

ACCENT

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THIS WEEKEND'S BEST BETS

'Frankenstein' exhibit

What: Exhibition about the literature of "Frankenstein" author Mary Shelley and medical science during the early 19th century, when the book was written

When: Exhibit opens at 5 p.m. Friday and runs through the first week of April

Where: Greenwood Public Library, 310 S. Meridian St.

Admission: Free

'Alien' on the big screen

When: 7:30 p.m. today and Saturday

Where: Artcraft Theatre, 57 N. Main St., Franklin

How to get there: Go south on U.S. 31 or State Road 135. Turn east onto State Road 144/ Jefferson Street. Follow it into downtown Franklin, and turn left onto Main Street. Theater is on the right.

Admission: \$5; \$4, seniors; \$3, kids

Information: 736-6823 or

Accents and gifts expo

When: 5 to 9 p.m. today, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday

Where: Indiana State Fairgrounds Northwest Pavilion, 1202 E. 38th St., Indianapolis

Admission: \$5

Information: www.in.gov/statefair

AT THE MOVIES



AP PHOTO

Teresa Gazelle (Vera Farmiga) with her mobster husband, Joey Gazelle (Paul Walker), are in danger from the mob in "Running Scared."

'Running Scared'

Writer-director Wayne Kramer's follow-up to his decent indie hit "The Cooler" loads up on gruesome carnage, flashy, hyperkinetic cuts and other camera techniques, deafening gunfire, bad Jersey accents and enough profanity to put the boys of "Reservoir Dogs" to shame.

The result is hard on the ears and harder on the eyes, an unsightly, unrelenting instance of a filmmaker given rein to indulge whatever senseless, brutal fantasies he likes.

Paul Walker stars as a mob flunky pulling a frenzied all-nighter to recover a pistol one of his associates used to kill a crooked cop.

Along for the chaotic, bloody ride are Vera Farmiga as his wife, Alex Neuberger as their son, Cameron Bright as the neighbor kid at the center of the search and Chazz Palminteri as a corrupt cop.

Rating: R for pervasive strong brutal violence and language, sexuality and drug content

Stars: One out of four

TOP TOURS

Tour list ranks artists by average box-office gross per city and includes average ticket price in North America. The previous week's ranking is in parentheses.

- (1) **The Rolling Stones;** \$3.68 million; \$165.21
- (2) **U2;** \$2.31 million; \$93.36
- (3) **Bon Jovi;** \$1.66 million; \$78.59
- (4) **Aerosmith;** \$1 million; \$83.52
- (5) **Dave Matthews Band;** \$834,487; \$52.19
- (6) **Depeche Mode;** \$825,792; \$63.31
- (7) **Gwen Stefani;** \$563,624; \$58.00
- (8) **Andre Rieu;** \$380,558; \$51.75
- (9) **Mannheim Steamroller;** \$380,192; \$47.28
- (10) **Trans-Siberian Orchestra;** \$352,490; \$38.59

The Associated Press



SCRIPPS HOWARD PHOTOS

Microsoft and other video-game makers are hoping to produce new computer games that will attract people formerly dedicated to console gaming. "Rise of Nations: Rise of Legends" is a successor to the much-lauded "Rise of Nations," a fan favorite.

Computers getting their game on

PCs, consoles vie for market

By BRIAN D. CRECENTE
SCRIPPS HOWARD NEWS SERVICE

Three months after its heralded introduction of the Xbox 360, Microsoft is prepping to launch another gaming platform: the computer.

With computer game sales in a tailspin and a new generation of sleek, graphics-spewing consoles hitting stores, the software giant is promising to deliver a PC gaming renaissance.

Last year, computer game sales dropped 14 percent from the year before, the worst dip in a five-year decline. Retail stores have taken note, relegating PC games into back corners.

"PC gaming used to take up the entire store," said Ken Levine, president and creative director for Irrational Games. "Now PC gaming gets a tiny little shelf."

The industry's top advocates say there are plenty of problems keeping PC gaming down but just as much potential that portend its rebirth.

Software behemoth Microsoft contends a new system due out at the end of the year will push the platform to new heights and save PC gaming.

"I don't believe PC gaming is going to die, but it is bleeding right now," said Tim Willits, lead designer and co-owner of id Software, maker of such PC powerhouse games as "Quake" and "Doom."

He points to piracy as a chief culprit in the sales drop. He says developers need to first find ways to make people pay.

Others believe the innovation shouldn't stop there. PC games have, in many ways, become formulaic.

"Publishers need to take more chances," said Robert



"Prey," featuring an alien-invasion storyline, is one of several computer video games coming out this year with new features for PC gamers.

"Apache" Howarth, editor of gaming site Voodoo Extreme. "PC gaming in general is in a rut."

Despite the hurdles facing the PC gaming industry, few think that computer gaming will become a thing of the past.

"It's like saying people are going to stop browsing on the Internet," said Mark Rein, vice president and co-founder of Epic Games. "It's idiotic."

GAMES TO KEEP YOUR COMPUTER BUSY

'Rise of Nations: Rise of Legends'

Set in an industrial age, this real-time strategy game is the spiritual successor to the much-lauded "Rise of Nations" and has fans salivating at the prospect of a streamlined follow-up.

'The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion'

This latest in a string of successful role-playing games gets a new life through more realistic computer-controlled characters that make choices based on your actions and their personalities.

'Prey'

Featuring an American Indian protagonist and alien-invasion storyline, this first-person shooter includes unusual gameplay mechanics such as shifting gravity and having to fight for your spirit to continue the game after a death.

'Auto Assault'

This multiplayer online game mixes sci-fi and fantasy with car combat and role-playing to create a wicked blend of racing, shooting, exploration and car upgrades.

Barbie's former main squeeze returns a changed man, er, doll

Suppose you heard that Barbie and Ken are back together.

Yep, two years after Babs gave Mr. Perfect the boot, throwing him out for some Australian surfer dude named Blaine, America's favorite couple (in the 12-inches-tall-or-less division) is back together.

Not only that, Ken sports a new look.

Remember the old Ken, with the bland smile and wardrobe to match, the sweaters and slacks, the swim togs, the shorty pajamas? Gonesville.

New Ken wears cargo pants and a motorcycle jacket and — what's this? — why, Ken's had some face work done around the nose and mouth.

All in all, it's a look described by his designer as "Matthew McConaughey meets Orlando Bloom." As the Barbie Web site



Mike Redmond

puts it, he's totally crushworthy.

And he has a new story. It seems our boy dealt with his rejection by spending the past two years tramping around the world, studying Buddhism and Catholicism and learning to cook.

Imagine: All that and he's crushworthy, too.

Unchanged, however, appears to be Ken's sniveling worship of Herself, the princess of Pepto-Bismol pink, ruler of the dream house.

Let's not forget, she was the one who called it quits in 2004. I wasn't there for the bust-up, but I'm willing to bet she told him any or all of the following:

- "I need space. You're smothering me."
- "I need more intimacy. You're too distant."
- "I want to do things, and I'm afraid I won't do them if I'm tied down."
- "I want to settle down, and I'm afraid I won't if I keep running around with you."
- "It's not you. It's me."
- "It's you. You're dull. And that smile. I just can't take the smile anymore."
- "That's different. I'm Barbie. I'm supposed to smile."
- "There's this guy, Blaine, and, well, I don't know how to say it, but frankly, Ken, you're just not measuring up in the surfboard department."

"No, you may not have Francine's number."

Ken wasn't good enough for Barbie two years ago, so he gets a makeover and now everything is hunky and dory?

Just what sort of message is this supposed to send? Barbie, as usual, gets what she wants? Ken is the same big weenie he always was? Neither of the above.

The truth is, Barbie's starting to show her age. She's almost 50, after all, and while her cantilevered corpus is still the model for exotic dancers everywhere, she's starting to lose market share to those glossy-lipped newcomers, Bratz.

The makers of Bratz recently announced that their dolls overtook Barbie as the leading fashion doll for the 2005 holiday season and denounced the return of Ken as a mere publicity stunt. (No! Really?)

KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOR: MIKE BRADY



Maj. Mike Brady loves his family and his fellow soldiers.

Photos of his three children — sons Jordan, 9, and Austin, 3, and daughter Madison, 7 — share the places on the wall with posters of soldiers.

For the past two years, Brady has been away from his civilian job working with people with severe mental handicaps. He is busy filling the role of public affairs officer for the U.S. National Guard installation at Camp Atterbury.

Brady lives in Greenwood with his wife of 11 years, Julie, and their children.

Most important thing in life: Family and the U.S. military

Something you've always wanted to try: Jump out of a plane and maybe fly in a fighter jet.

Proudest accomplishment: Serving four years in the Marine Corps and serving our country.

My children describe me as: Major Dad.

Place you would like to live: Somewhere that stays 70 degrees all the time and rains each day between 2 and 4 a.m.

Last thing I do before bed: Say a prayer.

Words I live by: "Semper fi," Marine Corps slogan that means "Always faithful."

Why is your job important? I facilitate the soldiers telling their stories back home to their families.

Best things about your spouse: Her smile and her understanding of the military.

What is dangling from your rearview mirror? A sticker with the Army emblem.

Weirdest thing you have eaten: Dog, while I was in Japan with the Marine Corps.

Interview and photo by Scott Roberson



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Mike Redmond is the author of "Six of One, Half-Dozen of Another" and "The Night the Wheels Fell Off." Send comments to letters@thejournalnet.com.