

# Hanging over the hill

## Student contemplates disadvantages of 21st birthday



There were loud crashes and flashes of light. It was not the Fourth of July, and there were no fireworks. It was my 21st birthday, and a thunderstorm was on its way.

I always thought turning 21 would be a bright and boisterous occasion, but thunder and lightning are not what I had in mind.

I should have expected it. As far back as I can remember, my birthday celebrations have always included the typical colorful party ingredients, but none have been complete without dark clouds, flash flood watches and raincoat-clad party guests. My mother said that is what happens when you are born in the rainy season, and I guess I can accept that.

On the other hand, I find it hard to accept the fact that my 21st birthday has come and gone, and all I got was a hangover, lower car insurance rates and the realization that at my next milestone birthday party people will be giving me black balloons and "over the hill" gag gifts.

It does not really bother me that

my carefree, youthful days are over; I have much more serious problems than that.

First of all, there are certain people in this world, who I will refer to as "kids," who insist on calling me ma'am. This title does not make me feel respected. It makes me feel old. Someone should tell these kids that "ma'am" should be reserved for mothers and teachers. Oh yeah, there are people my age who are mothers and teachers.

Second, some radio stations play songs disc jockeys call "classic cuts." What are they talking about? I remember these songs. I remember who sang these songs. Yes, I know 1987 was 10 years ago, but they make it sound like we might as well be listening to Chubby Checker and doing the Twist.

Finally—and I hate to admit it—but there are times when I get more excited about getting ready to go to bed than getting ready to go out. Going to bed at a decent hour is a task not easily accomplished, especially when a decent hour gets earlier every year. Besides, getting into a 21-and-up club loses its excitement after the first time, but getting a full eight hours of sleep is something that can be appreciated time and again.

Don't get me wrong. Turning 21 is not cause for breaking out the choco-

lates and Kleenex. It is just not all it is cracked up to be. Feeling old does not happen over night, but it is a process that evolves over a period of time and becomes more apparent on days like 21st birthdays.

Things could be worse, however. At least I can still remember the classic cuts on the radio. As the aging cycle progresses, a day will probably come when I will be able to say I have forgotten more songs than I can remember. This is another phrase I have heard my mother say, and that leads me to another point.

The older I get, the more reasonable my mother gets. Her logic makes more sense, her jokes are funnier and we now enjoy doing most of the same things.

Am I really getting old, or am I just growing up? My mom is not old, so how can I be old?

Maybe age is not determined by a number. People always say "you're only young once," but they never say how long youth is supposed to last. Maybe it can last forever. Maybe my hair will never look like a football helmet. Maybe I will never drive 40 miles per hour in a 55-mile-per-hour zone. Maybe I will never answer "How are you doing?" with a list of ailments that seems to grow daily. Maybe I will never get wrinkles. Maybe.



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## Summer movies fit formula

Expected 'blockbusters' are undeserving of the hype

Summer is not the movie critics' favorite time of the year.

Summer is the season of mass-marketed, big-budgeted, PG-13 action movies with lots of special effects and witty dialogue spoken by huge stars under the supervision of corporate directors. It is the season of McDonald's merchandising tie-ins. It is, at least

usually, a season with a formula: (Disney Movie) + (PG-13 Sci-Fi/Comedy) = Shopping Extravaganza. Last year, the variables in this formula turned out to be *The Chamber*, *Notre Dame* and *Independence Day*, respectively. This year there is no reason to believe that *Hercules* and *Men In Black* won't do very well if for no reason other than they don't have that much competition.

Last weekend saw John Woo's *Face-Off* debut with an exceedingly healthy \$22.7 million domestic box office take, just barely nudging out *Hercules*, now in its second week. Due out later this summer are *Starship Troopers*, starring a lot of space bugs; and various other knickknacks, most of them sequels.

*Men In Black* promises to be the blockbuster of the season. We know this, of course, because we see the commercials on TV

all the time, and not because we have any evidence that the movie is going to be any good. We're all going to go see it. Millions of us. And when we buy the ticket and walk into the theater, we do so with the relief that we are about to see what we're supposed to see this summer. Why?

Because there isn't anything better playing.

To be sure, this is shaping up to be a particularly dry summer; even the advertisers seem to be going through the motions (notice how the critical praise quota-

*Hard* and *Terminator 2: Judgement Day* were summer blockbusters. The hotter months also regularly hock up sentimental or formulaic Oscar-winners like *Forrest Gump* or *Braveheart*. But when was the last time a really good movie came out in the summer?

Joel and Ethan Coen's masterpiece *Fargo* came out in March of 1996. *Independence Day* came out that July, and made quite a bit more money.

*Pulp Fiction* was hands-down the best movie of 1994 — and was released in October. It was beaten out at the box office and the Oscars by that timeless lesson in the virtue of ignorance, *Forrest Gump*, which was as summery as they come.

Martin Scorsese swept away the conventions of the American gangster film when in September of 1990 he gave us *Goodfellas*, probably the best crime movie ever made. What was packing them into theaters that July?

*Ghost*. Of course, when it comes down to it, everybody wants to make at least a little money, and nobody wants to go toe to toe with Disney. It's probably as shrewd a marketing strategy to release a film like *Fargo* in the spring as it is to release *Independence Day* on the Fourth of July.

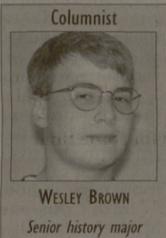
But when Will Smith and Tommy Lee Jones come busting through the door next weekend, don't expect any surprises. By the way, I found out the ending to that movie. Wanna hear what it is?

The good guys win.

“And when we buy the ticket and walk into the theater, we do so with the relief that we are about to see what we're supposed to see this summer.”

tions in the commercial for *Speed 2* are strangely unattributed — that's because nobody ever actually had the energy to say "Speed 2 is the thrill ride of the summer!"

It is rare, however, that the summer rarely produces anything of note. Sure, we've gotten some good action flicks over the years: *Die*



WESLEY BROWN  
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## Roberts redeems herself in wedding comedy

**My Best Friend's Wedding**  
Starring Julia Roberts, Dermot Mulroney and Cameron Diaz  
Directed by P.J. Hogan  
Rated PG-13  
Playing at Hollywood 16

★★★ (out of five)

BY JENNY VRNAK  
THE BATTALION

In the generally funny, occasionally awkward *My Best Friend's Wedding*, Julia Roberts returns to the form that movie-going audiences love.

She laughs uproariously, smiles almost constantly and tosses her flowing red hair. It is her best performance since playing the hooker with a heart of gold in *Pretty Woman*.

This time around, Roberts is playing Julianne Potter, a Manhattan food critic who adores recognition. Julianne's near-perfect life suddenly gets turned upside down when her long-time friend, Mike O'Neal (Dermot Mulroney), calls to tell her he is engaged.

It seems that a few years ago, when Mike and Julianne were in college, they made a promise to marry each other if neither of them had tied the knot before they turned 28. With her 28th birthday approaching, not to mention Mike's wedding day, Julianne realizes she has loved him all along and just did not realize it.

So Julianne jets off to Chicago, determined to stop the wedding and win back Mike.

There is just one problem — Mike's fiancée, Kimmy Wallace (Cameron Diaz). She is beautiful, wealthy and overly sweet. Julianne mistakenly believes fooling Kimmy will be an easy task.

Directed by P.J. Hogan, director of the sleeper hit *Muriel's Wedding*, the movie is enjoyable because Julianne will go to any length to get what she wants. Hogan often relies on obvious gags to elicit laughs,

such as Julianne falling flat on the floor, but most of the jokes are wonderfully light and offbeat.

This movie is Ms. Roberts' return to form, after flops such as *Mary Reilly* and *Something to Talk About* threatened to cut short her career. Roberts is funny and sincere, but, at the same time, she is also very devious. She never lets the audience forget that Julianne is trying to destroy her friend's wedding.

Diaz spends most of the film trying to act sweet and lovable. The audience may begin to wonder if she even has a backbone or if she is just exceptionally slow and too trusting. Diaz also has annoying habits of squealing a lot and hugging everyone around her, but eventually she manages to make Kimmy respectable.

Mulroney does not bring much to the role of Mike O'Neal. He spends the majority of the movie trying to keep up with Roberts and Diaz and ends up constantly looking confused.

The most hilarious role belongs to Rupert Everett, who plays Julianne's homosexual confidante and editor. Every scene Everett is in generates big laughs. He manages to bring freshness and hilarity to a role that could have easily become cliché.

*My Best Friend's Wedding* is not perfect — there are slow periods that tend to drag on, but it is an overall winner. In a summer overloaded with big action blockbusters, this movie is a breath of fresh air that makes the audience happy they came.



Julia Roberts stars as Cameron Diaz' maid of honor.

# A taste of SUMMER

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Rudder 601

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