



September 2011 Newsletter

No Man's Land: A Post Apocalyptic World...Cosmic cataclysm, a prophetic disclosure or revelation: lifting of the veil...any way you look at it, "apocalypse" is a final catastrophe. What will the survivors do? What will the world be like? Will there be a world or survivors?

That's Science Fiction

Tuesday September 6, 2011 - 7p

Hillsdale Public Library

Daybreakers (2009)

Face the Fiction

Saturday September 10, 2011

Well Read Books

Jeff Somers

*Full details on p. 2

Suspense Central

Monday September 12, 2011, 2010 - 8p

Panera Bread Restaurant

165 Rt. 64 West

Paramus, NJ - 201.368.0752

Green Angel/Green Witch by Alice Hoffman

Drawing A Crowd

Wednesday September 14, 2011 - 7p

Fantasy Games & Hobbies

9 Miller Rd - Mahwah

Post Apocalyptic worlds

www.fantasygamesandhobbies.com

Films to Come: 4-Star Movie Discussion Group

Wednesday September 21, 2011 - 7p

Mahwah Library - downstairs

100 Ridge Road

Mahwah, NJ 07460

This group discusses the world of cinema and entertainment. If it deals with entertainment, our Master of Entertainment Moderator will cover it.

Modern Masters

Tuesday September 23, 2011 - 8p

Panera Bread Restaurant

1300 Rt. 17 North - Ramsey Square Shopping

Center Ramsey, NJ 07446

Special guest, award-winning author Hank

Quense

Rogue Trader: Wolves in the Fold

Saturday September 24, 2011

Fantasy Games & Hobbies

9 Miller Road, Mahwah, NJ

Rogue Trader is a game of space adventure, set in

the grim darkness of Games Workshop's

Warhammer 40000 universe. Are we the wolves in

the fold, or merely the sheep?

Themes of the Fantastic

Tuesday September 27, 2011 - 8p

Wayne Public Library

No man's lands

www.waynepubliclibrary.org

Please visit www.sfsnj.com for full details

A look ahead: October's theme is Battle of the

Monsters! Who is the Big Bad? Our Face the

Fiction panel of Jonathan Maberry, Keith

DeCandido and Mary SanGiovani will find out!

- That's Science Fiction! - Monster Squad
- Suspense Central - God's Demon
- Modern Masters - Sense and Sensibilities and Sea Monsters

SFSNNJ Face the Fiction presents: Jeff Somers

When: Saturday, September 10, 2011

Where: Well Read Books, 425 Lafayette Avenue, Hawthorne, NJ 07506,
(973) 949-3440

About our guest: Jeff Somers (<http://jeffreysomers.com/blather>, <http://the-electric-church.com>). Mr. Somers is a Jersey native, born in Jersey City, NJ. Jeff is a U.S. science fiction author.

In 1995, Jeff began publishing his own magazine; *The Inner Swine* (www.innerswine.com), which he hysterically claims, "has done nothing for my writing career. Except, perhaps, inhibit it." *The Electric Church* was inspired by a character in Douglas Adams' *Dirk Gently's Holistic Agency* - loosely inspired. Jeff says he took "an amusing concept and turned it into something horrifying."

Jeff has been a prolific contributor to alt.zines. Somers's has transformed from an observational essayist into a science fiction writer of no small talent. His first novel, *Lifers* was soon followed by the dystopian *Avery Cates* series. His novels are published in the US and the UK by Orbit Books.

The Avery Cates Series

1. *The Electric Church* (2007)
2. *The Digital Plague* (2008)
3. *The Eternal Prison* (2009)
4. *The Terminal State* (2010)
5. *The Final Evolution* (2011)

Other Works

- Lifers* (2001)
The Freaks Are Winning (2002)

Blood and Splendor: Sliders Special (1997)
Sliders Comic Book Co-writer)

Digital Fiction

The Electric Church (an Alternate Reality Game)
Twitter Fiction
The Eternal Prison Text Adventure

Face the Fiction: Where imagination lives!

Only at the SFSNNJ

SFSNNJ News: We have moved the locations of Films to Come and Modern Masters due to the unfortunate closing of Borders Books & Café. Modern Masters will enjoy its new location at Well Read Books in Hawthorne: <http://www.thewellreadbookstore.com>. Films to Come will enjoy its new location in the downstairs area of the Mahwah Library.

Augusts' Theme: Conspiracy Theories. Meeting recaps

That's Science Fiction! Tuesday, August 2, 2011:

To begin our month's theme regarding Conspiracy Theories, we showed the Pilot for The X-Files television series. Liz B. thought the show began before 1993.

She then realized it has been 18 years. All attendees then agreed to show the next episode called Deep Throat. The show really

depicts the relationship between Muldur and Scully well, with the former believing that we are not alone, the latter preferring to believe in what can be scientifically explained. The shows hold up really well, definitely something that could be shown today. (Chris H)

Suspense Central Tuesday, August 8, 2011 by AM:

Suspense Central met last night to discuss The Physick Book of Deliverance Dane by Katherine Howe. Very enjoyable gathering that stayed on topic for the entire meeting!

The majority had read the book (8 out of 9) and the majority gave it a solid B/B+ rating. Impressive. Even more impressive is that The Physick Book of Deliverance Dane was author Howe's first novel. The few flaws in the book - weak main character - were far outweighed by the things we liked: otherwise good, solid characters, fast, even pace, fantastic settings, descriptions and pretty decent story.

The Physick Book of Deliverance Dane is about a graduate student Connie Goodwin. Connie is doing research to defend her doctorate and unearths a doozy of a mystery and secret. The story takes place in Cambridge, MA, Salem, MA, and Marblehead, MA, and takes the reader back and forth between 1692 during the Salem witch trials

and the summer of 1991 while Connie works on her doctorate.

While finishing up her thesis, Connie is contacted by her mother, Grace. Her mother asks if Connie could please handle the sale of Connie's grandmother's house right outside Salem since she's in the area and Connie's mom is all the way in Arizona. Connie agrees. Connie and her friend Liz figure it might be fun to clean up the old, abandoned house and prepare it for sale. The discovery of a key hidden in a 17th century bible while cleaning starts a mystery that becomes deeper and dangerous. The key contains a piece of parchment with a name on it: Deliverance Dane. Who was Deliverance? The search comes with some interesting finds...

What follows is a story about the witch trials, the conspiracies behind the trials, dark visions, a rare book of power and the people who want that book. Along the way, Connie realizes her part in the story and her relationship to Deliverance Dane.

All agreed the pacing of the book was quite good. The settings were described so well that you could easily imagine yourself in any given scene. Howe also made sure to choose the year 1692 for a good reason. In 1692, much historical data was not yet computerized so searching would be a monumental task requiring hours of hunt-and-peck-type research. Cell phones were not yet mainstream. Connie had some work ahead of her! these

Suspense Central: The Physick Book of Deliverance Dane by Todd Ehrenfels:

The Power of Cotton Mather compels you! The Power of Cotton Mather compels you!

That's right, last night was Suspense Central's discussion of *The Physick Book of Deliverance Dane* by Katherine Howe, and a good time was had by all! We started off a bit later than usual, with Chris, Mike P., and I chatting out in the cold, cold dining room area because the Meeting room was occupied by sorcerous folks dabbling with the powers of dark magics. "Peace Meditation" is what the sign said, but with the lights out... let's just say that there is no way to know if they were not sending forth their spectres to corrupt the innocent. Goody Simple will have to be warned, no good will come of this!

OK, well, back to the dining room, then, as we were joined by Aurelia and Ann Marie, we noticed that the vile heretics had abdicated the room, which now smelled of horrid potions and wicked intent... well, Patchouli incense, anyway. We moved into the room, and lo, as if they were summoned by the very black arts themselves (or possibly an SUV) did Kathleen and Josephine appear unto us and bid us to actually start discussing the bloody book.

Aurelia led us on a pretty in-depth tour of the book, and for a change almost everyone had read it (or listened to the audio book). We started at the beginning and quickly jumped around, griping about the things that we felt were wrong with the book and praising the things we really liked. One particular issue for Aurelia was the fact that the protagonist, Connie Goodwin, was such a weak lead. Kathleen was incredulous as to how Connie could possibly have forgotten that her own first name was Constance (derp-a-derp). We all liked the Historical aspects of the book (though I complained that the characters felt like cartoonish

seemingly small issues become integral to the story and how things play out.

Most of us also agreed that we preferred the story set in 1692. We liked the characters better, the settings better and the story.

Overall, this book is a strong recommend. At times creepy, keeps you guessing, good historical detail, and just plain fun.

sketches from *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller or *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne), and kind of felt like they could have stood well alone, and away from the rest of the story. Here are few of the other issues and praises we discussed:

Research - For a Post-Graduate/Doctoral student, Connie was pretty darned inept as a researcher. It is a problem when the audience 'gets it' before the character, and when this happens consistently with blindingly obvious stuff... well...

Overly Coincidental Action - Many of the elements of the book seemed overly coincidental, and out of the characters' control. While that makes sense in terms of the ideals and beliefs of the Puritans, it might have been better had the coincidences not been so convenient.

Main Character Issues - Connie, as mentioned before, is more than a bit of a drag on the story, but part of that is that her skillset and knowledge are somewhat inconsistent with the needs of the story. The story might have been better served had Connie been earlier in her academic career, Jo and I both posited that simply making her a Junior just starting to get into her Major courseload would have made more sense.

Lack of Genealogy - How does a character with a Masters in Colonial Economics History not research her own genealogy?! She knows that her family is from Massachusetts, and she never bothered to research her own lineage. Worst PhD Candidate ever?

Chris brought up that another group that he is a member of, the Watchung Book Group, had read the book and had a pretty positive reaction to it. We gave the book an average grade of a B, with

myself giving it a C+ and everyone else giving it B or B+. I could not help but compare the book to Rebecca Stott's *Ghostwalk*, which I liked a good

deal more.

Tune in next month for more shenanigans!

Drawing a Crowd: Conspiracy Theories, Wednesday, August 10, 2011 by Todd Ehrenfels:

What do Batman, Daredevil, the Fantastic Four, Captain America, Superman, Luke Cage, and the X-Men all have in common? None of them have ever been burned at the stake by Cotton Mather.... sorry, still flashing back to Suspense Central... Anyway, they have all fallen afoul of a well built and masterfully executed conspiracy.

When the gang gathered downstairs, Mike called us to order and we began to go through the information that he had gathered for us to discuss. I would like to take a quick moment to thank Mike and Haywood for the job they do as moderators of Drawing a Crowd. Every month they work together to put together a neat programme for us, with Mike writing up hand-outs that include his favorite comics from his collection and Haywood gathering up Covers from those issues as well as pictures and video for us to enjoy from his personal collection. They put in a lot of work to making the discussion fun, and providing a great deal of direction for us to look through.

Barry took one look at the five page hand-out and declared that this month we would actually get through the whole list, and we each began reading sections of Mike's handout. This turned out to be a lot of fun, and we all affected voices and accents to make the characters stand out. If they ever decide that they need some solid, non-celebrity, voice-over people, well, I am sure we could help!

We started with Mike reading about Captain America in his fight against a conspiracy from the Secret Empire, and its vile leader, Number One (who turns out to be Richard Nixon). This was a storyline that we had discussed during the Government and Bureaucracy discussion some months back, but this time we approached it from another angle. This is obviously one of Mike's favorites, and we had some fun with the series.

Next up was a Dare Devil sequence about a

manipulative android named Mr. Klein and his plot to save the future and ensure the survival of humanity by preventing Nelson from running for governor. Mike liked this one a lot as well, but thought that there was a lot of hand-waving, and glossing over of important pieces of the story. One notable issue was the fact that the Black Widow saves DareDevil, even though there is absolutely no reason for her to have been anywhere near the area (we chalked it up to the fact that Assassins are drawn to Matt Murdock for some ineffable reason).

The Fantastic Four were next on the list with an early series (issue #2) about the first contact with the Skrulls. This is a series that has been redone a number of times and is still a lot of fun. For reinforcement of this series and the follow-up on the Kree-Skrull War, Haywood showed clips from the newest incarnation of the animated Fantastic Four series (so much Saiyan Hair), which were pretty cool and showed off the Super Skrull to best effect. We also discussed the Kree Intelligence Supreme and its oft-changing nature and unchanging command of the Kree people.

We spent a lot of time on a Batman story about Ra's al Ghul and his daughter Talia, who fake their own deaths in order to outwit Batman. The conspirators used computerized guns that could be commanded to aim and fire independently of the user. Typical of DC, it was the kind of ludicrously far-fetched set-up that often drives readers nuts, but the cover art for the various issues was still pretty awesome.

Luke Cage got in on the action next as we discussed the ins and outs of a convoluted set of countervailing conspiracies that embroil the Hero for Hire in an escape from an asylum and multiple frame-jobs, murders, and a lady named Mrs. Jinks (no first name, as pointed out by Aurelia). We had more fun discussing the differences between Black Panther and Luke Cage, and the blaxploitation

movement of the times, and Haywood showed off some more awesome Luke Cage art!

Moving down the list we discussed a conspiracy to frame Superman for murder authored by none-other-than the Crime Exchange Board (a subsidiary of NASDAQ). Mr. Noble (who obviously wasn't) and Doctor Frost rigged a charity boxing match to make it appear that Superman killed Noble with one punch. The Judge and Jury were encased in a glass box and Superman flew them off into space at speeds faster than light so they could get ahead of the light from Earth at the time of the match and witness what actually happened. My head hurts just thinking about how silly this is, and Mike pointed out that there were more than a few issues that make no sense in the entire affair.

Haywood brought up the character of the Question, and Barry, ever the great resource for all things Comic-Book related, explained that the character of Rorschak in the Watchmen was based on the Charlton character of The Question, who had become a DC property at the time. Pulling up a clip from the Justice League Unlimited, we watched the Question begin to unravel several conspiracies using bubblegum pop music... How bizarre! This was really a lot of fun, and we all recognized the inestimable Jeffrey Coombs' voice as that of the Question.

Rounding off the list were the Sentinels (yes, we actually did make it all the way through the list), and we discussed their various appearances and impacts before turning to other weighty matters. BJ reminisced about an early arcade game that had Sentinels in it that were less enormous and more man-sized, and I recalled the Sentinels sequences

from the animated X-Men series of my youth.

Next, BJ brought up a mini-series with the Spiderman universe where a reporter at the Daily Bugle finds evidence that all of the various super heroes were in fact part of a big series of government black ops science projects that did not quite turn out as planned (in most cases). BJ relished the story as one of the better thought out tie-ins, and had a great deal of fun explaining the truth of how Spiderman got his powers. Oh, and that poor Doctor Banner, "Still, he (the Hulk) does make it easier to justify increased appropriations spending..." Too funny!

We got side-tracked a bit when discussing the Evil Villain Lair Real Estate Market, and I did a routine as an old man buying a foreclosed Volcano Fortress from the Bank for only \$50K and all back taxes. Who knew! We also came up with failed modern day villains who would likely benefit from their counterparts and peers constantly being arrested. The Financier, the Forecloser, Escrow Jones....

Another sidebar had us discussing the merits of *Warehouse 13*, *Eureka*, and *Alphas*. Haywood and I (who apparently are the only ones watching these shows) had a lot of fun explaining the shows and why they are awesome, and Haywood showed a scene from *Warehouse 13* that introduced the Regents in their wacky little hole in the wall Diner.

We finished off with a discussion of the looming DC reboot, and Barry gave out free "Get Caught Up with DC" give-aways that are really cool. As always we had a great time, and I got made fun of for all the voices in my head.

Films to Come Wednesday, August 17, 2011 by AM

Last night was the first night at what appears might be the permanent meeting space for Films to Come at Mahwah Library. We met downstairs in a very nice location and had the place to ourselves...all seemed to agree the location was suitable and the staff friendly and helpful.

It will take some adjusting to for our moderator to get used to the two-hour time allotted, but next month I'm sure he'll be back on his "A" game.

Although we all thought it was a fun meeting, noticed no flaws, and had no complaints, our moderator had brought a bunch of material he didn't get to and wasn't quite satisfied...picky, picky. The loyal fans of this group had a good time and much discussion went on about a number of movies. We also got many recommends for films to see.

We started off with the infamous "List", beginning with **May**. Barry asked if anyone had seen any of

the movies on the list since last month. A lot of conversation centered on *The Tree of Life*. It seems this one is either a "love it" or "not quite love it" film. Mark and Pam thoroughly enjoyed the film and gave it a strong recommend, while Barry was not as easily sold.

After a brief skim of May, we moved onto **June**. *Super 8*, *Bad Teacher*, *Cars 2*, *Green Lantern* and *X-Men: First Class* were discussed. It is always interesting to hear the differing opinions on the films. For example, Mark and Alesia both enjoyed *Green Lantern* and viewed it as an entertaining film with good action. Todd was much more critical and thought it had one of the worst scripts of the summer...or ever (and this wasn't even an Uwe Boll film!).

*Small note: a few people wondered why we were going over movies we had discussed already. While we had discussed June last month, some people had only recently seen several of the movies - this is why Barry revisits previous months. People don't always see a film when it first comes out, and it's gives a new perspective when people who had not seen the movie the prior month see it in the interim and compare the movie to the comments they've heard.

Next up was **July** - a very busy month for our members!

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2 - Pam & Mark felt this the best Harry Potter ever. Mark felt that because they finally broke a book into two movies they were able to include much more than in previous films. Larry agreed saying he had no clue what was going on in some of the previous movies and the book and film often seemed like a disconnect. Chris felt the film provided a good conclusion, as did Barry.

Cowboys & Aliens - much talk on this one. Larry enjoyed this one as both a western and a science fiction film. He felt it had good action, as did Alesia. Alesia also felt the movie gave a realistic portrayal of how things would have been handled. Chris liked Daniel Craig and thought he did a great job. Todd liked that the filmmakers went with a low tech vs. high tech and didn't sell out with a "steampunked up" version of the cowboys. Bill felt the film started good then lost steam...no pun

intended. Barry felt it had good action but wasn't satisfied with the overall product.

Winnie the Pooh - here is Chris' review, "It was short."

The Smurfs - out-grossing *Cowboys & Aliens*! Huh! I thought it best we go to Belgium (birthplace of the Smurfs) to check out the Comic Museum...Alesia seconded the road trip...we're still waiting. How much longer are Alesia and I gonna have to stand in this airport waiting for you guys?? Liz, ever observant, pointed out that the Smurfs are out-grossing C & A because you can get Smurf toys in happy meals...LOL!

Transformers: Dark of the Moon - Chris explained this one with, "As short as Winnie the Pooh was, this one was long." Barry had no problems with the movie other than the Transformers.... uh Barry...they're the reason for...never mind.

Horrible Bosses - Bill called this one, "a waste of talent." Barry begged to differ.

Captain America: The First Avenger - Pam and Mark thought this the best superhero movie of the summer. Larry and Bill seemed to agree and both enjoyed it.

Tabloid - Pam & Mark both gave a strong recommend to this documentary and Pam believes this will be strong contender come award time.

The Guard - Bill enjoyed this one very much. He saw it as a special preview with director John Michael McDonagh present to provide background on the film about the IRA and special police in Ireland.

August:

The Help - Alesia had both read the book and seen the movie. She pointed out that the movie was funnier than the book and that the book wasn't a comedy. Alesia strongly felt it was a marketing move. Although she did think the movie had a different feel from the book, she does recommend the movie. Alesia did a good job of explaining the premise to Bill who seemed a tad confused...

30 Minutes or Less - Larry quipped, "I think this was about the Winnie the Pooh movie."

Rise of the Planet of the Apes - Alesia enjoyed the 'easter egg-type' bonuses spread throughout the movie (nods to the original films). She also feels while it summed things up, it does leave the door open for another movie...

Realizing the library was closing shortly, Barry stopped the August list at *Conan the Barbarian* (good thing because Todd was going on his *Scorpion King* rant...lol) and quickly moved to **September**. First up was *Moneyball* starring Brad Pitt & Jonah Hill. This movie is based on the 2003 non-fiction novel of the same name. *Abduction* with Taylor Lautner (of the Twilight series) and possibly written by Lautner, *Contagion*, *Dream House*, *Dolphin Tale* were briefly covered with descriptions and some background

Now, while it seems like we covered an awful lot in two hours and it appears we only talked 'movie'...no. We had the usual digressions. Some kinda fun - i.e. Bill going around the table and asking if anyone had ever walked out of a movie because it was just so bad. Barry doesn't walk out of bad movies - he falls asleep, while poor Mark sat

on the floor of a theater to avoid *Highlander III* and *To Wong Fu, Thanks for Everything Julie Newmar*. Larry liked them both - so I'm guessing he did not walk out or sit on the floor. Chris said he had walked out on a bad movie (I think back when dinosaurs ran on belts to make the projector work), and Liz explained walking out of a bad movie with, "You never get those moments back!" Then we had Todd still trying to get that petition to imprison whoever wrote the script for *Green lantern* - lol. Trying to decide whether or not to send a search party out for Bill, who of course was checking out the library while we were discussing *Cowboys & Aliens*. Larry added his usual hilarious comments.

We had to wrap up as the library was closing, and headed out to continue conversation.

Themes of the Fantastic Tuesday, August 23, 2011 by Chris Hasselkus

Good discussion on conspiracy theories. Examples include, of course, the JFK assassination, "The Parallax View", Roswell/Area 51, UFOs, X-Files, "Plan 9 From Outer Space", William Twelve Hawks "Traveler" trilogy, the "Paul [McCartney] Is Dead" hoax, "Men In Black", "Doctor Who", an Alice In Wonderland film from the

'80s, "Dream Child" written by Dennis Potter, "Ghost Story" by Peter Straub and the film, the faked moon landing (as shown in "Capricorn One"), "Cowboy Angels" by Paul McCauley, "Alternates" by Michael P. Kube-McDowell, "A Midsummer Tempest" by Poal Anderson. A fun meeting.

Modern Masters: Event by David Lynn Goleman, Friday, August 26, 2011 by Todd Ehrenfels

The secret cabal that is *Modern Masters* met in our hidden base deep in the mountains of Ramsey to plot our way forward into a tomorrow controlled by our vicious band of cut-throat villains... Oh, wait, I wasn't supposed to tell you about the secret plans! Initiate Cover-up Procedure 66!

So Friday night we met at the Panera in Ramsey (which is totally not a secret mountain fortress, really) to discuss the book *Event* by David Lynn Goleman. That's when <Redacted> came in and told us that <Redacted> was really a secret spy for <Redacted>... wait, this cover story isn't really working well. Let's try this again...

So *Modern Masters*, the meeting where we discuss books, and not where we plan to take over the world ("Narf, poit!")! This month we focused on a new author, David Lynn Goleman, who likely needs a better press agent. We assembled at the Panera in Ramsey at 8p, and actually started discussing the book early (yes early!), with Liz, Chris, Ann Marie, Kathleen, and I launching into an in-depth analysis of the book. This discussion would continue, literally non-stop, until well past 10p! That's

right, over two hours of discussions and no evil plots to take over the planet... forget I said that.

The novel *Event* is the first book in Goleman's overarching *Event Group* series, and posits a Government Department whose sole purpose is to examine unique and mythical historical events and artifacts to discover everything that we can from them and prevent catastrophes of Epic proportions. Due to the fact that normal people are ill-equipped to understand the complexities of the ancient information that these folks are responsible for studying, they operate in secret with lots and lots of government dollars. In *Event*, Joe Collins, a Navy pilot who downs an alien spacecraft, is sent to help the *Event Group* investigate. This allows Goleman to expose us, the readers, to the *Event Group* in the time honored and cliché manner of most movies and TV series (i.e. we learn with the main character). As it turns out, this *Event* connects back to an earlier one, to what the crashes at Roswell in the 1940's. Hijinx ensue.

While we all agreed that the book was solidly in the C+ range, we definitely felt that there were a lot of very good, positive things about it that merited a lot of

discussion. Here are a selection of scenes that we felt were exceptionally well done:

Gus and Buck (an old prospector and his donkey) discover the crash site and witness the Destroyer leaving the crashed alien ship. The sheer terror of the scene is very well drawn out, and even the discovery of the Alien (referred to as Matchstick by Gus because of his big head and tiny skinny body).

Gus dealing with the young boy in the desert was a nice touch, and added some reality to the somewhat cliché 1950's stock SF movie character.

Gus dealing with Matchstick and conversing/protecting the little alien (dressing him up in 'human clothes' was priceless as well, reminded us alternately of ET and Roger from American Dad).

Vince, Mendenhall, and Collins interactions were well drawn out.

Senator Lee and his assistant, who are arguably the only people at the Event Group with really fleshed out personalities (well at least the only ones who don't profess undying love as a prelude to gruesome death).

The Death of Lisa! Was particularly grisly and definitely showed how the monster works. The problem was that it was visible a mile away by Mr. Magoo since it was telegraphed two chapters earlier with the "Hey baby, I love you let's get married and tell everyone that we are so in loooooove..." scene.

Henri, the vile little psychotic Bellock impersonator!

Some stuff we didn't like? Well: Action scenes contained waaaay too much Dickensian description for action scenes. We don't need to know the history and utility of every item in Collins' inventory, just show us it working and we will go from there.

Somewhat cliché and reminiscent of old 1950's horror/science fiction. Of course, since that is what he is going for with the series, that may not be a particularly relevant complaint.

The creature could swim through terrestrial matter because its atoms were more dense than terrestrial atoms... seriously? With all the decent science and archeology, he throws this at us?

Bizarre motivations for the aliens, who apparently never seem to learn from past mistakes, keep crashing into the Earth. We should probably put up road cones or something.

At any rate, we discussed *Event* for a great amount of time, but we also delved into the rest of the series. Kathleen and I had read much of the rest of the books, and we both recommended the sequel as being better than the first book. *Legend* is a bit less fast paced than *Event*, but still has all the stuff that makes *Event* such an enjoyable read, and, what makes it better, is that he does not fall into the traps that we complained of in the first book. Sadly, it is all downhill from there. *Ancients*, the third book in the series is pretty good through the first 2/3 of the story, but then totally falls apart into incoherent stupidity and the resolution (during which most of the major powers of modern Earth are pretty thoroughly crippled) apparently has absolutely no effect on anything whatsoever! *Leviathan* is just mind-numbingly stupid, and though it has some pretty good scenes, the plot is just bad to the point of idiocy. *Primeval*, which Kathleen reluctantly admitted to reading, was serviceable, but the story seems incredibly silly (Sasquatches and Romanovs, 'nuff said), and while it harkens back to the earlier *Legend*, I am still not sold on Sasquatches and Romanovs. The forthcoming *Legacy* looks suspiciously like *Apollo 18*... I mean exactly like *Apollo 18*.

One more thing that we spent a lot of time discussing was Goleman's biography, or lack thereof. Apparently, he was born, did some stuff in California and Colorado, then magically conjured some great children from the aether. As there was no mention of a spouse, and the phrasing of the sentence was a bit odd, we spent a lot of time speculating on the nature of these great children. Mike P. posited that the term *Great* could mean really large, so maybe the kids are really adopted Sasquatches themselves. Aurelia suggested that perhaps, since he did not list any education or profession, they were secret lab experiments gone awry, and somebody indicated that there was the possibility that he was in fact a wandering hobo child-abductor.

All-in-all we had a fun, exciting, and wacky time discussing this book. Tune in next month as we kick off *Modern Masters* new location at Well Read Books with a special guest!

Heroes & Rogues, Saturday, August 27, 2011 by Todd Ehrenfels

Chapter 16: Revelations and Retributions

From the Journals of Wencisia Tremnar, Executive Officer of the *Lady Malbec*, 602.861.M38

I have decided that the world of Zama is possibly the worst of all possible planets in this benighted sector of the galaxy. Crawling with Inquisitors, yet home to secret tombs and treasure troves of Xenos technology, would be

bad enough, but the simple fact that Xenos appear to be appearing from thin air simply to attack us is more than a bit problematic.

After taking the time to properly hide the bodies of the Eldar who attacked us at the Path's terminus on Zama, and obscure the markings that would easily identify the Monoblades and Powerswords as obviously of Eldar design, we returned to the capital. Micro, who had surgically altered his torso during the voyage to Zama, hid the Key to the next step of the Path as well as the jewels from the Eldar armour, while Samuel altered the Powersword and Monoknives. We cautiously traversed the desert to the drop-site and did our best to hide the fruits of our labours from the shuttle crew. We returned to the capital to find that little had changed.

Taking a night in one of the Starport's luxurious hotels, we were enjoying ourselves in our rooms when, at 03:30, a knock on my door came. It was Samuel, being trailed by three vagrants who looked like they had neither eaten nor slept in days. Samuel, who had awakened the rest of us when the vagrants knocked on his door, informed us that these vagrants were asking us to go to the Starport, Terminal 2. For whatever reason, it appears that Sarvus went with the trio of unfortunates without alerting the rest of us. We determined this through both the fact that Sarvus left us a note, but also because the vagrants did seem to have been lit aflame at some point in the recent past. Liana, determining that trouble was not just afoot, but running straight for us, led us to the Starport to see what we could find.

When e arrived, we found Sarvus, his armour and weapons removed, and one of the vagrants standing over him with Sarvus' Assault Flamer pointed at the prone and presumably unconscious Missionary. Behind our fallen comrade was a screen being held in place by another vagrant. Using telemetry from Samuel's ServoSkull 001, Liana developed a fairly good plan of attack, which sadly did not survive our entry to the room. Liana immediately attempted to execute her plan, signalling to Micro to use his powers over technology to steal the Flamer from the vagrant, however the second vagrant pulled down the screen revealing a foul xeno Enslaver! Samuel and his Servitor 002 opened fire at the horrid beast, and I decided to change tactics and charge the enemy over my cousin. Slicing forward with my power sword, my blow landed squarely on the Assault Flamer, which the vagrant raised up to parry. The resulting explosion hurt me, but knocked the villain right out of the fight. The Xeno and his followers were quickly dispatched, and we revived Sarvus, though we were unable to locate most of his gear, save for the remains of the detonated Flamer.

Given the alarms and the dead bodies, we felt it was safer to contact the local Arbites, who had already been investigating disappearances at the Starport as the Inquisition had determined such things were beneath

their notice. Upon examining the scene, the local Prefect determined that the Inquisition would need to be consulted on the corpse of the creature. As Sarvus had no memory of anything past leaving his hotel room with the vagrants. The fact that he did so willingly and without advising anyone else may mean that he was under the influence of the foul Xeno. Who else would arrive on the scene but our current ally, Fortius Mandragorin, and our former ally Inquisitor Lord DuMorne. DuMorne probed Sarvus' mind and learned of the Xeno's discussion with our Missionary, where the creature demanded that sarvus surrender the Key to the Path. Liana was quite incensed that the Inquisition was now privy to our work on the Path, but given the inability of Micro to lie, and the fact that DuMorne could cause extensive difficulties for us if he decided we were not being forthcoming. In the end, he determined that dragooning us forcibly into the Inquisition would be both foolish and difficult, and so he demanded simply that we proceed on the Path and reveal its nature to him as we learned more. In the mean time, he was planning to find out everything he could from the Slaan complex in the deep desert.

Upon discovering that the Enslaver was after our progress on the Path, suddenly the vagrants' interest in the Path made sense. Rumours abounded that the Path contained the keys to the destruction of the Enslavers and their threat to the Empire as we know it. There is no profit to the Enslavers, and I agree with Sarvus in his newfound hatred of these creatures. The simple fact that we can worm our way into the good graces of at least one powerful Ordo Xeno Inquisitor Lord in our pursuit of this Path is one more advantage in our drive to bring wealth and prestige back to House Tremnar.

Having secured an agreement from the Inquisitor Lord DuMorne regarding our pursuit of the Path, Liana determined to head out into the city to seek the services of some specialists. Little did I know that specialists meant Jokaero. Liana had heard rumour that the Inquisition made extensive use of the ubiquitous and annoying beasts. Liana Attempted to broker a deal with the beast, but it simply did not seem to understand the concepts that she was trying to convey. At one point it did something to the Left Arm of her Armour, and then it did some of its bizarre manipulations to a small mirror that Liana had offered in trade, then returned it to her in exchange for, of all things, her decorative belt buckle. When we returned to the *Lady Malbec* Micro, Samuel, and Yvan determined that the mirror was actually a form of circuitry that would allow us to run one of our ship's components beyond its specified capacity. After much debate, we decided to install the Mirror in the Gellar Field Generator. When combatting the Warp Beast in Yois, this might allow us to prevent the Daemon from taking over our ship's systems or bringing other Daemons aboard.

Inquisitor Lord Mandragorin and his Entourage, in the mean time, cloistered themselves in the Lance Bays, using their arcane rights and abilities to enhance our weapons in the hopes that they would be more effective against the Warp Creature. Since time was of the essence, Lilith and Ramhat worked their best courses into the systems, but the burgeoning Warp Storm stymied our attempts to enter Yois in a timely fashion. We arrived as the Storm was already beginning to manifest in the Materium, and had occluded the system completely in the Immaterium. Ramhat was driven to the brink of madness by the images from beyond, though luckily our Astropaths and Chief Navigator did not succumb to the effects. Lilith used her abilities as a Navigator to Stack the Deck in our favor, and we began our attack upon the beast.

The beast materialized in the Materium as a massive organic ship with a single great eye on the prow and massive squid-like tentacles. Gaspar Took firm command of the weapons team and began barking orders. With Inquisitor Lord Mandragorin over his shoulder muttering litanies and invocations, Gaspar, Alequintus, and Eladio began the attack run. Eladio sang out instructions from the Augur Primaris station, while Alequintus brought us into key position to strike the Beast amidships, but it was Gaspar's massive hit aft of the centerline that eliminated the enemy's Voidshields, propulsion, and damaged the port-side Macrobattery array. Another amazing hit took the ship directly in its obscene eye, and it crumpled away to nothingness.

Successful in our endeavour to destroy the beast, and having gained the favor of Inquisitor Lord Mandragorin, who took his gun-cutter out to examine and close the Warp Breach through which the beast had entered the Yois systems. He indicated that after examining the breach he would be headed to the planet to ensure that no Daemonic Infestations had taken root there. Confident that he would find nothing there, we made our way to Fortnight to complete our deal with TASU and gain the location of the *Tremnar's Profit*. Its last known location was Grosianus, but TASU indicated that the ship has made many transits to the Inkit Lamp system. Inkit Lamp and Grosianus are both relatively near our next step on the Path, which would be on the Commonwealth controlled world of Ope'Diar. We transmitted the information to Reclusiarch Interrogator Iannos of the Dark Angels, who declared that he would honor our bargain and dispatch the Deathwing under the command of Captain Hubron aboard the *Vengeance of Johnson*. Hubble would soon be under our complete control! He also indicated that the Dark Angels would be leaving the Deiop system very soon, and that a shipment of munitions to help create a Militia there would likely be of great profit.

With all these opportunities for profit, it remains to be seen where we will move to next...

Out and About with Todd

So, as many of you know, this past week was a pretty busy travel time for me, and I figured I would give you all the benefit of an awesome recap of all the cool and exciting stuff I did that you were not present for... not that I was excluding you, you could have come if you wanted...

Thursday August 4, 2011 - Craigcon Day 1

As many of us know, Craig Hatler, the guy who brought Heroes and Rogues to life, runs a small event every year that is called Craigcon. It has variously been hosted at the Howard Johnson's Conference Center on Route 3, at the Reality's Edge Game and Hobby Store in North Arlington, at New Moon Comics, and now this year at Gamer's Grotto. As I was going to be leaving for the Newport Jazz Festival on Friday, I wanted to maximize my Craigcon antics and so I arrived at noon to find Craig and Josh Gildea at the store chit-chatting. We started playing one of Steve Jackson's incredibly fun board games, *Frag*, and whiled away about forty minutes waiting for the rest of the 'Philly Crew' to arrive (it should be mentioned that 'Philly Crew' is a misnomer as most of them no longer live anywhere near Philadelphia). Having whalloped my opponents quite resoundingly twice in a

row, we decided that I was obviously cheating, in spite of the fact that I was completely unfamiliar with the game prior to that session. Anyway, we were at a loss as to what to do next, and so several of us started up a game of Fictionary, the short story building game, and I was severely beaten, in spite of the fact that I told some pretty keen stories (Greg Shwartzkopf and Dan Ford were just too good to beat). Licking my wounds from this severe trouncing, I walked to the nearby Turkish Restaurant with the Philly Crew and we caught up over Kabobs, Feta, and Spicy Paste. After that, we ambled back to Gamer's Grotto where our old friend Omega Direx, along with Ronnie Fernandez, Josh Gordon, and Gregg, were waiting to run our usual first Thursday of the month game. It should be pointed out that we moved the game from Fantasy Games and Hobbies (which is much more spacious) specifically for Craigcon, so we could enjoy our game with many of the friends we never get to see. Imagine our shock when we find that everybody is leaving Gamer's Grotto to go back to their hotel because "The gaming space is very cramped and there is a lot of stuff going on at Gamer's Grotto..." In spite of our disappointment, we played our game where we were (not really having the time or energy to

relocate). A note for the future: PICK A BETTER VENUE.

Friday August 5, 2011 - The Journey North

Though I had a lot of fun on Friday, the real highlight of the weekend was sure to be the Newport Jazz Festival! Friday we (myself and my parents) arose early, prepped the dog for his sojourn with our neighbor, and headed north on the sundered byways of Connecticut. Though we made what I would euphemistically call 'relatively good time', it still took almost four and a half hours (which is irritating due to the fact that the trip should only be three hours and a half at most). Anyway, we checked into the Warwick Courtyard Marriott and then hied up to Providence to walk along the twisty and hilly Thayer Street and explore the precincts of Brown University before dining at the famous Kabob and Curry Restaurant on Thayer. A wonderful meal punctuated by good drinks, fine food, and great explorations all around followed. As night closed in we returned to the Hotel to prepare for tomorrow's festivities at the world famous Newport Jazz Festival.

Saturday August 6, 2011 - Newport Jazz Festival

Early to bed, early to rise, early to get some yummy healthy breakfast at the Marriott Bistro before heading over the Jamestown Bridge to lovely Newport and Fort Adams State Park. As a side note: if you have not been to Newport or Fort Adams now is the time to go, as the entire fort is open for the first time in a loooooong time and Newport is looking fine, fit, and faaaabulous. Things were far better organized this year than in previous years, and we were able to get in and set up quickly and efficiently. Here is a rundown of the acts we enjoyed: **Regina Carter and Reverse Thread** - Wow! Just WOW! What an awesome way to start the Festival (though technically two other acts had started on the other stages before Regina, she was the first act on the main stage and thus the first act we saw). Simply listening to Reverse Thread warm up was fantastic, then when they got started, it was like a party. I am telling you all right now to buy this CD!

Hiromi - I missed Hiromi as I went to the Quad Stage to see Eddie Palmieri, but my folks reported that in spite of a slow and awkward improv jazz start, she picked up and finished strong. I would also suggest buying her CD as the proceeds go to help the Japanese Tsunami Disaster Relief fund. If you are unfamiliar with Hiromi, she is an amazing Pianist.

Eddie Palmieri and the Latin Jazz All Stars - Eddie Palmieri is always a fun act. 30+ albums and over 200 original songs to his credit, not to mention several Grammys mean that he is a force on the stage. Eddie and his gang were set up on the Quad stage, which was inside the fort this year and provided some really intriguing acoustical funkiness. It was a lot of fun to listen to these great musicians inside the Fort proper, with the weight of history mellowed by the smooth sounds of

riffing trumpets and Latin drums. Also, I got to meet both the famous George Wein, founder and organizer of the Festival, as well as the fantastic Trombone Shorty and his Band (I was standing near the Crew Parking area as it was nice and shady).

Trombone Shorty - I love Trombone Shorty, but I missed most of his set as he was on opposite Wynton Marsalis, who I also really like. What little I got to hear of it was great, though.

Wynton Marsalis - As always, a great performer and a consummate professional, I kind of felt that Wynton was a bit more technical than relaxed in his performance. Not that this is a bad thing, I just felt that the set seemed a lot less spontaneously fun than some of the other groups that we enjoyed. Still, I admire the great work and the exciting feel of his playing regardless.

Esperanze Spalding - Sadly she was on the Quad Stage and I completely missed her whole set, but I have always liked Spalding's style and vocal abilities. We did manage to hear part of her set over the wall, but it was quickly drowned out by...

Michel Camilo - One of the most talented Pianists in the Latin Jazz world, Michel Camilo was debuting work from his new album *Mano a Mano* with Jan Benitez on Contrabass and Jorge Hidalgo on Congas and Drums. Michel is a wizard on that grand piano, and his companions were just plain on fire! Most of the work was covers, but there were a few recognizably new pieces.

Bands we missed:

New Black Eagle Band - Traditional Dixieland Jazz with touch of Rockabilly charm. I have heard them before and they are a fun group. Very Southern, if you like that sound.

Sometimes Other People Do the Killing - Fresh from... Long Island! These guys are a fresh group of young Northeastern Jazz musicians mostly doing covers of modern Jazz and Blues pieces.

Ambrose Akinmusare - One of the best Trumpet talents in the Jazz world, Ambrose Akinmusare is always in demand.

Joey DeFrancesco Trio - No comment, I really know nothing of them.

Steve Coleman and the Five Elements - These guys have been around for a while, and if you like New Age Jazz, they are pretty good. No appearances by Luc Besson, Bruce Willis, or Milla Jovovich, though I thought I might have seen Gary Oldman and Ian Helm in the audience...

Grace Kelley with Phil Woods - Stop, wrong Grace Kelly. This Grace Kelley is an awesome Asian Sax player, Phil Woods is an awesome Latino Sax player, together they form... Mega Super Jazz Sax Player!

Randy Westin and the African Rhythm Trio - I have a couple of their albums, and they are a nice and relaxing.

Al DiMeola with Gonzalo Rubalcaya - Amusingly, the World Sinfonia, which normally travels with Al DiMeola, was stuck in customs, being interviewed in detail by the Department of State. Why? Well we all know what

radical anarchists those Jazz flutists are. Still, they let the uber-revolutionary Gonzalo Rubalcaya in, so I am at a loss to figure out why the rest of the group was held up. On a more musical note: Al is always good (I had him as a guest at Borders many years ago).

The rest of the evening involved eating at Bertucci's and falling asleep early.

Sunday August 7, 2011 - The Monsoon

Rhode Island can be a very treacherous state for weather, and nothing showed that as clearly as the

weather on Sunday. Downpours and Squalls so heavy you could not see more than 10 meters in front of you made for a fun and challenging ride home. It took nearly two hours to get from Warwick, RI to New London, CT. From what I gather, the outdoor festivities were cancelled and only the Main Stage performers were playing at the Tennis Hall of Fame (General Admission ticket holders got hosed, again). The trip took nearly 6 hours all told, and ended with relaxation at home, laundry, and the season finale of *Falling Skies* on TNT.

SFSNNJ Member Reviews

Gene McGrath

I've also see the trailer for **In Time**. Looked pretty good to me, too.

The Help: I also enjoyed the movie - it was anything but "The Terrible Awful" or "The Horrible Awful!" LOL

Bill Wagner

Rise of the Planet of the Apes and John Carter of Mars - Went to see the new Planet of the Apes movie last night. Found it for the most part entertaining and actually very intelligent up until the final apes' confrontation with the humans. The special effects were top notch, especially the close ups and the dramatic sequences.

Possible Spoilers

Many references back to the original film, including a chimpanzee named Cornelia, and an Orangutan named Maurice.

If you watch the newspaper headlines and listen closely to the background newscasts they even left a door open for astronauts to return later to an Ape dominated world.

There is a scene towards the end that if Tarzan was substituted for Caesar it would fit right into a Tarzan movie gathering of the Apes.

Also saw the first theatre lobby display for the John Carter movie.

Steve Spinoso

Jim and I saw the film **Apollo 18** at the Clearview Cinema 12 in Parsippany earlier this afternoon, which is considered to be in "mockumentary/found-footage" style. The film opens with three historical notes/disclaimers: The first moon landing in 1969, the "supposed" cancellation of the Apollo program in 1974, and..(Wait for it) the release of "eighty hours of previously unreleased footage uploaded to www.lunartruth.com in May 2011". The next graphic says "This film is based on that footage", then we are taken into the story proper of astronauts Anderson, Walker & Grey, who explain how the Dept. of Defense "reactivated" them for a "top secret" mission to the moon in order to find possible evidence of the Russians beating the U.S. to the moon.

When they land near the "South pole" section of the moon, Anderson & Walker set up cameras to film everything, then go exploring, where upon they find a tattered Russian flag as well as a broken space helmet with the letters "CCCP" on it (they also find that the U.S. flag has also been torn to shreds as well). Suddenly the picture breaks up and we go back to the ship where John Anderson is treating Nate Walker for a large wound on his stomach caused by some unseen creature. As time passes, Nate's wound becomes infected and he starts to resemble a zombie! Nate tells John to leave him behind and get out

of here. John wants to save his friend & solve the mystery of the Russian cosmonaut. When John tries to get their lunar module to lift off, it fails and they lose all life support.

John then goes in search of the Russian ship and is suddenly is attacked by what appears to be a GIANT ALIEN SPIDER (The first appearance of alien life on the moon since the film *First Men on The Moon* in 1964?). John makes it to the Russian ship and attempts to contact earth. At this point he realizes that has become infected as well. The Deputy Secretary of Defense, who tells him that neither he nor Nate can come home because they've become contaminated and they can't take the risk, contacts John. Grey contacts John and tells him that if he can get the Russian ship into orbit, he will get him back aboard the U.S. ship and they'll both go home. Sadly the attempt fails (but we don't see the fatal collision) and that's where the film ends.

Overall it's a very disjointed affair using the techniques of picture break-up (and shifting from black & white to color) used in films like *The Blair Witch Project*. It will provide fodder for conspiracy theorists, though.

My Grade: B-

Yesterday's trailers before screening Apollo 18 were for:

Paranormal Activity 3

50/50 - comedy about a guy pretending to have cancer to garner sympathy from chicks.

Killer Elite - marginally good thriller.

I Don't Know How She Does It - predictable work-and-family comedy with Sarah Jessica Parker.

Rise of The Planet Of The Apes (8/5/2011) - Jim and I saw this film today at the Clearview Cinema 12 in Parsippany. The film is considered to be a prequel/reboot of the legendary film franchise that was born in 1968(which was originally based on Pierre Boulle's 1965 novel with a screenplay by Rod Serling & Michael Wilson...but that's another story). THIS story is set in San Francisco where scientist Will Rodman (James Franco) is using a group of apes for experiments with a drug that might cure Alzheimer's at the GenSys labs. A female ape, nicknamed "Bright Eyes"(which was the astronaut Taylor's nickname from his female captor, the scientist Zira in the original film) responds so well that her intelligence has increased enough to be shown off for the board of directors. But as it turns out, she was pregnant and had her child just before Rodman & his assistants come to collect her. Determined to protect him, she gets aggressive and runs wild from the lab to the board meeting before being gunned down by the company's security force. Company President Jacobs dresses down Rodman and orders the rest of the apes destroyed, but Will takes home "Bright Eyes' child to live with him and his ailing father (John Lithgow), who names the young chimp Caesar (Andy Serkis). Will notices that Caesar inherits her mother's enhanced intelligence, and monitors the situation (along with injecting his father with a dose of the same drug that Bright Eyes was given). Both Caesar & his father Charles do well until one day when an altercation with one of their neighbors forces Will to turn over Caesar to the San Bruno Animal Shelter, where he is mistreated by one of the young workers. Caesar subsequently turns against humanity and leads the rest of the apes at the shelter to revolt and escape. After a pitched battle on the Golden Gate Bridge, Caesar and his friends head for Muir Woods to begin a new life. This is a very good film that deals with many issues (animal rights and caring for the elderly among them) in a straightforward matter. Highly Recommended.

Grade: A+

Today's movie trailers...

These are the trailers we saw for "coming attractions" at the Clearview today:

In Time-a Sci-Fi film where all humanity lives on periods of time injected into their bodies. Has potential.

Dream House-horror film involving a man caught in a killing loop with his wife and daughters.

The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo-based on a new Swedish author's series of books (the author died recently).

Paranormal Activity 3-more scary stuff involving little girls and a spirit named "Bloody Mary".

Shark Night in 3D- An excursion into "Jaws"-type territory without the "JAWS" brand name. Also has potential.

The Sitter- a terribly predictable reworking of "Adventures in Babysitting" starring that Josh guy...

Robert Bloch: Over this long rainy weekend I had the chance to watch two Robert Bloch stories that were adapted for two famous TV series on DVD. On Sunday night (after discovering that the Mid-Atlantic Little League Regional final between Paramus, NJ & Clinton, PA was rained out) I watched the classic *Star Trek TOS* episode *Wolf In The Fold* in which Scotty is accused of murdering three women on the planet Argelius but the culprit turns out to be Mr. Heingist of Rigel IV (being possessed by the spirit of Jack the Ripper). I then discovered that Bloch took the idea for *Wolf In The Fold* from his short story that he adapted for the Hubbell Robinson produced anthology series *Thriller* in 1961(hosted by Boris Karloff). The name of that story was *Yours Truly, Jack The Ripper*. In that one, a British pathologist Sir Guy (John Williams) works with his American counterpart (Donald Woods) and the local police in NYC to stop another killing spree by the spirit of Jack the

Ripper by trying to discover who's body Jack has inhabited. Sir Guy finds out in the end...much to his surprise!!! Both stories are excellent and highly recommended.

I watched a vhs tape from the library entitled *How to Be A Confident Math Solver* and discovered that the instructor Bonnie Bohannon looks (and sounds a little) like the character Peggy Hill from the long-running cartoon King Of the Hill. Was she the inspiration for that character???

Chris Hasselkus

The Help: Liz B. and I had read the book for another book discussion group. The moderator Larry and his friend Jamie were going to see it Saturday night, so Liz B. and I met them. The film was generally a good representation of the book. The acting was top-notch, especially that of Viola Davis. Grade: B+.

Watership Down by Richard Adams came out in 1972. 24 years later, in 1996, he came out with a book called *Tales From Watership Down*. Well, I finally got around to reading it in 2011, 15 years later. In the original, Adams had these little fables sprinkled throughout the narrative to kind of break the tension. They concerned El-ahrairah, a rabbit hero. *Tales From* are mostly more of his adventures, while the rest follow Hazel, Fiver, Bigwig, et al, shortly after their defeat of General Woundwort. It was great revisiting these characters after so many years. Definitely worthwhile.

Raptor Red: I DID know some dinosaurs personally. BTW, years ago I remember *Raptor Red* by paleontologist Robert T. Baker, who has appeared in documentaries on dinosaurs, being recommended. The book isn't like *Watership Down* by Richard Adams, who had rabbits talk. Baker knew dinosaurs so well that he got into their heads and spoke for them. There was no real plot, per se, but rather just seeing how they survived. I remember it being a great book, so if we ever have a month with dinosaurs as the theme, I strongly recommend *Raptor Red*.