As everyone who reads my columns knows, I really enjoyed “Avatar”. However, that doesn’t mean I’m not shaking my head over the news that a bunch of people are now going about learning to speak Na’Vi as an actual language. As William Shatner once said in that great SNL skit where he was speaking to a Trekkie Convention, “Get a life!”

Mini Review – Boondock Saints II: All Saints Day

I will admit that the first Boondock Saints movie was a guilty pleasure of mine, although I was more fascinated at the sordid details of bartender turned writer/director Troy Duffy’s exercise in self destruction for first getting and then losing a big deal for this film, and then finally getting it made and released, earning almost nothing at the box office, but then achieving cult status from its DVD release.

That was 1999. Duffy has done nothing in Hollywood since. Until now, with the second chapter of the lives of the deeply religious MacManus twins and their love of shooting bad guys in the back of the head while receipting Scripture.

Nothing much has changed from ten years ago. The boys are living in exile in Ireland with the beloved Poppa (Billy Connolly), when they hear of the execution of a popular Boston priest that was done to frame them. Going back to the States, they pick up where they left off, leaving a mess of bodies everywhere they go.

The three bumbling cops that helped them before are back, as well as the old Torrents spouting Irish bartender. Along for the ride this time are Clifton Collins, Jr. as their Mexican third-wheel Romeo (as opposed of the Italian third wheel Rocco from the first film), and Julie Benz, late of "Dexter", as the FBI agent investigating the Saints since Willem Defoe's character was supposed to be dead. The villains this time are Judd Nelson chewing up scenery as a Mafioso, and Peter Fonda as a late arriving, mysterious voice from the past.

The script itself is complete crap. Duffy can't write dialog to save his life, and for some reason he had Benz player her part of Eunice Bloom with the worst Southern accent I've ever heard. He tries for more comedy here, and almost every time it falls far short, sometimes groan inducingly bad. The plot makes no sense whatsoever, as I still have no idea what Peter Fonda's character was really trying to accomplish or why he was doing it.

What does work is that Sean Patrick Flanery and Norman Reedus are very good as Conner and Murphy MacManus, and the action sequences are great to watch, as Duffy loves to film them jumping from places in slow motion, firing off hundreds of rounds into hundreds of lowlife scumbuckets. It is all highly stylized and much better than was seen in the first film.

So it goes down as another guilty pleasure, but not as good as the first. The ending was obviously made to set up Part III. I just hope it doesn't come out in 2019.

My Rating – Tim Couch (1 ½ footballs)

News and Rumors

~ I wasn't a huge fan of the three previous "Mission Impossible" movies, although I though JJ Abrams did a great job with the action sequences of the third one. Now a fourth is being planned, and the director is rumored to be Brad Bird…whose previous two efforts in the director's chair were excellent…but were a little different from this. Bird directed the Pixar films "The Incredibles" and "Ratatouille". Tom Cruise is expected to be back as Ethan Hunt, but the speculation is that he might be wanting to start shifting the focus away from Ethan to other characters to carry on the missions in the future.

~ Twilight addicts should love this one. John Singleton ("Poetic Justice", "2 Fast 2 Furious", "Four Brothers") will direct Twilight heartthrob Taylor Lautner in "Abduction". It is said to be a "Bourne-style action film" with Lautner as a teenager who discovers that as an infant he was kidnapped and raised by the people he thought were his parents. OK…I may dislike Twilight, but I like Singleton, and this sounds like a good project.

~ More Tom Cruise news. He's looking at starring with Reese Witherspoon in "Paper Wings", a love story set in the world of rodeo. Cruise would be playing a rodeo champ who falls for an up-and-coming country singer, played by Witherspoon. Pretty familiar territory for Reese, but I'm not sure about Tom on a horse.

~ Liam Neeson and Cedric the Entertainer are two names connected to the film "Selma", to be directed by Lee Daniels, a Best Director nominee for his work on "Precious". Neesom would play Lyndon Johnson, which I find very interesting, with Cedric playing Ralph Abernathy, a close associate to Martin Luther King, Jr. British actor David Oyelowo has been picked for the role of King, Hugh Jackman will play Alabama Sheriff Jim Clark, and Lenny Kravitz will play future Atlanta mayor Andrew Yound.

Stupid Remakes and Sequels

~ Both Keira Knightley and Scarlett Johnasson have been rumored to be in line for the lead of the remake of the musical "My Fair Lady", but now word is coming out from Emma Thompson, who is writing the script, that it will be Care Mulligan ("An Education") who will be playing the iconic role of Eliza Doolittle. Thompson also is pushing for Hugh Grant to take the role of Henry Higgins. Interesting, but not when you compare it to Audrey Hepburn and Rex Harrison.

This week's new movie releases:

Hot Tub Time Machine

Starring: John Cusack, Rob Corddry, Craig Robinson

Plot: Four guy friends, all of them bored with their adult lives, travel back to their respective 80s heydays thanks to a time-bending hot tub.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: When I first started seeing the trailers for this, I thought it might end up being the stupidest movie-with-a-cool-title since “Snakes on a Plane”. But the early buzz on this film is great. Cusack is getting raves, and the film is said to be “The Hangover” level funny. Then again, director Steve Pink also worked with Cusack on “Grosse Point Blank” and “High Fidelity”, so there is some good history there. Don’t know if I’ll catch it at the theater with all the basketball this weekend, but you never know. I just hope this doesn’t open up the door for too many “remember the 80s” movies.

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How to Train Your Dragon

Starring: the voices of Jay Baruchel, Gerard Butler, Christopher Mintz-Plasse

Plot: Young Viking Hiccup Horrendous Haddock the Third is sent to the Isle of Berk in the North Sea, where he is to subdue a dragon as a rite of passage.
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View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: Another movie coming out with very high Rotten Tomatoes scores, currently at an astounding 96% positive. You have the same team working on this one that made "Lilo & Stitch", and it is said that they have a real family pleaser here. In other words, you won't be tempted to stick needles in your eyes halfway through if your kids drag you to see it.

March 30th DVD Releases:

The Twilight Saga: New Moon – A different marketing approach on this one, as it's available today, released outside of the standard Tuesday release day just because it's so dad-gummed special. I personally couldn't stand it, but I understand that lots of teen and tween girls disagree.

Sherlock Holmes – Guy Ritchie directing Robert Downey, Jr. How could it be anything but a whole lot of fun?

Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel – Why the second film? For that matter, why the first film? Oh, yeah…because it made a boat load of money, even if it was crap.

An Education – Can't wait to see this one. Oscar nominated for Best Picture with Carey Mulligan in her Oscar nominated role as a teenage girl finding adventure with an older man in 1960s London.

Where the Wild Things Are – I incorrectly had this listed as coming out several weeks ago…but that's the way DVD releases go. Anyway, this is another film like "The Fantastic Mr Fox" where is couldn't find an audience because it's really a film for adults, especially as director Spike Jonze has envisioned it.

Calendar Watch

Next Week *Clash of the Titans* , *The Last Song, Tyler Perry's Why Did I Get Married Too*

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

Date Night – April 9 – Looks to be a funny mistaken-identity comedy with Steve Carell and Tina Fey.

Kick-Ass – April 16 – Lots of good early buzz on this action comedy about ordinary people dressing up and fighting crime.

Nightmare on Elm Street – April 30 – Jack Earle Haley ("Watchmen") takes over the Freddy Krueger role.

Iron Man 2 – May 7 – Downey Jr. is back, this time dealing with Whiplash (Mickey Rourke) and Black Widow (Scarlet Johannson).

Robin Hood – May 14 – Ridley Scott and Russell Crowe in what is supposed to be a more "historic" account of the legendary hero.

Shrek Forever After – May 21 – 3D entry into the series that is seemingly the only way Michael Myers or Eddie Murphy can make any money

Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time – May 28 – Might this finally be the first video game that translates to a huge hit at the box office? Depends on whether or not you can buy Jake Gyllenhaal as an action hero. Why not? It worked for Tobey Maguire, Matt Damon, and Robert Downey Jr.

The A-Team – June 11 – Based on the campy TV series…but the makers of this film are trying to sell it more as an action film with no camp. With Liam Neeson playing Hannibal Smith as their leader, they may have a chance.

Toy Story 3D – June 18 - It looks like a big year for 3D films in 2010. In this one, Buzz, Woody, and the rest of the toys are dumped into a day care after Andy grows up and goes to college.

The Twilight Saga: Eclipse – July 2 – More Wussy Vampires! I can't wait! (sorry…sarcasmectomy isn't scheduled for a few months yet).

Inception – July 16 – Leonardo DiCaprio and Ellen Page in a Christopher Nolan sci-fi mind bender that looks to be in the mode of "Momento"

The Sorcerer's Apprentice – July 16 – Live action remake of the Disney classic short, starring Nicolas Cage.

Salt – July 23 – Angelina Jolie as a CIA operative accused of being a Russian spy.

Wall Street 2: Money Never Sleeps – September 24 – Oliver Stone brings Michael Douglass back as Gordon Gecko, teaming him with Shia LaBeouf in a film that looks to be quite different in tone than the last one.

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part I – November 19 – Part One of the final book about Harry, Hermione, and Ron. This one (and I'm sure the last one) will be in 3-D.

Tron Legacy – December 17 – Might be the most anticipated Holiday release of this year.