Not a huge week for releases at the theaters and on DVD this week, but the News & Rumors section of this week's Crystal Ball is a veritable treasure trove of juicy info on big projects in the works. In that section, Mitch tells us all the latest on the "24" movie, "Iron Man 2", "Spider Man 4 ... as well as the latest projects Sean Penn, Keira Knightley, and "Slumdog Millionaire" beauty Freida Pinto are working on.

Once again, I had someone from the Entertainment Industry contacting me due to catching something snarky I said about someone in the News and Rumors portion of this column. Damn Google Alerts!

This time, it was one of the writers from the upcoming Richard Pryor biopic, set to star Eddie Murphy. The interesting news from him is that Don Cheadle was actually considered (which is what I advocated), but was considered too old. Despite my concerns, they're pretty confident Murphy can handle it.

Not that anyone out there is really losing any sleep over MY concerns. At least I should hope not.

I'm also hoping that Tom Cruise doesn't utilize Google Alerts, or else he's going to contact the Mother Ship using his Scientology Super Secret Communication Device, and send L. Ron Hubbard's ghost to come haunt me.

For more yucks and giggles, my wife Clarissa and I will be discussing Comic Book movies tonight on "THAT'S Entertainment?" on BlogTalkRadio. Tune in at 8 PM tonight at http://www.blogtalkradio.com/TheClevelandFan/2009/03/14/THATS-Entertainment

As most of you know, I often like Comic Book adaptations. Clarissa? Not so much. Should be an interesting "discussion".

News and Rumors

~ Keifer Sutherland has confirmed rumors that it is his desire to have the upcoming "24" movie filmed in Europe. He also stated that he would have loved to have an entire season filmed there, but it just didn't work out financially. But for a two hour movie? Yeah, he can do that.

~ New release dates have been announced for all of those upcoming Marvel Comics movies. "Iron Man 2" is set for May 7, 2010; "Spider-Man 4" will come out on May 6, 2011; "Thor" - June 17, 2011; "The First Avenger: Captain America" is moving from May 6, 2011 to July 22, 2011. And "The Avengers" film will now be released on May 4, 2012 instead of July 15, 2011.

~ Sean Penn is in talks to star in "Cartel". Penn would play a man trying to protect himself and his son after his wife is murdered by Mexican drug lords.

~ Rumors have "Slumdog Millionaire" beauty Freida Pinto in line to be the next Bond Girl. That would definitely work for me.

~ Keira Knightley has stated that she is through with Elizabeth Swann-Turner, and will not be returning for a fourth "Pirates of the Caribbean" movie. Inst ead, she wishes to get the part of Eliza Doolittle in the remake of "My Fair Lady".
I'm thinking she's making a wise choice.

~ Joaquin Phoenix. You and your stupid act have passed their "sell-by" date. Please go away.

Stupid Remakes and Sequels

~ Vin Diesel has announced that he'll be doing a third Riddick movie. I guess it's a perfect fit; as I'm not sure what sucked more in "The Chronicles of Riddick"...the story or the actor.

This week's new movie releases:

Nothing that I feel any burning desire to go out and see.

Race to Witch Mountain

Starring: Dwayne Johnson, Carla Gugino, AnnaSophia Robb

Plot: A cab driver in Vegas picks up a couple of kids, who turn out to be aliens on the run from a nefarious organization.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: Expect this to be the box-office winner this week. It's said to be relatively faithful to the original 1975 Disney film "Escape to Witch Mountain".

However, the critics haven't been too kind to this one, as it's reported to be pretty lame.

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Last House on the Left

Starring: Garret Dillahunt, Monica Potter, Tony Goldwyn

Plot: A group of scum buckets led by a prison escapee decide to try to hole up at an isolated house. Which turns out to be inhabited by the parents of a girl the baddies had earlier kidnapped and nearly killed.
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View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: This one may do a little better business than you think, because the promoters have learned a lesson from "Taken", and really emphasize the fact that this is a revenge flick, with the parents doing all the "justified" torture and killings of the criminals responsible for hurting their daughter.

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Miss March

Starring: No one you've ever heard of before. Or ever will again.

Plot: A dork is about to lose his virginity when he falls down stairs and goes into a coma for four years. When he comes out of it, his mission is to complete his quest with the girl, who is now a Playmate.

View Trailer
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The BeerBuzz: This is going to be no different from any of the other recently released crude sex comedies like "College" or "Sex Drive". It's going to absolutely tank. The fact that it's hitting around 10% on the Rottentomatoes is totally irrelevant.

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New DVD Releases for Tuesday, March 17

***Twilight* -** Teenage girls everywhere will be in line at Wal-Mart on Tuesday to buy this one. A huge hit from last November, it's a PG version of &quot;True Blood&quot;, with a bunch of vampires who look like high school students.

The main focus is on the vampire Edward (Robert Pattinson) and his relationship with the mortal girl Bella (Kristen Stewart)

***Punisher: War Zone* -** A few years ago, Marvel came out with a Punisher movie starring Thomas Jane that was so bad that it pretty much ruined Jane's career. Well, this one is even worse...although Robert Stevenson isn't exactly someone who has a great career to ruin, despite the fact that he was pretty good as Titus Pullo in &quot;Rome&quot;.
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Calendar Watch

Next week: *Duplicity* , *I Love You, Man; Knowing*

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

The Soloist - April 24 - Jamie Foxx and Robert Downey Jr. as a street living mentally disturbed man who is also a virtuoso cellist. Downey Jr. plays the down and out reporter who discovers and befriends him.

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: Revenge of the Fallen : - 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. Mickey Rourke and Scarlett Johansson to co-star.

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.

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.

Spider-Man 4 - May 2011 - Tobey Maquire is back as the angst ridden arachnid powered hero.

Thor - June 2011 - 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 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.

The Avengers - 2012 - Iron Man, Hulk, Thor, and Captain America open up a can of whoopass on bad guys everywhere.