



A rite of passage

In a recent issue of *Premiere* magazine, several of the top names on the subversive side of Hollywood—writer Daniel Waters (*Heathers*), director Amy Heckerling (*Fast Times at Ridgemont High*) and writer Bret Easton Ellis (*Less Than Zero*) to name a few—were asked to name their Top 10 coming-of-age films of all-time.

They named everything from the Elia Kazan classic *Splendor in the Grass* to John Singleton's *Boyz 'N the Hood*. Well here's the UNLV slant on the topic, so have at it and *bon appetit*.

The Jury

Debra Bass, opinion page editor, *The Rebel Yell*; **Brent Legault**, film enthusiast; **Brad Chisholm**, communication studies and film studies professor; **Mike Clark**, film studies major; **Carol Cling**, film critic, *Las Vegas Review-Journal*; **Hollywood Rob**, film critic, *Tempest*; **Sean Adam O'Hair**, film studies major; **Doug Karpp**, film studies major; **Marc May**, film studies major; **Francisco Menendez**, film professor; **Ched Whitney**, editor in chief, *The Rebel Yell*.

The Judge

Daniel W. Duffy (film critic, *Tempest*)

TOP 10

1) **Say Anything** (Cameron Crowe, 1989)- With John Cusack, Ione Skye and John Mahoney. "Teen love at its finest," Debra Bass said. "A sincere movie that avoided sappiness," Brent Legault said. "Besides, Ione Skye is HOT!" "Probably the most realistic portrayal of a coming-of-age relationship ever committed to film," said Hollywood Rob. "It's funny, sad and touching."

2) **Pump Up The Volume** (Allan Moyle, 1990)- With Christian Slater and Samantha Mathis. "Christian Slater is nice and angst-y, and that chick that looks like Winona Ryder is HOT!" Legault said. "Growing up as it is the '90s; Pop culture-influenced kids in a futile battle for soul and spirituality," Marc May said.

3) **American Graffiti** (George Lucas, 1973)- With Ron Howard, Richard Dreyfuss and McKenzie Phillips. "More than just a drive-in film, this picture is a well-crafted tapestry that weaves the separate stories of California teens, their foibles and their music, into an entertaining meditation on life after high school," Brad Chisholm said. "The mother of all coming-of-age films," said Francisco Menendez.

4) Heathers

(Michael Lehmann, 1989)- With Winona Ryder, Christian Slater and Shannen Doherty. "Teen angst served up in a delicious black comedy," Menendez said. Hollywood Rob said, "Psycho Slater does everything that a lot of us would have like to have done in high school." "Heathers is both funny and evil," LeGault said. "Besides, Winona Ryder is HOT!"

5) **The Graduate** (Mike Nichols, 1967)- With Dustin Hoffman, Katherine Ross and Anne Bancroft. "A classic that withstands the test of time," Menendez said. "A dark, sad movie that draws you in and keeps you there," Hollywood Rob said. "It's a perfect example of how a pop song should be used in a movie."

6) Risky Business

(Paul Brickman, 1983)- With Tom Cruise, Rebecca De Mornay and Curtis Armstrong. "The most subtly political of the coming-of-age films—political because this fantasy takes time to critique the social trappings that face young Joel as he journeys into the dark side and back while trying to live up the challenge of saying, 'What the fuck?'" Menendez said. "I, like every other guy my age at the time, wanted to make love with Rebecca DeMornay with wind and leaves blowing through the dining room," Sean O'Hair said.

7) Stand By Me

(Rob Reiner, 1986)- With Wil Wheaton, River Phoenix and Kiefer Sutherland. "Wil Wheaton did a brilliant turn in this classic of male adolescent male-ness. River Phoenix is no slouch either," Ch-

isholm said. "The friendship between the characters is moving," Doug Karpp said. "It's hard to believe it's based on a story by Stephen King."

8) **Platoon** (Oliver Stone, 1986)- With Charlie Sheen, Tom Berenger and Willem Dafoe. "The average age of the combat soldier in Vietnam was n-n-n-n-nineteen," Mike Clark said. "Charlie Sheen's character's coming of age is a trial-by-fire," said Ched Whitney. "This brilliant movie shows how we can grow up to be good or bad—it's our choice," May said.

9) My Brilliant Career

(Gillian Armstrong, 1979)- With Judy Davis and Sam Neill. "Most coming-of-age movies, like most movies in general these days focus on men and their growth traumas," Carol Cling said. "This one reflects the feminist rebellion of the '70s—and demonstrates that the hopes and goals of the women's movement were nothing new." Chisholm said. "Gillian Armstrong directs the fabulous Judy Davis and the sort-of-fabulous Sam Neill in this tale of early feminism in the Australian outback."

10) **The Last Picture Show** (Peter Bogdanovich, 1971)- With Timothy Bottoms, Jeff Bridges and Cybill Shepherd. "A small Texas town in the '50s stands for anywhere and everywhere, its bleakness coloring the lives of everyone there," Cling said. "The grandmother of all coming-of-age films," said Menendez.

—Daniel W. Duffy

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