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SURFING THE WAVES OF POPULAR CULTURE
BY MICHAEL GILTZ & FRIENDS

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George Lucas Proves (Again) He Knows Nothing About Movies

Big budget Hollywood movies are dead, insists George Lucas. He says spending \$100 million on a movie and another \$100 million on marketing is crazy. For the same amount of money, Lucas says he could make 50-60 movies (and apparently not market them). Volume, volume, volume, he insists.

That's great. He could indeed make 50 low-budget movies for \$4 million each and surely some of them would click. He'd probably end up like France, where the government bankrolls lots of tiny movies that nobody wants to see. Invariably, a FEW of them would gain a wider audience. But that has nothing to do with making blockbusters. Any good studio should include a mix of smaller films with big stars (called "independent" films) and another label for releasing truly small, independent films (called "award winners"). Some of them will invariably break out. But they won't fill the role of blockbusters like "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest" or "Spiderman 2" or even "Superman Returns," which -- good or bad -- pack people in.

And how does Lucas conceivably justify the ludicrous claim that Americans are abandoning the movie-going habit for good. No, movies don't dominate the landscape the way they did in the Thirties, but by every conceivable measure, movies are FAR bigger than they have been for at least 70 years. Tons of people go to the movies. And in the last 10 years, everyone has learned the joys of owning a library of movies the same way they've always had a library of music and books. More people own movies than ever in history. More people have access to more movies than ever in history. More movies are watched than ever in history. FAR more money is spent on movies than ever before in history.

Just from 1980 to today, you can see movies exploding from a roughly

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