



Science Fiction Society of Northern New Jersey

AUGUST 2010 NEWSLETTER

New Kids on the Bloch: Robert Bloch that is. This month we discuss Gothic Horror. The mist, the moors, the silent dread - it's gothic month! The masters who brought gothic to life - books, films, graphics and maybe a few misplaced ghosts.

That's Science Fiction
Tuesday August 3, 2010 – 7p

Hillsdale Public Library

Mr. Sardonicus

*Dining follows the movie.

Suspense Central
Monday August 9, 2010 – 8p

Borders /Interstate Shopping Center
Rt. 17 South, Ramsey, NJ

Soulless by Gail Carriger

Drawing A Crowd
Wednesday August 11, 2010 – 8p

New Moon Comics

Gothic horror in comics.

For additional information click

www.newmooncomics.com.

Face the Fiction
Saturday August 14, 2010
5:30 – 10:30 p

King of Games Day/Movies

*see page 2 for details

Films to Come: 4-Star Movie Discussion Group
Wednesday August 18, 2010 – 7p

Ramsey Borders/Interstate Shopping Center

This group discusses the world of cinema and entertainment. Classic, current and upcoming genre and genre-related films, TV, books and media happenings are discussed. If it deals with entertainment, our Master of Entertainment Moderator will cover it. *Dining follows this event.

Heroes & Rogues Call of Cthulu 1920's
Saturday August 21, 2010 – 2:30p

Directions available upon request/contact **Todd**

Join us for terror, monsters, madness and more as GM BJ Pehush explores the city of Arkham MA with our monthly Call of Cthulu (Chaosium 6th edition)

Themes of the Fantastic
Tuesday August 24, 2010 – 8p

Wayne Public Library

Gothic horror

www.waynepubliclibrary.org

Modern Masters
Friday August 27, 2010 – 8p

Borders Ramsey/Interstate Shopping Center

Flight of the Eisenstein by James Swallow

***pre-meeting dinner:**

Rogue Trader: Wolves in the Fold
Saturday August 28 – 2p – 10p
Panera Restaurant Community Room
Ramsey, 1300 Rt. 17 North

Welcome to the Western Nations of Temnia, a brutal and vicious tyranny ruled by the Immortal Emperor, the illustrious Naram'tzin, your boss. This game explores life in the far West, where powerful Samurai serve demon-worshipping madmen, and expediency and survival are balanced by honor and horror. A new day in the Yenxhai Dominions is dawning, and the peaceful nations of the East should beware!

please visit www.sfsnnj.com for full details

**SFSNNJ FACE THE FICTION
PRESENTS:
*KING OF GAMES DAY***

WHEN: SATURDAY, AUGUST 14, 2010

TIME: 2:00P - 10:00P

LOCATION: FANTASY GAMES & HOBBIES

MILLER ROAD

MAHWAH, NJ 07430

201.252.8421

WWW.FANTASYGAMESANDHOBBIES.COM

THIS MONTH WE RETURN TO FUN & GAMES WITH *KING OF GAMES DAY*. THE SFSNNJ WILL HAVE A DAY OF GAMING, MOVIES, FOOD AND FUN. RPG, BOARD GAMES, CARD GAMES, MOVIES, FOOD AND GOOD COMPANY!

IN ADDITION, WE WILL HONOR THE MEMORY OF OUR DEAR FRIEND TIMOTHY COOK. PLEASE JOIN US FOR THIS SPECIAL EVENT.

TODD WILL TAKE THE HELM AT THE GAMING TABLES PROVIDING TUTORIALS AND KILLING OFF YOUR ORCS! GOTTA WATCH HIM.

SNACKS AND BEVERAGES WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE, AND PIZZA WILL BE ORDERED LATER IN THE EVENING. PIZZA: \$1.25/SLICE PAYABLE TO FANTASY GAMES & HOBBIES (SPECIAL THANKS TO MANUEL AND JEFF FOR THE SPECIAL PRICING)

WHAT TO EXPECT:

ROLEPLAYING

Dark Heresy: Hell World

Warhammer 40,000 Kill Teams

AT-43 Demo

Flames of War Demo

Monsterpocalypse Demo

BOARDS GAMES:

Horus Heresy

Space Hulk

Commands and Colors: Ancients

Washington's War

Keep in mind that this is only a taste of what will be available! Join us to see all the other great games and events that are in store.

***FACE THE FICTION: WHERE IMAGINATION LIVES!
ONLY AT THE SFSNNJ***

July Meeting Recaps

That's Science Fiction! – Tuesday July 6, 2010

New York City, year 2095. A floating pyramid has emerged in the skies over Manhattan, inhabited by ancient Egyptian Gods. They have cast judgment down upon Horus (a falcon headed god), one of their own. With only seven days to preserve his immortality, he must find a human host body to inhabit, and search for a mate. In the city below, a beautiful young woman, Jill, with blue hair, blue tears and a power even unknown to her, wanders the city in search of her identity aided by a doctor who is fascinated by this mystery of nature. Reality in this world has a whole new meaning as bodies, voices and memories converge with Gods, mutants, mortals and extraterrestrials. Stunning visual effects meld with the poetic surrealism of comic book creator Enki Bilal's fantastic epic story. A groundbreaking step into the future of filmmaking.

This was the description on the DVD. It was an interesting mix of CGI and real actors. Afterward, we went to the Seville for more fun. (Chris H)

Face the Fiction: King of Games Day – Saturday, July 10, 2010

*Postponed – see www.sfsnnj for details

Suspense Central – Monday July 12, 2010

I would like to start off by apologizing in advance for the strange way that this write-up is going to be structured. Last night was a bit hazy for me. No, not "How much Mescal did I drink, who is that over there, and is this really Tijuana," haze so much as an, "I seem to have a fever, sleeping in my car for two hours before the meeting with the heater on in July, and not eating for two days due to nausea," haze. Thus, for those who put up with my disjointed and unfocused wonkiness last night, and those who are about to live through this by proxy: Sorry...

So the night started with me sleeping in the parking lot of the Borders before the meeting. 2 hours of Dvorak's Stabat Mater and the car heater finally had me feeling closer to human, since I felt as though I was frozen solid for most of the day. I walked in to the Borders, made my way over to the Event area, and joined the discussion already in progress. Sure, when I show up in the store early there isn't anybody there, I sleep in the parking lot and everybody sneaks in under the radar.

Luckily for me, we had a great crowd of people, 90% of whom had read most or all of Kat Richardson's third book in the Greywalker series, [Underground!](#) This made discussion easy. We started off by offering plaudits to Ms Richardson for choosing a monster the likes of which none of us had ever expected or even heard of. It is rare to find such things in the genre of modern urban fantasy, which is generally crawling with vampires, werewolves, and ghosts, and so one treats a well executed monster that is both truly mythological, and not over-played, like the diamond in the rough that it is. So, what Native American monster feeds on the homeless in the underground of Seattle, a Wendigo? Of course, I, like most of the readers, did not quite believe that Ms Richardson was going to color quite so far outside the lines as she did, though, and thus double kudos for that. The monster that deserves all the praise: [Sisiuti!](#) Wait, what?! Seriously?! Yes, not only does Kat Richardson take an amazingly obscure and strange monster from the depths of Tlingit mythology, she makes a monster whose description seem almost comical become terrifyingly realistic.

In addition to the monster, we all really enjoyed the continued development of some of the core characters, especially Quinton. Quinton really comes into his own in this book, and Liz, Ann-Marie, and Kathleen were very amused by the scene in which it is revealed that not only is Quinton not a Werewolf (as is heavily hinted in the first two books), Werewolves likely do not exist. Chris also brought up the scene in Harper's office with the NSA agents, for which I had a really extensive explanation of the reasoning for the scene (which is pretty blurry). We also liked the massive tension that has developed between Mara, Ben, and Harper over the situation with the ghost, Arthur. What we did not like: Wimpy William. Frankly, I do not understand why such a brilliant, strong woman like Harper Blaine has attached herself to such a pathetic shrinking violet. I mean, he runs off in a panic when she tears the shadows out of a zombie, what a weenie! To be honest, though, this is just the latest in a long list of irritating actions by the antiquing paramour that have gotten under the skins of the readers.

Some other things that we discussed were comparisons to the other books in the series that we have read in previous Suspense Central outings. [Greywalker](#) was an excellent first book, well written, fresh, entertaining, and executed with panache and verve. [Poltergeist](#) was good, but there were too many characters and too many balls in the air. The novella *The Third Death of the Little Clay Dog* was awesome, and fresh in the mind of Anna, who

had just read the anthology [Mean Streets](#) which introduced her to Harper Blaine, and showed Harper starting to grow and become more confident in her abilities. The trend of improvement continues up through *Underground*.

Conversation turned, as such things do, to things that we have read, prompting me to discuss my writer-slapping tour of America. I just finished reading *Red Rabbit* by Tom Clancy, and I want to wallop both his editors (or lack there-of) as well as the master of intrigue himself. Also on the smacking list: the writers of SyFy's *Haven* and the fools at ABC. *Haven* and *Happytown*, two shows that seem cut from the same cloth, with one exception: *Happytown* was GOOD! I think that I rambled on for about 10 minutes before mercifully come to the end of my rant on smackable writers and decision makers, thankfully, Anna stopped in to say hello and recommend the Stephen King novella [Blockade Billy](#). Anna, who was willing to forgive King his foible of being a Red Socks fan, really loved the story of the creepy catcher, and read several passages from the book to us.

At any rate, it was agreed that *Underground* is a success and a great addition to a series that we all really enjoy. Our question, however, is: will the next two books, [Vanished](#) and [Labyrinth](#) be as good? There seems to be a lot going on in [Vanished](#), and while I have not read it, I cannot help but be worried about this state of affairs. We shall have to see.

Join us on August 9th at 8pm at Borders in Ramsey as we gather to discuss [Soulless](#) by Gail Carriger.
Drawing A Crowd – Wednesday, July 14, 2010

Last night the DAC group convened at New Moon Comics to honor the memory of it's moderator, Tim Cook, who died on July 4th. Storeowner Rob placed an empty stool in the middle of the circle for Tim to "join in" the discussion. After a few remarks from Todd, the meeting was turned over to Heywood (Tim's former Art tutor & DAC member) who shared some of Tim's sketches, character histories, and [flow charts](#) for the comic book universe he was creating, along with Heywood's own visual interpretations of Tim's characters. Tim's aunts Aurelia & Ardeena were also on hand to provide commentary of Tim's work. I, for one, was impressed by the detail and depth that Tim showed in his work. It was said that Heywood & Austin (one of Tim's brothers) would be gathering up all of his sketches & story notes in an attempt to finish (& hopefully get published) the work that Tim started. It was a good evening and a fitting memorial for our friend.

Films to Come – Wednesday, July 21, 2010

Attendees were treated to an extremely enjoyable time at Films to Come. Films moderator Barry, was ready to go with relevant books, magazines, lists and a cattle prod to keep us in line (joking). But, he was eager to discuss the latest releases and tell us what to look for in theaters soon.

Barry brought *The Years Best Science Fiction* (2009), *Entertainment Weekly*, *Scott Pilgrim's Precious Little Life*, Vol. 1 (tie-in to the upcoming theatrical release), *SciFi* magazine and the infamous 'list'.

The always popular list of All-Time USA Box office movies helped start the meeting. Finally toppling *Alice in Wonderland* (\$334,185,206) as the big dog was *Toy Story 3* (\$364,856,662). Rounding out the list:

3. *Iron Man 2*
4. *The Twilight Saga: Eclipse*
5. *Shrek Forever After*
6. *How To Train Your Dragon*
7. *The Karate Kid*
8. *Clash of the Titans*
9. *Grown Ups*
10. *Shutter Island*

Despicable Me, *The Last Airbender*, *Valentine's Day*, and *Robin Hood* took places 11 - 14 respectively. For dollar amounts, you'll have to attend and find out.

"The List" was next. June 2010 provided a brief recap of what people spent money on, wish they hadn't spent money on and what we successfully avoided. Mike Paulmeno gave *The A-Team* thumbs up. He hadn't seen the original TV series, but thought the movie was good fun. Barry gave a not-so-thumbs-up to *Twilight's Eclipse*. Was he surprised?! *Those who saw the film, even with the changes to the storyline, enjoyed The Karate Kid*. The big buzz was *Toy Story 3* - big thumbs up from everyone who had seen it. Liz B pointed out the creepy big bad in the film and Todd mentioned an article he read that concurred. That's the Pixar winning formula though - kids and adults can find something to enjoy. *Grown Ups* got a slightly less than lukewarm from Mike Paulmeno. He summed it up as 'not so funny'.

July 2010. What do we have this month? Opening today *Salt*. Some added it to their list while others yawned. We shall see. Bill Wagner had seen *Cyrus* and called the film "very disturbing", "cringe worthy" - hmmm, this of course pricked interest in some and flight reflex in others. Bill W and Mike Paulmeno both gave thumbs-up to *Predators*. For the record, the magic number is 5, not 3 but 5, for the franchise. Bill offered the great opening sequence, while Mike thought the actors did a good job. Mike P also enjoyed *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*. He liked the blend of science and magic and recommended the film. Barry had seen *Restrepo*, a documentary on the situation in Afghanistan. He was iffy.

August 2010 - what to look for. *The Expendables* generated some conversation and the inevitable jokes about the cast. It also created the debate of the year - can you be rich and still need money? If you're rich and need money are you then not rich? I kid you not, this took place. *Scott Pilgrim vs. The World* might be good. *Piranha 3D* has someone eagerly waiting. Scary. Will *The Last Exorcism* be this summer's *Paranormal Activity*?

The store was closing so we had to wrap things up. The great debate was still raging so we continued over food.

Modern Masters – Friday July 23, 2010

The evening started early with a small gathering at Nonna's Pizza on the Franklin Turnpike in Mahwah, where we chowed down on yummy Italian comestibles... well, everyone except for me, I had a Buffalo Chicken Salad which is about as Italian as... well, pizza (which was invented in Brooklyn). Barry's pasta & chicken dish looked exceptionally yummy, as did Chris H.'s Ziti, and Ann-Marie's Eggplant Roll. We enjoyed a nice meal with some fun conversation and watched the skies darken. Lucky us, it began raining as we left the restaurant, and I do believe that Barry was swept out to sea by the deluge as he was not able to make it to Borders (seriously, though, he had plans with other friends, but made the time to grab supper with us since we are his friends too).

When I arrived at the store, I found David, Kathleen, and Josephine sitting at the table, and when I went to grab a drink I ran right into Aurelia! Having gathered a quorum, we sat down and began our little chat about Rob Thurman's third Leandros book, *Madhouse*. *Madhouse* follows brothers Cal and Niko Leandros in a desperate running battle with a sadistic, psychopath redcap named Seawney Beane. Beane, who was unique among redcaps (think psycho gnomes) was renowned for killing thousands (more like 863 according to the mummy Wahanket), and forced local common townfolk to form a posse and burn out his clan. Waking up in the 21st Century, Beane immediately goes to work enacting his insane revenge on an unsuspecting NY. Harried and hounded from multiple directions by a completely insane foe, the brothers and their allies must find a way to stop the redcap before it is too late.

We first turned our attention to the other Thurman books, discussing *Trick of the Light*, *Nightlife*, *Moonshine*, *Deathwish*, and even *Roadkill*. This is a strange reversal of our normal procedure of discussing the book first and then the author, however this is an author that we have been following since *Suspense Central* and *Modern Masters* did books 1 & 2 of the Leandros series last year. One thing that I noted was that it was kind of unlikely that there would be a sequel to *Trick of the Light*. While an excellent book in its own right, this is very much a book that it would be almost impossible to top. All of the characters' secrets have been revealed, there is really little in the way of character development left to explore (except maybe the relationship between the foster-brothers). As I have yet to read *Chimera*, which I purchased on Wednesday during *Films to Come*, I could not comment on that save to say that Rob likes brothers. Although most of us were not as caught up on the series as we would have liked, we all agreed that Rob is a powerhouse writer to be reckoned with, and it is likely that she will eventually rise to the recognition levels of folks like Jim Butcher and Charlaine Harris.

Hands down, we unanimously liked this book. The writing was excellent, as always, and led to a discussion of Rob's 'less is more' economy of description. We discussed how Cal, who is described in good detail, is not over-described, and Niko and Robin Goodfellow are equally given just enough detail to allow the reader to fill in the rest if need be. Strangely in spite of what could be perceived as a lack of detail in another writer, Thurman uses her words like a champion archer hitting the marks with every pull of the bow. While a lesser writer may have had us arguing over the details, we all had a strangely similar interpretation of the characters and scenes.

Another excellent discussion centered on setting. Much of Madhouse centers on chasing the crazy redcap through sewers and abandoned buildings in NYC. Rob engages the reader and moves the story forward. The claustrophobic elements of the sewer system are leveled by the 'oh, no' factor of the characters getting into a wide open space just to have to fight ghouls or other crazies under the thrall of Beane. An excellent sequence involves the horrors one feels over the simple description of a child's yellow hair clip found in a pile of bones. Horrifying.

I have pretty much told you a lot about what went on, but I think that I have failed miserably in getting a picture of the mood. We all really loved Rob's books, and our enthusiasm was definitely contagious (much like Seawney Beane's madness). Dave, who had not read any of Thurman's works to this point, was eagerly jotting down titles. Aurelia was demanding that we set time to do book 4, and Kathleen was excited at the prospect of sinking her teeth into Deathwish. Ann-Marie is anticipating my finishing Chimera so she can borrow it and read the last page (a-hem). We were so engrossed with the topic that we actually stayed on task from 8:15p to 10:50p! That's right, more than 2 1/2 hours of Rob Thurman.

Join us next month as we explore new interpretation of Gothic Horror with a discussion of Flight of the Eisenstein by James Swallow. This book is part of the Horus Heresy series of books and details the horrifying events surrounding the division of loyalist and traitor Space Marines at the battle of Istvaan IV. We will be enjoying a meal at our old stomping grounds, Moe's Hand Rolled Burritos at 6:30p!

Rogue Trader: Wolves in the Fold – Saturday, July 24, 2010

Command Crew of the Lady Malbec
Rogue Trader Malakai Harmon (Craig Hatler) - Captain (transferred as Captain to Marioc's Pride)
Rogue Trader Liana Harm (Todd Debiak) – Executive Officer (promoted to Captain)
Seneschal Artemus Wachs (Thom Purdy) – 2nd Officer/Quartermaster
Navigator Lilith Benetek (Sharon Roberg) – 3rd Officer/ Chief Navigator
Missionary Sarvus Tremnar (BJ Pehush) – Purser/High Chaplain (promoted to Executive Officer)
Voidmaster Stubbs (Markus Siebler) – Coxswain/Chief of the Boat (transferred to Marioc's Pride)
Seneschal Wensicia Tremnar-Marioc - Cargomaster

Astropath Jacob Dreer (Todd Debiak) – Chief Astropath
Astropath Thale of Lacustra (Markus Siebler) – Chief Communications Officer (transferred to Marioc's Pride)
Explorator Micro (Sharon Roberg) – Chief Technologist
Archmilitant Veruca Wayne (Thom Purdy) – Chief Tactical Officer
Archmilitant Jorn of Lacusta (BJ Pehush) – Chief of Security
Voidmaster Zacharie Cort (Craig Hatler) – Chief Auspex & Scanner Officer (transferred to Marioc's Pride)
Navigator Ramhat Singh-Modar - Helmsman

Ivan Vasudev (NPC) - Assistant Chief Technologist
Eladio Marioc (NPC) - Chief of Augurs
Luka Tremnar (NPC) - Coxswain

Chapter 4: Horrors Above and Below (828.865,M38)

From the personal journal of Wensicia Tremnar-Marioc

Having dispatched the Ork Marauders that were threatening the Lady Malbec, Executive Officer Liana Harm ordered us to begin repairs while Captain Malachai held a victory banquet in the Observation dome. Given his inability to take his position seriously, and his lack of any real experience, I have been trying to convince him to replace the spineless coward Imbrogio aboard the Marioc's Pride. With luck I can enlist the aide of Liana and Sarvus to convince the addle-pated 'Commodore' to move his flag.

After several hours of repairs, the alert klaxons began sounding once more as the Marioc's Pride finally emerged from the Immaterialium into the system. Several days late, damaged, and stuck on a ballistic trajectory that would take the ship into one of the debris fields that litter the system, we were forced to perform emergency maneuvers to catch up with the other vessel. When finally we were able to board the damaged Pride, Ramhat Singh-Modar, Liana Harm, Lilith Benetek, Ivan Vasudev, and Sarvus Tremnar attempted to infiltrate the bridge, which was open

to space. Fighting their way through terrifying daemons, Liana dispatched the possessed Imbroglio with a single well placed Blot pistol shot to the head.

Having restored function to most of the damaged areas of the ship and rounded up any crewmen who looked like they might be succumbing to the malign influences of Chaos (and ejecting them into the void), we proceeded to the inhabitable planet of Sparta Hill.

During the journey, we discovered that the assistant Navigator of the Marioc's Pride had succumbed to madness and mutation, sabotaging the ship's Gellar fields and exposing the bridge decks to the Immaterium during the transit from Hubble to the Lum systems. The creatures of the Immaterium infiltrated and possessed the Navigator, Astropath, and Auspex Master as well as the Captain. 'Commodore' Harmon was convinced to transfer his flag in an effort to restore morale on the Pride. Needing a core cadre of officers he could trust, Malachai took with him Assistant Astropath Thale, Coxswain Stubbs, and Augur Master Cort....

Although it took several days of maneuvering, we finally arrived at Sparta Hill. The planet was just as unpleasant from orbit as it was in its description in the Librarian's almanacs. The planet was eerily devoid of even the rudiments of civilization, such as it is in this miserable stretch of space, and we received no communications or contact from anyone, nor were we able to find evidence of any Ork bases on the planet. It appears as though the rumors of the planet being deserted since the time of the Snow Plague more than 3000 years before were accurate.

Sending Ramhat, Jacob Dreer, Lilith, Ivan, Jorn, and myself down to the planet seemed advisable, however Ramhat, who was still recovering from his wounds, managed to damage our lander. Ivan and Ramhat remained behind to effect repairs while Jacob, Lilith, Jorn, and I went to explore the abandoned city of Tray. My memories of the city itself are somewhat hazy, however I seem to recall finding some information that led me to believe that we should concentrate our mining efforts on one of the larger moons in the system, and should build our outpost in the ruins on the other end of this continent.

As we all seemed to recall the same information, we determined that doing so was probably wise. We proceeded to return to the Lander when we were beset by a sniper. His desire? To get us to help his tribe against a rival tribe called the Aeduii who were receiving the aide of our long-time enemies House Wolfe! New Players Always Welcome!

Join us on August 21st at Fantasy Games and Hobbies in Mahwah for a special session as we determine how to proceed with the current Call of Cthulu and Rogue Trader games.
For more information, email RogueTrader@sfsnj.com

Themes of the Fantastic – Tuesday, July 27, 2010

Our discussion of Games of SF took awhile to get going as we spent the first half hour rambling on about various topics (including a Charles Stross novel dealing with government persecution of homosexuals, Todd trying to get a job at a wine library, Controversies surrounding the 1st Star Trek Picture, SF Music scores, The Arizona Immigration Law, etc.) until Bill officially kicked us off with a Burroughs reference, The Chessman of Mars (which dealt with the game Jatan), followed by Steve Rubin's mention of a John Ford novel. This led to a couple of Star Trek references: The Gamemasters of Triskelion {Bill}, and three-dimensional chess in the Second ST pilot Where No Man Has Gone Before [SS & SR] while Todd cited a Paul Anderson novel. Chuck cited a Jack Vance story, Hassad {which dealt with getting a ring}. Steve Rubin mentioned Courtship Rite by Donald Kingsbury, and then Bill cited the film The Last Starfighter (which mentioned video games in the future) Chris said that they were remaking the film TRON, and there was talk of who was returning in the new version. Steve Rubin talked about "Hard Drive Races" and compared them to tractor pulls. Bill mentioned Death Race 2000, The Running Man and Predator, which he claimed was based on the western The Most Dangerous Game. Todd then disputed that with evidence from the Saturday Morning Breakfast Cereal website. We also discussed examples from the TV Shows Lost In Space ("The Deadly Games of Gamma Six" and "The Curse of Cousin Smith", which led to some behind the scenes stories about interaction between the Lost In Space and Voyage To The Bottom of the Sea cast and crew) and The Twilight Zone ("A Game of Pool", "The Fever", and "The Prime Mover"). We continued in this vein until 9:50 p.m. when it was time to head home. See y'all next time!!!

Additional comments: I also want to add that Chuck added to the list of examples the play Damn Yankees and the TZ episode The Mighty Casey that dealt with baseball... Steve Rubin cited the film No Way Out, Chuck mentioned Battle Royal & Bill did Flashman & The Great Game. Chuck mentioned Keith Lauber's book Five Fates with the board game Reprise, and I slipped in Fizbin from the Star Trek episode A Piece of The Action. Steve Rubin & Todd did a riff on D & D in the 21st Century, and then Todd mentioned the video game Halo. Rubin then talked about Purple Green, and cited a whole list of books related to games. Bill mentioned Ender's Game (which triggered a Todd riff), and I mentioned the novel Starfleet Academy by Diane Carey (based on the video game from the Harve Bennett draft). Bill then cited the "Dinosaur Chess" scene from the original Star Wars movie, and

Chris mentioned Alice in Wonderland, with quite a number of games. Rubin cited role-playing in Battlestar Galatica, which led to an off topic discussion of various historical days on the calendar. Chuck mentioned another Jack Vance novel A Silver Carrier, and Chris got in a play written by ABBA members called Chess. This led to more movie score mentions by Todd and Bill quoting Groucho Marx. Chuck then mentioned Keith Laumer's Retif novel, and Rubin mentioned Achilles Children. Bill then mentioned the film Angels in the Outfield, which was made twice, and that led to the Lost In Space/Voyage discussion...

Medium Screen Classics – Saturday, July 31, 2010

What a fun way to end our month of Fun & Games! Medium Screen Classics enjoyed a stellar line-up of *Made-for-TV- Movie Theater*. The selections included: *Don't Be Afraid of the Dark*, *Bad Ronald*, and *Special Bulletin*. Each offered something a little different. They went from scary to disturbing to horrifying.

First up was *Don't Be Afraid of the Dark*. This 1973 made-for-TV movie was very atmospheric. The tagline was: *Can you see them, Sally ... hiding in the shadows. They're alive, Sally. They want you to be one of them when the lights go out.*

The story has a young couple Sally & Alex Farnham (Kim Darby & Jim Hutton) inheriting an old Victorian mansion. It's an old house and needs work. While having work done, Sally finds an old locked room with a bricked up fireplace. Her crusty old carpenter (William Demarest) tells her to leave it alone. Yeah, she opens it. Out comes an ugly secret in the house. What makes this one creepy is the clever use of the dark. They make it hard to see the 'secret' making your imagination work over time. Scary.

Next up was *Bad Ronald (1974)*. This one was, as Jo put it, disturbing. Young Ronald Wilby (Scott Jacoby) accidentally becomes the boogey-man of his block. Ronald is somewhat of an outcast. His peers make fun of him unmercifully. They make fun of him for being a 'momma's boy'. He goes to a girl's house to ask her out and she laughs at him and her friends join in. Embarrassed, humiliated and angry, Ronald leaves. As he's walking home he accidentally bumps into a girl riding her bike. The girl starts poking fun at him and gets him so angry he pushes her. Unfortunately, she hits her head and dies. He panics, buries the body and flees home. His mother (Pippa Scott) decides the only course of action is to hide him in a secret room. Bad luck for Ronald when Mom goes into the hospital and dies during surgery. Ronald is left alone in his room with his secret world he's created....until a new family moves in. Disturbing.

Rounding out the day was *Special Bulletin*. This tense 1983 made-for-TV- movie won 4 Primetime Emmys. A TV reporter (Christopher Allport) and cameraman are taken hostage on a tugboat while covering a workers strike. They hear gunshots, go to investigate and are taken by a terrorist group. The group wants the nuclear weapons on the South Carolina coast disarmed or they will detonate their own bomb. What follows is tense. The story is told as if it were an actual newscast. Ed Flanders plays the seasoned anchorman at the station bringing the story to the TV audience. Tense, sad, frustrating. ..this one gets emotions going.

All three selections were enjoyable, particularly since the majority of the audience had never seen them. It's always fun to see something new - even if they terrified us! Big thanks to Barry for the line-up and the delicious breakfast. Dinner followed the event where we learned the back-stories of the movies and more.

SFSNNJ Member Movie Reviews

Karate Kid (2010) – Chris Hasslekus

I finally saw this remake because of Aubrey's review and the fact that my brother Bill from Virginia loved it. The really surprising thing is how effective Jackie Chan was; it's the best I've ever seen him act. Grade: B+

Harry Brown – Chris Hasslekus

I took a chance Tuesday night, 7/13/2010, and went to the Cedar Lane Theatre in Teaneck to see Harry Brown - it was the only movie house showing it. I had heard that the film was just ok, while [Michael Caine](#), its star, was terrific. Well, the story was more than ok: Caine's character and others in the English community where he lives are being terrorized by a bunch of punks. When Caine's chess partner / buddy gets killed, he's finally had enough. For an actor in his upper seventies to be in a [Death Wish](#) / [Dirty Harry](#) kind of role is certainly surprising. But he pulls it off. Grades: Film B+, Caine's performance A.

Avatar – Steve Spinosa

The other night Jim & I watched the DVD of the 2009 film Avatar (which Steve Rubin gave us Wednesday night after we brought him back to his house after the DAC meeting).

Special effects aside, The story comes off as "cowboys vs. Indians in outer space" with the RDA Corporation

Miners & their "Sec-Ops" attempting to remove the native Na'Vi tribe from their "Home Tree" in order to mine the "unobtainium" mineral from under the land on the planet Pandora. The highlight of the story is the select group of scientists, led by Dr. Grace Augustine, who use the Avatar technology to assume Na'Vi bodies (in a form of "virtual reality") that attempt to work out a peaceful move. Corporal Jake Sully, a crippled Marine, takes the place of his look-alike brother Tom (killed earlier in a robbery) and works with the scientists while reporting to Colonel Quaditch of the sec-ops. The big swerve comes during the destruction of the Home Tree/Willow Grove when Jake sides with the Na'Vi against the Sec-Ops and eventually stops the whole mission flat.

The film combines old-time western & military clichés with hints of Anime in a way that is fresh & appealing. Even Jim cheers at the end...lol. My grade: A

The Kids Are Alright – Chris Hasselkus

I went to see the film as advertised. I can see why it's getting such good reviews. Lisa Cholodenko wrote and directed the film about two lesbians, Jules (Julianne Moore) and Nic (Annette Bening) and their two children Joni (Mia Wasikowska, who was Alice in Tim Burton's Alice In Wonderland) and Laser (Josh Hutcherson). The two kids find the sperm donor, Paul (Mark Ruffalo), who impregnated both Jules and Nic. It's not really a comedy nor a drama, more like a dramedy. I won't be surprised it it's up for awards, especially the writing. Grade: A

The Kids Are Alright – Gene McGrath

I also went to see this film down in Greenwich Village two weeks ago - I enjoyed it - The children gave wonderful performances - Ms Wasikowska is talented *and* adorable!

We Remember

On July 4, 2010, a great loss was suffered. Friend, artist, student, nephew, brother, moderator of Drawing A Crowd, Timothy J. Cook left us tragically. He will be remembered and sorely missed.

Mike Piazza gave a touching tribute to Tim at Tim's service and Remi gave us the poem below:

God needed another artist

We ask, why he was way too young there was so much he'd yet to do

We ask, what was the reason he was strong, healthy, a good and wonderful person

We say, it's tragic, a sapling cut down before it could become a tree

We say, it's devastating he was taken too soon, his dreams withered on the vine

God says, I needed another artist.

**I needed the brightness of his smile to help light the sun, moon and stars so that your world won't be full of
darkness**

I needed the strength of his convictions to give you the will to go on when you would give up

I needed the sound of his laughter to help inspire musicians to write the music that calms your weary soul

I needed the sound of his voice to whisper on the soft breezes I send you on a hot summer's night

**I needed his fearlessness to help you not to be afraid, so that you can stand strong in the face of life's
adversities.**

Tim has great work ahead of him.

When you look up into the sky and see the beauty of the day, he helped paint those clouds

**When you stand in awe at the beauty of a sunset, remember that Tim help to mix the colors and used all the
talent he had here on earth to get it all just right**

When you see the lightening flash and hear the thunder roll, remember that's just our Tim having a little fun

When you look at the beauty of this world just remember

God needed another artist and his name was Timothy Joshua Cook.

~ Remi King ~ Sunday, July 11, 2010

Upcoming Conventions



PARSIPPANY, NJ
Fri., Sat. & Sun.
August 13-15, 2010

Pi-Con

Aug 20th-22nd 2010 • Crowne Plaza Enfield-
Springfield, *Enfield, CT 06082*
board game, geek, role-playing game, science, science
fiction, technology, video game,.

Twilight Convention

PARSIPPANY, NJ
Fri., Sat. & Sun.
Aug. 20-22, 2010
Hilton Parsippany
1 Hilton Court

Big Apple Comic-Con

Oct 7th-10th 2010 • Pier 94, *New York, NY 10019*
Join tens of thousands of fellow fans as they converge
to celebrate the best in pop culture. Big Apple Comic-
Con brings it all - Movies, Comics, Toys, Video Gaming,
Games, TV, Anime, Manga, Horror, Wrestling, MMA,
Original Art, Collectibles & More!

-----New
York Comic Con

Oct 8th-10th 2010 •, *New York, NY 10001*
art, comics, cosplay, fantasy, media, science fiction.