

Holmdel Science Fiction Discussion Group
Club Notice - 4/25/79

MEETINGS UPCOMING:

(All meetings are in room 3H-506 on Wednesdays at noon.)

DATE	TOPIC
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5/16/79	END OF ETERNITY by Isaac Asimov
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6/6/79	IMPERIAL EARTH by Arthur C. Clarke
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Our library is in HO 2D-634A. Rich Ditch (x3432) is librarian.
Evelyn Leeper (HO 1B-527 x6334) is Club Expediter in charge of book-buying.

1. On June 6, we will be discussing IMPERIAL EARTH by Arthur C. Clarke.

2. In an attempt to start picking books earlier in advance of the discussion and also to spread out the choice of books we are asking each member to name two books that they would like to have discussed at a future meeting. We will take the combined list, eliminate what turns out to be unavailable, and assign dates to the rest. Please either send your list of at most two books (well, if it is less than two it will just be a short list) to me at the address below or bring it to the May 16 meeting.

3. We expect to show a film version of Isaac Asimov's "The Ugly Little Boy" in the auditorium on June 25 in an effort to get around the word that there is a science fiction group at Bell. The film was made for Canadian TV and is fairly well done. It stars Kate Reid (the female scientist in ANDROMEDA STRAIN) and Barry Morse (the scientist from the first season of SPACE 1999; also the policeman from the TV show THE FUGITIVE). It will be shown once at 12:00 and once at 12:30.

4. Jonathan Post, who shows up occasionally at meetings, is the author of the article "Cybernetic War" in the current issue of OMNI magazine.

5. As usual I am attaching a number of articles, jus' in case ya' got nuthin' bedder t' read.

Mark Leeper
HO 1B-512 x7093

THE REFERENCE CORNER

by Evelyn C. Leeper

Ash, Brian -- THE VISUAL ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SCIENCE FICTION

This is one of those "general" reference works; it covers books, film, television, and art. The articles are written by well-known authors, and the material is arranged topically. This makes it useful if, for example, you are interested in a list of time travel stories. There are some interesting timelines included, and the stronger-than-usual coverage of British SF (including television) gives this book added interest. Definitely recommended.

Barron, Neil -- ANATOMY OF WONDER

This bibliographical work seems aimed at librarians attempting to build a science fiction collection. The works listed are described as a "basic" selection, with asterisks marking those even more "basic". To the science fiction reader, it is more useful for its plot synopses and publication data. Barron's separation of books into various categories is annoying at times (some Andre Norton books are contemporary adult books; some are juvenile). This is an index which helps locate a particular book, however, so this is not a major flaw. Interesting mostly for the library-minded.

IN MEMORY YET GREEN, by Isaac Asimov. Doubleday Books, New York, 1979, 732p, Cloth, Nonf., \$15.95. ISBN 0-385-13679-x.

To call this book an autobiography is misleading. It is a combination history book, chemistry text, physics primer, writer's guide (but see below), and personal reminiscence. It is also only volume one of two volumes. The mere fact that Doubleday is willing to publish a 2-volume autobiography of Asimov is an indication of his popularity and range.

Asimov's memory is phenomenal, even allowing for the fact that he has kept a diary since he was eighteen and relied heavily on it for this book. Unfortunately, many readers may find the cast of characters a bit unwieldy by page 500 or so, since Asimov often seems to slip into the mistake of believing that everyone's memory is as good as his own. Also, no matter how readable Asimov is (and Asimov is definitely readable), it becomes a little tiresome to know the exact date and subway fare for every trip he ever made to John Campbell's office. For whatever reason, the earlier sections of the book are the most fascinating, with the appeal of the later parts chiefly in the anecdotal stories related. For those who know Asimov only through his persona at conventions, these will prove a revelation, for Asimov is not reluctant to relate stories that point up his shortcomings as well as his virtues. There are two indexes (story titles and

people), which are helpful in locating particular incidents and which keep this from becoming a "read it once" book. (And at this price, it should be more than a "read it once" book.)

While this book contains some valuable information for new writers, it is mostly pertaining to the business end of writing -- the sale of movie rights, advances, etc. This is not a book on "how to become a famous science fiction author". Asimov is the first to admit that what works for him would probably be disastrous for anyone else. But for some fascinating insights into one man's life and career, it is highly recommended.

WATERSHIP DOWN PICTURE BOOK, by Richard Adams. Macmillan Books, New York, 1978, Unpaged (approx. 300p), Reinforced Paper, Art, \$8.95. ISBN 0-02-016060-7.

This book was issued immediately following the release of the motion picture and just in time for Christmas gift-giving. It is a very well-crafted attempt to record the film in book form by printing selected frames from the film along with captions and dialogue by Richard Adams. Unfortunately, due to the excellence of both the original novel and the motion picture, this comes off as a poor third. If you haven't seen the movie, this book won't convey the true feeling of the film. It is just not possible to capture the quality of the animation in a few pictures, since much of the effect was due to subtle changes from frame to frame rather than gross changes every dozen frames. It is also not possible to fully relate the story in this abbreviated form (even the movie cut large sections from the original novel). And if you have seen the movie, the pictures without the dialogue and score just won't be the same. If you have the soundtrack album, playing that while reading this book will help, but reading the original novel will be more rewarding. For children too young to read the novel, however, this would be a very nice present, and might encourage them to read the novel itself later on. One final note: the black background on the pages is the type that tends to show every fingerprint. Be warned before reading.



DOUBLE VISION

And lo, before the sun sets on the Day of Fulfillment the two of the same blood shall meet—and both shall be fulfilled. But only one shall bear away the Crownlet of the White Elves. And in that hour shall be decided the fate of the land of Urthunak.

So begins what may become the most spectacular fantasy epic in years, the story of

the struggle for control of a long-lost continent and of the elves, wizards, sorcerers, and wide-eyed fury "gwarps" that dwell in it. Greg and Tim Hildebrandt are identical twin brothers and the creators of *Urthunak*, which will be published this fall by Ballantine Books. Millions have already entered their fantasy world via the *Lord of the Rings* calendar that the brothers illustrated. Others have been captured by their drawings of Shea Ohnstad in *The Sword of Shannara* or seduced by the powerful staves of Princess Leia and Darth Vader in the original *Star Wars* poster.

The brothers Hildebrandt have been working hard at their craft for most of their 40 years. During their teenage days in Detroit, they would march off in the direction of high school, only to sneak back to the family barn and put in a day's work creating—by hand-carved brick—the miniature metropolis of Hildebrandt. (The extraterrestrial metropolis was destroyed by an alien spacecraft armed with magnesium charges and highway flares in an attack that the 15-year-old brothers captured on film.)

For most of the kids, the farthest horizon was the nearest drive-in; we were on the moon or Jupiter or beyond, and everybody else was going to the sock hop," recalls Greg, who now dwells in terrestrial West Orange, where the twins maintain a studio. Tim lives with his wife and son in Gladstone, less than an hour's drive away.

Greg and Tim have the uncanny ability possessed by some pairs of identical twins to work, talk, and even think as if they were a single character somehow broken into two equally ebullient, equally talented, and always complementary halves. They have a remarkable capacity for silent communication and have conducted informal experiments to see whether they have ESP. After high school the twins joined the Army reserves to avoid the draft ("It was like being captured by the Qucs and thrown into Mordecai"). Their first job—they have never worked separately—was with a producer of industrial films, and it was there that the characteristic Hildebrandt style began to emerge. For the brothers, painting has always been a partnership. Their brush strokes are identical, so that they can, and have, worked on the same illustration without damaging the cohesiveness of the final product.

In 1963, after three years with the film producer, the Hildebrandts came east. They worked briefly in New York City for the Catholic Church, making documentary films. Then they turned to illustrating full-time.

"It was mostly Grade-C stuff," Greg says of the mass of illustrations—perhaps a thousand a year—but they produced over the next eight years. They illustrated children's books, ads, the covers of science fiction



books; in short, they adorned the fagades of that giant paperback kingdom that some people dismiss as pulp but others consume additively. "It drove us to the point where we were ready to blow our brains out," says Greg.

Most fantasy tales have a scene in which the hero, hopelessly lost and beset by every conceivable horror, is about to quit when the sky suddenly opens and his way is clear. The Hildebrandts' innocent came innocently enough one Christmas morning when Tim found a *Lord of the Rings* calendar under his tree. It had been illustrated by an artist for Ballantine Books, and on the back was a small message inviting anyone who wanted to take a shot at drawing "the Rings" to contact the company.

The next day, Greg and Tim threw their wrinkled, coffee-stained fantasy drawings into a green plastic garbage bag and, without bothering to make an appointment, drove into New York and parked themselves and their material in the office of Ian Summers, the art director at Ballantine. Summers already had seen the portfolios of 800 artists eager to get the *Rings* assignment. The Hildebrandts' work stopped him dead. He immediately signed them up to do a painting for a book. Two weeks later, after a series of sketches of other Ballantine books, he gave them the calendar job. That was 1973. Since then the brothers

have created three Tolkien calendars (the 1978 edition sold a million copies). Ian Summers has quit Ballantine to become their agent, and the firm has produced a spectacular color book called *The Art of the Brothers Hildebrandt* (Ballantine Books, \$15, \$4.95 soft cover).

After the Tolkien illustrations, the Hildebrandts felt it was time to gamble on a creation all their own. They conceived *Urthunak*, excruciatingly elaborate illustrations, and got a writer friend in Detroit to help supply a text. Summers prepared a multi-media presentation to show to publishers, six of whom bid on rights to the book. The auction resulted in a deal with Ballantine Books, the world's largest paperback house. Ballantine is paying well into six figures for their work. The twins see *Urthunak* as their personal summa. "*Urthunak* is everything we've done for the past forty years coming together," says Greg. "It's our hangup on Disney, our hangup on movies, our hangup on costumes and puppets and art and music all together."

They have already devoted almost two years to *Urthunak* and plan to spend a few more producing a film version of the story. Greg vows: "This will be the film that every kid of those fantasy years has been waiting for. The past film had hasn't quite seen yet. This is gon... de one, because if it ain't, we don't want it made."