As is tradition for me here at TheClevelandFan.com, I use the last weekend of the year to look back on what we saw at the theaters in 2010.

And what a horrible year for movies it was…at least until November, when the decent movies came out, and have somewhat saved this year; at least in terms of good movies. The Top 10 I'm giving is just as strong, I feel, as what we've seen in any year since 2006.

Now overall, I think 2010 is just as strong at the top as 2006, but it's missing an all-time great movie like "The Departed" to really stand out.

The summer is what really sank 2010. While there were the usual barrage of crap movies from January to April, May is when things were supposed to heat up; and it flopped miserably.

"Iron Man 2" kicked things off with what was to be the theme of the summer; Sequels and Remakes that were 100% worse than the originals.

“Robin Hood”, "Clash of the Titans", “A Nightmare on Elm Street”, “Shrek Forever”, “Prince of Persia: Sands of Time”, “Sex and the City 2”, “Get Him to the Greek”, “The A-Team”, “The Karate Kid”, “Jonah Hex”, “Grown Ups”, “Knight & Day”, “The Twilight Saga: Eclipse”, “The Last Airbender”, “Predators”, and “The Sorcerer’s Apprentice”. I’m getting a headache just reading that list. T he only things that saved the Summer were “Toy Story 3” and “Inception”.

But the year could have been worse. Remakes of “Footloose” and “Red Dawn” were supposed to be out this year, and were pushed back. Hopefully pushed back until 3011…but I doubt we’ll be that lucky.

So on with the Top 10. Every other year, I take this opportunity to tell you all that I KNOW the list will change substantially before Oscar time, as there are always plenty of good features that haven’t made it down to my neck of the woods just yet.

It is different this year, as we had a couple of art houses open in my area, and the studios didn’t hold back the top rated films to show only in LA and NY before the end of the year.

So while it is “possible” that “Company Men” or “Blue Valentine” may make my list once I see them…I kind of doubt it due to the buzz I’m hearing about them, and the quality of the other films on my list.

“127 Hours” is said to be a very, very good movie. But we all know the subject matter, and it is said to be extremely graphic at the end when the main character, played by James Franco, is forced to cut his own arm off with a pocket knife.

It’s been said that it’s so graphic that people have been sick after watching it.

Sorry…my stomach can’t take that.

Maybe I’ll watch in on DVD at some point when I can fast forward through that scene.

But I can guarantee you that I will not be watching it at the theater, even if Franco is said to be a sure fire Best Actor nominee.

So without further adieu:

Top Ten movies of 2010:

1. The Social Network. I have bumped this from number two to number one upon further consideration of both this film and “Inception”. I normally hate “based on true events” films because they are normally full of B.S.

But with this film, screenwriter Aaron Sorkin doesn’t pretend that he’s making a biography of the characters; he’s using them as a backdrop to the entire phenomenon of social networking, and looking at an entire generation of people who are more comfortable communicating on line than in real life.

The script and direction are incredible, and the acting is superb.

2. Winter’s Bone. I did a mini-review of this after I saw it on DVD. Expect a full review once it receives its inevitable Oscar nomination for Best Picture.

An incredible tale of poverty, perseverance, devotion, and courage featuring a breakout performance from young Jennifer Lawrence as Ree Dolly, a 17 year old girl trying to track down her bail-jumping father through the Missouri and Arkansas Ozarks in order to save the house and land she lives on with her invalid mother and two young siblings.

A haunting film that will both disturb you and move you.

3. True Grit. In the year of the Remake, I find it interesting that the Coen Brothers were the only ones that could do it right. Even though the plot line does stay 90% true to the 1969 John Wayne film, it is lifted by superior performances from Matt Damon and 13 year old Hailee Steinfeld, and a brave turn from Jeff Bridges in playing Rooster Cogburn as he was written in the novel, and not how he was portrayed by Wayne.

4. Inception. This one dropped after I paid more attention in the second viewing. It is still an amazing movie, although I know many people who didn’t like it due to its maddeningly complex plot. While there are some serious holes that are more noticeable on a second viewing, director Christopher Nolan still gets kudos for having the guts to makes something so original and

intelligent.

Great acting as well from Leo DiCaprio, Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Thomas Hardy, Ken Watanabe, and yes…Ellen Page.

5. The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo. Highest yearly ranking I've ever given to a foreign film with subtitles; it absolutely deserves the high praise. A tense thriller in its own right; the film reaches this high of status due to the daring performance of Noomi Rapace as goth hacker Lisbeth Salander, the most captivating and unique character I've seen in years.

6. Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1. This stopped being a kids' movie once "The Prisoner of Azkabahn" came out. And with this movie, it stopped being about the older, superstar British actors carrying the film, and was shouldered entirely by Daniel Radcliffe, Emma Watson, and Rupert Grint…and carried extremely well.

7. Black Swan. The review will be coming out shortly for this mind #@&% from Darren Aronofsky, who builds off from his character study focus from "The Wrestler" in his tale of a ballerina trying to prepare for her first ever performance in a lead role. Aronofsky goes back to the style seen in "Requiem for a Dream" in following Nina's (Natalie Portman) decent into madness due to the pressure.

Portman needs to get a space ready on her mantel for her upcoming Best Actress Oscar.

8. The King's Speech. Speaking of Oscar…Colin Firth is almost as much of a leap pipe lock as Portman for his outstanding performance as the future King George VI, trying to cure a debilitating stammer, while dealing with the stress of the shadows of WWII, and his older brother's abdication of the throne in order to marry the divorced American Wallis Simpson.

Much better movie than it sounds, with Geoffrey Rush stealing much of the film as the Australian speech therapist.

9. The Fighter. While I didn't like the boxing sequences in this, and the director ignored the actual chronology of the ascent of "Irish" Micky Ward to the top of the boxing world, the script is excellent, and the acting superb…with Christian Bale having the inside track for Best Supporting

Actor for his portrayal of Micky's crack addict half-brother, Dicky.

10. The Town. Some of the action sequences look like they have come from a Bruce Willis movie, but the script, direction, and acting shine through in this bank heist tale set in the Boston lower-middle class suburb of Charlestown. Ben Affleck proves that the accolades he received as a director for "Gone Baby Gone" were no fluke, as he comes through again in this film. Jeremy Renner ("The Hurt Locker") steals the film as Affleck's hot-headed sociopath best friend.

Just missed; "Toy Story 3", "The Ghost Writer", "The Kids are All Right".

So you may be asking "How is it that Mitch gave 'Toy Story 3' four footballs, but it's not good enough for Top Ten?"

It's because even though "Toy Story 3" is a wonderful, beautifully made movie…it's still a kids' movie. And while I think it was perfectly done for what it is, and that it certainly deserves the Oscar it will win for "Best Animated Film", I don't think a kids' movie is worthy of my Top Ten.

One other note: For the ten pictures that will be nominated for Best Picture Oscar, I fully expect that "Harry Potter" and "The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo" will be overlooked. E xpect "The Ghost Writer", "The Kids are All Right", "Toy Story 3" or "127 Hours" to be the most likely to take those two slots.

Bottom Five Movies of 2010.

As always, these are the worst movies that I was stupid enough to see. There are obviously many worse movies than these…but it's just too easy to select "The Last Airbender", "Valentine's Day", "Grown Ups", or "Yogi Bear".

5. The Twilight Saga: Eclipse. I was "told" that this one was better because at least there

were some great action sequences. I was lied to, as the "final" big battle was horribly lame.

This just left us with more bad acting and bad writing.

4. Clash of the Titans. The original movie was horribly campy and fun. This was just dour and horrible. Worst use of 3D I've ever seen.

3. From Paris with Love. John Travolta playing the five hundredth variation of a wacky, out of control character; this time as a top secret agent shooting up half of Paris while Jonathan Rhys-Davies panics as his partner. Can't decide if it's a comedy or action drama…up until a ridiculous plot twist at the end.

2. The Losers. Just a terrible film. When the filmmakers decide that in the first 20 minutes, they need to kill 20 young children just to provide "motivation" to the main characters…just turn off the dvd.

1. Cop Out. I still haven't forgiven my brother-in-law for forcing me to sit and watch this piece of crap.

Box Office Bombs of the Year

1. Jonah Hex. Maybe it didn't have the same $100 million + budgets as the rest on this list…but it only barely cleared $10 million at the box office, and was also considered one of the worst movies of this or any year.

2. How Do You Know. $120 million for this James Brooks' comedy, most of it to pay stars like Jack Nicholson and Reece Witherspoon. This is no "Network News" or "Terms of Endearment", as the critics are savaging it.

It's made only $15 million in two weeks, so there is no way it will be able to recoup even half of

the investment.

3. The Tourist. A total lack of chemistry between Johnny Depp and Angelina Jolie…combined with a boring script = a movie that won't come close to recouping its $100 million budget.

4. The Wolfman. A $150 million budgeted film that brought in only $139 million world wide…as well as critical bashing.

5 . The Sorcerer's Apprentice . $150 million budget for a film that only made $65 million in the U.S. It did make $150 million overseas, which will help (studios usually get back 55% of the box office receipts). Once it comes out on DVD, it should break even, but that's not what was expected when Disney made this…they were expecting sequels.

Don't hold your breath.

Winners of the Year: Fresh new actresses. Warmest welcomes to Noomi Rapace ("The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo"), Jennifer Lawrence ("Winter's Bone"), Hailee Steinfeld ("True Grit"), and Chloe Moretz ("Kick Ass" and "Let Me In"). We'll be hearing a lot more from you in the future.

Loser of the Year: Mel Gibson. His return to acting was less than an attention grabber ("Edge of Darkness"), and then the recordings of his racist, homophobic, misogynistic rantings towards his baby-mama have pretty much sank Mad Max to a national punch line.

Guilty Pleasures of the Year: There were three different movies that were very similar and predictable action yarns…but great fun to watch. "The A-Team", "The Expendables" and "Red" may be stupid…but I didn't care.

Have a Happy New Year, and see ya' in the popcorn line next year!