

Lincroft-Holmdel Science Fiction Club
Club Notice - 10/26/83 -- Vol. 2, No. 16

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>
11/02	TAU ZERO by Poul Anderson
11/02	HO: THIEVES WORLD ed by Robt. Asprin
11/23	Audio/visual meeting
12/14	WARLOCK IN SPITE OF HIMSELF by Christopher Stasheff
01/04/84	Audio/visual meeting
01/25	COURTSHIP RITE by Donald Kingsbury
02/15	Audio/visual meeting
03/07	NOR CRYSTAL TEARS by Alan Dean Foster
03/28	Audio/visual meeting
04/18	DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS by John Wyndham

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 discussion will be of Poul Anderson's novel of
relativistic flight, TAU ZERO. It is in TAU ZERO that the Bussard
engine, now a common idea in science fiction, was introduced.

2. It will appear from my attached review of THE RIGHT STUFF that I
did not like the film. This is not the case. Being against THE
RIGHT STUFF is sort of like being against Motherhood or the
American Flag. I did like the film, but so have almost all of the
reviewers and parroting the same sort of things that everyone else
has said serves no good purpose. I think what I said should have
been said, but realize that the film is worth seeing.

3. Well, people, this is it. The human race has its walking
papers. We have just 13 million years to develop interstellar
travel on a massive scale, because anyone left on the planet after
that is cold meat. Scientists studying the fossil record have
discovered that there have been massive extinctions at various
points in Earth's history. At these times most of the animal life
on earth has been extinguished and evolution has taken massive
turns. The reasons for these changes has never been established
but recently it has been discovered that they occur almost
precisely at 26 million year intervals. The extinction I am most
familiar with is the extinction of the dinosaurs 65 million years
ago. Evidence indicates that 65 million years ago a large chunk of
rock fell from the sky and punched a hole in the Earth's surface.

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

The result was Iceland's formation over the hole and enough debris shot into the atmosphere to REALLY lower the earth's temperature enough to kill off all animals larger than the size of a rat. The giant reptiles died off and were replaced by mammals as the dominant family. Until now it was thought that meteorite that caused all that was a wayward asteroid.

Now it looks like every 26 million years there is some extraterrestrial event that causes the extinctions. My guess is that the solar system enters a region of space with an excess of rock floating around. The SCIENCE NEWS article does not list when the great extinctions have been in the past, but if there was one 65 million years ago, there was one 13 million years ago and there will be one in another 13 million years. This means that this is just about the worst time to look for the debris since it is at its furthest point away. Nonetheless, it behooves us all to be ready to abandon the Earth in 13 million years or be destroyed like the dinosaurs were. You have been warned.

4. By the way, issues are generally "published" most Wednesday evenings and mailed Thursday morning, unless there is some of machine failure (or as a character in a Japanese movie once said, "unless the rains come early or the monsters come out of the hills and tear up the roads"). If you have an item, please send it to Evelyn Leeper (our publisher) to arrive by COB Wednesday.

Mark Leeper
LZ 3E-215 x2571
hocse!lznv!mrl
houxa!mhtsa!lznv!mrl
hogpd!lznv!mrl

Mercury Capsules - October 26, 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, houxal!mhtsa!lznv!psc, or hocse!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.

Where else but Mercury Capsules would you expect to find reviews of The Right Stuff?

The new movie Brainstorm seems to be generating lots of controversy; feel free to add your reviews and random comments. Don't feel obliged to produce a "full review". (For those of you at Lincroft, look in /nv1/psc/ms/sf/mercury/template for a review template.)

Brainstorm: movie, co-written and directed by Doug Trumbull.

This movie begins with a fascinating, tight sixty minutes of extrapolation and good story. A group of scientists develop hardware for recording and transmitting what goes on in the brain. We are shown people as they deal with revolutions in personal communications, mass media, love, pornography, addiction, psychiatry, torture, and a few other things I've forgotten. The movie, as it should, then settles down to deal with a single idea in depth. If it had ended just before that, I'd have given it a +3 (on the Cinefantastique scale of -4 to +4).

However, the idea Brainstorm tried to deal with is life after death. Worse, deals with it with some tricky photography and fancy graphics. Still worse, it postpones dealing with the idea by throwing in a battle between the good mad scientists and the evil Pentagon mad scientists, and a bunch of gratuitous computer hacking. The movie stops just before its ending, in which the good mad scientist is arrested and thrown in jail forever, and his knowledge is destroyed. I wonder how much of the crud was filler, to make up for scenes Natalie Wood was supposed to be in. (Ms. Wood died just before principal photography was scheduled to end.) This last half hour rates a -2.

When you like and dislike different parts of a movie, how do you rate it? Overall, a movie that starts dumb and improves, and ends well, is a good movie. A movie that ends poorly leaves me disappointed. Despite its ending, I give Brainstorm a 0, because of the first hour. But oh, what a movie this could have been!

Paul S R Chisholm

The Right Stuff: movie, directed by Philip Kaufman, based on the book by Tom Wolfe.

Some science fiction writer said it a decade ago: NASA took man's greatest adventure and made it boring. This movie makes it exciting. Highly recommended: +3.

Just not to avoid confusing you, bear in mind that some of the actors have the same last names as some of the characters, and that a couple of the actors are a couple of the characters (only one plays himself). Thus, Harris plays Glenn, Glenn plays Shepard, Shepard plays Yeager, and Yeager plays Fred. Got that?

Paul S R Chisholm

The Right Stuff: film, directed by Philip Kaufman.
It has it! +3/[-4...+4]

Evelyn C Leeper

The Dead Zone: film, directed by David Cronenberg.

Reasonably faithful adaptation of Stephen King's novel, although a lot of incidents (some of them important to the plot) were left out. There seem to be three standard responses to movies made from Stephen King books: People who read the book and didn't like it really don't like the movie. People who read the book and liked it think the film is good because it invokes the book and bad because so much detail has to be left out or changed, resulting in a so-so rating. People who haven't read the book think the movie is fair to excellent. This film is worth seeing if you're in one of the last two categories.

Evelyn C Leeper

Never Say Never Again: film, directed by Irvin Kershner.

It's a James Bond film; what more need be said? (Except perhaps that Barbara Carrera is a really great villain!) +1/[-4...+4]

Evelyn C Leeper

Eating Raoul: film.

Offbeat black comedy about one couple's attempt to rid the world of decadent swingers and make a profit in the meantime. Some very funny scenes. Highly recommended. +2/[-4...+4]

Evelyn C Leeper

Timewalker: film.

Ancient Egyptian mummy turns out to be alien from outer space. (This doesn't really give anything away.) Best touch is the twist on the standard shower scene. Not enough good stuff to be worthwhile. -1/[-4...+4]

Evelyn C Leeper

The Right Stuff: (further note).

In Star Trek: Spock has it; Kirk doesn't.

In Star Wars: Skywalker has it; Solo doesn't.

In The Right Stuff: Yeager has it; Cooper doesn't.

Evelyn C Leeper

The Warlock In Spite of Himself: novel, Christopher Stasheff. Discussion book.

On the one hand, this is featherweight fantasy, full of unlikely twists and impossible achievements. On the other hand, that's what it's supposed to be. Stasheff succeeds admirably in mixing fantasy, science, and humor. On the third hand (did I ever tell you about Fosco Goodbody, my three armed halfling? so dexterous, he didn't fight Florentine, he fought Tridentine), it's not enough. The characters are cardboard thin, the bad guys aren't believable, and the slow spots (near the beginning and end of the second half) are hard to wade through.

It's a fun read, but I'm not going to run out to buy the sequels. Borrow them, maybe.

Paul S R Chisholm

THE RIGHT STUFF -- Almost

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

No opening credits. The screen just flashes The Right Stuff and suddenly you are on the desert with Chuck Yeager looking at the Bell X-1. The credits come after what seems to be a short opening segment, but in reality that segment is over three hours long. The Right Stuff is one long film that is over before the viewer has a chance to squirm in his seat. Philip Kaufman has taken sixteen years of one small group of people pushing back a new frontier and turns it into a smoothly flowing short story. After an extended prologue of Yeager's breaking the sound barrier the film segues into a history of the Mercury program, from its pre-history at the same Edwards Air Force Base where Yeager flew, to a series of orbital flights.

There are a full spectrum of approaches one can take to chronicle a project like the Mercury program. The contemporary government and the news media took the approach of showing a very sanitized view of the space program--showing heroic Eagle Scouts going after space travel merit badges. To turn a story everyone knows into a saleable item, Tom Wolfe's book and Kaufman's film go to the opposite extreme, showing, wherever possible, the scatological side of space exploration. For example, during what should have been one of the great moments of triumph of the film--the Mercury program's sending its first man into outer space--the film's main interest was that Alan Shepard had been strapped in for hours and so was forced to wet himself. As a 30-second detail the incident would have added a nice texture to the film. As a five-minute sequence, it smacks of misplaced priorities on the director's part. While the plot of the film sticks pretty close to the facts, the tone is clearly very subjective, with Wolfe and Kaufman pointedly picking out the Yahoos and the Houhynymys. Singled out for lionization is Chuck Yeager (played by Sam Shepard) as the kind of man the Scotch companies like to feature in their magazine ads. He is the sort of rare breed who will take up a plane with a one-in-four chance of crashing, a stick of Beeman's gum, and three broken ribs, all for no more reward than the title of "fastest man alive" and a \$260/month paycheck. (Actually the script misquotes the book, which says that over a twenty-year career a pilot has a 23% chance of being killed in a crash.) Faring almost as well at the director's hands was John Glenn, who apparently really is the Eagle Scout that the media tried to make all the astronauts. He believes in America and the space program. His finest moment, however, is standing up to his superiors all the way up to the Vice-President Johnson, in defending his shy and stammering wife's choice not to meet with Johnson in front of TV cameras. Coming off not nearly as well are the news media, the government, the administrators of NASA, and the small cadre of German scientists, all of whom seem guilty of telling the public that the astronauts were heroes in the mold of Daniel Boone and/or treating them like a species of laboratory ape.

Yet even if Wolfe and Kaufman are treating the space program in the most irreverent way possible, there is deep down an awe for the men who took

the first dangerous steps to the stars. While the news media of the time only hinted that the flights were dangerous and left the impression that American scientists had made the flights milk-runs, in the film the flights seem much more dangerous. During the sequence showing John Glenn's flight, all indicators show his heat shield to have fallen away. Mission Control seems convinced that there is no way he can return alive. Whether hair-breadth escapes really were common in the space program or whether they are just filmmaker's license will probably never be known. The real hair-breadth escape, however, takes place much closer to the ground to non-astronaut Yeager, who finds himself 20 miles up in a dead plane. To walk away from a plane that has crashed from that high up seems to prove Wolfe's thesis that, more than any of the astronauts, it was Yeager who had the right stuff.

THE RIGHT STUFF
A review from the NET by Roger Noe

(Contributed by Dale L. Skran)

>From hocsf!hogpc!houxm!ihnp4!ihlts!rjnoe Wed Dec 31 19:00:00 1969
Relay-Version: version B 2.10 5/3/83; site hocse.UUCP
Posting-Version: version B 2.10.1exp 10/6/83; site ihlts.UUCP
Path: hocse!hocsf!hogpc!houxm!ihnp4!ihlts!rjnoe
From: rjnoe@ihlts.UUCP
Newsgroups: net.movies,net.space
Subject: The Right Stuff
Message-ID: <249@ihlts.UUCP>
Date: Mon, 24-Oct-83 14:17:05 EDT
Date-Received: Tue, 25-Oct-83 02:15:44 EDT
Organization: AT&T Bell Labs, Naperville, IL
Lines: 60

"The Right Stuff", while it is a very good movie, was something of a disappointment to me. Perhaps I was expecting too much because of my special fascination with the subject matter but then again I think the movie does not wholeheartedly succeed even for those with lesser expectations.

Nothing but the highest praise can be given Phil Kaufman for his direction and (to a much lesser degree) writing. His skill is evident in virtually every scene. These scenes work far better in the movie than they did in Tom Wolfe's book. The failing point of the movie is that it is too much like Wolfe's writing. I perceive this to be the fault of the editors. "The Right Stuff" had FIVE editors, and it looks like they all worked independently, throwing their edited footage together at random. There is no coherence, no fluidity to this movie. Some points are repeated all too often while others (which needed to be made) are all but ignored. I should also mention that Kaufman could have written it better had he not used so many "Wolfe-isms". Wolfe's unique style, while rather interesting to read, just grates on the ears when one hears the words spoken.

On the acting level, the movie is excellent considering the difficulties inherent in a story with no main character. They've chosen to emphasize John Glenn, Alan Shepard, and Gordon Cooper at the expense of Wally Schirra and Deke Slayton. If you see the movie, count the number of lines spoken by Schirra (Lance Henriksen) and Slayton (Scott Paulin)—you'll be surprised how small the number really is. But this is all but unavoidable here. The actors themselves are all very good, most notably Ed Harris (as John Glenn), Sam Shepard (as Chuck Yeager), Scott Glenn (as Alan Shepard), and Fred Ward (as Gus Grissom). Dennis Quaid (as Gordon Cooper) and Charles Frank (as Scott Carpenter) should not be forgotten for their more than adequate performances, and as I've said Henriksen and Paulin just weren't given enough opportunity to show how well they can act.

Credit for the story has to be given to Wolfe. He has done an incomparable job of presenting a side of the first seven astronauts seldom seen before

his book was published. He has also shown how much effect these men had on the direction and philosophy of the manned space program. The movie does a better job than the book does in showing how the similarities and differences in these seven personalities contributed to this end.

There is little noteworthy about the special effects. They are more "artsy" than accurate and, while pleasing to look at, detracted from the authenticity of the movie. I do have to give credit for the achievement of depicting aircraft in flight when years have passed since the last of these relics actually flew. There are many inaccuracies and inconsistencies which aviation fans will spot easily.

They have also gone too far with the humor in this movie. I disagree with Walter Cronkite that they made LBJ look like a buffoon--while very funny, I think it was probably not too far off target. But they depict government workers and German scientists collectively by caricaturizing them. This time could have been better spent giving the viewer more historical details of the Mercury program.

One thing I will say for this movie is that it did not bore me. The three hours (plus!) passed by more quickly than two often do, even faster than another long (but good) movie such as "Gandhi". I do recommend it, particularly to those who read Wolfe's book and didn't hate it.

***% (that's three and one half stars out of four)

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Roger Noe

...ihnp4!ihlts!rjnoe

NEVER SAY NEVER AGAIN

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

Back when the James Bond films were just getting popular, Kevin McClory, a friend of Ian Fleming gave him an original screenplay for a James Bond film. Fleming liked the story and adapted it into the novel Thunderball. The novel was then filmed and there was some sort of lawsuit that followed between the former friends over who really had the rights to the story. McClory ended up with the right to produce a remake of Thunderball. He has finally made that film with Sean Connery (who said he would never play James Bond again) once again in the lead role.

Never Say Never Again breaks out of the usual mold of Hollywood being flashier than their originals. If anything, Thunderball looks like a flashier and higher-budget remake of Never Say Never Again. There are a number of serious problems with the casting of the new film. Sean Connery is starting to look a little long in the tooth to be playing James Bond. Even though he is two years younger than Roger Moore, he completely lacks Moore's thirties-ish appearance. Connery looks old and bejeweled as he is lectured by a much younger-seeming M. This mature Bond is put through a lot of silly situations by Lorenzo Semple Jr.'s script that seems to be a long way from the Ian Fleming character. It just does not feel right to see Bond playing video games or ballroom dancing.

Semple's script has much bigger faults than a few gag situations for Bond. Klaus Maria Brandauer seems like a cooler, sharper villain than most of those in the Broccoli-Saltzman series, but he makes much sillier blunders, like telling Bond and company all Bond needs to know to destroy him. Even stranger, he gives away (on a piece of jewelry) a map to his top-secret base. There is no reason for him to hand out such valuable information except that the script wouldn't work any other way.

Semple has packed the script with a multitude of tiresome sexual double entendres and absurd sexual situations. In one a vicious, male-hating female assassin is ready to kill Bond, but will not do it until he writes on a grubby piece of paper that she was the best lover he had ever had. Of course, in trying to get this stupid affidavit--useless because it would have been made under duress--she manages to get herself killed instead of bond. This deadly efficiency and intelligence seems better suited to Batman's TV foes than to Bond's film foes. Time after time in this longest of the James Bond movies, the script shoots the film in the foot. From the first sequence, which borrows heavily from Star Trek II, to the decidedly unspectacular finale, this film proves to be one of the Bond films that least bears thinking about.

Of all the Bond films made by anyone only Casino Royale, You Only Live Twice, Live and Let Die, Moonraker, and Never Say Never Again did not have Richard Maibaum working on the scripts. With evidence like that, I think it matters decidedly less who plays Bond than that Richard Maibaum write the script. Never Say Never Again decidedly needed his help.

THE DEAD ZONE

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

David Cronenberg makes fast-paced, violent horror films, usually with a strong dose of gore effects. Stephen King takes ideas worthy of good short stories and writes and writes until the short story idea is the basis for a highly padded novel. His novel The Dead Zone is an example with mediocre development of not very interesting characters filling in pages to flesh out a moderately interesting ESP tale of about twenty pages into a 300-page novel. Because the two styles (Cronenberg's and King's) are so different, I was anxious to see how they came together on the screen in the film version of The Dead Zone. The result is Cronenberg's least gory film and also his draggiest.

The Dead Zone is a cold, bitter film about a man whose special fate and talent have left him isolated and alone. Johnny Smith (Christopher Walken) comes out of a five-year coma with the ability to touch people and know something from the touch. Sometimes he sees the person's future, sometimes he sees the person's past, sometimes he sees a possible future that isn't going to happen, and sometimes he sees what is currently happening to someone the person loves. Neither the book nor the film are bothered by the inconsistency. Johnny sees only things, however, that have a staggering dramatic effect. He never seems to see things like how the person will have his eggs the next morning. Whatever fate gave him this power also gave him only acquaintances with dramatic things happening in their lives. In any event, to avoid seeing too much about people Johnny has isolated himself in an old New Hampshire house somewhere where there is always snow on the ground.

The book tells the story not only of Johnny but of Greg Stillson, an insidious and dastardly politician rising to power. The book makes it obvious that Smith and Stillson are on some sort of collision course, but the film leaves Stillson as a minor character until the last twenty minutes or so. In both versions of the story, Stillson's come-uppance comes with a whimper where a bang is needed.

The Dead Zone is a film with not enough horror to be called a horror film, a little gore but not enough to call this a gore film, and a little fantasy but not enough to call it a fantasy film. It functions best as mood piece, though much of the mood effect comes from muted colors and dismal weather that is always raining, snowing, or just too cold. As a film The Dead Zone is a bit too slow and deliberate for my taste. Neither the book nor the film had the focus of the film version of King's Cujo, seen earlier this year.

THE DEAD ZONE by Stephen King
Viking, 1979, \$11.95.

Book review by Evelyn C. Leeper
(Originally appeared in the 11/14/79 HOSFS Notice)

When Johnny Smith is six years old, he falls and suffers a minor concussion. This appears to have only temporary effects and is soon forgotten. Twenty years later, John Smith is in a car accident which puts him in a coma for four and a half years. When he awakens, he discovers that he has developed psychic abilities, apparently due to the combination of the two accidents. (Smith tells his girlfriend a story the night of the accident that is obviously a parallel to what will happen to him.)

It is important to realize at the outset that in spite of the realistic settings and many references to actual occurrences, King is not trying to write a "true-to-life" novel. His characters are often larger than life--as in The Stand, some characters are totally evil, others are totally good. There are, of course, many characters whose personalities show aspects of both types, but King is writing the modern equivalent of a medieval miracle play, Good vs. Evil.

When Smith wakes up, he discovers that by touching a person (or an object touched by that person), he can see into that person's past, present, and future. (Later, King dispenses with the need for physical contact between Smith and the person.) The results are predictable--Smith becomes a "nine-day-wonder" in the press, people send him objects and questions ("Here is my son's last letter. He was declared MIA in Vietnam. What happened to him?"), he is asked by a sheriff to help track down a killer, and so forth. Gradually, Smith comes to loathe his talent, as more and more people become afraid of him--afraid to touch him because of what he might learn from the contact. He attempts to hide by moving to another town, but he cannot escape himself. He gets a perverse enjoyment out of meeting the various political candidates (he lives in Maine, right over the New Hampshire border) and discovering what the future has in store for them. It is in this section that King seems to be striving for realism, but his method is a trifle heavy-handed. It is very easy to throw in references to Muskie's crying, Carter's win, etc., in an attempt to seem accurate, but since the novel does not strive to be realistic in its characterization, topical references such as these serve only to jar the reader. Finally, Smith meets Greg Stillson, an ex-Bible salesman with a violent temper which he can barely control. When Stillson shakes Smith's hand, Smith realizes that Stillson (whose campaign seems to combine the more obnoxious features of Billy Carter, Lester Maddox (of the ax handles), and "Lonesome" Rhodes in A Face in the Crowd) will eventually become President and start a nuclear war. (Somehow, in a way never made clear, Stillson realizes that Smith knows something about him that could hurt him.) At this point, Smith is faced with the dilemma: Knowing that Stillson will destroy a large percentage (if not all) of the human race, what should he do?

The last part of the book deals with this problem. Again, King seems to lay it on a bit thick--Smith asks an extraordinary number and assortment of people whether, if they had a time machine and could do it, they would go back to 1932 and kill Hitler. Somehow, none of the people he asks feels this is an unusual question, in spite of the fact that it is totally unrelated to anything else in the conversation. But King also deals with some important issues. Stillson, regarded at the start of his campaign for the House of Representatives as the village clown, has become somewhat of a folk hero. The press has played up his good points, and skipped over the bad (when a little girl was injured after being pushed off a stage by Stillson's bodyguards, a group of ex-motorcycle toughs, this gets only a one-line filler in the newspapers). The one person who was investigating Stillson's background of blackmail and strong-arm tactics is mysteriously killed when his car blows up. The few people who are still bothered by Stillson's extremism are drowned out by the many who love his showmanship and promises. The parallel with Hitler's rise is, in fact, a fairly accurate and frightening one.

I suspect that when King wrote the ending, he felt it to be clear and straightforward. However, the current [as of 1979] political situation, vis-a-vis a certain Presidential hopeful and his past, rendered it quite ambiguous and more than slightly troubling. This book will leave a lot of people asking themselves, "When does a political figure cross the line between that which is acceptable and that which is not?" A better question might be: "How can the voter tell what is behind the mask?" Very highly recommended.

A CENTURY OF PROGRESS by Fred Saberhagen
Tor, 1983, \$2.95.

Book review by Evelyn C. Leeper

Typical parallel-worlds, time-travel story. (Only a science fiction fan could say something like that with a straight face.) Alan Norlund is recruited (read that "coerced") into helping a group fighting Hitler in all timelines. Along the way he gets Jerry Rosen, a Jew, involved. We get the now standard scenes of a man from the present coping with the past, and a man from the past coping with the present. At least Saberhagen manages these scenes fairly well. One good touch is Rosen's difficulty in accepting integration ("On the beach Jerry could see niggers, playing around and stretched out on the sand, mixed right in among the white people, who seemed to be paying them no attention at all. Jerry might have stared longer at this phenomenon, but..."), then later not being surprised at his acceptance even though a Jew, because he remembered "one conviction that he'd always held about the future, that magical world of fifty or a hundred years to come. By the time that men were getting ready to travel into space, things on Earth would have changed to the point where nobody cared who had a Jewish background and who did not." So go figure people?

Anyway, the story proceeds along fairly standard lines to a fairly predictable conclusion. Norlund and Rosen travel back and forth, attempting to carry out their jobs and be reunited with their families. There are, of course, the bad guys to contend with. One problem here is that everyone seems entirely too sure of which side are the good guys, even when they have been told practically nothing about what's going on. Saberhagen's writing style makes the reading easy and puts the book slightly above average, but don't expect anything revolutionary. (The back blurb, by the way, lies. I won't spoil it by saying how.)

WELCOME TO MARS by James Blish
Avon, 1983 (1967), \$2.50.

Book review by Evelyn C. Leeper

Juvenile (sort-of) science fiction. Eighteen-year-old Dolf Haertel invents (discovers) anti-gravity and builds a spacecraft (disguised as a treehouse, but airtight) in his backyard. He goes to Mars and gets stranded. His friend, Nanette, who knows something of his experiments, builds another ship and follows him to try to rescue him. Standard Robinson-Crusoe-type story (with aliens) follows.

One good point and an example of the attention to detail that makes Blish a good author: he doesn't strand his female character for years on another planet without considering the difficulties her monthly cycles might cause. (This seems to indicate a target audience in the eleven to fifteen-year-old range, somewhat older than a strict juvenile audience.) His solution is less than believable. Well, his solution to a lot of their other problems (like food, water, and air) is less than believable also, so one can't quibble too much.

All in all, this book is entertaining, if featherweight, reading. There are much worse ways to spend an evening.

ELLERY QUEEN'S LOST MEN edited by Eleanor Sullivan
Dial Press, 1983, \$12.95.

Book review by Evelyn C. Leeper

Average collection of mystery stories, of which only a couple have any sf/fantasy/horror content. "Lost-men" stories are stories in which someone seems to disappear (not unlike Judge Crater), just as "locked-room" stories are stories in which a crime is committed in a locked room that no one could have gotten into (supposedly). I suppose the reason this was sent to someone on an SF mailing list as a review copy is that the concept implies a certain fantasy element. If you like mystery stories, you would probably enjoy at least some of the stories in this book, though I found few of them to be as cleverly written as, say, an Agatha Christie story. Even the Jacques Futrelle story was one of his lesser works. (I have a predilection for puzzle-type mysteries which should be taken into account.)

Gaming (by Rob Mitchell)

In my first column, I reviewed Mayfair Games' Sanctuary, and gave it a moderate, if not enthusiastic, endorsement. Shortly after writing that column, I received my latest GAMES magazine in the mail. This month's issue contains the famed GAMES 100, a list (with brief descriptions) of the 100 games most highly recommended by the editors of the magazine (except for games playable on home computers, which have their own special list next month). Among the other games listed this year, are Sanctuary and the topic of this column, Dune.

Dune is put out by Avalon Hill, but the development and graphics were done by a design group that later went on to form Eon Products, a company known for clever gaming innovations. Predictably, then, Dune is visually appealing and immediately captures the spirit of the book.

The game revolves around the struggle for control of Arrakis, with each of the 2-6 players representing one faction -- Paul, the Fremens, Baron Harkonnen, the Bene Gesserit, the Spacemen's Guild, or the Emperor. Each faction has special strengths and weaknesses that influence the play. Your strategy will depend on who you are, but will rely on a blend of military force, alliances, treachery, and luck. Spice is the currency that allows players to bribe key characters such as Duncan Idaho or Lady Jessica, or to buy protective measures against the poisons and assassinations that are a fact of life. Sandworms, storms, and the Family Atomics can all play a crucial role in determining the winner(s). Winning is determined by who controls which key territories at the end of play.

For \$16, you get a lot. The game is only moderately complex, and will take 2-3 hours. There's a lot of interaction with other players, you can win through cooperation or deceit, the rules are clear, and the mechanics are smooth. I agree with the Editors of GAMES on this one; Dune is a winner.