



DANIEL MCFADDEN/FOCUS FEATURES

Chris Cooper, left, and Steve Carell star in "Irresistible," a political comedy written and directed by Jon Stewart.

Both parties take hits in entertaining satire

RICHARD ROEPER

As I was enjoying Jon Stewart's light political satire "Irresistible," I was reminded of a Kevin Costner movie from a dozen years ago with a similar setup and tone. What the heck was the name of that movie about the guy with the swing vote?

Oh right. "Swing Vote." Costner played the apolitical Bud Johnson, a single father in the small town of Texico, New Mexico, whose vote will carry his state and thus determine the presidential election. The candidates and their campaign managers swoop into Texico and Bud becomes a media sensation as he wrestles with his decision.

In "Irresistible," Chris Cooper plays the apolitical Col. Jack Hastings, a single father in the small town of Deerlaken, Wisconsin, whose town hall speech goes viral, prompting a national political operative to persuade Jack to run for mayor. Like "Swing Vote," this is a relatively gentle indictment of the cynical, money-driven political system, bolstered by winning

performances from the ensemble cast. The insightful screenplay by Stewart takes Hollywood's tendency to condescend to small-town America and turns it upside down in clever fashion.

The granite-faced, quietly commanding Cooper is perfectly cast as the retired Marine who gets up every morning before dawn to do chores on his farm, is a loving father to his wonderful daughter, Diana (Mackenzie Davis), listens to Glen Campbell's "Rhinestone Cowboy" in his pickup truck and has zero interest in local politics — until he attends a meeting where the town council is about to approve an ordinance cutting off any type of financial aid or employment to illegal immigrants. Jack gives a halting but heartfelt speech about how it would be un-American to turn their backs on the hundreds of good, hardworking, family people who have been an integral part of the community for years. The whole thing is caught on a shaky cellphone video that goes viral. Here's the kind of conservative guy you'd expect would be wearing a MAGA hat,

Irresistible

★★★

Cast: Steve Carell, Chris Cooper, Mackenzie Davis, Rose Byrne
Rating: R for language including sexual references.

and he's delivering a rousing liberal message! Crazy.

Cut to Washington, D.C., where the Democratic National Committee's top strategist, one Gary Zimmer (Steve Carell), has been humiliated by a devastating election loss and is looking to revive his career. A low-level staffer shows him the video of Jack, and lightbulb moment! Gary will trek to Deerlaken, befriend the local yokels and convince Jack to run for mayor against the entrenched conservative. The media will lap it up, Deerlaken will become a microcosm of the battle for America's political soul, and Gary will become a hot commodity again.

"[Jack] is like Bill Clinton with better impulse control," says Gary. "Like a churchgoing Bernie Sand-

ers with better bone density!"

Carell gives a finely honed performance as Gary, who believes he can roll into town in his slacks and expensive sweaters, order a burger and a beer at the local tap and easily win over and manipulate these hicks. He's definitely the most sophisticated and polished person in the room, but he's not necessarily the smartest person in the room. Time and again, he underestimates Jack and Diana, as well as a number of their neighbors.

After Jack reluctantly agrees to run for mayor, the national media indeed does shine a spotlight on Deerlaken, and the madness escalates when Gary's nemesis, the cunning GOP operative Faith Brewster (Rose Byrne), swoops in to marshal the mayor's campaign. All of a sudden, various PACs are spending millions on a small-town mayoral race that now features scathing attack ads, e.g., a spot painting Jack as angry and unstable that concludes with, "Paid for by traditional Wisconsin families for faith and freedom."

Writer-director Stewart is an

equal opportunity satirist, getting in some choice jabs at both political parties. In one of the movie's best scenes, Gary and Jack attend a private fundraiser in a lavishly appointed home on the Upper West Side, where a roomful of elite wealthy liberals marvel at Jack like he's a museum piece. "Authentic, I get it," says one potential donor. (When Jack is asked if he's a farm-to-table guy, he shrugs and says, "It all goes from farms to tables of some kind.") Stewart also pokes fun at the media and our tendency to go nuts over the Story of the Year before moving on a week later to the next Story of the Year. At one point we see a CNN segment featuring a dozen talking heads in little boxes who all talk at the same time.

Obviously, Stewart knows this territory well, having spent 16 years presiding over "The Daily Show" and racking up enough Emmys to fill a room. "Irresistible" doesn't have the sharp bite of a "Wag the Dog" or a "Bulworth," but it's a timely and entertaining satire with one of the most likable casts of the year.

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ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

All times are Eastern unless otherwise noted.

Events

Attractions

Angel Mounds Historic Site, 8215 Pollack Ave., Evansville. **Hours (CT):** 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesdays through Sundays. Closed major holidays. www.indianamuseum.org/angel-mounds-state-historic-site

Big Splash Adventure, Valley of the Springs Resort, 8505 W. State Road 56, French Lick. 877-936-3866 or www.bigsplashadventure.com

Falls of the Ohio State Park Interpretive Center, at the end of West Riverside Drive, Clarksville. **Hours:** 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays and Saturdays and 1 to 5 p.m. Sundays. Closed major holidays. www.falloftheohio.org

Indiana Caverns, 1267 Green Acres Lane S.W., Corydon. Features a 25-minute boat ride, a waterfall, thriving cave life and Big Bone Mountain. **Hours:** 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily April through October and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily November through March. Closed Christmas. www.indianacaverns.com

Indiana Railway Museum, French Lick. Excursion trains depart from the former Monon Railroad Passenger Station. The two-hour, 20-mile trip takes passengers through several limestone rock cuts, part of the Hoosier National Forest and the 2,200-foot Burton Tunnel. **Train rides:** 1 p.m. Sundays, Tuesdays and Saturday through July 21 and Aug. 1-8 and 1 p.m. Tuesdays and Saturdays Aug. 4-29. **Special events:** **Wild West Hold-Ups**, 1 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, July 25-26. **Museum hours:** Tuesdays, free. 800-748-7246 or frenchlickscenicrailway.org

Jasper City Mill, 160 Third Ave. The mill features cornmeal ground on site, craft items, old-fashioned candy and local products. **Features Dubois County Art Guild Gallery Walk**, items from artisans and rustic Amish furniture available in the gift shop. **Hours:** 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesdays and Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and noon to 5 p.m. Sundays. Closed major holidays.

Marengo Cave Park: The Crystal Palace walking tour features a formation-filled room and huge flowstone deposits, while the Dripstone Trail walking tour is known for its profusion of delicate soda straw formations, slender totem pole stalagmites and penny ceiling. **Hours:** 9 a.m.-6 p.m. daily. <http://marengocave.com>

Mega Cavern, 1841 Taylor Ave., Louisville. **Historic Tram Tours, Mega Zips and Mega Quest**, an underground ropes challenge. Closed major holidays. 877-614-6342 or www.louisvillemegacavern.com

Mesker Park Zoo, 1545 Mesker Park Drive, Evansville. **Hours (CT):** 9 a.m.-4 p.m. daily. **Tickets must be reserved in advance online.** 812-435-6143 or www.meskerparkzoo.com

Wilstem Ranch, Paoli: **Animal Encounters.** www.wilstemranch.com or 812-936-4484

Upcoming events

“The Goonies,” Oct. 10, Lincoln

Amphitheatre, Lincoln City. 1-844-2054223 or lincolnamphitheatre.com

Exhibits

Kremp Gallery

Exhibit: Hours: Dubois County Art Guild, through July 1-30; **Amy DeLap and William Kolock**, Aug. 5-30; **27th Annual Juried Art Exhibit**, Sept. 2-27; **Art Cloth Network**, Oct. 1-30; **Betty Beshoar and Monte Young**, Nov. 4-25; and **David Stratton and Michael McAuley**, Dec. 2-30. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Thursdays and noon to 3 p.m. Sundays. Closed major holidays.

Dubois County Museum

Membership: 2020 memberships are available.

Learn To Tie A Fly Fishing Fly, 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m., Saturday, June 27.

Permanent exhibits: Our Eldest Daughter, The Cold War (1945-1991), Black Heritage in Dubois County, Grand Army of the Republic, A Bicentennial Remembrance: The Story of German Immigration to Dubois County, Safari Room, The Story of Bill Schroeder and the Jarvik Heart; Main Street Dubois County (a model town from the 1900s featuring 17 businesses, including Stewart Hotel, Schutz's Shoe Service and a funeral home, doctor's office, jail, barbershop, church, bank, surveying office and bar), Grand Army of the Republic, Little Pioneer Children's Play Area (includes one-room schoolhouse, book nook, toy area and dress-up area), Lewis and Clark keel boat, The Law in Dubois County, Honoring the Military, The Civil War Diary of William C. Benson, Model Trains, Dubois County in World War I, The Spanish-American War and Dubois County, Huntingburg Wagon Works, Girl Scouting in Dubois County, People of the Woodlands, Trace the Buffalo, Pioneer Area, Germans, Land Owners Map, Early Settlers of Dubois County, Cheering our Champions, Furniture, Civil War Flag, Prisoners of War, The Mills of Dubois County. Also, Heidet Blacksmith Shop, depicts the original shop from Ferdinand; Lindauer Sandstone Quarry and Grindstone Works of St. Henry, displays days of sandstone manufacturing; Eckert Log Home, assembled log home inside the museum shows building material and home life inside a German-style log home; Women's Work is Never Done, choreographs the daily work week of pioneer women; History of Coal Mining; Meyer Planing Mill of Haysville; Ferdinand Sawmill; Huntingburg Buggy Works wagon; History of Boy Scouting; Antique Farm Machinery, featuring more than 75 pieces, including a binder, reaper, corn shredder and 1879 Buckeye hoe wheat drill; Tinker the Horse, represents the contribution of animals to the history of the area; silver smelter from Buck Shoals in Haysville; giant fruit press; threshing machine belted to a Kitten engine, one of five working steam engines; cane press and evaporator pan like the one used to make Birdseye molasses; and murals of Zoar, Birdseye, Celestine, Dubois, Duff, Ferdinand, Huntingburg, Portersville/Boone Township, St. Henry/Johnsburg, St. Anthony/St. Marks, Holland, Haysville, Ireland, Jasper and Schnellville.

Hours: The museum, 2704 N. Newton St., is open from 10 a.m.-2

p.m. Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturdays and 1-4 p.m. Sundays. Admission charged. Can be found on Facebook and at www.duboiscountymuseum.org. 812-634-7733

Huntingburg Museum

On exhibit: Commercial, manufacturing, military, school and social club memorabilia; the Geiger bedroom, family Bible and other belongings; a dollhouse inside a grandmother clock; a pony cart; and a 1950s kitchen.

The museum is in Huntingburg City Hall, 508 E. Fourth St. **Hours:** 8 a.m.-5 p.m. weekdays unless City Hall is closed and by appointment. Closed major holidays. 683-2211.

French Lick-West Baden Museum

The museum, 469 S. Maple St., Suite 103. Features exhibits on Larry Bird, Pluto Water, the historic hotels, casinos and Henry and Ferdinand Cross. Also features a circus diorama. **Hours:** 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Fridays, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturdays and noon to 5 p.m. Sundays. www.flwbmuseum.com

Casinos

French Lick Casino: Willie Nelson, Aug. 8; **Grand Funk Railroad**, Aug. 15; **Clint Black**, Feb. 27, 2021; **Trace Adkins**, April 30, 2021. 888-936-9360 or www.frenchlick.com/entertainment/concerts

On stage

Actors Community Theatre

Plays: “Escanaba in da Moonlight,” July 23-25.

All shows will be performed at the Jasper Arts Center. Season tickets and single-event tickets are available at ActorsCommunityTheatre.com.

Area concerts

Lincoln Amphitheatre, Lincoln City: Amp Unplugged Acoustic Events (5 p.m. CT; seating limited): Chris Shaffer of The Why Store, June 28; **Adam Hood**, July 12; and **Paul McDonald (“American Idol” finalist, Season 10)**, July 26. **Other concerts: Del McCoury Band**, June 5, 2021; **Wreking Crüe: A Tribute to Mötley Crüe**, June 12, 2021; **All My Rowdy Friends: A Tribute to Hank Williams Jr.**, July 10, 2021; **Captain Fantastic: A Tribute to Elton John**, July 17, 2021; **Monsters of Yacht: America's Premier Yacht Rock Tribute Band**, July 31, 2021; **ONE: A Celebration of U2**, Aug. 14, 2021; **Edgar Winter Band** with special guest **Henry Lee Summer**, Aug. 21, 2021; **An Evening Samantha Fish**, Aug. 28, 2021; **Southern Accents: A Tribute to Tom Petty**, Sept. 4, 2021; and **Hard Day's Nigh: An Audio and Visual Tribute to the Beatles**, Sept. 25, 2021. 1-844-2054223 or lincolnamphitheatre.com

Other concerts

Corydon Live (formerly Corydon Jamboree), 320 Hurst Lane, north of town square: **The Forgotten Trail Show**, first Saturday of each month; **The Lloyd Wood Show**, Saturday; **Elvis & Friends: Thru the Years**, July 11; **God & Country**, July 18; **Summer Country**, July 25; **Thru the**

Years, Aug. 8; **Dashing Decades: Celebrating 100 Years of Country Music**, Aug. 15; **Ricky Howsare Comback Concert**, Aug. 22; **Rockin' Terry Lee and His Million Dollar Band**, Aug. 28; and **The Diamond Duo: Tribute to Loretta Lynn and Conway Twitty**, Aug. 29. 812-734-6288 or www.corydon.live

Derby Dinner Playhouse, Clarksville: The Van-Dells, Aug. 3; **Melissa Combs: Great Women of Song**, Aug. 24; **The River City Boys: A Salute to the Songs of the Statler Brothers**, Sept. 14; **Chris Collins and Boulder Canyon: A Tribute to John Denver**, Sept. 21; **The Doo Wops & The Sulfe Bros**, Oct. 5; **How Great Thou Art: The Gospel Music of Elvis Presley**, Oct. 12; **The Return: A Beatles Tribute**, Nov. 2; **The Ladies for Liberty & The Soldiers of Swing**, Jan. 2-3, 2021; **The Monarchs**, April 5, 2021; and **The World Famous Glenn Miller Orchestra**, June 7, 2021. 812-288-8281 or www.derbydinner.com.

The Ford Center, 1 S.E. MLK Jr. Blvd., Evansville: Luke Bryan, Oct. 24; **Laruen Daigle**, Feb. 26, 2021; and **Reba McEntire**, July 8, 2021. For the complete schedule, visit www.thefordcenter.com. For tickets call 800-745-3000 or visit www.ticketmaster.com

KFC Yum! Center, Louisville: Dan + Shay, Aug. 6; and **Michael Bublé**, March 17, 2021. For the complete schedule, visit www.kfcyumcenter.com. For tickets call 800-745-3000 or visit www.ticketmaster.com

Louisville Palace Theater, 625 S. Fourth St.: Boney James, Sept. 27; **The Smashing Pumpkins**, Oct. 8; **Cole Swindell**, Oct. 11; and **Chicago**,

Nov. 18. For a complete schedule, visit www.louisvillepalace.com. 800-745-3000 or www.ticketmaster.com

Victory Theatre, 600 Main St., Evansville (all times CT): Whiskey Myers, Aug. 23; and **Charlie Daniels Band and Marshall Tucker Band**, Sept. 20. www.evansvillephilharmonic.org or www.victorytheatre.com

Area plays

Lincoln Amphitheatre, “The Rivalry,” June 25-27, 2021. Story of debates between Illinois Senator Stephen A. Douglas and lawyer Abraham Lincoln. 1-844-2054223 or lincolnamphitheatre.com

Other plays

Derby Dinner Playhouse, Clarksville: “Cinderella,” July 7-Aug. 9; **“Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story,”** Aug. 12-Sept. 27; **“Polkadots: The Cool Kids Musical,”** Sept. 30-Nov. 8; **“A Christmas Story: The Musical,”** Nov. 11-Dec. 31; **“Lend Me a Tenor,”** Jan. 6-Feb. 14, 2021; **“Camelot,”** Feb. 17-March 28, 2021; **“Grease,”** March 31-May 16, 2021; and **“Dearly Beloved,”** May 19-June 27. 812-288-8281 or www.derbydinner.com.

■ **Items for the Entertainment Guide may be emailed to news@dcherald.com or mailed to Entertainment Guide, The Herald, 216 E. Fourth St., Jasper IN 47546. The deadline is noon Tuesday for Thursday's Herald.**

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MOTORCOACH TOURS FROM JASPER!

Colonial Williamsburg
■ September 16 – 20, 2020

New Tygart Flyer RR
■ October 15 – 17, 2020

New England & The Islands
■ August 22 – 31, 2021

MOTORCOACH TOURS FROM EVANSVILLE!

Trains & Parks of Colorado
■ October 3 – 12, 2020 (Sat.-Mon.)

Branson Christmas
■ November 9 – 12, 2020 (Mon.-Thurs.)

A Southern Christmas
■ Natchez, Mississippi
■ November 16 – 20, 2020 (Mon.-Fri.)

Savannah and the South
■ March 21 – 27, 2021 (Sun.-Sat.)

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