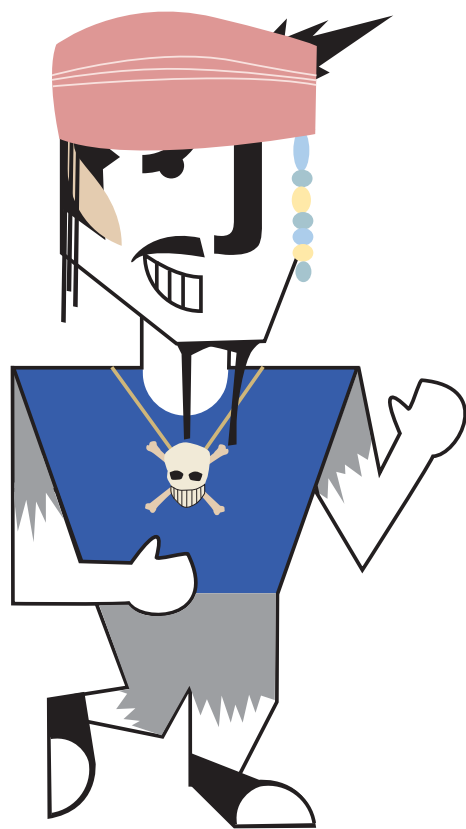


Summer Preview Films

# CHARACTER DRIVEN

Grab your popcorn, and head to your seats, it's gonna be a wild ride at the cinema this summer. Many of the blockbusters will look familiar — sequels, prequels and series abound, as they do every summer. As usual, dates are subject to change.



**TODAY**  
**"Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides"**  
 Captain Jack Sparrow is forced on a journey to find the fabled Fountain of Youth.

**THURSDAY**  
**"Kung Fu Panda 2"**  
 Po's dream job is disrupted by an enemy who wants to destroy kung fu.  
**"The Hangover Part II"**  
 Four friends travel to Thailand for a wedding. Despite advance planning, things go wrong.

**FRIDAY, JUNE 3**  
**"X-Men First Class"**  
 A look at how the X-Men saga started.

**FRIDAY, JUNE 10**  
**"Super 8"**  
 A group of young filmmakers captures a strange supernatural event in their small town.

**FRIDAY, JUNE 17**  
**"Green Lantern"**  
 The latest comic book-based story features a hero with a super ring.  
**"Mr. Popper's Penguins"**  
 A driven businessman inherits six penguins.

**FRIDAY, JUNE 24**  
**"Cars 2"**  
 Lightning McQueen and Mater head overseas to compete in the World Grand

Prix to determine the world's fastest car.

**FRIDAY, JULY 1**  
**"Monte Carlo"**  
 Three graduates discover the true magic of friendship.  
**"Larry Crowne"**  
 A man heads back to college after his job is eliminated.  
**"Transformers: Dark of the Moon"**  
 The Autobots race the Decepticons to the moon to find a spacecraft.

**FRIDAY, JULY 8**  
**"Zookeeper"**  
 Zoo animals break their code of silence to help their zookeeper get the attention of a woman.

**FRIDAY, JULY 15**  
**"Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows – Part 2"**  
 The battle between good and evil forces spins the Wizarding world into full-scale war.  
**"Winnie the Pooh"**  
 Owl sends the Hundred Acre Wood gang on a quest to save Christopher Robin.

**FRIDAY, JULY 22**  
**"Friends with Benefits"**  
 A couple decides to see what happens if they leave emotion out of a relationship.  
**"Captain America: The First Avenger"**  
 Steve Rogers is an ordi-

nary soldier who's turned into a super soldier.

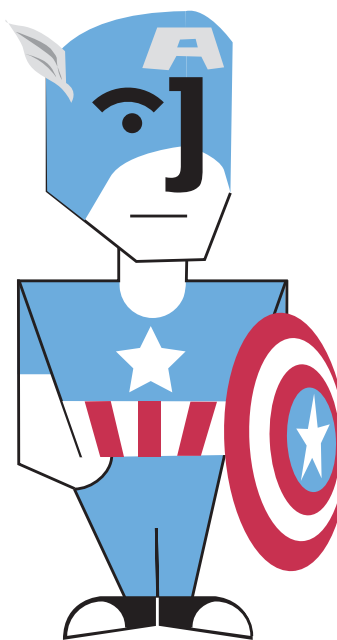
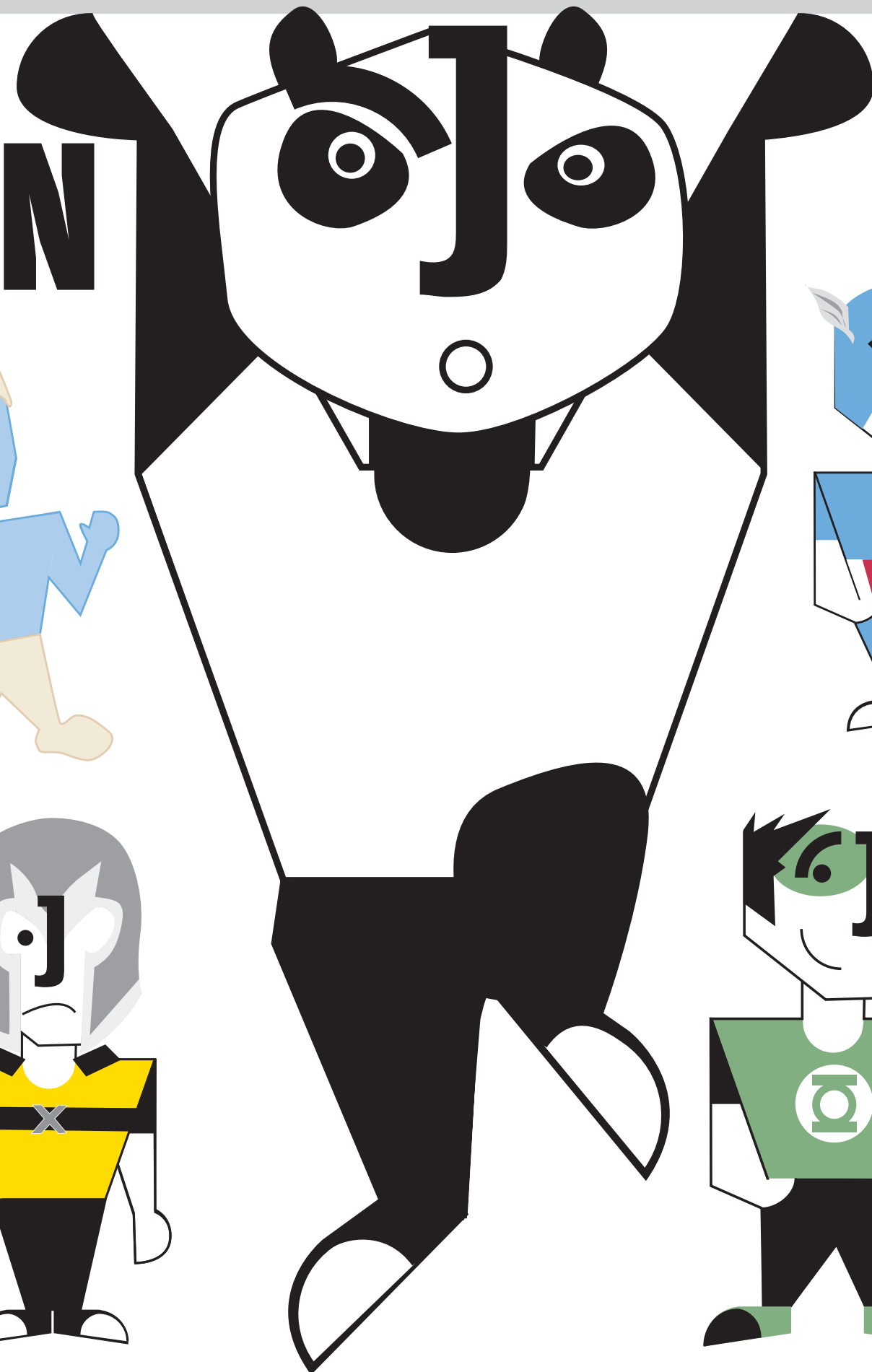
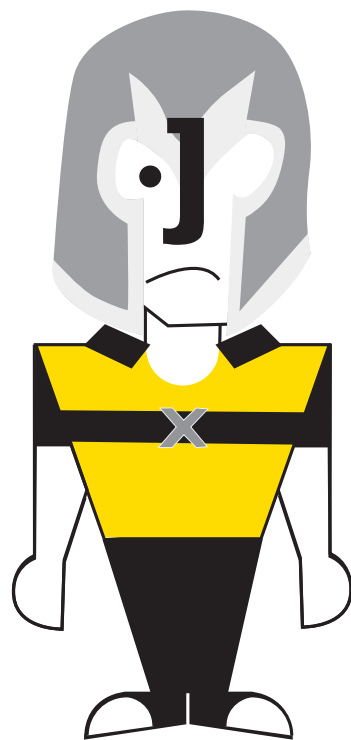
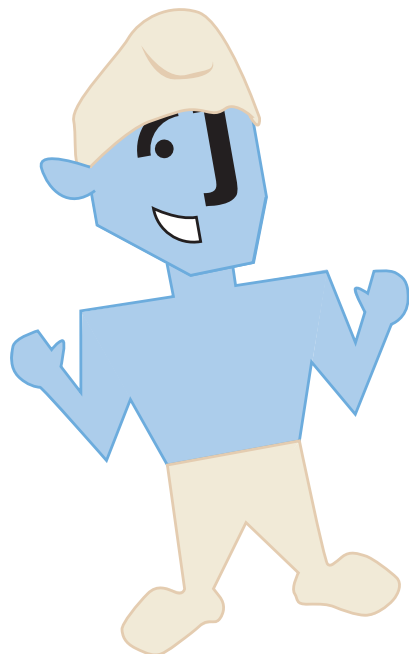
**FRIDAY, JULY 29**  
**"The Smurfs"**  
 Gargamel chases the Smurfs into the real world.  
**"Cowboys and Aliens"**  
 A desolate city in the New Mexico territory is attacked by marauders from the sky.

**FRIDAY, AUG. 5**  
**"The Change-Up"**  
 Two best friends switch bodies and lives.

**FRIDAY, AUG. 12**  
**"Final Destination 5"**  
 Death tries to keep order in the next installment in the series.  
 Prediction: Should have stopped after No. 1.  
**"The Help"**  
 Three different women build an unlikely friendship in the 1960s.

**FRIDAY, AUG. 19**  
**"Spy Kids 4: All the Time in the World"**  
 A retired secret agent must deal with twin stepchildren.  
**"Fright Night"**  
 A high school student believes his new neighbor is a vampire.  
**"Conan the Barbarian"**  
 Conan goes on a quest to avenge the murder of his father.

Rick Bentley, The Fresno Bee



Penelope Cruz adds her feminine touch to the popular "Pirates of the Caribbean" movie franchise in "On Stranger Tides."

## This year, summer isn't only about the men

By Robert W. Butler  
 McClatchy Newspapers



Summer traditionally is the season of boy movies — big, loud, rude and not terribly smart. So what are we to make of the summer of 2011 when so many titles suggest, well, an estrogen-centric approach?

It's not as if bad boys and manly men will be AWOL from the megaplex over the next four months — not with "Green Lantern," "Captain America" and "Cowboys vs. Aliens" among the most anticipated titles.

But movies for, by and about women will be all over the place. Even in traditional guy genres more important roles. In several cases, they're the main reason I want to see the movie.

Take, for example, "Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides." My attitude toward this hugely popular franchise has mutated from mild amusement to stupefying boredom. And yet I'm intrigued by the prospect of seeing the Oscar-winning Penelope Cruz all dolled up in swashbuckling finery.

Likewise, I was getting burned out on the "X-Men" franchise un-

til I heard that Jennifer Lawrence (an Oscar nominee for "Winter's Bone") would appear in "X-Men: First Class." She'll play young Mystique, the blue-skinned shape-shifting mutant previously portrayed by Rebecca Romijn.

We're also seeing a slew of movies in which female characters misbehave.

In "Bad Teacher," Cameron Diaz is a boozy, foul-mouthed junior-high educator who sets her sights on a colleague (Justin Timberlake).

In "Larry Crowne," Julia Roberts plays a grumpy community college instructor. One of her new students is a recently-fired fellow (Tom Hanks) hoping that an educational retooling will land him a new job.

And in "Horrible Bosses," Jennifer Aniston plays ... yes, yes, I've guessed it ... a horrible boss! In this case a dentist who preys on her male assistants.