

Lincroft-Holmdel Science Fiction Club
Club Notice - 1/30/85 -- Vol. 3, No. 28

MEETINGS UPCOMING:

Unless otherwise stated, all meetings are on Wednesdays at noon.
LZ meetings are in LZ 3A-206; HO meetings are in HO 2N-523.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>
02/20	HO: ROGER CORMAN--HOLLYWOOD'S WILD ANGEL (video)
02/20	LZ: ?
03/13	HO: DOWNBELOW STATION by C. J. Cherryh
03/13	LZ: ?
04/03	HO: Book Swap (HO 2N-529)
04/03	LZ: ?
04/24	HO: CIRCUS OF DR. LAO by Charles G. Finney
04/24	LZ: ?

Chair is Mark Leeper, HO 1E-412 (834-2954). LZ Librarian is Lance Larsen, LZ 3C-219 (576-2668). HO Librarian is Tim Schroeder, HO 2G-427A (949-5866). Jill-of-all-trades is Evelyn Leeper, HO 1B-437A (834-4723).

1. As of this writing, nobody has volunteered to be the Lincroft chairperson. Now I have tried to keep this friendly, but it will be the best for all concerned if someone steps forward to take the position. If I have to shanghai someone for the position, they may not be the best choice for the job. I make no promises that whomever I hit on the head and force to take the position will be the best candidate for the job. I may even pick an involuntary non-sf fan for the job. Believe me, you won't like that. (Actually, more likely is the club will just die at Lincroft. You probably don't want that either.)

2. On Monday, February 4, at 9PM, Channel 13 will run a 90-minute "American Playhouse" of John Varley's "Overdrawn at the Memory Bank." We're talking real SF here, folks, not that "sci-fi" stuff like OVERWORLD (see review elsewhere in this issue). At least we can *hope* it's real SF. (It will also be re-run Saturday, February 9, at 4:30 PM.) Catch it if you can. [--ecl]

3. On Thursday, February 7, at 7 PM (note the earlier time), we will be showing at the Leepers' two exercises in science fiction. They are:

*****Presorted*****
* Leeper, Evelyn C. *
* 114A HO 1B-437A *

Wee Folks:

DR. CYCLOPS (1940) dir. by Ernest Schoedsack

FANTASTIC VOYAGE (1966) dir. by Richard Fleischer

These are two films about how life changes when the outside world gets larger. The first of these movies is considered a classic sf film. DR. CYCLOPS is based on a novelette by Henry Kuttner and has a lot of fun pulp feel. The second film, FANTASTIC VOYAGE, is a story by Jerome Bixby and is considered to be one of the most spectacular sf films of the pre-STAR WARS era. Most of its sets were done the full size they appear on the screen. The film stars Steven Boyd, Donald Pleasence, and Raquel Welch.

4. The latest venture of Space Services, Inc. (owner of the Conestoga rockets) is

Space Burial

Yes, you can be buried in space! Just have someone send your cremated remains ("cremains," as they were called in the news story on NPR this morning) to SSI (not to be confused with the Princeton-based Space Studies Institute, also called SSI), and they will further reduce them to fit into a capsule approximately 1" by 1-1/4" which will be inscribed with your name, social security number, and (optional) religious symbol of your choice. Then a capsule containing several thousand of these will be placed into low earth orbit (through the Van Allen Belt, which has very little satellite traffic).

Oh, yes--the nosecone will be reflective so that your loved ones can, with the aid of a telescope, watch your remains cruise through the sky.

(The cost of all this is \$3900, which SSI claims is not much more than an earth-based funeral. Of course, there's the cost of cremation on top of that, and the telescope,...)

This brings a whole new meaning to the hymn, "Nearer, My God, to Thee"! [-ecl]

5. Will people who have no building code number preceding their building mnemonic (e.g. 114A for Holmdel) please send their code number to Evelyn Leeper (...ahuta!ecl or address above)?

Mark Leeper

LZ 3E-215 x2571

...{houxn,hogpd,hocse}!lznv!mr1

1984

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

It usually is not a very good idea to try to remake a classic film. Remaking is all too often trying to capitalize on reflected glory. Whatever the spark is that makes a film great, it is almost impossible to recapture. Even if a filmmaker can recapture that spark, he will only be praised for making a good imitation. Few producers ever improve on a classic in a redux. After seeing retreads of The Thing, Cat People, Invasion of the Body Snatchers, and a number of other classic fantasy films, I predicted years ago that someone would make a new 1984 and release it in the year of the title. And right on schedule--or perhaps a little behind--we have a 1984.

So does the new version compare well to the 1956 version (directed by Michael Anderson and starring Edmond O'Brien)? First of all, the Fifties' version is not the best possible adaptation of Orwell's novel. It very much simplifies the story. The degree of responsibility to accuracy that the filmmakers felt in making the film can best be demonstrated by the fact that two endings were shot. One was a happy ending with Winston and Julia getting back together in spite of the system. The new version is, to the best of my memory, entirely faithful to the book. That is not easy to do with a book as cerebral as 1984. The acting on the newer version is more gutsy, less Hollywood than in the original. John Hurt really changes in the course of the film. He goes from being an officious mouse of a man to a young lover to and old and agonized man in the hands of his captors. Richard Burton very accommodatingly underplays his part. Reportedly, director Michael Radford wanted Burton's part understated. When Burton was corrected for verging on being more dramatic than the director wanted, he would apologize for what he called "pulling a Burton." His quiet, menacing acting makes his last role one of his better ones.

Visually, the film is quite impressive. Radford originally wanted to do the film in black and white but the financial backers balked. Instead, Radford used a photographic process which intentionally subdued the colors. Radford also wanted to do the film from what he imagined was Orwell's point of view. The offices at INGSOC look like a 1948 author's view of the future, much as Orwell might have pictured the offices of INGSOC. The film's biggest flaws are where it varies most from what might have been Orwell's vision. That is where it plays the musical score by the Eurythmics. Rock music is wrong for the film and Radford complains bitterly about his financial backers' insistence on the inclusion of rock music in the score. The non-rock music in the film was written by Dominic Muldowney and is actually quite good. The few pieces of rock score by the Eurythmics are out of place, and Radford had to fight a legal battle to keep their presence and effect in the film to a minimum. (The rock score, incidentally, is present only because the backers wanted to sell a rock soundtrack record, much as was done profitably with Metropolis.)

Radford has done a stunning job of adapting Orwell's novel to the screen. Conditions that he complains were forced on him by his backers are precisely the biggest faults the film has. I cannot fault him for a single artistic decision he made on the film, and that is very rare. Of the three adaptations of science fiction novels we have seen this winter, 1984 is as much better than 2010 as 2010 was better than Dune. Rate 1984 a solid thumbs up and +3 (on a scale of -4 to +4).

(Some of the factual material in this review is from an interview with Michael Radford aired on WBAI radio on January 27, 1985.)

OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN
A film review by Mark R. Leeper

This film is an unexpected pleasure. It was lost among a flood of similar little horror films with similar unpromising premises. Bart Hughes is a successful executive with a proven track record. He has a beautiful wife, a beautiful secretary who has designs on him, a nice urban house, and one extremely bright and tenacious rat in his cellar.

The film traces the disintegration of Bart's personality as he battles the rat. Time and again he loses battles with his small foe by underestimating its powers. Eventually he is reduced to a primitive animal fighting for its existence against his small adversary. This Canadian film combines some of the better aspects of Spielberg's Duel and Bass's Phase IV.

Eventually the film loses its credibility as the rat just behaves too intelligently, and in some scenes the size of the rat seems exaggerated. Still, the film is an effective little film. Rate it +1 on (a -4 to +4 scale).

EARTHBLOOD by Keith Laumer and Rosel George Brown
Bluejay, 1985, \$8.95.

A book review by Mark R. Leeper

Bluejay Books is a relatively new publishing company run by Jim Frenkel. It publishes trade paperbacks and hardbacks. Most of their line seems to be reprints of older novels, but they also publish some new fiction. Frenkel's memory seems better than his eye for new talent. I have yet to hear of a good new piece of fiction that Bluejay has printed, nor a bad reprint.

You may remember me ranting and raving about Bluejay Books in the past. In specific, I ranted against Elizabeth Lynn's The Silver Stallion, which even in my youth I would have hated. By the time I was old enough that I would have been able to read The Silver Stallion, I would have been too old to appreciate the sugary story of toys coming to life. And I raved about Jack Williamson's Darker Than You Think. This is a fun fantasy-horror novel with a feel of the 40's horror films, but which is just as much fun today. Frenkel had David G. Klein illustrate it inside and out and at least inside the illustrations were superb.

I just recently picked up another Bluejay reprint, Earthblood by Keith Laumer and Rosel George Brown. Earthblood is a wild space opera which was written in 1966. The book follows the adventures of Roan Cornay, a descendent of Earth stock in a universe in which Terrans are mistrusted and feared. Roan was hatched from a valuable terrestrial strain embryo and grows to youth among the bird-like gracyls. The first part of the book borrows a lot of its plotting from Tarzan of the Apes, I think. From there he is kidnapped into a circus where he hones his skills until the circus is destroyed by pirates. Once again kidnapped, he joins the pirates. The plot never slows down as we follow Cornay's career. The plot is comic book level, but well-written. Alan Gutierrez illustrates and though the cover is attractive, the interior illustrations are a bit fast and sloppy. Gutierrez is no David Klein. Still, Earthblood is a nice-looking book and the story makes a good evening's read, if a bit pricey at \$8.95.

FIRE WATCH by Connie Willis
Bluejay Books, 1985, \$14.95.
A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper

The collection contains twelve stories--eleven reprints and one "never-before-published" story. The Hugo- and Nebula-award-winning "Fire Watch" is the story of one history student's time travel project--to the London Blitz. Well-deserving of its awards, it is doubtless the best story in the book. But others are worthy of note also. "Lost and Found" and "Daisy, in the Sun" are both strange apocalyptic tales, though in very different ways. "All My Darling Daughters" (the one new story) is a bizarre little piece--it's easy to see why this may have had difficulty finding a market. "The Sidon in the Mirror" was nominated for a Hugo last year and its alien feel is an interesting juxtaposition to the "just plain folks" feel of most of Willis's other works. There is some fluff: "The Father of the Bride," "And Come from Miles Around," "Mail-Order Clone," and "Blued Moon." The last, though fluff, is highly recommended; it has some of the funniest scenes I've seen in print. "Samaritan" covers some fairly old ground, though the characters do hold the reader's interest through it. "Service for the Burial of the Dead" and "A Letter from the Clearys" are just average.

The cover art is striking, and the book is well put together. Still, the price would indicate that unless you're a real Willis fan, you might want to wait for a paperback edition.

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OTHERWORLD
A TV review by Mark R. Leeper

Otherworld is CBS's current offering for primetime sci-fi. And I mean sci-fi, not science fiction. Through pyramid power and an alignment of the planets a lovable American family is transported to the Planet of the Fascists. The family, led by Police Surgeon veteran Sam Groom, was transported from Egypt to the alien planet (or parallel universe), but the other world is very American. It has American language(!), American foods (like corn, American clothing, even hula hoops. The aliens have independently even developed our popular metaphysics, as an alien female talks about how people have souls. The planet is divided into regions with different societies separated by "Forbidden Zones." There is some possibility there for ideas, but they will probably be lost on the cutting room floor. There were some decent jibes at generic food (perhaps inspired by Repo Man), but there was little that would make me want to tune in again.

PERILS OF GWENDOLINE (IN THE LAND OF THE YIK-YAK)
A film review by Mark R. Leeper

Newspaper comic strips don't work like movies. They may have one extended plot that lasts the entire story, but it will be broken into little short adventures so that each day's installment will have something interesting, and maybe once a week--maybe every twenty frames--there will be a cliffhanger. These little substories will be more important than the overall months-long plot, because newspapers want to be able to attract readers mid-story, and they also don't want to confuse people who do not remember plot details from months before. Hence scenes are much more important than overall connectivity of plot. Most film adaptations from comic strips use the conventions of film for plotting and become just films about comic strip characters. Not so with The Perils of Gwendoline in the Land of the Yik-Yak.

The Perils of Gwendoline is a film adaptation of the French comic strip The Adventures of Gwendoline. According to a friend who has seen compilations of the strip (under the name Gwendoline Dear when published in English), the comic strip is heavy on nudity and bondage. (The American title is probably a tip of the hat to the early serial The Perils of Pauline.) Apparently the bondage aspect has been toned down a little for the film, though it still shows up every once in a while; it's hard to believe that the nudity has been toned down at all.

The story is of the title character searching China for her father, who had earlier come to find a rare butterfly. Instead, he ran afoul of one more subterranean super-scientific civilization. This one is made up of Amazons who wear only leather armor--and apparently leather is in short supply. Tawny Kitaen (in the title role) picks up a friend, then a macho protector, and the three go off into the land of the Yik-Yak to try and find her father.

The Perils of Gwendoline is a Parafrance film dubbed in English (often very poorly) and released in the U.S. by the Samuel Goldwyn company. It is directed by Just Jaecklin from his own screenplay. Apparently (from the ads), Jaecklin is the director of Emmanuelle. The Perils of Gwendoline has a number of faults and virtues in common with Barbarella, but has a better sense of humor. I'd rate it +1 (on a -4 to +4 scale), a mild thumbs up.

LEEPER FILM QUIZ #3 (Answers)

1. "DA... Differential Analyzer... DA..."
Answer: WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE
2. "God bless Mrs. Ethel Shroak."
Answer: THE BED-SITTING ROOM
3. "I'm pulling the plug on myself."
Answer: THE BIG BUS
4. "I've a whale of a tale to tell to you."
Answer: TWENTY THOUSAND LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA
5. "It reminds me of my days in a red light district."
Answer: ANDROMEDA STRAIN
6. "Lucky. Lucky. Lucky."
Answer: ALIEN
7. "Me and my rhythm box."
Answer: LIQUID SKY
8. "Nipples for men!"
Answer: TIME BANDITS
9. "Operation Sand-dust."
Answer: LASERBLAST
10. "Operation Skyhook."
Answer: EARTH VS. THE FLYING SAUCERS
11. "Shit, and I was such a great guy, too."
Answer: CAPRICORN I
12. "Snake servo-mechanism."
Answer: WESTWORLD
13. "There comes a time in every man's life when he can't believe his eyes."
Answer: PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE
14. "They tell me this Mexican food is terrific."
Answer: KRONOS
15. "To God there is no zero."
Answer: INCREDIBLE SHRINKING MAN
16. "We weren't programmed to land in the water."
Answer: PLANET OF THE APES
17. "What sin could one man commit in a single lifetime to deserve this?"
Answer: AMAZING COLLOSAL MAN
18. "You may send rockets into space, but you're a menace on the highway."
Answer: MAROONED
19. "You're a brick."
Answer: DOC SAVAGE
20. "Your story's gotten bigger, kid."
Answer: THE BLOB