

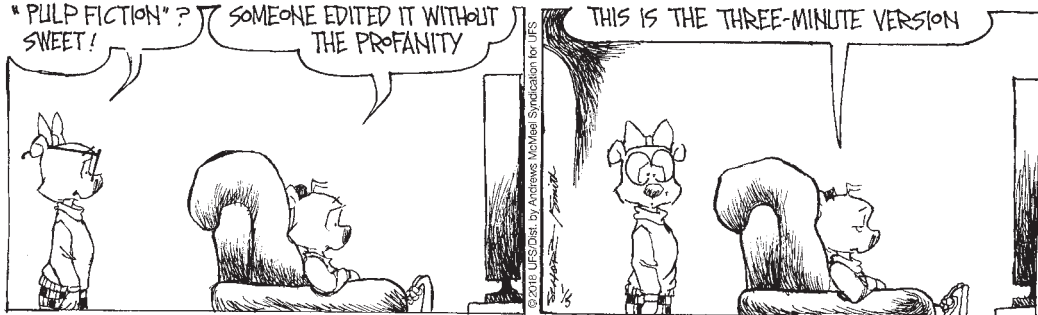
ARLO AND JANIS® by Jimmy Johnson



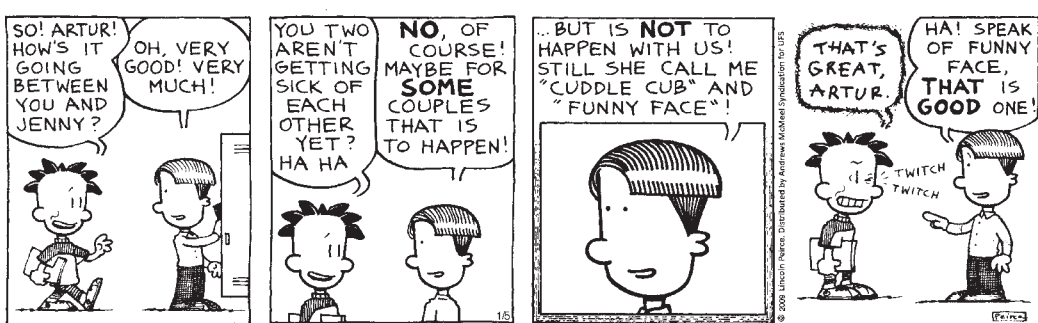
FRANK & ERNEST® by Bob Thaves



THE GRIZZWELLS® by Bill Schorr



BIG NATE® by Lincoln Peirce



ALLEY OOP by Jack and Carole Bender



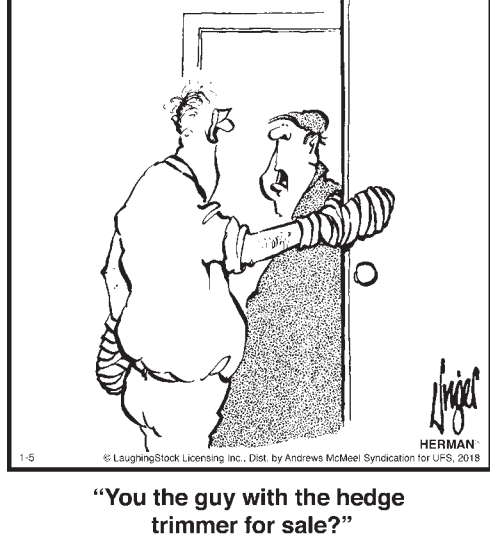
SOUP TO NUTZ by Rick Stromoski



THE BORN LOSER™ by Art & Chip Sansom



HERMAN® by Jim Unger



REALITY CHECK® by Dave Whamond



AT THE MOVIES

'Star Wars' forces its way to top of box office

LOS ANGELES (AP) — After two consecutive record-breaking years at the domestic box office, 2017 was the year the momentum slowed — even with the late adrenaline boost of a new “Star Wars” film.

The domestic box office is estimated to net out with \$11.1 billion in grosses, down around 2.6 percent from 2016’s \$11.4 billion, according to projections from box office tracker comScore.

Looked at another way, it’s also likely to be the third highest grossing year in cinema history.

The year saw tremendous highs with three biggest grossing films “Star Wars: The Last Jedi” (\$517.1 million), “Beauty and the Beast” (\$504 million) and “Wonder Woman” (\$412.5 million), notably all female-led, and the remarkable successes of a handful of non-sequels including “It” (\$327.5 million), “Dunkirk” (\$188 million), “Get Out” (\$175.5 million), “Wonder” (\$117.4 million) and “Girls Trip” (\$115.1 million).

Some superhero films even found renewed energy, either thanks a new director and vibe (“Thor: Ragnarok,” \$309.4 million), as part of a farewell tour (“Logan,” \$226.3 million) or a successful reboot with a new star (“Spider-Man: Homecoming,” \$334.4 million).

It was also a year peppered with failed starts and serious lows for everything from R-rated comedies, like “Baywatch,” to formulaic actioners and burgeoning cinematic universes. Franchises die on the vine every year, but 2017 was particularly brutal for some spectacularly expensive efforts like “Valerian and the City of a Thousand Planets,” “King Arthur: Legend of the Sword” and “Blade Runner 2049.”

The summer as a whole was the lowest grossing in over 10 years, and August was the worst in two decades. Disney’s “Pirates of the Caribbean” had a franchise worst domestically with “Dead Men Tell No Tales” (\$172.6 million) — although worldwide was a more positive story. For the second

year in a row, the Walt Disney Company is at the top of the ladder with over \$2.2 billion in domestic revenue making up over 21.2 percent of the market share from releases like “The Last Jedi,” “Beauty and the Beast” and “Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2” (\$389.8 million).

Warner Bros. followed in second with 18.9 percent of the market share, and over \$2 billion thanks to films like “Wonder Woman,” “It,” “Dunkirk” and even “Justice League,” which underperformed domestically with \$223.2 million. The studio also had its best worldwide year ever with around \$5 billion in grosses.

Universal took third with around \$1.5 billion compliments of “Despicable Me 3” (\$264.6 million), “The Fate of the Furious” (\$225.8 million) and “Get Out.”

Quality content on streaming platforms like Netflix and Amazon and premium cable options like HBO continue to be formidable draws for consumer attention too.

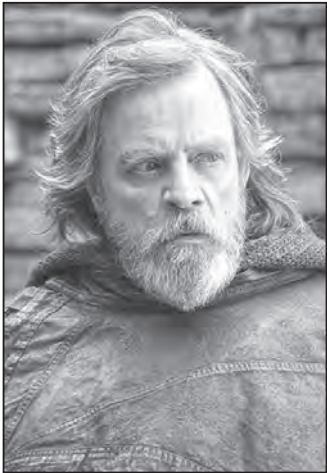
Jeff Bock, a senior box office analyst for Exhibitor Relations, says movies can’t compete.

“2017 will ultimately be remembered as the changing of the guard where people realized, you know what, movies aren’t

getting better, but TV is,” said Bock, who notes that for about the same price as a movie ticket, a consumer can get access to all the content on a streaming service.

While studios and exhibitors are bullish on the promise of the 2018 slate, which includes “Black Panther,” “Ocean’s 8,” “Avengers: Infinity War,” “Solo: A Star Wars Story,” and sequels for “Jurassic World,” “Deadpool,” “Mamma Mia!” and “The Incredibles,” analysts are more cautious.

“Streaming is not going to kill the movies,” said Paul Dergarabedian, comScore’s senior media analyst. “It’s just a wake-up call for an industry that really has not changed the way movies have been marketed. The usual formulas for success don’t seem to work anymore.”



“Star Wars: The Last Jedi” was the top grossing film of 2017.

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS

1 Sheath or sack

6 Get through to

11 Spanish dish

12 Filch

13 Cracker shape

14 Opening remarks

15 Church law

16 Salon creation

17 — splicing

19 Defense grp.

23 Trim a doily

26 Jedi knight trainer

28 Spy org.

29 Butterflies-to-be

31 Railroad switch

33 Mystiques

34 Moves on ice

35 Tax pro

36 Ocean fish

39 Unsold of the NBA

40 Pocket janglers

42 Bottle top

44 Zilch

46 Schnoz-related

51 Aplenty

54 Like a cow

55 Math propositions

56 Spotted cat

57 Quick glimpses

58 Tire center

DOWN

1 Comic Carvey

2 Harness piece

3 Furry red Muppet

4 Informal speech

5 — ammoniac

6 Outer coat

7 Rocker — John

8 Kenya's loc.

9 Exec

10 Many mins

11 “—Man Fever”

12 Uttered shrilly

16 Numero —

18 Potato bud

20 Sharp

21 Antler prongs

22 Feedbag morsels

23 Pantyhose hue

24 Panoply

25 Rural elec. provider

27 Grill, maybe

29 Deficiency

30 Volcanic emission

32 Fumble for words

34 Wine category

37 Alpaca habitat

38 Green parrot

41 Meddle

43 Engine noise

45 Starfish features

47 Maintain

48 Round building

49 Ever's partner — on (pretend)

51 Opening

52 Hack

53 Perjure oneself

54 Python or wrap

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