



September 2009 Newsletter

An Alternate War & Peace?

That's Science Fiction

Tuesday, September 1, 2009 – 7p

Hillsdale Public Library

The Shape of Things to Come

Drawing A Crowd

Wednesday September 9, 2009

New Moon Comics - www.newmooncomics.com

Whispers From Beyond & Face the Fiction

Saturday September 12, 2009

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

8:00pm - 10:00 pm (Face The Fiction)

Panera Bread Restaurant - www.paneranj.com

1300 Rt. 17 North, Ramsey, NJ 07466, 201.236.6300

Please join us at 7pm for our open mic-style Whispers From Beyond.

Author John L. Manning Jr.

Suspense Central

Monday September 14, 2009 – 8p

Panera Bread Restaurant - www.paneranj.com

165 Route 4 West, Paramus, 201.368.0752

Fatherland by Robert Harris.

Films to Come: 4-Star Movie Discussion

Wednesday September 16, 2009 – 7p

Borders Ramsey (Interstate Shopping Center)

If it deals with entertainment, our Master of Entertainment Moderator will cover it.

*Dining follows this event.

Fantasy Gamers Group

Saturday September 19, 2009

2:30 pm - 7:30 pm

Directions available upon request/contact **Todd**

Join us for terror, monsters, madness and more as

GM BJ Pehush explores the city of Arkham MA with our monthly Call of Cthulu (Chaosium 6th edition) game. Books are available for order at New Moon Comics - www.newmooncomics.com

Themes of the Fantastic

Thursday September 24, 2009 – 8p

New Moon Comics - www.newmooncomics.com

Modern Masters

Friday September 25, 2009 – 8p

Borders Ramsey (Interstate Shopping Center)

In The Balance by Harry Turtledove.

Infinite Chaos: A Temnia Campaign

Saturday September 26, 2009 – 2p – 10p

Directions available upon request/contact **Todd**

Welcome to the Western Nations of Temnia, a brutal and vicious tyranny ruled by the Immortal Emperor, the illustrious Naram'tzin, your boss. This game explores life in the far West, where powerful Samurai serve demon worshipping madmen, and expediency and survival are balanced by honor and horror. A new day in the Yenxhai Dominions is dawning, and the peaceful nations of the East should beware!

please visit www.sfsnnj.com for full details

SFSNNJ

Face the Fiction- Saturday, September
12, 2009

John L. Manning Jr.

Saturday, September, 12 2009, 8p

Panera Bread Restaurant

1300 Rt. 17 North

Ramsey, NJ 07466

201.236.6300

About John L. Manning Jr.

From Amazon.com: I wrote this book because I wanted to get away from my life but, taking a vacation wasn't enough. I wanted to go to a different world like in the Star Trek series, but it isn't likely to happen. So I came up with a story that could possibly happen some day in the not to distant future. With technology moving as it is right now it should take about fifty years before the common man can travel to other planets in this solar system. We can take a vacation to Mars and create new sports and activities to do on Mars. I am encouraging you to open your mind and dream up a vacation to Mars according to my book.

Mr. Manning has recently published with PublishAmerica another great book. **The Night**

Watchman is about a young man who has conquered many challenges in his life. This story takes place in any city where there is street crime, street racing, and underground fighting. There is a young man that was in a car accident as a child of 12 and was left with physical limitations.

His latest book, **Paradise Island**, will be released by September with Tate Publishing.

Come explore Mars with this fantastic Face the Fiction guest..

For more information go to <http://home.comcast.net/~jlm1976/Home.html>.

August Meeting Recaps

That's Science Fiction! – Tuesday – 8/4/09

Our Modern Fantasy month started off well with *Enchanted* (2007). All who attended enjoyed the film. It was a fun film.

In the movie, fairytale collides with modern-day New York City. Princess Giselle (Amy Adams), who lives once upon a time in the kingdom of Andalasia, is about to marry Prince Edward (James Marsden). Prince Edward's not-so-nice stepmother is not happy about the impending nuptials. When they marry, evil queen loses her crown.

Giselle is sent to our world by the evil queen (Susan Sarandon). Giselle lands in NYC and embarks on a quest to find help. Her reactions are funny and heartfelt. She meets cynical divorce lawyer Robert (Patrick Dempsey) and his young daughter Morgan. Giselle is completely confused by this world and the harshness of it. What unfolds is amusing. All of the characters go through personal changes as they adapt to the situations they are placed in.

Enchanted does a wonderful job of mixing animation, humor, song and live-action. All of the actors were fantastic in their roles and believable. As Chris put it, "it was perfect, a fine film."

Following the movie, a group headed over to Seville Diner to continue the fun. **(AM)**

Face the Fiction – Saturday – 8/8/9

We had a great time Saturday, 8/8/09 at Face the Fiction with our guest E.F. (Eileen) Watkins. Ms. Watkins wears several hats: Eppie Award winning author, founding member of the Garden State Horror Writers, member of the mystery-writers' group Sisters in Crime/Central Jersey, member of The Writer's Workshop of Bergen County, NJ, and teacher (taught fiction-writing seminars for the adult school in Wayne, NJ). Ms. Watkins also put together the Deadly Ink conference in 2008 that had Todd and Sandy Schlosser (who took time off from writing her most recent Spooky Series book to join us) on a panel about the blending of genres.

Ms. Watkins opened her presentation with a brief background, her path to being published and provided brief descriptions of her books. Her books include her latest, *Danu's Children*; *Dance With the Dragon* (an Eppie Award winner in 2004), *Paragon*, *Black Flowers* and *Ride A Dancing Horse*.

After giving us descriptions of each book, Eileen explained her research techniques, influences and even her preferences for good, old-fashioned horror rather than the contemporary leaning towards 'slasher' films. The audience agreed. We had a great time talking 'vampires' for well over an hour! We covered vampires in film, books, legend and then some. Ms. Watkins was extremely knowledgeable and gave insight to some things we hadn't previously considered. Her book, *Dance With The Dragon* has vampires, so of course we had to know every detail about her specific vampires. We were thrilled to find out her vamps are much closer to the vamps we prefer – hers is a cult leader who does some 'creative recruiting' for his cult. Chilling.

The discussion ran the gamut from books, movies, cults and why you should never drink the Kool-Aid – lol. Ms. Watkins kept us well entertained. This was a fun night. After discussing her books, characters, research, settings and rationale, we asked Ms. Watkins to read a passage. We were fortunate enough to have passages from two of her books read to us.

First up was a passage from *Danu's Children*. We sat quietly and listened as a character experiences a not-so-usual road trip. We're experiencing the harrowing journey through the characters eyes and then Ms. Watkins stopped!! Poor Chris couldn't believe it, he sat there saying, "What! What happens!" You know we laughed at his misery.

Next up was a passage from *Dance With The Dragon*. Ms. Watkins read a passage that has the cult leader (aka the vampire) bringing back a cult member – from the dead. The scene was creepy. Of course, Eileen stopped just as 'reinvigorated' member starts getting up from her coffin!! Did she go on a rampage looking for blood?! Do the cult members think this is a miracle and have no clue this is a vampire – those blood-sucking fiends of myth?! We were hooked.

After the readings, the floor was opened for questions. Ms. Watkins gave information about the publishing process, keeping your characters/storylines true/consistent, and being able to accept some criticism. We got a heads-up regarding her upcoming book about a haunted house and the psychic unfortunate enough to live in it. Ms. Watkins combined humor with her vast knowledge and was a wonderful guest.

She closed the meeting and we started getting up to make our purchases and chat with Ms. Watkins. I swear I took two steps when my phone rang – I kid you not – it was Todd!! Even from Rhode Island he managed to be the first in line to buy the book! I couldn't believe it – lol. I answered the phone to hear, "Can you get me a book?" Does he have radar? Talk about a paranormal moment. We made our purchases and chatted with Ms. Watkins. Aurelia purchased *Danu's Children* with Suspense Central in mind. We look forward to Ms. Watkins joining us to discuss the book – and poor Chris can finally have his questions resolved.

Thank you EF Watkins for a nice time! Please check out www.efwatkins.com for info on her books and more.

We headed out and a group of us had a great time at TGIFriday (Thanks to Gene for the awesome coupon that saved us all \$\$). **(AM)**

Suspense Central – Monday – 8/10/09

We met to discuss "Into The Wild", a book by Sarah Beth Durst. Five people had read the story, which involves a young girl, Julie, trying to save her mother, grandmother and others from being trapped in fairy tales. The larger topic was, is it better to live in a fairy tale world where everything seems good but in reality you have no real life, or netter to live in the real world with it's pain but where you have choices.

(Chris Hasselkus).

Films to Come –Wednesday – 8/19/09

If you only come to one Films To Come this year, last night should have been it! I think this is the only Films To Come installment each year that Brian & Ana Keaveny can attend and so, if you weren't there...you missed them! They came armed and ready to talk about recent films they saw as well as films they were anxiously awaiting.

Our moderator began with a very loving tribute to filmmaker John Hughes. The tribute came from the blog "We'll Know When We Get There" by Alison Byrne Fields, who became Hughes' penpal from 1985-1987.

Next up came the recently released 26th edition of The Year's Best Science Fiction edited by Gardner Dozois. Mike P read Mr Dozios' summation of 2008 genre films while Barry read the 2008 summation of genre TV.

Barry also made a pitch for Joss Whedon's Dr Horribles Sing-Along Musical Blog on DVD which Borders carries.

Next came the year's top box office films to date. These can be found here: <http://www.boxoffice.com/yearly/chart/?yr=2009&p=.htm>. You can also find Brandon Gray's 2009 predictions here <http://www.boxoffice.com>.

No Films To Come would be complete without a look at the Maltin Guide and this month was no exception. In fact the 2010 guide is out now, so we recapped the year so far based upon Leonard Maltin's ratings.

Then, we got into a discussion of current films we have seen. Bill decided that GI Joe was both the stupidest and smartest film he's seen all year. Brian thought it was as good as The Mummy Returns which he liked but not as much as the original Mummy movie.

There was a discussion about The Time Traveler's Wife which Ana both read and saw. We discussed how he can travel back and forth within his life span and how he can travel to a time before he met his wife and not remember her, but that he traveled to a time when she was a kid and she remembers him years later.

Barry also passed around The Art Of Ponyo book, Hayao Miyazaki's most recent release which is an updated Little Mermaid-esque story.

Next came the anticipated September 2009 movies. Which ones were we eagerly awaiting? Cloudy With A Chance Of Meatballs... , etc.

Then Barry read through Stephen King's feature in Entertainment Weekly, called Where The Joys Are. 20 film recommendations from King, what more could anyone want?

And there you have it...August Films To Come! Thanks to Barry for his ever entertaining round up of all things entertaining! **(Jo)**

Themes of the Fantastic – Tuesday – 8/25/09

Themes of the Fantastic met on Tuesday, August 25, to discuss the topic of fantasy/fairy-tales in genre (horror, SF). The more specific topic was how Grimm's original fairy-tales have influenced books/movies and other media.

Moderator Bill Wagner kept the discussion moving using a handout on the brother's Grimm and their various works, while moderator Steve Spinosa kept notes on the plethora of contributions.

Bill explained how the original Grimm fairy-tales were tales to alleviate some of the tedium that marked the daily life of peasant workers. The often-bawdy tales were a way for the peasants to indulge in the fantasies of wealth, power and success. They were the ancestors of the urban legends and cautionary tales of today.

We had a fun and lively discussion that compared the original Grimm stories to the sanitized versions most are familiar with. I brought the book, *Grimm's Grimmett*, a collection of Grimm's original stories in the original telling. Most are familiar with the Disney version of such tales as Cinderella, Snow White, and a few other cheery, delightful little stories. Grimm's versions were dark and nothing like the stories we know. Grimm's original tale, Aschenputtel varies greatly from the story we know as Cinderella. The Grimm's version had no fairy godmother, an even meaner stepmother and stepsisters, and birds pecking out eyes! We also found out Rapunzel wasn't just letting down her hair...shocking!

After discussing the differences in Grimm's tales to the stories we know, Bill went around the table to have attendees offer up the tales/books/movies they know that have been either influenced by Grimm's tales or adaptations of the tales. Movies like *Hoodwinked*, *Shrek*, *In the Company of Wolves* and *Red Shoes* were tossed out. Comics/graphics like *Fables*, as well as books such as *Into the Wild*.

From here we moved onto urban legends/cautionary tales that stemmed from Grimm's tales. Vanishing hitchhikers, waking up in a tub full of ice to find organs missing for sale on the black-market to the horror movies methodically killing off the 'randy teens' all have origins from these campfire 'fairy-tales' of Grimm. This led to too many titles to list from attendees!

Good meeting. Thanks to Bill and Steve for keeping the hounds at bay. Thanks to Brett for the donuts. Big thanks to Steve Rubin for your generosity in picking Steve S up so he could attend the meeting. And thanks to all who joined us for a fun night. **(AM)**

Modern Masters – Friday – 8/28/09

Modern Masters met on Friday, August 28, to discuss author SC (Sam) Butler and book two in his Stoneway Trilogy, *Queen Ferris*.

Todd opened the meeting by providing background on author SC Butler. Butler was born in Cambridge, MA. His first novel was Reiffen's Choice, book one in The Stoneway Trilogy (*Reiffen's Choice*, *Queen Ferris* and *The Magician's Daughter*). We've been fortunate enough to have Mr. Butler as both a guest at Face the Fiction (May 2008) and at a Modern Masters when we read and discussed his first book, *Reiffen's Choice*.

Todd then moved on to *Queen Ferris*. In the first book, *Reiffen's Choice*, we meet Reiffen and his friends Avender and Ferris. Reiffen is the true heir to the throne of both Wayland and Banking. He lives in a world filled with magic - talking animals, shape-shifting bears, dwarves and powerful wizards. Reiffen will not be allowed to rule those lands though. Evil plots stand his way. Reiffen is forced to make many choices and possibly surrender his humanity to take the throne. *Reiffen's Choice* was about the loss of innocence of struggle. It is comparable to *Eragon*, *The Once and Future King* and Feist's *Magician*.

In *Queen Ferris* we learn what Reiffen is doing with his magic. *Queen Ferris* picks up almost immediately after the end of *Reiffen's Choice*. It's the story of how Reiffen learns to use magic, while Avender and Ferris struggle to understand why he chose magic over them. It's also a story about the attempt by the Wizards to use Reiffen to seize control of the lands. Has Reiffen been corrupted? Will evil take control? Todd and Liz both pointed out that Reiffen does some really despicable things in this book. Will he redeem himself?

Butler's books are high fantasy with broad appeal. If you like your SF tinged with fantasy you'll enjoy this series. The books are often compared to the LOTR books, and do have some similarities, but stand-alone. If you enjoyed Steven Erikson's *Memories of Ice* and *Midnight Tides*, you may want to give these books a read. **(AM)**

Medium Screen Classics – Saturday – 8/29/09

Members of the SFSNNJ met to screen some "interesting" films. At Barry's suggestion, we started with a Route 66 episode that featured Boris Karloff, Peter Lorre and Lon Chaney, Jr. It's significance was that Chaney donned the Wolfman make-up and Karloff donned the Frankenstein make-up for the first time since 1948 and 1939 respectively. This was in 1962. Our features were "Frankenhooker" as well as "Re-animator". Barry added a short from the DVD "Seed" called "Criticized" that fit right in. Thanks to all that attended, especially Barry for the additional short and Ann-Marie for scheduling the four features. I had the Route 66 episode. We then continued the fun at Charlie Browns. **(Chris Hasselkus)**

The films were 'interesting' but they were fun. Even though Re-Animator was rated higher than Frankenhooker, we had more fun with Frankenhooker's silliness. Wanna date?

Barry's contribution of short film *Criticized* was a nice bonus - OK, we're scarred for life and will never view office supplies in the same way ever again, but.... ;) Barry also brought a book *The Juniper Tree* that followed up our Themes discussion from Tuesday. It was a book of collected fairy-tales in their less sanitized versions. He posed a very interesting question as well, does the word 'grim' originate from the Brother's Grimm and their sordid tales?

I did some research and discovered: grim comes from the Old English word *grimm*. Grim also finds its origins among Old High German. In this language it meant fierce. The word derives from the Norse word *grimr* meaning devil and a nickname for Odin or Wodin the God of War and Magic.

Thanks to Chris for providing Route 66 and Re-Animator. Thanks to Jo for Frankenhooker. She also owns Bride of the Re-Animator! Gene is eagerly waiting find out what happens in the sequel - Special Activity Viewing?! We'll keep you posted. (AM)

SFSNNJ Special Activity

Author Signing – Saturday, August 1, 2009 – Chris Hasslekus

6 of 7 authors appeared at the Borders Express at Paramus Park on Saturday. Patricia Bray was missing, but S.C. (Sam) Butler, Barbara Campbell, Laura Anne Gilman, Jackie Kessler, Joshua Palmatier and Anton Strout were there.

The SFSNNJ has had Sam Butler as a speaker and Jackie Kessler not only has come down to Suspense Central to discuss one of her books, but will also be the guest at Face The Fiction in March 2010. The SFSNNJ were represented well; we had a great time talking with the authors about not only their own books, but also J.K. Rowling and the like. A truly great event; a fun time was had by all.

SFSNNJ Member Movie Reviews

Ponyo – Chris Hasslekus

Roger Ebert gave it 4 of 4 stars, and boy is he ever right. The films of H.M. run from the serious (Princess Mononoke) to fanciful (My Neighbor Totoro). This is closer to the latter - but what an incredible imagination! Loved it! A+

Julie & Julia – Chris Hasslekus

The film is about two true stories, one about Julie Powell (who does J.C.'s 524 recipes in 365 days), the other about Julia Child. I took my time getting to it, but it is was worthwhile. And yes, Amy Adams is adorable yet again. B+

Inglorious Basterds – Chris Hasslekus

Quite an interesting film. I felt it was much better than Pulp Fiction. Good acting, directing. B+

Inglorious Basterds – Gene McGrath

I also enjoyed this film, very inventive and interesting and fun!

District 9 – Ana Keveney

Brian and I saw this yesterday. Like Alien Nation, it is about a large extra-terrestrial ship that moors itself over a city, and about its passengers (who go coo-coo for cat food), but the resemblance ends there. It is very dark, very gritty, with a large helping of Franz Kafka thrown in. The ship moors itself over Johannesburg, SA and stays in place. After some time has passed and no one as gone in or out, human beings cut their way in and find insect-like creatures, malnourished and ill. District 9 is set up for the aliens to live, apart from the general population. Twenty or so years later, it is an overcrowded slum, with all the attendant crimes, so a new area, farther away from Johannesburg is set up. The movie concerns itself with what happens when a multi-national corporation tries to move 1.5 + million sentient bipedal grasshoppers from point A to point B. Said Multi-national Corporation has been overseeing the care of these beings, but there is also a darker secret reason for their presence.

One company man, Vickers (sp?) is the son-in-law of either the CEO or the President of the corp. I got the distinct impression that the father-in-law deliberately threw the son-in-law in over his head when he chose Vickers to oversee the move, perhaps to belittle Vickers before Vickers' wife. Poor Vickers is only trying to do his job and do what is right, but soon enough he realizes that the company line is not all it claims to be. I'll stop here to prevent Spoiler-age.

Suffice it to say that the commentary made by this film is far from subtle. The Africans and the Afrikaans are quick to band together and treat the aliens like *third* class citizens. (Who cares about a bloke with a tan when you have a 6-foot tall grasshopper standing behind you on a queue?) Which only goes to show that once a subjugated group is supplanted by an even more subjugated group, the first group tends to identify with the aggressor; human nature hasn't really changed all that much.

There are some sweet moments: The tenderness between "Christopher" (one of the aliens) and his son. The equivalent of a "cockfight" (two chicken-like insect creatures going at it in a ring, with both humans and aliens cheering and betting away). I know a cockfight is not tender, but seeing the two sentient species getting along, if only for monetary reasons, was a nice touch.

I give this an A for the overall effect, in spite of its darkness, and there is a glimmer of hope, however faint, at the very end, for Vickers. It is NOT, I repeat, NOT for the kiddies, great special effects notwithstanding.

Upcoming Conventions

New York Renaissance Faire

Saturday, August 1, 2009 - Sunday, September 20, 2009
*runs every Saturday and Sunday (plus Labor Day Monday)
10:00 AM - 7:00 PM
Adult daily admission: \$ 20.00
Sterling Forest, Tuxedo, NY
(845) 351 - 5171. <http://www.renfaire.com/NY/>

UberCon XII:

Edison, NJ
November 6th, 7th, and 8th, 2009!
[UberCon XII Dates!](#)

At long last, we can safely announce our next event's dates and location: November 6-8, 2009, at the Holiday Inn, Edison.

The site does not currently reflect this information, but in the next couple weeks, we will be updating everything, and getting you the latest information.

<http://www.ubercon.com/>

Some 2010 dates:

Lunacon 2010, March 19-21, 2010
New York's Oldest Science Fiction and Fantasy Convention
Author Guest of Honor: Tanya Huff
Artist Guest of Honor: Theresa Mather
Fan Guest of Honor: Dominick Corrado
Hilton Rye Town, Rye Brook NY
Lunacon 2010
PO Box 432
Bronx, NY 10465
info@lunacon.org

I-CON 29

APRIL 9, 10, & 11, 2010!!!
<http://www.iconsf.org/>

Parsippany, NJ
Fri., Sat. & Sun.
July 9-11, 2010
Hilton Parsippany Hotel
Creation Entertainment's East Coast - Supernatural Convention