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A Slice of Life

by [Francine Brokaw](#)



February 2005 DVD Selections



The Adventures of the American Rabbit

This animated film provides kids with another hero that will not only inspire them to do good, but entertain them as well. Little Rob the Rabbit discovers he has special powers and is the legendary American Rabbit, "a star-spangled superhero who fights for justice." It is up to Rob to save the city from a bunch of jackals who are causing chaos. Rob is a sweet little fellow with a good heart, and once he gets going, he transforms into the star-spangled hero who is there to save the day – and the city! This is a cute film for little kids.



An American Tail

Steven Spielberg's animated treasures about Fievel, the endearing little mouse, are now available on a double feature DVD. *An American Tail* and *An American Tail: Fievel Goes West* include not only the two feature films, but also some sing-alongs and some fun interactive bonuses.

Fievel's story begins when he is separated from his family. This Russian family of mice makes it safely to America, but little Fievel gets separated and spends his time trying to get back to his family. The second film has the family going out West, after they discover New York is not what they expected.

Fievel Mousekewitz is a sweet little critter who has won over generations of viewers. This double feature is sure to please everyone. Yes, they are animated, but they are classy and sentimental and filled with humor adorable characters, making them perfect for the entire family.



Carolina

Julia Stiles and Shirley MacLaine star in this offbeat story of a family trying to get through one day at a time. Randy Quaid is the father of three daughters who leaves them in the care of their

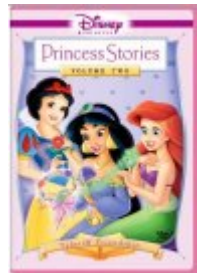


grandmother (MacLaine) to raise. Well, this grandmother isn't your run-of-the-mill granny. She is a feisty woman who has done everything she could to raise the girls the best way she could. She says what she thinks and does what she wants. The girls are all very different individuals, and quirky themselves. The oldest, Carolina (Stiles), is a hard working TV assistant looking for the love of her life, who it turns out is right in front of her eyes. This is a fun, wacky story with unusual characters portrayed in an innovative way. This family is more than a little dysfunctional (with a Madam for an aunt and other wacky family members), but they have their moments.



Deadwood – Season 1

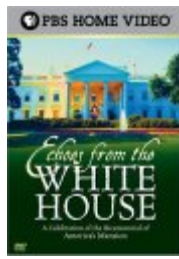
The first season of this acclaimed series comes to DVD in a boxed set that includes a documentary on the history of "The Real Deadwood." This 6-disc set includes the entire first season as well as bonus material. A "making of" feature, audio commentaries and a one-hour interview with the creator of the series round out this DVD collection. For those who do not know anything about the show, it is about the lawless times of the old west and stars Ian McShane and Keith Carradine, among others. McShane recently won the Golden Globe for his performance in the series. The series has won high acclaim from critics and fans. If you haven't seen the show or do not have HBO, now is your time to see what everyone is talking about.



Disney Princess Collection Volume 2

The second volume of Disney's Princess Collection is available with new "Princess Stories" and "Princess Party" DVDs. The "Princess Stories Volume 2" has three new tales of friendship with Jasmine, Snow White and Ariel. There are fun stories to watch and there are several bonus features including a music video and a craft activity where kids can create a friendship wreath. There is also a Princess Academy, where little girls can discover their inner princess by testing their princess knowledge and history, as well as get lessons on bowing, posture and everything to turn them into perfect little princesses.

The "Princess Party Volume 2" has everything needed to help put on the best party ever! With stories, games and music, little girls will be entertained for hours, whether they are by themselves or with a group. The virtual environment plays a beautiful video collage of castles in the sky to make a nice backdrop for any princess party. And the disc contains tips for birthday, slumber, costume and tea parties. With this disc and the help of the Disney princesses, you're bound to have some incredible princess parties in your own home!



Echoes From The White House

This fascinating PBS DVD explains the history of the White House from the perspectives of the various inhabitants through the years. It is unique in that it is not a “tour” of the house. It details the history of the house, including additions and renovations through letters and diaries of Presidents, their families and staffs that have lived and worked in the famous home. Actors like Sam Waterston, Blythe Danner and others read the historic accounts. The film is hosted by Martin Sheen. If you thought you knew everything about the President’s house, think again. This is truly an enjoyable and educational film for everyone.



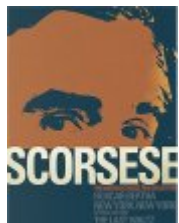
Ellen – Season Two

Season Two of the TV series is now available on DVD. Along with season one, these episodes are nonstop laughs. All 24 episodes are included in this 3-disc set along with some commentaries by cast members. The Emmy award winning series stars Ellen DeGeneres, one of the funniest women to hit the airwaves. Ellen plays a bookstore owner with a couple very different employees. Fans of Ellen DeGeneres will enjoy the situations in which this woman finds herself, episode after episode, laugh after laugh.



Love's Enduring Promise

This sequel to *Love Comes Softly* is a sweet story based on the bestselling book series by award-winning author Janette Oles. This time it is Missy’s (January Jones) turn to find true love. When her father is injured, Missy and her mother must work the farm. Then a stranger appears and helps plow the fields. He’s a godsend to the family, and a good friend to Missy. But she is also being courted by a very wealthy man (Mackenzie Astin) who promises her all her needs will be met if she just marries him. Missy then realizes money is not the answer to her heart, or her dreams. This is a sappy sweet story that is more like a romance novel, but it’s compelling nonetheless. It is directed by Michael Landon, Jr., who also directed the first of these Hallmark films. They have much the same feeling of love and family that his father put into his own work and “Little House on the Prairie.” If you loved that series, you’ll enjoy these films.



Martin Scorsese Film Collection

This box set includes some of the filmmaker’s memorable titles. *Boxcar Bertha*, *The Last Waltz*, *Raging Bull* (a 2-disc set) and *New York, New York* come beautifully boxed together in this

collector's set. The DVDs include bonus features that add to the enjoyment of the classic films. *New York, New York* is a salute to the musicals of the past starring Liza Minnelli and Robert DeNiro and introduces the famous song. The story follows the two (a singer and a sax player) as they meet in post WWII, fall in love, and build their careers, to the detriment of their relationship. It's filled with wonderful songs of the era as well as fashions. There is an introduction from Scorsese and other features. A photo album and trailers, and deleted scenes as well as an alternate ending are included. Actually, the alternate ending changes the ending of the story, which is interesting for those who love "happily ever after" love stories. The Last Waltz includes commentaries and behind-the-scenes footage in this tribute to The Band's 1976 farewell performance. *Raging Bull* includes interviews with Scorsese and star De Niro.

Martin Scorsese is considered one of the most accomplished filmmakers of our time. This set is a treasure for his fans and fans of his work.



Mr. 3000

Stan Ross (Bernie Mac) is an egomaniacal jerk who just happens to be a great baseball player. When he hits his 3000th ball, he says good-bye to his team and the game and retires to a life of entrepreneurship with several "Mr. 3000" shops and restaurants. Later, when he is being considered for the Baseball Hall of Fame, an error is discovered and it turns out he didn't hit 3000 balls. He only hit 2997. Wanting desperately to be immortalized in the hall of fame, this now 47-year-old wants to get back in the game to get the last 3 hits. He is given one month to get in shape and join his Milwaukee Brewers team. Can he do it? This hilarious film will have you laughing as Stan tries to get back in shape and fit in with the new team. Bonus features include deleted scenes, a "making of" feature, funny outtakes and more.



Mulan 2

This sequel to the hit movie begins with Mulan becoming engaged to Shang. They continue to make a great team and the Emperor charges them with the duty of transporting his three daughters - the three princesses - on a trek across China to marry the sons of a rival ruler, in order to ensure that China will not be invaded and secure the safety of the country. It seems that Mulan will be saving her country once again! Along the way the princesses fall in love with their three unorthodox and bumbling guards who are more like the three stooges more than serious bodyguards. During the journey Mushu plots to break up Mulan and Shang after he learns that once they are married he will lose his job and no longer be

Mulan's buddy. Will his master plan work or will true love win out? Will the princesses be forced into arranged marriages or will they be allowed to live their lives as they wish? The movie is just as creative and enjoyable as the original and a treat for the whole family.

The DVD contains some deleted scenes and a fun game hosted by Mushu where visitors learn about the customs, history and people of China. There is also a tour of the beautiful and vast country. Additionally, there are deleted scenes, a look at the voices behind the characters, and a fun animated music video.



The Notebook

Based on the best-selling novel by Nicholas Sparks, *The Notebook* is a profound story of love. Some may see it as a story about aging and Alzheimer's, but more than anything else, it is truly a love story. Noah Calhoun (James Garner) and his wife Allie (Gena Rowlands) live in a convalescent home, but not together. Allie's memory is tragically diminished and she has no recollection of Noah or her family. But he will not leave her there alone, so he also resides there. His children offer him a home, but his love for Allie is so strong, he will not leave her. To keep her close to him, he reads to her from their personal journal, hoping to ignite a spark of memory and, for even a brief moment, reunite them in the present. Every once in awhile she remembers their life and love, which is all Noah can hope for at this point. Those few moments, combined with the journal are all he has of his beloved Allie. The journal recounts their tumultuous courtship, and the audience is treated to watching the young couple (Ryan Gosling and Rachel McAdams) as they fall in love and deal with the differences in their social status.

The DVD contains several special bonus features. There are 12 deleted scenes, a look at the location of the film as well as the casting. There is also a look at the author, Nicholas Sparks, and a history of how he began writing his famous stories and how he became a successful published author.



On a Clear Day You Can See Forever

Barbra Streisand stars in this musical about a woman who accidentally discovers the truth about reincarnation. When she is hypnotized by Doctor Chabot (Yves Montand), he unlocks one of her past lives. Unbeknownst to her, he continues to learn about her life in the 1800s. She thinks she is going to him to stop smoking, so when the truth comes out, she is dumfounded to realize she has lived before. But that's not the whole story. There is much more revealed when she is under hypnosis.

Streisand is adorable as Daisy Gamble as she stumbles through

her somewhat boring existence yet reveals her extraordinary past life was anything but boring. The music adds to the film. Jack Nicholson has a small part as her half brother, who understands there is more to her than what others see. Meanwhile, Daisy falls for Dr. Chabot, and he is interested in her, albeit her past life. This is a delightful movie.



p.s.

Louise Harrington (Laura Linney) is 39 years old and works in the admissions office at Columbia University. Her life is going along on an even keel, and she is, for the most part, content. Then she comes across an applicant with a similar name to that of her high school sweetheart who died. Scott Feinstadt may be dead, but F. Scott Feinstadt (Topher Grace) is very much alive and applying to Columbia University. The name lights a fire inside Louise and she invites the young man in for an interview. That sounds harmless enough, but soon, and I do mean soon, Louise is having a hot and heavy affair with this twenty-something year old. This young man looks and talks like her old boyfriend. Could he be a relative or a reincarnation? Louise finds herself in a situation that affects her life and her outlook on life and love. Bonus features on the DVD include some deleted scenes.



Raise Your Voice

Hilary Duff takes a different role in this film, portraying a girl trying to figure out how to deal with life after her brother is killed. She retreats and gives up her dreams of singing and of the summer music program in Los Angeles. But her mother (Rita Wilson) persuades her to go and to follow her dream. The question is, will she be able to get on with her life, or will the tragedy of her brother's death keep her from fulfilling her goals. While in Los Angeles, Terri not only must deal with her classes and fine-tuning her musical skills, but she also must learn to live her life again. She must learn how to enjoy living the way she once did. The story is about this young girl's struggle dealing with life and death.

The DVD contains some deleted scenes and outtakes and a music video. Also included are a behind-the-scenes featurette and a fun interactive activity where viewers put together their own musical creations by choosing different instruments and sounds.



Shall We Dance?

When John Clark (Richard Gere) feels his life is missing something, he secretly takes up ballroom dancing. Of course, his wife (Susan Sarandon) thinks he is having an affair, but John isn't looking for that. His life is all right, but he simply feels he

needs a little oomph, and discovers dancing gives him more self confidence and enjoyment. The film also stars Jennifer Lopez and Stanley Tucci, among others, who make this one of the most delightful and romantic films in recent times. It's a keeper!

This delightful film comes to DVD with several exciting bonus features. There is a great behind-the-scenes feature describing how the actors approached their parts and learned to dance. Richard Gere was a bit intimidated at first but spent countless hours perfecting his dancing skills. A feature about the music of the film as well as many deleted scenes round out the DVD extras.

The Japanese film is the original on which the 2004 version was based is also available. It is just as heartwarming as the new one with the same enchanting characters. The DVD includes a look at the Richard Gere version. This film is in Japanese with English subtitles. It's enjoyable to see and interesting to compare this version to the American film.



Signing Time

Sign language is not only useful, but it also helps kids understand about the hearing impaired. The DVD series Signing Time! teaches how to sign in a fun, musical way. There are different DVDs for different signs. There is an "ABC Signs," in which viewers learn how to sign the letters of the alphabet. The "Family, Feeling and Fun" DVD teaches how to sign the words for home, family, love, brother, sister, and more. The "My Favorite Things" DVD teaches how to sign the words for colors, food, and more.

Each of the discs teach a new way to communicate in a fun environment. Music is a big part of the discs, so kids won't get frustrated while trying to learn how to sign.

In the recent film *Meet the Fockers*, the baby used sign language to communicate, even though he wasn't deaf. It's a fun and easy language to learn, and it never hurts to know a second language.

These DVDs are a fresh, fun easy learning experience. Each disc is a "multi-sensory program [that] introduces children to a 'hands-on' second language." Actually, they're great for adults who want to learn to sign too!



Barbra Streisand Collection

Just released on DVD is a three set collection of non-musical Barbra Streisand films. *The Mirror Has Two Faces*, *The Prince of Tides*, and *The Way We Were* each won acclaim for the films and for Barbra Streisand, who shows she is more than

just a funny girl.

Costarring with Jeff Bridges in *The Mirror Has Two Faces* Streisand plays a plain college professor who meets and marries another professor who is interested in her only for her mind. However, when she transforms herself into a striking woman, the dynamic of their relationship changes. Streisand also directed this film. *The Prince of Tides* stars Streisand as a psychiatrist who falls for the brother of her suicidal patient. In this film it is Nick Nolte who acts opposite Streisand, who also directed this film to high praise. *The Way We Were* was directed by Sydney Pollack and teamed Robert Redford with Streisand in this romance that spans several decades and weaves historic events through the relationship, which has its ups and downs. There are a few special features on this DVD, including a “making of” documentary with interviews with Barbra Streisand and Sydney Pollack.

All three of these films have made it to many “most romantic” lists of films. With other stars like Pierce Brosnan, Mimi Rogers, Lauren Bacall, Blythe Danner and more, it’s safe to say they are all star-studded films. But the best way to describe this set is to say they are beautiful dramas with compelling stories and characters that stand the test of time.

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