

# Year's best films

2010 produces decade's best thriller and closure to childhood classic

BY KEN DUSOLD  
Staff Reviewer

## 10. "A Screaming Man"

This foreign film from the state of Chad achieves more than most films from the previous year through director Mahamat-Saleh Haroun's use of simple techniques — like natural lighting — to bring to life the story of a complex man who struggles with the effects of civil war, outstanding guilt for how he has hurt his son and his inability to accept the aging process and his mortality.

## 9. "The Town"

This riveting and intense crime drama from actor/director Ben Affleck follows a small band of tough-skinned bank robbers as they carry out heists for their questionable "patron," while taking every precaution to fend off FBI agents' snooping. Jeremy Renner's supporting performance — one of the year's best — as the protagonist's hot-headed

best friend helps bolster this picture as the best crime film since Affleck's 2007 work, "Gone Baby Gone."

## 8. "Toy Story 3"

Pixar's third installment of this franchise sees Andy headed to college and faced with the toughest decision of his life — or so we consider it as fans — what to do with his beloved toys. Better than "Toy Story 2," this movie brilliantly combines slapstick comedy with action and the rich emotion we have come to expect

from Woody, Buzz and the gang. Our final farewell to these friends touched our hearts more deeply than any other 2010 film.

## 7. "The Fighter"

Boxing movies are either deftly produced portraits of complex characters

or over-the-top melodramas complete with cringe-worthy performances. "The Fighter" is more like "Raging Bull" in its uncompromising realism, as we are introduced to a man tested not only in the

ring, but also at home. While Mark Wahlberg stars, it is Christian Bale who gives what might be the best individual performance of the year as a crack-addicted ex-boxer.

## 6. "The Kids Are All Right"

In the best comedy of 2010, Annette Bening stands out among an almost flawless ensemble cast as a controlling and critical surgeon, lesbian partner to Julianne Moore and parent to Mia Wasikowska and Josh Hutcherson. When the children seek out and find their sperm donor/father (Mark Ruffalo), this American family is thrown into chaos and brought to the brink of collapse.

## 5. "The American"

George Clooney stars as a ruthless but self-tormented assassin faced with his last job and the hope of finding peace in a beautiful, rugged region of central Italy. This scrupulously filmed thriller from director Anton Corbijn is strangely calming because of the quiet intensity that results from a decision to use dialogue only when absolutely necessary. Yet, the film manages to remain one of the best thrillers in recent years.

## 4. "Black Swan"

In what is possibly the most haunting psychological thriller of the last decade, Nat-



Jessie Eisenberg convincingly delivers the role of innovative genius as Mark Zuckerberg in "The Social Network," ranked in this list as the year's No. 1 film.

Photo courtesy of rottentomatoes.com

alie Portman gives her best performance to date as an overly dedicated and stressed ballerina seeking perfection. With terrific performances from the entire cast, director Darren Aronofsky has proved himself a deserving contender for best director of the year.

## 3. "True Grit"

This updated version of the film that won John Wayne his only Oscar is less a romanticism of the frontier and more a story of the virtue of unflinching determination. Jeff Bridges and young Hailee Steinfeld give two of the best and most entertaining performances of the year. In what is their most beautifully filmed

movie, the Coen Brothers prove that — while rare — it is possible for a remake to not only meet, but surpass, an original work.

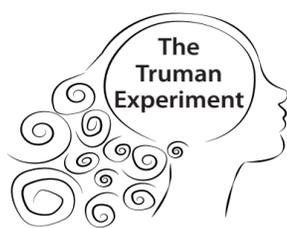
## 2. "The King's Speech"

Tom Hooper's depiction of King George VI's struggle with a debilitating stammer boasts witty dialogue, dry British humor and flawless performances from stars Colin Firth, Geoffrey Rush and Helena Bonham Carter. In fact, Firth's portrayal of the World War II era king is so striking, it is difficult not to think of him as George VI during every moment of the film. This endearing story succeeds as an equally captivating film.

## 1. "The Social Network"

A tale for our time, the "Facebook movie," as it has come to be known, is the best 2010 had to offer theater audiences. The combination of Aaron Sorkin's masterpiece of a screenplay and David Fincher's clear understanding of the story results in a film of both subtle humor and ironic sadness on par with some of William Shakespeare's greatest tragedies. Complete with unrestrained performances from every cast member — even Justin Timberlake — and a well-tailored music score, "The Social Network" will stand as a defining film of our age.

# How not to fail this year's resolutions



BY ELIZABETH NECKA  
Columnist

## Psychological studies offer insight to help improve success rate

Take better care of my health, spend more time with the people I care about, spend money more wisely: These are my New Year's resolutions, and perhaps they're yours too.

Every year we trick ourselves into believing that this year will be the one in which we actually stick to our resolutions. The new year is fresh with possibilities. In 2011, I will graduate, change geographic locations, begin graduate school or a job, make friends, lose friends, travel and much more — who can be sure what is in store?

A new semester is the same way — this time through, I'll procrastinate less, get better grades and sleep more. By dividing our lives into these manageable chunks, time seems less continuous. Our definitive beginnings provide clean slates, while our definite endings enable us to effectively put the past behind us. Come April, attendance at

the Student Recreation Center classes will be a small proportion of the surge we saw this week. During finals, we'll walk amongst the sleepless zombies who flood out of the library resolutely at 2 a.m. We know this to be true given our own experiences, and psychologists' research supports this. By June, only 40 to 46 percent of people will be successfully maintaining their resolutions, according to research by psychologist John Norcross.

Maybe the problem is innate within the concept of a New Year's resolution: The implementation of these lofty goals at the start of a new period in our lives. A study published in the Journal of Applied Psychology by researchers Thomas Bateman, Kirk Karwan and Thomas Kazee studied the performance and motivation of baseball players who were traded in the middle of a season or during the off-season. However, their own feelings of competence and self-esteem might be threatened.

As with the start of any new job, one feels a need to prove himself or herself. So the researchers asked if performance, as measured by batting records, would change when the players switched teams, and if so, what would be the effect of the time of the switch? They found that those players who switched mid-season were much more likely to experience jumps in their performance than those who switched in the off-season, who were unlikely to experience any jump.

The researchers attributed the immediate demand to per-

form as one of the reasons why mid-season switches were most productive. When a player is already in the competitive mindset that comes with being engaged in a season, the need to perform well is heightened by a change in teams, whereas during an off-season, players might be less worried about proving themselves. Those who switch during an off-season probably don't experience as direct of comparisons from spectators and critics regarding their performance.

This leads me to wonder, could it be the same for our New Year's resolutions or our new semester plans? Although I've always been one to become incredibly excited about New Year's celebrations and all that they entail, I don't think deciding upon my resolutions a few days before New Year's Eve puts me far from the norm. Gorging myself with Christmas cookies, I decided I needed to take better care of my physical self. But I proceeded to see the next few days as my last chance to eat junk food and avoid the gym, most definitely overcompensating for my supposed healthy plans for 2011. I spent money carelessly on post-holiday sales, promising to be responsible later. The anticipation and buildup was detrimental, but felt unavoidable as I watched the final days of 2010 tick away.

Maybe we should just drop the idea that the new year clears our slate and gives us a fresh start. We can have a fresh start anytime we want to create one, as long as we take control of our lives. If I wanted to go to the gym, why didn't I just wake up

Dec. 26 and go? If I liked the idea of post-graduation traveling, why did I choose to expend my bank account instead of saving? How do I make these changes instead of just talking about them?

It's going to take a lot of willpower on my part, constantly reminding myself of my dedication

to fulfill my goals. But I think my first plan of order is to stop calling them New Year's resolutions. I'm innately setting myself up for failure, making these changes in my off-season. Instead, these are part of my continuous self-betterment: I'm switching baseball teams mid-season.

1. Lose weight and get fit
2. Quit smoking
3. Learn something new
4. Eat healthier
5. Get out of debt
6. Spend more time with family
7. Travel to new places
8. Be less stressed
9. Volunteer
10. Drink less

according to Time.com

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