

Lincroft-Holmdel Science Fiction Club
Club Notice - 6/6/84 -- Vol. 2, No. 49

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. We are getting to the Hugo voting time so once again this year,
we will be showing as many as possible of the Hugo-nominated
dramatic presentations at the Thursday night Leeper house showings.
Since RETURN OF THE JEDI is unavailable for showing, we will not
show that. Two of the films have been on cable and two are
available by rental. We will start with

FAHRENHEIT 451 (1968) par Francois Truffaut
SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES (1983) dir by Jack Clayton

The first (which obviously is NOT up for a Hugo) is one of Ray
Bradbury's "They can't take that away from me" stories about a
future in which books have been banned [as opposed to sunlight
being taken away or the right to walk around or any of the other
things that Bradbury is afraid that future nasties will take away].
It is quite and effective mood piece. The second film is
Bradbury's horror novel brought to the screen from his own script.
This is not a paranoia piece, but an effective little horror film
with some real depth.

2. This is to verify what most of you already know. As has been
pointed out to me by upwards of 30 phone calls, the May 30 issue
was number 48 not number 47. I have had several complaints that
people were not sure how there could be two issues numbered
47. Six different people, each of whom claim to be writing the
comprehensive guide to the writings of Mark R. Leeper have pointed

out that this will screw up their indexing schemes. One person called me all the way from Denver to be sure that there hadn't been previously double numbered issues afraid that he may have missed an issue of my vibrant writing. I have to thank you all for your concern. Hopefully I will once again return the notice to the high standards that each of you has come to expect from it.

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

Mercury Capsules - June 6, 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 wilpsc 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.

+ Star Trek III: The Search for Spock: movie, written and produced by Harve Bennett, directed by Leonard Nimoy, 1984.

This movie is truer to the television series than either of its predecessors. There's a word for this: pandering. Dammit, what we have here is YAMWAGS (Yet Another Movie Without A Good Story). Some scenes played to my sentimentality as a Trekkie, but there wasn't enough story to fill the playing time. Sign of a bad movie: I can't tell you anything about the story without giving too much away.

I can tell you what I didn't like about it. All five starship commanders were wimps, including Kirk. The battle was nifty for about thirty seconds; it would have been more spectacular if it was longer, not to mention more logical. (Don't mention logical!) The tactical wizardry I've come to associate with Kirk and Star Trek was largely absent, with one exception: and that, the beginning of the battle, was one of the best scenes in the movie. There was too little action; not just non-stop, Raiders of the Lost Ark action, but simple "then the next thing happens" action.

By this time, I expect the special effects to be invisible. I guess I expect too much. Between the icicle looking like chicken wire and papier-mache, the simulated computer graphics that might have come from an Atari 800, and the bad mattes (see also below), it looks like the producer's reach was longer than his grasp.

See it . . . but don't get your hopes too high. +1 on [-4..+4] scale.

Paul S R Chisholm

+ Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom: movie, directed by Steven Spielberg, story by George Lucas (executive producer), 1984.

YAMWAGS. They've stopped aiming for the ten-year-old in all of us, and started aiming for ten-year-olds. All the kids I've heard loved it; the adults weren't as satisfied. Bad mattes and unconvincing stunts (e.g., the scene with the raft) hurt the movie; lack of story cripples it. I couldn't keep my sense of disbelief suspended, partly because the movie dragged, at least as compared to its predecessor. +1 on [-4..+4] scale.

Paul S R Chisholm

+ I, Vampire: novel, Jody Scott, 1984. The main character of this novel is a seven-hundred-year-old female vampire who falls in love with Virginia Woolf (who is actually an alien fish-woman from outer space) and gets involved in a time travel scheme to sell famous men's sperm. As you can tell, this is not your typical vampire novel. In fact, it's not your typical anything novel. It's . . . well, it's interesting. The vampire aspect is very much down-played, as is the alien fish-woman and the scheme. This seems to be a surrealistic novel with the message that we each make our own reality. Scott's is flippin' weird. She does have some unique explanations for why we (humans) are the way we are (and what we should do about it), but I can't say that I wholeheartedly agree with all of them. Not exactly recommended, but if the description intrigues you, give it a try.

Evelyn C Leeper

+ Falcon's Gold: film, 1984. I think this must be a Mexican film. In any case it is a half-bad imitation of Raiders of the Lost Ark. It stars John Marley, best known for sharing a bed with a horse's head after refusing to do business with The Godfather. His slightly better-looking co-star is Simon McCorkindale, TV's Manimal. Together they haul around Mexico looking for some ancient gold dinner plates with meteoric rock centers which could be turned into super-weapons. They face death in dozens of unimaginative ways. This is poor man's Spielberg, but okay for matinee crowds. Cable watchers get their chance this month. (Marley, incidentally, died April 16.)

Mark R Leeper

STAR TREK III: THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK
A film review by Mark R. Leeper

The Star Trek TV series at its best (which it rarely was) offered the viewer ideas, action, and drama. The action would spring from an idea and the drama would spring from the action. For example, "Devil in the Dark," one of the better episodes, was built on the idea that to a sufficiently alien creature (in this case the rock-like Horta) actions that humans consider innocent could make us life-threatening monsters, and the alien's efforts to defend itself would only serve to make it seem a monster to us. This idea clearly leads to a story with action and human drama. No other science fiction series ever succeeded in providing ideas, action, and drama as often as Star Trek.

Up to the present, neither have the "Star Trek" films. Star Trek: The Motion Picture had weak drama and virtually no action. For these it substituted a new fourth element, awesome special effects. Like Godel's Theorem, it was beautiful and intellectually stimulating but could be appreciated by very few. Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan had much more action, a little more human drama, and very little in the way of ideas. What ideas there were were badly flawed and did not bear much consideration. For the most part it was cops and robbers in space. The first film was not at all like a Star Trek episode; the second was like a lesser episode. Star Trek III by far comes the closest of the three to what made a good episode of the TV series. It has more and better ideas than the previous film, and at the same time it has better action and better drama. In spite of this, one fault that Star Trek III: The Search for Spock is that it does not stand well on its own, but is a more a continuation of Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan, beginning where that film ended and continuing the second half of a three-and-a-half hour story about the Genesis Effect. This second part of the story involves Kirk's return to the Genesis planet. Kirk steals his old starcraft and sets off on his own--with the help of a few loyal friends--to search for the Vulcan's remains which he so blithely shot into space in the previous film. Why not simply let poor Spock rest in peace? Suffice it to say there is a good reason why Kirk needs this particular moldering Vulcan carcass. But to find Spock's body Kirk will have to fight a pack of ugly Klingons on their own mission to the Genesis planet. Once again Kirk finds himself outmanned and outgunned by the contingent of Klingon warriors led by Christopher Lloyd--somewhat less befuddled here than his Reverend Jim from Taxi.

Leonard Nimoy's direction start a little maudlin and hammy, but soon takes on a darker tone. In retrospect, it seems like there was not a lot of plot for the screen time, but the tale never drags and the characters are interesting and empathetic. At this point, it was no small feat to make Kirk once again a sympathetic character. In the previous two films he seemed a pompous incompetent whose correct decisions never seemed to compensate for his blunders. Welcome back, Star Trek.

WORLDS APART
by Joe Haldeman
reviewed by Dale Skran

Welcome back Joe! Several years Joe Haldeman exploded on the science fiction scene with a brilliant first SF novel, The Forever War, winning both the Hugo and the Nebula. Since then I have despaired as his later novels, Mindbridge and All My Sins Remembered seemed to repeat the black finale of the first, and draw off a limited store of ideas (powered suits a la Starship Troopers, etc.). I refer to a "black finale" not because all turns out badly for the major characters, but because Haldeman seemed unable to imagine a peaceful human future without having mankind become a race of mentally linked clones.

In Worlds Apart, the second book in a trilogy, (following Worlds) Haldeman is defining quality science fiction. All in one book Joe has accurate science, plausible societies, pulse-pounding action, stomach-turning realism, believable characters, a grim warning for all humanity, and a tale that holds out real hope for the human future. To top it off, Haldeman is maturing as a craftsman and a wordsmith. The best parts of Worlds Apart echo in your mind with haunting images of desolation created by the matter of fact words of Vietnam Vet Haldeman. You heard it here first: this is Hugo material.

Unlike many middle books in trilogies, Worlds Apart stands apart, although the first chapter is a bit rough as a transition. The book ends without leaving a lot of loose threads hanging about, while seeming unhurried and plausible.

Haldeman is writing fiction about the kind of lives we or our children will actually live, rather than copping out with tales of unicorns or a vaguely Romanesque galactic empire. At the same time Joe writes sitting down, and spares us the lectures of a Heinlein or the jingoism of a Pournelle. If this book has a message, it is a grim warning about the future if mankind remains confined to "one world," the Earth. In the first book, Worlds, the Earth is destroyed in a planet-wide war, along with many of the "worlds," L5 colonies near the earth. Only one survives, "New New York," buried inside a miles long asteroid. Worlds Apart continues the saga as characters both on the Earth and in New New (as it is called) struggle to survive.

I'll say no more. Buy it. Read it. Lend it to your friends. Then write your Congressman and demand to know why he doesn't support the space program.