

## KIDS' PICKS FROM 826

## Kids declare 'Alice' to be amazing

This week's monthly offering from the 826 Valencia student program is the retelling of Lewis Carroll's "Alice in Wonderland," directed by Tim Burton, starring Johnny Depp as the Mad Hatter, Mia Wasikowska as Alice, Helena Bonham Carter as the Red Queen and Anne Hathaway as the White Queen. The movie is now playing in Bay Area theaters.

## Madeleine Felder



**Age:** 16  
**Hometown:** San Francisco  
**Pirate name:** Jolly Rogette  
**Favorite thing about pirates:** The flag.

"Alice in Wonderland" uses an amazing combination of special effects and live action in the retelling of the Lewis Carroll's books "Alice in Wonderland" and "Through the Looking Glass," creating a psychedelic, semi-feminist fantasy.

The movie starts with Alice as young girl but quickly switches to her as a 19-year-old at a garden party. As expected, Alice chases the rabbit down the hole and into Wonderland (although Alice calls it Wonderland). The special effects were wonderful, because while the movie is mostly live action, the characters' images are morphed to look animated. For example, they gave the actors who portray the Red Queen, Tweedledum and Tweedledee comically oversize heads.

This retelling of "Alice in Wonderland" gives Alice a more feminist attitude. While the classic story revolves around characters telling Alice where to go and what to do, in this movie she followed her own path, being brave and fierce. This retelling was also a bit darker, with more violence and a few gruesome images. I am 16 so I didn't mind it, but for some younger viewers it might be too disturbing.

While Mia Wasikowska was very good as Alice, Johnny Depp as the Hatter and Helena Bonham Carter as the Red Queen stole the show. I've always enjoyed Tim Burton and Depp's collaborations in "Edward Scissorhands" and "The Corpse Bride" — this was no exception. The only thing I did not like about the movie was the ending, although it was not terrible. Yet this is one of the best movies I've seen.

## Alec Dufurrena



**Age:** 17  
**Hometown:** San Francisco  
**Pirate name:** Blonde Beard  
**Favorite thing about pirates:** The swashbuckling.

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A whirlwind of a film, "Alice in Wonderland" takes moviegoers down the rabbit hole and into a world of adventure and excitement. This is a great movie for kids and is sure to brighten the eyes of children ages 7 to 70. A jaded, cynical teenager, I found myself swept away by the plot and drama of the story. Helena Bonham Carter, Johnny Depp, and Anne Hathaway shine in their roles. Tim Burton astounds with his directorial genius and cinematic skill.

Viewers looking for a remake of the classic book may be disappointed in this depiction. A 19-year-old Alice embarks on a Narnia-like quest to slay the Jabberwocky from the poem of the same name. Alice's character is two-dimensional and follows the cliched formula of unlikely hero who finds that her courage has been inside of her all along at the moment of truth. Despite this, I give "Alice in Wonderland" four out of five stars for amazing direction, great acting and a plot that meanders enough to captivate the moviegoer into forgetting about the future and focusing on the action going on now. The special effects are sick, and the 3-D glasses take the spectator along on the journey as if they are in Wonderland. If you want to believe that dreams can come true, or if you just want to see Johnny Depp wielding a sword again, I urge you to see "Alice in Wonderland," an escape into a different reality.

## Daisy Guzman



**Age:** 14  
**Hometown:** San Francisco  
**Pirate name:** Captain Patchy  
**Favorite thing about pirates:** Their ability to explore.

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"Alice in Wonderland" was truly an amazing movie full of adventures. It was a complete feast for the eyes. The best part of the movie was that it was in 3-D. The 3-D effects made every action come to life and reached out to the audience. The visual splendor was astounding.

Unfortunately, Alice's character was not exactly what I expected. She had no personality whatsoever. In the beginning Alice wouldn't give in to the fact that she was living the dream she'd had her entire life. She simply thought she was dreaming up her great adventure.

The rest of the cast was great. They were energetic and optimistic, trying everything they could to accomplish their goals. My favorite character was the Mad Hatter. He was consistent all throughout the movie. He helped me snap out of my boredom from Alice's monotonous voice.

If I were directing the movie I'd definitely change Alice's role and give her more emotional draw. The movie also lacked spirit. While watching, I couldn't help but wait for more curiosity on Alice's part. Her confusing personality bewildered me.

Despite the movie's faults, I was able to appreciate most of the plot. Overall, "Alice in Wonderland" was well planned and entertaining. With some adjustments, the movie would have completely satisfied my expectations for what a successful movie should be.

## Yvette Ramos



**Age:** 11  
**Hometown:** San Francisco  
**Pirate name:** Captain Something  
**Favorite thing about pirates:** The cool ships.

I think the movie was awesome. What I liked best about it was the action, especially when Alice fell down the hole; it made me want to know what would happen next and was very exciting.

The characters I liked best were Alice and the Rabbit. Alice as the main character was very brave. I also liked the rabbit because he had funny interactions with his watch.

I didn't dislike anything about the movie, though I would have added more humorous parts. I haven't read "Alice in Wonderland," but the movie made me interested. While I was watching the film, I felt excited, happy and it made me want to laugh.

## Erika Ramos



**Age:** 14  
**Hometown:** San Francisco  
**Pirate name:** Captain Shamalamadingdong  
**Favorite thing about pirates:** Their unique style.

"Alice in Wonderland" was a very fascinating movie. I liked several things best: The atmosphere, the unique characters, and the 3-D effects felt like I was interacting with the scenes in front of me.

What I disliked about the movie was that Alice seemed confused all the time and didn't really express any emotions of happiness. I liked the Red Queen, because even though she was cruel and mean, she was also unaware that her servants were falsely loyal.

If I were the director of the movie, I would have added more action to the battle scene, because it would have been more interesting if the dragon and Alice fought a little bit longer.

I was excited during the movie because I got this feeling that made me keep wanting to watch; I wanted to know what was going to happen next. After I watched it, I felt surprised because some things didn't turn out the way I expected.

## Hilda Herrera



**Age:** 12  
**Hometown:** San Francisco  
**Pirate name:** Captain IDK  
**Favorite thing about pirates:** All the gold coins in their treasure chests.

I would say you should watch "Alice in Wonderland" because the graphics and 3-D images made it extraordinary.

I have two favorite parts. The first was when Alice fell through the rabbit hole; I felt excited when I saw her tumble and I liked the song they played as she fell. My second favorite part was when she battled the dragon.

The thing I disliked most about the movie was the Red Queen. I didn't like her because she wasn't mean and greedy. I also thought that the movie was too colorful. The colors were too bright, distracting and too vivid.

I liked the White Queen best because actress Anne Hathaway was funny.

I don't know what I would do differently if I were directing the movie because it was just too good to be corrected; maybe lessen all the fluorescence.

After the movie ended, I was amazed because I thought the message was that you are never too old or young to imagine incredible things.

## 826 Valencia

Founded in 2002 by Ninive Calegari and Dave Eggers, 826 Valencia is a San Francisco nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting students ages 6 to 18 with their writing skills. The organization also houses San Francisco's only independent pirate supply store, designed to be a kid-friendly gateway to the neighborhood where all people are welcome to come, play, shop and write. In addition to materials for the working buccaneer, the store sells publications written by the students in the programs. 826's free student programming and services include year-round tutoring, field trips, specialized workshops, in-school assistance and student publishing. The students writing for The Chronicle this month are from the Young Apprentice Workshop and After School Tutoring.

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