

ACCENT

www.thejournalnet.com

THIS WEEKEND'S BEST BETS

Family pet expo

When: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday

Where: Ag/Hort Building, Indiana State Fairgrounds, 1202 E. 38th St., Indianapolis

Admission: \$7 for adults, free for children

Information: 927-7503 or ww.in.gov/statefair/

Comedy on stage

When: 8 and 10 p.m. today and Saturday and 6:30 p.m. Sunday

Where: One-Liners Comedy Club, 50 Airport Parkway, Suite E, Greenwood

Who's there: Tom Foss with Todd Justice with Rob Busboom

Admission: \$11

Information: 889-5233 or visit www.onelinerscomedy.com

Live music for all ages

When: 7 p.m. today and Saturday, 5 p.m. Sunday

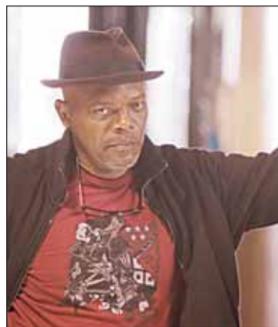
Where: Club Logos: 154½ E. Jefferson St., Franklin (upstairs)

Who's there: Punk on Friday; alternative/rock on Saturday; rock/punk on Sunday

Admission: \$7

Information: 446-1503 or www.clublogos.com

AT THE MOVIES



SCRIPPS HOWARD PHOTO

Police detective Lorenzo Council (Samuel L. Jackson) investigates a carjacking in "Freedomland." The movie also stars Julianne Moore.

'Freedomland'

When a movie tries and fails at examining meaningful matters such as racial unrest and police authoritarianism, it should at least be decent drama.

But this overblown tale starring Samuel L. Jackson and Julianne Moore is an exercise in bleakness and tedium occasionally broken up by shrill clashes between the two leads and poorly staged, stereotypical confrontations between white cops and black citizens.

Directed by esteemed Hollywood executive Joe Roth and adapted by Richard Price from his own novel, the movie centers on the relationship of a black detective (Jackson) and a white mom (Moore).

The mom claims her 4-year-old son was abducted in a carjacking, prompting a community-wide clash in a black neighborhood that comes under the boot heel of oppressive white cops.

Rating: R for language and some violent content

Stars: 1½ stars out of four

The Associated Press

NOW ON TOUR

Tour list ranks artists by average box-office gross per city and includes average ticket price in North America. The previous week's ranking is in parentheses.

- (1) **The Rolling Stones**; \$4.02 million; \$156.38
- (3) **U2**; \$2.39 million; \$93.97
- (4) **Bon Jovi**; \$1.66 million; \$79.32
- (5) **Aerosmith**; \$1.05 million; \$86.69
- (6) **Dave Matthews Band**; \$834,487; \$52.19
- (7) **Depeche Mode**; \$727,649; \$63.44
- (8) **Gwen Stefani**; \$572,304; \$57.27
- (9) **Andre Rieu**; \$380,558; \$51.75
- (10) **Mannheim Steamroller**; \$380,192; \$47.28
- (12) **Trans-Siberian Orchestra**; \$355,236; \$39.11

The Associated Press



Grant (Adam Campbell), left, and Julia (Alyson Hannigan) undergo couples counseling in "Date Movie" for a spoof of "Mr. and Mrs. Smith," which starred Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie as assassins with marital problems. "Date Movie" opens Feb. 24.

Band-camp girl meant for new spoof movie

By **BETSY PICKLE**
SCRIPPS HOWARD NEWS SERVICE

It might be the most flattering thing an actress could hear from screenwriters: They wrote a role with her in mind.

It's what Jason Friedberg and Aaron Seltzer told Alyson Hannigan when they wooed her to star in "Date Movie."

"I've heard that before," Hannigan says. "It's always very flattering to hear, but I'm not sure if I quite buy it. It's just kind of like, 'Yeah, yeah. Are you telling everybody that?'"

"But in this instance, I actually think I do believe them."

Maybe director Friedberg and writing partner Seltzer thought the girl who'd done it all at band camp, according to "American Pie," could handle dancing in a fat suit so energetically that her breasts would swing around to her back.

"I guess they figured they could just put me through the wringer and I wouldn't mind," says Hannigan by phone from Los Angeles. "They were right. I don't know if I should be flattered or not. But, OK."

"Date Movie" hopes to do for romantic comedies what "Scary Movie" did for horror films. (Friedberg and Seltzer were among the six writers of "Scary Movie," and they co-wrote "Spy Hard.")

In "Date Movie," Hannigan plays Julia Jones (a nod to Julia Roberts and Bridget Jones), an overweight young woman desperate to meet her soul mate.

After getting a "Pimp My Ride"-type makeover, she finds her prince, Grant Fonkyerdoder (think Hugh Grant plus

Ben Stiller's "Meet the Parents" character), played by newcomer Adam Campbell.

The movie proceeds to spoof such hits as "My Big Fat Greek Wedding," "Hitch," "My Best Friend's Wedding," "Wedding Crashers," "Runaway Bride" and "The Wedding Planner."

"We had such a great time doing this movie," Hannigan says. "Everybody was game for just going for it."

Hannigan, 31, says she didn't dwell on details such as the fact that Eddie Griffin, who plays her father on screen, is only six years older than she is in real life.

"Even worse is my mother (Meera Simhan) was, like, five years older than me," she says. "That's warped."

Hannigan was a fan of "Scary Movie" and grew up adoring "Airplane!"

"But I never really thought, 'Oh, I really want to do a spoof comedy' until this presented itself," she says. "The idea of spoofing romantic comedies was just too good to pass up."

To see how to act in a spoof, Hannigan rented a few, but she quickly changed her approach.

"I was like, 'Oh, wait a minute. I don't need to rent the spoof movies. I need to rent romantic comedies.' Because it's really just playing it as straight as you can that's gonna make it that much more funny."

Hannigan didn't binge to play Julia. She put on her extra weight with uncomfortable prosthetics.

"I might have some claustrophobia issues that I didn't have before," she says. "We'll see if I get confined in a small space and start freaking out."

"Having that stuff glued onto your face for that long, it's freaky. It can definitely do some emotional damage."

Writers had actress in mind for 'Date Movie'



In that most dangerous of venues, a bridal shop, Julia (Alyson Hannigan), left, and Andy (Sophie Monk) prepare to "Kill Bill" in the spoof film "Date Movie." Hannigan starred as a band geek in the "American Pie" series of movies about a group of high school friends as they transition to adulthood.



Mike
Redmond

Cheer on your favorite eater

I just finished reading about Sonya Thomas, the so-called "Black Widow" in her chosen field of athletic endeavor, competitive eating.

Yes, friends, this is how weird things have gotten: We now live in a world where the ability to eat 26 grilled cheese sandwiches in 10 minutes, as she recently did, is hailed as athletic achievement.

Thomas, a 100-pound wisp of a woman, is a giant in her field of endeavor. She holds trophies for eating 46 dozen oysters in 10 minutes, 11 pounds of cheesecake in nine minutes, 48 chicken tacos in 11 minutes, 37 hot dogs and buns in 12 minutes and 56 hamburgers in eight minutes.

I suppose it goes without saying that you should never follow Sonya through the salad bar.

Here's what gets me: There are people trying to convince the rest of us that competitive eating is a sport. That is the word they use, "sport," on the Web site of the International Federation of Competitive Eaters (www.ifoce.com).

I guess it comes from the same sort of thinking that has declared poker a sport, on television, no less.

Or the thinking that gives us televised cooking contests (although I have to admit I kind of like "Iron Chef." I just don't consider it a sport.)

Or televised fishing. I still can't believe people actually sit down in front of their televisions to watch other people fish.

Here's what I see in the future: Americans will continue to enjoy major sports like baseball, basketball, football and hockey — well, maybe not hockey — but the TV coverage will increasingly be augmented by even more contests involving things people do every day, like poker, eating, cooking, fishing and ...

Housecleaning

"This week's contest is a grudge match between those bitter adversaries, those longtime rivals, those competitors who can barely stand the sight of one another, those enemies who would love nothing more than to find dust on the other's end tables, Bernice Devonderhaven of Blistered Fingers, Ohio, and her mother-in-law."

Lawn mowing

"It looks like an exciting race today, as every man on Balloon Mortgage Court in the Housing Bubble Heights development has his 32-horse lawn tractor tuned up and ready to go ..."

Taking out the garbage

"Tune in Saturday to watch two teams of surly junior high students. See which one will be slowest to take the recyclables out to the curb as their mothers goad from the sidelines."

Beer drinking

"It's youth against experience tonight, folks, as the members of Tappa Kegga from Schlitz-Heidelberg College go head to head, so to speak, with the members of Post 26, Benevolent and Protective Order of Ring-Tailed Lemurs."

"We'll be back with all the chugging, belching, I-love-you-man action after this word from our sponsor ... Dr Pepper."

Like I said, it could happen. Hey, in a world where people get trophies for wolfing down cheese sandwiches, it would be the logical next step, although a quick flip around the cable box makes me unsure there's any such thing as logic where TV sports is concerned these days.

I'll stick with baseball, basketball and hockey, thanks.

But if they ever have a chicken-and-noodle eating contest, count me in. If chicken-and-noodle-eating is a sport, I am definitely pro material.

Mike Redmond is the author of "Six of One, Half-Dozen of Another" and "The Night the Wheels Fell Off." Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com.