

# HOT SPOT

By Art Snyder

There'll be no sitting around the fireplace this winter, wondering what new products and promotions might do well with your customers. Hollywood has a bundle of films prepped for release, including Toy Story 3 and a Justin Bieber concert film, and that type of news should translate into fresh new business for your rink — if you do your homework and devise effective marketing. And, Barbie is looking better than ever, so you can key in on that, not to mention Taylor Swift, Glee and some beverage happenings of note. Details are below.

## 'Toy Story 3'

The Toy Story franchise is a study in success. Making its debut in 1999, Toy Story now includes three animation films and oodles of licensed fare and promotions, as well as the marketing savvy of

the joint Disney-Pixar film studios, where the hit films came into being. Toy Story 3, you'll note, was the top-grossing film of any type last year across the country, and the highest-grossing animated film of all time. Such strong consumer response —

measured at the cash registers in literally billions of dollars — over the course of several years means that whenever you see a Toy Story product that could serve your

rink customers, you owe it to everyone to incorporate the item (or items) into rink promotions. Since the targeted demographic includes middle-schoolers and younger fans, Toy Story is a natural for all your school sessions — drawings and giveaways are perfect — church and other private parties, redemption area, game room and birthday packages. But ... you need to keep your rink-Toy Story outreach fresh, for maximum impact. Since Toy Story 3 is the latest Toy Story installment to be released in DVD and Blu-ray formats (it was issued just a few weeks ago), the disk

should be at the top of your Toy Story options this winter. Be sure to consult with your staff, too, for possible Toy Story 3 ideas that might complement rink interests. Everyone wins. Big-time.

## Hollywood ahead

Staying current with upcoming offerings from Hollywood is an excellent path to financial rewards for your rink. While no Toy Story 4 is planned, so far, a film-dome list of prime prospects for 2011 and beyond almost begs for some rink innovation. As the calendar unfolds, plan your cross-couponing with nearby cinemas, and then hone your strategy for other marketing opportunities throughout your rink's several profit centers. Upcoming animation, sci-fi, superhero, fantasy and other films of interest to your customers for 2011: The Adventures of Tintin: Secret of the Unicorn (a Steven Spielberg film); Batman 3: the Dark Knight Rises; Cars 2 (a Disney-and-Pixar sequel); Captain America: the First Avenger (a superhero film); Conan; Footloose; Fright Night (a vampire film); Gnomeo & Juliet (animation); The Green Hornet; Green Lantern; Harry Potter

(vampires); Scream 4; Puss in Boots (a DreamWorks animation featuring a Shrek character); Rango (Paramount animation); Red State (teen horror); Rise of the Apes (sci-fi "prequel" to the Planet of the Apes film series); Sanctum (3-D adventure); The Smurfs; Spy Kids 4: Armageddon; The Thing; Thor (a Paramount comic book character); The Three Musketeers; The Three Stooges; Transformers: Dark of the Moon; The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn (Part 1); War Horse (a Spielberg film based on a popular children's novel); and X-Men: First Class (a Marvel comic book story).

## 'The Hobbit'

Standing especially tall with prospects for superstardom in the world of movies is The Hobbit, which is filming this winter. No release date has been announced, but with a budget pegging into the realm of hundreds of millions of dollars, you can be sure that the story by master author J.R.R. Tolkien stands on the threshold that the various Harry Potter and Shrek films have staked out. If you're not too familiar with Hobbit life, ask your staff for input. A lot of income in the months ahead can be yours if you parlay Tolkien fantasy with a good "coattail approach" from one end of your rink to another. Stay tuned for further news, advice and ideas in this column to assist you with anything related to The Hobbit.

## Barbie, Disney, other dolls

For more than 50 years, Mattel's Barbie doll has ruled the lives of girls from 5 to 15, and the parent company's marketing stands at the head of the class. The reason: Despite today's challenging economy, Barbie sales have risen 6 percent in the last year. That's a figure any toy

## Hollywood, Barbie, 'Glee' and Taylor Swift in the spotlight

and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2 (the final Harry Potter flick); Immortals (3-D epic



adventure); John Carter of Mars (Disney sci-fi adventure); Justin Bieber: Never Say Never (release date of Feb. 11); Kung Fu Panda: the Kaboom of Doom (animation sequel to 2008's Kung Fu Panda hit); Mars Needs Moms! (Disney animation, featuring the character Milo); Newt (a Pixar sci-fi animation); Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides (May release); Priest

manufacturer would relish. Talk with your staff to see how you might employ Barbie merchandise at your rink. Birthday parties, vending machines and your redemption area all look very promising as Barbie platforms.

Barbie is not alone, however, with outstanding consumer demand and sales, not to mention licensing partnerships. Dis-