

Where's the girl power?

Movies rated G have fewer strong female characters than male ones.

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SECTION **C**

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Paul Walker, as an Antarctic guide, and a group of sled dogs star in the movie "Eight Below." The film is rated PG.

'Eight Below' dogs prove ample actors

Movie based on true story in Antarctic is two tales in one

By CARLA MEYER
SACRAMENTO (CALIF.) BEE

Emotive, great-looking and physically nimble, the principal actors in "Eight Below" are born movie stars.

The humans are OK, too.

Charting the struggle for survival of a group of sled dogs left behind in Antarctica, this Disney film represents achievements in directing, editing, cinematography and, most of all, animal training.

Trained by a team led by Mike Alexander, the film's canine performers show grit, ingenuity and camaraderie, all without being able to talk. Whimper and bark, yes, but not talk.

Inspired by a true story previously told in the 1983 Japanese film "Nankyoku Monogatari," "Eight Below" will enthrall youngsters and warm the hearts of adult dog lovers.

Adults will recognize Antarctic guide Jerry (Paul Walker) as the ultimate dog person. His affectionate tone when addressing the dogs helps pull off dialogue that can be simplistic and repetitive.

There might be a method to the dialogue's blandness. The repetition of dogs' names in early scenes will help viewers distinguish the animals from each other later. Maya is the silver-coated queen of the pack. Blue-eyed Max is young and impetuous, and red-tinged Buck is sweet but dumb.

Jerry seems easygoing enough until he learns he is to lead a geologist named Davis (Bruce Greenwood) into a treacherous part of Antarctica.

"Eight Below" combines two adventures in one, since the trip with Jerry and the dogs is its own compact little story. A scene in which Jerry must lead the dogs over thin ice is fraught with tension.

The larger drama unfolds once a terrible storm forces the human crew to abandon base camp. The plan had been to return for the dogs, left chained together in a row outdoors. But the storm, and the onset of winter, means Antarctica will be impenetrable for months.

The possibility of food nearby, after days without any, prompts most of the dogs to break their chains.

Later scenes of animals injured or in peril, though hard to watch, are offset by the pained expression on Walker's face. We know that Jerry, back home in Oregon and appealing to officials to help rescue the dogs, will move heaven and icebergs for his beloved pups.

MOVIE REVIEW

'Eight Below'
• Rating: PG for some peril and brief mild language
• Stars: Three out of four

By DAVID GERMAIN
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES

Bad Academy Awards puns are flying. There's the "Brokeback backlash" ... the little film that "crashed" the party ... the one about "Brokeback Mountain" peaking too early.

While the cowboy love story "Brokeback Mountain" has been established as a solid favorite for the best-picture Oscar, the ensemble drama "Crash" has an ardent following and some late-season momentum that could make it a surprise winner.

When there's a clear Oscar front-runner, that film almost always goes home with the big trophy, but upsets do happen, and late-surging films have pulled off come-from-behind wins.

Just look back to the 1998 awards season.

"The year of 'Saving Private Ryan,' everybody was certain it was a lock," film historian Leonard Maltin said. "People thought it was a sure thing to win best picture given the subject matter (D-Day heroics) and the people behind it (Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks), until the middle of December."

That's when a little film called "Shakespeare in Love" showed up. Oscar voters, along with everyone else, fell in love with the dark-horse film.

Spielberg won best director, but "Shakespeare in Love" grabbed the top prize.

The previous 77 Oscar ceremonies have had their share of unexpected twists, mostly in the acting categories.

The best-picture announcement often has

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INSIDE

Hollywood gives some gutsy Oscar nominations.
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INSIDE THE OSCARS

And they're off!

Dark-horse race could stall award front-runner



Best-picture Oscar momentum has been building for the film "Crash," starring Terrence Howard, left. The best-picture favorite, "Brokeback Mountain," stars Jake Gyllenhaal, below left, and Heath Ledger.

AP PHOTOS



Giving, Grammys mark year for U2's Edge

Hurricane relief efforts of guitarist center on music

By SOIWEI SCHOU
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES

With a long-held affection for New Orleans, U2 rocker The Edge felt compelled to try to help it recover from Hurricane Katrina.

The result: Music Rising, an organization that provides instruments to musicians blasted by the storm.

The city especially took hold of his heart in 2001 after he and the band, while playing there, experienced a loss of equipment back home. A storage area in Dublin where they kept a lot of instruments was wiped out in a flood.

"Luckily," he recalls, "my main guitars were with us in New Orleans ... the Gibson Explorer that I've had since I was 17 years old, and the amplifier I've used on every album for every show since we got a record deal."

Four years later, after Katrina blew through New Orleans, the memory of that good fortune led him to create Music Rising, along with Gibson Guitar, the Guitar Center Music Education Foundation and the MusicCares Foundation.

For The Edge, aka David Evans, that relief work topped off a packed year of touring and Grammys for U2's *How to Dismantle an Atomic Bomb*. The band won for song of the year, album of the



The Edge from the group U2 performs in a tribute to New Orleans at the Grammy Awards on Feb. 8. The Edge is working to provide instruments for musicians affected by Hurricane Katrina.

year, best rock song, best rock performance and best rock album.

The normally soft-spoken guitarist, 44, grows passionate when he talks about his efforts to help with Music Rising.

"When I heard about the hurricane, the devastation of the city and the area, I

pretty soon started thinking about the musicians, started to think about the cultural loss, not just to New Orleans, not just to America, but really to the world," he said.

The birthplace of jazz, and a major influence on rock and roll, New Orleans captivated his attention years ago, he said.

He returned in November and found a different, less fun-loving city, one torn apart by disaster and a lack of aid.

"Going through the streets of New Orleans and seeing the homes of musicians I knew and respected, seeing Fats Domino's home completely destroyed ... it does bring it home in a very personal way," he said.

At a recent Music Rising event in Hollywood, the native Irishman chatted easily with some New Orleans transplants.

Affable and humble, he even asked for their e-mail addresses and talked about music gear, more a regular Joe than guitarist for one of the biggest bands in the world.

U2, its long history including 11 studio albums and 16 Grammy wins, rocked the music world last year with its "Vertigo 2005" tour and was also inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

The band plans to start working on new songs after returning from an upcoming tour in South America, he said.

And watch out Rolling Stones: U2 won't stop touring any time soon.

"We grew up on the road. ... It's such an integral part of what we are. I don't think we could give up touring. I don't think we could do what the Beatles did, just pack it in."

Quirky pieces bright spot of annual artist exhibition

Items for sale range from funky to functional

By ANNETTE JONES
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Pottery by a Greenwood artist will be easy to spot at the Indiana Art Fair next weekend.

Vessels in bold colors and quirky shapes are trademarks of Jim Kemp's latest work.

Creations by nearly 100 other

Hoosier artists will join his jugs, pots and plates at the fair from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Feb. 25 at Indiana State Museum, 650 W. Washington St., Indianapolis.

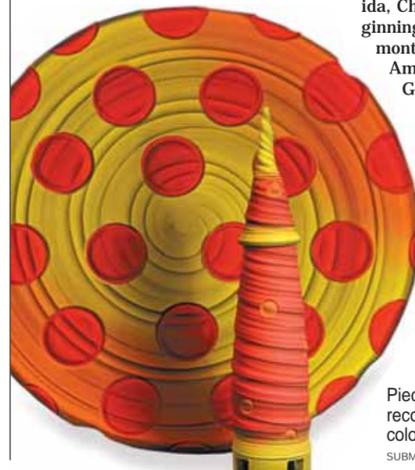
The show marks Kemp's second trip to the junior Indiana Art Fair. Kemp has molded clay in his home studio for 25 years.

He displays his work at shows in central Indiana as well as in Florida, Chicago and Wisconsin. Beginning April 6, he will open a month-long individual show at American Art Clay Co., 6060 Guion Road, Indianapolis.

He recently received a grant from the Indianapolis Arts Commission to rewire his studio and purchase two new kilns that he says will allow him to experiment more with clay.

A clay-glaze substance mixed with ceramic colorants provide vivid

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Pieces by potter Jim Kemp are recognizable by their bright colors and unusual shapes.

SUBMITTED PHOTO