

**CLAYTON CLUB**  
1873  
**SALOON**

6096 Main Street, Clayton, 673-0440

**Jan. 11 & 12** . . . Bollinger Station  
**Jan. 16** . . . . . Karaoke  
**Jan. 18 & 19** . . . Blues Healers

All entertainment from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m.

www.claytonclubsaloon.com

**Pleasant Hill studio condo, \$229,990, Great location!**

Mówię po Polsku

**Century 21**  
Real Estate for Your World

**Hosking Associates, Inc.**

**Kim Dromlewicz, B.S.E.E., M.B.A., Realtor®**

direct (925) 324-7072 • Kim@homes4ewe.com

**Seasonal Reflections** The Holiday and Party Superstore

has everything you need to plan your **Super Bowl XLIII party**

Celebrate in the Super Bowl spirit with balloons and tableware (plates, tablecloths, napkins)

Light up the party with a string of FOOTBALL LIGHTS

Mon - Thu 9 am - 7 pm  
Fri & Sat 9 am - 8 pm  
Sun 10 am - 4 pm

672-4425 visit our online store: www.seasonalreflections.com

**Happy New Year from all of us at ROBINS RANCHES**

**JUST LISTED** **Horse Set-up.**  
1.67 acres, 4 bedroom, 2 bath home plus 2 bedroom in-law home. 6 stall barn with 3 turn-out pastures. **\$1,045,000**

1542 Peridot Dr., Livermore **\$699,000** possible lease option

5 bedrooms, 3 baths. Beautiful house near park. Spacious corner lot. Motivated sellers dropped price by \$100,000.

10330 Crow Canyon, Castro Valley **\$2,100,000**

9.1 Acres, 2 outdoor arenas, 1 indoor arena, judge's booth with PA system, 50 stalls with automatic waterers, snack bar. Main house has 3 bedrooms, 2 baths and hardwood floors. Barn has 3 apartments in it. Way too much to list. Also has 3+ acres next to ranch for \$999,000.

12706 Sierra View Dr., Oakdale **\$1,650,000**

Fantastic opportunity for horse ranch or almond ranch. Gated community only minutes from town. 44+ acres with 3 bedroom, 3 bath plus office, 3,150 sq.ft. Was \$1,950,000. Price reduced.

Robin's Ranches need's Clayton's horse set-ups. I have over 6,000 showings a month at www.robinsranches.com

**Robin's Ranches**  
website: www.robinsranches.com  
email: robin@robinsranches.com  
(925) 550-2383

— At the Movies —



The Pioneer's movie reviewers take a look back at last year's films.

**Top five from new filmmakers**

**JIM BRIGGS** 5 **"Waitress."** Kerri Russell plays a gifted pie maker who discovers she's pregnant with her deadbeat husband's child. She then begins an affair with her doctor (Nathan Fillian). What makes this film extra bittersweet is that knowledge that it's writer/director /co-star Adrienne Shelley was found murdered in her Tribeca office a few months before "Waitress" premiered at Sundance.

**4 "Black Snake Moan."** This is writer/director Craig Brewer's follow-up to "Hustle and Flow."

"Moan" stars Samuel L. Jackson as Lazarus, a down-and-out blues singer who discovers Christina Ricci's Rae beaten unconscious in a ditch. Believing she's possessed by some kind of sex demon (I guess); Lazarus chains her to his radiator until she's cured of her "wickedness." Brewer brilliantly incorporates the blues to create some deeply haunting moments.

**3 "Juno."** In director Jason Reitman's follow-up to "Thank You For Smoking," Ellen Page plays Juno, a sixteen year-old who discovers she's pregnant and decides to give the baby up for adoption. Diablo Cody's script's power is twofold; it's one of the funniest and most moving films of 2007.

**2 "Away From Her."** This is the devastating first feature from Canadian actor Sarah Polley. Julie Christie's Fiona has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and her husband (Gordon Pinsent) is forced to move her into a nursing home. Christie's performance alone will break your heart.

**1 "Atonement."** Moving from Jane Austen to Ian McEwan, director Joe Wright brings "Atonement" to vibrant life. Elegantly adapted by Christopher Hampton, cleverly scored by Dario Marianelli and masterfully acted by James McAvoy, Keira Knightley, Saoirse Ronan and Vanessa Redgrave, "Atonement" takes us through time and through the psyche of its characters with clarity.

"Away From Her," "Black Snake Moan" and "Waitress" are available on DVD. "Atonement" and "Juno" are still in theatres.

**Five notable epic films**

**NATALIE BUDESA** The top five epic movies of 2007, whether for their special effects, raw emotion, or sweeping heroism, were enough to make any movie-going experience a step closer to extraordinary.

The fifth installment in the Harry Potter series, "Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix," brought a refreshing outlook from new director David Yates. As the characters grow, no one is safe from getting on Harry's



nerves. With the addition of visual wonders like thestrals and Luna Lovegood, Potter fans are prepared for yet another adventure.

Summer could not have been complete without a bit of swashbuckling and rum in the form of "Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End." Following the clutter of the second Pirates, "World's End" makes you believe sea adventure is always complicated. Still, the trilogy gives Will, Elizabeth, and Jack the endings they deserve.

"Sweeney Todd" brings a new flavor to holiday films, as Tim Burton is the perfect director for this dark musical and Johnny Depp a suitable demon barber. The vigor of Depp's voice (why hasn't anyone thought of making him sing sooner?) is enough to overlook Bonham Carter's airy tone, so pay a visit to your good friend, Sweeney.

"Atonement" transformed the seemingly overlooked gesture of an apology to a sweeping epic of torn emotions. From lazy summer days to the war front, one child's misconception shatters an entire future. A definite tear jerker, "Atonement" lingers with its vivid imagery and brings a new importance to the choices everyone makes.

Even "Spiderman" has a dark side, as shown in the third flick of the series. The hero's faults would have been enough to satisfy a good chunk of the movie, but Spidey also had two new villains to deal with. Double-teaming seems like a good idea, but the result was an unsatisfying collage of comic book action best judged scene-by-scene.

**The year's disappointments**

**JANE MAILANDER**



In the seasonal spirit of Festivus, I wish to air grievances against five films that have disappointed me this year – I'd hoped for better from all of these:

**1 "Pan's Labyrinth"** This film about human monsters nurtured by war was advertised as a fantasy. I have a low threshold for watching a

man crush someone else's face with a wine bottle or take wire cutters to a prisoner's hand. The Hieronymus Bosch phantasms were the least horrific parts of this film.

**2 "Bridge to Terabithia"** Katherine Paterson's award-winning tragic novel about friendship, art and imagination lands on the other side of the misguided-fantasy ledger. The film took "imagination" to mean CGI everything, and combined children's conflicts with bullies with animated ogres and monsters from the imaginary world, weakening the film.

**3 "Balls of Fury"** It's the "Airplane!" of kung fu films, only not funny. My disdain encompasses all such "comedies" that assume homophobia, disabilities, groin punches and white people using African-American slang are intrinsically hilarious.

**4 "Dan in Real Life"** If this is real life, I'll stay in Terabithia, thank you. Better to

deal with CGI ogres than this sickeningly perfect New England family in which a widower courts a male-fantasy Perfect Woman (the only thing Juliette Binoche doesn't do is turn into a beer after sex). Steve Carell's likeable Dan can't save a film that's about as romantic as "Balls of Fury" was funny.

And last, and least –  
**5 "Pirates of the Caribbean 3: At World's End"** Another wonderful first film spawns dreadful sequels; another summer film substitutes special effects and fight sequences for plot. But the worst crime in "At World's End" is the emasculation of Captain Jack Sparrow, who has gone from being Johnny Depp's rogue creation to a lame, tame Disney animatronic.  
... Better luck next year.

**My own private awards list**

**JEANNA ROSS**



The Jeanna Ross **Widest Audience Award** goes to "Ratatouille." In 2007, Pixar changed the face of motion picture animation yet again. This is an adult movie that children enjoy. The food, the wine, the inside of the French Laundry-esque kitchen – it's a Food Network reality

show in two dimensions.  
**The Proud Papa Award** goes to "Hairspray." They could have screwed it up. They could have cast famous non-singers or changed the story so it would appeal to a wider audience. But they didn't. They took a chance on a totally unknown star and found C-list actors who had the vocal chops to pull off the supporting roles.

**Brand New Hottie Award: James McAvoy.** Ten bucks says that the first time you clapped eyes on James McAvoy, it was as Mr. Tumnus in "The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe" back in 2005. He was already a standout actor then, for the riveting "Inside I'm Dancing," and then he shot to the top of the charts in 2006 with "The Last King of Scotland." This year, he's been insanely busy playing the romantic hero to a slew of lovely lasses, including Christina Ricci, Anne Hathaway, and Keira Knightley. Next up? Angelina Jolie. Not bad for a 27-year-old from Scotland...

**The Surprisingly Addictive Soundtrack Award** goes to "Music & Lyrics." The 80's ripoff songs in this film are like the irritating ditties cooked up by advertising campaigns – you can't listen just once. The good news is that the opening number, "Pop Goes My Heart," is accompanied by one of the most ridiculously hilarious spoof music videos ever created in the history of film. Catch it on YouTube.

**And my Favorite Movie of the Year Award? "Amazing Grace."** I reviewed this back in March and I still love it. Thank goodness Ioan Gruffudd has proven that he's capable of more than simply Mr. Fantastic...If only Hollywood would take notice.

**Navlet's** GARDEN CENTERS & SINCE 1988

Where experience makes a beautiful difference.

Please bring in your donations for...  
**ALAMEDA COUNTY COMMUNITY FOOD BANK**  
of Contra Costa and Solano

View our website for details: navletsgardens.com

Open seven days a week from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

**prune like a pro**

Come join our **FREE Pruning Classes!**  
These valuable classes will lead you through the proper way to prune rose plants and fruit trees for optimal health, appearance, and yield.

<b>Roses</b> – Sat., Jan. 12 10:00 a.m. • All stores	<b>Roses</b> – Sun., Jan. 20 11:30 a.m. • All stores
<b>Fruit Trees</b> – Sun., Jan. 13 11:30 a.m. • All stores	<b>Roses</b> – Sat., Jan. 26 10:00 a.m. • Fremont only
<b>Fruit Trees</b> – Sat., Jan. 19 10:00 a.m. • All stores	<b>Roses</b> – Sat., Jan. 26 2:00 p.m. • Danville only

Concord 1555 Kriker Pass Rd. (925) 681-0550  
Danville 800 Camino Ramon (925) 837-9144  
Fremont 48100 Warm Springs Blvd. (510) 657-751  
Martinez 6740 Alhambra Ave (925) 935-9125  
Pleasant Hill 2925 Contra Costa Blvd (925) 939-9000