

Lincroft-Holmdel Science Fiction Club  
Club Notice - 12/05/84 -- Vol. 3, No. 21

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.

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- 12/05 HO: STARTIDE RISING by David Brin  
01/09 LZ: THE CIRCUS OF DR. LAO by Charles G. Finney  
01/09 HO: Book Swap  
01/29 LZ: Video meeting: THE FLY (part 1)  
01/30 LZ: Video meeting: THE FLY (part 2)  
01/30 HO: COURTSHIP RITE by Donald Kingsbury  
02/20 LZ: SLAN by A. E. Van Vogt  
03/13 HO: DOWNBELOW STATION by C. J. Cherryh

LZ Chair is Mark Leeper, LZ 3E-215 (576-2571). HO Chair is John Jetzt, FJ 1F-108 (577-5316). LZ Librarian is Lance Larsen, LZ 3C-219 (576-2668). HO Librarian is Tim Schroeder, HO 2G-432 (949-5866). Jill-of-all-trades is Evelyn Leeper, HO 1B-437A (834-4723).

1. Back around the turn of the century, Christmas was a time for telling ghost stories. I am not really sure why the two became associated with each other, but rare was the family magazine that didn't have some blood-curdling ghost story in their Christmas issue, full of old houses that mysteriously bang and chains that rattle in the night. These days the only vestige of the tradition are the repeated retelling of the same ghost story, A CHRISTMAS CAROL a\_d\_n\_a\_u\_s\_e\_u\_m. I take this as a sign that the telling of Christmas ghost stories goes back at least to Dickens' times. (While I am on the subject of that particular story, the only adaptation worth seeing is the Brian Desmond Hurst version made in 1951 with Alistair Sim. That one is quite good, however. This is an unsolicited testimonial. Pardon the digression.) It seems only fitting that our last evening film festival of the year (Thursday, December 13, 7:00pm [both are long films], Leeper house) be two good, chilling ghost stories.

THINGS THAT GO BUMP IN THE NIGHT:

- THE HAUNTING (1969) dir. by Robert Wise  
THE CHANGELING (1979) dir. by Peter Medak

Both of these stories involve strange bumping noises in old, dark houses. The first is many people's favorite ghost film, an adaptation of Shirley Jackson's THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE starring Julie Harris and Claire Bloom. The second is a surprise. It

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turned out to be a combination of a good chilling ghost story and a mystery. It stars George C. Scott as a composer who gets involved with a haunted house and the mystery that caused the haunting. A friend of mine who claims to be jaded on horror films said that this film, and one scene in particular, really frightened him.

2. And speaking of Christmas ghost stories, Robertson Davies has a collection of them called HIGH SPIRITS which won the World Fantasy Award for Best Anthology or Collection this year. It's available in trade paperback in the "Literature" section of most large bookstores. If you're looking for Christmas ghost stories, consider this book. [--Evelyn Leeper]

3. For those of you who get HBO, this month's entry in their HITCHHIKER horror series, "Remembering Melody," is the best that they have done. That isn't saying much and it isn't a particularly good story, it just is the best that this rather disappointing series has done. It is based on a George R. R. Martin story. That is an optimistic touch since this is the first I have seen them buying stories from established writers, and it is paying off. If you don't get HBO, don't be too disappointed. The best of HITCHHIKER would be below average for TALES FROM THE DARKSIDE and you can get that one on commercial TV. DARKSIDE almost always uses either a story from an established writer, an adaptation by a famous writer, or both. The worst stories are at least ok and best stories are pretty good. I would liken it in quality to second or third season TWILIGHT ZONE. I think that it is the best American produced TV series in the science fiction/horror/fantasy genre since STAR TREK. [Additional comment from Evelyn--one recent episode was based on an Ellison story; another had a teleplay by Michael McDowell.]

Mark Leeper

LZ 3E-215 x2571

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

## BOOK REVIEWS by Nigel

A few thoughts for a few days. Why do people have so much trouble with the idea of sending mail? After my pleadings a few weeks ago I got mail from one single solitary person (thank you again, Lynda) but since then I have had a number of people, who know what I look like, say complimentary things when they bump into me.

Am I expecting too much of you when I ask you to comment about things? Are you all incapable of answering questions as set? Not one single solitary person has ever answered any of my specific questions to you all.

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INCARNATIONS OF IMMORTALITY by Piers Anthony  
Volume 1--ON A PALE HORSE  
Volume 2--BEARING AN HOURGLASS

Another series by Anthony set in a fantasy world where magic and science operate concurrently. There are seven immortal powers of which five are incarnated in a human. The series will consist of one book dedicated to

each of the human incarnations. The two genuine immortals are God and Satan and they are using Earth as their battlefield.

O\_n\_a\_P\_a\_l\_e\_H\_o\_r\_s\_e dealt with the personification of Death. B\_e\_a\_r\_i\_n\_g\_a\_n\_H\_o\_u\_r\_g\_l\_a\_s\_s dealt with Time. Death made a certain amount of sense. The basic mythos is obviously Christianity based because of the definition of Heaven, Hell, Purgatory and Limbo. Death has the fun job of picking up souls not clearly bound for either heaven or hell. On the other hand, one the of incarnations is Fate, who decides the fate and therefore the moment of death, of everyone. This strikes me as being a conflict of responsibility.

Apart from such trivia, O\_n\_a\_P\_a\_l\_e\_H\_o\_r\_s\_e is a worthwhile book. The concept is interesting and continuity is good. Even the romantic element is well done.

B\_e\_a\_r\_i\_n\_g\_a\_n\_H\_o\_u\_r\_g\_l\_a\_s\_s is atrocious. The concept of Time as an Incarnation is out of place. A sizable chunk of the book deals with the dolt who will become the incarnation. Another sizable chunk deals with adventures in a simple minded Satanic fantasy world. Another portion deals with a journey to the ends of time. The obligatory paradox is created and mishandled. There is a plot but it is buried under a mound of inane wordage. It should have been buried at the bottom of the garden and the inane wordage with it.

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DINOSAUR PLANET: THE SURVIVORS by Anne McCaffery

This is the long awaited sequel to D\_i\_n\_o\_s\_a\_u\_r\_P\_l\_a\_n\_e\_t. If you weren't waiting for it then don't pick it up. There is a long history to this book and why

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it has taken so long to appear which is interesting but doesn't make the story any better.

The problem with the story is that for the first half of the book the viewpoint is far too limited. The plot then opens up with another half dozen plot lines which deserve lots of expansion. The world gets more and confused until McCaffrey decides to pull the plug on the book in the last chapter.

The result does not leave much of an opening for another sequel, but is

totally unsatisfying in terms of what I expect from a book. It is as though McCaffrey had the book more than half done when someone asked for more books in the series, at which point she killed all the options she could see as being start points for sequels.

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THE DAY OF DISSONANCE by Alan Dean Foster

This is definitely a book in the series, sharing characters with the previous "Spellsinger" books but little else. This is a tale of a quest, trials overcome, friends and enemies encountered and reencountered, landscape traveled over and described, especially the great wonders. And, as should happen in any proper quest, we finally discover that the goal of the quest was at home all the time.

I was a little surprised that Jon-Tom was able to effectively fight a duel when his magics are so unreliable but that is about par for the course in a fantasy.

A typical piece of lightweight frivolity.

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A TRACE OF MEMORY by Keith Laumer

Lance Larsen has occasionally mumbled at me about 'Golden Oldies'. This is one of the books that I most frequently reread. It is also currently in the bookstores. I am not at all sure why I like it so I cannot tell you.

It is hard science fiction, medium-weight and very readable.

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THE TRAVELLER IN BLACK by John Brunner

This is another book in the same class. On the other hand, this is a collection of short stories, all pure fantasy and all related. This is typical of Brunner's short story and short novel writing of the early 60's. At the same time he was writing a fair number of hackwork novels for Ace. The shorts show how much thought he could give to a simple idea to make you

think about it too.

Recommended, and I could wish for some his other stories of that period being republished. This has a lot to do with why I keep collections of magazines.

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MYTHING PERSONS by Robert Asprin

This series was never intended to be anything other than light-hearted foolishness. My only objection to the series is that it is difficult to find. Some time ago I realised that the second book of the series was missing from my collection. I have yet to find a replacement copy.

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BRISINGAMEN by Diana L Paxon

This is a current time frame retelling of a piece of Norse legend. The heroine acquires a necklace which turns out to be Brisingamen, the property of Freya. She wears it and becomes a personification of Freya. Various other characters become various other members of the pantheon. There is an eventual confrontation and the book ends on a warm and happy note. The book is full of sex and magic and has one violent battle.

Since this is a retelling of legend and since all of the characters are reflections of the gods they represent, there is no character development and no logic behind the actions. However, it is well written and absorbing and therefore recommended. The best part is that the book includes the references to the available sources of all parts of the legend.

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THE TIDES OF TIME by John Brunner

In the beginning I was interested. After the third chapter until the last, I was running on impetus and cursing the man for doing Michener impressions. The last chapter made everything better and turned the book into the most thought provoking book of the year.

Read it and do not give up hope.

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ICEHENGE by Kim Stanley Robinson

I read this because of all of the comments in netnews. In some ways I agree with the comments made there, that it is worthwhile and not about what you expect it to be about and that it leaves the reader unsure of everything.

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It is a fairly slow moving book but that allows time for the pictures of the society. If you read it, pay attention to the type of society being described and think about its good and bad points. Think about the effects of lifespan and memory.

Recommended but only if you are willing to take the time to think about the less obvious aspects of the book.

Hugo Gernsback  
A counter-editorial by Mark R. Leeper

In the last issue Evelyn published an editorial suggesting that Hugo Gernsback has had a negative effect on the field of science fiction. In the guise of the "loyal opposition" I would like to disagree. Her argument is two-fold. First, it is that he was an incompetent writer and second, that by creating separate science fiction magazines, he pulled science fiction out of the mainstream and made it a separate genre that the critics could ignore.

On the first charge I have to admit that Evelyn is right, but Gernsback is guilty with mitigating circumstances. People like Wells and Verne were writing for a fiction-reading audience and were putting new twists on fiction writing when they wrote what we call science fiction. Gernsback was a science writer. He started with science articles about the present, went on to scientific speculation about the future, and then as a twists on that he started putting characters in, and writing his articles as stories. He was writing the literary equivalent of a World's Fair exhibit showing the world of the future. These exhibits, incidentally, often create a fictional character, usually called Jimmy, and take Jimmy through a typical day. One gets to the end of such an exhibit with some dubious idea of what the future may be like, but rarely does he or she get any earth-shaking insights into Jimmy's psyche.

What Gernsback discovered was that just like there are long lines



outside World's Fair future exhibits, there was a demand for his future fiction. Now at this time, there were maybe two or three novels written in a year about the future. Maybe one in six was any good, so every couple of years there would be a competently written book that we would consider a science fiction novel. Critics noticed this one book every couple of years and called it to the attention of their readers, many of whom had some interest in the fantastic.

Gernsback recognized this interest and started devoting separate magazines to it. Readers brought writers; writers brought more readers. Suddenly readers no longer needed the critics to point out where fantastic literature was--it was right there on the magazine shelf. Critics continued to point out literature their readers might miss, but it was not science fiction because that was not hard to find. Also, the percentage of hack writers had increased with a proven demand for science fiction. They tended to give the field a bad name. Soon every science fiction magazine had its own critics reviewing science fiction books and telling which were the good. There was no need for mainstream critics to discuss science fiction at all.

Now what gave science fiction a bad name were the hack writers and the demand for even hack science fiction. There was a real market for bug-eyed monster stories in magazines with bug-eyed monsters on the cover. Through all this the critics disdained the bad stuff and enjoyed the good, but there

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was little need to review the good because people who liked the fantastic had very apparent ways of finding the better writing. In the Fifties, celebrities, including prominent critics, would show up on the back cover of    F&    S    F extolling the virtues of science fiction.

Most high school English teachers were not well-read in science fiction and, having seen newsstands, were painfully aware that much of science fiction was bad, backed away from letting students read it for school. Now the readership of science fiction is expanding as never before. Baby-boom children who grew up on Captain Video or Captain Kirk make up a large proportion of the reading public. That means that science fiction is now creeping onto the bestseller lists. Further, there are people who do not read the science-fiction-only critics who are getting interested in the field, so mainstream critics are reviewing science fiction for them.

All this might or might not have happened without Gernsback's help. He

was just someone who saw a demand and made some money filling it. But by creating a dependable source of his "scientific fiction"--a magazine that showed up down at the corner drugstore once a month--he brought together the people who wanted to read science fiction and the people who wanted to write it. Once that happened, both the success of the genre and the ghetto were inevitable. The former is what Gernsback is gratefully remembered for. The latter was a temporary minor inconvenience resulting from the formation of the genre. The formation of the ghetto could have been avoided only if the supply of science fiction had remained very small. And that is too high a price to pay for a few pats on the back from mainstream critics.

To blame Gernsback for the formation of the science fiction ghetto is like blaming Henry Ford for our country's dependence on petroleum. All this convinces the writing critics that there is enough interest in science fiction that their readers will want to read about the field.

\_ \_ N \_ O \_ T \_ E \_ S \_ F \_ R \_ O \_ M \_ T \_ H \_ E \_ N \_ E \_ T

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Subject: New Deryni Novel by Katherine Kurtz  
Path: ihnp4!mit-eddie!genrad!teddy!mjn  
Date: Wed, 28-Nov-84 15:56:21 EST

A recent bookstore excursion yielded a new novel by Katherine Kurtz set in her Deryni Universe. You will no doubt remember the first trilogy (Deryni, Deryni Rising, and Deryni Checkmate) and the second (Camber of Culdi, et al). This trilogy is called "The Histories of King Kelson" and picks up where the first trilogy left off. We re-join our heroes: Kelson, Duncan and Morgan in a new set of adventures.

The first book of this new trilogy is called "The Bishop's Heir" and is currently available only in Del Rey hardcover (\$14.95). The also published page reveals the next two titles: "The King's Justice" and "The Quest for Saint Camber".

Since I'm only a few chapters into the book, I really can't give a recommendation of this novel (or give anything away, either). On the other hand, I've read the six previous Deryni novels and liked them all. Anything new in this series falls into a BUY-IMMEDIATELY category for me.

Mark J. Norton

Subject: Re: Douglas Adams - HHGTTG, So Long And Thanks For All The Fish  
Path: ihnp4!harvard!seismo!umcp-cs!aplvox!milo!eric  
Date: Thu, 29-Nov-84 11:57:55 EST

I have started working over HHGTTG from Infocom. It is immediately apparent that Douglas Adams played an integral role in creating the game. The manual reads much like the books (make sure and read the sample dialogue and other sections you normally skip over). So far the plot of the adventure has followed the plot of the book, but the puzzles I have encountered so far have not been helped by knowing the book.

eric

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Subject: Mything Persons (Non-Spoiler) - (nf)  
Path: houxm!ihnp4!inuxc!pur-ee!uiucdcs!uok!esmith  
Date: Wed, 28-Nov-84 15:44:00 EST

Mything Persons by Robert Asprin

I enjoyed the book, but I didn't think it was as good as the others in the series. I will call it a must for the Myth Adventure fan. Once again Bob

has put our faithful heroes in complicated and humorus situations. To sum up in a nutshell: Light reading, (about one and a half hours, with constant interruptions), good humor, and just overall good fun. I liked it. What can I say I'm easy to please...

-Eric L. Smith

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Subject: Harlan Ellison essays (book recommendation)  
Path: houxm!ihnp4!zehnte!dual!amdcad!decwrl!dec-rhea!dec-amber!chabot  
Date: Mon, 3-Dec-84 10:01:36 EST

I'd like to recommend Sleepness\_Nights\_in\_the\_Procrustean\_Bed, a book of rare and previously unreprinted essays by Harlan Ellison, edited by Marty Clark. It contains the Introduction to the "Harlan Ellison Issue" of F&SF, some speeches and program book essays from WorldCons, several essays normally rather hard to find for some of us since they were originally published in Los Angeles magazine, Video Review, and other magazines. Two of the items come from SFWA speeches: these show briefly that Ellison does know quite a good deal about the movie business and its attitudes towards writers. There is also an account of Ellison's participation in the March on Montgomery in '65; this article is a chilling time-capsule/time-bomb of the hatred and fear in Alabama concerning the Civil Rights marches.

This volume may be a bit hard to find (I only saw it accidentally in a bookstore I normally don't go to), so here's some publishing info from the back cover: The Borgo Press, Distributed to the trade by Newcastle Publishing Co., Inc., P.O. Box 7589, Van Nuys, CA 91409. It has a copyright date of 1984. ISBN 0-89370-270-6. To interested Cambridge Mass folk, I found mine in the Paperback Booksmith in Harvard Square in the science fiction section.

L S Chabot

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Subject: Gene Wolfe - some spoilers  
Path: houxm!ihnp4!stolaf!robertsl  
Date: Sat, 8-Dec-84 00:09:29 EST

I've enjoyed the recent discussions of Gene Wolfe's Book\_of\_the\_New\_Sun. I've read ( and re-read) this and a fair ammount of Wolfe's other work. Has anyone out there read The\_Fifth\_Head\_of\_Cerberus? Has anyone read both that book and Silverberg's Lord\_Valentine's\_Castle? Did it seem to you as if LVC lifted certain concepts from Fifth Head - note the similarity of the

Annese to Silverberg's *Metamorphs*, and the underlying theme in both books of metamorphosis - in *Fifth Head* from generation to generation of clones (#5) and from VRT to Marsch, and in LVC from the old Valentine to the new. And, although I'm no Heinlein fan, what about Michael Valentine Smith's *Castle*? Well, perhaps I'm paranoid.

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Is it possible that there never was a Marsch in the first place, that VRT made him up? I haven't re-read the book since I heard this hypothesis, but even if there aren't any contradictions to it, it sounds kind of shaky. Of course, you've probably noticed the marsch-men pun in "A Story". Then again, how about March's green eyes? Was there a handwriting change in the journals in part 3?

One analysis I read mentions that scenery in "A Story" also appears in "VRT" (part 3). I never noticed this before - I'll have to watch next time.

Now a few New Sun things... What about the second time the Green Man was supposed to save Severian's life? Has anyone heard when The Urth of the New Sun is coming out? What is The Wolfe Archipeligo?

Does anyone out there read Thomas Disch or Somtow Sucharitkul? They are both marvelously literate authors. What's your opinion of Wolfe and Disch (among others) publishing unaffordable collectors editions that you'd be afraid to read for fear of damaging them, even if you could afford them... I'm not even talking about \$18 hardbacks ( although those are bad enough ). I'm complaining about \$100 books, and somewhat about Disch's booklets like Ringtime for Toothpaste Press... Opinions?

Laurence Roberts  
"Ifrit first you don't succeed, fly, fly a djinn!"

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Subject: re: Stephen King/Dino DeLaurentiis  
Path: hocs!houxm!ihnp4!zehntel!dual!decwrl!dec-rhea!dec-akov68!boyajian  
Date: Wed, 28-Nov-84 04:26:09 EST

A couple of weeks ago, someone asked about a future Stephen King movie called SILVER BULLET, asking if this was an existing King book, or was possibly based on the limited-edition King books CYCLE OF THE WEREWOLF or

THE DARK TOWER: THE GUNSLINGER. I responded saying that there was definitely no book with the title SILVER BULLET and that it was unlikely that it was based on either of the two aforementioned books. Well, some new information has come to light in the magazine CINEFANTASTIQUE, January 1985 [no flames, please, about the accuracy of information in this magazine]:

"SILVER BULLET, a werewolf story written by Stephen King and illustrated by Bernie Wrightson (CREEPSHOW), will be filmed by Dino De Laurentiis in Wilmington, North Carolina. The modern, semi-comic story with ambitious makeup effects will be directed by Dan Attais, former second assistant director on TWILIGHT ZONE: THE MOVIE."

Well, there still is no story by King entitled "Silver Bullet", but since CYCLE OF THE WEREWOLF is illustrated by Bernie Wrightson, it looks like it indeed is the source for the movie. For those of you who didn't manage to get a hold of a copy of that book, this may be good news, as the book may well be reprinted in a mass-market edition as a tie-in to the movie.

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--- jayembee (Jerry Boyajian, DEC, Maynard, MA)

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Subject: re: Info on STARMAN  
Path: hocs!houxm!ihnp4!zehntel!dual!decwrl!dec-rhea!dec-akov68!boyajian  
Date: Wed, 28-Nov-84 04:39:51 EST

From: uokvax!dewey (Dewey Coffman)

Has anyone heard anything about the new movie coming out December 14th called Starman. Supposedly, it has to do with Voyager II's invitation to all to visit the earth. and the advertisement says "get ready, company is coming".

This is all that I heard or seen,(I don't get out much), any more info on this would be greatly appreciated.

The bit about "Voyager II's invitation" is just ad hype. Basicly, the story (this info is gleaned from the January 1985 CINEFANTASTIQUE) is that an alien ship is shot down in Wisconsin. The lone occupant finds his way to a cabin inhabited by widow Jenny Hayden, played by Karen (RAIDERS OF THE LOST

ARK) Allen. The alien comes across a lock of hair from her dead husband, cracks the DNA code for it, and alters his body to match that of her husband, played by Jeff (TRON) Bridges. And, of course, they fall in love, etc., etc., but he has to go back to his home planet, etc., etc.

The film is directed by John (THE THING) Carpenter, co-produced by Michael (ROMANCING THE STONE) Douglas, and has make-up effects by Rick (AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON) Baker and Dick (ALTERED STATES) Smith.

--- jayembee (Jerry Boyajian, DEC, Maynard, MA)

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Subject: Re: Dune  
Path: ihnp4!mit-eddie!godot!ima!haddock!jimc  
Date: Wed, 28-Nov-84 23:46:41 EST

Sender: steven at ISM70  
Subject: Re: Dune  
To: jimc

Don't get your hopes up over Dune. The Los Angeles Times reported that recruited audience screenings of the film were very unenthusiastic. Supposedly the film is uninvolving. Esquire had a short column on the inside word on the Christmas releases a few issues back and reported (at that time) that there was absolutely no word on the Hollywood grapevine about the film, usually a sign that the film is in trouble. From Variety I've noted that Universal had to go to the trouble to schedule exhibitor screenings on November 9 for theatre owners, a sure sign to me that these rumors about the

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quality of the film are somewhat accurate.

But all rumor and innuendo aside, here it is:

DUNE

Kyle MacLachlan (newcomer) is Paul  
Jurgen Prochnow (Das Boot) is Duke Leto  
Francesca Annis (Krull) is Lady Jessica  
Kenneth McMillan (Ragtime) is Baron Harkonnen

Sean Young (Blade Runner) is Chani  
Linda Hunt is Shadout Mapes  
Max Von Sydow is Dr. Kynes  
Paul Smith (Midnight Express) is Beast Rabban  
Dean Stockwell is Dr. Yueh  
Patrick Stewart is Gurney Halleck  
Freddie Jones (Firefox) is Thufir Hawat

Photography by Freddie Francis (Lawrence of Arabia)  
Production Design by Anthony Masters (art director, 2001)  
Editing by Antony Gibbs  
Visual Effects by Kit West (Raiders) and Carlo Rambaldi (Alien)  
Music by Toto (and a piece by Brian Eno also included)

Produced by Rafaella DeLaurentiis  
Written and Directed by David Lynch (Eraserhead and The Elephant Man)

From Universal Pictures. Opens December 14th.

Check out the children's section of your local bookstore. It should have The Dune Storybook and The Dune Activity Book, both with pictures from the movie.

Jim Campbell

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Subject: A Modest Proposal (CITIZEN KANE \*SPOILER\*)  
Path: ihnp4!ucla-cs!reih  
Date: Fri, 30-Nov-84 07:16:06 EST

Having just seen a different version of "Once Upon a Time in America", I was reminded of someone's earlier posting which postulated what a Star Wars movie directed by Sergio Leone would be like. How about a Star Wars movie directed by Orson Welles? Why not



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*   Citizen Darth!                   *
*                                     *
*                                     *
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Luke could be dissatisfied with what he knows about his father, so he goes on a quest through the galaxy looking for the real Darth Vader. Everyone he meets would give him a different impression of what Vader was really like. Welles could even do a flashback to Vader's death and reveal that his last word was really "Rosebud". Think how hard it will be for even a Jedi like Luke to turn up a sled out of all the garbage in the universe. Perhaps the Emperor's true hold on Vader was that he held the sled for ransom! Perhaps Annakin Skywalker will be unable to become one with the Force (or whatever) until the sled is recovered. Maybe Han Solo could be sorely tempted to sell the sled for megacredits to some intergalactic souvenir collector. (Extra credit trivia question: Who currently owns Rosebud?) We might have something here. (Or, perhaps, not...)

Peter Reiher

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Subject: Re: Info on Starman  
Path: ihnp4!allegra!mit-eddie!godot!imalism70!steven  
Date: Sun, 2-Dec-84 06:34:41 EST

Info from Lotusland:

STARMAN  
Starring Jeff Bridges and Karen Allen.  
Also starring Charles Martin Smith and Richard Jaeckel.  
Directed by John Carpenter. Produced by Larry D. Franco.  
Music by Jack Nitzsche.  
From Columbia Pictures. (1984)

Bridges plays an alien stranded on earth with only three days to get to his mothership. He must cross the U.S. to Meteorite Crater in Arizona. To make it, Bridges assumes the form of Karen Allen's dead husband.

It has been widely reported that Columbia Pictures was incredibly stupid to have spent about a million dollars developing E.T.: THE EXTRATERRESTRIAL and then to have passed on the film because they thought it would only appeal to kids. What is not so widely known is that the STARMAN property has been at Columbia since 1980. Columbia decided to do STARMAN instead of E.T. because they thought it would appeal to adults as well. Hollywood grapevine has it that the film is pretty good.

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Subject: Starman <<review from sneak preview>>

Path: pegasus!hansen

Date: Mon, 3-Dec-84 00:22:27 EST

My wife and I saw the film last night in a sneak preview. It is about an alien that decides to accept the invitation sent out on Voyager II (1977) to "Come see earth sometime" and his adventures once he arrives on Earth.

Jeff Bridges plays the alien fairly believably and a trifle bit comically. Karen Allen was enjoyable to watch in her role. She goes through many emotional states through the course of the movie. (The movie IS billed as a love story.)

Charles Martin Smith and Richard Jaeckel played their parts very well: Charles in the role of the questioning, dream-filled scientist and Richard in the role of a hard-nosed bureaucrat who doesn't care what gets in his way.

The special affects were enjoyable (Industrial Light and Magic, who else?), but were certainly not as numerous as in other recent Sci-Fi Major Motion Picture flicks. Nor were they necessary, as the story stood up very well without them.

The movie isn't the worlds greatest, but we certainly found it enjoyable. We'd rate it at a good solid 3 stars out of 4.

Tony Hansen

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Subject: STARMAN reviewed

Path: houxm!vax135!cornell!uw-beaver!ssc-vax!fluke!moriarty

Date: Sun, 2-Dec-84 22:27:19 EST

\*Sigh\*

The Christmas season is one holiday which still seems to keep a bit of that childhood feeling of anticipation. This is probably due more, these days, to Christmas movie releases than to anticipation of presents ("Clothes again, Ma..."). Lately, local papers tend to be running the trade journals'

word-of-mouth rumors about Xmas movie chances at the Box Office. STARMAN, John Carpenter's new film, was one of those which had garnered good marks from the "in the know" people; it was supposed to have everything in it to make it a big holiday hit.

Well, folks, it DOES have several things which could add up to a success: a couple of actors very capable of romantic chemistry; a basic premise that has already been proven an attraction; and a plot that has already been test-driven for reliability about 30 times. The problem is, the ingredients were piled in -- but they weren't stirred, and nothing else was added. This movie, about an alien being on earth trying to get back home (yes, like THAT

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movie -- but with one (perhaps two) great difference(s)), has not one original bone in its storyline; I should know, I was struggling to find one throughout the entire show. The movie was so predictable (and so slow) that I could concern about 70% of my attention on identifying where different bits of the movie had been taken from. This movie is BARREN of original ideas; it is as if a Hollywood studio meeting produced it, but left it in rough draft condition.

The actors involved try, to various degrees (only four are drawn out at all). Karen Allen looks terrific, and is able to display a certain amount of tenderness, but with the script given her, it was a forlorn hope. The only time one feels for her character is when something particularly repugnant is done to her by the government (the villains); nemesis, in STARMAN, was apparently derived after repeated watchings of BILLY JACK movies. Jeff Bridges, as the alien in human form, again tries (he has, of late, been cast to play romantically against the most beautiful of Hollywood actresses, Rachael Ward and K.A. (your opinions may vary :-)) to bring across a character from nothing; but the jokes are strained, and his very capable acting talent (e.g. AGAINST ALL ODDS, WINTER KILLS) has nothing to amplify, or sketch out. Charles Martin Smith blows a role which could have been fantastic, even given the weak lines he is provided with. And Richard Jaekel (sp?) plays the same CIA hardass he's been playing on the screen and TV for the last 15 years.

In short, it has two people falling in love (guess who?) set against a background of a chase scene, where the enemy are terribly stereotyped and very stupid. The helicopter scene at the end was particularly badly done, reminding one only that you had seen it before in APOCALYPSE NOW and

CAPRICORN 1. I cannot recommend this even marginally; I wish I could, as I had hopes for it, but it makes me angry to see something done with little effort to make it interesting, preferring to sell the movie on its potential, rather than its actual, worth.

Moriarty, aka Jeff Meyer

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Subject: Buckaroo Banzai times three  
Path: houxm!vax135!cornell!uw-beaver!ssc-vax!fluke!moriarty  
Date: Mon, 3-Dec-84 00:18:21 EST

Well, Mr. B. Banzai and his merry band of new wave musicians and particle physicists is out again at several cities... and after my third sitting, I still find it one of the best movies of the years.

You've heard me yack about this all year. However, I took two people with me (my parents -- they heard an excellent review on ALL THINGS CONSIDERED), without telling them anything about the plot. I just told them it was pretty fragmented and could be somewhat confusing.

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Well, they loved the movie -- Dad thought it was probably a good successor for the Saturday matinees of the past (I remember a kid behind me whispering "Watch out, Buckaroo!" behind me) -- and neither of them thought it confusing. They suggested that, being forewarned, they had paid closer attention than they usually do, and that made all the difference.

So, if you've been scared away from this movie due to claims that it is incomprehensible -- take heart. You're missing one heck of a treat in this movie.

Moriarty, aka Jeff Meyer

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Subject: Re: Buckaroo Banzai times three  
Path: houxm!vax135!cornell!lasspvax!gtaylor

Date: Tue, 4-Dec-84 09:22:35 EST

In article <> moriarty@fluke.UUCP (Jeff Meyer) writes:

So, if you've been scared away from this movie due to claims that it is incomprehensible -- take heart. You're missing one heck of a treat in this movie.

After having hung on for who knows how long waiting for it to wander into the Maul cinema, I gotta agree. If anything, the strong sense that I had is that the script writers themselves had great fun writing the thing, the actors really enjoyed themselves, and then the studio people saw the rough cuts and laid a brick, sending some poor hapless smurf scurrying into the editing room with instructions to make it more linear. Perhaps if they'd adopted the "Repo Man" school of PostModern editing (Pastiche is the name of the game, don't be afraid to \*let\* the movie unroll in the little world it has created for itself), this would have been truly transcendent.

A diamond in the rough, definitely. ANY film that opens with a Marvin Gaye quote in the middle of a desert test \*can't\* be all bad, niet waar?

Greg

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Subject: Woman of Steel, etc.? - (nf)

Path: houxm!ihnp4!inuxc!pur-ee!uiucdcs!uokvax!emjej

Date: Sun, 2-Dec-84 17:34:00 EST

Apologies if someone has thought of this before, but in view of the debut of the \*Supergirl\* movie, I can't help asking: has anyone prodded Niven to write a sequel to "Man of Steel, Woman of Kleenex?" I would imagine that potential suitors would be scared off quickly if they but thought...

James Jones

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Subject: Re: Woman of Steel, etc.? - (nf)

Path: houxm!ihnp4!inuxc!pur-ee!uiucdcs!ea!mwm

Date: Mon, 3-Dec-84 16:23:00 EST

I don't know if anyone has prodded Niven, but I've got something from uokvax!jab that delves into the problem. He also considers the problems of raising a superkid from birth, as opposed to from already being potty trained (For the Kent's sake, I \*hope\* Clark was potty trained when the adopted him!).

<mike

