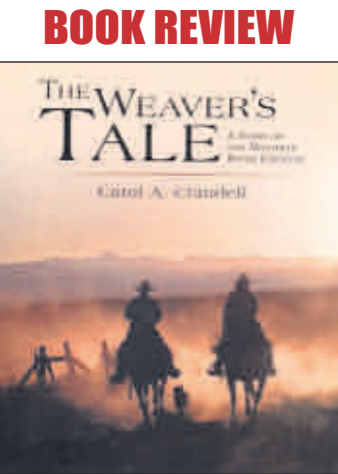




Practical romance

A bodice-ripper it ain't. Sure, Carol Crandell's new Western offering "The Weaver's Tale" has all the right ingredients for a romance novel — a lovely widow struggling to keep up with her ranch work and her three young kids; a rugged down-on-his-luck cowboy searching for a home; kindling love and flaring jealousy; and the right mix of minor characters to keep the story clicking along. What it doesn't have is the extremes of emotion, intrigue and danger that you expect from your typical romance novel, which suits me just fine.

Heroine Summer Jackson is mourning the accidental death of her husband and struggling to keep up with the responsibilities of a working cattle ranch and three rambunctious youngsters. Tanner Greywolf has hit rock bottom when a broken leg puts him out of work. Summer offers Tanner a job and he soon integrates himself into the Jacksons' life in the harsh but beautiful Malheur River country.

The difference in Crandell's scenario is that she doesn't use the typical romance formula of girl meets boy, girl and boy hate each other, danger ensues, boy saves girl, they live happily ever after. Summer and Tanner like and respect each other, and when feelings do start to appear, they are practical about it instead of simply falling into bed with each other at the drop of a cowboy hat. While this is not an overtly religious book, the Christian values that permeate the story shine through. The main characters stop and think about the consequences of their actions, and the children are treated like their opinions matter. It was also refreshing that, while there was enough action to keep the story moving, there wasn't imminent destruction around every corner. Crandell captures ranch life in a way that both romanticizes it and grounds it at the same time.

Carol Crandell is a retired language arts teacher living and writing in Salem.

"The Weaver's Tale," by Carol A. Crandell. © 2014, Archway Publishing.

Film Reviews Sweet 'Paddington' is just right

Paddington Bear. How well we know him. He's cuddly, he's loyal, he's sensitive. He's well-traveled — but loves to stay home, too. And he can whip up a mean homemade marmalade.

As Mom would say, what's not to love?

And one can say precisely the same of the engaging new "Paddington," written and directed by Paul King and based of course on the famous 1958 book by Michael Bond. It doesn't try to be too clever. Or too sweet. Or too dark, for that matter, though there's plenty of mischief, thanks to Nicole Kidman, channeling her inner villainess.

"Paddington," PG, 89 minutes, ★★★★★

'Blackhat' clicks with urgency

Michael Mann's "Blackhat" begins with the camera slowly descending from above Earth, diving down into a nuclear facility, and submerging into the underlying, twisting maze of electronic circuitry. A single, glowing blip — a bit of malicious code, we soon learn — invades and proliferates.

In "Blackhat," Mann has returned to modern day from "Public Enemies" for an especially timely tale of cyberterrorism, but his grim fascination with the poetry and choreography of violence is the same, even if it comes by pixels rather than pistols.

"Blackhat," R, 133 minutes. ★★★★★.

Laugh it up, Hermiston

By TAMMY MALGESINI East Oregonian

An evening of laughter brings back a familiar face to the Melonville Comedy Festival stage.

Brad Upton, who has performed at the Hermiston event in 1995 and 2008, is returning to headline the 22nd annual show. In addition, David Crowe and Duane Goad will get the laughs going.

"I think they are pretty funny," said Warren Smith, organizer of the event. "It will be fun and it won't be so much gross and disgusting humor."

Initially a fundraiser for the Umatilla County Fair, Smith continued the tradition of bringing top comedians to town after the fair board decided to drop the event.

"As long as we have an audience and we can sell enough tickets, we will keep it going," Smith said.

The Melonville Comedy Festival is Saturday, Jan. 24 with the doors opening at 7 p.m. for the 8 p.m. show at the Hermiston Conference Center, 415 S. Highway 395. Tickets for the 21-and-over event are \$35 per person. There will be a no-host bar. In addition, the local Special Olympics program will sell food to raise money for its athletic programs. Tickets will be sold at the



Contributed photo
Brad Upton is the headliner for the 22nd annual Melonville Comedy Festival. The Saturday, Jan. 24 show is at the Hermiston Conference Center.

door and are available in advance at the conference center.

Upton is a past winner of the Las Vegas Comedy Festival and has appeared at Caesar's Palace as part of the HBO Comedy Festival. Based in Seattle, Upton has been a stand-up comic for 35 years, includ-

ing several years as a regular guest on National Public Radio's Rewind program.

Also hailing from Seattle, Crowe has made people laugh for more than two decades. He's won several comedy competitions and is a regular guest on the Bob and Tom radio



Crowe



Goad

show. Crowe also has appeared on Comedy Central and other TV specials.

Born in Canada and now based in Seattle, Goad has worked in many top clubs in the United States. He has opened for Lewis Black and Jim Gaffigan and appeared in numerous TV commercials.

"These types of comics don't just do the clubs, they do the radio shows and big shows," Smith said. "It's a good night out for people to have a good time."

For more information, contact Smith at 541-561-7488, melonvillecomedyfestival@gmail.com or visit www.melonvillecomedyfestival.com.

Contact Community Editor Tammy Malgesini at tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4539.

Festivals

- Tri-Cities Sportsmen Show**
- Jan. 16 1-7 p.m.; Jan. 17 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Jan. 18, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
 - TRAC Center, 6600 Burden Blvd., Pasco
 - www.shuylarproductions.com
 - \$9/adults, \$4.50/ages 6-12 (and seniors on Friday). For lovers of the outdoors, features the latest in outdoor equipment, outdoor activity tips, interactive displays, seminars, door prizes.
- Eagle Cap Extreme Sled Dog Race**
- Jan 21-24
 - Wallowa County
 - www.eaglecapextreme.com
 - Events free except awards banquet. Race Central & Kids' Corner at the Joseph Community Center; vet checks (which provide opportunities to meet dogs and mushers) Jan. 21 at 9 a.m. Main Street, Joseph and 1 p.m. Main Street, Enterprise; banquet Saturday at 6:30 p.m. at the Joseph Community Center (cost \$20/adults, \$8/ages 5-12).
- Tri-Cities Family Expo**
- Jan. 23 noon-8 p.m.; Jan. 24, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
 - TRAC Center, 6600 Burden Blvd., Pasco
 - www.tcfamilyexpo.com
 - \$5/adults, \$3/seniors, military with ID, \$1/kids. Sponsored by Kadlec Regional Medical Center, the event features vendors, entertainment (clown act, Ronald McDonald magic show, clogging) and activities (dentistry for kids, dance connection, dance party and Zumba) for all ages and a youth mentoring seminar.
- Mom and Baby Expo**
- Saturday, Feb. 7; 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
 - Three Rivers Convention Center, 7016 W. Grandridge Blvd., Kennewick
 - www.momandbabyexpo.com
 - \$5/adults, free/12 and under. Donate a package of diapers for free admission. Vendors, toddler nutrition, car seat safety, cloth diapers

Art

- "All Things Bright and Beautiful"**
- Monday-Thursdays, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.
 - Betty Feves Memorial Gallery, BMCC, 2411 N.W. Carden Ave., Pendleton
 - Free. Gallery also open by appointment by calling 541-278-5952. Runs through Feb. 19.
- ArtWORKz**
- Monday - Saturdays, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. opens Jan. 23
 - Tamástlikt Cultural Institute, near Wildhorse Resort & Casino.
 - www.tamastlikt.org
 - \$10/adults, \$9/senior citizens, \$6/youths, free/5 and under or \$25/family of four. In its fourth year, the youth art show highlights area youth artists. Awards reception is Saturday, Feb. 14 at 1 p.m. Runs through Feb. 28.
- "EOU Staff Exhibition"**
- Monday-Fridays, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.
 - Wednesday, Jan. 14 gallery talk; 5-7 p.m.
 - Nightingale Gallery, Eastern Oregon University, La Grande
 - www.eou.edu/art/faculty
 - Free. Features the works of Eastern Oregon University visual arts professors, including Peter C. Johnson, sculptural ceramics; Susan Murrell, abstract installations and painting; Cory Peeke, remnant-imagery collage; and Michael Sell, photography. Runs through Jan. 30.
- Kids + Art = Fun!**
- Saturday, Jan 31; 1-4 p.m.
 - Tamástlikt Cultural Institute, near Wildhorse Resort & Casino.
 - www.tamastlikt.org
 - Free. Pepsi Primetime@the Museum, held in conjunction with the ArtWORKz youth show and competition. Kids can drop in during the afternoon and participate in different craft stations for a hands-on art-making afternoon. Participants will leave with one or more of their very own creations.
- Peterson's New Year's Show**
- Tuesday-Sundays, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
 - Peterson's Gallery and Chocolatier, 1925 Main St., Baker City
 - www.petersonsgallery.net
 - Free. Features most requested artists in 2014, including Paul Hoelscher, a painter from Baker City; Pattie Young, a metal artist from Boise; and Terri Axness, a painter and ceramic artist from Haines. Runs through Jan. 31.

WHAT TO DO

- Blue Grass Jam**
- Saturday, Jan. 17, 3 p.m. All ages. No cover.
 - Great Pacific Wine & Coffee Co., 403 S. Main St., Pendleton
- Beat Frequency**
- Saturday, Jan. 17, 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. No cover
 - Wildhorse Sports Bar at Wildhorse Resort & Casino, off Highway 331, Mission.
- Alder Street All Stars**
- Saturday, Jan. 17, 8 p.m. All ages. No cover.
 - Great Pacific Wine & Coffee Co., 403 S. Main St., Pendleton
- Retro Ed**
- Saturday, Jan. 17; 9 p.m. to midnight. 21-and-over. No cover
 - Hamley Saloon, 8 S.E. Court Ave., Pendleton
- Cabin Fever Concert**
- Sunday, Jan. 18; 3 p.m.
 - Hermiston Conference Center, 415 S. Highway 395
 - www.facebook.com/pages/Cabin-Fever-Concert-Hermiston-Oregon/112003375533063
 - \$10. John Wambeke & Friends present a musical variety show featuring local talent.
- Brass Fire Band**
- Wednesday, Jan. 21, 7 p.m. All ages. No cover.
 - Great Pacific Wine & Coffee Co., 403 S. Main St., Pendleton
- Cherry Road Gang**
- Friday, Jan. 23; Saturday, Jan. 24, 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. No cover
 - Wildhorse Sports Bar at Wildhorse Resort & Casino, off Highway 331, Mission.
- Kelley James**
- Friday, Jan. 23; 9 p.m. to midnight. 21-and-over. No cover
 - Hamley Saloon, 8 S.E. Court Ave., Pendleton

- Tyler Scruggs**
- Saturday, Jan. 24; 9 p.m. to midnight. 21-and-over. No cover
 - Hamley Saloon, 8 S.E. Court Ave., Pendleton
- Cabin Fever Concert**
- Sunday, Jan. 25; 3 p.m.
 - American Legion Hall, 325 W. Second St., lone
 - \$15, advance tickets required (purchase at lone/Hepner branches of the Bank of Eastern Oregon Dutch Oven Dessert Show. John Wambeke & Friends take their musical variety show on the road to lone. Includes the lone pep band.
- Nick Jaina**
- Friday, Jan. 30, 7 p.m. All ages. No cover.
 - Great Pacific Wine & Coffee Co., 403 S. Main St., Pendleton
- 4More**
- Friday, Jan. 30; Saturday, Jan. 31, 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. No cover
 - Wildhorse Sports Bar at Wildhorse Resort & Casino, off Highway 331, Mission.
- Fusion**
- Saturday, Jan. 31; 7:30 p.m.
 - Vert Auditorium, 480 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton
 - www.oregoneastsymphony.org
 - \$20/adults, \$15/students., seniors, \$45/family. James Dean Kindle & the Eastern Oregon Playboys reunite with the Oregon East Symphony & Chorale for an evening of lush, symphonic pop country. Dakota Brown opens the show.

- Thursdays and Saturdays, 8 p.m.
 - The Pheasant, 149 E. Main St., Hermiston
- Mac's Trivia Night**
- Thursdays, 8 p.m. No cover
 - Mac's Bar & Grill, 1400 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton
 - 21 and older. Teams of 2-8 compete in trivia contest with other teams. Live host and prizes.
- Wine tasting**
- Fridays, 4-8 p.m.
 - Sno Road Winery, 111 W. Main St., Echo.
- Open Mic**
- First/third Friday each month, 8 p.m. to midnight
 - The Packard Tavern, 118 S.E. Court Ave., Pendleton
- Karaoke**
- Fridays 8 p.m. (9 p.m. if game on)
 - Riverside Sports Bar, 1501 Sixth St., Umatilla
- DJ and dancing**
- Fridays, 8 p.m.
 - The Pheasant, 149 E. Main St., Hermiston

Theater, stage & film

- Koontz Manor Murder Mystery**
- Saturday, Jan. 31; 7 p.m.
 - Sno Road Winery, 111 W. Main St., Echo
 - Single/\$25, couple/\$40. Wine, hors d'oeuvres, intrigue. Seating is limited, contact 541-376-0421, info@snoroadwinery.com
- "Memphis The Musical"**
- Tuesday, Feb. 3, 8p.m.
 - Toyota Center, Kennewick
 - www.ticketmaster.com
 - \$47-\$67. From the underground dance clubs of 1950s Memphis comes a musical that bursts off the stage with explosive dancing, irresistible songs and a thrilling tale of fame and forbidden love.
- "Beauty and the Beast"**
- Register by Friday, Feb. 6
 - Hermiston Parks & Recreation, 180 N.W. Second St.
 - www.hermistonrecreation.com

Oscar nominations add intrigue, not diversity

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

The Oscar nominations added intrigue if not diversity to an Academy Awards race by favoring one late-season release ("American Sniper") over another ("Selma").

The flip-flopping of fortunes, however, did little to dislodge the humble coming-of-age epic "Boyhood," which has steadily grown into the movie to beat in a little-seen Oscar field, closely followed by Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu's back-stage ego trip "Birdman."

The two films solidified themselves as Oscar favorites with best-picture and best-director nominations: "Boyhood" chalked up its expected six nominations, including supporting nods for Patricia Arquette and Ethan Hawke. And "Birdman, (or the Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance)" landed a co-leading nine nominations, including best actor for Michael Keaton.

"I don't care how much people tell you: 'It's gonna happen.' When it happens, you're thrilled," said Keaton about his first nomination.

But the Oscar race — largely solidified by the ever-expanding industrial complex of Hollywood's awards season — may have gotten a little more competitive in Thursday's nominations.

Clint Eastwood's "American Sniper" (six nods), Wes Anderson's "The Grand Budapest Hotel" (nine nominations) and "The Imita-



AP Photo/IFC Films
This image released by IFC Films shows Ellar Coltrane at age six in a scene from the film "Boyhood."

tion Game" (eight nominations) all emerged as heftier contenders, while another, "Selma," largely fizzled.

Each joined a best-picture field that also included the Stephen Hawking biopic "The Theory of Everything" and the music school psychodrama "Whiplash." The modestly sized movies — all dwarfed by Hollywood's stampede of bigger blockbusters at the box office — make for a classy but not particularly high-wattage batch of nominees that may challenge host Neil Patrick Harris to drive viewers to the Feb. 22 ceremony, which drew 43 million viewers last year, a 10-year high.

They also amount to a distinctly white Oscars. All 20 of the nominated actors are white, which led to the trending Twitter hashtag "OscarsSoWhite" on Thursday. It's a nightmare scenario for the Academy of Motion Pictures, which has in recent years sought to diversify its ranks. It also comes a year after the best-picture win for "12 Years a Slave," during which there was much chest-thumping about Hollywood's thawing close-mindedness.

Though Ava DuVernay's civil rights drama "Selma" was once seen as a major contender, it landed just two nominations. (The second was for best song.) David Oyelowo,

Best picture nominees

- American Sniper
- Birdman or (The Unexpected Virtue of Ignorance)
- Boyhood
- The Grand Budapest Hotel
- The Imitation Game
- Selma
- The Theory of Everything
- Whiplash

who stars as Martin Luther King Jr. in "Selma," was surprisingly left out of best actor. On Twitter, DuVernay called the nominations "an Oscar gift" to King on his birthday, but referenced Oyelowo's oversight, calling him "our miracle."

Whereas the late December arrival of "Selma" appeared to hurt its chances, similar timing was on target for Clint Eastwood's Navy SEAL drama "American Sniper." Bradley Cooper, who plays lethal marksman Chris Kyle in the film, seemed to take Oyelowo's best-actor spot.

Wes Anderson's old Europe caper "The Grand Budapest Hotel," which also won best comedy or musical at the Globes, has emerged as the most unexpected awards heavyweight. It managed nine nominations without a single acting nod and was instead repeatedly cited for Anderson's meticulous craft in directing, production design, makeup and screenplay.