It's been a rough couple months to be both a Browns fan and a movie fan ... as there has been little to get excited about with either. In this week's Crystal Ball, Mitch says to hang in there. January will bring us all of the Oscar worthy films, plus on TV, we'll have restarts on "24", "Lost", "Battlestar Galactica", and "Big Love". Not to mention that we'll finally be out of our misery when it comes to Browns' games. Mitch recaps all the week's releases at the theater and DVD in this week's piece.

I'm not really sure which part of me is in a bigger rut.

The Browns fan side of me, or the movie fan side. Because I haven't had jack to be excited about on either side since July.

No relief coming this week, either.

Just keep hanging on. January will bring us all of the Oscar worthy films, plus on TV, we'll have restarts on "24", "Lost", "Battlestar Galactica", and "Big Love". Not to mention that we'll finally be out of our misery when it comes to Browns' games.

News and Rumors

~ Lots of howling from the fanboys when they found out that "Batman: The Dark Knight" only received one Golden Globe nomination; for Heath Ledger as best supporting actor for his role as The Joker. But don't give up hope for an Oscar Nomination for Best Picture. In the past 10 years, 10 of the 50 films nominated for

the Oscar were not nominated for a Golden Globe in that category.

~ Now for my personal favorite so far in 2008, "Wall-E" was named best picture of the year by the prestigious Los Angeles Film Critics Association; the first time in the organization's 33 year history that an animated film received that award. Sean Penn was named Best Actor for "Milk", Sally Hawkins Best Actress for "Happy-Go-Lucky", and Danny Boyle for director for "Slumdog Millionaire".

~ Daniel Craig has shot down rumors that the next Bond film would be a third in a trilogy with "Casino Royale" and "Quantum of Solace", and that they'll go back to the old method of having totally independent storylines. Great move, as far as I'm concerned. Now that Bond's over his funk about Vesper Lind, it's time to move on.

~ I'm not sure which bit of stage news is more disturbing: Reports of George Lucas announcing plans for "Star Wars" A Musical Journey", or the plans to make a stage musical out of "Spider-Man". (answer: both).

~ Earlier, it was reported that British funnyman Ricky Gervaise was being mentioned as the next Oscar host. Nope: seems Ricky is a little too acerbic for the Academy's taste, so the job goes to...Hugh Jackman. Huh?

Stupid Remakes and Sequels

~ "Alvin & The Chipmunks: The Squeakuel". Waiter? A double-shot of Tums with an Alka-Seltzer chaser, please?

This week's new movie releases:

The Day the Earth Stood Still

Starring: the Robot also known as Keanu Reeves, Jennifer Connelly, Kathy Bates

Plot: Aliens land on Earth with an important message for its citizens. LISTEN TO AL GORE OR DIE!!!!!

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: Looks like it's time for me to take one for the team, and go see this film, despite all of these trepidations. This one is getting savaged by the critics, especially those critics who happened to have loved the original 1951 classic with Michael Rennie playing the part now played by Neo himself. The Original had the aliens ticked off about mankind's warmongering. This time they're upset about Global Warming.

Next time, I'm sure they'll be coming back to wipe us out because of the BCS forumula.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Nothing Like the Holidays

Starring: John Leguizamo, Freddy Rodriguez, Debra Messing

Plot: The scattered members of the Rodriguez family return to their parents' home in Chicago to celebrate the holiday season. Dramady ensues!

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: This movie had limited release a couple of months ago, but then it was titled

"Humbolt Park". I guess they figured that at this time of year, if you re-title anything with a holiday theme, you'll get a few suckers to watch it. I won't be one of them.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Delgo

Starring: the voiced of Freddie Prinze Jr., Val Kilmer, Anne Bancroft

Plot: A troubled teenager framed for a crime he didn't commit escapes from prison, leading him to band with an unlikely group of friends as they try to save two sparring races from a common enemy.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: So I see Anne Bancroft's name in the credits, and I'm wondering how that could be since Anne died in 2005. Turns out that this movie was made in 2003...shelved...and now redone with the old voice tracks and "more advanced" animation.

In any case, it still sucks.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

New DVD Releases for Tuesday, December 16

Mamma Mia! - I saw this movie at the theater, forced to go upon the threat of living in the doghouse for a month. I was also threatened with two months in the doghouse

if I were to write a review of it...my wife's punishment after what I did in my review to "Sex In the City". But now that it's coming out on DVD, I will warn all of you men to stay far, far away from this.

There are few things that I could compare to Pierce Brosnan's rendition of that old ABBA classic "SOS"...having your crotch tazered would be one of them.

If you want more information about it, send an email to mitch@C-Town_Kennels.com

Mummy: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor - Another one of those films that the critics savaged, but it still made a boatload of money...and that's because it may have been stupid, but it was entertaining. Personally, I enjoy watching Brendan Fraser in these types of roles, as he is perfect in them...and I'll be adding this to the top of my Netflix queue.

Calendar Watch

Next week: *Seven Pounds* , *The Tale of Despereaux, Yes Man*

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

The Spirit - December 25th - Frank Miller's next comic book adaptation, done in the same style as "Sin City".

Valkyrie - December 25th - Evidently some good editing has been performed on this film once destined for the scrap heap. Very positive buzz about Tom Cruise's performance as the German colonel who attempted to assassinate Hitler.

We shall see.

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button - December 25th - Fantasy tale about a man (Brad Pitt) who is born old and ages backwards.

From director David Fincher ("Fight Club", "Se7en")

Gran Torino - January 9 - Clint Eastwood, in what he says will be his last acting role, as a man dealing with gang violence and prejudice in his own way.

The Reader - January 9 - Kate Winslet and Ralph Fiennes in a period drama about a woman on trial for war-crimes in post WWII Germany.

Doubt - January (unannounced) - The principal (Meryl Streep) of a Catholic school in the Bronx grows suspicious of a priest (Philip Seymour Hoffman) who might have molested a student.

Frost / Nixon - January (unannounced) - Ron Howard's latest Oscar attempt, adapting the stage play of the disgraced president's attempt to re-habilitate his image on David Frost's TV show, and Frost's attempt to drag out the truth from Tricky Dick

The Wrestler - January (unannounced) - Mickey Rourke is picking up early Oscar buzz in this character study of a professional wrestler nearing the end of his performing days.

Revolutionary Road - January (unannounced) -Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet as a young couple raising a family in a Connecticut suburb during the mid 1950s. Sam Mendes ("American Beauty") directs the

"Titanic" stars in their on-screen reunion.

Defiance - January 16 - 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

Taken - January 30th - Liam Neeson goes against type as a former special ops leader hot on the trail of slave traders who abducted his daughter.

The International - February 13, 2009 - Clive Owen and Naomi Watts in a thriller about an Interpol investigation of a world-wide bank funding murder and corruption. And you thought Wachovia was bad?

Watchmen - March 6, 2009 - The screen version of what is arguably graphic novelist Alan Moore's greatest work.

Duplicity - March 20, 2009 - Clive Owen again, this time teaming with Julia Roberts as corporate spies looking to pull a con job of their own. Directed by Tony Gilroy ("Michael Clayton").

The Lovely Bones - March 27, 2009 - Peter Jackson's latest, about the ghost of a young, murdered girl watching over her family and friends' reactions to the event.

Mark Wahlberg and Rachel Weisz star.

Blockbusters on the Distant Horizon (movies that would seem to be big hits...as soon as they get made or released).

The Road - (unannounced release date) - Viggo Mortensen as a man walking with his son for months across a ravaged, post-apocalyptic landscape in search of civilization. Charlize Theron co-stars.

X-Men Origins: Wolverine - May 1, 2009 - Hugh Jackman goes it alone as the adamentium enhanced anti-hero. With Live Schreiber as Sabertooth, and Ryan Reynolds as Deadpool.

Star Trek - May 8, 2009 - J.J. Abrams and a young cast reboot the franchise, going back to Kirk and Spock's days at Starfleet Academy.

Angels and Demons - May 15, 2009 - Tom Hanks and Ron Howard follow-up to "The DaVinci Code"

Terminator 4 - May 22, 2009 - Christian Bale as John Conner as the franchise moves into the apocalyptic future.

Transformers 2 - June 26, 2009 - The next chapter of Robots In Disguise!

Public Enemy - July 1, 2009 - Johnny Depp as John Dillinger. Co-staring Christian Bale, and directed by Michael Mann

2012 - July 10, 2009 - Roland Emmerich's ("The Day After Tomorrow") tale of global cataclysm and the struggle of the surviviors.

Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince - July 17, 2009 - The sixth of J.K. Rowling's seven books, setting the stage for the two part conclusion in 2010 and 2011.

The Taking of Pelham 123- August 7, 2009 - Denzel Washington, John Travolta, and James Gandolfini in a remake of the classic 1974 film about a hijacked subway car.

Shutter Island - October, 2009 - Martin Scorsese working once again with Leonardo DiCaprio in this mystery set in 1954.

Nottingham - November, 2009 - Ridley Scot and Russell Crowe together again in a retelling of the Robin Hood legend, this time through the eyes of the Sheriff of Nottingham (Crowe). With Sienna Miller as Maid Marion.

Avatar - December 18, 2009 - James Cameron's sci-fi/CGI extravaganza. The C.I.A. should take lessons about secrecy from Cameron, as he's keeping info about this film very much to himself at this time.

Iron Man 2 - May, 2010 - Right on the heels of the success of the first one, Marvel is quick to get Robert Downey Jr. back into his titanium suit.

The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader - May, 2010 - The series goes off in a bit of a different direction, as those of you who love the books already know.

Thor - June 2010 - Another Marvel superhero...but the Nordic God is about as bland personality-wise as Superman, so we'll see how it goes.

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part I - 2010 - The start of the End for the boy wizard and his battle against He-Who-Shall-not-Be-Named

Lincoln - 2010 - Steven Spielberg directs the biographical film of the 16th President (Liam Neeson)

The Hobbit - 2010 - Guillermo del Toro directs and Peter Jackson will produce the prequel to "Lord of the Rings". Ian McKellen will return as Gandalf

Fantastic Voyage - 2010 - Roland Emmerich ("The Day After Tomorrow", "10,000 B.C.") remakes the classic 1967 movie about a miniaturized sub and crew operating on a scientist from inside his brain.

The Avengers - 2011 - Iron Man, Hulk, Thor, and Captain America open up a can of whoopass on bad guys everywhere.

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part II - 2011 - The end of the line for what will be beyond doubt the most profitable series in the history of film making.

The Hobbit 2 - 2011 - del Toro and Jackson again, this time covering the time between the end of Tolkien's book, "The Hobbit" and the start of LOTR.