

Lincroft-Holmdel Science Fiction Club
Club Notice - 5/30/84 -- Vol. 2, No. 48

MEETINGS UPCOMING:

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

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>
06/19	Video meeting: LAST MAN ON EARTH pt. 1
06/20	Video meeting: LAST MAN ON EARTH pt. 2
07/11	STARTIDE RISING by David Brin
08/22	TEA WITH THE BLACK DRAGON by R. A. MacAvoy
10/03	CIRCUS WORLD by Barry Longyear
11/14	THE TOMBS OF ATUAN by Ursula K. LeGuin
01/02	THE CIRCUS OF DR. LAO by Charles G. Finney
02/13	SLAN by A. E. Van Vogt

LZ's library and librarian Lance Larsen (576-2668) are in LZ 3C-219. Mark Leeper (576-2571, LZ 3E-215) and Evelyn Leeper (576-2378, LZ 1D-216) are co-chairpeople. HO's library and librarian Tim Schroeder (949-5866) are in HO 2G-432. John Jetzt (577-5316) is HO-chairperson.

1. Please note two important differences in the club. Evelyn Leeper is now a co-chairperson. Bell Labs Club wanted to have one person to be chairperson. That is no longer a requirement so Evelyn's ample contribution to the club is now officially recognized in title. Members should notice very little difference since responsibilities will not change. Evelyn is already doing at least half of the work associated with the club. One difference that people will notice is that we have a new librarian in Holmdel. In the nick of time just before we were going to have to close the Holmdel branch of the library, we got a volunteer to take over that task. The new librarian is Tim Schroeder (949-5866) and the library is located in HO 2G-432.

2. On getting a new librarian in Holmdel, it is proper time to express appreciation to our former librarians. Mike Lukacs, who has been the librarian for years, deserves thanks for the time that he kept the library running smoothly. We should also thank his predecessor, Rich Ditch both for his services as the first club librarian and for his careful experimentation which helped us develop a code of ethics for science fiction librarians. Also we thank our current librarians for their continuing services.

3. Recent acquisitions by the Lincroft SF Library include:

Brin, David	STARTIDE RISING
Finney, Charles G.	THE CIRCUS OF DR. LAO
LeGuin, Ursula K.	THE TOMBS OF ATUAN

LeGuin, Ursula K. A WIZARD OF EARTHSEA
Longyear, Barry CIRCUS WORLD
Van Vogt, A. E. SLAN
Wollheim, Donald (ed.) 1984 ANNUAL BEST SF

Mark Leeper
LZ 3E-215 x2571
...{houxn,hogpd,hocse}!lznv!mr1

Mercury Capsules - May 30, 1984

"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 wi!psc from the AT&T-IS ENS systems in Lincroft; hocse!lznv!psc, houxn!lznv!psc, or hogpd!lznv!psc from everywhere else. If that's impossible, I'm at LZ 1D-212, 576-2374.

+ Damiano's Lute: novel, R A MacAvoy, 1984.

Boy, can you tell this is the middle of a trilogy! It won't make a shred of sense if you haven't read the first book, and it makes you want to start the third book immediately, if only to see how MacAvoy's going to manage to finish this.

So how is it? Pretty good; starts slow, gets better. I'm a little confused about when Damiano changed his attitude about a few things, but it's not unreasonable.

Recommended for people who liked Damiano; but if you can, wait until September, so you can start the third book when you've finished the second.

Paul S R Chisholm

+ The Robots of Dawn: novel, Isaac Asimov, 1983. Nominated for the 1984 Hugo.

There are two problems with this novel. One is that Asimov has, God help us, discovered that he can put s-e-x in his novels. And he has. He writes about sex on a planet where any physical contact, or even being in the same room, with another person is traumatic. He writes about sex on a planet where having sex is treated as casually as having lunch. He writes about sex on a planet where the term 'incest' is meaningless. He writes about sex between humans and robots. He uses words like 'masturbation' and 'orgasm'. He's boring. There are writers who can write about sex--Ellison and Silverberg come to mind--and there are writers who can't. Asimov falls into the latter category (as does Heinlein, for all his attempts).

The other problem is the same as with Moreta: Dragonlady of Pern (reviewed here last week): it doesn't stand on its own. If you haven't read the first two novels (The Naked Sun and The Caves of Steel), The Robots of Dawn isn't going to make much sense. Oh, it won't be totally obscure, but you will miss a lot of the important implications.

On the plus side, if you have read the first two novels in the series, The Robots of Dawn is a fairly enjoyable book. It suffers from Asimov's trying to tie it into his "Foundation" series, and I was able to guess the "solution" less than halfway through the book, but there are worse ways to pass an evening.

Evelyn C Leeper

Gemini Capsules - May 30, 1984

"Gemini Capsules": SF review column, edited by Rob Mitchell. Appears in the "Lincroft-Holmdel SF Club Notice".

A medium for quick reviews of of anything of interest in the worlds of science fiction/fantasy, although the gimmick will be to relate pairs of interesting anythings. Unlike other columns, I'll pass along even the slanderous and scatological comments I receive. You can reach out and touch me at 576-6106, at LZ 1B-306, or via hogpd!jrrt.

Two science fiction circus novels

The year 2142 was a rough one for the world's only surviving circus. O'Hara's Greater Shows was verging on bankruptcy, and the corporate Powers That Be had decided to close it down. But John J. O'Hara knew "the show must go on," and even if Earth was too jaded to be interested in a circus, surely there were plenty of other planets where clowns, jugglers, and lion tamers could earn a living... Such is the introductory plot of Barry B. Longyear's City of Baraboo and its successor, Circus World.

The first book details how O'Hara manages to "steal" a spaceship and develop the circus into an interstellar attraction (along the way, incurring the wrath of a mogul who vows to destroy the show). This villain finally manages to succeed, because in the last page of the book, the sabotaged ship crashes on an obscure planet well off the normal transit routes. Time passes. The survivors, realizing there is no hope of rescue, nonetheless eke out a living on the planet, and gradually develop a "civilization" that retains most of their circus background. After a few hundred years, the planet (named Momus after the Greek god of ridicule and censure) was discovered by the rest of humanity and Momus became the center of a tug-of-war between opposing stellar empires. The response of the populace and a few enlightened outsiders to this struggle is the basis for Circus World.

So much for the plot summary; what about the review? In a word, fantastic. Longyear does a superb job of bringing to life the circus from the performers' viewpoint; he clearly spent a great deal of time in research, and he portrays the circus with loving respect. The characters are vivid and three-dimensional (except for that evil businessman in the first book, who's embarrassingly stereotypical). The books are novels but were clearly written originally as short stories, so Longyear doesn't give the reader a chance to get bored. Make no mistake; I heartily endorse these books (and a third, Elephant Song, which I read several years ago and which covers the first few years of life on Momus). At least a 3.9 on the Leeper -4/4 scale.

R L Mitchell

INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM
A film review by Mark R. Leeper

There is more to making a sequel than simply reusing characters. How the characters strike an audience will be very dependent on the style of the filmmaker. If the style of a filmmaker varies radically from one film to another, each film of a series may still stand on its own, but the seam will be painfully obvious between the films and the series as a whole will be weaker. This is the problem with the James Bond series. The Bond of From Russia with Love is a hard-as-nails secret agent who can be suave if given a chance. The Bond of Moonraker is a suave bungler whom the scriptwriter contrives to always be at the right place at the right time. The transition was slow but the series as a whole is weaker. There are many fewer films in the Indiana Jones series from Spielberg and Lucas--the second film just came out--but already the two films do not fit well together.

Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom amalgamates the styles of Raiders of the Lost Ark and Spielberg's 1941. The result is enjoyable but a real disappointment. Raiders of the Lost Ark copied the serial style by taking itself semi-seriously. It is nicely ambiguous as to whether the audience is supposed to take seriously scenes like Jones being dragged behind a truck protected by only a leather jacket. The viewer is free to believe such scenes or guffaw at them. Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom takes the scene a step further by having Jones stop a speeding coal train by dragging his foot on the wheel. Again the viewer can ask, "Is that for real?" But when Spielberg adds billows of white smoke coming from the shoe, turning the scene into a joke, the answer is a resounding "Of course not!" The serious/tongue-in-cheek ambiguity that worked so well in the first film is taken away. When Spielberg cinematically tells his audience "this scene is just for laughs" the adventure aspect is taken away. We no longer have an Indiana Jones film but an Indiana Jones cartoon in live action.

And the humor of Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom is all too often a brand that simply does not work: the contrived mechanical humor of 1941. The opening nightclub sequence of Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom is just Spielberg asking what the elements are present in a nightclub and how to combine them to create as much chaos as possible. Spielberg just said to himself, "Okay, the diamond is on the floor. Now how do we make it hard to pick up? I know--suddenly a crowd of dancers comes out and kicks it around the floor. Now what? I know--a bucket of ice is spilled on the floor so you can't find the diamond." The addition of this clockwork humor fills the proverbial much-needed gap in the first film. It is not in the style of the 40's serial the way Raiders of the Lost Ark was; it is 1941 humor and this film comes off as Spielberg's attempt to vindicate that style of filmmaking.

As far as the plot is concerned, this film had nearly the potential of Raiders of the Lost Ark. It starts with Jones frenetically finishing up some previous adventure in which he was procuring a rare and valuable find in return for a diamond. Once again his find is stolen from him and his

customer attempts to kill him with a novel death trap involving flying him thousands of miles, then sacrificing a valuable plane on the sound assumption that airplanes are cheaper than bullets. This literally drops Jones (together with a nightclub singer and a boy sidekick) into his next adventure, the return of a sacred stone to an (Asian) Indian village. The stone is being kept at an Indian palace built on top of the temple of a thuggee cult which is built on a slave labor mine. Jones goes down only the three layers so misses the drug ring, the ancient artifact counterfeiting factory, and the bordello, which were the next three floors down in the sub-basement.

Like any Lucas or Spielberg film (yes, including 1941, though perhaps not THX-1138), Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom entertains. The viewer lays down his five bucks gladly, sure that he is going to get five bucks worth of entertainment. Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom is worth the price of admission, but Raiders of the Lost Ark and Star Wars were worth the price and some more besides. Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom, with its gaps in logic and contrivance, is worth only the admission price. The next Indiana Jones film may not be worth that if Spielberg doesn't stop having fun making films instead of getting down to the serious business of making fun films.