

Lincroft-Holmdel Science Fiction Club  
Club Notice - 11/2/83 -- Vol. 2, No. 17

MEETINGS UPCOMING:

Unless otherwise stated, all Lincroft meetings are on Wednesdays  
in LZ 3A-206 (HO meetings in HO 3N-418) at noon.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>
11/23	Audio/visual meeting
12/14	WARLOCK IN SPITE OF HIMSELF by Christopher Stasheff
12/14	HO: TAU ZERO by Poul Anderson
01/04/84	Audio/visual meeting
01/25	COURTSHIP RITE by Donald Kingsbury
02/15	Audio/visual meeting
03/07	NOR CRYSTAL TEARS by Alan Dean Foster
03/28	Audio/visual meeting
04/18	DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS by John Wyndham

LZ's library and librarian Lance Larsen (576-2668) are in LZ 3C-219.  
Mark Leeper (576-2571) is chairperson. HO's library and librarian  
Mike Lukacs (949-4043) are in HO 4B-510. John Jetzt (834-3332) is  
HO-chairperson.

1. Attendance has been trailing off on our evening film festivals  
at my house. Even so, I will once again attempt another showing.  
The next films will be on Thursday, November 10, 7pm. We will show

QUEST FOR FIRE (1982) dir. by Jean-Jacques Annaud  
CAVEMAN (1981) dir. by Carl Gottlieb

The first film created something of a stir when it was released.  
It is an attempt to show realistically what prehistoric man was  
like. Anthony Burgess (author of CLOCKWORK ORANGE) created a  
prehistoric language for the characters. The story deals with  
three men on a life-and-death odyssey to find fire when their  
tribes' flame is extinguished in a fight. Then for some fun we  
will show the comedy CAVEMAN, a surprisingly funny sendup of the  
ONE MILLION BC style of caveman flick. Please let us know if you  
plan to attend.

2. Evelyn has asked me to explain that the reason we publish  
entries from the UNIX Newsnet (e.g., net.sf\_lovers) is that in our  
area we cannot get Newsnet otherwise. Our management has decided  
that allowing Newsnet into our area is a breach of security. A  
nod, incidently, goes to Mark Mueller who at one time did most of  
the (unsuccessful) fighting to get Newsnet for members of AIS/NET  
1000.

\*\*\*\*\*Presorted\*\*\*\*\*  
\* Leeper, Evelyn C. \*  
\* LZ 1D-216 \*  
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3. On my way home from work one day last week I stopped at the local grocery and saw something that rather startled me. I was looking at a block of cheese for sale and noticed the peculiar legend "Approved for the cheese lifestyle." I find it remarkable, I guess, first because I was unaware there even was a "cheese lifestyle." People are more conscious of sociology than ever before yet I don't know anyone I can say really lives the cheese lifestyle. I suppose it has something to do with the good life to be able to tell your children that you are really bringing them up in the cheese life style. ["No, Jimmy, poor children get skates for Christmas, this year we are getting you a pound and a half of Gjetost. No, we aren't going to put any more Limburger in your stocking. Your stockings smell bad enough as it is."] It is just hard for me to imagine a lifestyle built around a single food type. If there were such a thing there would be a wine lifestyle somewhere out in California. Even in California wine is treated only as a religion, not a whole lifestyle.

Secondly, if this cheese is approved for the cheese lifestyle, it implies that somewhere out there there is some committee who is deciding what is or is not acceptable for a lifestyle. ["I'm sorry. I had no idea you ate Velveeta. This is an unapproved cheese food and cannot be accepted into our circle. You now must be thrown out of this lifestyle and gravitate into some other one. Have you considered communal living?"] What other lifestyles are these people approving things for? Have they considered the New Jersey lifestyle? ["Masterpiece Theater cannot be approved. The New Jersey lifestyle calls for watching only football games, and then only wearing the approved New Jersey lifestyle uniform, the ubiquitous sleeveless tee-shirt. And you must have a can of St. Pauli Girl in your hand."]

If there is anyone out there who is actually living the cheese lifestyle, could they please come forward and explain the socio-political underpinnings of this little understood subculture?

4. On the more serious side we have had a number of international misadventures of late. First there was the Korean 747 shot down, then the coup in Grenada that lead to the invasion to prevent the American students from become hostages (as in Iran), then there was the massacre in Lebanon. My suspicion is that we are going to see a lot more over the next year for one simple strategic reason. The Soviets and political groups backed by the Soviets are going to try to demonstrate to the American people that during Reagan's term the world situation has deteriorated. All indications seem to be that Reagan is the Soviets' most disliked American President in many years. They cannot vote against him, but they can certainly try to make his foreign policy look like a failure. If I were playing the Soviets' hand, that would be my strategy.

5. (Contributed by Paul S R Chisholm): An interesting arcade game materialized on the market this summer: Dragon's Lair is based on a

video disk, containing footage of a dungeon adventure. Every few seconds, you have to react (move or attack). The right move keeps you alive (and earns you points); the wrong move displays your death scene, and takes away one of your "lives". You have three (or so) lives; when they're gone, the game's over.

The game was a success for Don Bluth Productions, an animation firm following in the steps of Walt Disney and other great animation studios. Their movie last summer, The Secret of NIMH, was a beautiful children's film, though too simplistic for adults. I haven't seen any numbers for their video game, but I have seen long lines of players waiting to spend fifty cents a shot for a few minutes as Dirk the Daring (a.k.a., Dirk the Dead). That gets you through the first half; you need to put in another half dollar to continue. Once you win, the game's over, and you need another fifty cents if you want to go again. The whole thing lasts about twelve minutes, short for an expert player.

I told you that to tell you this: some firm has taken one of the Japanese "Lupin III" animated films, Castle Cagliostro, added some explosions and corpses, and edited it into a video disk game called Cliff Hanger. The game presents a rather incoherent telling of the thief's exploits. (The thief is referred to by players as "Cliff".) The game moves rather slowly in spots, to establish each new scene before the life and death decisions start.

This new game should provide a wedge into the American media scene for Castle Cagliostro in particular, and Japanese animation in general. We'll see.

Mark Leeper  
LZ 3E-215 x2571  
hocse!lznv!mr1  
houxa!mhtsa!lznv!mr1  
hogpd!lznv!mr1

Mercury Capsules - November 2, 1983

"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 mhmtsa!lznv!psc, houxa!mhmtsa!lznv!psc, or hocse!lznv!psc from the Holmdel Computer Center, or nv!psc from the Lincroft Computer Center. If that's impossible, I'm at LZ 1D-212, 576-2374.

Christine: novel, Stephen King. In Carrie, King wrote about a loner with psychic powers. In Salem's Lot, it was vampires. In The Shining, it was a young boy with psychic powers. In The Stand, it was E-V-I-L. In The Dead Zone, it was a man with psychic powers. In Fire-Starter, it was a young girl with psychic powers. In Cujo, it was a mad dog. Well, this time it's a loner with a haunted car. King is nothing if not consistent.

Christine is not a bad book, it's just a (fairly) predictable one. Although King does throw one twist in at the end (I won't spoil it for you), the plot proceeds in a very straightforward manner. Even the ending is totally predictable (for one thing, King has used it before). King's writing style makes the book move quickly, but it seems as though he has used up his basic ideas, and is now recycling them. The novel looks like he had taken Cujo and replaced the dog with the car, then added the characters from Carrie, and finally thrown in a dash of Salem's Lot.

For someone who hasn't read a lot of King's work before this novel, it would probably be very enjoyable. But if you've read his other novels, you will find the writing style good but unchanged, the tension lessened by the predictability, and the ideas somewhat shabby from wear.

Evelyn C Leeper

BOOK REVIEWS by Nigel

A mixed bag of items this time. Some of the comments may be unfair because the books have been read over a long period and a number of other activities have intervened.

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PORT ETERNITY by C.J.Cherryh

I keep hoping that she will write something as readable and entertaining as her very first books. This one isn't.

I find that I cannot care about her characters, I get weighed down with all the glorious detail that is irrelevant, distracting and never explained. It gives me the impression of being an isolated piece of an enormous and overelaborate brocade. All of the threads passing through look as though they are going someplace, but you will never be able to find out where.

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DRAGON ON A PEDESTAL by Piers Anthony

This is the latest Xanth book and is no better and no worse than might be expected. It is a piece of frivolity laden with puns and mythconceptions. I think that it is a better story for not involving Mundania but the lack of effects from the recent invasion is curious.

I like the base concept of the series, that everyone has a unique talent for magic. I also like the subtle point that even with a talent you have to learn how to make the best of it. The puns, I tend to ignore. Thus I could be missing a significant element of the series. However, the stories are so lightweight that I doubt that that is the case.

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DANCER'S LUCK by Ann Maxwell

The scenario is that a group of slaves have escaped bondage in a spaceship that belonged to one of the slaves before she was captured. She, the Captain-Owner, promised to relocate all of the slaves for helping in the escape. Since there are a lot of them from a lot of different worlds, this is going to take time. The book relates the trials and tribulations of relocating the first. Given the story line, this should turn into a long series of books. In fact, I have the impression that I have missed the first book.

I enjoyed reading this and will be disappointed if the series does not materialise. Unlike Cherryh, Maxwell introduces strangenesses that add to the story rather than wander off into the aurora borealis while you are heading for the sunset.

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A CENTURY OF PROGRESS by Fred Saberhagen

As Evelyn commented, this is a rather ordinary time travel sort of story. However, his concept of how time travel and history modification works leaves me more irritated than anything else. The idea that the world as we know it is a close approximation to the best of all possible worlds is something that I find very difficult to accept. The conclusion that the best way to nullify a madman is to kill him is something else that I cannot accept.

An interesting but very stupid sort of story. The sole purpose seems to be to give the modern SF reader a picture of life in the thirties in this country. I am not at all sure that that is what I want for my investment in SF books.

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NAVIGATOR'S SYNDROME by Jayge Carr

I rate this as one of the better books of the year, particularly since it kept me awake last night reading it through to the bitter end. There were any number of loose ends at the finish but at least there was a definite finish. There were even a few illogicalities but they were probably explainable.

The story is of someone trying to fight corruption in a decadent and apparently uncaring society. The society could not be quite as corrupt as it appears at first glance because that would make it totally unworkable. This is no worse than judging US society on the basis of books like The Godfather. Equally, the bureaucracy shown could not support the enforcement agency shown.

Despite all of this, it is still the best SF book that I have read recently.

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THE RIGHT STUFF by Tom Wolfe

Note 1. I have not seen the film yet.

Note 2. I am not American and therefore my national pride is not involved in the subject material.

I was not caught up in the story as written at any time. Thus I did not finish the the book in the two weeks allowed me by my local library. This means that as far as I am concerned, the style of writing varies from mediocre to abysmal.

It is very clear that he is presenting history with a slant and that his slant is that Chuck Yeager was right. The space program was 'Spam in a Can' and totally wasted, except as sop to national pride, until the Space Shuttle

came into being. Personally, I agree with him.

I still did not like the book as a book. It reads like a loosely related set of anecdotes, badly edited into a sermon (something which I detest at the best of times and intensely dislike when masquerading as an 'important' novel).

If I want to read anecdotes about men in the air I will reread A Gift of Wings by Richard Bach or any of the other books on my shelf which are written by flyers, enthusiastically describing some aspect of their favourite way to spend their time (6 of which I have reread this week).

Wolfe seems to care more about describing the aspects of men and women trying to do their jobs and get the most reward for the least effort, in the worst possible light. At the same time he tries to show that the rewards they received were undeserved. Truth in writing may be a good thing but if this is the result I would prefer to read fantasy.

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BIPLANE by Richard Bach

This is not SF any more than The Right Stuff is but that is not going to stop me talking about it. This is an anecdotal book which is written as a novel, which enthuses about flight and which is a joy to read. I borrowed the copy I read from the Monmouth County Library the same as I borrowed The Right Stuff.

Bach describes how he bought a plane and flew it home. It is just the details that make the story enjoyable. Details like the plane was the last of a thirty-year-old production run of biplanes, like the plane was in South Carolina and home was in California.

The theme is the same, 'if a man wants to get somewhere he should be able to fly there'. The presentation of the theme and the enjoyment you might get out of reading about it and worlds apart.