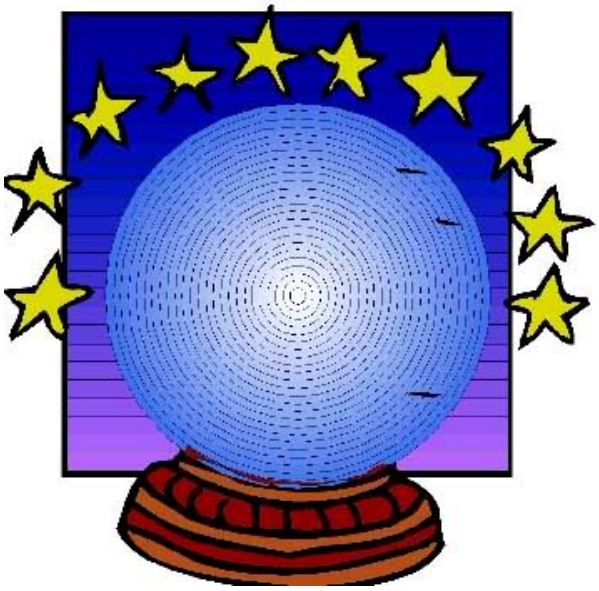
You just never know who's reading these columns. A lesson that emerging global icon Mitch Cyrus learned this past week when trashing a couple of former Grammy winners in last week's Crystal Ball, then hearing from them on e-mail this past week. And it's All Mitch All The Time next week here on The Cleveland Fan, as we will run Mitch's reviews of all five films nominated for Best Picture as we lead in to next Sunday night's presentation of the Oscars.



One of these days I'll learn that I should consider some other people's feelings some time when I'm writing snarky, derogatory comments, because TheClevelandFan has grown large enough that you can never tell who is reading it.

Case in point: last week's Crystal Ball, when I decided to trash Christopher Cross winning all of those Grammys in 1981. I believe the word I used was "mediocricy".

So I get an email from one Rob Meurer, who just so happened to be the keyboard/synthesizer player on that album, as well as a long time collaborator with Christopher Cross. It seems that Rob must be a Cleveland fan, or else just a "fan" of smart-assed entertainment writers, as he read my comments, and took a little offense to them.

Not that I could blame him for being offended.

I found the email exchange quite amusing. Rob was VERY polite in his email...much more than I probably deserved. My amusement came from me getting BUSTED once again for my snarkiness (and MS Word says "snarkiness" isn't a word. Well, it is now), and using someone's hard work as a punch line.

I did apologize to Rob and Christopher Cross in an email, and I'll do so here again. In truth, I was going to bust on Toto as the REAL mediocre group that shouldn't have won the Grammys that they received...but my wife Clarissa is a huge Toto fan, and I didn't want to tick her off.

(And if I get an email this week from the drummer of Toto, I'm just going to go ahead and get the Texas Pete ready to make that shoe leather go down a little easier).

Oh...and stand by for a barrage of Mitch articles this week, as Swerb will start running my reviews of all five Oscar nominated films on Sunday, with my annual predictions running the morning of the Oscar telecast (Feb. 22).

News and Rumors

~ This looks interesting. Tom Cruise and Denzel Washington are set to team up in "The Matarese Circle", a spy thriller penned by Robert Ludlum (who, of course, was the writer of the Jason Bourne trilogy). Cruise and Denzel will play rival spies who team up to take on an evil organization. David Cronenberg is onboard as the director.

~ Last week I talked about Johnny Depp signing on to star in the movie adaptation of Hunter S. Thompson's novel "The Rum Diary".

Well, it looks like this project is taking off quickly, as they've just announced that Aaron Eckhart and Richard Jenkins (Oscar nominee for "The Visitor") have been added to the cast.

~ Nancy Meyers is a pretty prolific writer of successful chick flicks, and often directs them as well ("The Holiday", "Something's Got To Give", "What Women Want"). She'll probably have another one raking in money next year, as she's gotten commitments from Meryl Streep, Steve Martin, Alec Baldwin, and John Krasinski for her next project...which currently doesn't have a title nor a description of the plot. But rest assured, it will be aimed right at the Estrogen Set.

~ I've been talking about Ridley Scott's upcoming "Nottingham" for well over a year now. The on-again/off-again project was to bring a new take to the Robin Hood tale, telling it from the point of view of the Sheriff of Nottingham, putting him in a love triangle with Maid Marian and Robin. Russell Crowe is still set to star as the sheriff, but the latest news has Cate Blanchett taking on the role of Maid Marian.

~ I should really stop picking on fanboys...but it's so hard when they keep making such total fools of themselves. Latest case in point: a group of fans of The Dark Knight have demanded that ALL of Hollywood permanently retire the character of the Joker from all future movies forever as a tribute to Heath Ledger. Please. Come out of your parents basement and get a life.

~ More bad news for the fanboys. Christopher Nolan is putting off a third Batman movie until 2011 or later, as he'll first be directing a sci-fi flick called "Inception", scheduled for a 2010 release.

~ Look for Robin Williams to appear in next season's "24". Seems that once Keifer Sutherland found out that Robin was a huge fan of the show, he immediately started working on figuring out a character for Williams to play. I actually hope they make him the chief bad guy, as Williams actually is a very good dramatic actor.

~ Joaquin Phoenix; White Courtesy Call from the Mothership, wanting to return to Planet Loon.

Stupid Remakes and Sequels

~ A sequel to one of the worst movies I've ever watched, "Smokin' Aces", which will have Vinnie Jones as a hitman. Tom Berenger and Sofia Vergara will also star.

This week's new movie releases:

Friday the 13th

Starring: A bunch of nobodies. Pretty much like the original Friday the 13th (Kevin Bacon excepted)

Plot: Another group of young people get naked and get killed in really gross manners by a psycho at Camp Crystal Lake. As opposed to Camp Crystal Ball, where they just get Snarked to death.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: This is from the same group who remade the "Texas Chainsaw Massacre" so my guess is that if you liked that one, you'll like this. It's said to have a lot more gore than the original...which is nice (not really).

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Confessions of a Shopaholic

Starring: Isla Fisher, Hugh Dancy, Krysten Ritter

Plot: An out of control fashionista ends up as an advice columnist for a financial magazine.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: It's the traditional Valentine's Day weekend Romantic Comedy. I liked Isla Fisher last year in the Valentine Day release of "Definitely, Maybe", but "Shopaholic" looks like it doesn't have the intelligence that was surprisingly woven into "Definitely, Maybe". But I get the feeling it really won't matter, because guys everywhere will be taking their wives/girlfriends (just not both at the same time) to this or to "He's Just Not That Into You" if they have any expectations of getting lucky this weekend.

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The International

Starring: Clive Owen, Naomi Watts, Armin Mueller-Stahl

Plot: An Interpol Agent and a Manhattan Assistant District Attorney pool their resources in an attempt to break up an international arms dealing ring financed by a high-profile bank

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: Bankers as Evil People! That's pretty damn timely, isn't it? So we sort of get to see what Clive Owen would have been like had he gotten the role of James Bond instead of Daniel Craig. I also like the casting of Mueller-Stahl with Watts again, after they showed some great (and creepy) chemistry in "Eastern Promises". All said, this is the highest rated movie on RottenTomotoes that is coming out this week.

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New DVD Releases for Tuesday, February 17

Body of Lies **-** I was very disappointed in this film. If you have Leonardo DiCaprio and Russell Crowe together in a movie directed by Ridley Scott, you expect great things. Not even close. All you really have is a lukewarm rehash of Peter Berg's "The Kingdom" with better actors, the same plot devices, half the chemistry, and a quarter of the suspense.

***Changeling* -** Clint Eastwood expected this period suspense tale to be an awards contender. It wasn't even close, as the plot is said to be very, very weak. It did garner Angelina Jolie an Oscar nomination for Best Actress, but from where it looks now, she has zero chance at winning.

***High School Musical 3* -** For those of you with little girls between the ages of 6 and 12...I really feel sorry for you, as you have no choice but to buy this.

***Flash of Genius* -** Another film that was made to be an awards contender, but fell completely flat as people just couldn't get into the tale of the man who invented the intermittent windshield wiper as he battled Ford for stealing his design.

***Quarantine*-** Jennifer Carpenter of "Dexter" fame (and now wife of Dexter himself, Michael C. Hall) stars in this horror flick that actually got some decent reviews and made a good amount of cash. Sort of a combination of a horror flick and "Cloverdale", it covers a news team that ends up in a really bad place.

***How to Lose Friends and Alienate People* -** I love Simon Pegg, but his last two movies have been

absolute clunkers. First was the David Schwimmer directed bomb "Run, Fat Boy, Run", and now this one, with Pegg starring as an obnoxious writer. Hey! That's MY gig!

Calendar Watch

Next week:, *Fired Up, Tyler Perry's Madea Goes to Jail*

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

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

Duplicity - March 20 - 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").

X-Men Origins: Wolverine - May 1 - 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 - 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 - Tom Hanks and Ron Howard follow-up to "The DaVinci Code"

Terminator: Salvation - May 22 - Christian Bale as John Conner as the franchise moves into the apocalyptic future.

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

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

Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince - July 17 - 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 - Denzel Washington, John Travolta, and James Gandolfini in a remake of the classic 1974 film about a hijacked subway car.

9 - September 9 - Tim Burton's latest animated strangeness, with Elijah Wood and Jennifer Connelly voicing characters fighting aliens in a post apocalyptic world.

Shutter Island - October 2 - Martin Scorsese working once again with Leonardo DiCaprio in this mystery set in 1954.

2012 - November 13 - Roland Emmerich's ("The Day After Tomorrow") tale of global cataclysm and the struggle of the survivors.

The Lovely Bones - December 11 - 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.

Avatar - December 16, 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.

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

The Road - (unannounced 2009) - 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.

*Nottingham - (*unannounced 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.

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. Kevin Kidd (Rome) is said to be playing the title role.

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.