

# ENTERTAINMENT

THE BATTALION

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## Oscar night!

### Hobbits, pirates and monsters dominate 2004

By Robert Saucedo  
THE BATTALION

While film buffs tune in to the Oscar awards every year out of love for films, Anna Cobb has one more reason to tune in. She is connected to the award ceremony in a way most people dream of.

"(My family) actually have an Oscar at home," said Cobb, a sophomore biology major. "My great-uncle won an Academy Award for best score for 'Stagecoach' (1939). He won with two other people; they all scored it together."

With such a direct tie to the ceremony, it's little coincidence that Cobb watches the awards ceremony every year.

"Ever since I was old enough to understand what movies are and what the Oscars are, I've watched them," Cobb said. "The Oscars used to have a lot of shows in between that were really interesting, but now I like watching them because I like seeing all my favorite people together."

Come Sunday, the demi-gods and goddesses of modern culture will descend the hills of Hollywood to gather, dressed in garish costumes, to make offerings of praise and thanks in what has become a ritualistic ceremony of epic proportions. In other words, Feb. 29 will mark the 76th year of the Academy Awards and with it the presentation of this year's Oscars to the films and people the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences deem to be the best in their field. Whether they agree or disagree with the choices, a billion people across the world will tune in to witness the glitz and glamour of the Academy Awards.

This year, the award ceremony will be hosted by comedian Billy Crystal, who has hosted the Oscars seven times. Cobb counts Crystal as her favorite Academy Awards host.

"I'm really glad he's doing it again this year," Cobb said.

Award presenters will include Will Ferrell, Sandra Bullock and Jack Black. There will be musical performances by Annie Lennox, Sting, Eugene Levy and Elvis Costello.

Spencer Littlejohn, a freshman anthropology major, considers himself a casual fan of movies and plans to watch the award ceremony this year. Although he hasn't seen all of the movies nominated this year for best picture, he still has his ideas of which should or shouldn't win.

"I saw 'Lord of the Rings' and I (liked it)," Littlejohn said. "I think it will probably win, but I kind of want something else to win because ('Lord of the Rings') wins different awards all the time."

Although he believes the awards are prestigious, Littlejohn said he isn't sure if they are the definitive word on what makes a great movie.

"It gives (the movie) more credit, but I wouldn't definitely say I would like it if I watched it," he said.

Cobb agrees with Littlejohn's assertion.

"I'd like to think certain films win best picture, but I know there's a lot of films less deserving that win," Cobb said. "I definitely think there is a lot of under-the-table politicking. I certainly don't think certain actors and actresses have won their awards rightly in the past few years."

Julia Roberts win for "Erin Brockovich" is among the actresses Cobb considers wrongfully awarded for their roles. She also said in the past, many awards went to the wrong people.

"I didn't really like (that) Ron Howard won for 'A Beautiful Mind,'" Cobb said. "I'd rather he won for 'Apollo 13.' I was not happy 'A Beautiful Mind' won best picture that year because I definitely feel 'Moulin Rouge' was more of an innovative film."

Regardless of past disagreements, Cobb still has hopes the Academy will choose the rightful winners in its respective awards.

"I would like to see 'Lost in Translation' win for best picture, but I don't know if it's big enough," Cobb said. "'Lord of the Rings' will probably win."

Even though Sofia Coppola's nomination for directing "Lost in Translation" marks the first time an American woman has been nomi-



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nated for best director, Cobb feels the award belongs to someone else. "I would rather see Peter Jackson win for best director because the 'Lord of the Rings' trilogy is a bigger accomplishment for the award of best director. I would like to see 'Lost in Translation' win for best screenplay," Cobb said.

From Adrian Brody's kissing attack on Halle Barry to Michael Moore's anti-Bush rant to Jack Palance's one-handed push-ups, the Oscars have become as famous for outlandish behavior as they are for their prestige.

Cobb considers Roberto Benigni's surprise at the announcement of his win one of her favorite Oscar moments.

"When Roberto Benigni won for 'Life is Beautiful' and he climbed over all the chairs, because he thought that was easier than just walking down the aisles was hilarious," Cobb said. "Another was Cuba Gooding Jr.'s acceptance speech (for 'Jerry Maguire') when he was thanking everybody on earth for winning the award. I wouldn't have been surprised if my name showed up on his list."

Both Cobb and Littlejohn have watched the Oscars alone in the past, but this year they plan to drop by the Memorial Student Center Film Society produced Oscar Gala.

Michael Venner, MSC film chair, explained the Film Society's hosting of an Oscar Gala was only natural.

"This is the first year we've tried to do an Oscar Gala," Venner said. "In years past, we've been more of a committee. We asked ourselves what was the biggest thing that happened all year for the industry. We decided to put on a party for the event and see how it goes. If it goes really well, we're going to have it continue."

Megan Schmidt, MSC Film Society director of student development, said she hopes to make the gala an annual event.

"Every year people watch the Oscars and have their own party," Schmidt said. "We're going to watch the Oscars and have trivia throughout the night. People watch the Oscars at home, and they should definitely come for the free food and fellowship. It's a good opportunity to learn about the Oscars, hang out with other Aggies, make new friends and basically hang out with people with your same interests."

The Oscar Gala will take place in MSC 201. The doors will open at 6:30 p.m. and admission is free.

The Academy Awards will be broadcast Feb. 29 at 7 p.m. on ABC.

INFOGRAPHIC BY RUBEN DELUNA • THE BATTALION

## BIGGEST OSCAR UPSETS

### 1993 TIMELINE

Marisa Tomei's character in "My Cousin Vinny" stole the prize for Best Supporting Actress, a decision that still confuses some.

### 1994

Then 13-year-old Anna Paquin stole the hearts of film viewers and critics for her role as Florida McGrath in 1993's "The Piano," but still caused an upset when she was named Best Supporting Actress.

### 1999

Stealing the show from veterans such as Meryl Streep and Julianne Moore, Hilary Swank's win for Best Actress for her portrayal of Teena Brandon in 1998's "Boys Don't Cry" was one of the Oscar's most shocking upsets of recent years.

### 2001

Ron Howard's win for Best Motion Picture with "A Beautiful Mind" was an upset for only two reasons - "Moulin Rouge" and "The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring."

### 2003

Adrien Brody's win for Best Actor for 2002's "The Pianist" resulted in international recognition, though some argue much of that had to do with his post-win mauling of Halle Berry.

### 2004

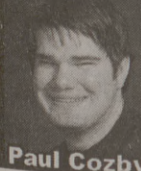
Tune in to ABC Sunday night at 7pm to find out!

ANDREW BURLISON • THE BATTALION

## The Battalion Entertainment Staff Predictions for Oscar night 2004:

### Best Picture

"Lord of the Rings: Return of the King" was a fantastic end to an amazing trilogy. Not only that, but the fact that it was able to live up to all the hype that it generated is enough to make this the shoe-in for best picture.



Paul Cozby

### Best Director

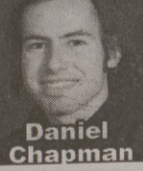
Out of all the films nominated for best director, Peter Jackson's job on "The Return of the King" is by far the most impressive. This is not an easy job to do, and for that reason I believe Jackson is the most deserving of the award.



Robert Saucedo

### Best Actor

Hands down, Johnny Depp will win. Combining Mick Jagger and Marlon Brando, he becomes the hilariously cunning pirate Captain Jack Sparrow. Creative, smart and sexy, Depp deserves recognition for the actor that he is.



Daniel Chapman

### Best Actress

Though the immediate attraction to "Monster" is Charlize Theron's cast-off beauty, her efforts go far beyond physical transformation. She unearths the humanity in a killer through her powerful acting.



David Shackelford

### Best Supporting Actor

I suspect that Tim Robbins will win Best Supporting Actor for his role in "Mystic River." Robbins can add this role to his list of many diverse and talented characters.



Christina Teichman

### Best Supporting Actress

I'm partial toward Shoreh Aghdashloo, who gave a heartbreaking and commanding performance, complementing Ben Kingsley well. But she is a newcomer facing tough competition, and the Academy likes Renee Zellweger.



Julie Bone