

Vampires and hormones-it's bloody good

ERICA AMES
Staff Reporter
MEAD

"Breaking Dawn" By Stephanie Meyer (Little, Brown, 754 pages, \$22.99) The long awaited debut of Meyer's fourth and final edition to the highly acclaimed "Twilight" series arrived with a bang this August.

Many bookstores throughout Spokane hosted "debut parties." Fans dressed with vampire teeth and counted the minutes until midnight when the book went on sale. "Breaking Dawn" sold 1.3 million copies its opening day.

After reading the newest installment in the mystical series, I am confused as to why everyone appears to be bewitched by the best seller.

Meyer begins the book with this question: "When you loved the one who was killing you, it left you no options. How could you run, how could you fight, when doing so would hurt that beloved one?" Already I'm dizzy rather than

intrigued.

Bella Swan and Edward Cullen, are star-crossed lovers with a deadly secret. Edward is a vampire. Think Count Dracula meets Romeo and Juliet.

The first 138 pages are devoted to the marriage of Edward and Bella and the realization that she is pregnant. The situation gets stickier when Edward remains an immortal vampire while Bella ages on. There is also uncertainty as to what exactly is growing in her. (Obviously the situation isn't ideal).

Discretion is advised as Bella begins caring for the unborn monster the only way the Cullens (Edward's vampire clan) know how. Drinking blood comes to mind. With the help of Edward's family, Bella survives the brutal pregnancy and the transformation into a vampire. She learns that like Jasper, Alice and Edward, she has special powers that allow her to produce a protective shield around herself and others.

The plot thickens as the Volturi, the most

feared and respected vampire clan, that play royalty in the vampire world, catch word of Bella and her new half vampire, half mortal offspring.

With so many twists and turns, readers struggle to keep up with the quickly unraveling storyline. Climax after climax leaves the taste of a soap opera on its seventh season in your mouth.

Sparkling moments magnify the characters and settings throughout the book. However, those precious insights are over-ran by cheesy details and phrases that make the novel a difficult 754 pages to battle through.

Elements of the supernatural are, in the three previous books, incorporated with skill and appeal. But Meyer takes it too far in her fourth; the paranormal reaches a bitter, dark edge that doesn't amount to her earlier books. To voice your opinions on Meyer's best-selling "Twilight" series go to www.thetwilight saga.com and click discussion.

Me gusta la comida

MARGARET FRANKS
Staff Reporter
LEWIS AND CLARK

Many of us in high school take a foreign language. We all have our own motives, with emotions ranging from love to hate, but the most common reason for taking a foreign language class is for the college requirement.

For me, the only thing that got me through two years of Spanish was the food. A lot of people complain that the restaurant scene in Spokane leaves something to be desired.

I disagree, so in honor of all those students toiling in Spanish class, here are the top three Mexican restaurants in Spokane.

On Sprague in a neon green building, lies the best mole in Washington at El Gallo Giro.

A sauce served over chicken or enchiladas, mole often contains chilies, chocolate, and sometimes peanut butter.

Everyone makes their sauce a little differently, but only a few dishes feature this unusual sauce.

I tried the mole enchiladas, one with chicken and the other with cheese. Mole offers a new taste because of its spicy and sweet flavor. Among other menu items, El Gallo Giro also serves a wide variety of veggie burritos. The Spinach Enchiladas, for example, put a new spin on an old classic for my companion. They also serve two different kinds of salsa, the regular chunky red

salsa, and the other is a fresh salsa with chili pepper and fresh veggies. The average burrito with sides is around \$7.

Next we head north to the Rogers area. The El Rincon Tapatio offers the best variety of Mexican deserts. Their rich fried ice cream with strawberries, whipped cream and drizzled honey melts in your mouth.

Their nachos were laden high with veggies, meat and toppings. My favorite item, the Cheese Crispi is a flour tortilla layered with cheese and broiled. It is served with salsa and sour cream, making it a crispy version of a normal cheese quesadilla.

The service there is always quick and personal. Out on Northwest Blvd by Pete's Pizza is the location of our last stop.

All these restaurants have good prices; you and your date can each get a good meal, drinks and split dessert for under twenty bucks.

But, at Rancho Chico you receive the most food for your money. They cover all the basics; Mexican-American, beef, pork, seafood, vegetarian: you name it they got it. Their salsa blows me away and along with the great service, this restaurant has a superb family atmosphere. The tortilla soup proved delicious, and the three enchiladas also shared at the table offered tons of food.

Whether you want a quiet date night, new food with the family or just a place to try out your new Spanish phrases, then these restaurants will fit the bill.

"Microcastle" is rock solid

JORDAN SATTERFIELD
Staff Reporter
FERRIS HIGH SCHOOL

Less than a year ago, I called Atlanta's prodigal shoegazers Deerhunter the third best band of the year 2007. Of course, that was back when I still ran a music blog.

Bands like Deerhunter make it even harder for me to keep something like that going, as even now, almost a year after I listened to their sophomore effort Cryptograms, I still spin it more than most albums in my possession. It puts a huge dent on my time and ability to listen to new things.

So it's easy to imagine that when I heard Deerhunter was releasing Microcastle over two months early on iTunes, I felt a little giddy.

It feels great to know my excitement was not in vain, needless to say. Deerhunter is most easily described in references, which can be severely deadly to a band, their reputation, and their sound. It never helped Coldplay that their sound could easily be described as somewhere between U2 and Radiohead without fail.

No, Deerhunter bares no resemblance to Coldplay in that respect (or any respect, for that matter).

Deerhunter is better for their influences, a long list which includes Sonic Youth, My Bloody Valentine, and Velvet Underground concubine Nico.

On Microcastle, ditch the more experimental aspects of their bigger influences, instead faring better with the more contemporary sides of their shoegaze roots. "Little Kids," one of

the biggest standout tracks, sounds more like a quiet R.E.M. than a tired Sonic Youth.

The first song proper, "Agoraphobia," showcases lead singer Bradford Cox's glorious Nico obsession. Instead of making you laugh or annoying you, though (see "These Days," a Nico song I personally enjoy) Cox's voice is eerily soothing, and almost entrancing.

Bradford's pretension is obvious, however, as he expects his audience to listen to the last minute or so of closer "Twilight at Carbon Lake," which is essentially crashing cymbals, trembling guitars, and Cox's constant moaning.

He's done something right though, replacing pathetic self-righteousness with creativity and pulling the listener in. This makes "Green Jacket's" repetitive, droning piano progression somehow fascinating, layering double tracked vocals on top and even daring to slide an almost inaudible guitar in the back somewhere.

Microcastle sees Bradford and co. opting out of building on the ambient fuzz of Cryptograms and instead going for the more accessible side of their sound. What could have turned out to be a boring train-wreck, ended up being a slightly less creative focus on Cryptograms' more sing-along moments.

Regardless, Microcastle won't be number three again this year, but you'd better believe Deerhunter has guaranteed a spot in the best albums of 2008.



Spored out of my mind!

AUSTIN HENDERSON
Saint George's
STAFF REPORTER

Few games can claim as ambitious a goal as Spore, the game of the evolution from the tiniest of microscopic amoebas swimming in primordial soup to galaxy-spanning sentient creatures. Will Wright, creator of the fantastically popular Sims series takes a great step forward in his unique brand of "pointless" games, changing the focus from the life of a few people to a thousand different species all interacting on a thousand different worlds.

Like other Will Wright games, Spore is a game that cannot be "won," but instead is played countless times, each differently depending on starting conditions and the early choices made by the player.

One of the grandest endeavors of Spore was the amazing feat of taking the process of evolution and making it into the nuanced, balanced and fun feature it was. From the first click of the mouse where it was decided whether the amoeba would be a carnivore or herbivore, every decision made in the game will come back as more important at a later stage.

Even outside of the creature editor, a tendency towards aggressive or cooperative action will affect the species' social behavior once they unite their tribes and make cities.

For example, a species in the tribal stage of evolution that expands by killing off the competition will invent the tank before they learn how to trade or build houses (mine did this). This description is abominably brief, but despite the immensity of the evolution system, the game succeeds in making it palatable and never too overwhelming, a ne-

cessity considering the audience it is targeted to.

There is a growing trend in the gaming industry towards making games that appeal to non-traditional gamers. In order to bring in people unwilling to spend hours mastering complex control systems, this new generation of games is regressing back to the days of early gaming where instead of a 6-axis controller with 4 triggers, a single joystick was enough.

The Wii console is a good example of this change. Simple games, made simpler to play by its intuitive motion sensing controller. Almost all of Spore can be played with just the mouse and only a few bits of typing. One can really notice the effort the company took to make it more beginner-friendly.

Unfortunately, this does lead to a couple stages in the game that seemed too easy to really challenge anyone who had played many real-time strategy games before, but that's an unavoidable consequence of the design directive.

In the end, Spore is a game that can be endlessly rewarding or underwhelming, depending on the mindset going into it. If someone tries to play the game like Halo, they will be angered that the combat system isn't as deep. If someone tries to play the game like Civilization, they will be angered the civilization mode isn't as deep (duh).

But if someone plays Spore for what it is, the genes of all these things plus The Sims blended up and birthed into a wonderful three-eyed space gorilla, they will really appreciate the immense scope and solid presentation of this game.

Despite it being a cliché to say, Spore is an evolution in gaming and will probably influence almost every game that comes out following its release.

Don't fear: The Bioneers are here

MARGARET FRANKS
Lewis and Clark
STAFF REPORTER

Students may attend free the Oct. 17-19 second annual Bioneers conference to enlighten the Spokane community on how to live green and readjust living habits at Spokane Community College.

Local orators from around the region will teach workshops and food, music and special art will highlight the event and be available between each workshop.

The foundation of Bioneers is finding innovative solutions and strategies to heal human communities and the environment and to bring enlightenment to the public.

Although the main Bioneers conference will take place in San Rafael California, Spokane is one of 19 locations that will receive the conference via satellite and hold their own workshops and special events. Between the California conference and our own Spokane version, 10,000 people will learn about the Bioneers revolution.

Their website reads "As a celebration of the dazzling genius of people and nature, Bioneers helps spark mass creativity and engagement. As author and social entrepreneur Paul Hawken said, 'Bioneers is central to the re-imagining of what it means to be human.'"

In California, Erica Fernandez is the youngest presenter at age 18 and will discuss how she "mobilized her whole diverse community to defeat the placement of a liquefied natural gas facility just offshore." She says that she originally was interested in air pollution because of

her asthma, but decided to take her research to the next step.

This year at Bioneers, some teenagers have designed a "Youth Tent." According to Patty Gates from the Bioneers Planning Team, the tent will feature "art, music and ideas for 'greening' your life."

Local musicians and artists will be featured during the weekend, many of whom are members of the student community. The students from the Spokane Community College Culinary Program are even providing lunch on Friday, and are preparing special "local and organic" food for the conference.

On Friday and Saturday session one begins at 2:45-4:15 p.m. and session two starts at 4:30 and goes to 6:00 p.m. Different films will show during each session, including "The 11th Hour," "Building Green," and "Everything's Cool." To learn more about the event, they also have movies posted at their website and on YouTube.

Over thirty workshops include a Google Earth forum taught by Ron Hall on Friday, as well as an Indigenous Spirituality & the Environment workshop taught by Barry G. Moses, a member of the Spokane Tribe of Indians.

The Education Connecting to Culture & Tradition class will feature some students from the Medicine Wheel Academy at Havermale and takes place Friday. Register beforehand at the website: www.sustain-spokane.org and students can attend for free. Also check out bioneers.org for more general information about the organization and how to become a member. Volunteers are also needed. Call Julie at 509-624-9667 to sign up.

