



# ONE CRAZY SUMMER

*Blonde Ambition Strikes John Cusack*

It's spring, and a young man's fancy turns to thoughts of...well, the same thoughts his fancy turns to in winter, fall and **One Crazy Summer**.

The young man (age 19) is the physically undaunting John Cusack. And boy, is he confused on-screen. His fancies always seem to be blonde, dazzling and unattainable — blinding him with hormones to the more willing, substantial and compatible young ladies right under his nose.

Take *The Sure Thing*, Rob Reiner's sweet-spirited teen-film which launched the lean teen actor's career. He drove across country looking for the title subject, a nubile version of the Holy Grail while true love lurked in the passenger seat.

Or *Better Off Dead*, last year's harder-edged, heavily slapstick work of black humor from a neophyte writer/director named Savage Steve Holland, in which Cusack spends half the movie thinking up ways to kill himself after being dumped by the blonde Teen Queen (while across the street, a French foreign exchange student looks at him with *amour dans ses yeux*).

And then there's **One Crazy Summer**, the second team-up of gonzo scriptwriter Holland and confused teen star Cusack.

At first it looks as if the song has changed, that Cusack's on-screen persona might have found a new neurosis on which to dwell. As Hoops McCann, the latest in a long-string of basketball players in his family, Cusack is wrestling with another teen problem, parental pressure. He wants to draw pictures and his folks want him to draw fouls.

Which is where this young man's fancy shifts back to where it belongs. As part of the entrance requirements at a school of design, he must write a love story and illustrate it. Enter summer camp, a likely spot to find dream girls, and say hello to street-smart Demi Moore (of *St. Elmo's Fire* fame) the Ms Right who, once again, doesn't fit the dream...at first.

What's in between? Well, that's a secret. But Holland, who peppered *Better Off Dead* with bouts of utter madness (green dinner stew that crept off the table by itself, dancing hamburgers, bizarre races with car-fulls of Asians who talked like Howard Cosell), might not be expected to do things the conventional way.



Demi Moore and John Cusack (centre) with the whole *One Crazy Summer* gang.

"There's such a thin line between clever and stupid," Cusack recently told *USA Today*, by way of explaining the disparate range of reactions to that and other teen movies. And he admits he's not entirely sure on which side of the line 26-year-old Holland falls.

But he does know that he "laughed out loud" repeatedly on reading Holland's script, the same effect produced by the script for *Better Off Dead*.

The Chicago-born Cusack, who sees his screen persona as "a nutty, irreverent kind of guy...with a Midwestern earthiness," keeps finding a *sympatico* with Holland's ideas. Talking about Hoops McCann, and his having to deal with a hereditary "jockocracy," Cusack recalls that "my older brother was a great athlete in high school, playing soccer and rugby. I felt pressure to follow suit, but I just couldn't fit into that mold. I wanted to be an actor."

However, his rebellion *did* make things easier for sister Joan Cusack, who is now a member of TV's new, young *Saturday*

*Night Live* troupe.

Of course, John Cusack has had one brief fling with a wholesome, non-libidinous role, that of the young heroine's self-appointed bodyguard in Disney's critically-praised but little-seen '30s epic *The Journey Of Natty Gann*.

"I liked it because I got to leave the '80s and play a guy unaffected by MTV and television," he says of the career departure.

In the meantime, life will continue to be a series of studious winters and "crazy summers" for Cusack. He's eschewing a life in Hollywood while he completes a liberal arts and film degree at New York University, and restricting film work to his four-month summer breaks.

Just the thing for a young actor already experienced with his B.A. — blonde ambition.

