

Lincroft-Holmdel Science Fiction Club  
Club Notice - 3/6/85 -- Vol. 3, No. 35

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>
03/13	HO: DOWNBELOW STATION by C. J. Cherryh
03/13	LZ: DRAGON'S EGG by Robert Forward
04/03	HO: Book Swap (HO 2N-529)
04/03	LZ: HELLICONIA SPRING by Brian Aldiss
04/24	HO: CIRCUS OF DR. LAO by Charles G. Finney
04/24	LZ: MISSION OF GRAVITY by Hal Clement
05/15	LZ: DOOR INTO FIRE by Diane Duane
06/05	LZ: TACTICS OF MISTAKE by Gordon R. Dickson

HO Chair is Mark Leeper, HO 1E-412 (834-2657). LZ Chair is Rob Mitchell, LZ 1B-306 (576-6106). 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. This from Rob Mitchell:  
The Lincroft Leaders (not to be confused with the Holmdel Has-Beens) will meet yet again, this time on March 13. Topic of discussion will be Alien Intelligences, with special emphasis on Robert Forward's DRAGON'S EGG. Additional recommended reading includes the novel THE BLACK CLOUD by Fred Hoyle, and the short stories "A Martian Odyssey" by Stanley Weinbaum and "First Contact" by Murray Leinster. Everyone is welcome; last time a few adventuresome Holmdel souls journeyed down to LZ and found the meeting to be a splendid time for all.
2. On March 13, the Holmdel (real authentic science fiction club) branch (not to be outdone by the upstarts at Lincroft led by Napoleon Mitchell) will be discussing a gen-u-ine Hugo-winning novel. Yup! We're going to discuss C. J. Cherryh's DOWNBELOW STATION, chosen the best novel of 1981 by readers of science fiction everywhere. Copies of the book are available in the Holmdel library.
3. Our March 14 (7:30) evening film festival will be two classic adventure stories and their best film adaptations.

\*\*\*\*\*Presorted\*\*\*\*\*  
\* Leeper, Evelyn C. \*  
\* 114A HO 1B-437A \*  
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Classic journeys:

JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH (1959) dir. by Henry Levin

TREASURE ISLAND (1972) dir. by John Hough

I think many of us will fondly remember from our youths seeing JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH. This not-very-faithful adaptation of the novel by Jules Verne is second in the popularity of Verne films to TWENTY THOUSAND LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA and brings back James Mason to star. It is a very well constructed adventure film about a trip to a land with dinosaurs, giant mushrooms, and often incredible beauty.

Orson Welles often claimed that TREASURE ISLAND was misunderstood. He thought of the Stevenson story as no less of a horror story than was "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." He co-authored the screenplay and starred as Long John Silver in this version. He ignored previous softer interpretations of Silver and the rest of the pirates and made them instead the frightening incomprehensible figures that they were in the novel. Director John Hough is best known for his LEGEND OF HELL HOUSE.

Mark Leeper

HO 1E-412 834-2657

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LIFE BEYOND EARTH: THE INTELLIGENT EARTHLINGS GUIDE TO LIFE IN THE UNIVERSE  
by Gerald Feinberg and Robert Shapiro (Morrow Quill Paperbacks)  
Book review by Mark Thorn

"Life Beyond Earth" is well-written speculative science, by a respected theoretical physicist and biochemist, about what forms life might take in (very) alien environments. This makes it very pertinent reading for some of the science fiction books that have been discussed or are scheduled to be discussed at Lincroft (Sundiver, Dragon's Egg, Mission of Gravity), as well as other classics like "The Black Cloud", "The Gods Themselves", etc.

The book is written in a highly readable style, although it starts a bit slow. However, the first section deals with the chemical basis of life on earth and can be skimmed by those already familiar with the subject. This section does raise some interesting questions about the chemical evolution of earth-life and the possibility of very strange, non-DNA based life existing now on Earth.

The majority of the book, and by far the most interesting part to science fiction readers, proposes a scientifically rigorous but somewhat non-conventional definition of life, and then evaluates the likelihood of such life and the forms that it might take in some very unusual alien environments. It considers such relatively "friendly" environments as Mars (with some interesting comments about the Viking lander's conclusions), Titan, the interior of Ganymede, and the upper parts of Jupiter's atmosphere as well as such "impossible" environments as liquid rock, planetary surfaces near absolute zero, the interior of stars, and interstellar dust clouds. In all of these cases, it makes plausible arguments for the presence of life, most of which is very bizarre by the usual carbon-based life standards. It then rates the likelihood of finding life in different parts of the solar system and of the universe, based on the prevalence of different environments and the availability of conditions necessary for (unconventional) life in these environments, and concludes that our kind of life may be among the least common!

The question of intelligent life is not really addressed, except implicitly by assuming that a process of evolution will result in increasingly complex lifeforms and possibly intelligence. However, mutual recognition of intelligence in such different life-forms, let alone communication, poses many additional questions.

The perceptive reader looking for a scientific basis in his science fiction will find this an enjoyable and mind-expanding book. At least one copy has been seen at the Lincroft Bookstore.

INTO THE NIGHT  
A film review by Mark R. Leeper

Into the Night is John Landis's best crafted film to date. Landis has had a career of gimmicky films that have been mostly just collections of gags with a thin (or, in the case of Kentucky Fried Movie, no) connecting plot. His career started with a parody of Trog called Schlock! (It is in Schlock that he first started making references to a non-existent film, See You Next Wednesday, a gag that he pulls in most of his films). He went on to do films like Animal House, Blues Brothers (haven't seen), An American Werewolf in London, a segment of Twilight Zone: The Movie (I think he is still having legal problems over an accident that killed Vic Morrow and two children), and Trading Places. To date most of his films have been characterized by a lot of funny jokes but very poor control over the tone of the film. For example, in Trading Places, he works for almost a Capra-esque feel of comedy of social comment. Then he sabotages it by throwing in a farcical piece of slapstick involving a seemingly intelligent gorilla on a train. Into the Night has Landis's best script to date and the tone of the scenes always seem to fit. Into the Night is almost as smooth and professional a comedy thriller as Romancing the Stone and is at times a good deal funnier.

Ed Okin (Jeff Goldblum) is a Yuppie aerospace engineer who has become disenchanted with his lifestyle. It bothers him to the degree that he has given himself insomnia and spends both day and night in a bleary twilight zone between waking and sleeping. One night to fight the boredom of laying in bed awake he gets in his car and drives to the airport. What he discovers is being in the wrong airport garage at the right time is one really good way of fighting boredom. In a manner reminiscent of North by Northwest he is dragged into an adventure involving rich magnates, car chases, international killers (two sets of international killers!), about a dozen cars, and a wacko who thinks he's Elvis Presley. In Hitchcock style he is dragged around the sights of LA at night from back alleys to the penthouses of the very rich, from gambling houses to the sets of TV movies. (Do they really shoot TV-movies at 2am???) Almost the whole film takes place between the hours of midnight and dawn on two consecutive nights. Through it all Okin maintains the even keel of someone so exhausted from his insomnia that he can only manage to take in what is happening, not react to the absurdity of it all. Goldblum plays the part very well.

Landis has his usual collection of inside jokes. In some of his previous films, Landis would put in people like Forrest Ackerman to play small roles. In this film he has in minor parts Jack Arnold, Paul Bartel, David Cronenberg, Jonathan Demme, Richard Franklin, Carl Gottlieb, Amy Heckerling, Jim Henson, Colin Higgins, Lawrence Kasdan, Jonathan Kaufer, Andrew Marton, Paul Mazursky, Daniel Petrie, Don Siegel, Roger Vadim, and, of course, John Landis. And there is more than enough sight gags, gratuitous nudity, and car chases to keep John Landis's fans happy. For the first time, there is also a pretty good story. It isn't War and Peace, but it stands way above the plot of Animal House. Rate this one a low +2 (on the -4 to +4 scale).