

Home video show challenging theaters for movie fanatics

By Carolyn Bruce

Of the Emerald

Although she admits home videos won't ruin box office business, Terry Thomas of American Family Video concedes videos have "taken a chunk of that business away."

The most popular times to rent are Friday and Saturday nights during the fall and winter when people would rather stay indoors than pile on sweaters, she said.

However, Buzz, from Silver Screen Video, said his business isn't so seasonal. "People rent in the summer too because kids are home and TV is lousy," he said.

Thomas explained that sometimes the "box office bombers" make it big in the video market.

This season's home video hits for American Family Video include "Critters," a movie about voracious aliens who invade earth and eat everything in sight; "The Money Pit," a film about a couple who buys a house that falls apart; and "Down and Out in Beverly Hills," a movie about a couple who takes in a transient in hopes of making him "normal," Thomas said.

American Family Video manager Laura Webber said she thinks people choose the rentals they do to relieve stress, to get the family together or to entertain their children when they're too busy.

Rental hits closer to campus are "Out of Africa," "FX," and "9 Weeks," said Mike Doyle from Agate Video, a store housing 2,000 videos. "During the summer, professors make up most of the business. They generally rent the classics from the 1940s, '50s, and '60s," he added.

Video sales indicate that Eugene residents want comedy



Photo by Shu-Shing Chen

Molly Van Beek and Lisa Weber browse through the increasing selection of videos, which are beginning to compete with traditional theater movies.

and action in their home entertainment, Thomas said.

"But quality is found in the theatre," said a Bijou theatre employee. "The picture and the sound are better there."

"Of course you have to deal with an audience, which you may not always want to do," he added.

Hildy Casey, a University student with the EMU Cultural Forum, agrees that it is more exciting to see movies on the big screen.

"It's more of an event and definitely worth the extra money to go out," she added.

However, enough people prefer the bigger wallet to the bigger screen to allow Doyle to report sales of 18,000 to 19,000

movie rentals per year for Agate Video.

Customers showing either major credit cards or driver's license and social security card can usually rent movies for about \$2 per night. Videos sell for an average of \$70.

Those eagerly waiting for "Top Gun" to explode onto their television sets instead of fighting the big screen audience will continue to wait.

"People have been asking for "Top Gun" but there is usually a minimum, six-month time difference between the box office stage and the cassette stage," Thomas said.

Not even "E.T." has made it to our living rooms yet, she added.

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