the supporting characters around this hustler that makes the story of trying to make it into the flow so rich.

Hollywood has a long standing place for prostitutes with a heart to melt us. Even though Howard reveals a compelling sensitivity and hopefulness, rooting for a pimp doesn't seem to go down as easy as rooting for a prostitute. Curiously, Howard's supporting role in *Crash* is a more complex triumph. There, he plays a successful Hollywood director trying to do well in life as a person until life smears his face with the all too ready message that he is a Black person. Howard is noteworthy, but Hoffman, he the Oscar man.

Best Actress

Much as I like the headline, "Huffman and Hoffman Heft Oscars," Felicity Huffman will fall short with her gimmicky role in *Transamerica*. She's the frontrunner because she does well by the challenging novelty of being an actress playing a man in the transsexual process of becoming a woman.

To her credit, Huffman finds an interesting balance of anxiety and groundedness in the character's personal commitment to the change. Maybe a better script could have made for a sure Oscar bet. The road trip he/she takes with his/her troubled teenaged son, who doesn't know he is his/her son, pushes the possibilities of a gimmick into an undermined contrivance.

Actually, the woman-playing-a-man-playing-a-woman thing has been done. It's not fair to compare *Transamerica* to a farce like *Victor/Victoria* (1982), but the point is that one movie is so-so and the other is excellent.

Sometimes a consummate realization, like Charlize Theron as the serial killer in *Monster*, lays the competition aside. So, when Charlize Theron puts her all into *North Country*, she ends up competing with the Oscar she won a couple of years ago.

Based on a true story, Theron plays a single mom, who mostly faces small-mindedness, harassment, and abuse trying to work in a Minnesota mine. It's a dramatic showcase of emotion and strength. Although it is instructive to be shocked by the fact that such workplace extremes still occurred into the 1980s, the film is diminished a bit by cinematic familiarities, especially the all too movie-like courtroom finish. It is clear, however, that Theron cares to be challenged, and we can expect to see her run through varying dramatic ringers in the years to come.

Keira Knightley, who shines in *Pride & Prejudice*, is very pretty. This introduces a less shallow observation. You will be drawn to her mouth. There is something especially enticing and expressive and intelligent about her mouth, not the least of which are the sentiments spoken therefrom. *Pride & Prejudice* is an enticing, expressive, and intelligent romantic comedy.

Though the film is an excellent rendering of a classic Jane Austen novel, this classy British period piece failed to make the Best Picture list. Without currying this favor, young Ms. Knightley will not win an Oscar in the storied way she wins a movie husband.

Judi Dench already has an Oscar for playing Queen Elizabeth in *Shakespeare in Love*. Dame Judi Dench has a grand and continuing career on stage, screen, and television. In *Mrs. Henderson Presents*, she plays a wealthy aristocrat in World War II England. This matron has the quaint notion of running a London theater that entertains the troops with vaudeville revues accented by naked ladies.

As presented, this is hardly a risqué picture, but Dame Judi Dench commands its charming center. It's not an Oscar-like performance, but there's an Oscar nominatable curiosity about it. Movie making is a business constantly scrambling for beautiful people worth plastering on the big screen for two hours. Goldie Hawn has said that the only roles for women are "babe, district attorney, and Driving Miss Daisy." Judi Dench defies this cynicism. At age 72, it is worth the price of admission to watch the stature and grace of this woman for two hours of playfully sentimental entertainment on the big screen.

Somehow, the Best Actress performance of the year was not even nominated. Releasing *The Upside of Anger* back in April of 2005 was bad news for Joan Allen. This is a film stoked by four teen and post-teen daughters, plus Kevin Costner. Allen mostly plays as angry and depressed as any actress ever played a woman whose husband done up and gone. It is masterfully painful with a comedic flare.

Lacking a nominated performance that distinguishes itself in a fresh way, the Oscar will go to the most visible performance. Reese Witherspoon jumps into the skin of Johnny Cash's wife, June Carter, in *Walk the Line*. Yes, she is entertaining and heartening but it's not an impressive enough jump from Reese Witherspoon's signature roles in *Legally Blonde* I and II. Yes, she gets points for doing her own singing and for acting brunette. This shouldn't boost her tally to Oscar, but it will.