

Fall movies leave explosions to blockbusters of summer

By CHRIS KREWSON
Collegian Arts Writer

Summer's over — or nearly so — and Hollywood is leaving the explosion-laden *Con Air* and *Face/Off* behind in favor of movies that rely heavily upon plot. This fall offers, among other films, Kevin Spacey in a crime thriller, Michael Douglas as a billionaire and Al Pacino as the Devil.

A far cry from two Nicolas Cage movies with shots flying every 10 minutes.

There is a shrewd marketing decision involved with the big-summer-movie theory, said Pat Trimble, instructor of integrative arts.

"Summer is the major time to showcase blockbusters," he said. "The idea is to show action movies like *Con Air* in summer, so they can be out on video by Christmas."

Summer blockbusters are in a

Fall films set sail

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great position to profit from a younger crowd, said Chris Jordan, assistant professor of media studies.

"Movie makers are looking for young people out of school who want to see pyrotechnics and explosions, and they haven't been disappointed."

That type of schedule gives "smart" movies only a few months to flourish.

"Usually, the thoughtful films are caught between summer and Christmas, so they can only be showcased in September, October and November," Trimble said. "I think that the movie people would love to have May to Christmas full

of blockbusters. The dead months are between January and May."

A few movies coming out this fall could easily fit in the summer blockbuster genre: *Starship Troopers* and *Titanic*. They are slated for release on Nov. 7 and Dec. 19 respectively, long after the summer heat.

"I think what's happening is there are a lot of movies trying to reach the same audiences," Trimble said. "I read somewhere that there are a hundred films released between June 1 and Aug. 1, so that's going to mean a lot of films going up against each other. That happened with *Air Force One* and *Conspiracy Theory*. Obviously, you don't want Harrison Ford and Mel Gibson going up against each other. So they had to sit down and rethink it, and *Conspiracy Theory* was released later."

That scheduling problem would



Photo courtesy of Tristar Pictures Inc.

Mobile infantry invade the surface of a planet occupied by alien insects in *Starship troopers*. Contrary to the norm, the film is a big-budget actioner to be released in the fall.

mean a few movies that aim for the same viewers would be held for a later date.

"With all that jockeying going on, it's wise to hold *Starship Troopers* and *Titanic* for the Christmas crowd," Trimble said.

However, it can be misleading to

think every summer movie has to be a blockbuster and every fall film will be heavy on plot. *Contact* proved a well-written diversion to the fluffy summer fare, and *Starship Troopers* seems more at home in the summer. The end of summer also saw a number of small inde-

pendent films such as *Ulee's Gold*.

"You don't want to draw a 'Point A to Point B' conclusion about when movies come out," Jordan said. "Movie people do try to keep their fingers on the pulse of the public, but that isn't the only reason when movies are released."

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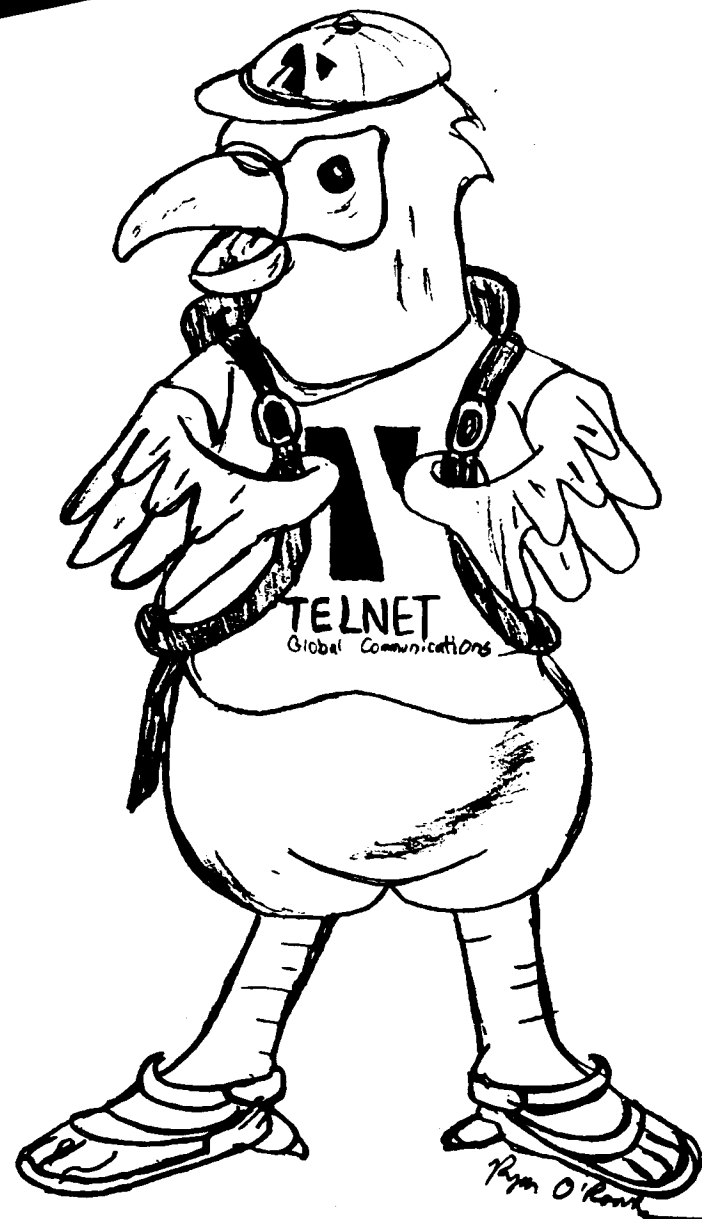
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