

Lincroft-Holmdel Science Fiction Club  
Club Notice - 7/24/85 -- Vol. 4, No. 4

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>
08/07	LZ: A CASE OF CONSCIENCE by James Blish (Religion)
08/14	HO: THE FLIGHT OF THE DRAGONFLY by Robert Forward (11AM)
08/28	LZ: DINOSAUR BEACH by Keith Laumer (Time Travel)
09/04	HO: CODE OF THE LIFE-MAKER by James G. Hogan (2N-529)
09/11	MT: Organizational Meeting (tentative)
09/18	LZ: THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES by Ray Bradbury (Near Future History)
09/24	HO: ? (*Tuesday*)
10/09	LZ: THE SHEEP LOOK UP by John Brunner (Catastrophes)

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-500A (834-4723).

1. The next Leeper Film Fest Extravaganza will be at 7:00 PM August 1 at the Leeper house. The films are:

The Men Who Went Too Far:

THE MAN WHO COULD WORK MIRACLES (1937), dir. by Lothar Mendes

THE MAN WHO WOULD BE KING (1976), dir. by John Huston

"I charge thee, fling away ambition:

By that sin fell the angels." --Shakespeare, KING RICHARD III

These are two classic English stories. The first, THE MAN WHO COULD WORK MIRACLES, is the second film produced by Alexander Korda with a screenplay by H. G. Wells (the first being THINGS TO COME). It is Wells's examination of omnipotence as it would be used by a very ordinary man.

Rudyard Kipling's story "The Man Who Would Be King" came magnificently to the screen in the film adaptation. Michael Caine and Sean Connery star in a film that John Huston had as a project for decades (he first cast Clark Gable and Humphrey Bogart -- I am curious for which roles). This is a great story. At one point I asked a friend 90 minutes into the film how much time had passed since the film started. He guessed about 45 minutes. Rare is the film that is that engrossing. The script is nearly perfect and the scenery is tremendous. Not my favorite film, but pretty high up

\*\*\*\*\*Presorted\*\*\*\*\*

\* Leeper, Evelyn C. \*

\* 114A HO 1B-500A \*

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there. The story concerns two adventurers who want to set themselves up as kings, and how they fare in the attempt. Great stuff! If you can't make it to the film, read the story.

2. The following books have been added to the Holmdel branch of the library. A few were purchased; most were donated by members.

[-tps]

Abbey, Lynn	The Face of Chaos
Abbey, Lynn	Wings of Omen
Anderson, Poul	Trader to the Stars
Anthony, Piers	Crewel Lye
Asimov, Isaac	Great SF Stories 1
Asprin, Robert	The Face of Chaos
Asprin, Robert	Wings of Omen
Asprin, Robert	Shadows of Sanctuary
Asprin, Robert	Storm Season
Bischoff, David	Star Fall
Bixby, E. Rew	Fire Throne Mountain
Blish, James	Fallen Star
Bova, Ben	Voyagers
Bova, Ben	Test of Fire
Brin, David	Sundiver
Brin, David	The Practice Effect
Carr, Terry	Universe 10
Coney, Michael	Neptune's Cauldron
Conklin, Groff	Omnibus of Science Fiction
Correy, Lee	Star Driver
Ford, John	Web of Angels
Forward, Robert	Flight of the Dragonfly
Foster, Alan Dean	Voyage to the City of the Dead
Haldeman, Joe	Mindbridge
Herbert, Frank	The Jesus Incident
Hogan, James P.	Code of the Lifemaker
Lewis, Tony	Best of Astounding
MacAvoy, R. A.	Damiano
Martin, George R. R.	Sandkings
McCaffrey, Anne	Alchemy & Academe
McCaffrey, Anne	Moreta: Dragonlady of Pern
McEnroe, Richard	Proteus: Voices for the 80's
Merrill, Judith	The Best of SF No. 9
Niven, Larry	Integral Trees
Norwood, Warren	The Windover Tapes: Flexing the Warp
Pohl, Frederick	Heechee Rendezvous
Pohl, Frederick	The Early Pohl
Pournelle, Jerry	Janissaries: Clan and Crown
Pratchett, Terry	The Colour of Magic
Ransom, Bill	The Jesus Incident
Saberhagen, Fred	The Water of Thought
Shaara, Michael	Soldier Boy
Silverberg, Robert	The Best of Randall Garrett
Silverberg, Robert	Those Who Watch

Smith, Cordwainer  
Varley, John  
White, James  
White, James

The Best of Cordwainer Smith  
Picnic on Nearside  
The Escape Orbit  
Futures Past

Mark Leeper  
HO 1E-412 834-2657  
...mtgzz!leeper

THE SOUL OF A NEW MACHINE by Tracy Kidder  
1982, \$3.95, Avon.

A book review by Mark R. Leeper

This is one of those books that sat on my shelf for years before I actually got around to reading it. I knew it was inevitable that I would read it since it was a best seller about my own industry, but at the same time I was never anxious to read a book that was so much like work. My final impression is that the book contained some very perceptive observations about life in the technical community, yet other parts seemed off base.

The book is, as I am sure most computer people know, an account of the development of a computer--the Eagle--by a team at Data General. Kidder gives mostly a breezy narrative of how such a project runs, but takes frequent detours to explain in layman's terms how a computer works or to give biographical sketches of the dramatis personae. It was probably the former that won it the 1982 Pulitzer Prize. The technical description isn't great, but it probably made the Pulitzer Committee feel that they were reading and understanding something of some complexity. In fact, Kidder tends to shy away from technical details that he cannot render into simple terms. So while we are told that the Eagle is being built to compete with and to beat the VAX, we are never given any real comparison of the two machines. That, presumably, would be tougher to explain than how memory works.

The day-to-day drama of working on such a project does ring fairly true without too much distortion of details for effect. I was bothered by the dialogue, however. It often struck me as being less than credible. Too many of the conversations are terminated by someone getting in a dramatic last word. That makes for good reading, I suppose, but it is a writing convention and not a realistic portrayal of the way people talk. I guess a film that shows how people really behave would be dull and an author deserves similar license to make his book enjoyable.

The Soul of a New Machine is not the sort of weighty book one usually associates with the Pulitzer Prize, but it does bring light to the work of some people who rarely get attention outside of their own circles. There are plenty of books describing what it is like to be a doctor, a policeman, even a reporter. At least The Soul of a New Machine had the originality to show the technical community to readers outside of science fiction.



THE HEAVENLY KID  
A film review by Mark R. Leeper

I never planned to see The Heavenly Kid. What little I knew about the film made it sound a little hum-drum and familiar. A teenager gets a guardian angel to help him through life's trying moments. The idea has been done to death (you'll pardon the expression) on made-for-TV copies of films like Here Comes Mr. Jordan, its remake Heaven Can Wait, Topper, episodes of The Twilight Zone, even a Tom and Jerry cartoon. But I was in for one shock. Like Holiday Inns says in its ad: "The only surprise is that there are no surprises." Even Heaven Can Wait had moments when it was unpredictable. From beginning to end there is not an original scene or an original piece of dialogue in The Heavenly Kid. This film could have been written by high school students who pieced it together from made-for-TV films.

In a reprise of the chicken race of Rebel Without a Cause, Bobby is killed. In scenes stolen from Here Comes Mr. Jordan, he deals with angelic bureaucrats who arrange for him to return to Earth for a good deed which will allow him to go to Heaven. He is dispatched to help a young teenager find himself.

The film sets for itself some hard and fast rules, then goes about breaking them with no regard for logic. The invisible angel gets into fights and nobody notices an invisible force is in the fight. One victim does notice, but never seems to mention it. The angel is allowed to reveal himself only to his charge, but when the script-writer wants him to, he reveals himself to other people. In another scene, he sits in a tight backseat with two women, the actresses desperately trying to act as if they can't tell there's a third person in the seat.

The Heavenly Kid (it's not clear if the title refers to the angel or the boy--neither fits) is just a string of familiar scenes and a real yawner. Of minor note is that the stunt co-ordinator was Ricou Browning. Browning was the man inside the monster suit in Creature from the Black Lagoon. The only other familiar name (to me) was Richard Mulligan as the angelic bureaucrat in beatnik poncho on a motorcycle he can't ride--funny, huh? Rate this film an admittedly high -2 on the -4 to +4 scale.

## SILVERADO

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

I recently reviewed Clint Eastwood's Pale Rider here. Silverado is this summer's other serious Western. Pale Rider was a grim realistic Western; Silverado is more in the tradition of the sprawling Westerns of the 1950's. In fact, it sprawls over 130 minutes and seemingly dozens of characters and acres of plot. It would be unAmerican not to like a real full-bodied Western like this. And more important, it would be dishonest not to recommend a film with this much fun. Even the name conjures up images of the old Westerns with place names for titles: Tombstone, Dodge City, Santa Fe, El Dorado, El Paso, Rio Bravo, Rio Conchos, Rio Grande, Rio Lobo, all the other Rio's and El's (except of course El Alamein).

Silverado is pure pleasure, chuck full of good outlaws and bad sheriffs. There are frightened settlers and friendly barmaids. There's the town chippy and the slick gambler. There is even a small range war (one farmer against a few cattlemen) and a medium-sized cattle stampede. And of course there's shooting with derringers and rifles and ivory-handled six-guns. In fact, script-writers Lawrence and Mark Kasdan have made every effort to put as much as possible of the genre of the old Westerns into this colorful reprise of the genre. This film's major fault is its excess. There is almost too much story and there certainly are too many characters. It is almost as if the Kasdans went through all the standard character types and ordered one of each. As for too much story, the script really has two stories. One is a sort of extended prologue that tells how the four heroes become friends and team up on the way to Silverado. But once the four get to the title town, it becomes pretty much a standard but enjoyable Western. It tells its story with wit--not enough to make it really a comedy, but enough to keep the audience interested when the pace slows--and style. At least one point of its +2 rating (on a -4 to +4 scale) is for the novelty of making a Western, but even in the 50's, this would have been a fun film.