

# Who Rules the Range?

## Cowboys vs. Cattlemen

**OPEN RANGE:** Directed by Kevin Costner. Written by Craig Storper. Produced by Costner and David Valdes, Jake Eberts. Executive producers Arman Bernstein, Craig Storper. Cinematographer, James Muro. Production design, Gae Buckley. Editors, Michael J. Duthie, Miklos Wright. Costumes, John Bloomfield. Music, Michael Kamen. Visual effects supervisor, David J. Negron Jr. Starring Robert Duvall, Kevin Costner, Annette Bening, with Michael Gambon, Michael Jeter, Diego Luna, James Russo, Abraham Benrubi, Dean McDermott and Kim Coates. Touchstone Pictures, 2003. R. 135 minutes.

Kevin Costner's third film as director and star pays homage to the classic Westerns he loves. While Clint Eastwood redefined Hollywood's vision of the Western with the bracing realism of his 1992 drama, *Unforgiven*, Costner's lingering images of landscape, cattle and the sun-burned cowpokes who ride the range reinforce the genre's idealism. Costner's nod to cornpone sentimentality — saving the puppy from the flood — escapes the label of heavy-handed, but it belongs to the nostalgic Americana embraced by many moviegoers who love old Westerns.

As the film opens, Boss Spearman (Robert Duvall), Charley Waite (Cosner), Button (Diego Luna) and Mose (Abraham Benrubi) herd their cattle into pristine valley pastureland so green and graceful it looks fake. A spectacular mountain range provides aesthetic balance to the verdant grasses, and both man and beast welcome the sight. Later when a massive thunder-

storm turns their campsite into a sodden, muddy mess and spooks both livestock and horses, the guys sit under a tarp, next to a fire and play cards. How idyllic is prairie life!

But not for long. A power-mad cattle baron, Denton Baxter (Michael Gambon), bullies people in the nearby town into submission through his nasty hired guns. After Mose fails to return from a trip to town, Boss and Charley check the pistols in their holsters, grab their rifles and saddle up.

Turns out Mose got beat up while corrupt Sheriff Poole (James Russo) twiddled his thumbs. The cowboys get their man out of jail, but Baxter warns the "freegrazers" to get on their horses and ride out of the county. But before leaving town, they stop by the local doctor's place to get Mose patched up. Sue Barlow (Annette Bening) lets them in and cleans up the wounded man until Doc Barlow (Dean McDermott) arrives — long enough for Charley and Sue to exchange meaningful glances.

Crusty old cuss like Boss knows what's up, but Charley is convinced that he is too bad a man for a woman like Sue to even consider. Takes the whole dang movie for him to come to a different opinion. Meanwhile the conflict between Baxter's thugs and the wranglers heats up, leading eventually to a whopper of a shoot-out.



CHARLEY WAITE (KEVIN COSTNER) AND BOSS SPEARMAN (ROBERT DUVAL) TAKE IT EASY IN CAMP.

CHRIS LARGE, BUENA VISTA, TOUCHSTONE PICTURES, 2003.

OK, all of this is pretty predictable, right? We've seen the cowboys versus despotic landowners played out lots of times. But here's the rub. The very industry armed cattleman Baxter tries to save from entrepreneurs like Boss was built on free grazing. By 1887 Baxter's sort would become relics along with the lone cowboys like Boss and Charley they displaced, after farmers discovered a product that radically changed the politics of wealth in the West: barbed wire.

In *Open Range's* indeterminate, post-Civil War period, barbed wire apparently has not yet come to Harmonville's general store, although Swiss chocolate and Cuban cigars have. But it is understood that good

men like Boss and Charley cannot stand by and watch a tinhorn despot like Baxter get away with imposing his will on their lifestyle. This metaphor underlies the Western as genre and this Western in particular.

Recently I've observed politicians who lack Boss and Charley's self-awareness and whose goals are no more moral than Baxter's use and abuse this metaphor. While *Open Range* may cater to our nostalgia for the good old days, it's always smart to carefully examine the message you're being asked to swallow.

A good Western despite its flaws, *Open Range* is now playing at Cinemark and Cinema World. **EW**

## movie clips

### OPENING OR RETURNING:

**League of Extraordinary Gentlemen:** Based on the comic book miniseries by Alan Moore, directed by Steve Norrington, the movie stars Sean Connery, Peta Wilson, Shane West, Stuart Townsend, Naseeruddin Shah, and Tony Curran. PG-13. Movies 12.

**Marci X:** Lisa Kudrow plays a spoiled daughter who has to run her dad's music company after his death. Damon Wayans is a rapper with a bad reputation and a dicey CD. Directed by Richard Benjamin, written by Paul Rudnick, comedy also stars Jane Krakowski, Christine Baranski. R. Cinemark.

**Medallion:** Jackie Chan action comedy co-stars Lee Evans and Claire Forlani. A mysterious medallion turns police detective Chan into a superhero, but the bad guys want it back. Gordon Chan directs. PG-13. Cinema World. Cinemark.

**My Boss's Daughter:** Comedy directed by David Zucker stars Ashton Kutcher, whose boss, Terrence Stamp, asks him to look after his house for a night. But he has company, including the beautiful Tara Reid and strange visitors. PG-13. Cinemark. Cinema World.

**Rugrats Go Wild:** Nickelodeon's animated diaper set meets up wit the Wild Thornberrys after being washed ashore to a desert island from a storm-wracked cruise ship. Directed by Norton Virgien and John Eng. Bruce Willis voices Spike the dog. PG. Movies 12.

**Twenty-eight Days Later:** Danny Boyle (*Trainspotting*) directs scary horror film set in a post-cataclysmic future, where a deadly virus sweeps through earth's population, leaving people in a chronic state of killer rage. Stars Christopher Eccleston, Cillian Murphy, Naomie Harris, Megan Burns and Brendan Gleeson. New possible ending. R. Movies 12.

**Films open the Friday following date of EW publication unless otherwise noted. See archived reviews at www.eugeneweekly.com.**

### CONTINUING:

**American Wedding:** Jim (Jason Biggs) and Michelle (Alyson Hannigan) are getting married. Now if their friends and family will just stay on their best behavior. Right. American Pie's crude humor lives on. Also stars January Jones, Fred Willard, Eugene Levy, Thomas Ian

Nicholas, Seann William Scott and Eddie Kaye Thomas. R. Cinemark.

**Anger Management:** Adam Sandler plays a man who must undergo anger management. His shrink, played by Jack Nicholson, moves in with him. Also stars Marisa Tomei. PG-13. Movies 12.

**Bruce Almighty:** Jim Carrey, Morgan Freeman and Jennifer Aniston star in this tale of a at TV reporter, who has a really bad day, rages against God and receives more than he expected. PG-13. Movies 12.

**Chicago:** Broadway spectacular directed by Rob Marshall stars Renee Zellweger and Catherine Zeta-Jones as killer dames behind bars who compete for tabloid coverage. With Queen Latifah, John C. Reilly and Richard Gere. 2002 Academy Awards for best picture, supporting actress Zeta-Jones, art direction, sound, editing and costumes. PG 13. Movies 12. **Online archives.**

**Daddy Day Care:** Eddie Murphy and Jeff Garlin lose their jobs and can't afford day care for their sons, so they open their own facility. Comedy directed by Steve Carr also stars Anjelica Huston, Steve Zahn and Regina King. PG. Movies 12.

**Finding Nemo:** Pixar's computer-animated fantasy of two Clownfish, Marlin and his son Nemo, who get separated in the Great Barrier Reef. Written and directed by Andrew Stanton (*A Bug's Life*), with voices by Albert Brooks, Ellen DeGeneres, Willem Dafoe, Geoffrey Rush, Allison Janney. Very highly recommended. G. Cinemark. **Online archives.**

**Freaky Friday:** Jamie Lee Curtis and Lindsay Lohan play a quarreling mother and daughter who accidentally switch bodies. Ooops! Mark Harmon plays the mom's fiancé. Directed by Mark Waters, based on Mary Rodgers' book. Opens Wed. 8/6. Cinemark. Cinema World. **Online archives.**

**Freddy vs. Jason:** The ultimate celebrity death match: Freddy Kruger (Robert Englund) takes on Jason "The Face Mask" Voorhees (Ken Kerzinger), in this film directed by Ronny Yu. R. Cinemark, Cinema World.

**Grind:** Four skaters follow their idol on his summer tour in an attempt to get noticed, sponsored and become stars themselves. Directed by Casey La Scala; stars Mike Vogel, Vince Vieluf, Adam Brody, Joey Kern and Jennifer Morrison. PG-13. Cinemark. **Holes:** Adventures digging holes at Camp Green Lake for Stanley, who comes from a strange family that's

been cursed for generations. Embarrassingly, Jon Voight, Sigourney Weaver and Tim Blake Nelson co-star. PG. Movies 12. **Online archives.**

**Hollywood Homicide:** Fast-paced action comedy directed by Ron Shelton stars Harrison Ford and Josh Hartnett as cops, with Isaiah Washington, Lena Olin, Bruce Greenwood, Master P., Lolita Davidovich, Dwight Yoakum, Keith David and Martin Landau. PG-13. Movies 12. **Online archives.**

**Hulk, The:** Director Ang Lee's action-adventure adaptation of the Marvel Comics series hits darker notes than usual superhero comics. Scientist's (Eric Bana) inner demons change him after a catastrophic experiment. Written by James Schamus, it also stars Jennifer Connelly, Nick Nolte, Josh Lucas and Sam Elliott. PG-13. Movies 12. **Online archives.**

**Johnny English:** Inept Johnny English (Rowan Atkinson) tries to solve who has stolen the crown jewels from the Tower of London. Accompanied by his assistant Bough (Ben Miller), Johnny bungles his way through one scrape after another. Directed by Peter Howett. PG. Movies 12.

**Lara Croft Tomb Raider: The Cradle of Life:** Angelina Jolie stars as action heroine Lara Croft who saves the world, again, from unspeakable evil. Directed by Jan De

Bont, also stars Gerard Butler and Noah Taylor. PG-13. Cinemark.

**Legally Blonde 2: Red, White and Blonde:** Reese Witherspoon is Elle Woods, Harvard Law, class of 2001, now in DC on behalf of pet animal's rights. Luke Wilson's her boyfriend, Jennifer Coolidge's her manicurist, Sally Field and Bob Newhart are new. Charles Herman-Wurmfeld directs. PG-13. Movies 12.

**Mighty Wind, A:** Christopher Guest's (*Best in Show*) pseudo-documentary narrative about a folk music reunion show is one of his craftiest satirical offerings. Stars the usual suspects: Eugene Levy, Parker Posey, Bob Balaban. Harry Shearer, Michael McKean and Guest himself. Highly recommended. PG-13. Movies 12. **Online archives.**

**Open Range:** Kevin Costner directs and stars with Robert Duvall in this traditional Western. A corrupt cattle baron (Michael Gambon) forces the cowboys to take up arms. Also stars Annette Bening, whose restrained performance is warm and real; Abraham Benrubi, Diego Luna. Recommended. Cinema World. Cinemark. **See review this issue.**

**Pirates of the Caribbean:** Non-stop adventure directed by Gore Verbinski stars Johnny Depp, Geoffrey Rush, Orlando Bloom and Keira Knightley. Depp sashays, Rush dissembles, Bloom fences and Knightley swashbuckles. Depp and Rush's over the top performances

are great. Recommended. PG-13. Cinemark. Cinema World. **Online archives.**

**S.W.A.T. Police Special Weapons and Tactics unit buddies Samuel L. Jackson and Colin Farrell star in this action-thriller based on the 1970s TV series. Also with Michelle Rodriguez, LL Cool J. PG-13. Cinemark.**

**Seabiscuit:** A has-been racehorse becomes America's Depression-era success story. Seabiscuit gets support from jockey Tobey Maguire, trainer Chris Cooper, and owner Jeff Bridges. Written, directed by Gary Ross based on Laura Hillenbrand's best-selling non-fiction book, it also stars Elizabeth Banks, William H. Macy. Highest recommendations. PG-13. Cinemark. Cinema World. **Online archives.**

**Spy Kids 3D: Game Over:** Alexa Vega and Daryl Sabara continue to embrace the family business — spying — but this time the Toymaker (Sylvester Stallone) may be their nemesis. Also, Antonio Banderas and Carla Gugino. Special 3-D viewing glasses required. Written and directed by Robert Rodriguez. PG. Cinemark.

**Two Fast Two Furious:** John Singleton directs this sequel action adventure about street racing. Stars Paul Walker, Tyrese Gibson, Cole Hauser, Eva Mendes. PG-13. Movies 12.

**Uptown Girl:** Brittany Murphy stars as the freewheeling daughter of a

late rock legend, but when her inheritance is stolen, she's forced to get a job as a nanny to precocious Ray Schleine (Dakota Fanning), an "eight-year-old going on forty." In a comedic battle of wills, each discovers in the other a true friend. Directed by Boas Yakin. Also stars Heather Locklear. PG-13. Cinemark. Cinema World.

**Whale Rider:** Winner of the World Cinema award at Sundance 2003, Niki Caro's Maori drama about a spunky girl, played by Keisha Castle-Hughes), who decides to show her beloved but authoritarian grandfather that she is able to lead the tribe, despite being a girl. Wonderful, inspiring drama features the exquisite New Zealand coast. A don't-miss movie. PG-13. Bijou. **Online archives.**

**Winged Migration:** Documentary directed by Jacques Perrin shows many bird species making round trip migrations of up to 10,000 miles up close. Ingenious ultralight aircraft let movie's 13 cinematographers fly right next to, in front of or below the birds they were filming. A moving film. Highest recommendations. Bijou. **See review this issue.**

Bijou Art Cinemas (686-2458)  
Cinema World 8 (342-6536)  
Cinemark 17 (746-5202)  
Movies 12 (741-1231)

## VIDEO CLIPS

### NEW RELEASES ON VIDEO

Releases subject to change. Available the Tuesday following date of EW publication, sometimes sooner. See archived movie reviews at [www.eugeneweekly.com](http://www.eugeneweekly.com)

**Chasing Papi** (2003) Stars Roselyn Sanchez, Sofia Vergara, Jaci Velasquez, Eduardo Verastegui, D.L.Hughley, Freddy Rodriguez, Joy Enriquez, Lisa Vidal. DVD includes commentary by director, cast; bloopers; extended scenes; music vid.

**Desperado** (1995) Robert Rodriguez directs Antonio Banderas, Salma Hayek, Cheech Marin, Steve Buscemi, Quentin Tarantino. DVD includes director's commentary and "Anatomy of a Shootout" featurette.

**El Mariachi Special Edition** (1992) Robert Rodriguez's surprise hit stars Carlos Gallardo, Consuelo Gomez. DVD includes director's commentary plus his award-winning short, *Bedhead*.

**"ER: The Complete First Season"**: 4-disc DVD covers all 25 episodes plus pilot. Michael Crichton commentary, interactive character profiles, "patient" histories, outtakes, unreleased scenes and more.

**Iron Giant, The** (1999): Animated feature about a 1950s small town boy who befriends a giant metal robot that's fallen into the sea and protects him from Cold War patriotic zealots. Voices of Jennifer Aniston, Harry Connick Jr., Cloris Leachman and others. Clever enough to entertain both kids and adults, film also tackles complex issues. Recommended. 2-disc DVD. PG.

**Levity:** Despite its stellar cast, Billy Bob Thornton's "ostentatious restraint and his bottomless melancholy cry out for a mask and cape," writes *NYTimes* critic A.O. Scott. Ed Solomon directs Thornton, Kirsten Dunst, Morgan Freeman and Holly Hunter. R.

**Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers:** Directed and re-imagined by Peter Jackson, part two of J.R.R. Tolkien's trilogy continues. New characters, a surprise return and great battles. Director Peter Jackson's second masterpiece. Very highest recommendations. 2002 Academy Awards for sound editing, visual effects. DVD extras include 10-min. preview of *The Return of the King*. PG-13. **Online archives.**

**National Lampoon's Animal House Double Secret Probation Edition** (1978) Special 25th anniversary edition. Directed by John Landis, this cult classic shot in Eugene and Cottage Grove stars the late John Belushi, Tim Matheson, Stephen Furst, Tom Hulce, Peter Riegert, Karen Allen, Donald Sutherland, John Vernon, Verna Bloom, Mark Metcalf, Bruce McGill, Mary Louise Weller, Martha Smith, Kevin Bacon, James Daughton, James Wildoes, Cesare Danova. DVD extras include Landis's "Where Are They Now?" featurette.

**Poolhall Junkies** (2002) Stars Chazz Palminteri, Rick Schroder, Rod Steiger, Michael Rosenbaum, Mars Callahan, Alison Eastwood, Christopher Walken. DVD includes commentary by director, star Callahan and writer Chris Corsio.

**Raising Victor Vargas:** Peter Sollett's indie romantic, coming-or-age comedy about 16-year-old Victor (Victor Rasuk) who wants to go with Judy (Judy Marte) but first must win her trust. Victor's grandmother (Altagracia Guzman) doesn't know what's happening to the three kids she's raised. Funny, touching and terrific performances by fresh, new faces. Highly recommended. R. **Online archives.**

Next week: The Ballad of Little Jo, The Breakfast Club, The Endurance, Identity, A Man Apart, Monty Python's Meaning of Life, Once Were Warriors and Titanic (1953).