

HOLLYWOOD HOLIDAYS

Itemizer-Observer staff report

With two three-day weekends coming up for the Christmas and New Year's holidays, you may have time to watch something other than football and basketball. Why not pick in a good flick?

By the end of December, some people might be suffering from a bit of Christmas overload, so after combing over multiple lists of "unconventional Christmas movies," we've compiled our own list that maintains the holiday mood, but with an edge.

It is Christmastime after all, so we tried to keep the list "family friendly"... mostly. Happy viewing.

1. "Die Hard" (1988, R): OK action flick fans, here's one for you.



20th Century Fox

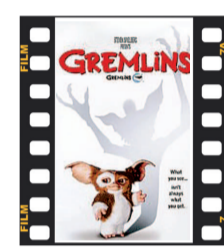
New York cop John McClane takes his Christmas vacation to visit his wife in Los Angeles, but the holiday cheer is quickly interrupted. A group of bank robbers hold everyone at Holly's company's Christmas party hostage and it's up to McClane to save the day.

2. "The Nightmare Before Christmas" (1993, PG): For those who like a little Halloween with their Christmas, "The Nightmare Before Christmas" highlights the best of both holidays. Jack Skellington, the pumpkin king of Halloween Town, is bored with doing the same thing every year for Halloween. He discovers Christmas Town, and tries to have residents of Halloween Town put



on Christmas, with a few bumps along the way.

3. "Gremlins" (1984, PG): These little mogwai are the strangest — and most destructive — Christmas present



Warner Bros.

ever. Remember, don't feed after midnight, or give them water, or expose them to bright light, lest the cute, fuzzy creatures become little green monsters.

4. "Lethal Weapon" (1987, R): This is another one for the action fans in this Mel Gibson and Danny

Glover cop buddy movie. Lethal Weapon is set in December, with the opening scene taking place with "Jingle Bell Rock" playing and ends with an invitation to eat the "world's louisest Christmas turkey."

5. "Trading Places" (1983, R): This movie, starring Dan Aykroyd as Louis Winthorpe III and Eddie Murphy as Billy Ray Valentine, has the two main characters becoming pawns in a bet between Winthorpe's two millionaire bosses. Is it "nurture" or "nature" that makes us who we are, they wonder. Only one problem, Valentine and

Winthorpe find out about the bet during the company Christmas party and decide to turn the tables.

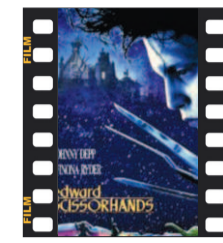
6. "Kiss Kiss Bang Bang" (2005, R): Robert Downey Jr. stars



Warner Bros.

in this as a petty thief — he's robbing a toy store to find the perfect Christmas gift in an early scene — who through a series of events tries to help solve several Christmas-season murders.

7. "Edward Scissorhands" (1990, PG-13): Do you know where snow comes from? It is created by a



20th Century Fox

boy named Edward, who has scissors for hands, when he carves ice sculptures. That's at least according to the plot of the quirky Tim Burton-directed movie starring Johnny Depp and Winona Ryder.

8. "Rent" (2005, PG-13): There has to be a musical on this list, you know, because there must. But "Rent" fits the bill, beginning on Christmas Eve and ending on Christmas Day the next year.

9. "Batman Returns" (1992, PG-13): It's Christmastime in Gotham



Warner Bros.

City in this sequel starring Michael Keaton as the Caped Crusader.

The holiday serves as a backdrop to Batman's battle with Penguin and Catwoman.

10. "The Thin Man" (1934, Prior to rating system): More a murder mystery than Christmas tale, but it is set during Christmas.

In addition, former private detective (forced back into service) solves the mystery over a holiday dinner gathering.

Sources: Details for plot summaries courtesy of Internet Movie Database, www.imdb.com and December 2014 Time article "11 Christmas Movies You Didn't Know Were Christmas Movies."

Staff Picks:

Staff Writer Jolene Guzman

"A Christmas Story" (PG)



Thanks to my brother-in-law introducing us to the 24-hour marathon some years ago, Ralphie's quest to be given a Red Ryder BB gun always is in the background of my family's Christmas gatherings.

It wouldn't be Christmas without Flick getting his tongue stuck on a frozen flag pole after the issuance of a "triple-dog dare," the infamous "leg lamp" incident, and Santa crushing the little guy's hopes for the best Christmas present ever by saying to Ralphie, "You'll shoot your eye out, kid."

I love the childhood nostalgia of the movie. It's a must-see for the holidays.

Staff Writer Emily Mentzer

"Elf" (PG)



There's only one time of year you get to stick to the four main food groups: candy, candy canes, candy corn and syrup, so why not enjoy it while watching this holiday classic. Buddy's attempt to find his father after learning he is not a real elf offers countless hilarious and touching moments.

Buddy's love for all things Christmas and his endless enthusiasm for others is contagious. His childlike innocence is charming and heartwarming — "Congratulations! You did it! World's best coffee!"

It's just not Christmas until Buddy the Elf has graced our living room at least once.

Sports Editor Lukas Eggen

"National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation" (PG-13)



Clark Griswold's attempt to have a good, old-fashioned family Christmas is a comedic adventure I could watch over and over again.

The Griswolds' misadventures from sledding to getting an extreme light display working to dealing with a pesky squirrel, the laughs just keep coming.

Many of us have experienced a dysfunctional family member (or two) but this is one family holiday outing you'll want to enjoy again and again.

This hilarious and, in parts, heartfelt romp is one Christmas adventure I look forward to reliving year after year.

www.polkio.com

Pencil us in!

www.polkio.com

Polk County Itemizer-Observer

Every time a Windermere agent sells a home, a portion of the commission goes to the Windermere Foundation. Since 1989 the foundation has raised more than \$30 million to support non-profit agencies. Locally the foundation funded scholarships to Dallas and Central High Schools, YMCA and various other local non-profit agencies.

GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY SINCE 1989

Thank you for using your local Windermere agent. We know that without you this would not be possible.

Windermere REAL ESTATE

Windermere Western View Properties 297 N Pacific Hwy. Monmouth / 484 NE Bovard Ave. Dallas

503-838-1141 503-623-2333