

Lincroft-Holmdel Science Fiction Club
Club Notice - 11/27/83 -- Vol. 2, No. 22

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>
12/14	WARLOCK IN SPITE OF HIMSELF by Christopher Stasheff
12/14	HO: TAU ZERO by Poul Anderson
01/03/84	Audio/visual meeting: WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE, pt. 1
01/04	Audio/visual meeting: WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE, pt. 2
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. My apologies to anyone who did not get the correction notice and showed up for WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE the two days before Thanksgiving. Security said that they would gladly write us a letter, addressed to the guards, saying we could bring a VCR into a building if I got my director's approval. I did. They had better than a week to get a one paragraph letter written and they couldn't do it. We can, however, all sleep easy tonight knowing that they are on duty protecting the building from the presence of unauthorized videotape recorders.

2. For the benefit of those of our readers who are interested: New Jersey Public Television is going in for old science fiction and horror TV series. Weekday nights at 7 pm they are showing DARK SHADOWS the vaguely gothic old weekday serial that was to be cancelled due to bad ratings when producer Dan Curtis got the bright idea to introduce a vampire as a character. In the succeeding years it added more and more fantasy, first redoing a number of old horror films, then introducing new plots of parallel universes and times. I personally find that the plot moves much too slowly, but it had a legion of fans at the time.

The Tom Baker episodes of Dr. Who have been shown a number of times in this area. Public television is showing them edited into two-hour stories Saturday nights at 9 pm. If you haven't seen them, they are an acquired taste but one worth acquiring; rare is the Dr. Who story that doesn't have decent ideas somewhere.

(THIS NOTICE IS PRINTED ON BOTH SIDES -- TURN THE PAGES OVER)

New Jersey Public Television operates a number of identical PBS stations up around the channel 50 or thereabouts [for example I get it on Channel 52.] If you are going to watch public television on an extended basis, etiquette dictates that you should join the station by sending them a monetary contribution. I tend to join in those years that they run a program that interests me. I joined a while back when they showed a fairly good British horror/mystery called OMEGA FACTOR.

3. I saw the first episode of THE HITCHHIKER, a series of horror stories running on cable station HBO. The episode, "Shattered Vows", was a moderate horror story of the sort you would see in a horror anthology film like TALES FROM THE CRYPT or CREEPSHOW. The plot concerns a man trying to use magic to kill his new wife so that he can wed his stepdaughter. I have seen a lot worse masquerading as horror on television. HITCHHIKER does seem to have a superfluous and gratuitous dose of sex and nudity, meaning that the producers are unsure that they can attract an audience on the basis of the stories alone. The sex dilutes the horror a bit, but at base a decent story is a decent story with or without sexual content. On a -4 to +4 rating scheme, the first episode deserves a +1.

I would give the same +1 rating, incidentally, to George Romero's pilot episode for his TALES FROM THE DARK SIDE television series. "Trick or Treat" had less of a story than "Shattered Vows," but some interesting makeup work. The TALES FROM THE DARK SIDE pilot was shown on commercial TV just before Halloween. Its plot concerned the town miser whose offers to children of a chance to redeem their parents' debts really hides a sadistic plot to frighten the children.

4. Speaking of DR. WHO, does anyone have THE FIVE DOCTORS (which ran on November 23) on VHS videocassette that I (Evelyn Leeper, 576-2378, or hocse!lznv!ecl) could borrow?

5. Warner Brothers has the soundtrack for THE RIGHT STUFF on hold. (Another note by Evelyn.)

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

Mercury Capsules - November 30, 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 mh1sa!lznv!psc, houxa!mh1sa!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.

+ Starburst: novel, Frederik Pohl. "The Stunning New Novel by Frederik Pohl" reads the cover. "Here's a new science-fiction novel" reads one of the blurbs inside. Well, don't believe it. This "new novel" is merely an expansion of his ten-year-old story "The Gold at Starbow's End." I wasn't thrilled with it at the time, and I'm not thrilled with it now, with its glorification of mysticism and recreational drugs over science. It does tell what happens after the end of "The Gold at Starbow's End," so I suppose some people may want to read it for that. Otherwise, not recommended. (Note: I haven't liked much of the recent Pohl I've read, except for The Cool War, so take that into account.)

Evelyn C Leeper

+ "Behind The Glory Of The Heroes": short story, Joseph McCarthy. "Behind The Glory Of The Heroes" by Joseph McCarthy is a new piece of Star Trek Fiction. Big deal, you say. Well this time maybe it is.

The plot revolves around a Romulan attack on a Federation Base Station and is based on a scenario from the Star Fleet Battles game. To quote from the story: "Service in Star Fleet is two years of boredom and an hour of stark screaming terror." Needless to say, the story is about the second half of that quote.

This short story stands out for several reasons. First, although it is set in the Star Trek universe (all right, so it is really set in the Star Fleet universe, the difference is trivial), none of the "regulars" appear. This lets it stand on its own merit as a story. It doesn't lean on established characters.

Second, it gives a very different viewpoint. The main character is a lowly sensor tech. We get to see things from down in the trenches for a change, and it is an interesting change.

Third, and most important, this story evokes strong emotional response from the reader. Character development is strong for a story of this length, and the main character's reactions to the events unfolding around her really put the reader in the story. The author succeeded in making me care about what happens to the characters.

"Behind The Glory Of The Heroes" appears in NEXUS #6. Read it if you get the chance. On the Leeper Scale [-4 to +4], I rate it a +2.

Alan M Gopin

A CHRISTMAS STORY
Film review by Mark R. Leeper

One of the most poignant disappointments of my life was to move to the New York area too late. By the time I got here Jean Shepherd had already left WOR radio. For years his program was played on WOR and syndicated around the country. Shepherd's humor is so American it makes apple pie seem like a Communist plot. Shep (as his fans call him) would sit in front of a microphone and tell the funniest stories imaginable about his youth in the Midwest. With a straight face he would invent stories of mythic proportion about his youth, his adolescence, or his Army years. After he left WOR the same stories were framed as prose and published in magazines like Playboy, or went into one off several books. PBS has even adapted them into TV plays two or three times. A Christmas Story is the first (and in all likelihood the last) full-blown Hollywood film based on Shepherd's works.

Since Shepherd for years invented his stories to fit into an hour of radio, his books tend to be disconnected anecdotes, each a chapter in length. Shepherd insists on calling his books novels though they read much more like collections of short stories. The first of these "novels," In God We Trust, All Others Pay Cash, is the basis for A Christmas Story. To make the film about Shepherd's 8-year-old alter ego Ralphie flow, the storylines of the book have been intertwined to occur nearly simultaneously.

A Christmas Story is a cluster of funny stories glued together by a somewhat less successful main storyline. That glue is sticky sweet and sentimentally maudlin like the 200th recounting of "The Night Before Christmas." The stories, however, are pure Shep and I think it has been literally years since I have laughed so hard at a comedy. Stories like the Red Ryder Rifle and the pop-art lamp are every bit as funny on the screen as when Shepherd told them on the radio, and the added visual elements are perfectly orchestrated.

In one way the medium does work against the story, however. Shepherd's stories about when he was eight years old are usually told with Herculean mythic proportions. To see them dramatized with real eight-year-olds really does not work. Not that Peter Billingsly, who plays Ralphie, is not an excellent child actor, but even he cannot fill out the role that Shepherd created for him. Nor is Darren McGavin my idea of "the old man"; somehow he seems too articulate and educated. Melinda Dillon also seems a little more delicate and sensitive than the mother in the stories. These little quibbles aside, the film really deserves to be seen. I am really afraid that a PG-rated film with an eight-year-old as the main character may end up with only children for an audience. If so, it will be the adult audience's loss.

A Brief List of Books about Space Exploration
Compiled by Evelyn C. Leeper

- Clarke, Arthur C.--THE CHALLENGE OF THE SPACESHIP
- Clarke, Arthur C.--THE EXPLORATION OF SPACE
- Collins, Michael--CARRYING THE FIRE
- Cooper, Henry S.F.--A HOUSE IN SPACE
- Gaul, Albro--THE COMPLETE BOOK OF SPACE TRAVEL
- Graham, Lt. Gen Daniel O.--THE HIGH FRONTIER
- Heppenheimer, T.A.--COLONIES IN SPACE
- Lewis, Richard S.--APPOINTMENT ON THE MOON
- Ley, Willy--THE COMPLETE BOOK OF SATELLITES IN OUTER SPACE
- Ley, Willy--ROCKETS, MISSILES, AND SPACE TRAVEL
- Macvey, John W.--SPACE WEAPONS, SPACE WAR
- Michener, James A.--SPACE (Fictional)
- O'Neill, Gerard K.--THE HIGH FRONTIER
- O'Neill, Gerard K.--SPACE RESOURCES AND SETTLEMENTS
- Shepard, Alan B., et al--WE SEVEN
- Wilford, John Noble--WE REACH THE MOON
- Wolfe, Tom--THE RIGHT STUFF

COMIN' ROUND ANTARES
(to Comin' Round the Mountain)
(words by Evelyn C. Leeper)

She'll be comin' round Antares when she comes,
She'll be comin' round Antares when she comes,
She'll be comin' round Antares,
With the payload that she carries.
She'll be comin' round Antares when she comes,

She'll be blasting all her rockets when she comes,
She'll be blasting all her rockets when she comes,
She'll be blasting all her rockets,
She'll have spacedust in her pockets.
She'll be blasting all her rockets when she comes.

She'll be stopping off at L-5 when she comes,
She'll be stopping off at L-5 when she comes,
She'll be stopping off at L-5,
With her ion-powered warp drive.
She'll be stopping off at L-5 when she comes.

She'll have tales of alien races when she comes,
She'll have tales of alien races when she comes,
She'll have tales of alien races,
Distant planets and strange places.
She'll have tales of alien races when she comes.

She's much younger, she will find, when she comes,
She's much younger, she will find, when she comes,
She's much younger, she will find,
Than the twin she left behind.
She's much younger, she will find, when she comes.

She'll be crossing the ecliptic when she comes,
She'll be crossing the ecliptic when she comes,
She'll be crossing the ecliptic,
Towards an orbit that's elliptic.
She'll be crossing the ecliptic when she comes.

She will use atomic fission when she comes,
She will use atomic fission when she comes,
She will use atomic fission,
On her insterstellar mission.
She will use atomic fission when she comes.

We will kill the old red rooster when she comes,
We will kill the old red rooster when she comes,
We will kill the old red rooster,
While she refuels her old booster.
We will kill the old red rooster when she comes.