

Holmdel Science Fiction Discussion Group
Club Notice - 8/6/81

MEETINGS UPCOMING:

(Unless otherwise stated, all Holmdel meetings are on Wednesdays at noon. Rooms for meetings listed below.)

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>
8/12/81	THE GODS THEMSELVES by Isaac Asimov in 4A-606 (HP: DRAGON'S EGG by Robert Forward)
8/19/81	Game meeting: Alan Gopin and TRAVELLER (HO 2H-305)
9/2/81	FLOW MY TEARS by Philip K. Dick in 4A-606
9/23/81	GAMEPLAYERS OF ZAN by M. A. Foster and selection new books for discussion in 4A-606
10/14/81	SNOW QUEEN by Joan Vinge
11/4/81	TACTICS OF MISTAKE by Gordon Dickson

Our library is in HO 4B-510. Mike Lukacs (x4043) is librarian. Debi Bennett (HP 1B-368 x2408) is in charge of South Plainfield activities. Evelyn Leeper (HO 1E-313 x6033) is Club book-buyer. Alan M. Gopin (HO 1D-407 x2089) is the game chairperson. This notice publishes anything (not slanderous or libelous) submitted by club members. Members, feel free to submit.

1. THE GODS THEMSELVES will be the topic of discussion at the next meeting of the SF discussion group. After we discuss the gods we may have time to go on to the demigods and heroes. Members who choose not to attend will be discussed behind their backs at the meeting. If you don't want people talking about you behind your back, you will just have to attend. If you are curious about what people say about you behind your back, why not come and hide in the closet? The South Plainfielders will be cracking DRAGON'S EGG at the same time.

2. In spite of what you may have read in earlier issues of the notice, it does not appear that the club is maintaining its size. After several more weeks of reregistration it appears that we are still in our growing phase. It has been suggested to me by no less a person than I. M. Ross, President of Bell Laboratories, that we are artificially padding our membership list by occasionally trying to be humorous in the notice, and attracting members by humor in the notice. [Actually the person who suggested this was my wife whom I consider to be no less a person than I. M. Ross; each of them are equally people. I just wish my wife was getting Ross's salary.] At any rate, I wish right now to dispel that rumor. Everything that you read in this notice is absolutely serious. I have been tempted in the past to introduce an occasional note of levity into the notice but have resisted the temptation. As most members are no doubt already aware, the notice does nothing but report, as accurately and seriously as possible, the environmental forces faced by Bell Labs employees who also happen to be science fiction fans. My reasons for doing this are two-fold. One is to perform a service for science fiction fans in the Bell Labs community and the other is to supplement my meager salary with a Pulitzer or Nobel Prize for literature. So far I have not been entirely successful in either endeavor, but I keep trying.

Mark Leeper
HO 2B-515 x7093

WOLFEN: More Dog Than Wolf

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

For 20,000 years--ten Christian Eras--the Wolfen have lain in wait to inherit the world. Their patience must have been nothing short of phenomenal. Still, sitting through Orion Pictures' WOLFEN would undoubtedly have them fidgeting in the aisles and howling at the blunders. In spite of one or two moody scenes, WOLFEN is an inept bore of a film, filled with superfluous scenes, logical non sequiturs, and amateur attempts at building tension.

Albert Finney has returned after a long absence from film-making to play Dewey Wilson, an unconventional police detective investigating the killing of one of America's wealthiest men. In the first hundred minutes the only two things that distinguish WOLFEN from a standard police thriller are mysterious clues that whatever is killing people is lupine, and the lack of progress that Finney is having in solving the mystery. One hundred minutes into the film, Finney is investigating the crime exactly as he was ten minutes into the film. In fact, what little Finney learns toward solving the crime he learns by being told directly. The only deduction that Finney himself makes is one that will be obvious to most of the audience from the first scene. It takes Finney until the end of the film to reach the same conclusion, and then it is obviously intended to be a revelation for the viewer.

One of the more common horror effects in films is the false alarm. This is a scene intended to startle the audience but which turns out to be innocent. (For example, what looks like a large shaggy beast that has fallen on the hero turns out to be an animal skin a friend dropped on him as a joke.) It is basically a cheap shot used to enliven a film without causing a plot complication. A really bad film may do this two or three times. WOLFEN averages a false alarm every five minutes or so. Clearly somebody was afraid that WOLFEN would put audiences into a merciful sleep. The script is more interested in how many different excuses it can find for making the audience jump than in resolving problems like why the moon stays full for a week at a time.

Although the main character is a policeman and not a reporter, fans of TV's KOLCHAK: THE NIGHT STALKER series will find much that is familiar. Like Darren McGavin, Finney plays a man with an unorthodox approach to investigation who has drawn some very weird conclusions. Finney shares McGavin's less-than-rousing success at convincing others that the menace is supernatural. Most NIGHT STALKER episodes have a "secret" way to vanquish the evil that the hero uses in the final reel, just as Finney does in WOLFEN. In fact, the only answer that Finney has not been told or has not figured out for himself by the final reel is why anyone would pay to see WOLFEN.