

Lincroft-Holmdel Science Fiction Club
Club Notice - 8/29/83 -- Vol. 2, No. 9

MEETINGS UPCOMING:

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

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>
9/21	THIEVES' WORLD ed. by Robt. Asprin
9/21	HO: ???
10/12	Video meeting
11/2	TAU ZERO by Poul Anderson
11/23	Video meeting
12/14	WARLOCK IN SPITE OF HIMSELF by Christopher Stasheff

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. Our next evening program, Thursday, September 8, at the fabulous
(-ly unimpressive) Loew's Leeper is a double feature (so what else
is new?) of films based on John W. Campbell's novelette WHO GOES
THERE? Although THE THING FROM ANOTHER WORLD (1951) and THE THING
(1982) are similar in title and are based on the same story, the
films are surprisingly different. In fact, about all that is in
common between the two films is that they both are about Antarctic
bases menaced by alien terrors.

The earlier film, produced and co-scripted by Howard Hawks, is
really based on the first third of the story only and doesn't get
into Campbell's concept. Still it stands on its own as one of the
most popular science fiction films ever made. It has a witty
script and three-dimensional characters. John Carpenter's more
recent film is based much more closely on WHO GOES THERE? Rather
than retelling the first story, it more or less assumes that the
audience has seen the first film, and so certain scenes are
intentionally not refilmed. Instead the film relies heavily on Rob
Bottin's creative special effects and model work.

The story both films are based on received the highest number of
votes of any novelette to be included in the SF Writers of
America's SCIENCE FICTION HALL OF FAME anthology. People
interested in reading WHO GOES THERE? before Thursday night can
find it in the Holmdel Science Fiction Club library in the SCIENCE
FICTION HALL OF FAME vol 2a and in the Lincroft Science Fiction
Club library in THE BEST OF JOHN CAMPBELL.

Mark Leeper
LZ 3E-215 x2571

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

Mercury Capsules - August 30, 1983

"Mercury Capsules": SF review column, edited by Paul S R Chisholm. Appears in the "Lincroft-Holmdel SF Club Notice". A medium for quick reviews of anything of interest in the world of science fiction. I'll pass along anything (not slanderous or scatological) without nasty comments. I prefer to get reviews by electronic mail: send to mhtsa!lznv!psc or houxa!mhtsa!lznv!psc from the Holmdel Computer Center, or nv!psc from the Lincroft Computer Center. If that's impossible, I'm at LZ 1D-212, 576-2374.

The Princess Bride: novel, William Goldman.

Although Goldman claims that this is his translation of "the good parts" of S. Morgenstern's original work in Florinese, it becomes obvious that this is a literary fiction, and that Goldman is, in fact, the author. (See my comments on The Silent Gondoliers, in the previous notice's "Mercury Capsules".) At times well-written, at times dragged-out, it is, on the whole, a most unlikely story. Goldman comments on "Morgenstern's" faults, which one presumes are his own (intentional) ones, then turns around and does the same thing without comment. Perhaps this is supposed to be high parody, but I found it annoying. The ending, especially, is a real cop-out of the type that Goldman berates "Morgenstern" for earlier. In spite of all this, it remains a cleverly written story, well worth your time. Goldman knows how to turn a phrase so that it is remembered.

Evelyn C Leeper

Best of Trek #6: non-fiction anthology, Walter Irwin.

Mostly on Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan. Therefore, if you've been reading the Net, or discussing the movie, or whatever, you've probably heard it all before. Not up to the previous volumes, and even those are for Trek fans rather than the general SF fan.

Evelyn C Leeper

Stellar 6: anthology, edited by Judy-Lynn Del Rey.

Eight short stories and a poem. The poem does nothing new for an old idea. "Till Death Do Us Part" has a clever idea, but is complicated enough that it takes considerable analysis to figure out exactly what happened to who where. "A Gift of Space" is the best, balancing emotion with action. The rest are average or worse. Not up to some of the earlier volumes of the series.

Evelyn C Leeper

Fevre Dream: novel, George R R Martin.

In this Nebula Award nominee, Martin has written an excellent story combining vampires and riverboats set along the Mississippi of the mid to late 1800's. The novel's strong points are the characterizations and the fine background detail. Martin manages to present vampires in a believable, consistent manner that differs in many ways from the more traditional presentations. Although a little slow starting, the action and suspense continue to grow throughout. At the end, the reader is left with a feeling of sadness for the personal losses of some principle characters, the transitory nature of beautiful objects, as well as the loss of a unique era in American history. Highly recommended.

Currently available only in hard cover from Poseidon Press, \$14.95. Look for a paperback edition later this year.

Richard Ditch

Silverlock: novel, John Myers Myers.

Having a certain fondness for fantasy, a favorable review of this long novel on the Unix net led me to try Myers' 1949 "masterpiece". I shouldn't have bothered. I found the first 200 pages of this 500 page Ace book to be so superficial, trivial, and frivolous that I couldn't continue. The shallow and self-centered protagonist travels through the "Commonwealth of Letters", briefly encountering famous fictional characters. Some readers may find it fun trying to identify characters and sources of these cameo appearances; I didn't.

Avoid this turkey.

Richard Ditch

BOOK REVIEWS by Nigel

Last Saturday I went to Englishtown Auction and picked up a few books at 75 cents, unused books without any of the usual marks of having been dumped. Two of them are reviewed here. It is nice to have a second chance to acquire books especially when the price is right. I do not understand the mechanics of how this happens but I am more than happy to take advantage of it. Please let me know of other sources of cheap books.

THENDARA HOUSE by Marion Zimmer Bradley

The latest Darkover book. I used to enjoy reading the books in this series but the I have found the last few offputting. They have become more and more feminist, more and more sexual and less and less interesting. The earlier books concentrated on the problems of the Terrans trying to come to terms with a society that had its own, very different, technological power base. The technology being such that Terrans were taught that it could not exist, i.e. some form of magic.

After a while, the books changed to the power problems within the Darkovan power structure, with or without Terran interference. These books were all more or less fun to read, interesting and well written. The society was clearly chauvinist for a variety of reasons some psychological and some from the inheritance laws of the culture.

Then feminism became a popular cause and was reflected in the appearance of a feminist group in Darkovan history. My feeling is that it is time for a change. I do not mind feminist sub-themes in a novel but I feel that we have had enough pure feminist books.

This book is a sequel to The Shattered Chain. It gives lots more detail on the foundation and organisation of the Free Amazons, otherwise known as the Renunciates Guild. It also ties in fairly closely with The Sword of Chaos and The Forbidden Tower. Despite all of this good stuff I did not like the book. I doubt if it will win any new enthusiasts for the series. Basically don't bother with this book unless you are already a fan of the series, in which case it is irrelevant how good or bad any individual book is. (Note to fans: I would like to have a vociferous discussion of the eugenics of Darkover as mentioned in this book and the breeding program in general.)

THE WIZARD AND THE WARLORD by Elizabeth Boyer

This is the most recent of her books. It is set in the same general background as the previous three (see last week's review). This one I felt to be far weaker in its development. About a third of the way in it became obvious what was going to happen which made the actual happening very much of an anticlimax. The few surprises about how it turned out were not enough to offset the impression.

This book also has a much darker image of Skarpsey and an ungenerous answer to the problem of controlling the dark forces. This is not a fun book nor is the story particularly entertaining. Also the book does not extend the images of the land or the people. If it were the first book of the set that you read, it might seem better than I thought it to be. For me the most interesting thing in the book was the cursed sword with its strange runes.

TOMORROW IS TOO FAR by James White (a cheapy)

This is the most interesting book that I have read recently; however, it was written in 1971. It does not show its age particularly, which is good for a book treating current times. It is the story of a security officer at a commercial hi-tech factory. He gets caught up in a covert activity at the factory with a variety of interesting results. To say more would spoil the story. I am willing to lend the book to anyone who can find me and I think that it is worth the effort.

There are enough elements to the story that interest does not flag. The characters are mostly believable and humane. The only questionable feature of the plot is ability of the factory to fund the covert activity.

THE RING OF ALLAIRE by Susan Dexter

This is an above average sorcery book. It is not sword and sorcery as it lacks a muscle-bound hero. It is

definitely a lightweight but this is not a sin and with practice I would expect her stories to improve.

The world is one where magicians have power derived from words, much like Le Guin's Earthsea. Here there are not so many magicians so that physical force is also effective but irrelevant to the story. The main point is that there are no gods and the world does not suffer from their lack. I am not convinced that this is viable, as humanity seems to create religions at the drop of a hat. On the other hand keeping religion and gods out of stories is good practice as it means the author has not opted for an easy way out.

The main characters all behave in a juvenile fashion but that is in character with their ages. The thing that is missing is a rationale for the behaviour of the most skilled magicians. Can there be a rationale for the behaviour of any magician, wizard or sorcerer in any book?

-----the end

Script Conference for
Metalstorm: The Destruction of Jared-Syn
(Transcribed by Evelyn C. Leeper)

"I have this terrific script about a prospector and his beautiful daughter. They find this supposed used-up gold mine, you see, but just as they discover a huge chunk of gold, they're ambushed by Indians who kill the prospector and steal the gold. Then the daughter is rescued by this Texas Ranger..."

"Sounds great, but westerns aren't big unless they have Willie Nelson in them, and our budget doesn't go that high. Can you make it science fiction or something?"

"You mean like Road Warrior?"

"Great! We can probably even get one of the bit actors from Road Warrior, maybe for the villain. We can't afford Gibson, though; we'll have to make do with an unknown for the ranger. We can put all sorts of punk hairdos in and everything. We have this title someone thought up: Metalstorm: The Destruction of Jared-Syn."

"Fine. But can we leave the Apache fight scene in?"

"Sure, no one will know the difference. Anything else? How about something Star Wars-like?"

"Well, I could have this ranger look for a pilot, oops, I mean a guide, in a bar filled with colorful characters, sort of like the cantina scene."

"Terrific! Hey, there was this great weapon in this horror film, Phantasm I think it was, like a spinning metal ball that drills into people's heads. Can you put that in somewhere?"

"Sure, I can have one of the tribes of Indians, I mean mutants, use it. Hey, and how about a star gate, like in 2001? I mean the villain can use the energy from...from a crystal(!) to escape to another universe or something! And the girl and her father could be prospecting for crystals!"

"Super! And the escape gives us room for a sequel when this cleans up at the boxoffice!"

"But don't we have to change the title then? I mean, there's no metal storm, and Jared-Syn isn't really destroyed."

"Don't worry; no one will ever notice. We'll put the whole thing in 3D and they'll get such a headache that they won't even remember the title by the end of the film."