



MOVIE REVIEWS IN WEEKEND

★★★★☆ **BlacKkKlansman** Film about a detective who infiltrates the Klan is one of Spike Lee's best in years. **21**

★★☆☆☆ **The Meg** This popcorn movie about a giant prehistoric shark doesn't have much of a bite. **22**

★★★☆☆ **The Miseducation of Cameron Post** An affecting drama about adolescent self-discovery. **23**



## The Oscar for most likely to succeed



Ann  
Hornaday

Well, as the kids say these days, *that* escalated quickly. When the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences announced its decision to add an award for best popular film on Wednesday, the predictable howls went up throughout the Film Twitterverse. The best hot take might have come from Rob Lowe, who called the new category “the worst idea the Academy has had since they asked me to sing with Snow White.”

The outrage was quickly matched by skepticism, with observers noting that the idea emanated from Disney-ABC Television Group — the company that is contracted to broadcast the Oscars through 2028 and, coincidentally, includes the company that produces the Marvel, “Star Wars” and Pixar movies, all of which stand to gain the most from the change. As reported in *Variety*, the new category — along with an earlier date and shorter running time of the telecast — was proposed to the academy shortly after this year’s awards show, which clocked in at three hours-plus and suffered a 19 percent dip in viewership compared with 2017. The numbers were particularly dismal when it came to young viewers, who stayed away in droves.

Heaven forfend that ABC should re-examine the writing and production values of a telecast that is notoriously bloated, forced and un-fun to watch. On a deeper level, the company’s concern over the steady decline in audience and the academy’s chronic search for relevance are just the most graphic examples of the fundamental contradiction that has always animated cinema, which is simultaneously — and uniquely — an art form, an industrial practice and a commercial enterprise.

It’s the first two that the academy recognizes in its awards for artistic and technical merit; perhaps the organization should now be called the Academy for Motion Picture Arts, Sciences and Entertainment. This might be the logical, if regrettable, outcome of what happens when you take a relatively intimate, inside-industry event and

HORNADAY CONTINUED ON C3



CALLA KESSLER/THE WASHINGTON POST

## Building to her moment

BY HELENA ANDREWS-DYER

What happens to a moment deferred? Does it slip through the cracks of YouTube, never to be replayed?

Retire to the island of old tweets to shrivel in the sun?

Or does it quietly gather a viral army of followers too big to ignore?

The secret may lie with Amanda Seales, a comedian (and actress, and singer, and poet and painter) who after nearly a decade is finally undeniably having *a moment*.

Perhaps you caught her schooling Caitlyn Jenner during Katy Perry’s “Dinner and Discourse” last year? How about her scene-stealing one-liners on HBO’s “Insecure”? Or her appearance on “Def Poetry Jam”? The stint as an MTV VJ? The guest appearance on Q-Tip’s last album? Opening for the Roots? Delivering that unapologetically black stand-up set on “Late Night With Seth Meyers”?

After a decade in the game,  
multitalented comedian  
Amanda Seales is  
finally breaking out

“My thing about creating things is that it has to do two purposes: It has to serve me creatively but also has to serve the people,” Amanda Seales says.

“I’ve had a couple of breakouts,” said Seales, 37, during a recent interview at the Watergate Hotel.

“Smart Funny and Black,” the live black-pop-culture game show Seales dreamed up in her living room, has landed in the plush and rarefied halls of the Kennedy Center. The show is a live Quidditch match of wits mashed up with SNL’s “Black Jeopardy” sketches and a three-piece band.

Confused? Basically it’s quintessential Amanda, whom for years the entertainment industry’s gatekeepers just didn’t “get.” She bursts onto the stage wielding a microphone and gold lamé leggings, the evening’s “head-mistress.” During the show, two famous funny folks (Tiffany Haddish, Estelle, Boman Jones and Angela Rye have been guests) compete in games written by Seales for the title of “Master Blackspert” by debating categories handpicked by Seales such as

SEALES CONTINUED ON C3

## Dragon’s Breath snacks are the latest way thrill-seekers can hurt themselves

BY MAURA JUDKIS

Teens! They’re so great at finding innovative ways to cause bodily harm. First they were eating Tide Pods, then they were jumping out of moving vehicles to dance to the new Drake song, or giving themselves frostbite by spraying an entire can of deodorant on their skin. And now they’re eating Dragon’s Breath, a snack made with liquid nitrogen that can burn your mouth or cause respiratory distress if ingested incorrectly. And it should not surprise you to learn the teens are ingesting it incorrectly.

Dragon’s Breath gets its name because the snack can make a diner breathe “smoke” — condensed moisture from your own breath — out of both their nose and mouth. It makes very appealing videos on YouTube and Snapchat and Instagram! Sold at mall kiosks across America, DRAGON CONTINUED ON C2



JULIO CORTEZ/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dragon’s Breath, a treat made with liquid nitrogen, can burn your mouth or cause respiratory distress if ingested incorrectly.

## See white men as victims? You got to the movie late and still hogged the armrest.



Monica  
Hesse

When I try to imagine what it might feel like to be a man, particularly a white man at this moment in time, I imagine what it would feel like to walk into a

screening of “The Karate Kid” with only four minutes left in the movie.

You might notice the rest of the audience cheering loudly for Ralph Macchio and not understand exactly why. Yes, his opponent is bigger and more aggressive — but they’re both trying to compete. They’re both fighting in the same ring. Since you’d missed the first 123 minutes, you wouldn’t know Billy Zabka and his friends spent most of them torturing Macchio. That the movie was basically two hours of how cruddy it was to be Macchio, followed by a solitary hard-fought win.

Which brings me to thinking about this week.

This week, conspiracy peddler Alex Jones’s show, “Infowars,” was banned from multiple media platforms. Jones delivered an impassioned online broadcast to his 72 percent male audience. “We knew it was coming,” he told them, continuing the narrative his show is built on — namely, that minorities, feminists, lesbians and liberals are all out to get people like him.

This week, a group of mostly male white nationalists prepared to rally in Washington — a sequel to their Charlottesville rally last year, when marchers chanted “Jews will not replace us” and a counterprotester was killed. As the nationalists planned the event in a Facebook group whose contents were later leaked, they reassured one another: “It’s okay to be white,” one man wrote.

I think of Alex Jones’s terrified, paranoid listeners,

and of the terrifying white nationalists, but I also think about how those groups are the warped, warted, extreme version of a lot of current masculine fear and pain. There are cohorts of regular white men now who believe society is leaving them behind or making them victims. Delivering a crane kick to the face.

This week, a polite and inquisitive male reader emailed me after seeing news about sexual harassment: “Who speaks for me?” he wrote. “I was generally supportive, but . . . is it possible what you #metoo people want is not equality but power for yourself?”

This week, wounded-feeling men (and some women, too), took to comment boards to protest a New York Times hire, Sarah Jeong. As a satirical response to her own mistreatment online, she had

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