

VISION



The Santa Clause

Hollywood Pictures

Tim Allen trades in his tool belt for a Santa suit after accidentally — and literally — scaring the pants off the jolly old man on his rooftop. Scott Calvin (Allen) puts on the suit of the mysteriously vanished Santa and takes a sleighing joy ride to the North Pole. He finds out that a few stipulations are attached to being the wearer of the coolest costume since Mrs. Doubtfire's duds. Upon further inspection of the getup, Calvin finds something other than the "dry clean only" tag — the Santa clause, which states that whoever wears the jacket has got to deliver the goods. And we don't mean pizza.

Star Trek: The Next Generation — The Movie

Paramount Pictures



Just like those *Police Academy* dimwits who keep hatching like flea eggs, the Trekkies are back in yet another flick. But where else

can they boldly go? They've already been everywhere. This time it will be like an awkward class reunion, bringing together members of the original *Star Trek* crew and the members of the *Next Generation* with Patrick Stewart as Captain Stubing, er, Captain Picard.

Dumb and Dumber

New Line Cinema



Granted, the title doesn't offer much reason to run out and buy tickets, but *Dumb and Dumber* does offer audiences the humor of Jim Carrey (*The Mask*) and Jeff Daniels (*Speed*). As

the two gel heads travel across the country to return a briefcase full of money to its rightful owner, it is the audience's responsibility to figure out who is dumb and who is dumber. Teri Garr and Lauren Holly (*Picket Fences*) costar in this movie that's very likely for Jim Carrey fans only.

Drop Zone

Paramount Pictures



Impossible. How could a movie have a sequel after only a month? Oh, never mind. This isn't *Terminal Velocity II*. It's just another high-action skydiving movie. In this movie, the bad guys try to kidnap another bad guy from a Boeing 747 while it's in flight. Seems people will do just about anything to get their hands on those little packages of salted peanuts. Director John Badham (*Saturday Night Fever*) keeps up his tradition of thrillers — let's hope this one doesn't involve polyester, too.

Nell

Twentieth Century Fox



if the fragile woman should be brought into society. That's easy. Just ask Tarzan if he ever adapted to civilization. He took one taste of fat-free frozen yogurt and headed back to the jungle.

Prêt-A-Porter

Miramax Films

Director Robert Altman brought together a large and varied cast to work on his new movie, set in Paris, about the intriguing and comical world of fashion. The cast includes Sophia Loren, Lyle Lovett, Julia Roberts, Kim Basinger and Tracy Ullman. Let's hope the movie will last at least two hours — about half an hour longer than Julia dated Lyle before they got married.

The Perez Family

Samuel Goldwyn



Two Cuban refugees slip past the Coast Guard's nets for director Mira Nair's new movie about romance and destiny. Juan (Alfred Molina) has just been released from a Cuban jail and has not seen his wife (Anjelica Huston) in over 20 years. Who could blame him? Did you see *Addams Family Values*? On the way to America, Juan meets Dottie (Marisa Tomei), a dreamer who thinks America is all rock and roll and John Wayne. Try minivans and food dehydrator infomercials, sweetie. Alienated from his family, Juan finds a close relationship with Dottie.

Trapped in Paradise

Twentieth Century Fox

Trapped in senseless Christmas movie plot land, audiences can look forward to seeing Nicolas Cage, Jon Lovitz and Dana Carvey in a movie about kindness knocking out crime. Three brothers from New York visit the small town of Paradise at Christmas time with the hopes of robbing the residents blind. But hey, it is the time of year for overpriced gift wrap, gift sets of stinky hand soaps in red cellophane and, of course, the punching power of piety. Who

knows? The good people of Paradise may just knock these bad boys on their butts.

Speechless

MGM/UA



Michael Keaton and Geena Davis star in *Batman and Louise*, an intriguing movie about a dissatisfied housewife and a misunderstood 6-foot-tall bat

who trek across the country. Wait — wrong plot. Kevin Vallick (Keaton) and Julia Mann (Davis) — political speech writers for opposing candidates — meet over a box of Nytol in a convenience store. Then the chemistry begins, causing Mann's would-be fiancé (Christopher Reeve) and Vallick's ex-wife to complicate matters for the debatable couple.

Mixed Nuts

TriStar Pictures

Steve Martin stars in another one of this season's attempts to put a twist on the whole good-will-toward-men thing. *Mixed Nuts* is about a group of people working at a suicide hotline on Christmas Eve. That must be one of the busiest phone lines of the night — who doesn't put the suicide hotline number on speed dial when they know they'll be trapped in a room with relatives for hours?

Higher Learning

Columbia Pictures

John Singleton (*Boyz n the Hood*) directs as a group of college students face issues concerning identity, diversity, sexism and racism. Most of us confront all these things just selecting an item from a vending machine on campus. Ice Cube and Laurence Fishburne star in this schoolbook drama of college life.

■ Erin Laskowski, *The Oracle*, U. of South Florida

Jury Duty

There may be an image change in store for America's favorite weasel. Pauly Shore, best known for his dim-witted antics on MTV and in the flick *In the Army Now*, will play a hapless loner who charms Tia Carrere, upholds justice and saves the day in *Jury Duty*.

Is Shore really trying to carve out a persona as a romantic hero? Not likely. His character, Tommy, is merely the latest variation on a successful theme. *Jury Duty* should contain enough of the familiar, goofy, Shore-type antics to please his fans and broaden his appeal. "My other movies were 'Pauly the son-in-law' or 'Pauly in the Army,'" Shore says. "This is more of a comedy-romance. We're not billing it as 'Pauly on jury duty.'"

Co-star Carrere is content to leave the joking to Pauly. Best known for her turns as the slinky babe in *Wayne's World* and the seductive villainess in *True Lies*, Carrere plays a law student serving on the jury with Tommy. "I wouldn't even presume to be funny," she says. "I think that's the hardest thing in the world."

Carrere doesn't have to worry. With Shore at the helm, *Jury Duty* may not have trouble courting viewers — just be glad you're not on the witness stand.



■ Lael Loewenstein, *The Daily Bruin*, U. of California, Los Angeles