

TOP 5

of the week

Television

1. "NBC NFL Playoff Game 2," NBC
 2. "CSI," CBS
 3. "NBC NFL Pre-Kick2," NBC
 4. "Desperate Housewives," ABC
 5. "Fox NFC Wildcard Post Game," Fox
- Nielsen Media Research

Movies

1. "Stomp the Yard," Sony Screen Gems
 2. "Night at the Museum," Fox
 3. "The Pursuit of Happiness," Sony
 4. "Dreamgirls," Paramount
 5. "Freedom Writers," Paramount
- Exhibitor Relations Co.

Songs

1. "Irreplaceable," Beyonce. Columbia
 2. "I Wanna Love You," Akon with Snoop Dogg. SRC
 3. "Fergalicious," Fergie. will.i.am
 4. "Smack That," Akon with Eminem. SRC
 5. "Say It Right," Nelly Furtado. Mosley
- Billboard magazine

Albums

1. Soundtrack: "Dreamgirls." Music World
 2. "Konvicted," Akon. Konvict
 3. "Daughtry," Daughtry. RCA
 4. "FutureSex/LoveSounds," Justin Timberlake. Jive/Zomba
 5. "NOW 23," Various artists. Sony BMG Strategic Marketing Group
- Billboard magazine

Tours

1. Barbra Streisand
 2. The Rolling Stones
 3. The Who
 4. Aerosmith/Motley Crue
 5. Bob Seger & The Silver Bullet Band
- Pollstar

AT THE MOVIES

Scripps Howard News Service

'ALPHA DOG'

Director Nick Cassavetes tries to kick butt with this re-creation of a true crime tale about suburban gangstas. An impulsive kidnapping leads to murder in SoCal.

Cassavetes indulges in some self-conscious gimmickry (a faux documentary style, for example) but gets intense performances from a cast that includes Emile Hirsch and Justin Timberlake. If nothing else, you're going to wish you had the tattoo concession.

Rated: R. Pervasive drug use and language, strong violence, sexuality and nudity

'CHILDREN OF MEN'

Director Alfonso Cuaron puts Harry Potter behind him with a visually amazing foray into the year 2027, when women no longer can have children.

With humanity threatened, an office worker (Clive Owen) must get the last pregnant woman on Earth to safety.

This rivets attention, even if it fails to dot every "i" and cross every "t."

Rated: R. Strong violence, some drug use, language and brief nudity

'DREAMGIRLS'

Full of strong performances and outsized musical energy, "Dreamgirls" has all the makings of a big-time holiday hit, and it deserves to become one. As you may know from all the pre-movie hype, Jennifer Hudson is the movie's great discovery.

Hudson, an "American Idol contestant" who didn't win, delivers a knockout blow as Effie White, the initial lead singer of a group called The Dreamettes. Her rendition of "And I Am



Elvis Schmidt (Shawn Hatosy), left, and Frankie Ballenbacher (Justin Timberlake) discuss what to do with their hostage in "Alpha Dog." The film is rated R for drug use and violence.

Telling You I'm Not Going" — a heart-wrenching, show-stopper of a tune — has "bring down the house" written all over it, and all the talk you've heard about an Oscar nomination seems entirely justified.

Rated: PG-13, for language, some sexuality and drug content

'FREEDOM WRITERS'

Hilary Swank stars as an initially naive teacher who attempts to reach recalcitrant

inner city kids. Swank's performance and the movie's capacity to move us compensate for the familiarity of the tale, based on a true story.

Rated: PG-13. Violent content, some thematic material and language

'HAPPILY N'EVER AFTER'

When "Hoodwinked" came out a year ago, it felt like a poor man's "Shrek." Guess that makes this totally uninspired fractured fairy tale the

poor man's "Hoodwinked," writes Christy Lemire of the Associated Press.

Rated: PG. Action and mild rude humor

'THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS'

Will Smith's low-key performance adds credibility to an inspirational tale about a homeless man who takes care of his young son (Smith's real-life son Jaden), completes a no-pay internship at the investment firm of Dean Witter and generally tries to stay afloat.

Based on a true story, "Pursuit" may not be a classic, but Smith does this character justice. The movie also does a good job illustrating the catalog of woes that Smith's Chris Gardner faces as he attempts to pull himself out of destitution.

Rated: PG-13, some language

'CHARLOTTE'S WEB'

Julia Roberts heads a big-name voice cast in this charming, live-action adaptation of the classic E.B. White story about the friendship between Wilbur, a pig, and Charlotte, a spider.

A bit of humor enlivens the proceedings, which also explore such worthy subjects as mortality, the meaning of friendship and the importance of tolerance.

A fine family film.

Rated: G

'CODE NAME: THE CLEANER'

Cedric the Entertainer stars as a janitor with amnesia who thinks he may be a secret agent. Lucy Liu and Nicollette Sheridan also star in a movie that may cause you to experience memory problems, like trying to remember it at least until you reach the parking lot.

Rated: PG-13. Sexual content, crude humor and some violence

City Market vendor has right idea with sushi

You may have heard or noticed that the venerable and historic City Market in downtown Indianapolis is getting a makeover.

But those who rely on the market for its luncheon sustenance, either as a visitor or daily toiler, are not being denied its richly varied nourishment in the interim.

At the start of the new year, the main center hall of City Market was closed, and work commenced to transform it into the fresh produce, meat and food market of yore, not exclusively the lunch-counter food court that has sustained the market the past two decades.

Plans call for the renovation to be completed in May, with longer weekday hours of operation.

Under the new blueprint, market stands offering fresh pro-

duce, flowers, cheeses, gourmet pantry items, made-on-the-premises potato chips, nuts, caramel corn, and hopefully, fresh meats, will dominate the center of the hall.

The existing food vendors will operate along the perimeter under a new hooded ventilation system.

Also in the plans are new lighting, flooring, painting and designs for the market and food-service vendor stands.

While all this is going on, the existing food vendors are whipping up their culinary triumphs in the east and west wings of City Market, with most of the center hall vendors operating with considerable intimacy on the second floor of the east wing.

During my tour of the temporary arrangements for the existing vendors, I had a major sushi-

withdrawal attack that could only be alleviated by Asiana's sushi bar in the west wing.

Owner Kyo "Pete" Huyh last year greatly expanded what was initially a quick-serve forum for Chinese stir-fried chicken, beef, shrimp and rice offerings by constructing an ample sushi bar.

The fish availabilities are small but well tuned for the lunch trade, taking in red and white tuna, yellow tail, salmon, eel, smelt roe, crab stick and surf clam with 25 sushi roll permutations on the menu.

Other staples include shrimp tempura, beef teriyaki fried pork cutlets and the Korean beef dish, bulgogi.

I found myself quite contented and sushi satiated with the "Hana Roll" (\$6.50), with the rice wrapped around cucumber, avocado and crab with a very spicy

kick, and the "Crunch Roll" (\$6.50), featuring fried shrimp and cucumber filling and crunchiness of fried dough in a spicy sauce.

Both were expertly and appealingly crafted.

More than a few of the center hall vendors are more than a bit leery of losing their center-stage status in the new City Market set-up in spring. But they will continue to be its most reliable and consistent lure for those looking for variety and savory flair in their downtown midday sustenance because of their commendable track record of delivering the goods.

Veteran restaurant critic Reid Duffy writes a weekly review for the Daily Journal. Comments may be sent to letters@thejournal.net.

• Garrett

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE C1)

responsibility. Being a producer on it, I feel the best part about that is I have a say.

Q: What kind of marriage did your parents have?

A: My parents got divorced when I was really young. Marriage was a rocky scenario for me as a kid.

Q: I understand you had an amicable divorce.

A: The great thing is that we had the same exact passion, which is our children. ... We do things as a family all the time.

Q: Do you think you will ever get married again?

A: No, probably not. I'm probably someone that shouldn't be married, you know? Or should be in captivity, one or the other.

Q: You said in an interview something about having a darker side.

A: I do have a darker side. You turn that dark place into a place you can go as a performer or actor. ... I am cynical and very sarcastic at times. But you know, I wear my heart on my sleeve, too. I mean, I call it like I see.

• Idol

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE C1)

"There seems to be the same degree of fascination going into this season as there was last season," said analyst Bill Carroll of ad-buyer Katz Television. "It's sort of become the event of the year for viewers."

The series began with a pair of two-hour episodes that aired Tuesday and Wednesday and featured auditions in Minneapolis and Seattle.

"American Idol," produced by FremantleMedia and 19 Entertainment, returns with a richer gloss than ever. Last year's finale included a surprise appearance by Prince.

"Prince blew the doors off. He is one of the quintessential ones of our time," Jackson said.

Frot-Coutaz's take: "The fact we can get Prince is a real tribute to the show. ... (Now) who knows who we can get?"

McCartney, an iconic figure who's an impressive "get" for any venture, is reportedly being courted. Carey also may

end up on the guest list.

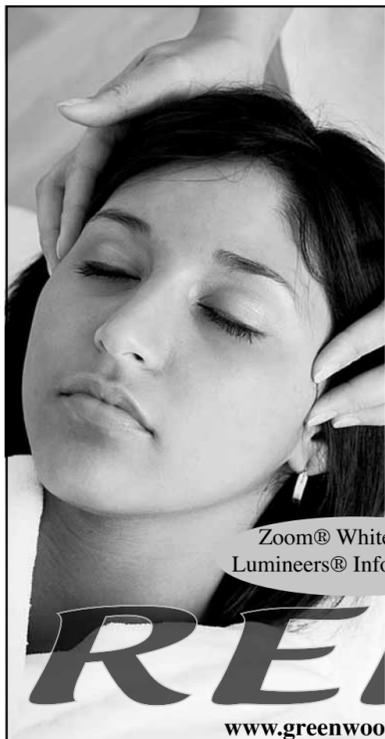
More evidence of the power of "American Idol" is the "Dreamgirls" film debut of Jennifer Hudson, a 2004 also-ran (to winner Fantasia Barrino) who's considered a potential Oscar nominee.

That's alongside the best-selling CDs and singles churned out by past winners including Underwood and Kelly Clarkson, and the awards they've collected that include Grammy and Country Music Association trophies.

"Music hadn't worked on American TV for a while, so I think we filled a gap," Frot-Coutaz said.

According to Advertising Age magazine, FremantleMedia has deals set or is in negotiations for new products including a theme-park attraction and cell-phone downloads of show performances. Items already sold include clothing, books, toys and an "Idol"-themed Barbie doll, with a Monopoly game coming soon.

"There's a lot of things in the works," Frot-Coutaz said. "We're feeling more confident about our ability to go out and really turn this into a bigger brand than just a TV show. It takes a few years before you can get to" that point.



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