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Sizing up the Best Picture race for the 2014 Oscars

By Paul Sorrell

They don’t always award the best movies, and the winners often depend on political maneuvering by studio heads to get their films nominated and winning speeches about the great importance of the Academy Awards to the Hollywood film industry. This year, the Oscar news has been one of the deepest fails in its 86-year history with a number of well-received films being surprisingly cut from the Best Picture race.

A lot can happen between now and the actual ceremony on Mar. 2, but now that all of the contenders have been announced at Sundance in Park City, Utah, New York and Los Angeles, it’s time to take stock of the contenders in the Best Picture category and see who the favorites are in this race.

12 Years a Slave

Steve McQueen’s “12 Years a Slave” has received tremendous praise for its honest, realistic and upsetting depiction of slavery. Based on a true story, “12 Years a Slave” has been compared to “Schindler’s List” in terms of both quality and social importance and is a factor in a number of award categories, most notably in Best Picture. Best Director, Best Actor, Best Supporting Actor and Adapted Screenplay, with a legitimate shot at winning several awards. Michael Fassbender has long been one of the most talented and hardworking actors in the business and he gets his first high profile starring role in McQueen’s film. Fassbender, a black man, who is kidnapped and sold into slavery in New York, is a likable Newfoundlander who earns considerably more money working as a sugar-cane slave in Louisiana, although the role itself might be too dark and stultifying for someone of his talent. Fassbender’s role, as it turns out, is in the race, even if it might be too lumbering for many of the Academy voters.

Gravity

Alfonso Cuarón’s “Gravity” is in the same technical category, considered the overwhelming favorite in both the Visual Effects and Cinematography categories. Although it’s a movie nobody really does want at the Oscars, “Gravity” will certainly pick up nominations for Best Picture and Best Director and has a small chance of winning at least one. It will get a Best Actress nomination and will likely be in the popular choice for Best Picture. “Gravity” is a visual masterpiece, perhaps one of the most breathtaking films ever made and long enough to somehow sneak up on people and win big in the major categories.

American Hustle

David O. Russell has seen his last two films “Silver Linings Playbook” nominated for Best Picture and his latest film, “American Hustle,” is close to a sure thing to repeat that feat.

Nebraska

Alexander Payne’s “Nebraska” is a huge threat in the acting categories and will definitely be a critical favorite but it’s simply too difficult for a black and white minimalist drama to win Best Picture for it to beat out the other films on this list. Martin Scorsese’s “The Wolf of Wall Street” may seem like a strong favorite but it has the most rabid fans by the time the votes are tallied. It’s another long shot, but “Her” is definitely a contender for Best Picture at this point.

Inside L’Wren Scott

The Com Sirens have been among the elite American filmmakers for over two years and their film “Inside L’Wren Scott” has picked up some nominations for Best Director, Best Actor and Best Supporting Actor, so it’s a possible Best Picture contender. “Her” is another film that could pick up a few votes for the Best Picture category.

Saving Mr. Banks

Disney’s “Saving Mr. Banks” will likely receive a lukewarm reception but it has the backing of Disney, which makes it this Oscar season’s trademark “average film nominated for Best Picture” and is very interesting because many of these films have the most rabid fans by the time the votes are tallied. “Inside L’Wren Scott” is another film that could win Best Picture, but it’s a long shot, but “Her” is definitely a contender for Best Picture at this point.

Hockey is back

By Jeff Carr

Last weekend was the first of the two championship weekends of the year for the Yarn Bee Braintrust for The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAH) hockey teams 2013-2014 season took place with the men’s team hosting the Bemidji State Beavers for both the Friday night game and the Saturday night game. Friday night was a bittersweet win of 6-1 at the end of the game in which the Beavers fought hard but were ultimately defeated, ending in a 1-0 loss for the Chargers.

Friday’s opener started with a goal at exactly 00:05 by Paul Groenings. The Beavers had a power play in the final minute of the period. The following Saturday, the Chargers jumped out to a 5-0 lead early in the first period with goals from Ryan Marooney and Brent Fletcher. Both teams had some opportunities to score but neither were able to capitalize. UAH had a power play in the final minute of the game, but couldn’t score on the man advantage.

For the men’s team, the biggest moment was at 18:06 of the second period when defenseman Jordan Berns was able to score on a deflection goal for the night’s big prize.
**Student Spotlight continued**

of incorporating research into my undergraduate program," says Torres. "Not only that, but the classes are smaller and there is more interaction with professors who are experts in my field of study." Currently, Torres is working on her Honors thesis with Dr. Luis Curtis-Vera in the lab researching regulatory mechanisms on E. Coli.

Torres is also the president of the Hispanic Student Organization at UAH. The organization was started to promote unity of Hispanic students on campus. "Hispanic students are few and far between at UAH. Unless we have an organization that brings us together, we might never have the opportunity to know each other," Torres notes. "So a culture, we need to reach out to Hispanics in the community through service projects." One of these service projects involves members of the organization going to Morris Elementary School in Huntsville to help students whose first language is Spanish and assist them in reading and other fundamental subjects.

Another service project of UAH's Hispanic Student Organization will occur this December. Diversity Service Fairs will be funding a trip to Puerto Rico for six students, including Torres, along with faculty advisors. Dr. William Setzer. They will have several missions while there. First, they plan to give basic necessities to families living in rural areas. Next, they plan to give students much needed school supplies that have been donated to the organization. Lastly, they plan to visit elementary and high school students to assist these students to go to college, and perhaps to attend UAH.

Helping students is nothing new for Torres. She is a minority in the Mentoring Program where she assists with Open House for new students. Admitted families living in rural areas. Next, they plan to give students much needed school supplies that have been donated to the organization. Lastly, they plan to visit elementary and high school students to assist these students to go to college, and perhaps to attend UAH.

With everything Torres does, there is no such thing for spare time activities. She says it's the service time that she enjoys the most. When she was asked what she enjoys doing on her spare time; however, with the busy little spare time she has, she enjoys hanging out with friends, spending time with family and of course, running with her dad-

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**Zombie Walk Takes Downtown by Storm**

By Lucas Stewart

The undead took over the streets around Big Spring Park as part of World Conspiracy’s 7th Annual Zombie Walk on Saturday.

The parade of staggering zombies gathered at the Christion Parking garage at two o’clock to begin their trek. The group marched to the UAH Board of Trustees’ Board Room where they were given their zombie tour. The group then made its way through the streets of downtown. There were an estimated 90 participants in all shapes, sizes, and colors. Some were young, some were old, but all looking their best for the zombie event. One could almost smell the wastewater emanating from the public restrooms in the immediate vicinity. The group ended their zombie walk when the multitudes dispersed at the Board of Trustees’ board meeting.

Photos courtesy of Jacqueline Marshby.

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**Immigration becomes top priority, remains controversial**

By: Claudia Menutí-Baez

The Immigration issue in the United States is not new, however there is a new push to make it the priority in the House of Representatives. The Democratic-controlled Senate was able to pass an immigration bill in June. This bill included guidelines for potentially beneficial changes, some of which could address the 11 million people who are already here illegally. A similar version of this bill was introduced by House Democrats, but there is little hope that the GOP in the House will pass it quickly.

This push to pass an immigration reform bill comes on the heels of a historic government shutdown, during which the House took its turn to pass a bill to raise the debt ceiling. The government agencies and employees that had been off work were able to return to work on Oct. 16 when Obama signed a bill that ended the 16-day partial shutdown. This event may have given a great influence on House Republican behavior regarding an immigration bill. With Republicans suffering in popularity, some speculate that they might be more compliant this bill is an attempt to appease more Republicans. The day after the shutdown ended, Obama said "To vote for the U.S. Immigration system, were kicked this particular can down the road for too long."

A New York Times article explains that the GOP in the House are emphasizing that the illegal immigrants in the U.S. should absolutely not receive any amnesty and have never said, in any general terms, that the House needs to be completely secured before any laws regarding immigration are passed. House Republicans have said they want to pursue an immigration overhaul incrementally, allowing smaller bills to make gradual reforms to the overall system. Other Republican representatives continue that they support giving citizenship for immigrants who were brought to America as small children and grew up here. The Democrats are taking advantage of the post-shutdown mood since it may be a light situation for the Republicans. The Republicans have been around 300 Republicans from around the country flying into the nations Capitol to influence the House GOP vote on this issue. These will include police chiefs, farmers and business owners, mostly with Republican representatives. Other Republicans have been negatively affected by the current immigration system and are seeking to change it.

"I am not an advocate of open borders. I am not an advocate of amnesty. I just see (undocumented immigrants) who are hurting and want to contribute to their family... and the system is not working for them," said Jeremy Hendon, a pastor whose Fellowship Christian Church operates in House Speaker John Boehner’s Ohio district.

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**NSA Gets Caught Spying on Allies... Again**

By: Lucas Allery

U.S.-allied France and Germany, expressed growing frustration with the United States this week amid new revelations that the NSA collected phone data on French and German citizens, including German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

The allegations of U.S. spying on the German government’s headquarters in Berlin are only the latest in a series of incidents that have pushed the two nations, both of which are leading members of the EU, to the edge of a breakdown in their relationship. The allegations come just weeks after German media reported that the NSA intercepted Chancellor Angela Merkel’s cell phone for years before she left office.

"The Americans are not playing fair and this is unacceptable," German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle said during a meeting with the media. "We have to have a special summit at the government level to discuss this issue in detail."

However, French President Francois Hollande is more measured in his response, saying he is prepared to work with the United States to resolve the situation.

"We must continue our dialogue with the Americans to ensure that our phone conversations are not monitored," Hollande said.

Merkel’s demeanor has been relatively reserved compared to other European Union leaders. She has not publicly condemned the NSA’s actions, nor has she called for the U.S. to halt its spying programs.

Davos, Switzerland - Participants listen to a panel during the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, 21 January 2014. The annual forum brings together 3,000 leaders from politics, business, academia and civil society. (Katja Jaeger/ZUMAPRESS.com)
Banana Bowl – ATO vs. Sigma Nu

By Derek Williamson

...as the SNu's 84 yard touchdown run. The defense had outscored its last six opponents, a streak that stretched 104 unanswered points against field goal, Bama had scored 14 passes for 320 yards and a touchdown. The yardage was expected as a growing number of people speculate that "sproston" could be the greatest wide receiver of all time.

Dez Bryant caught two of those touchdowns along with his 72 receiving yards on the day. The Cowboys only managed to rush for 62 yards, on a area that had to improve with starting running back DeMarco Murray out with injury. Dallas kicker Dan Bailey was perfect on the day, hitting two field goals from 30 yards away and one from 44 yards. The 44-yarder put Dallas up 30-24 with 1:02 left to play.

Yet the Lions went 80 yards in 99 seconds with no timeouts to go ahead 31-30 with just 12 seconds remaining. The go-ahead touchdown was set up by Calvin Johnson's 14th reception, which went for 25 yards and put the ball on the Dallas 1-yard line. With

Bama Rolls Over Tennessee

By Derek Williamson

The annual rivalry game between Alabama and Tennessee was a one-sided affair, with the Tide cruising to a 45-10 victory over the Vols.

Bama struck early with AJ McCarron hitting Amari Cooper for a 36-yard touchdown pass. Yeldon made a 1-yard touchdown run and Kermit Whitbread added a 20-yard touchdown reception in the Tide's 21-0 lead at the end of the first quarter. Yeldon ran for a second 1-yard touchdown to put the Tide up 28-0. Tennessee was driving late in the half, but Bama's Landon Collins, who gained the start this week in place of injured Vinnie Sunseri, stopped a Vols drive with a 3-yard tackle and a 9-yard sack of quarterback Justin Worley. Tennessee had an opportunity to get on the board in the third quarter when Tramain Foster recovered a Peyton Marble 37-yard field goal. But

that field goal, Bama had scored 304 unanswered points against opponents, a streak that stretched back to the third quarter of the game against Kentucky on Oct. 12. Yeldon later carried the ball for the third 1-yard touchdown of the game. Tennessee finally scored a touchdown in the fourth quarter on a 3-yard run by Jalen Hurd. That touchdown was the first the Tide had allowed at Bryant-Denny stadium this season. Adam Griffith capped off Bama scoring of the game with a 40-yard field goal.

Al McCarron finished the game with 19 of 27 passes completed for 273 yards and two touchdowns. Kenny Drake gained 80 yards on the ground while T.J. Yeldon and Kenyan Drake combined for 126 yards on the ground and one touchdown. The Cowboys only managed to rush for 62 yards, on a area that had to improve with starting running back DeMarco Murray out with injury. Dallas kicker Dan Bailey was perfect on the day, hitting two field goals from 30 yards away and one from 44 yards. The 44-yarder put Dallas up 30-24 with 1:02 left to play.

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The University of Alabama in Huntsville
Arts and Leisure
Pumpkin Patch 
Brews
By David Vail

This week’s beer line-up is overwhelmingly orange. One thing people have not noticed is the volume of pumpkin ales currently on release. Of the many specialty beers brought in, I always find myself pleasantly surprised by this unusual style. These are a few pumpkin ales I’ve tried and seem to be some of the best.

Rogue Farms GYO Pumpkin Patch Ale

Ales in Oregon. It’s a good bit more spicy than the other two come in, along with the fact that it’s available in a six-pack in many stores, as opposed to the demanding and pricey 22 oz bomber bottles the other two come in, and can only be found a couple places in town.

Squatter’s Pumpkin Ale

I couldn’t find an ABV rating for this one anywhere, but it was listed as the highest ABV I’ve come across. It’s a priced 22 oz bomber bottles the other two come in, along with the fact that it’s available in a six-pack in many stores, as opposed to the demanding and pricey 22 oz bomber bottles the other two come in, and can only be found a couple places in town.

The Counselor” Review

By Paul Sorrells

“The Counselor” is the latest film from acclaimed filmmaker Ridley Scott, director of such classics as "Blade Runner" and "Thelma \& Louise." It’s a surrealistic tale of a couple of drug dealers who find themselves in a life-threatening situation. The story is fast-paced and full of action, with a cast that includes some of the biggest names in Hollywood.

McAfee’s character, played by Marlon Brando, is a man with a heart of gold. He is constantly on the lookout for his next big move, but he never loses sight of his family. His character is complex and multi-dimensional, making him a very interesting character to watch.

The musical score by Daniel Pemberton is also impressive. It adds to the overall atmosphere of the film, and helps to build the tension and suspense.

The Counselor” serves as a modern interpretation of the Elmore Leonard novel. The result is a film that is both entertaining and thought-provoking. It is definitely one that deserves multiple viewings before the overall meaning will view other films in similar vein. It is a modern film with weighty themes to ponder and the more interesting films to come out that year.

Review from the Archives

I Walked with a Zombie (1943)

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Let us get small. In this gripping absurd science fiction adventure, average American Frank finds himself gradually but surely declining after apparent nuclear explosion. This proves not only existential problems but also disastrous and social mayhem. The "Candy" life seems inside-out. Becoming as small as a grain, he is thrown into a world of various nihilistic objects, obviously including his own incarnation as a human and feeling and having a personal friend alike that for. The film offers a fascinating speculative perspective, as Candy "the good soldier," "the Candy." "Candy" is a na"
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ACROSS
1 Kindle add-ons
5 Fight
10 Rainy day consequence
13 Wool source
15 Personal strength
16 Georgia's songwriting partner
17 "Slow-to-develop" sort
19 Cover
20 Work in which Figaro is a baritone
21 Spot for a Hindu's tilak
23 "Precursor to adoption, often"
25 Like an unswept fireplace
26 "Ring Cycle" goddess
27 Skip over
29 Hubbub
32 Gloss targets
35 Maui howdy
38 Amigo
39 Pound spenders
41 Postal motto word
42 Coffee shop feature
44 Half a sci-fi sign-off
45 Yard parts
46 Star in Lyra
48 Sphere opening
50 Gray
52 "Bargain hunter's destination"
58 All one can stomach
60 Northwest college town where "Animal House" was filmed
61 Big bird
62 Salad choice, and a literal description of the starts of the answers to starred clues
64 Switch
65 Witch
66 Where many tennis winners are hit
67 Farm structure
68 Father of Moses
69 Word after high or open

DOWN
1 "The Lights": Kanye West song
2 First placegetter to mention Moscow
3 Gourmet spreads
4 Ore refinery accessory
5 Fiscal VIP
6 Bubble bath accessory
7 Hard wear?
8 Music provider
9 On hand
10 "21st birthday, e.g.
11 "Hater of David, in Dickens"
12 Pixels
13 More qualified
14 Impervious
22 Flag down
24 Winter
27 "Highlands hunter"
28 "Money, in Madrid"
29 Reloading
30 "Big TV line shown in a heart"
33 "Newscaster"
34 "Capital SW of Riyadh"
36 "Getaway car for"
39 Lose tensile strength
40 Pumpkin pie spice
42 "Old TV line"
43 "Ticket"
44 Evolves beyond forgiveness
45 "Maintain as true"
47 "Tierney of "ER"
50 Drives the "getaway car for"
51 Mail payment
53 Veggie hotel with a Sphinx recreation
54 "Colleague of Ruth and Sonia"
55 "New Hampshire"
56 "Nineteen"
57 "Lab work"
58 "Village People"
59 "Classic"
60 "Rep's rival"

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