

Holmdel Science Fiction Discussion Group  
Club Notice - 9/3/80

MEETINGS UPCOMING:

(Unless otherwise stated, all meetings are on Wednesdays at noon.)

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>
9/10/80	Film "Attack of the Tire People," and Book Exchange, rm 4H-205
9/17/80	RAX [alias HELLO SUMMER, GOODBYE] by Michael G. Coney, rm 4H-205 [DORSAI! by Gordon Dickson, at HP]
10/8/80	CANTICLE FOR LEIBOWITZ by Walter M. Miller, rm 4H-205

Our library is in HO 2C-401. Rich Ditch (x3432) is librarian.  
Debi Bennett (HP 1B-368 x2408) is in charge of South Plainfield  
activities. Evelyn Leeper (HO 1E-321 x6334) is Club book-buyer.

1. Every few months we have a book exchange to allow members to trade/buy/sell science fiction (and related materials). All members are welcome to participate. Bring your old science fiction and/or money to HO 2H-205 on Wednesday September 10 at noon. This time around we are combining the book exchange with a film presentation. Pat Autilio of HP will show his film, "Attack of the Tire People." The first half hour will be the film and in the second half hour we will have the book exchange. Anyone who wants to come will, of course, be welcome.

2. Rich Ditch has found something new to complain about. He claims that he came away from my CLOSE ENCOUNTERS--SPECIAL EDITION review thinking that I was saying that SPECIAL EDITION was better than EMPIRE STRIKES BACK. I perhaps should clarify my statement. I meant only to imply that SPECIAL EDITION succeeded in being an improvement on the 1977 version of the same film. It falls woefully short of the quality of EMPIRE STRIKES BACK which in turn is not as good as STAR WARS. Spielberg's film at its current, slightly more polished state still is a good deal behind either of the STAR WARS films. I apologize to anyone but Rich who misconstrued my meaning. There is no need to apologize to Rich, of course, since he has already received ample gratification from just having found some small thing he could complain about in order to make the world a better place.

Mark Leeper  
HO 2B-515 x7093

N.E.S.F.A. BRINGS YOU  
**BOSKONE XVIII**

FEBRUARY 13 - 15, 1981

SHERATON-BOSTON HOTEL

YES, THERE WILL BE A BOSKONE THIS COMING YEAR;

NO, IT WILL NOT BE A "QUIET CON IN THE COUNTRY".

BOSKONE XVIII WILL BE HELD AT THE SHERATON-BOSTON IN FEBRUARY.

HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF OUR INVOLVEMENT WITH NOREASCON II, WE HAVE NOT HAD TIME YET TO DO ALL THE THINGS PREPARING A CONVENTION ENTAILS- INCLUDING CONFIRMING A GOH. DON'T WORRY...WE WILL HAVE ONE, WHO AS USUAL, WILL BE INTERESTING TO TALK WITH AND LISTEN TO.

A FLYER ANNOUNCING OUR GOH, SCIENCE SPEAKER, ETC, WILL BE FORTH- COMING SOON AFTER NOREASCON II IS OVER.

MEMBERSHIP IN BOSKONE XVIII WILL BE \$12.00 UNTIL JANUARY 1, 1981 AND WILL BE \$15.00 AT THE DOOR. WE INTEND TO HAVE A 3,000 PERSON LIMIT, SO JOIN EARLY. THE NESFA DEALER'S TABLE (D-6) IN THE DEALER ROOM IS ACCEPTING MEMBERSHIP FOR BOSKONE AT NOREASCON II.

N.E.S.F.A  
BOX G  
MIT BRANCH P.O.  
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

\$12.00 UNTIL JANUARY 1, 1981  
\$15.00 AT THE DOOR

VISA AND MASTERCARD ACCEPTED

NUMBER OF MEMBERSHIPS \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ CHECK ENCLOSED

\_\_\_\_\_ VISA OR MASTERCARD NUMBER.

MEMBER(S) NAME(S) \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I AM INTERESTED IN HELPING AT BOSKONE XVIII

\_\_\_\_\_ PLEASE ADD ME TO THE MAILING LIST FOR THE INFORMATION FLYER



## The Empire Strikes Back...At Technology?!

*Is the disconcerting message of the Star Wars films — obscured by a celebration of gadgetry — really a kick in technology's pants? Arthur Lubow, a writer for Film Comment Magazine, comments.*

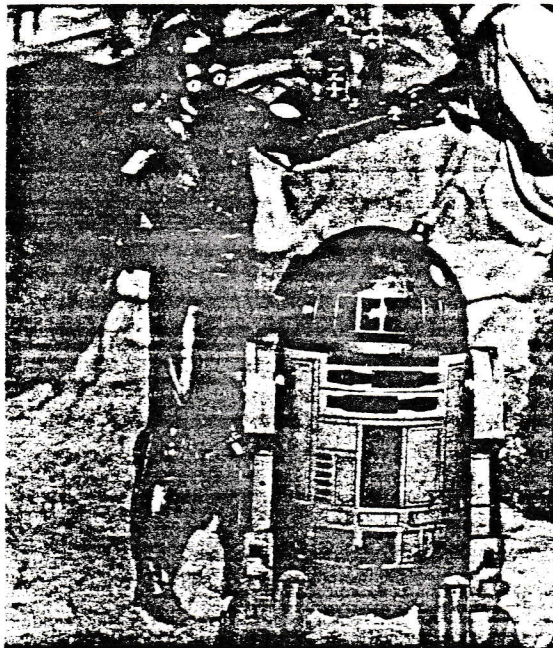
If you want a loyal friend or a lethal weapon, try a machine. But when the revolution is sliding down the incinerator chute and there are only five seconds left to save it, you had better rely on the Life Force.

That's the unexpected message of *Star Wars*...an anti-modern message in an ultra-modern wrapper. What could be more stylish?

Glory be, mysticism works. It's not only holier than science, it's more effective.

Civilization survives. The Force prevails.

Is it significant that beneath the films' futuristic skin



there beats an unregenerate reactionary heart? *Star Wars* — replacing human protagonists with machines — is stridently anti-technological...a paean to mysticism and an attack on modern science.

The message has powerful appeal.

It was the essence of the Nazi myth, and that's worth pointing out — not because the analogy makes *Star Wars* "fascist" (the good humor and lack of rancor ensure against that) but because it explains some of the buzz of excitement from the audience leaving the theater. The mixture of heroism, self-sacrifice, and mysticism is heady stuff.

When the old Liebfraumilch is poured into new bottles, it packs a powerful wallop.

EXCERPTED FROM A SPACE ILIAD.  
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## The Human Factors

Bell Laboratories' human factors studies conducted in connection with two new Bell System services — Call Answering and Advance Calling — focused mainly on finding the best operating procedures and the most effective wording for announcements used with the services.

Call Answering and Advance Calling will allow customers to receive and send messages even when the customers are away from their regular telephones. Together, the services will enable customers to receive voice messages when they cannot (or do not wish to) answer their telephones, and to record voice messages for later transmittal to designated telephone numbers.

For one phase of the human factors studies, a Voice Storage System simulator was built so that responses made to various procedures by role-playing people could be

observed. For example, the performance of role-playing subjects who were given detailed instructions on how to use the service was compared with the performance of subjects given only various access codes. Other studies tested the role-players' ability to gather detailed information from recorded messages. The test results were used in designing such Call Answering playback features as repeat, pause and skip functions, and a silent interval between messages.

For the Advance Calling service, two studies dealt with ways in which customers might specify the time of message delivery. Various schemes were tested, including a 24-hour military clock and different codes for a.m. and p.m. Other studies concerned the way people would behave after making a dialing mistake. (To prevent transmittal of an incomplete Advance

Calling message, the service requires a positive confirmation from the customer before a message is scheduled for transmittal.)

Human factors studies also helped define the tones used by the new custom calling services.

The services are based on the capabilities of the 1A Voice Storage System, developed by Bell Labs to receive, store, retrieve, and send voice messages. The new services will complement such existing Bell System services as Call Waiting, Call Forwarding, Three-way Calling, and Speed Calling. Call Answering and Advance Calling services don't require change in customer premises equipment, and both can be activated and controlled from either rotary or *Touch-Tone*® signaling telephones.

Call Answering service can be used by business and residential customers. It automat-

ically answers incoming calls, plays a greeting, and records a message from the caller.

Messages are accumulated and are played back when the subscriber requests them. Advance Calling is intended for use when direct communication is not desired or is not convenient because of busy lines or time-zone differences. The service allows customers to record a voice message and have it transmitted to a designated telephone number at a designated time up to 24 hours later.

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[The services were to be made available first to some Philadelphia customers, but the Pennsylvania regulatory commission placed a six-month suspension on Bell tariffs (scheduled to go into effect July 7) after a trade organization representing telephone answering bureaus and services took issue with the proposed offerings.]



### THE FINAL COUNTDOWN

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

There are a generation of filmmakers that have grown up seeing TWILIGHT ZONE and its reruns on television and all too many of them think that TWILIGHT ZONE is what science fiction is all about. The ideas that Rod Serling used seem to crop up time and again in films that have been made over the past twenty years. THE FINAL COUNTDOWN, while entertaining enough, might well have been called TWILIGHT ZONE: THE MOTION PICTURE. The story is one that is pretty much a plot from an old episode of the TV show, a U.S. aircraft carrier mysteriously hits a time warp and shows up at the attack on Pearl Harbor. Serling did an almost identical plot with an armored tank showing up at the Battle of Little Big Horn.

Peter Douglas, son of the film's star Kirk Douglas, must have realized that his plot was essentially TV fare and that he would have to give audiences something spectacular that they could not see on TV. That he did by pulling off a rather interesting coup. He got the Department of Defense to give him permission to film THE FINAL COUNTDOWN right on the U.S.S. Nimitz. In spite of security, that must not have been too difficult, since THE FINAL COUNTDOWN carries throughout an atmosphere of the old Pentagon information films that used to brag about this country's incredible air and sea power. One gets the feeling that whether or not we could lick the Russians today, we sure could make mincemeat out of the 1940s' Japanese, if that means anything. And speaking of not meaning anything, I looked in vain through the whole film for a final countdown - or ANY sort of countdown. I guess that they wanted to make the title as much of a whizbang as the aircraft carrier that they were filming.

Once one gets past the plot, which we used to be able to see free on TWILIGHT ZONE, and the footage of aircraft carriers and planes, which we used to be able to see free when a TV station played the "Star-Spangled Banner," THE FINAL COUNTDOWN is not a bad little film. The story is entertaining enough. Douglas, as usual, takes his part professionally and convincingly. In fact, the professional actors act professionally and crew of the Nimitz act about as well as you would expect for the crew of the Nimitz. The special effects of going through the time barrier are spectacular, proving that the laser is God's gift to the Hollywood special effects man. Once the Defense Department has gotten its message across, there is still time for a small dig for women's liberation.

THE FINAL COUNTDOWN spends most of its time dealing with the members of the crew of the Nimitz, to avoid having to do expensive recreations of the styles of the period. In fact only four characters from 1941 have speaking roles. Katharine Ross is fetching, but somehow her clothing and hair styles do not seem

to have come from 1941. Nor does Charles Durning wearing what is supposed to be a timeless bowling shirt. One actor is convincingly dressed in a straw hat and suspenders. He, unfortunately, has only a few minutes of screen time.

To sum up, THE FINAL COUNTDOWN will be disappointing for science fiction fans, will be acceptable for adventure film fans, and will be loved by plane and aircraft carrier fans.

Notes on Gordon Dickson's  
Childe Cycle Stories

by R. L. Ditch

According to Dickson, as interviewed in Science Fiction Review, Number 26, July 1978, the Childe Cycle will eventually consist of 12 novels. These are broken down into 3 historical novels (Hawkwood-14th century; Milton-16th century; Robert Browning-19th century), 3 contemporary novels, and 6 science fiction novels.

The titles of the 6 SF novels are:

1. Necromancer (1962; also published as No Room for Man).
2. Tactics of Mistake. (1971).
3. Soldier, Ask Not. (1964).
4. Dorsai! (1959; originally published in shorter form as The Genetic General).
5. The Final Encyclopedia.
6. Childe.

The Final Encyclopedia and Childe have not yet been published.

A single volume entitled Three to Dorsai! was published, containing Necromancer, Tactics of Mistake, and Dorsai!, along with connecting material. Another item, entitled Spirit of Dorsai (1980), contains two short works entitled "Brothers" and "Amanda Morgan". An announced Ace item, Lost Dorsai, will contain two stories: "Lost Dorsai" and "Warriors".

Dickson states that his original plans called for only 3 SF novels, but that the publishing climate when he began forced him to shorter books. Thus, each of his planned 3 appears as 2 separate books. "Each book, even divided, is set up to be read as a separate story. It's just that together they fit into holes in the major pattern."

Dickson's premise, developed over all 12 books, is that Man is in a process of moral or spiritual evolution that began with the Renaissance, is continuing unnoticed today, and will culminate in 500 years with what Dickson calls "Responsible Man".

The three lines upon which the evolution is successful are called Splinter Cultures:

- the warrior (Dorsai)
- the philosopher (the Exotics of Mara and Kultis)
- and the faith-holder (the Friendlies of Harmony and Association)

As discussed in the afterward to the current Ace edition of Dorsai!, written by Sandra Miesel, the internal chronology of the SF novels is complex. Therefore, the only easy recommendation as to the order in which these novels should be read comes from Evelyn Leeper: read them in the order they were written, since an author usually tries to make each story fit with those already issued.