

Holmdel Science Fiction Discussion Group  
Club Notice - 4/18/80

MEETINGS UPCOMING:

(Unless otherwise stated, all meetings are on Wednesdays at noon.  
Book discussions at South Plainfield are 3 weeks after dates shown.)

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>
4/23/80	MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS by Robert Heinlein, rm 4H-205
5/14/80	MASTERS OF SOLITUDE by Kaye & Godwin, rm 4H-205
6/4/80	EYES OF THE OVERWORLD by Jack Vance, rm 4H-205
6/19/80 (thur)	Film program in auditorium
6/25/80	JEM by Frederik Pohl, rm 4H-205
7/16/80	THREE HEARTS AND THREE LIONS by Poul Anderson, rm 4H-205
8/6/80	PROTECTOR by Larry Niven
8/27/80	DORSAI by Gordon Dickson
9/17/80	RAX by Michael G. Coney
10/8/80	CANTICLE FOR LEIBOWITZ by Walter M. Miller
10/29/80	ICERIGGER by Alan Dean Foster
11/19/80	CITY by Clifford Simak

Our library is in HO 2D-634A. Rich Ditch (x3432) is librarian.  
Evelyn Leeper (HO 1G-318A x6334) is Club book-buyer.  
Debi Bennett (HP 1B-368 x2408) is in charge of South Plainfield activities.

1. Well, here it is. Your tri-weekly notice of an upcoming meeting: Wednesday we will be discussing THE MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS, Robert Heinlein's tale of thinking computers and lunar revolution. This is the last novel Heinlein wrote in a hard science fiction style. All who are interested, please attend the discussion. All who are disinterested are free to attend also. I don't know what you would do, but you are free to attend.

2. May and December are the big months for science fiction and horror films to be released. The major films scheduled to be released next month (and to compete with each other) are THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK (which you probably know is a sequel to STAR WARS) and Stanley Kubrick's film of Stephen King's novel THE SHINING.

3. Attached to this notice is among other things, an example of a seed company's ad that uses science fiction to attract attention.

Mark Leeper  
HO 2B-502A x7093

The future is coming. And with it will come great benefits for mankind. And a whole new set of problems. Because we are a forest products company, and plant seeds that take up to 50 years to become mature trees, Champion International has to think a lot about the future. We'd like to share some of the things we've learned with you—to help you make intelligent choices in the years to come. Here is something you might want to think about.

**In the future, we may discover that we are not alone in the universe, and we may even make contact with powerful beings from another world.**

**How might that awesome possibility affect our view of ourselves and our world?**

There are trillions upon trillions of stars in the universe. It is a cosmic light show of unimaginable wattage, and it is getting harder and harder to believe that we are the only spectators.

Amazing discoveries about our universe are occurring more and more often. Quasars, which radiate more energy than can be accounted for in earthly physics. Black holes, where all the normal laws of nature seem to be repealed. We are even beginning to understand what happened during the *first 90 seconds* in the life of the universe.

While there is as yet no direct evidence of extraterrestrial life, complex organic molecules have been found throughout the universe. Man has landed space probes on only two planets—Mars and Venus—and the vital ingredient water was found on both of them.

Indeed, scientists have already derived a formula which strongly indicates that there must be many, many technological civilizations out there, and there are huge radio-telescopes trained on the skies, listening. So it should not come as a complete surprise if one day an astronomer looks up from a printout and reports that someone just said hello.

The benefits of an exchange of information could be enormous. They might give us

short cuts that would save us a few hundred years of Research & Development. They might present us with practical fusion power which, so far, has eluded earth's scientists. (It could solve the energy shortage in a flash.) Is cancer universal? Progress report, please. And the cold? Is it really common?

There will also be a few problems. How will earthly religions handle the new facts? How will we manage to get along with an alien race that has a different culture, ethics, habits, expectations, rituals, and maybe even four arms, when sometimes we even have trouble getting along with the couple next door, not to mention other nations.

On the other hand, maybe these differences will teach us something fundamentally enlightening about differences, and we'll end up getting along better with each other here on earth. Just that would literally be a gift from the heavens.

But the greatest fact of all will be the demonstration that highly technological societies more advanced than ours *exist*. Have *lasted*. In other words, if they've managed to keep from destroying themselves, maybe we can too.

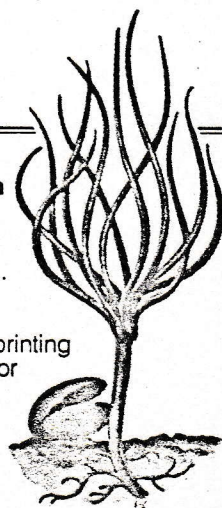
You can learn more about some of the other critical issues we face in the future and get a bibliography for further reading by sending for our free brochure. Write: Champion International Corporation  
Dept. 200T, P.O. Box 10141  
Stamford, Connecticut 06921

Don't wait too long.

**Champion—  
a forest products company with  
its roots planted firmly  
in the future.**

We are in the forest products business. We plant trees, grow trees, harvest trees. And from trees we make wood building products. Plus fine paper for printing and business. And paper packaging for shipping and selling.

Because we make our living from the forest, our success depends, in one way or another, on the future. And we're planning—and planting—for it.



**Champion**  
Champion International Corporation

**Planting seeds for the future**

SS-GB, by Len Deighton. Ballantine, New York, 1979, 375p, Paper, Novel, \$2.75. ISBN 0-345-28815-7.

"What if...?" "What if...?" "What if Germany had won the war?" It seems to be a very popular game, and a variety of authors tackle it in a variety of ways. The latest of these attempts is Len Deighton's SS-GB, which you probably missed because Ballantine marketed it as a mainstream novel rather than as science fiction.

As you have probably deduced by this time, the premise of the novel is that Germany won world war II, this time by invading England in 1941. The setting is still 1941, so whether or not Pearl Harbor is bombed in this alternate universe remains in doubt. Hostilities in Europe, however, are at an end. Douglas Archer, Detective Superintendent of Scotland Yard, has been asked by his boss, Gruppenfuhrer Fritz Kellerman of the SS, to investigate a murder. It all seems straightforward enough until Berlin takes enough of an interest in the case to send Standartenfuhrer Huth from the personal staff of the Reichsfuhrer--SS to take charge. From that point on, Archer finds himself involved in an increasingly tangled web of plots involving the SS, the German Army, the Resistance, and what is left of the British Royal Family. It is a tightly drawn suspense drama that uses its premise well without becoming a victim of it. (Or to paraphrase a famous definition of science fiction, it is a story based on human beings which could not have taken place without the science fiction premise.)

It is interesting to contrast this novel with other stories of a similar type. Philip K. Dick's The Man in the High Castle deals more with the Japanese than with the Germans, and is written on a far more "mystical" level, with its reliance on the Iching cutting against its realism. "An Englishman's Castle" (that three part BBC serial by Philip Mackie that ran on WNET about a year ago) could almost be a sequel to Deighton's work. The only differences in premise lie in the part that the Americans play in all that is going on. Sarban's The Sound of His Horn projects further into the future, but even so is based too much on the more medieval aspects of Germany to portray a believable picture. A similar problem is found in Eric Norden's The Ultimate Solution, which ignores all logic in an attempt to sell itself on sex and sadism alone. Norman Spinrad's The Iron Dream takes the alternate universe theme even further, presenting itself as being written by that well-known science fiction author, Adolf Hitler, who it seems did not become Fuhrer of Germany but rather wrote science fiction novels in which the German ideal had won out. There are, in addition, numerous short stories along the same lines, and the topic seems to be rapidly overtaking "what if the South had won the Civil war?" as the prime alternate universe premise. (Lest any other war feel left out, there are also stories on "what if the Spanish Armada had not been defeated?", "what if there had never been an American Revolution?", etc.)

In summary, if you find this concept interesting, you have a broad field in which to follow it. SS-GB, with its wide-range appeal and engrossing story, is probably one of the best places to start.

--Evelyn C. Leeper

## Movies

# Only 'The Fog' can top 'Halloween'

By WAYNE WARGA  
The Los Angeles Times

**F**OLLOWING THE SUCCESS of "Halloween"—it cost \$300,000 and has so far returned \$19 million, making it the most successful independent film in history—John Carpenter could have followed custom by taking on a big-budget studio film. That, after all, is how it's usually done.

But he didn't. He chose to stay independent. The result is "The Fog," a glorious collection of the best kind of cheap thrills, just exactly what one wants from this sort of enterprise. It cost \$1 million, still a bargain and by far his most technically complicated film, and looks to be the only film around that is capable of knocking "Halloween" off its first-place perch.

Carpenter grins at the mention of cheap thrills and shakes his head approvingly.

"Exactly. Just what I wanted," he says. "I have a single purpose in life: to make movies and to make them my own way. Something that, right or wrong, I did. I found at one point that that's all I can do well, to take the responsibility. I've discovered I have to take the responsibility, then the blame or the credit. I don't want anybody to blame."

**I DON'T HAVE** anything against Hollywood, nothing at all. I've found for myself that I have to have control. I would even like to eventually make pictures in a studio situation. Technically, they're the best in the world here. But the committees are maddening. That something gets made with any kind of personal viewpoint to it is incredible."

Reality has a habit of tempering altruism, and Carpenter is a very practical fellow when it comes to considering his alternatives.

Although he expresses some reservation about juggling the mainstream studio system, he intends to answer them, and with as much clout on his side as possible. What's more, he's already been there twice, both times for television movies. "Someone's Watching Me" and "Evie," the latter with big ratings and excellent reviews, were his way of testing the waters. "I was surprised to find I liked it. When I was getting ready to do 'Someone's Watching Me,' they took me around Warner Bros. and showed me all the departments. I couldn't believe it. Purely from a craft standpoint, Hollywood is incredible, absolutely incredible."

**CARPENTER** IS a soft-spoken man from Kentucky and the University of Southern California film school. The son of musicians, he grew up with a rich fantasy life. When he was a youngster his parents took him to see "It Came From Outer Space."

"That did it," he says now. "From then on I knew what I wanted to do."

When he was 8, his parents presented him with an 8mm camera and he made "Gorgon the Space Monster." But it was at USC that he became certain



JOHN CARPENTER: Chose to remain independent

of what it was he wanted to do.

"It was a tremendous time for me. It allowed me to learn the technical side of film, and to learn about

dramatic structure too. It was also competitive and exciting."

The short film he worked on at USC, "The Resur-

rection of Bronco Billy," won an Academy Award as best live-action short subject in 1970.

**HIS FIRST FILM**, "Dark Star," was an infant failure although it has since become a minor science-fiction classic as a kind of forerunner to "Star Wars." With his second, "Assault on Precinct 13," the failure was strictly local. The British discovered it, then the Europeans and it became one of those rare films exported a failure and sent back a success. It is now a cult film popping up frequently, and the picture for which Carpenter says he has a "left spot in his heart because it is the one that made it happen."

He is quick to point out that he is a collaborative worker, particularly when it comes to Debra Hill, the producer and co-writer of "The Fog," and the co-writer of "Halloween." It is a partnership he thoroughly enjoys but doesn't expect to last a great deal longer.

"We met when she came on as the script supervisor on 'Assault,' and she is a very knowledgeable, very tough, smart lady. Eventually I expect she'll go off and do her own pictures. She's going to make an interesting director. She likes action films, things that are larger than life."

**"SHE AND I** have two scripts we're working on now, a mystery-suspense thriller and a Western. Debra does a draft, I do a second draft and then we both sit down and come up with a shooting script."

On his own, Carpenter is making what he calls his "tentative step into stardom" as a director. He's working with Bill Lancaster, "an excellent writer," on a remake of "The Thing," which he describes as "the grandest of all the monster movies."

Carpenter's other professional involvement is also a personal one. When he was shooting "Someone's Watching Me," one of its stars, Adrienne Barbeau, caught his interest and, in short order, him. They were married a year and a month ago and she is the star of "The Fog." Working together as husband and wife made them both nervous.

"We wanted to be very, very professional and of course we were nervous. We professionalized right through lunch and then I said, 'Hey, I'm not having any fun here.' So we loosened up and everything went fine. We were professional but we also had a good time. I'm hoping she'll star in the next one, the suspense thriller. The agreement is that if she likes the part, she will."

On "The Fog" Carpenter was not just the director and co-author and uncredited cameo player, he was also the composer and performed part of the score himself. He turns often from his typewriter to his piano as a means of invention and also to work off frustration.

Carpenter, who is 32, is determined to hang on to his independence and make films. These are the things he relates to the most.

Carpenter pauses for a moment, then explains his enthusiasm by confessing the obvious: "Movies are my point of view of the world."