

Rhythm & Reviews

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Eat, drink and be merry!

Check out the University of Oregon Student's Guide to Entertainment in the Eugene community



Emerald

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Entertainment Thumbs



ROTTEN RECENT FILM TITLES:

The recent trend of non-descript, unoriginal movie titles in the action/suspense genre has got to stop. Read this list and then try to remember which is which: 'Extreme Measures,' 'Desperate Measures,' 'Deep Impact,' 'Mercury Rising,' and on, and on.

NORM AXED FROM SNL:

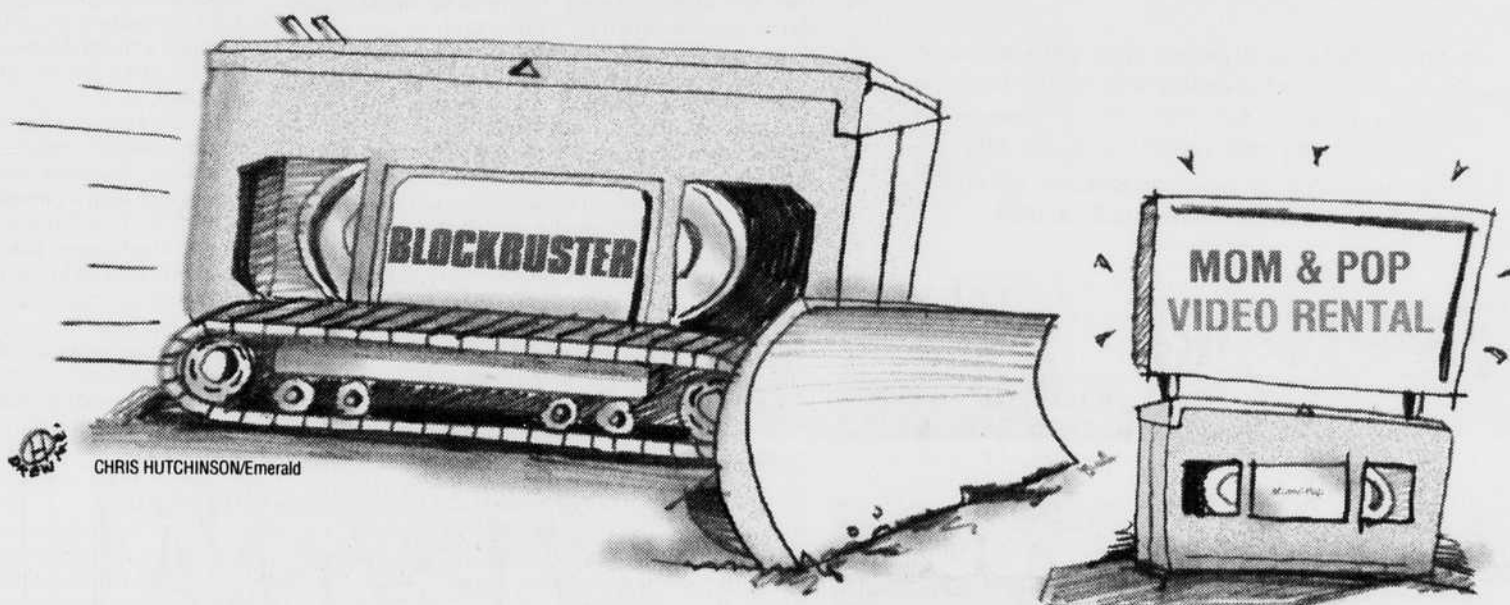
The dry, sardonic wit of Norm MacDonald is noticeably missing from 'Saturday Night Live's' Weekend Update segment. It's rumored that he got canned because an NBC executive didn't think he was funny. You know what's really not funny anymore: 'Saturday Night Live.'

LEGAL DRAMA CROSSOVER:

So this guy David E. Kelly is really high on his two shows — the highly successful 'Ally McBeal' and the less-than-stellar-show 'The Practice,' and he decides it would be cool to have one show's storyline continued on the other. The only problem is that 'Ally' is on Fox and 'The Practice' is on ABC. Needless to say, the Fox network affiliates were less than thrilled that their show was promoting a switch to ABC at 10 p.m. Dumb idea, Dave.

'THE NEW LOVE BOAT' ON UPN:
Enough said.

THE DEATH of Mom & Pop Video Stores?



Blockbuster's stock titles drop to 99 cents, encroaching on independent video stores

By Chris Kenning
Student Activities Reporter

When word spread back in January that video rental chain Blockbuster was dropping the price of its stock video rentals to 99 cents for five nights, more than a few local, independent video store owners began to sweat.

Some owners worried that Blockbuster would monopolize the market on the more dated video rentals that constitute the bread-and-butter income for independent stores such as Silver Screen, Premier Video and Flicks & Picks.

"Price strategies like that can put a bite on the independents. Since

the mom-and-pop places don't get as many new releases as the chains, they really depend on older titles," said David Lund, owner of Eugene's Premier Video.

Traditionally, corporate chains have made most of their money on new releases.

"The smaller stores just don't have the deep pockets Blockbuster does" to be able to afford as many new releases, he said.

Sheri Blumenstein, manager of the Willamette Blockbuster, said rentals of stock titles increased 20 percent at her store after the price drop. New releases remained priced at \$2.99 a day.

But four months of dirt cheap Blockbuster prices haven't made the dent in the independent rental business some expected.

"Nothing has really changed for us since the price drop," said Dave

Mendonca, owner of Flicks & Pics. One reason, he said, was the loyal base of customers who value the wider selection and more personal atmosphere.

"We've got more art films and classics. Plus, in Eugene, local people really like to support local businesses," he said, explaining he's not worried about a Hollywood Video that's being built only a half mile away.

Hollywood Entertainment is planning to open a new store at 29th Avenue and Willamette street and one in Springfield on Mohawk Boulevard.

Still, the expansionary tactics and pricing strategies that favor the deep pockets of a national corporation can sink other stores that don't have the number of titles his does, Mendonca said.

Others echo his uneasy attitude

toward chain expansion but agree that, so far, price undercutting hasn't affected them either.

"We've been offering dollar rentals for years already," said Buzz Kawders, who owns Silver Screen Video. He said one of the reasons Blockbuster could drop prices so low is that it doesn't make much off the old titles.

"They really don't impact the bottom line. You could practically give them away," Kawders said. New releases cost stores an average of \$75 and \$90 per tape.

He said Blockbuster and Hollywood Video basically compete against each other, while the independents fill specific niche markets such as foreign, cult and classic cinema.

"The indies stay unaffected be-

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University student-director 'tumbles' into success

By Eric Collins
Freelance Entertainment Reporter

Standing in the back row of The Majestic Theatre in Corvallis last weekend, Jesse Lawler felt out of place. His usual seat in the front row was taken, his friends weren't sitting by him, and it was his movie instead of "Titanic" or "The Full Monty" that was on the big screen.

What was once just a concept for the 21-year-old recent University graduate during the summer of 1996 has exploded into an hour-long, black-and-white feature film following the exploits of Jack Kreiger, a groin-kicking, trenchcoat-wearing, mob-fighting detective.

Almost two years in the making, "Tumbler: From the Files of Kreiger P.I." was written, directed and edited by Lawler, a computer science graduate, with the help of 50 University students and Eugene natives.

Lawler and crew received a thumbs-up from the movie's first critics: friends, family and members of the Corvallis community who watched the film last weekend at The Majestic Theatre. This weekend "Tumbler" is playing at the Bijou Art Cinemas on Friday and Saturday

at 1:30 p.m. The EMU Cultural Forum is also presenting the film in 180 PLC on April 24 and 25 at 8 p.m.

Lawler was prompted to action by his incessant infatuation with filmmaking, coupled with an ominous honors thesis deadline from the Robert D. Clark Honors College. For years he had gone from fiddling around with dad's video camera to writing scripts and making half-hour short films with his high school and college friends.

Finding a way to appease both interests came to him in 1996, as he watched yet another one of his several video projects. The color was running together from so much editing. The solution was black and white film. Instantly, detective Jack Kreiger, an invention from a previous video, sprung to mind.

Script written and thesis approved, Lawler found funding for the project with Corvallis-based Groovie Moovies and producer Paul Ahrens in the spring of 1997. However, Lawler had to stifle the urge to follow in the footsteps of his idol, recent academy award-winning di-



COURTESY PHOTO

'Tumbler' is about a mob-fighting detective.

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