

Lincroft-Holmdel Science Fiction Club  
Club Notice - 6/2/83 -- Vol. 1, No. 30

MEETINGS UPCOMING:

(Unless otherwise stated, all Lincroft meetings are on Wednesdays  
in LZ 3A-206 at noon; all Holmdel meetings are in HO 3N-418.)

| <u>DATE</u> | <u>TOPIC</u>                                      |
|-------------|---|
| 6/7 (tue)   | Video meeting: WAR OF THE WORLDS pt. 1            |
| 6/8         | Video meeting: WAR OF THE WORLDS pt. 2            |
| 6/29        | TALES FROM THE WHITE HART by A. C. Clarke         |
| 6/29        | CANTICLE FOR LEIBOWITZ by Walter Miller (at HO)   |
| 7/19 (tue)  | Video meeting: PHASE IV pt. 1                     |
| 7/20        | Video meeting: PHASE IV pt. 2                     |
| 8/10        | TALES FROM THE WHITE HART by A. C. Clarke (at HO) |

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, it is the start of the summer film season and there is a lineup of science fiction films starting at local theaters. There is a minor film with the unlikely name of RETURN OF THE JEDI or something similar. It's flawed, but shows promise. A fuller review is included in this issue for those of you who want to hear more about the film. Also reviewed is SPACEHUNTER: ADVENTURES IN THE LOW-BUDGET 3-D FILM ZONE. Now for those of you who don't want to squander your hard-earned dollars on special effects science fiction films, we got one you can see on the cheap. It is WAR OF THE WORLDS, George Pal's film not very based on the novel by H. G. Wells. Accuracy of adaptation aside, this is a pretty darn enjoyable film with some of the best special effects of the antestawarsian epoch. This film has been criticized for showing normal, intelligent people square-dancing, but we at the Lincroft Science Fiction Club have never been ones to avoid controversial themes. That is Tuesday and Wednesday next.

2. Isn't it always the way! After we sent out the ballot for what books we should get for the library, Rich Koehler went and donated to the library a whole bunch of the books that we were considering

\*\*\*\*\*Presorted\*\*\*\*\*  
\* Leeper, Evelyn C. \*  
\* LZ 1D-216 \*  
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buying. Now the whole ballot is invalid. Thanks a lot, Rich. When are you going to return my copy of SWEENEY TODD? The following is a list of the new acquisitions in the library. Kohlerbutions are marked with an asterisk:

FOUNDATION tetralogy (\*)  
Wolfe Tetralogy (\*)  
DUNE Tetralogy (\*)  
Cherryh--PRIDE OF CHANUR  
Wollheim--1983 WORLD'S BEST SF  
Heinlein--FRIDAY (\*)

3. Paul Chisholm tells me that Michael Bishop's novel, No Enemy But Time, won the 1983 Nebula Award for Best Novel. "Another Orphan" by John Kessel was named Best Novella. Connie Willis won awards for Best Novelette ("Fire Watch") and Best Short Story ("A Letter from The Clearys").

4. O-gosh-o-golly-o-wow. A number of people noted that they saw my name in print, a few weeks ago when the sheet came around listing the five (count 'em) clubs at ABI. Everybody assumes that because my name is on the list that I know about the other clubs. In particular I was asked what a Hacky-sack Club is and what it does. In self-defense I researched the subject and here are the results:

A Hacky-sack is a small ball, the size of a ravioli. A game is played with a Hacky-sack that is just like soccer, if you happen to be 18 inches high. The game is popular among the pygmies of New Guinea who are 18 inches high and who invented it after watching a World Cup soccer match on satellite television. They had a hard time judging the scale and so made a soccer ball out of a ravioli, or "kreplach" in the local language. The name comes from Hackensack, New Jersey, where the Italian restaurants leave something to be desired and the ravioli is kicked around like a soccer ball. Hackensack, in turn, takes its name from a military strategy developed by Atilla the Hun, himself a midget and a ravioli-eater.

Mark Leeper  
LZ 3E-215 x2571

## THE RETURN OF THE JEDI: The Universe for Five Dollars

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

The first questions that everyone gets asked after seeing THE RETURN OF THE JEDI are "Is it as good as STAR WARS? Is it as good as THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK? Did Lucas top his previous films?" There is little argument that the new film is several cuts above THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK. There is nothing that Lucas did in the second film that he did not do better in the third. The character development and the plot revelations that were the most interesting part of the second film continue in the third. But while the second film was serious to the point of being a little somber, THE RETURN OF THE JEDI manages to be as serious and at the same time light-hearted. The question of whether Lucas has topped the triumph of his first STAR WARS film is a little harder to answer. The first film had the element of surprise, the astonishment of "I didn't know you could do that on film!" The "that" is showing scenes of such imagination and vitality.

Lucas created the images by for the first time exploiting the full image creation possibilities of the computer. The computer had made possible hundreds of new techniques that no studio had yet applied to filmmaking. When these effects were introduced in a single, medium-to-low-budget science fiction film, the film STAR WARS turned into an almost unstoppable money pump for the studio. Now the element of surprise is gone. Audiences expect to be dazzled by the STAR WARS films and their many imitators. Still THE RETURN OF THE JEDI feels like "STAR WARS concentrate" with not just far more visual effects on the screen but also a better story. It is hard to believe that anyone who liked either of the first two films would be at all disappointed with the third.

The new story deals with the rescue of Han Solo from the intergalactic smuggler and slaver Jabba the Hutt, of whom we've heard but never seen. Jabba turns out to look like a cross between Tweedle-dum and a giant bullfrog. With Han rescued and the trio of Skywalker, Leia, and Solo back together, Luke Skywalker is ready to finish his Jedi training and apply it to the destruction of the Empire's new and more powerful Death Star. Along the way all the loose ends from the first two films are neatly tied up. Luke unravels the mystery of his origins and his destiny. The story of the three is brought to a pounding conclusion to make the trilogy the epic of science fiction film.

Are there faults to the third film? Sure, a few. Audiences have already seen one story of the destruction of a Death Star. Sections of THE RETURN OF THE JEDI's plot are virtual retreads of the first film. But don't worry, there



is more than enough new to compensate. A small disappointment is that the first film had a number of throwaway gags, quiet jokes that do not call attention to themselves, like the stork-like legs that walk across the screen in silhouette shortly after the Cantina scene. There were no similar understated jokes in the second film. But in spite of this the story has all the lightheartedness of STAR WARS and the seriousness of THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK. The sprinkling in of alien life forms that we saw in the first film but to a much lesser extent in the second is back in force in THE RETURN OF THE JEDI.

It seems likely that THE RETURN OF THE JEDI may not be as successful as the first film. When STAR WARS was released it was "the only game in town." Now it is simply the best of a much improved heap that also includes the first two films and a few decent non-STAR-WARS contenders. Fewer people will want to see this film time and time again. This will probably be one of the top ten grossing films, and may even pass EMPIRE in the top-grossing list, but it will not pass the first film. THE RETURN OF THE JEDI most certainly will be the big success of the summer. See it.

## THE STAR WARS SAGA

with particular emphasis on THE RETURN OF THE JEDI

An article by Evelyn C. Leeper

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WARNING: Details of THE RETURN OF THE JEDI are discussed in this article. If you have not yet seen the film, this article will 1) give away the plot, and 2) not make too much sense.

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Now that George Lucas has finished the first/second trilogy of the "Star Wars" saga (first by external chronology, second by internal chronology), it is perhaps not unreasonable to step back from reviewing each piece and consider the three films as a whole. However, since the third film has not had anywhere near the amount of discussion that the first two have already had, I will start with a quick discussion of it.

I did not like THE RETURN OF THE JEDI as much as everyone else seems to have, which means I give it an A- rather than an A or an A+. Since everyone knows all the good points, I will discuss the bad ones.

My main objection is to the treatment of the Ewoks in the movie. The Ewoks appear to be a primitive warrior culture whose main occupation is hunting; the snare they have set which catches Han, Luke, and the droids indicates that. (It also explains how they managed to set up the other traps (used in the battle) so quickly -- they were already in place for the hunting of animals. After the Ewoks release their captives (at C3-PO's request -- they think he is God), C3-PO gives them a brief summary of all that has happened with the rebel alliance and the Empire (in Ewokese, but we get the gist of it). Brief in this case is apparently about 10 minutes total (not all on screen). Later, when C3-PO calls the storm-troopers over outside the bunker, he says to R2-D2, "This idea of yours better work." Immediately after this, the Ewoks attack the storm-troopers and the battle is on. The only logical interpretation (and the novelization bears this out) is that C3-PO has somehow convinced the Ewoks to do this. But he would not do so without being told to be a human (he isn't strong enough), so it must be that the humans involved have told him to do so, i.e., use his influence as God to convince the Ewoks to serve as cannon fodder. And cannon fodder they are, since it is a question of stone-tipped arrows against blasters.

So far as we can tell, the Ewoks are never told just how bad the odds against them are; they are instead given a glorious battle tale, guaranteed to stir the warrior in them, and then asked by their god to help. This crass disregard for the lives of sentient (if primitive) beings is totally out of keeping with anything we have seen from the alliance before. It is more the Empire's style. In the book, at least, there is a much longer and serious discussion of the Ewoks' participation, and it is made clear that the decision is their own (the Ewoks talk among themselves of the necessity of making their own choice rather than blindly following their god). It is unfortunate that this got lost in the film.

The only other problem I had with THE RETURN OF THE JEDI is that nothing was a surprise; nothing was unexpected. At the end, I found myself asking, "Is that all there is?" Perhaps I had built up my expectations too high, but I didn't get the "rush" I had gotten from STAR WARS or THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK. Well, enough of nitpicking. Considering the three films as a whole (which they are), the first aspect to consider is that of character development. The character most obviously changed is, of course, Luke Skywalker, who has gone from farmboy to Jedi knight. We first see him in STAR WARS whining that he was "hoping to go into Tahatchee Station to pick up some power converters" (i.e., "waste time with [his] friends" according to his uncle). Forced to flee when his uncle and Aunt are killed, he begins his adventures, starting with the impulsive (and somewhat inept) rescue of Princess Leia Organa. The end of STAR WARS shows him rewarded for his success at defeating the Death Star in a scene not unlike a high school awards ceremony.

In THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK, he has "graduated" to a position of importance in the rebel forces, but leaves them to train under Yoda as a Jedi knight. He fails in his first big test (in the cave), and leaves before finishing his training to rescue his friends, an act that seems at the time impulsive. In the course of the rescue, he learns of the true "fate" of his father. At the end of THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK, Luke has been taught a lot, but it still is not clear that he has learned very much.

From the first time we see Luke in THE RETURN OF THE JEDI it is clear that he is a Jedi knight. Somewhere between the end of the second film and the beginning of the third film, he has learned what it is to be a Jedi. He has accepted the knowledge of his father's identity and the responsibility of his power as a Jedi. The Luke Skywalker that we see in Jabba the Hutt's court is, from the first instant, a Jedi. This makes Han's skepticism at Luke's status even more humorous, since we know that Han is wrong (as usual). Throughout the third film, the change in Luke is affirmed over and over, from his calmness at discovering



that Vader knows his whereabouts (as opposed to his impetuosity in rescuing Leia in the first film), to his steadfast refusal to yield to his anger (and the dark side of the Force) even in the face of death. While he accepts his responsibilities, he also accepts the danger of hubris ("overweening pride"), as demonstrated by the Obi-Wan's mistaken belief that he (Obi-Wan) could train Darth Vader as well as Yoda. The acceptance of Obi-Wan's fallibility (and Yoda's -- Yoda is wrong when he tells Luke that leaving Dagobah to rescue his friends will destroy Luke as a Jedi) means that Luke will be doubly cautious in his actions as a Jedi in the future. The farmboy is gone and only the Jedi remains.

Han Solo too is transformed, from loner to member. He begins the first film as pure mercenary, only getting involved insofar as there is profit in it. (He helps to rescue Leia only when told "She's rich.") At the end of the first film he begins to see the value of teamwork and the meaning of friendship and loyalty when he returns to rescue Luke. (This is mirrored in the second film when Luke returns to rescue him.) In the second film, he falls in love (more on this later), and gives up any chance of escape (though admittedly slim) to insure Leia's safety. In the third, first he saves Lando (who turned him over to Vader in the second film) when he could easily have "accidentally" killed him, then he volunteers for what appears to be a suicide mission, not for the glory, but for the cause. He also gives his ship, the Millennium Falcon, back to Lando. This last break with his unscrupulous past (he cheated to win the Falcon, if you remember from the second film) and his forgiveness of Lando, ties his fate to that of the rebels. (This is made more explicit in the novelization of THE RETURN OF THE JEDI, but is still fairly clear in the film.) His willingness to "step aside" when he believes that Leia is in love with Luke is the last piece. The old Han would either have denied his feelings or put up a fight; the new Han wishes only Leia's happiness.

So we come to Princess Leia. In her case the most fortunate change is also fortuitous: Carrie Fisher's transformation from "chunky" to "svelte". (These are actors and actresses, remember!) While in the first film, she looked like a pampered princess, by the time THE RETURN OF THE JEDI occurs, she has lost her pampered appearance and looks like a guerilla fighter. Gone is her "cheese danish" hairdo (which was obviously time-consuming to put up and difficult to maintain). Instead it is replaced by a more practical braid wrapped around her head (a compromise -- the practical thing would be to cut it short in the first place). Her complaining from the first film is replaced by positive action -- she first disguises herself as a bounty hunter, infiltrates Jabba the Hutt's court (not a very safe place in any case), and defrosts Han, then plays an

important part in the escape, and throughout the rest of the film is the equal of any other fighter. This is doubly true since she is obviously no longer in charge, but has been superceded by others (she asks permission to take part in the raid on the bunker, when as leader she never would have been able to risk herself). When at the door of the bunker, she draws her blaster out of sight of the storm troopers (so as to surprise them), she is doing exactly what Han, the mercenary and fighter, does in the first film to Greedo. This final transformation is what triggers Han to say "I love you"; at last he has found someone like himself!

Finally, there is Darth Vader. His transformation is the most drastic of all -- second only to the Emperor in his devotion (or enslavement) to the Dark Side of the Force, he turns on the Emperor and the Dark Side to save Luke and to destroy the Empire that he helped build. From ultimate enemy to hero is quite a change. Unfortunately, Vader has been such a poorly defined character up to this point that the meaning and reasons behind this change is difficult to understand.

It may be said that much of this is due to the actors involved having learned to act. While it is true that six years is a long time, a reading of the novelizations, free of actors' strengths and weaknesses, indicates that these transformations are intentional. When Lucas chose his actors, he knew that they would be six years older at the end of the saga, and perhaps he bargained on them being six years better. Perhaps, but perhaps they had it in them all the time. Perhaps the Force was with them.



BLUE THUNDER

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

TOP SECRET, HOLLYWOOD STUDIO EXECUTIVE EYES ONLY. PLOT TYPE: POLICE FILM. PLOT NUMBER: 2a. Main character is renegade cop. Police force does not like him because he does not follow rules. Script must make clear that he is a very good cop but not a team player. Hint in the script that he is really an idealist disillusioned by having seen too much of how the system really works. It is useful to hint darkly at some really nasty disillusioning incident. For role of cop actor must have strong boxoffice appeal [e.g., Steve McQueen, Clint Eastwood, Burt Reynolds, maybe eventually Roy Scheider]. Renegade cop discovers system is up to no good again, but worse than ever before. Renegade cop gets evidence of what is going on, turning the system against him and eventually threatening cop's life. From this point film becomes a chase. Chase should contain spectacular [expensive] stunts. Vehicle may be car, plane, helicopter. Do not use police tugboats. MINOR VARIATIONS FROM PLOT POLICE-2A ALLOWABLE. BOTTOM LINE: POLICE-2A HAS PROVEN A BOXOFFICE WINNER. USE AS OFTEN AS POSSIBLE.

BLUE THUNDER is one of the first action films of the summer. Roy Scheider stars as a hardened police helicopter pilot on the outs with his superiors, but for some reason is chosen to fly a new super-armored police helicopter. Scheider finds out that the new helicopter is the lynch pin in an ill-defined government plot to control the Watts ghetto. The film culminates in a spectacular air and land battle with Scheider holding off the entire police force and large parts of the Air Force. Somehow the story is familiar, though I am not sure why.

SPACEHUNTER: ADVENTURES IN THE FORBIDDEN ZONE

a film review by Mark R. Leeper

Back in the Fifties the film industry, confronted with the advent of television, had to give audiences an experience that they could not get at home. The answer then was 3-D. Scores of poor, cheap, exploitation films were ground out, at first the two-color lens process, and then in the polarized lens process that allowed color films. For every well-made 3-D film like KISS ME KATE and DIAL M FOR MURDER there were dozens that left audiences with pounding headaches, and all required wearing silly-looking glasses to unscramble the image. Eventually audiences decided that 3-D was just a silly gimmick. It was not because 3-D did not enhance the cinema effect just as sound had done 25 years earlier (when the industry had to combat people sitting home to listen to radio), but because the glasses were painful to wear and 3-D was used as a gimmick to attract people to films that would otherwise be boxoffice poison. After a while 3-D was more of a detriment than an asset and the studios let 3-D become a silly-looking curio of film history.

Well, now it's the Eighties and home video is stealing film audiences. Again we are seeing studios experimenting with 3-D and those funny polarized glasses. The first was Filmways with a reputedly execrable western called COMIN' AT YA. A science fiction piece, PARASITE, had to be worse still. Now we are seeing that if the second sequel to a successful film died at the boxoffice, a third sequel is made in 3-D. JAWS and FRIDAY THE 13TH each have gotten 3-D-third-film treatment. But as the promotions said, the first new 3-D film by a major studio, Columbia, is SPACEHUNTER: ADVENTURES IN THE FORBIDDEN ZONE. I guess the implication is that if a film is released by a major studio, it will be of higher quality than the usual run of 3-D films. SPACEHUNTER was better than PARASITE, but it was no KISS ME KATE. It has a tired western plot retreaded for space. On an alien planet three luscious women have been captured by some mutant baddies. Our hero must go and rescue them. The tattered remains of civilization in the so-called forbidden zone are clearly inspired by last year's ROAD WARRIOR. There is some humor in the script, about half of it intentional, but the characters are eminently forgettable, with the exception of a tongue-in-cheek villain called Overdog. Overdog's laconic comments on the proceedings are the most watchable part of the film.

And watchable takes on a new meaning in a 3-D film like this. In many of the scenes the director tried to have objects come so far out of the screen that they were just two blurred images. In several of the scenes there were

ghost images that the lenses were intended to block out. Due to the polarized lenses, two or three shiny objects looked bright to one eye and dark to another as if the polarized glasses were killing the glare with only one eye. And one final complaint. Apparently Columbia sent out grainy prints to the theater where I saw the film. When watching a black spot on the screen with 3-D glasses, that spot looks like a three-dimensional object suspended in space. It made it look like there was an avalanche of sand between the audience and the screen. It is films like SPACEHUNTER that killed 3-D last time around.



# RESULTS OF THE BUDGET BALLOT

First place was worth 10 points, second 9, ...

| Points                              | Author    | Book                               | Estimated Cost   |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|------------------------------------|------------------|
| 48                                  | KINGSBURY | Courtship Rite (Hugo nominee)      | 3.95? (if paper) |
| 44                                  | CHERRYH   | Pride of Chanur (Hugo nominee)     | 2.95             |
| 42                                  | WOLFE     | Sword of the Lictor (Hugo nominee) | 0.00             |
| 42                                  | WOLLHEIM  | Year's Best SF                     | 2.95             |
| 39                                  | CARR      | Year's Best SF                     | 3.95             |
| 38                                  | ADAMS     | Life, the Universe & Everything    | 4.95             |
| 32                                  | ASIMOV    | Foundation's Edge (Hugo nominee)   | 0.00             |
| 21                                  | WOLFE     | Claw of the Conciliator            | 0.00             |
| 18                                  | HEINLEIN  | Friday (Hugo nominee)              | 0.00             |
| 14                                  | HERBERT   | Children of Dune                   | 0.00             |
| 10                                  | HERBERT   | God Emperor of Dune                | 0.00             |
| 6                                   | CLARKE    | 2010 (Hugo nominee)                | 3.95? (if paper) |
| TOTAL                               |           |                                    | 22.70            |
| Allowed (adjusted for 25% discount) |           |                                    | 16.19            |

The books marked 0.00 cost were donated by Rich Koehler (thanks, Rich!).