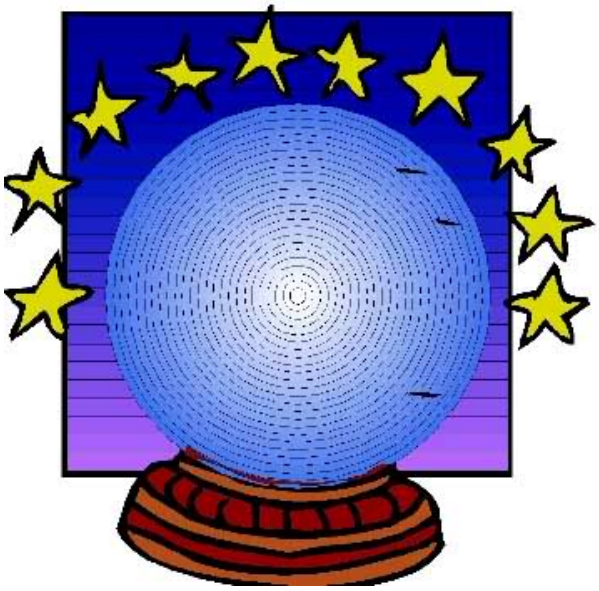
The new X-Files movie. Giselle Bundchen in the latest Austin Powers flick. A new project for Natalie Portman. Mitch hits on all of these items in the News & Rumors section of this Friday night's Crystal Ball. We've also got a couple theater releases of note this weekend as well as a couple of intriguing films hitting DVD. Mitch hits on it all in this week's Ball.



For those of you who liked Judd Apatow's hit comedies of last year, "Knocked Up" and "Superbad", then this is the week that the drought of completely crappy movies comes to and end.

And it couldn't come a day too soon.

News and Rumors

~ The subtitle of the new X-Files movie has been announced. "The X-Files: I Want To Believe". For me, I want to believe this movie won't suck. We'll see.

~ Richard Gere will join the cast of an upcoming biopic of Amelia Earhart. Hillary Swank will star as the iconoclastic aviator. The movie will focus a lot on the rocky relationship between her and her husband, publisher George Putnam, to be played by Gere.

~ Tom Brady's Squeeze of the Moment, Supermodel Gisele Bundchen, is slated to be in the next Austin Powers movie. Rumors state that this one may just focus solely on Dr. Evil...which would be played by Tom Brady if Bridget Moynahan had her preference.

~ Shia LaBeouf will star in an adaptation of "The Dark Fields", a thriller based upon the book by Alan Glynn. The story concerns a "loser" who gets his hands on a top secret pharmaceutical drug that makes you smarter. He experiences sudden financial and social success, but soon discovers that the drug has some strange side-effects. Good thing this drug doesn't exist in real life. If everyone became smarter, there would be no Pittsburgh Steeler fans.

~ Natalie Portman continues to make some excellent role choices (even if the movies aren't blockbusters). She is set to star in a remake of the 1939 Laurence Olivier/Merle Oberon classic "Wuthering Heights", playing the role of Cathy. No word yet on who would play Heathcliffe in the adaptation of the famous Emily Bronte novel.

~ And no "News and Rumors" section would be complete without me griping about some stupid remake or another. This week, it's Brett Ratner, the hack behind the "Rush Hour" movies and the destruction of the X-Men franchise with "X-Men 3", looking to direct Eddie Murphy in a COMIC remake of the 1957 sci-fi classic "The Incredible Shrinking Man". Insert "shrinking" joke of your choice.

This week's new movie releases:

Forgetting Sarah Marshall

Starring: Jason Segel, Kristen Bell, Paul Rudd

Plot: A man just dumped by his TV star girl friend jets off to Hawaii, little knowing that he'll run into her and her new rock-star boyfriend at the resort.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: Any Judd Apatow produced or directed movie seems to be gold anymore (except for the horrid "Drillbit Taylor"), so expect nothing different with this. Very much in line with last year's Apatow hit "Knocked Up", combining gross out humor with sweet sentimentality. And starring much of the same cast...plus the hot brunette chick from "That 70s Show". It's getting major props from most of the critics, but I'll be judging for myself, and I'll let you know.

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88 Minutes

Starring: Al Pacino, Alicia Witt, Benjamin McKenzie

Plot: A forensic psychiatrist for the FBI receives a death threat telling him he only has 88 minutes to live, causing him to chew large amounts of scenery while he hunts for the identity of the potential assailant.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: One rule to remember. When a movie has been sitting on someone's shelf for TWO YEARS, it is doing so for a reason, and the reason is almost always because it sucks. And this one does. Badly.

My Estimated Rating: Mike Phipps (1/2 football)

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The Forbidden Kingdom

Starring: Jackie Chan and Jet Li

Plot: Two rival martial arts masters must put aside their differences and join forces to free an imprisoned king.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: Another Kung-Fu comedy from Jackie Chan...although it is interesting to see the "retired from martial arts movies" Li agreeing to his first on-film collaboration with Chan. Guess those big time dramatic roles weren't rolling in to old Jet. As far as this movie goes, it's a pretty harmless, quasi-amusing family flick.

My Estimated Rating: Kelly Holcomb (2 footballs)

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Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed

Starring: Ben Stein

Plot: Documentary about the huge global conspiracy by scientists around the world to discredit Intelligent Design

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: Ben Stein attempts to make a Michael Moore level "documentary" that is about as objective as a political commercial in late October. Difference is; love him or hate him, Moore is amusing. Stein is a total hack who is as big of a bore in real life as he was playing the teacher in "Ferris Bueller's Day Off". In other words, this film panders as shamelessly to the Moral Majority types as "Fahrenheit 9/11" did to Bush haters.

My Estimated Rating: Spergeon Wynn (zero footballs).

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New DVD Releases for Tuesday, April 22nd

Charlie Wilson's War - In my efforts to cover all of the films and roles nominated for the awards season, I sadly did not get a chance to check out this charmingly goofy Tom Hanks, Julia Roberts, and Philip Seymour Hoffman comedy about the renegade Texas Congressman who almost single handedly supplied Afghanistan with enough weapons to successfully drive out the Soviet Union. Top rental of the week.

Cloverfield - Sad to say, but this STILL rates as the best 2008 movie I've seen so far. But that's like saying a hockey player has the best teeth amongst a group of Pittsburgh fans (two slams against Squealer fans in one article...one more and I break the record). In any case, the hand held camera style of creator J.J. Abrams is

enough to require Dramamine, but he tells a fascinating tale of one group of young adults as they try to escape Manhattan when it's attacked by a giant monster.

One Missed Call - Bad Horror flick time. This one about people receiving voice-mails from their future selves, messages which include the date, time and some details of their upcoming deaths. Stars Edward Burns, who looked to be the Next Big Thing after "Saving Private Ryan". Guess not.

The Orphanage - Spanish language horror story about a woman who brings her family back to her childhood home, where she opens an orphanage for handicapped children. Before long, her son starts to communicate with an invisible new friend. Well received by the critics.

The Savages - Another darling of the critics, a tale of sibling relationships under stress as a brother and sister try to care for their ailing father. Excellent performances from Philip Seymour Hoffman and Laura Linney carry the film.

Calendar Watch

Next week:*, Baby Mama, Deception, Harold and Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay*

Upcoming Biggies (click on the hyperlink to view the available trailers).

Iron Man - May 2nd - The latest mega-budgeted superhero flick. Looks very

promising, and the casting of Robert Downey, Jr. as the alcoholic billionaire who designs a super suit was brilliant.

Speed Racer - May 9th - Emile Hirsch, Matthew Fox, and Christina Ricci as Speed, Racer X, and Trixie in the Wachowski Brothers' ("The Matrix" trilogy) adaptation of the campy 1960s Japanese anime.

The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian - May 16th - The same four kids from the first movie return to Narnia...1300 years after their last visit in that enchanted land's time frame, to

help restore the throne to the rightful heir.

Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull - May 23rd - Spielberg and Ford team up one more time, with Cate Blanchett as the romantic interest, and Shia LaBeouf ("Transformers") as Indy's son.

Sex and the City - May 30th - The movie version of the HBO series hits the big screen. Can we guys

get our share of this pie and have a movie version of "Deadwood"?

You Don't Mess with the Zohan - June 6th - Adam Sandler as a former Mossad agent setting up shop as a hairdresser in New York City.

Kung Fu Panda - June 6th - Jack Black as the voice of a

reluctant panda bear recruited by a team of Kung Fu masters.

The Incredible Hulk - June 13th -
Looks to be much, much better than the Ang Lee stink-fest, with Edward Norton taking on the role of Bruce Banner.

The Happening - June 13th - Latest M. Night Shyamalan thriller, staring Mark Wahlberg in a tale about a family on the run after natural disasters threaten the entire planet.

Get Smart - June 20th - Steve Carell, Anne Hathaway, and Alan Arkin

take on the roles of Maxwell Smart, Agent 99 and The Chief. As much as I hate movie adaptations of television shows, this one has potential.

The Love Guru - June 20th

- Mike Myers already catching as much hell from India as Sacha Baron Cohen did from Kazakhstan for making fun of cultures that don't seem to have a sense of humor.

Wall-E - June 27th -

Pixar's next masterpiece, about a garbage cleaning robot who dreams of the stars.

Wanted - June 27th - Look for this to make a box office star out of

James McAvoy ("The Last King of Scotland", "Atonement") as he plays a young man brought into a secret society of assassins by a hot, hot looking Angelina Jolie. Morgan Freeman plays their boss.

Hancock - July 4th - Will Smith as a hard-living superhero needing the use of a public relations professional (Jason Bateman) to repair his image.

Hellboy II: The Golden Army

- July 11th

- The big red cigar chomping demon with a bad attitude is back for more butt kicking.

The Dark Knight - July 19th

- Batman is back, and this time he's tracking the Joker, played by Heath Ledger. Most likely the box office champion of 2008.

Mamma Mia! - July 19th - Something for the ladies to attend while the guys are busy watching Batman kick the Joker's ass. A musical featuring

the songs of ABBA. And my wife wants us to go see it. Sigh.

X-Files 2 - July 25th - Little is known yet

about these further adventures of Scully and Fox...not even the title.

Tropic Thunder -

August 15th

- A group of actors shooting a big budget war movie are forced to become the soldiers they are portraying in the

film. Stars Ben Stiller, Jack Black, and Robert Downey Jr, playing a white actor donning black make-up to "fit the part".

The International - August 15th

- Clive Owen and Naomi Watts in a thriller about an Interpol agent's attempts to break

up an international arms dealing ring financed by a high profile bank. (What can Wachovia do for you?)

Righteous Kill - September 12th

- Robert De Niro and Al Pacino together again as NY detectives working on a

case that may be related to both a serial killer and a man they might have wrongly imprisoned years before.

Eagle Eye - September 26th

- Shia LaBeouf and Michelle Monoghan as a mother and son who become

unwitting members of a terrorist cell plotting a political assassination.

RocknRolla - October 31st

- Guy Ritchie hopefully back in form for another tale of London

gangsters. Gerard Butler, Thandie Newton, Tom Wilkenson, and Jeremy Frackin' Piven star.

Quantum of Solace - November 13th

- The next James Bond film, picking up

shortly after the events ending "Casino Royale"

Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince - November 21st

- The sixth of

J.K. Rowling's seven books, setting the stage for the two part conclusion in 2010 and 2011.

Defiance -

December 19th

- Daniel Craig and Live Schreiber as Jewish brothers in WWII Russian, leading a band

of refuges in striking back at the Germans. A major early Oscar contender