

Lincroft-Holmdel Science Fiction Club
Club Notice - 4/22/83 -- Vol. 1, No. 28

MEETINGS UPCOMING:

(Unless otherwise stated, all Lincroft meetings are on Wednesdays
in LZ 3A-206 at noon.)

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>
4/26 (tue)	Video meeting, DARK STAR, LZ 1M-206
4/27	Video meeting, DARK STAR (cont'd), LZ 3A-206
5/18	CANTICLE FOR LIEBOWITZ by Walter Miller
6/8	Video meeting
6/29	TALES FROM THE WHITE HART by A. C. Clarke

LZ's library and librarian Lance Larsen (576-2668) are in LZ 3C-219. Mark Leeper (576-2571) is chairperson. HO's library and librarian Mike Lukacs (949-4043) are in HO 4B-510. John Jetzt (834-3332) is HO-chairperson.

1. Well, here goes nothing. For the first time this year we are going to try to put on a video meeting. Last time we did it, our American Bell administrative staff made it a real bear to get a video monitor. The VCR itself we could borrow from a member but getting the monitor was a holy headache.

So what do we have for ya'? DARK STAR is the first film produced by a couple of amateurs from California. John Carpenter went on to make films like HALLOWEEN, THE FOG, and THE THING. Dan O'Bannon chief contribution so far to the science fiction film has been ALIEN. Together they made this black comedy about a hopelessly insane and fouled up mission in space. This is not the great film that many people make it out to be (particularly convention goers -- the film is a cult classic at conventions), but it is often wildly funny and has some interesting ideas to boot. Dan O'Bannon, himself, plays the domitable, repressible, defatigable, peccable, and highly vincible Pinback. DARK STAR, with its talking bombs, squeeking aliens, and homicidal elevators is an odyssey into intergalactic insanity.

2. King Kong seems to have been getting attention of late to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the film's New York release. The

*****Presorted*****
* Leeper, Evelyn C. *
* LZ 1D-216 *

odd thing is that they are at least a month and a half late. According to The Girl in the Hairy Paw, edited by Ronald Gottesman and Harry Geduld, KING KONG opened in Grauman's Chinese Theater on March 2, 1933 and at Radio City Music Hall on March 4. An ad reproduced in the same book seems to indicate that the film was playing in New York already on March 2. At any rate, an article about Kong is reproduced in this issue along with some film reviews for more recent films like the current EVIL DEAD. Also included is a list of the Hugo nominees of the year (I didn't make it, sob! -- nor did Young Dullard) hand-typed by Paul Chisholm (no doubt using his favorite piece of software, the vi-editor) as partial penance for having recommended RENDEZVOUS WITH RAMA and then going out for Chinese food instead of coming to the meeting (didn't even bring us a lousy fortune cookie either, sob!).

3. CLASSIFIED AD: Wanted: roommate for Constellation (contact Alan Gopin, 834-3126). Also Alan has a Constellation membership for sale. (This may be out of date, but that's my fault.--Evelyn Leeper)

Mark Leeper
LZ 3E-215 x2571

[From Instant Message #334:] "Here's a list of Hugo Nominations, stolen from File 770: #40, recieved on April 11. This list may not be the final list of nominees as those nominated still have the option to withdraw. See File 770 for more information and statistics. 660 ballots were submitted."

BEST NOVEL (189-96) [votes per nominee]
(3-way tie for 4th)

Courtship Rite, Donald Kingbury
Foundation's Edge, Issac Asimov
Friday, Robert A Heinlein
Pride of Chanur, C J Cherryh
Sword of the Lictor, Gene Wolfe
2010, Arthur C Clarke

BEST NOVELETTE (49-43)

"Aquila", Sumtow Sucharitkul (IASFM 1/18/82)
"Fire Watch", Connie Willis (IASFM 2/15/82)
"Nightlife", Phyllis Eisenstein (F&SF 2/82)
"Pawn's Gambit", Timothy Zahn (Analog 3/29/82)
"Swarm", Bruce Sterling (F&SF 4/82)

BEST NOVELLA (77-52)

(4-way tie for 3d)
"Another Orphan", John Kessel (F&SF 9/82)
"Brainchild", Joeseph H Delaney (Analog 6/82)
"The Postman", David Brin (IASFM 11/82)
"Souis", Joanna Russ (F&SF 1/82)
"To Leave a Mark", Kim Stanley Robinson (F&SF 11/82)
"Unsound Variations", George R R Martin (Amazing 1/82)

BEST SHORT STORY (55-36)

"The Boy Who Waterskied to Forever", James Tiptree (F&SF 10/82)
"Ike at the Mike", Howard Waldrop (Omni 6/82)
"Melancholy Elephants", Spider Robinson (Analog 6/82)
"Spider Rose", Bruce Sterline (F&SF 8/82)
"Sur", Ursula K LeGuin (The Compase Rose [also The New Yorker])

BEST DRAMATIC PRESENTATION (278-119) [!]

Blade Runner
Dark Crystal
E. T.
Road Warrior
Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan

BEST NONFICTION BOOK (60-32)

Fear Itself: The Horror of Steven King, ed. Underwood-Miller
Reader's Guide to Fantasy, ed. Searles, Meachem, Franklin
The World of the Dark Crystal, Brian Froud
The Engines of the Night, Barry Malzberg
Isaac Asimov: The Foundations of Science Fiction, James Gunn

BEST PROFESSIONAL ARTIST (188-47)

(3-way tie for 4th)

Kelly Freas
Don Maitz
Rowena Morrill
Barclay Shaw
Darrell Sweet
Michael Whelan

BEST PROFESSIONAL EDITOR (191-85)

Terry Carr
Edward Ferman
Stanley Schmidt
George Scithers

BEST FAN WRITER (46-32)

(Only 4 nominees in this category
as 8 individuals were tied at the
next highest vote total[!])

Richard E Geis
Mike Glycer
Arthur Hlavaty
Dave Langford
[Sorry, Mark!]

BEST FAN ARTIST (65-19)

Alexis Gilliland
Joan Hanke-Woods
William Rotsler
Stu Shiffman
Dan Steffan

BEST FANZINE (123-45)

Fantasy Newsletter
File 770
Locus
Science Fiction Chronicle
Science Fiction Review

JOHN W CAMPBELL AWARD (34-19)

(5-way tie for 3rd,

one of whom was ineligible)

* indicates last year of eligibility

Joseph H Delaney
Lisa Goldstein
Sandra Miesel
Warren G Norwood
Dave Palmer*
Paul O Williams*

THE EVIL DEAD

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

THE EVIL DEAD is the first feature film by Bob Tapert, Sam Raimi, and Bruce Campbell, Michigan University film students. The film was shot on a shoestring (\$400,000), blown up from a 16mm film, and used hundreds of gallons of fake-looking blood. Knowing that, one might expect considerably worse from THE EVIL DEAD than the film delivers. In fact, the film is amusing and quite watchable. It is considerably more creative than so many of the mad-slasher films that pass for horror these days. This is one of the few low-budget films, like CARNIVAL OF SOULS, that use their crudeness to add an air of credibility to the story. If the same film had a Lind Blair or a John Carradine it could not have been as effective.

The story won't win many plaudits for originality. Five college chums from Michigan rent a cabin in Tennessee only to discover that a former tenant had used the cabin previously in an experiment to raise the dead. After playing a tape of the former tenant reading from a Sumerian Book of the Dead, the dead spirits possess four of the five guests in order to scare the wits out of the fifth. From that point on the action never flags. Part of what makes THE EVIL DEAD amusing is that the ghouls talk in this one and it adds a dimension of black humor to them that is

missing from George Romero's "Living Dead" ghouls. In one scene our hero throws an attacking female ghoul onto a fire. Then, deciding that the corpse of a friend deserves better treatment, he pulls her lifeless body back out of the fire. The ghoul thanks him politely for his consideration and immediately goes back to choking him.

Admittedly some of the makeup effects and the stage blood are heavy-handed. But then who goes to a film called THE EVIL DEAD expecting to see a children's film? Toward the end, the film uses clay animation to create some of its effects. Like many other aspects of the film, the effects deserve "A" for originality if only a "C" for effectiveness. This is not a film I'd wholeheartedly recommend, but most of the audience seemed satisfied with the film. And that alone is an accomplishment for the inexperienced young filmmakers from Michigan.

KING KONG

film notes by Mark R. Leeper on the 50th anniversary of
KING KONG's New York opening, March 5, 1933

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Why all this fuss about a film that is fifty years old, we all saw as children, is poorly acted, and has cornball dialog? Why, because in spite of the faults KING KONG is one of the great fantasy films of all time. When it was made the world had seen nothing like it before. Consider that it was made just six years after JAZZ SINGER first introduced sound to film. Three years earlier films were little more than static filmed plays like DRACULA. Films were just beyond the stage in which everybody spoke into props like flower pots which rather transparently hid microphones. It is not surprising that KING KONG made an incredible impression when it was first released.

In addition, KING KONG was only the second real special effects film ever made. Earlier film makers, notably George Melies, harnessed effects he had discovered my accident [e.g. stopping the camera and rearranging the scene made the scene seem to jump.] Only in one previous full-length film, THE LOST WORLD (1925), had there been a technician experimenting to portray what he saw in his mind's eye on the screen. That technician was Willis O'Brien who invented stop-motion photography. The technique by which an articulated model is meticulously moved and shot a frame at a time.

Eight years later O'Brien used the same technique in his greatest work, KING KONG. O'Brien had the good fortune with this film to have even his mistakes work for him. Notice how Kong's hairy flesh seems to bristle as he moves. O'Brien covered his models in real fur without realizing every time he touched the fur it would rearrange the surface hair. O'Brien also used extreme cleverness to sidestep his mistakes. In Kong's battle with the serpent towards the end of the film, O'Brien realized halfway through the painstaking stop motion filming that he had left a monkeywrench on his model set and was accidentally filming it too. To remove the wrench would leave a jump in the resulting film that would call attention to itself. On the other hand if he left it where it was he would have to replan the scene because the fighting monsters were moving toward it. He solved his dilemma by filming continuing to film the scene with the wrench slowly moving itself out of the way of the monsters and out of the scene. It was done so carefully that nobody ever noticed the giant, living monkeywrench.

With the possible exception of STAR WARS, no other film has ever made such a great quantum leap in the cinematic visualization of fantasy.

If KING KONG is noted for its special effects, it is also known for its film score. As Goldner and Turner say in THE MAKING OF KING KONG:

The music is largely built upon three motifs: 'King Kong', a descending three-note fugue that is the leitmotif of the title character; 'Jungle Dance', which symbolizes the natives of Skull Island; and 'Stolen Love', a plaintive melody used to suggest the 'beauty and the beast' longing of Kong for Ann. These themes are paraphrased and deployed throughout the film in numerous variations. Among other compositions are 'The Forgotten Island', 'A Boat in the Fog' and 'Sea at Night', all of which have about them a suggestion of Debussy tone poems. 'The Sailors', introduced as a march as the men plod through the jungle, is developed as exciting chase music during several episodes. 'Aboriginal Sacrifice Dance', scored for orchestra and male chorus, is played during the first native ceremony. Kong's arrival on Broadway is heralded by the 'King Kong March', which is done in the style of a theatrical overture.

Music is present through most of the film, the exceptions being during the New York and shipboard scenes prior to the arrival at the island, the fight with the Tyrannosaurus (which is so filled with curious sounds as to make music superfluous) and the battle with the airplanes.

The earnestness of Steiner is transmitted to the subconsciousness of the viewer.... The precise conformity of the music to the flow of images results in a unity seldom achieved in the combining of visual and sound arts. The growing love of Ann and Jack is emphasized by waltz-like string passages in a lush romantic style, the mystery of uncharted seas by softly ominous chords with the disturbing rhythm of distant drums in the background, the frantic terror of pursuit by cyclopean giants by scherzi calculated to accelerate the beating of one's heart. Music accompanying the native ceremonies conveys the frenzy of barbaric religious passion.

It is in the delineation of the complex emotions and personality of Kong himself that the music achieves its greatest expressiveness. His savage brutality is accented by brassy, dissonant variations on the King Kong theme. The 'Stolen Love' motif subtly underlines the tragic side of his nature, portraying his loneliness and the painful bewilderment inherent in unrequited love. This theme is developed to its apogee of power and finally resolved in the finale as Kong mutely bids Ann farewell and gives himself up to the sacrifice that was, from the beginning, inevitable. It would be difficult to overestimate Steiner's share in

creating a classic tragic figure...

KING KONG is more than just a horror or fantasy film, it has become myth, a genuine piece of American folklore. Take a look at the ads in the subways of New York City and see how often they allude to KING KONG. The big ape is probably better remembered and more quickly recognized by New Yorkers than almost any of New York's mayors over the same fifty years. As a coming attraction for the film accurately proclaimed, KING KONG is the kind of film the movies were made for.

INCREDIBLE SHRINKING HORROR MARKET?

HI-COST SCAREPIX HURT; OUTPUT DOWN

By LAWRENCE COHN

The year 1982 was one of cleaning the shelves of horror films, as 61 new fright pictures were released domestically. Buttressed by dozens of reissues in the genre and one mega-hit, "Poltergeist," horror films generated a record \$230,000,000-plus in film rentals during 1982, but reduced production levels and the failure of several big-budget offerings have resulted in a more modest output for 1983.

Several key changes in the marketplace are affecting the horror genre. For one, the news media fell out of love with scare films, after several years of cover stories and tv specials hawking the public's love of being frightened by "Alien," "Halloween," "Friday The 13th" and their dozens of imitations.

With the glut of product on the market, and the reluctance of both indies and major distributors to hold press screenings for violent (and gory) films, most national and New York publications have stopped reviewing low-budget horror pictures.

This media blackout reflects the mounting near-crusade by various critics and commentators alarmed at the level of violence (specifically that aimed at women) common to these pictures.

Rental Windfall

Bad press has hardly hurt the steady (largely youth and minority) audience for horror films, which in 1982 combined with science fiction films (notably "E.T.") to generate in excess of \$640,000,000 in domestic film rentals per *Variety's* \$1,000,000-and-over annual rentals chart, or about a 43% share of the entire domestic film market. Significantly, only Steven Spielberg's production of "Poltergeist" overcame the recent jinx against big-budget horror. Mainly emanating from Universal Pictures (the traditional horror film leader of the 1930s), such films as "Ghost Story," "Cat People" and "The Thing," and (from MGM-UA) "Still Of The Night," were resounding b.o. flops.

Though these pictures' grosses would have made any low-budget indie producer happy, they reflected a limited horror film market and

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Incredible Shrinking Horror Market

(Continued from page 7)

failed to justify individual production budgets around the \$15,000,000 level in each case, let alone the multi-million-dollar national advertising campaigns. Except for that trailblazer "The Exorcist" and the borderline horror-adventure thrillers "Jaws" and "Jaws 2," no mega-budget horror film has broken through to blockbuster boxoffice.

Upcoming in 1983 are several big-budget pictures hoping to reverse this trend, notably Buena Vista's horror fantasy "Something Wicked This Way Comes" (at \$19,000,000 the second most expensive horror film to date next to "Jaws 2" and Universal's \$16,000,000 "Jaws 3-D." Also big-budget (at \$12,000,000) and in 3-D is Columbia's sci-fi "Space Hunter," which in common with many other fantasy films straddles the borderline between SF and horror genres.

More modestly conceived (but too costly to rely solely on diehard horror fans for b.o. support) are Paramount's \$10,000,000-plus "Dead Zone," and "The Keep," MGM-UA's \$8,000,000 "The Hunger" and WB's \$7,000,000-plus "The Twilight Zone." Since the last-named is a Steven Spielberg omnibus film, it would seem geared, like "Poltergeist" to attract a wider-than-average audience.

Since there generally is a time-lag between date of production and eventual pickup and release of most horror films, 1983 distribution will reflect the marked decline in production experienced during 1982. Although over 140 horror projects were publicly announced for 1982 filming, only 45 films were actually shot in the U.S., Canada and Britain during the year, as reported to *Variety*. Probably a dozen or so additional low-budgeters may also have been filmed with no publicity, in common with previous years.

It should be noted that except for major studio endeavors, almost none of the horror output is reported on trade production charts, mainly because of problems with unions (as experienced by the indie production "Cujo" which reportedly had a major run-in with a West Coast union alerted to its non-union shoot via production chart listing).

Large Production Drop

These statistics represent a virtual 50% drop in production from 1981, when 110 horror pics were lensed, or 1980 when production hit 84 titles (These counts ignore the numerous Italian and Hong Kong thrillers which have a minimal international impact.) Though the steady stream of phone calls to *Variety* from would-be producers and investors requesting production and b.o. data on indie horror films continues unabated, the glut of completed but unreleased pictures circulating last year had an impact upon production levels.

Of the 1982 releases, some 37 were filmed in 1981, six were shot and quickly distributed all within 1982, and 14 were leftovers made in 1980, augmented by four lame-duck releases produced in the 1970s.

Housecleaning is continuing in 1983, with older pictures such as "The Evil Dead," "The House On Sorority Row," "The Entity," "Mortuary" and "Night Warning" (aka "Butcher, Baker...") finally entering release. While a carefully budgeted (under \$1,000,000) opus can still expect to be profitable in worldwide distribution, production has abated simply because many films recently have failed to find a distributor.

Faced with the glut, some producers have foregone the U.S. mar-

ket entirely, with Cannon's "Hospital Massacre" (aka "X-Ray") and indie "Piranha II" typical examples of overseas distribution only. Other pictures, particularly among the dozen or so entries in the unpopular horror spoof category, have found distributors but remain on the shelf: UA's "Pandemonium," 20th Century-Fox's "Hysterical," Jensen Farley Pictures' "Wacko," Almi Cinema's "The Creature Wasn't Nice" and Orion's "Full Moon High" (inherited from American International and Filmways).

Other 1980-shot shelf items are a motley bunch, including two Jose Ferrer vehicles "Creepers" and "Easter Sunday," "Forced Entry" (perhaps an even older film) which features Nancy Allen and Tanya Roberts, Fritz Weaver in "Jaws of Satan" (aka "King Cobra"), "Island Claws," an Italian coproduction "There Was Once A Child" and "Terror On Tour."

Catch These Titles

Over 40 leftovers made in 1981 include such catchy titles as "A Night To Disremember" (made by former nudist camp filmmaker Doris Wishman), "Play Dead," "Home Sweet Home," "The Monster From Out Of Town," "Bloody Pulp," Canadian "Big Meat Eater" and "Slime." Snake pictures such as "Spasm" (aka "Death Bite") and "Rattles" are still rattling around, while 3-D doggie film "Rottweiler," "Turkey Shoot" and "The Deadly Spawn" await distribution.

More traditionally titled are "Ghostkeeper," "Haunted House," "Dark Games," "The Killing Hour," "The Black Room," "The Returning," "The Unholy" and "The Scarecrow," while more self-conscious producers have made "The Horror Star" and "The Last Horror Film." Confusing matchup is "Double Exposure" vs. "Double Jeopardy" (aka "Olivia").

Current batch of pictures filmed in 1982 emphasizes the horror buzzwords, bearing out the paramount importance of a commercial title in this field: "Bloodroot," "Blood Simple," "The Dark Room," "Demon Shock," "Demonville Terror," "The Evil Eye" (aka "Manhattan Baby"), "Horror Movie," "Killing Time," "The Killing Touch," Universal's "Psycho II," "Night Eyes" (aka "Rats"), "The Prey," "The Scaremaker," "Scream Of The Soul," "Silent Death," Embassy's "Spinal Tap" and "Trauma" (aka "Critical List").

VARIETY

2/22/83