

From the rack to the boutique

JENAE LEE
Columnist

Have you searched all over the department stores for that perfect prom dress and still have not found anything that you like? In order to save you a frustratingly lengthy experience, here are some new suggestions that might help sweep you off your feet.

Nordstrom Rack at the San Leandro Outlet Mall has luxury pieces at lower prices. They have great brand and designer pieces for lower prices than the original Nordstrom. They have a great selection of shoes as well. The famous Jessica McClintock Outlet in San Francisco has everything you need. You can also look at high-end thrift stores such as Buffalo Exchange out in Berkeley or San Francisco.

Is the sky the limit on how much you want to pay? Hit the local boutiques such as Armadillo Bay in the Irvington Area. Owner Alberta Dodge hand picks some of the dresses specifically for prom. Some of the labels she picks include Betsey Johnson and Nicole Miller, which have been marked down for the occasion.

Another boutique in the area is the Envy.Me Boutique in Niles. They understand how costly prom can be, so they have a wonderful selection of beautiful, long, donated prom dresses that range from \$20 to \$50.

There is this amazing website, <http://www.unique-vintage.com>, that has plenty of dresses for you to choose from. Short, long, solid, print, ruffles, this site has it all, and it's all well-priced. They also have a great deal of shoes and accessories to go along with your dress.

With that, happy shopping!



Photo by PARAMOUNT PICTURES

Teddy (DiCaprio) looks back in Scorsese's new psychological thriller. The Master of Suspense, Alfred Hitchcock, would have been proud.

'Shutter' thrills as events unfold

ALEJANDRO MONTALVO
Staff Reporter

Martin Scorsese makes two types of films: great films and classic films. *Shutter Island* is a great film, meaning that it isn't a Scorsese classic, but is still far superior to the trash that fills the screens in the theater.

Scorsese is at a point in his career where his successes outweigh his failures. Since 2000, he has not made an unsuccessful film, further proving his astonishing mastership of the cinematic craft. At the 2007 Academy Awards ceremony, Scorsese finally received a long overdue Best Director Oscar for *The Departed*. That being said, the anticipation for his latest film, *Shutter Island*, has been intense.

Shutter Island is not a scary film. The trailers and TV spots market it like a typical horror film, but it is far superior than the average horror flick. The film is about two Federal Marshalls who are investigating

the disappearance of a violent patient at a psychiatric hospital on an island. However, like the trailers suggest, there is something else at work, morphing the story as it progresses.

Shutter Island plays more like a 1950s Hitchcock thriller, with storytelling conventions from that style. The symbolism is not hard to understand, nor is it shy and masked. Flashbacks and walking hallucinations compliment the inner turmoil brewing inside the main character, Teddy.

Leonardo DiCaprio, further proving he is more than just a pretty face, plays Teddy with the kind of madness that garners Oscar nominations. Had this film been released on its original release date, back in October, DiCaprio would have gotten an Oscar nomination. Sir Ben Kingsley, Mark Ruffalo, Michelle Williams, Patricia Clarkson and Max Von Sydow all give outstanding performances that mold the atmosphere of *Shutter Island*.

Those who pay attention will know the twist before it comes,

but this does not necessarily ruin the film. The thrill comes in watching how the events unfold. The twist isn't that far-fetched, but is still satisfying and provides closure. Hitchcock would have been proud.

Critics of the film have already lambasted it for being too simple and sub-par by Scorsese standards. But even a foul-up of a film by Scorsese can still entertain most audiences. It will be interesting to see if anti-smoking advocates will attack this film, for there is a ton of smoking. Gore and violence are also prominent, as this is a Scorsese film after all. The war scene flashbacks and hallucinations are fairly graphic, leaving little to the imagination. But the blatant presence of violence only compliments the themes of the film.

Shutter Island is a synergetic meet between old-school filmmaking and modern-day storytelling as seen through the eyes of an auteur with cinema in his blood. **Verdict: B+**

Academy Award nominees reach for the gold

ALEJANDRO MONTALVO
Staff Reporter

The Academy Awards ceremony is March 7. Many of the nominations between the Golden Globes and the Oscars are similar, so there might not be many surprises. But upsets do happen.

After last year's musical fiasco, hosted by Hugh Jackman, the Academy has cleverly decided to return to traditional ways and appointed comedians Alec Baldwin and Steve Martin as hosts. Both actors worked together on the film *It's Complicated*, showing their comedic abilities.

The Academy has taken both flack and praise for upping the total number of Best Picture nominees to 10. The Academy reacted to the audience's complaints about the exclusion of *The Dark Knight* from last year's Best Picture category. But what does this say about the nature of the award? Do the financially successful movies carry more weight than the critically praised films just because they were popular? Since when do general audiences get a vote in

the Academy? The Best Picture Oscar has often been awarded to critically praised art films which weren't widely seen, such as *The Last Emperor* and *Chariots of Fire*, which does not garner high ratings for the telecast. By upping the number of nominees to 10, the Academy has sadly surrendered to the will of the idiot masses.

That being said, the odds for the critically praised, but limited released, film *The Hurt Locker*, are strong. *Avatar* may have made billions but *The Hurt Locker* has been honored at many esteemed award shows. The other eight nominees are great films, but the real contest is between David (*The Hurt Locker*) and Goliath (*Avatar*).

The acting awards are fairly secured, especially for the Supporting Actor category. Christoph Waltz has won every best supporting actor award at previous shows this season for *Inglourious Basterds*.

Like Waltz, Best Supporting Actress nominee, Mo'Nique in *Precious: Based on the Novel Push by Sapphire* is a lock.

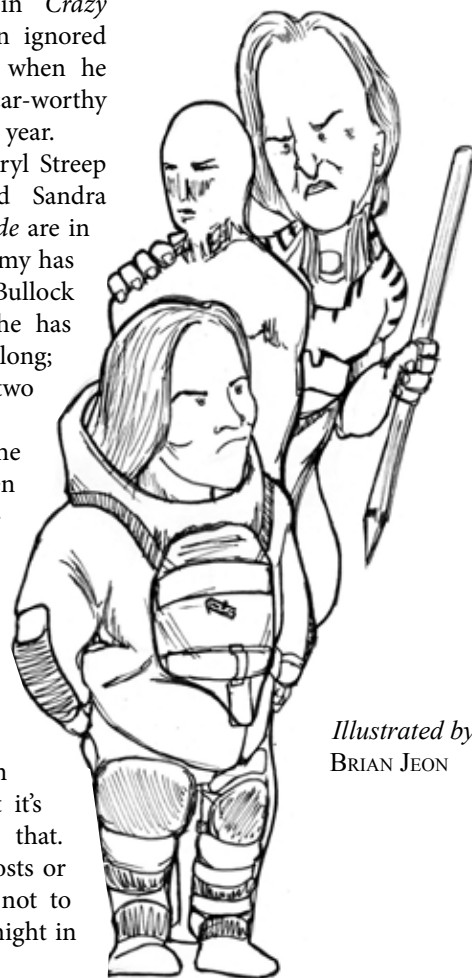
Jeff Bridges is the strongest

contender for the Best Actor award for his performance in *Crazy Heart*. Bridges has been ignored by the Academy, even when he has repeatedly given Oscar-worthy performances. This is his year.

For Best Actress, Meryl Streep for *Julie & Julia* and Sandra Bullock for *The Blind Side* are in a deadlock. If the Academy has brains, they'll go for Bullock because like Bridges, she has been ignored for too long; Streep already has two Oscars.

For Best Director, the showdown is between Bigelow and her ex-husband James Cameron, who has previously won for *Titanic*. If Bigelow wins, she would be the first female Best Director winner.

The list of nomination snubs could go on, but it's better not to dwell on that. Whether it be for the hosts or the awards, make sure not to miss the most glorious night in Hollywood.



Illustrated by
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Students lack reading

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Symbolism, tone, style. Some students can't even comprehend the meaning of the work, which makes enjoying, much less analyzing, the work impossible.

"Every day, it's a teacher's job to get students interested," English teacher Sharon Jones said.

Yet sophomore Melanie Miller is often bored by the assigned reading. She had difficulty understanding Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. She read *Maus* because it was a captivating, easy to understand, graphic novel.

"I was motivated by *Maus* because it was in the form of a comic book, which set it aside from all of the other books," Miller said.

Freshman Maureen Madrid believes students can be motivated to read by a good story and climax. Madrid is unimpressed with a majority of the current academic literary selections, but she continues to read in order to do well on the tests.

"I don't know what English teachers would really let us read but I guess [I would] like [to read] stories that can relate to a typical teenager's life," Madrid said.

Freshman Natalie McCluskey would like to read books containing adventure and life lessons.

"[The books I'm reading in English class] are about the older times, which is harder to relate to and [they also] use older language, which I don't see the point of learning," McCluskey said.

On the other hand, senior Michael Jones enjoys the assigned dramatic works. Although he did not enjoy every classic, he liked *Lord of the Flies* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

"Often in everyday life you see references or quotes from classic books. Like the ones assigned in class," Jones said.

If pop culture is not enough to encourage students to read classics, they will be pleased to learn that more contemporary books are approved annually.

In addition to *Maus*, *The Kite Runner*, submitted by English teacher Stewart Perlman, was also approved by the district. However, purchasing the novels and developing new curriculum will be an issue.

English teacher Teri Hu submitted eight contemporary books to the district for her AP class and six were passed.

"We teach enough literature by dead people, it's time to read books by people who still have a pulse," Hu said in an e-mail.

She submitted more dramas, such as *Six Degrees of Separation* and *Wit*, because she can make more copies to distribute to her students.

"I don't know if every student who doesn't read would be more inclined to read if the books were more relevant, but for SOME, that would make a difference," Hu said.

Meanwhile, teachers continue to motivate student readers through interactive projects, group work and class discussions.