



## MARCH 2009 NEWSLETTER

### March Calendar of Events

#### **That's Science Fiction**

Tuesday March 3, 2009

7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Hillsdale Public Library

201.358.5072

***Shadow of the Vampire*** (2000).

Seville Diner follows the movie - 289 Broadway, Westwood, NJ.

#### **Suspense Central**

Monday March 9, 2009

8:00 pm - 10:00 pm

Borders @ Garden State Plaza

201.712.1166

This month's selection is ***LAMB: The Gospel According to Bif, Christs' Childhood Pal*** by Christopher Moore.

#### **Drawing A Crowd**

Wednesday March 11, 2009

8:00 pm - 10:00 pm

New Moon Comics

973-81-COMIC or 973-812-6642

Discussion group re: comic books.

[www.newmooncomics.com](http://www.newmooncomics.com).

#### **Whispers from Beyond & Face the Fiction**

Saturday March 14, 2009

7:00 pm - 8:00pm (Whispers From Beyond) 8:00pm - 10:00 pm

(Face The Fiction)

Borders Ramsey Interstate Shopping Center

201.760.1967

This month's guest is bestselling horror writer, **L.A. Banks**. Ms Banks is the author of the wildly popular ***Vampire Huntress*** series.

#### **Films to Come**

Wednesday March 18, 2009

7:00 pm - 9:30 pm

Borders @ Ramsey Interstate Shopping Plaza

201.760.1967

**Films to Come: 4-Star Movie Discussion Group**

#### **Fantasy Gamers Group**

Saturday March 21, 2009

2:30 pm - 7:30 pm

Reality's Edge Game Store

Ridge Road

North Arlington, NJ

Explore the freaky world of HP Lovecraft's Cthulu mythos as writer, gamer, and veteran GM BJ Pehush takes the reigns for a story of gangland murders, strange beings, and terror beyond imagining as we explore the town of Arkham. This game will use the 6th edition Call of Cthulu

Chaosium rules (books available for order through New Moon Comics).

#### **Themes of the Fantastic**

Tuesday March 24, 2009

8:00 pm - 10:00 pm

New Moon Comics

973-81-COMIC or 973-812-6642

Topic discussion group

[www.newmooncomics.com](http://www.newmooncomics.com).

#### **Modern Masters**

Friday March 27, 2009

8:00 pm - 10:00 pm

Borders Ramsey Interstate Shopping Center

201.760.1967

This month we discuss Christopher Moore's ***Bloodsucking Fiends***.

#### **Infinite Chaos: A Temnia Campaign**

Saturday March 28, 2009

2:00 pm - 10:00 pm

Todd's New Place

Rutherford, NJ 07070

directions available upon request/contact **Todd**

## ***March Face the Fiction – L.A. Banks***

***Saturday, March 14, 2009 – 8p***

***Borders, Ramsey***

***([http://www.borders.com/online/store/StoreDetailView\\_479?schid=GLBC%7CRamsey+NJ%7C479](http://www.borders.com/online/store/StoreDetailView_479?schid=GLBC%7CRamsey+NJ%7C479))***

Join us on Saturday, March 14, 2009 at Borders Books, Ramsey, NJ (Interstate Shopping Center), as we welcome guest speaker L.A. Banks. Ms. Banks is the recipient of the 2008 Essence Storyteller of the Year award has written over 30 novels and contributed to 10 novellas, thus far, in multiple genres under various pseudonyms. She mysteriously shape-shifts between the genres of romance, women's fiction, crime/suspense thrillers, and of course, paranormal lore. A graduate of The University of Pennsylvania Wharton undergraduate program with a Master's in Fine Arts from Temple University, one never knows how or when this enigma will appear... her forms are many, her secrets of crossing genres vast, and she does this with her teenaged daughter and her black Lab from some remote, undisclosed lair in Philadelphia. Visit her website at [www.vampire-huntress.com](http://www.vampire-huntress.com).

### **SFSNNJ Members on Firefox**

Take a look at Peter and Aubrey's most recent reviews, or take a look back at previous reviews you may have missed.

**Peter Gutierrez:** <http://firefox.org/news/articlerrss/author/14>

**Aubrey Ward:** <http://firefox.org/news/articles/158/AubreyWard-III>

### **Movie Reviews**

#### **Hot Fuzz by Chris Hasselkus**

I finally watched this from the makers of the film Shaun Of The Dead. Not as good, and a good half hour too long, but still a lot of fun.

#### **Hot Fuzz by Gene McGrath**

I liked it too, and agree that it wasn't as good as Shaun of the Dead. I mostly enjoyed the interaction between Simon Pegg's and Nick Frost's characters. I find Frost very funny, and for me, he tends to steal every scene he's in.

#### **Waltz With Bashir by Chris Hasselkus**

The Bergen Record capsule summary:

"A devastating Israeli animated film that tries to reconstruct how and why thousands of innocent civilians were massacred because those with the power to stop them took no action. During Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, Palestinian refugees were killed by a Christian militia. Blame has never been clearly assigned." Rated R, 87 minutes. Entertainment Weekly gave it A. The animation is rather stilted, but I agree.

#### **Coraline by Chris Hasselkus**

My brother mentioned that there was a film version of Neil Gaiman's Coraline coming out. It came out today, 2/6/2009. Ebert gave it three stars - good. I'd agree. It has the same kind of animation as The Nightmare Before Christmas - it's not as good as that, but pretty decent. B+

#### **"V" for Vendetta**

Stop N Shop had this on sale for \$5.99; it was in full screen, but for six bucks, what the heck. I thought it was very interesting and quite well done. I had never heard of Hugo Weaving before or since, but he made for a very sound protagonist. Natalie Portman was great. I have no idea how this stacks up to the graphic novel (Barry, a little help here), but as a film it's really stylish and involving. Grade: B+

## February Meeting Recaps

### Medium Screen Classics – Saturday, 2/7/09

Medium Screen Classics closed its winter run with another viewing of TV series. Several titles were available, and may be used for future viewings, but *Buffy* and *Beauty and the Beast* won out.

Jo had a special request for a Season One *Buffy* episode, The Pack. The episode has Buffy, Willow and Xander on a class trip to the zoo. Being Sunnydale, this zoo has some nasty hyenas, dark magic, deranged zookeeper, unfortunate school mascot and very unfortunate school principal, Mr. Flutie. Jo is still upset about the school mascot.

The next selection was *Beauty and the Beast* (1987 - 1990), starring Linda Hamilton and Ron Perlman as Vincent (aka Beast). The premise of the series is inspired by the fairy tale *Beauty and the Beast*. The core of the series is the relationship between Vincent and Catherine and the strong bond they share. The secondary stories deal with the secret society living in the underground and different crime dramas. Interestingly enough, the series will debut on NBC Universal's horror/suspense- themed cable channel Chiller with a 24-hour marathon on Valentine's Day February 14, 2009.

Following several *Beauty and the Beast* episodes, short-film, The Red Balloon was viewed.

It should be noted that Jo had some confusion and was looking for Belle and clearly believed Catherine (played by Linda Hamilton) to be a usurper and Beast a two-timer. She also was upset to find that there were no dancing candles or clocks in this *Beauty and the Beast*. We have suspended her Disney movie viewing for a while. Contrary to what Chris may say, I did not break the donut box - much. Barry has a very high price. Gene did not feel bad for the poor school mascot in The Pack. And Chris, he's still looking longingly at the *Mamma Mia* poster in the lobby.

Medium Screen returns in July for its summer run. **(AM)**

Some of us met Saturday at the Hillsdale Library to view some episodes of TV series. We started with an episode of *Buffy* called Hyenas, about the title characters possessing people. We then went on to *Beauty and the Beast*, which starred Linda Hamilton & Ron Perlman. The four episodes we viewed were the first four from the first season. We finished up by seeing *The Red Balloon* from 1956, a true classic. The fun continued at *Charlie Browns* on Linwood Avenue. An enjoyable time was had by all! **(Chris H.)**

### Suspense Central – Monday, 2/9/09

February's Suspense Central selection was *Heart-Shaped Box* by Joe Hill. We had a great discussion about the author, the book, and several other relevant topics. A handout provided by Chris H helped add to the discussion.

*Heart-Shaped Box* by Joe Hill (aka son of Stephen King) is about a middle-aged rock star, Judas Coyne (Jude). Jude is jaded, washed-up, bored, cruel and an emotional void. He lives with various disposable girlfriends that he doesn't even bother to learn the names of. He calls them by the name of the state he met them in. He's seen it all, done it all, and at this point in his life, the only thing that provides passion for him is collecting macabre/gruesome artifacts. Snuff film? He has to have it. Books on dark magic, skulls, bones, anything controversial. When his personal assistant, Danny, sees a ghost for sale on the Internet, Jude has to have it. The ghost for sale is supposed to inhabit a suit. Without thinking, Jude buys the suit. Turns out to be a *very bad decision*.

Make no mistake. This book is dark, creepy and will have you looking over your shoulder. Joe Hill inherited his father's ability to tap into what truly terrifies you and bashes you over the head with it. This is one malignant ghost. He takes evil to new heights. He even has an evil sounding name - Craddock McDermott.

There are some nice twists in the story and enough action to keep you riveted. You go along with Jude and his girlfriend-of-the-moment, Georgia, as they take to the road to find the woman who sold Jude the suit. The characters are fleshed out and develop nicely. At the start, you can't stand Jude. He's a jerk! As the story progresses, you come to find Jude's horrible childhood and he learns to be more human. You get startled when Jude wakes up in the middle of the night to use the bathroom and finds evil ol' ghost sitting quietly and malevolently in his hallway. Your skin crawls as Jude thinks to himself, "don't look at him, don't look at him." Your gut instinct is the same - looking at the ghost is BAD. The final showdown between Jude and Craddock is chilling, and by now, you're pulling for Jude.

Aurelia discussed the story and what characters we liked and didn't like. It was a majority vote that current 'girlfriend' Georgia was not as likable as former girlfriend, Florida, who is only in the story through flashbacks. Jude's assistant,

Danny, was also likable. Bammy was a winner too. Most felt the relationship between Jude and Georgia was dysfunctional. Everyone liked Jude's dogs - they played a very important role in the story.

The handout Chris provided pointed out that each section of the book was based on a musical reference/song: Black Dog (Led Zeppelin), Ride On (AC/DC), Hurt (Nine Inch Nails), Alive (Pearl Jam). Hill, as his father did, uses music as a key factor in his writing. We had fun figuring out the bands linked to the songs. The name of the book, Heart-Shaped Box, i.e. is a nod to Nirvana. Others were: Jude - Hey Jude (Beatles), Jude's dogs are named Angus and Bon (Angus Young and Bon Scott of AC/DC) and the new dogs are Jimmy and Robert (Jimmy Page & Robert Plant of Led Zeppelin), Johnny Cash is mentioned in reference to the suit and his song "Folsom Prison Blues".

The handout also made mention of the movie rights for Heart-Shaped Box being acquired by Warner Brothers Studios. The film is to be scripted by Irish director Neil Jordan and produced by Akiva Goldsman. Will Hill have better luck than dad with a film adaptation? Todd read an excerpt from Hill's graphic novel, Lock & Key: Welcome to Lovecraft that talks about the upcoming film, and tossed out a TV series no one other than Todd had heard of - Golden Years. This was a very brief series from Stephen King. Aurelia said it's currently on the new channel Chiller. We then had a fun discussion of all of the shows on Chiller like Kindred, Brimstone, Golden Years and a few others. Todd then did the unthinkable and mocked SciFi Channel (and my guilty pleasure addiction to SciFi's horrific movies. Wait til he's walking in a dark parking lot).

The inevitable comparison/contrast between Joe Hill and dad, Stephen King came up. It was agreed that Hill inherited dad's use of fear. The man knows creepy. What was also agreed was that Hill used description much better than dear old dad. Dad tended to use too much detail for no good reason. Hill uses detail very well and only to enhance the story.

The store announced that it was closing in 10 minutes, so Aurelia wrapped up by taking a vote of who liked the book. She then announced the book for next month, *LAMB: the Gospel According to Bif, Christ's Childhood Friend* by Christopher Moore.

#### **Drawing A Crowd – Wednesday, 2/11/09**

Yes, Haywood was referring to the Batman: The Brave and the Bold team-ups, which led to a short wherein Elongated Man and Plastic Man teamed up.

I agree, it was a great night! (Todd)

#### **Drawing A Crowd - Semi Recap**

It was an enjoyable time at New Moon Comics. There wasn't a topic specified beforehand, so I suggested couples in comic books, such as Clark Kent & Lois Lane. That didn't last too long and before you know it we were discussing things like Dr. Who and The Clone Wars. It was good to see Haywood back; he brought up how he saw Elasticman and Plasticman (?) teamed up, which was a lifelong dream of his - someone correct me on this. Hopefully Barry and Todd can add to this in that they did most of the subjects discussed. (Chris H)

#### **Face the fiction – Saturday, 2/14/09**

Face the Fiction welcomed speakers Peter Gutierrez and Rob Hauschild last night (2/14/09) for a fantastic event. Peter and Rob's enthusiasm for their topic was infectious! If Starsky and Hutch, only the coolest 'buddies' to hit TV ever, were film critics, they'd be Peter and Rob. This was one fun night that had the audience involved. The night was a fun-filled, fear-filled walk down memory lane that had us commiserating, laughing and remembering fondly.

Peter and Rob had a great visual presentation prepared for us. It was fun to see people light up when they recognized a film. It was even more fun when Peter and Rob would throw in 'trivia' questions - winners got cool swag. Competition was fierce, and some got way more swag than others. Next time, Barry may not raise his hand.

The presentation, **From Fan to Pro and Back Again**, delved into the beginnings of Peter and Rob's love of film - from classic B & W horror to 70's grindhouse and beyond. They took turns discussing the ins and outs of their childhood, often with very funny results. Both Peter and Rob talked about being taken to movies, many age inappropriate, by their dads. Peter talked about being terrified by certain films and not even being able to watch the ending. It was hysterical to hear him recall how his father had to leave the theater with him crying all the way up the aisle. His, "remember the kid who was crying and had to leave the theater crying the whole way? Yeah, that was me with *Theater of Blood*." Rob had a similar story with the trailer for *Suspiria*. That awful little girl brushing her hair and then turning around to be a horrific skull. He told us he slept in his parent's bed for about a week, and couldn't watch

shampoo commercials for some time either. Rob had many audience members nodding in remembered fear. Gene had very clear memories of that very same trailer.

The presentation was thorough, well-thought out and covered an array of films and genres. It was amusing to hear Rob explain his mix of horror and Disney films being responsible for his later tastes in film. Odd mix that many of the audience shared growing up around same time. Rob also talked about going to the drive-in and spending all day watching movies.

Peter had fond memories of the Park Hill Theater in Yonkers, which I shared with him, as did Gene. Shout out to Yonkers and the twisted youth it produced ;)

Peter and Rob provided an excellent presentation and did a great job of taking turns and trading off as each recalled how a certain film influenced them, scared them and eventually shaped the fan into the pro. It was a fascinating journey to travel with them and a lot of fun to see how the two turned a love of film into a professional venture. So many times you wonder, "how'd they get from point A to point B?" Peter and Rob not only told us how, but also had us walking the path with them. We walked from theaters to movies and back again.

Peter and Rob talked for well over two hours and it wasn't enough. Here's a look at films discussed: *Theater of Blood* (look, there goes Peter being escorted out of the movie by his embarrassed dad), *Vampyr*, *Beneath the Planet of the Apes*, *Escape from the Planet of the Apes*, *Shakedown*, *Suspiria* (no shampoo commercials, ever!), *Herbie Goes to Monte Carlo*, *The Sadist*, *The Tingler*, *Enter the Dragon*, *Evil Dead 2*, *Hardboiled*, *Bluebeard's Ghost*, *The Bodyguard* (Sonny Chiba), *Seven Samurai*, *Exterminating Angel*, *Spirits of the Dead*, *5 Fingers of Death*, *Metropolis*, *The Omega Man*, *Kwaidan*, *Maniac* (1934), *Hour of the Wolf*, *I, Claudius* (TV) (this was a favorite of both Thom Purdy and Ana), *The Prisoner* (TV), *The Third Man*, *Jaws 2*, *Jules and Jim*, *Midnight* (1982), *Galaxy of Terror*, *Dawn of the Dead*, *Night of the Living Dead*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Children Shouldn't Play with Dead Things*, *Nighthawks*, *Polyester*, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, *Sullivan's Travels*.

As the films above were shown on the screen, Peter and Rob would toss out trivia questions. We had lots of winners. Barry, the swag-stealer, took the lead. Dean took a couple of trips to the prize table. Chris, Gene, Brian K, Ana, Steve Rubin, Steve Spinosa, Kate, Todd and several others took home prizes.

Peter and Rob had a natural rapport with each other and the group. It made for a fun time. It was getting late and the guys wrapped things up (much to our regret). Excellent guests, excellent presentation and an overall great time. A big thanks to Peter and Rob for such a wonderful time.

### **That's Science Fiction! – Tuesday, 2/17/09**

Last night's That's Science Fiction! was a unique experience - enlightening, shudder inducing, possibly empowering, and gross. **Teeth**, what can I say?

**Teeth**, recommended by the always-original Aubrey, was different. The X-chromosome viewers found it kind of funny in that "ha, ha, you had it coming way" while the Y-chromosome viewers may still be whimpering somewhere.

The movie **Teeth** was about a young girl in high school who lived too close to a nuclear reactor - she had a slight mutation - teeth - where you should not have teeth. These 'teeth' made 'close encounters' rather challenging. I do believe poor Bill is still sobbing quietly in a corner. Gene, ever the brave camper, thought this film should be viewed by men everywhere as it is a way more effective cautionary story than even *Fatal Attraction*.

This movie was bloody, gross, but oddly funny (OK, maybe the females present found it funny). Picture said high school girl. She suppresses her budding sexuality by being very into a group called Promise (in this group you 'promise' chastity). Her twisted stepbrother, Brad, is hell-bent on making said chastity vow nonexistent. Young girl finds young boy at Promise meeting. Moonbeams and unicorns fly when their eyes meet across the room. Date follows, he turns out to be a bad boy, and young girl discovers she is the living embodiment of the dentata myth. Young phony boy gets his, but not in the way he was hoping. Toss in sick mom, killer dog and some 'randy' boys who get what they deserve too. Oh, I forgot to mention unwitting doctor who is now minus four fingers. Young girl discovers her 'mutation' can be turned into a helpful little vigilante and off on a spree she goes. Hee hee...Bill, stop sobbing and come out from under that chair.

The movie, while gory, was pretty good. It took the concept of urban legend and combined it with the age-old cautionary tale for a unique spin. Respect yourself and others. No means no. And, most importantly, don't be fooled by the proverbial wolf in sheep's clothing. People will tell you whatever you want to hear; they will 'become' what you think is the perfect match, until they have you good and fooled, then.... CHOMP!! Look before you leap, read between the lines...has this person always been this way or is this recent behavior? HMMMMMMMM. CHOMP!!

Teeth girl in the movie looked sweet, acted sweet, made her stepbrother think he was getting his dream - CHOMP - and fed the 'leftover' to the dog! As Liz B said, "waste not..." Bill, Bill, stop running...Bill...I don't think he will ever recover.

Thanks to Aubrey for this fun little find. Join us next month for Shadow of the Vampire.

### **Films to Come – Wednesday, 2/18/09**

Once again our beleaguered Master of All Things Entertainment tried to enlighten the disenfranchised about the world of film. As usual, he also got the final say by keeping us, break-free, until 10:00pm (you know he was thinking, "I'll show you ungrateful heathens! I'll show you!). We fearfully answered any and all questions to show that we had indeed retained some modicum of knowledge.

A large group turned out to harass, umm, attend Films. We were rewarded by having a fantastic time. Barry (in hyper-rare form) introduced several new aspects to the meeting and displayed his inner dark side (frightening, yet oddly intriguing). During the night some secrets were revealed making for some hysterical running gags. For example, we found out Peter Gutierrez is a closet *Children of the Corn* fan - lol. Todd, the Enabler, even found out that 7 (count 'em 7) *Children of the Corn* films exist to date - why? Craig, always one to watch, can't pay attention and didn't pass the papers around. Barry revealed Chris' inner 'chick'. It was better than the drama at the Grammy Awards.

Barry opened the meeting by showing the group some books he thought would be of interest: two Rolling Stone books, *The Encyclopedia of Rock & Roll* and *Album Guide* (\$9.99), *Watchmen*, Jan/Feb guide to Jacob Burns Film Center and took some time to discuss *Stephen King Goes to the Movies*. He went over the adaptations covered in the book and the group talked about whether they liked the film or not. Chris didn't see many of the titles including *Shawshank Redemption*. Peter G recommended *The Mangler* before *Shawshank*, funny thing was he hadn't even seen *The Mangler*. King lists his top 10 favorite adaptations. Barry decided it would be fun to read them and discuss. We wondered why some (*Apt Pupil* for example, described as a 'major fumbling' by Barry) even made the list and why others (*Carrie*) didn't. Todd and his infamous emails are on a mission to find out. The list: *Apt Pupil*, *Cujo*, *Dolores Claiborne*, *1408*, *The Green Mile*, *Misery*, *The Mist*, *The Shawshank Redemption*, *Stand By Me*, *Storm of the Century*.

Barry was about to introduce a new segment to the meeting when his friend arrived, also named Peter (I hope Barry prepped him beforehand "don't get too close - they bite"). Peter Gutierrez very helpfully told newly arriving Peter that the group had a consensus and our favorite film of 2008 was *Children of the Corn*. Newly arriving Peter looked horrified. I hope he figured out we were joking. The new segment, The Power of Film was from an IMDb forum. Barry tackled 4 topics and each one was more fun than the one before. He also took an opportunity to inflict some pain on attendees, quite humorously I might add. Topics follow:

- 1) **Power of film: Most Nominated Films** - Barry read the list and had us guess the film based on clues he provided. I tried to help by giving visual clues for *The Titanic* - he hid the list after that!
- 2) **Power of Film: All Time Box Office Winners** - he further prevented me from helping the group by passing this one on to Peter Gutierrez. When Peter saw how many films were listed, he said he wasn't going to do them all. Barry responded with, "You're weak!" Peter, in a deadpan manner, "No! I'm expedient."
- 3) **Power of Film: Top 25 of 2008** - Barry took his list back (you gotta laugh). Films covered ranged from *Bolt*, *Eagle Eye*, *Wall-E* to *The Dark Knight*. Each film was discussed - who'd seen, liked/hated, etc.
- 4) **Power of Film: Top 25 2008 By Search** - Barry gave this one to Todd to cover. These were the top films of 2008 based on IMDb searches. Todd gave us clues as we tried to guess the film. When Jo answered a few questions, she called out, "these clues are too easy 'cause I'm getting them." Todd quickly changed tactics and Jo didn't get any more answers. All was right with the world. Some films in this category were Films to Come: *Transformers* sequel, new *Star Trek*, *Dragonball*, *Terminator IV*, *The Expendables*, new *Harry Potter* and a new *Tron* film. On the list were some surprises too: *The Godfather* (after all this time). We had a lot of fun with this one. Some of the answers we came up were too funny and not even close. I think Barry may be looking for a new batch of people to replace us - dunces.

It was during this list that Peter wondered why *Children of the Corn* was not there, "No *Children of the Corn*! I'm gonna bring it up every 20 minutes just for a laugh." Todd had to let him know 7 are in existence. Thanks Todd.

After the IMDb round up, Barry covered Oscar Nominations - genre only. This led to a debate over the winner, who should win, why they should win, favorites, etc.

When he felt he'd let us run amok long enough, Barry moved on to January & February releases. He stayed mainly on genre films but did toss in some hits (*Paul Blart: Mall Cop*). *The Uninvited*, *Push*, *Coraline*, *Defiance*, *The*

*Unborn, Not Easily Broken* - at this one's mention, Peter G said, "this one came out! He was so shocked it was hysterical. Barry asked the group as he read the films who had seen the film. When he realized no one had seen the majority of the films he asked, "What kind of SF group are you?" We sat stumped until Peter G quipped, "a discerning one." Ah ha! take that Mr. Moderator. OK, not entirely accurate, but it sounded good.

Barry finished up with another recent Films to Come addition that we really like, First Look. This is a list of upcoming films for 2009 in no particular order. It's fun to get a look and discuss what we're anticipating or dreading. *Land of the Lost*, believe it or not, seems to be a film we have to see. What will they do with it? At this point Barry must have felt like Marshall, Will & Holly on that doomed routine expedition...aaaaaaaahhhhhh. Glutton for punishment he is, he gathered us up for the diner to continue the night and kept us out late.

Excellent meeting Barry. If you haven't been to Films to Come, you're missing out. This is a good time. Outlander, we have your woman!

#### **Themes of the Fantastic – Tuesday, 2/24/09**

Our intrepid group met last night at New Moon Comics to discuss the topic "What's Love Got To Do With It/III-Fated Romance". Barry kicked things off by listing Jonathan Frakes' filmography as Director (First Contact/Insurrection/Thunderbirds - which I liked...lol - and Clockstoppers) which had nothing to do with the topic...then mentioned the Ike & Tina Turner biopic from whence this month's title was taken. Chuck then mentioned *Ghost* (with Whoopi Goldberg) and we started in earnest.

Early on, Chris spoke for the absent Ann-Marie and mentioned *Night of The Creeps*. Chris' addition was the *Fatal Attraction/Basic Instinct/Fatal Instinct* triad. Todd cited *Once Bitten* (with Jim Carrey & Lauren Hutton)& Superman & Lois Lane. Jim came up with *Creature from the Black Lagoon*, & *White Cargo* (both of which feature prominent female roles). Bill Wagner submitted the Popeye/Brutus (or Bluto)/Olive Oil, as well as *The 5th Element*. Gene mentioned *Across The Universe*, *The Gods Themselves* & *Psycho*, commenting, "A boy's best friend is his mother."

There were some digressions off topic too, as Barry & Rob got into a riff on the merits of "V" for *Vendetta* (film versus Graphic Novel), and Craig & Rob got into discussing *Watchmen* expectations. Jim brought us back on track by inserting *The Eyre Affair* by Jasper Fforde & *To Sail Beyond The Sunset* by Robert Heinlein (must have been channeling Taras...lol).

Bill brought up the Asimov "Robot" story LIAR! as well as *Excalibur*, Barry chimed in with *Wall\*E*. Chris got into a riff on Robin & Marian and also cited the Robin Hood TV series of the 50's. This led to Todd mentioning the new Robin Hood series on the BBC and looking up Jason's filmography on the Internet via his Dell notebook in response to questioning from the group (He was in the series Robin of Sherwood in the 80's-Sidenote: we also learned that Guy of Gisborne is pronounced "Gui"). Chris also mentioned *Friday The 13th* and *Halloween* on behalf of the absent Ann-Marie (mentioning the cautionary tale/urban legend to install fear in would be 'nookie makers').

Not to be outdone, Barry whipped out his legendary doohickey and read off a list of film titles with the word Love in them: *Mad Love*, *Doctor Strangelove*, *The Vampire Lovers*, *Quest for Love*, *To Die of Love*, *Love on the Ground*, *My Demon Lovers*, and topping it off with *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife & Lover*. Todd mentioned *Bizarre Love/The Naked Lunch*, and Jim mentioned *Zardoz!* on behalf of Kathy. Barry closed us out with a James Bond joke (which only he thought was funny), then Bill adjourned at around 9:45 p.m. Next month's topic is More Moore (the work of author Chris Moore) with the pre-meeting dinner to be held at Bahama Breeze. See y'all then!

#### **Modern Masters – Friday, 2/27/09**

Modern Masters met Friday night, 2/27/09, to discuss author **S.L. Viehl** and her book *Stardoc* (2000).

Chris H provided a handout that contained a biography about Viehl and listed her works.

Todd opened the meeting, using information he had looked up and the handout from Chris, to talk about author S.L. Viehl. Viehl, born Sheila Kelly is an American writer. She writes novels in a variety of genres and uses several pseudonyms. Viehl writes SF as S.L. Viehl, romantic fiction as Lynn Viehl, Gena Hale and Jessica Hall, and Christian fiction as Rebecca Kelly. Apparently, she's so prolific that compiling a full bibliography is problematic.

After a brief talk about Viehl's background, Todd launched eagerly into *Stardoc*. *Stardoc* is one of nine (yes, 9!) books in the Stardoc series. The books are: *Stardoc*, *Beyond Varallan*, *Endurance*, *Shockball*, *Eternity Row*, *Rebel Ice*, *Plague of Memory*, *Omega Games* and *Crystal Healer*.

*Stardoc* is described as a space opera meets medical melodrama with a dash of romance. It was Viehl's debut novel.

The main character, Dr. Cherijo Grey Veil is on the run from her domineering, control freak of a father. She's so fed up, she's leaving her home planet to take a job in a trauma center, on a planet she knows nothing about, whose inhabitants are even less known to her. In short, this woman is desperate! This is how she winds up in Trauma FreeClinic on Kevarzanga Two, a world colonized by over 200 different alien species. She's never treated an alien in her life.

Cherijo arrives to her new post eager and ready to work. Her new boss appears to hate her, one of her co-workers is a lazy, unmotivated dolt who is immediately threatened by Cherijo's desire to work (he thinks he'll have to work now too), some of her first patients are dangerous terrorists with a tendency to eat their victims, and her father has already found her and is harassing her to come home "or else." That's day one!

*Stardoc* is a fun book with many twists and turns to keep you interested. As the story progresses you find out a whopper of a secret Cherijo is hiding, her father becomes more and more evil (he is one twisted puppy), and the characters become realistically written. This is not a hardcore SF book, so, if that's what you're looking for, you won't find it here. What you will find, is a fast paced, well-written story with a little bit of everything - some romance, intrigue, a smattering of science, humor, mystery and mayhem. It's a fun adventure story.

Chris imagined the cantina scene in Star Wars while reading the beginning of the book, Kathleen and I agreed. Mike P also felt the setting reminded of some other SF stories. It was agreed that we liked the familiar sense it gave. Moira had not read *Stardoc*, but had read several of the later books in the series. She completely enjoyed them. Moira and Todd then discussed the follow-up books. Bill told them they had to wait to further discuss any juicy detail until he was away from the table.

Todd wrapped up the discussion and we sat discussing TV shows we're watching (Lost was a big topic), movies and other books. We only had about 10 minutes so we talked fast and had to leave as the store was closing. Join us Friday, March 27, for Christopher Moore and *Bloodsucking Fiends*.

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