

Behind the scenes

# Oscar balloter

Unlike the rest of us, Rick Miner's vote on the Academy Awards really counts

Who will win the Oscars this year? **Rick Miner** of Seattle has already cast his vote. And it will count. As one of the few voting members of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences here in Washington, Miner hopes "Crash" will win best movie. He voted for **Felicity Huffman** as best actress for her performance in "Transamerica." If he has his way, best actor Oscar will go to **Philip Seymour Hoffman** for his portrayal of **Truman Capote**.

Years ago, Miner was a young filmmaker whose documentary, "Get It Together," earned an Academy Award nomination and many other awards. As a long-time member of the academy, he views legions of DVDs sent to him and all the other academy members by the movie studios, as well as seeing the films in movie theaters.

"I think it's important to go to the theater — it's a different experience than seeing it even on a big, flat screen at home," he says.

Miner and his wife **Joyce** often put on some of the splashiest Oscar-watch parties in town, but this year they are attending the academy-sanctioned live Oscar-night event at The Triple Door.

Despite his vote for "Crash," Miner thinks the very best picture is "March of the Penguins," which has been said to have outsold all the other top movie titles this past year. However, it is listed in the foreign film category. He also feels that "Brokeback Mountain" may win one or two awards, but will not sweep categories as it did in the Golden Globes.

"There isn't one movie that is going to sweep this year," he predicts.

By night he may be Mr. Moviemanager, but by day, Miner, who works for Coldwell Banker Bain, is one of the top waterfront Realtors in the region. He says waterfront properties still sell like lightning. "We just listed one on Rainier Avenue. It had 65 feet of waterfront and sold in three days for a record \$1.285 million

— a record for that area," he says.

Miner, whose trademark logo is a traditional yellow rubber duckie, says



BRYAN VALIANT PHOTO

**A real estate agent by day, Rick Miner, with his wife Joyce, is also a longtime voting member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.**

floating homes had a banner year in 2005. Seven houseboats sold, two of them at \$1.3 million each. He says there are only about 500 floating homes in the Seattle area, and people hold on to them like gold, even customizing them — from climbing walls in the shower to vegetable gardens on the roof.

Back to Oscars: The presenters and winners will be getting a local product in

their overflowing gift bags — Volterra restaurant's fennel salt, discovered at a gift show by **Nancee Borgnine**, daughter of actor **Ernest**, who is coordinating the gift bags. She fell for the salt, the creation of Volterra chef/co-owner **Don Curtiss**. Says Volterra managing partner **Michelle Quisenberry**, married to Curtiss, "We've been invited to give a demonstration at the Beverly Hills Hotel for the gala Oscar party that night. We are so thrilled to be going."