“Toy Story 3” simply tore up the box office last week, completely dominating ticket sales, as expected. That probably won’t change this weekend, as I fully expect Toy Story to still be #1 at the box office for one more week…at least until “Twilight: Eclipse” comes out next Wednesday.

Also no real surprise in the bombing of “Jonah Hex”…although it was mildly surprising to me that it tanked as bad as it did, as I thought there might have been enough people suckered in just to watch Megan Fox stink up the joint for the 10 minutes of screen time she evidently has. However, like “MacGruber”, it looks like there are some movies so bad that you can’t get anyone out to see them.

Mini Review - The Messenger

Almost no one saw this at the theaters, as it barely made a million dollars there, but the film did generate some buzz in the form of Woody Harrelson’s Oscar nominated performance.

Harrelson does a good job as the by-the-books captain given the awful task of notifying the next of kin that their loved ones have died in service to their country.

Good, but not great, as far as I'm concerned. And that is because the character is too over the top. It was hard to really buy into an officer of the United States Army being basically as off the reservation as a typical Woody Harrelson character. It was very good to watch, but it just didn't ring true.

For the most part, Ben Foster gave a much more realistic portrayal as a Sergeant seriously wounded in Iraq, who now must serve out the last six months of his tour accompanying Harrelson on his gruesome deeds. Foster's character is still just as emotionally damaged as he was physically, so you have to wonder who the genius was who would put him on this kind of detail.

There are some powerful smaller roles in this film from the actors playing the family members on the worst day of their lives. Notably, Steve Buscemi gives the kind of raw, sad, and disturbing performance you would expect from him; including a brief, touching second appearance later in the movie. Samantha Morton, three months after delivering her second child, also does an admirable job in a very non-glamorous role as a young widow whom Foster becomes attracted to.

It was an OK movie with some very good moments, touching on a subject that is so personal that it almost seems disgustingly voyeuristic to film it. Hence, I'm not surprised at all that there was no real audience for this…and I'm not even sure I can walk away from it thinking I learned something about how the military operates.

If you want something on a similar subject that is done much, much better, rent Kevin Bacon's extraordinary "Taking Chance".

My Rating – Kelly Holcomb (2 footballs)

News and Rumors

~ Daniel Radcliffe has an ambitious project waiting for him once he wraps up filming the final scenes of the Harry Potter series. Radcliffe will be starring in a big budget remake of the classic

World War I film “All Quiet On the Western Front”.

~ News on something other than a blockbuster. Matt Damon is looking to star in Cameron Crowe’s next film, “We Bought a Zoo”. The memoir it is to be based on concerns Benjamin Mee a man who spent his life savings to buy a dilapidated zoo in the English countryside, and refurbished it with over 200 endangered animals. So while Mee and his children are working to save the zoo, he is also coping with his wife’s battle with cancer. Sounds almost like a Hallmark film on Lifetime…but not in the hands of Crowe, who has shown he can make wonderful films around unusual characters.

~ Here is an interesting sci-fi concept. “Rise of the Apes”. No, it’s not a Planet of the Apes offshoot, rather it is about a scientist’s experiments to make gorillas into soldiers gone terribly wrong. Some big names connected with this; James Franco as the scientist, John Lithgow, Don Cheadle and Frida Pinto (“Slumdog Millionaire).

~ A couple of weeks ago, I talked of rumors that Brad Pitt would be playing Professor Moriarty in the next Sherlock Holmes movie. Not so fast…another name has come to light in connection with the role: Daniel Day-Lewis.

~ Sylvester Stallone is in talks to star as John Gotti in a biographical picture about “The Teflon Don”.

~ There are talks of bringing a movie adaptation of Ray Bradbury’s famous short story collection “The Martian Chronicles”. This would be different than the 1979 miniseries with Rock Hudson…but perhaps only in terms of budget. I hope it is better than that, because the miniseries was just one big collection of WTH? moments. But then again, so was the book.

~ Sam Raimi (“Spider-Man”, “Army of Darkness”) wants to direct a film adaptation of the video game “World of Warcraft”. Even as “Prince of Persia” continues to lose money, they never learn, do they?

Stupid Remakes and Sequels

~ Does this really qualify as a remake? A movie based on the game “Rock ‘em, Sock ‘em Robots”? Maybe not technically, but the idea is so stupid that it still ends up here. And speaking of this level of idiocy…

~ “Troll Dolls: the Movie”. No, I am not making this up.

~ We’ve talked before regarding rumblings of a remake of “Escape From New York”. The rumbles are coming again, with Timothy Olyphant’s name being mentioned as the guy to play Snake Pleskin. Olyphant is one of my favorite actors after his years in “Deadwood”, and he would seem a natural for the part…but I just still don’t see the reason for the remake.

This week's new movie releases:

Knight And Day

Starring: Tom Cruise and Cameron Diaz (as if you haven’t been bombarded by this fact over the last two weeks).

Plot : A woman finds her everyday life tangled with that of a secret agent who has realized he isn't supposed to survive his latest mission. As their campaign to stay alive stretches across the globe, they soon learn that all they can count on is each other. This was released on Wednesday, and it’s already showing very little audience appeal.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: Very split opinions on this movie. What it seems to come down to is that this is stupid, but fun entertainment, and that Cruise and Diaz have some excellent chemistry. Sorta like “The A-Team”. Could be worse (see the following preview).

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Grown Ups

Starring: Adam Sandler, Kevin James, Chris Rock, David Spade, Rob Schnieder

Plot : After their high school basketball coach passes away, five good friends and former teammates reunite for a Fourth of July holiday weekend.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: I don't normally use other critic's quotes here, but this one from IMDB's Daniel Fienberg might just sum up best a movie that is being universally ripped…."Grown Ups" is the least funny theatrical release that any of its stars have ever been a part of. I just want to let that sink in, because Adam Sandler, Kevin James, Chris Rock, David Spade and Rob Schneider have combined to be in some truly unfunny movies." Ouch

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New DVD Releases for Tuesday, June 29:

Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief – I saw this with my wife on our annual Valentine's Day "Take Me to a Movie and You Can't Review It" date. So I still won't "review" it, but I will say that it was amusing and well done, for being a movie aimed at younger teens. I will also say that it was substantially better than the similarly themed "Clash of the Titans".

Hot Tub Time Machine – In the same raunchy vein as "The Hangover", this movie also had

strong reviews that belie the laughable title, and some very funny performances lead by John Cusack.

The Crazies – Another zombie movie! Just waiting for the inevitable "Vampires Vs Zombies" film.

Calendar Watch

Next Week: *The Twilight Saga: Eclipse* , *The Last Airbender*

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

Predators – July 9 – Re-booting of the original Ah-nuld franchise. Looks to be intriguing.

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.

Eat Pray Love – August 13 – Julia Roberts in this critically acclaimed ultimate chick-flick about a newly divorced woman's journey of self-enlightenment. Guys…get ready to get drug to this one.

The Expendables – August 13 – Sylvester Stallone, Jason Stratham, Jet Li, Dolph Lundgren, Mickey Rourke, Randy Couture, and Steve Austin in a movie about mercenaries. With appearances from Bruce Willis and Arnold Schwarzenegger. What more could any guy ask for?

The American – September 1 –George Clooney as an assassin hiding out in an Italian village awaiting what he hopes is his last job.

Machete – September 3 – Yes, they made a full length film from the "trailer" shown in "Grindhouse" with Danny Trejo as the revenge minded blade wielder.

The Adjustment Bureau – September 17 – Matt Damon in a mind bender about a politician falling for a ballerina (Emily Blunt), only to be stymied by mysterious forces keeping the would-be lovers apart.

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.

Secretariat – October 8 – Diane Lane in the story of possibly the greatest race horse ever. Could this be another "Seabiscuit"?

Red – October 15 – Another Bruce Willis action vehicle. This time he is a former black ops agent reassembling his old team to thwart an attack from a high-tech assassin.

Hereafter – October 22 – Clint Eastwood directs a supernatural thriller with Matt Damon.

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.

Red Dawn – November 25 – Yes, they actually remade this semi-classic.

The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader – December 10 – Third tale of the series…some people (like my wife) are still looking forward to it.

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

Gulliver's Travels – December 22 – Jack Black takes on the iconic role.

True Grit – December 25 – The Coen Brothers remake the iconic John Wayne movie with Jeff Bridges and Matt Damon.