

Lincroft-Holmdel Science Fiction Club
Club Notice - 7/11/84 -- Vol. 3, No. 2

MEETINGS UPCOMING:

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

_D_A_T_E _T_O_P_I_C

07/31 Video meeting: AN ENGLISHMAN'S CASTLE, pt. 1
08/01 Video meeting: AN ENGLISHMAN'S CASTLE, pt. 2
08/02 Video meeting: AN ENGLISHMAN'S CASTLE, pt. 3
08/22 TEA WITH THE BLACK DRAGON by R. A. MacAvoy
10/03 CIRCUS WORLD by Barry Longyear
11/14 THE TOMBS OF ATUAN by Ursula K. LeGuin
01/02 THE CIRCUS OF DR. LAO by Charles G. Finney
02/13 SLAN by A. E. Van Vogt

LZ's library and librarian Lance Larsen (576-2668) are in LZ 3C-219.
Mark Leeper (576-2571, LZ 3E-215) and Evelyn Leeper (576-2378, LZ
1D-216) are co-chairpeople. HO's library and librarian Tim Schroeder
(949-5866) are in HO 2G-432. John Jetzt (577-5316) is HO-chairperson.

1. THOSE INCREDIBLE LEEPERS DO IT AGAIN! Yes, once again you can
see a FANTASTIC HORROR DOUBLE FEATURE (or is it a horrible fantasy
double feature?) absolutely free of charge. All you have to do is
transport your worthless carcass over to the fabulously mundanely
decorated Leeper house on Thursday, July 19 at 7:30 and you can see
not one but two films with the same title. They are:

CAT PEOPLE (1942) dir. by Val Lewton
CAT PEOPLE (1982) dir. by Paul Schrader

On the surface this would look to be a film and its remake. Such
is not really the case. While the 1982 version was intended to be
a remake, its approach was quite different and the differences
between the two films far outweigh the similarities. Each stands
on its own and seeing the two together is like seeing two different
films that are just related in themes. The 1942 film stars Simone
Simon in the Nastassia Kinski role. The 1982 featured had
Nastassia Kinski in the Simone Simon part. (Funny how that worked
out.) In any case, you might as well come and see it. There
aren't a lot of freebies around any more.

2. Those of you voting on the Hugo awards, be reminded that the deadline is July 16.

3. On July 20, 1969, Neil Armstrong became the first man to walk on the moon. July 16-24 (the time Apollo 11 was off-Earth) has been

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designated space week, and July 20th, National Space Day. Across the nation space groups will be both celebrating our past achievements and working to educate the public as to the importance of space during this special week.

In New Jersey, the North Jersey L5 Society and the New Jersey State Museum of Science are jointly sponsoring SPACEDAY 1984 on Saturday July 21. A full day of speakers, films, and events is to take place at the NJ State Museum of Science in Trenton. A schedule of events is attached, including a lecture by the designer of the space shuttle main engines. Children's programming includes model rocketry demonstrations, special planetarium shows, a 1/15th scale model of the shuttle, and a showing of the feature movie, T_r_o_n.

Details, including a map to the museum, are available upon request from Dale L. Skran, 834-2908, HO 1E-425.

4. Barbara Pitzner, HO 1C-328, is looking for a copy of the book BID TIME RETURN (SOMEWHERE IN TIME) by Richard Matheson. Anyone who has a copy to sell her, she would be grateful to talk to.

Mark Leeper
LZ 3E-215 x2571
...{houxn,hogpd,hocse}!lznv!mrl

R-28

A film editorial by Mark R. Leeper

I saw the film J_u_d_g_e_m_e_n_t_a_t_N_u_r_e_m_b_e_r_g this last weekend and enjoyed it a great deal. The question that comes to mind is why are they making so few films of this quality these days. I love fantasy films and this is some sort of Golden Age for fantasy films, but movie-going is getting to be like living on a diet of ice cream and cake.

One of the problems is the audiences. If there isn't something enthralling happening on the screen every minute, the yobs and yahoos get restless. They start talking back to the screen and talking to each other (that makes sense because they usually have about the same intelligence as the screen). This is my bid for a new rating system. We don't need a PG-13 rating; we need an R-28. R-28 films wouldn't have more sex or violence than regular R-rated films. They might not have any sex or violence at all. What they would have is some thought content that the producers don't want ruined by the howling mobs. With the current rating system there are enough people who measure films on the same stupid and superficial criteria that the ratings people look at (and really what ratings people look at is what a

parent might not want a younger child to see) that a film like I_n_h_e_r_i_t_t_h_e
W_i_n_d (where Spencer Tracy and Fredric March dramatize the Scopes "Monkey"
Trial) could not be made today because it has neither sex nor violence. It
would at worst get a PG and more likely a G. G films die at the boxoffice.

The viewing public works on the very sound principle that if the film has
nothing in it that a parent would not want a young child to see, then it
cannot be worth seeing by anyone but a child. So films with serious points

to make, films like W_h_o_s_e_L_i_f_e_I_s_I_t_A_n_y_w_a_y? and F_i_r_s_t_M_o_n_d_a_y_i_n
O_c_t_o_b_e_r

are forced to put otherwise unnecessary nudity in or risk death at the
boxoffice. N_e_v_e_r_C_r_y_W_o_l_f, one of the best three films of last year, didn't
cave in and it had a relatively short run. If the main character had been
studying wolves mating habits rather than their eating habits, it might have
stood a chance. Maybe R-28 isn't the answer, but it is a start.

Put R-28 films in special theaters that don't show other films. That
way attendees to R-28 films wouldn't have to have their feet stick to the
floors to see the films. If you have these special theaters in which people
could watch serious films in relative comfort, and hear the dialog, you
might get a very different cut of the population going to movies in
theaters. Exhibitors might rebel, mostly because people over 28 buy less
food at the movie. The impression I have is that most of the money a
theater makes is at the candy counter. An exhibitor basically sets up a
building where the studios can show their films, takes a surprisingly small
cut of the studio's profit from this, and then hawks candy to the people
that the movie attracts. Still, films like I_n_h_e_r_i_t_t_h_e_W_i_n_d cost less to
make than J_a_w_s_I_I_I, so the studio could give the exhibitors a break. And
the exhibitor would be catching people who otherwise would only watch a film
on a VCR.

With an R-28 rating fewer of us would be looking at our cinematic diet
of ice cream and cake and asking "Where's the beef?"

Gemini Capsules - July 11, 1984

"Gemini Capsules": SF review column, edited by Rob Mitchell. Appears in the
"Lincroft-Holmdel SF Club Notice".

A medium for quick reviews of anything of interest in the worlds of
science fiction/fantasy, although the gimmick will be to relate pairs of
interesting anythings. Unlike other columns, I'll pass along even the
slandorous and scatological comments I receive. You can reach out and touch

me at 576-6106, at LZ 1B-306, or via hogpd!jrrt.

Two by James Schmitz

While visiting my Friend Mark the other day, I commented that James Schmitz seemed a competent, but not extraordinary, writer. When he questioned me, I admitted having read only his famed T_h_e_W_i_t_c_h_e_s_O_f_K_a_r_r_e_s novel. Mark got all excited, and insisted that I read some "undeservedly obscure" Schmitz books. I did, and here's my report.

T_h_e_T_e_l_z_e_y_T_o_y_a_n_d_O_t_h_e_r_S_t_o_r_i_e_s is the second of three independent short-story collections about Telzey Amberdon. She's perfect -- brilliant, courageous, rich, and the most powerful telepath in the Galactic Federation. The four stories in this book have Telzey going up against mad scientists, mad businessmen, mad aliens, and mad terrorists. Although the stories are alleged to take place when Telzey is 16, there are inconsistencies in the timeframes and technologies between the stories. The "About the Author" blurb at the back of the book trumpets Schmitz's "consistent use of strong female protagonists at a time when science fiction was a male-oriented genre." I guess that's a fair statement, but this collection makes me wish for less protagonist and more story -- I rate this a 0 on the Leeper -4/4 scale.

No so with the second book, T_h_e_D_e_m_o_n_B_r_e_e_d. This novel is based on Nandy-Cline, a water planet whose ecology is as detailed and compelling as Dune. Humans are on the planet to collect various substances and (in one case) to conduct research into longevity. All is quiet, until the Parahuans sneak in. These lizardish aliens lost a war against humankind seventy years ago, and are coming back for revenge. Their racial pride insists that they lost the first time only because the humans are actually guided by "Guardians" who keep a low profile. The Parahuans intend to use Nandy-Cline as a base to flush out and capture such a Guardian. A female (of course!) biochemist becomes the unwitting target of their machinations when she is trapped on the island where they are preparing their attack.

I rate T_h_e_D_e_m_o_n_B_r_e_e_d a +2 on the Leeper scale, in large part due to the lushness with which Schmitz portrays the floatwood forests, the intelligent mutated otters that cooperate with humans, and the believable aliens. Schmitz also gives us glimpses of other races, and adds some insightful analysis of the ways our race must develop if war is to be abolished. A well-done novel; I must revise my estimate of Schmitz to say

Neither of these books is new. T_h_e_T_e_l_z_e_y_T_o_y came out in 1973, and T_h_e_D_e_m_o_n_B_r_e_e_d came out in 1968, but Ace SF re-released them in 1982 and 1981, respectively.

Rob Mitchell

PROCURATOR by Kirk Mitchell
Ace, 1984, \$2.75.
A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper

In the last issue I reviewed T_h_e_L_a_s_t_D_a_y_o_f_C_r_e_a_t_i_o_n, which I described as a time travel/alternate history sort of novel. Two weeks ago, I reviewed L_a_m_m_a_s_N_i_g_h_t, which was an occult/alternate history novel. Well, this week it's P_r_o_c_u_r_a_t_o_r. This novel isn't anything but an alternate history novel; there's no time travel, no occultism, nothing to clutter up the premise. The premise (given away on the back blurb, so don't blame me--and besides, if you didn't realize it was an alternate history novel, you probably wouldn't buy it anyway) is that Pontius Pilate's wife convinces him not to crucify Jesus, hence Christianity never gets started, hence never brings about the fall of Rome. Now (in the book) it is the equivalent of the present (i.e., 2000 years later) and Rome is still slogging along as the Empire it always has been.

There are other variations from our history (Publius Vergilius seems to have defeated the Germanic tribes in this universe, rather than losing to them as in ours) and these may well have been the r_e_a_l turning points. Certainly one may argue that the fall of the Roman Empire was caused as much by its own size in an era before modern communications as by any external religious movement. The picture of the Roman Empire that Mitchell draws is one in which science has progressed to about the World War II level (i.e., slightly behind us, but no great gaps considering the two thousand year span), but the rulers in Rome are still emperors in an unbroken string back to Augustus. Germanicus (the title character) is fighting against rebels in Anatolia (Turkey). (Except for one anachronistic reference to Palestine--it should be Judea--all the geographical names are Roman: Hibernia, Gaul, etc.) The army is basically the Roman legions with mechanized transport and automatic weapons.

The problem with this premise is that (as Terry Carr once said) it's the aerodynamics of a bird in flight--if it doesn't keep moving forward, it falls. Rome does not appear to have advanced politically in any notable fashion in the intervening two thousand years in this novel. She still has rule by imperial fiat, decadence, conspiracies--in short, all that helped cause her fall in our universe. (And let's not forget the slow lead poisoning caused by all those aqueducts she was so renowned for!) But she has advanced technologically and, to some extent, socially. For example, women now serve in the army on an equal footing with men. If an empire crushes a_l_l change, it can manage to rule for hundreds or even thousands of years: ancient Egypt and China are two examples. Even so, it will eventually fall due to outside causes. But once change is let in, the politics must change also, or the system will collapse internally. Once people have an opportunity of improving their lot, rule by emperors cannot last long.

So what you have is a not very believable story of a three-thousand-year-old Roman Empire. And Mitchell doesn't even use this premise well. What he has written is little more than a historical novel set in ancient Rome. The "equality" of women gives him an excuse to have his female character (read that as "love interest") out on the front lines, and he does get to show Roman fighting style with modern weapons, but so what? All you have is a historical novel done up as an alternate history story. Where the other novels mentioned add other twists to the alternate history idea, this one doesn't even use that one idea. (Oh, it does add some vague psychic warfare, which may or may not be real. Big deal.)

Somtow Sucharitkul has tried the same sort of premise (the Roman Empire survives) in his "Aquila" stories. I'm not thrilled with those either.

Maybe I'm just not into that sub-sub-genre (genre: science fiction, sub-genre: alternate history, sub-sub-genre: what if the Roman Empire

survived?). On the other hand, I thought DeCamp did a good job with a time travel/alternate history novel on the same theme (L_e_s_t_D_a_r_k_n_e_s_s

F_a_l_l), so

who can say? I suspect that it's more a question of wanting a realistic alternate history and being confronted by authors who don't understand the causes and effects of historical events, or who are willing to play fast and loose with history in the interests of turning out a story.

(The best and most faithful alternate history novel I've seen is

Sobel's F_o_r_W_a_n_t_o_f_a_N_a_i_l, in which the American revolutionaries lost the

Battle of Saratoga. It's more an alternate history book than a novel

though. See below for more alternate history novels.) As far as P_r_o_c_u_r_a_t_o_r, it is of interest only as a novel about ancient Roman military technique.

Basic Alternate History Themes

1. what if the South won the Civil War:
 - Harrison's A REBEL IN TIME (well, sort of)
 - Kelley's A DIFFERENT DRUMMER

- Moore's BRING THE JUBILEE
 - Nesbitt's IF THE SOUTH HAD WON GETTYSBURG
 - Stapp's A MORE PERFECT UNION
2. what if Germany/Japan had won WWII:
- Dick's THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE
 - Hershey's WHITE LOTUS
 - Mackie's AN ENGLISHMAN'S CASTLE (a BBC play)
 - Norden's THE ULTIMATE SOLUTION (wretched!)
 - Mullally's HITLER HAS WON (also wretched!)
 - Sarban's THE SOUND OF HIS HORN

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3. what if the American Revolution had failed:
- Harrison's A TRANSATLANTIC TUNNEL, HURRAH!
 - Sobel's FOR WANT OF A NAIL (written as a history book!)
4. what if the Roman Empire didn't fall:
- DeCamp's LEST DARKNESS FALL
 - Mitchell's PROCURATOR
 - Sucharitkul's AQUILIAD
5. what if the Spanish Armada weren't defeated:
- Amis's THE ALTERATION
 - Roberts's PAVANE
6. what if X:
- Anderson's THE HIGH CRUSADE
 - Bradbury's "Sound of Thunder"
 - Kurland's THE WHENABOUTS OF BURR
 - Wyndham's "Random Quest" (made into the movie QUEST FOR LOVE)

KAJIRA OF GOR by John Norman
A book review by Lance Larsen

After ten years of listening to people castigate John Norman's "Gor" series, I couldn't take it anymore. I had to read one. I wanted to find out whether the Gor books and Mr. Norman's writing could possibly be as bad as their detractors claimed. Mr. Norman obligingly wrote yet another novel in the series, this one titled _ K_ a_ j_ i_ r_ a_ o_ f_ G_ o_ r. According to the book, "kajira" means slavegirl in Gorean. Since John Norman already wrote a story called _ S_ l_ a_ v_ e_ g_ i_ r_ l_ o_ f_ G_ o_ r he is effectively recycling titles -- not a good sign.

It took a long time to read this book. I could only read a little bit at a time, and I needed a long time between installments. But I've read it -- all of it. I've always felt that you should read a book -- the whole

book, not just a piece of it -- before you have any right to comment on it.

Most of the negative comments I have heard about John Norman's books center on his idea of how men and women should relate to each other. Since I wholeheartedly disagree with him on that, I'll concentrate on the quality of his story and his writing ability -- areas where he has been given a free ride by most people.

Does Donald Wollheim pay by the word? Judging from John Norman's prose he must -- and not much per word. What a competent writer could do well in six words John Norman does badly in three paragraphs. Each sentence is twice as long (and four times as convoluted) as necessary. And then it is repeated three more times on the same page. It is bad enough to have to wade through a badly constructed sentence. It is worse still when that sentence is redundant as well. It is intolerable to be given the same sentence again (and again) with the clauses rearranged.

John Norman is obviously not concerned with telling a story. There is no plot to speak of. A woman is kidnapped from Earth by slavetraders from Gor. She is set up as a double for a female ruler -- a Gorean oddity who is eventually overthrown (hence the need for the double). The female ruler (along with the captured Earthwoman and virtually every other female in sight) becomes enslaved by Gorean males (MASTERS).

Nor is he concerned with creating characters that mean something to the reader. The women are either slaves (and happy with their lot), fated to become slaves (and like it!) or secretly desirous of becoming slaves. The men are simply masters of slave women -- "real men." This master-slave relationship is presented as the natural order of things. Men and women can find true fulfillment only by acknowledging their true desires -- to be masters and slaves. The entire book seems to be nothing more than incessant repetition of the same statement -- "It is the natural order of things that women should be enslaved by men."

John Norman is entitled to his own sexual preferences. He may, as an author, choose to write essays arguing in favor of what he prefers. Or he may choose to write fiction, and create characters who share those preferences. But, if he chooses to write fiction, the least he can do is present his readers with real characters, some semblance of a plot and decent writing. Since Mr. Norman can provide none of these, I heartily recommend NOT reading this novel, or any of his other novels.

Space Day Schedule: July 21, 1984
Sponsored by The North Jersey L5 Society and

the New Jersey State Museum of Science

Space Day Planetarium Schedule

10:00-11:00 Movies: _ T _ h _ e _ S _ u _ n _ b _ e _ a _ m _ C _ o _ n _ n _ e _ c _ t _ i _ o _ n ,
_ T _ h _ e _ W _ e _ a _ t _ h _ e _ r _ M _ a _ c _ h _ i _ n _ e , and other
science shorts.

11:00-12:00 Planetarium Show: _ C _ o _ u _ n _ t _ d _ o _ w _ n - _ 2 _ 5 _ Y _ e _ a _ r _ s
_ i _ n _ S _ p _ a _ c _ e .

12:00-1:00 Planetarium Show: _ S _ u _ m _ m _ e _ r _ S _ t _ a _ r _ s _ f _ o _ r _ T _ o _ t _ s .

1:00-2:00 Planetarium Show: _ C _ o _ u _ n _ t _ d _ o _ w _ n - _ 2 _ 5 _ Y _ e _ a _ r _ s _ i _ n
_ S _ p _ a _ c _ e .

2:00-3:00 Planetarium Show: _ S _ u _ m _ m _ e _ r _ S _ t _ a _ r _ s _ f _ o _ r _ T _ o _ t _ s .

2:00-3:30: Movie: _ T _ r _ o _ n .

3:00-4:00 Planetarium Show: _ C _ o _ u _ n _ t _ d _ o _ w _ n - _ 2 _ 5 _ Y _ e _ a _ r _ s _ i _ n
_ S _ p _ a _ c _ e .

Space Day Speakers Schedule

9:00-9:30 _ I _ n _ t _ r _ o _ d _ u _ c _ t _ i _ o _ n _ t _ o _ M _ o _ d _ e _ l
_ R _ o _ c _ k _ e _ t _ r _ y : presented by James Newquist

9:30-10:00 _ M _ o _ d _ e _ l _ R _ o _ c _ k _ e _ t _ r _ y
_ D _ e _ m _ o _ n _ s _ t _ r _ a _ t _ i _ o _ n : presented by James Newquist

10:00-11:00 _ T _ h _ e _ W _ o _ r _ k _ o _ f _ t _ h _ e _ S _ p _ a _ c _ e
_ S _ t _ u _ d _ i _ e _ s _ I _ n _ s _ t _ i _ t _ u _ t _ e : presented by April
Whitt, Executive Director of the Space Studies Institute,
including slides and a video tape.

11:00-12:00 _ R _ C _ A _ A _ s _ t _ r _ o - _ E _ l _ e _ c _ t _ r _ o _ n _ i _ c _ s : presented by
Tony Manna.

12:00-1:00 _ H _ i _ s _ t _ o _ r _ y _ o _ f _ t _ h _ e _ S _ p _ a _ c _ e
_ P _ r _ o _ g _ r _ a _ m : a slide show/lecture presented
by J. Striab, Professor of Physics at Villanova.

1:00-2:00 _ T _ h _ e _ L _ 5 _ S _ o _ c _ i _ e _ t _ y _ a _ n _ d
_ M _ a _ n _ k _ i _ n _ d ' s _ F _ u _ t _ u _ r _ e _ i _ n _ S _ p _ a _ c _ e : a slide
show/lecture presented by Chuck Divine, President of the North
Jersey L5 Society.

2:00-3:00 _ T _ h _ e _ S _ p _ a _ c _ e _ S _ h _ u _ t _ t _ l _ e _ M _ a _ i _ n
_ E _ n _ g _ i _ n _ e _ s : a slide show/lecture presented
by J.R.Thompson, current Deputy Directory of Forrester
Laboratories, former Chief Engineer for the Space Shuttle.

3:00-4:00 _ I _ n _ t _ r _ o _ d _ u _ c _ t _ i _ o _ n _ t _ o _ M _ o _ d _ e _ l

_ R_ o_ c_ k_ e_ t_ r_ y: presented by James Newquist

4:00-4:30 _ M_ o_ d_ e_ l_ R_ o_ c_ k_ e_ t_ r_ y

_ D_ e_ m_ o_ n_ s_ t_ r_ a_ t_ i_ o_ n: presented by James Newquist

Space Day Video Schedule

9:00-10:00 _ 2_ 5_ Y_ e_ a_ r_ s_ I_ n_ S_ p_ a_ c_ e: _ A_ R_ e_ p_ r_ i_ s_ e

10:00-10:35 _ S_ k_ y_ l_ a_ b_ S_ c_ i_ e_ n_ c_ e

_ E_ x_ p_ e_ r_ i_ m_ e_ n_ t_ s, including

o + _ Z_ e_ r_ o_ G (1974)15 minutes

o + _ C_ o_ n_ s_ e_ r_ v_ a_ t_ i_ o_ n_ L_ a_ w_ s_ i_ n_ Z_ e_ r_ o_ G (1974)17 minutes

10:35-11:00 Shuttle Spacewalk set to music (created by E. Leeper)

11:00-1:00 L5 Video Show

o + _ S_ T_ S- 1_ P_ r_ e_ s_ s_ C_ o_ n_ f_ e_ r_ e_ n_ c_ e (17 minutes)

o + _ S_ T_ S- 3_ P_ o_ s_ t_ F_ l_ i_ g_ h_ t_ P_ r_ e_ s_ s
_ C_ o_ n_ f_ e_ r_ e_ n_ c_ e (17 minutes)

o + _ S_ T_ S- 6_ P_ o_ s_ t_ F_ l_ i_ g_ h_ t_ P_ r_ e_ s_ s
_ C_ o_ n_ f_ e_ r_ e_ n_ c_ e (15 minutes)

o + _ T_ h_ e_ N_ e_ x_ t_ F_ r_ o_ n_ t_ i_ e_ r:
_ I_ n_ t_ r_ o_ d_ u_ c_ t_ i_ o_ n_ t_ o_ t_ h_ e_ L_ 5_ S_ o_ c_ i_ e_ t_ y (40
minutes)

o + _ N_ A_ S_ A_ R_ e_ p_ o_ r_ t: _ S_ p_ a_ c_ e
_ C_ o_ l_ o_ n_ i_ z_ a_ t_ i_ o_ n (5 minutes)

o + _ N_ A_ S_ A_ R_ e_ p_ o_ r_ t: _ S_ p_ a_ c_ e_ S_ o_ l_ a_ r

_ P_ o_ w_ e_ r (5 minutes)

o + _ Z_ e_ r_ o_ G_ r_ a_ v_ i_ t_ y_ G_ y_ m_ n_ a_ s_ t_ i_ c_ s (7 minutes)

o + _ J_ u_ p_ i_ t_ o_ r_ a_ n_ d_ S_ a_ t_ u_ r_ n
_ R_ o_ t_ a_ t_ i_ o_ n_ F_ i_ l_ m_ s (14 minutes)

1:00-2:00 Business in Space: Free Enterprise Reaches Out

2:00-3:00 Careers in Space

o + _ S_ p_ a_ c_ e_ f_ o_ r_ W_ o_ m_ e_ n (1981) 28 minutes.

o + _ W_ h_ e_ r_ e_ D_ r_ e_ a_ m_ s_ C_ o_ m_ e_ T_ r_ u_ e (1979) 28 minutes.

3:00-5:00 History of the Early Apollo Program

o + _ A_ p_ o_ l_ l_ o_ 8: _ G_ o_ f_ o_ r_ T_ L_ I (1969) 22 minutes.

o + _ A_ p_ o_ l_ l_ o_ 9: _ T_ h_ r_ e_ e_ t_ o_ M_ a_ k_ e
_ R_ e_ a_ d_ y (1969) 17 minutes.

o + _ A_ p_ o_ l_ l_ o_ 1_ 0: _ T_ o_ S_ o_ r_ t_ O_ u_ t_ t_ h_ e
_ U_ n_ k_ n_ o_ w_ n_ s_ (1_ 9_ 6_ 9)_ 2_ 5_ m_ i_ n_ u_ t_ e_ s.

o + _ E_ a_ g_ l_ e_ H_ a_ s_ L_ a_ n_ d_ e_ d: _ T_ h_ e
_ F_ l_ i_ g_ h_ t_ o_ f_ A_ p_ o_ l_ l_ o_ 1_ 1 (1969) 28 minutes.

_ N_ O_ T_ E_ S_ F_ R_ O_ M_ T_ H_ E_ N_ E_ T

Contributed by Rob Mitchell & Dale Skran

>From ihnp4!inuxc!pur-ee!uiucdcs!uok!esmith Tue Jul 3 16:29:00 1984
Subject: Jack Chalker review (non spoiler) - (nf)

I've heard that most people out there don't really care for the works of Jack Chalker, but in my opinion he's written so very good works. His latest series "_____ of the Dancing Gods" I believe are some of the better works in SF out today.

The Dancing god series are relatively new. The first book "The River of the Dancing Gods", published Feb. '84, was very entertaining and left the reader waiting for the second of a three part series. The premise of the books is that there is a planet that when God created Earth this planet was created also. The only thing is that this planet wasn't governed by the strict set of rules that God made for Earth, magic works here, there are wizards and magical creatures, all governed by their own set of rules.

Now take two normal run of the mill Americans, headed for disaster, their own deaths, and transport them to this world to fight for Good. Good in this case is saving the earth from Armageddon.

Chalker weaves a tale that rivals some of the best fantasy books around and still leaves room for humor and great adventure.

The second book, "Demons of the Dancing Gods", Jun. '84, picks up where the first book stops and carries our hero and heroine on to further adventures.

I was very entertained by the books and made for some very good light reading, with lots of adventure.

- Eric L. Smith

>From ihnp4!inuxc!pur-ee!uiucdcs!uok!esmith Tue Jul 3 19:14:00 1984
Subject: F.M. Busby review (non spoiler) - (nf)

F.M. Busby and the Rissa Kerguelen Saga.

I know that these books were published back in 1977, but they have been re-released and make excellent reading. Berkley Publishing has taken the original two book series and split them into three. The books are:

Young Rissa,
Rissa and Tregare,
& The Long View.

The books get a little hard to follow because of the over abundance of supporting characters, but other than that they are a very well written series of books.

The series starts out with our heroine, age five, on Earth. The bad guys kill her parents and put her into legalized slavery, welfare, from here we follow her through several mishaps and she escapes in a very innovative way, she kills her way out. Well so as not to be a spoiler we follow her adventures as she and her husband, Tregare, try to take back Earth from the evil hands that made the galaxy such a rotten place to live.

Every once and a while the movement drags a little bit and there's a quite a few a typo's but nobody's perfect. All in all the reading was good and was very well done.

Although the plot is not very original Busby adds a "realism" to the Books that can only be compared with some of Heinlein's works. My recommendation is that if you like Heinlein, you should like these books very much, I did.

- Eric L. Smith

>From hogpc!houxm!houxz!vax135!cornell!uw-beaver!tektronix!hplabs
!sri-unix!JAROCHA-ERNST@RU-BLUE.ARPA Thu Jul 5 11:08:05 1984
Subject: Follow-up to Cthulhu Mythos request

As it's been a month since my original request for pointers to additional Cthulhu Mythos stories, I thought I should honor my promise to summarize my results for SF-LOVERS everywhere.

Unfortunately for me, no one was able to add substantially to my list, nor could anyone give me pointers to the Berglund bibliography. Bob Webber told me about Robert's Bloch's MYSTERIES OF THE WORM; Carl Powell gave me WORM and Bloch's mythos novel, STRANGE EONS. While I thank these folks, I did have these books already and simply forgot to add Bloch's name to the original list. Carl also mentioned the Hastur/Carcosa stories by Ambrose Bierce, the stories of Arthur Machen, and Robert Chambers's THE KING IN YELLOW. These may be considered "source material" for Mythos stories, but as they were written well before Lovecraft created Cthulhu, they're not Mythos stories, as such.

Winston Edmond called my attention to the Avon paperback NECRONOMICON, as did Carl. I've avoided this book because a) it's not Cthulhu fiction, and b) it's a fake. I suspect the author is somehow connected with Satanist Anton Szandor LaVey, who once wrote some Cthulhu rituals for one of his "Satanic Bibles".

However, Carl also mentioned another NECRONOMICON, which I'd be interested in seeing. I quote his paragraph in full:

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"There are also two books out about the Necronomicon. Necronomicon, published by Avon (I think) and The Necronomicon, published by Corgi. The former is a bunch of Persian (I think) mythology revised by someone named Simon, while the latter is supposedly a decryption of the book brought back from the court of Stanislaus IV (?), king of Poland, by John Dee, a mystic from Elizabethan times. The latter also contains a lot of conjectures about how Lovecraft might have gotten ahold of the book, biographical data, etc. Much more informative than the former. It is edited by George Hay. I got my copy in a book store in Ireland, and have yet to see a copy in the States."

Let's get this straight: the Necronomicon, the real Necronomicon, doesn't exist. Lovecraft admitted inventing it. He forged bibliographical data for it (HIST. & CHRON. OF THE NECR.), and did it so well that many folks thought it was a real book. BUT he may have seen some occult tome and used it as source material. This may be what Hay's book is. In any event, I'd like to see a copy of it. Any further info on it, anyone?

Finally, a repeat plea: what I'm looking for are places where Mythos stories may have been anthologized. SHORT STORY INDEX doesn't cover every anthology, nor is it useful unless I have particular authors/titles I'm looking for. I want stuff I haven't heard of yet, as well as stuff I have heard of but haven't read. Please see my earlier request in SF-LOVERS for details; it's too long to reproduce here.

Thanks to those who responded; Cthulhu fthagn!

Chris Jarocho-Ernst

>From ihnp4!zehntel!hplabs!sri-unix!sigel%umass-cs.csnet@csnet-relay.arpa
Thu Jul 5 15:44:00 1984
Subject: FUZZIES AND OTHER PEOPLE by H. Beam Piper

The final Fuzzy book written by H. Beam Piper, FUZZIES AND OTHER PEOPLE, has just been published by Ace Books. I hope it will be the last novel ever published about these beings; I feel certain Piper intended it to be, just from having read it. Piper was writing a future history at the time of his death, and the first Fuzzy novel, LITTLE FUZZY, was intended to be a one-shot, but the little critters proved so popular that he wrote a sequel, and, we now see, another sequel.

The novel feels right. FUZZY BONES by William Tuning, written when it seemed that the "lost" novel would stay lost, tried very hard to capture Piper's style and nearly succeeded, but it shifted scene too often, and was a little too cute at times. FUZZIES AND OTHER PEOPLE also continues the story from the end of FUZZY SAPIENS, and does so in a way that works better, given the characters as presented. Piper does take a few easy ways out, and the plot really isn't much to hang a book on, but I have always wanted to see how Piper would handle scenes that just had Fuzzies against the

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wilderness (as in the Ardath Mayhar book GOLDEN DREAM), so I guess I'm satisfied.

I suppose the thing I'm least happy with is Piper's final conclusion of the sapience level of Fuzzies. When all is said and done, I prefer Tuning's explanation, especially as it fits so nicely with the titanium requirement in the Fuzzy diet. It does have to come from somewhere, and Piper shouldn't have failed to explain it.

If you've read any of the other Fuzzy books, you should get this one. If you haven't, I'd start with LITTLE FUZZY first. It's too bad that Piper isn't around to enjoy his success; Ace Books is making a mint off it, and if he'd known what would happen, maybe he would have kept writing instead of committing suicide.

Andrew D. Sigel

>From hogpc!houxm!ihnp4!zehntel!hplabs!sdcrcdf!jkb Fri Jul 6 12:16:45 1984
Subject: Man vs. Machine

I was watching Showtime the other day and happened to see an episode of The

Paper Chase, the Second Year where the engineering department pitted their "thinking" computer program against the law department, and eventually, Professor Kingsfield. He was soundly trounced on all of the rote questions involving interpretations of the law because the computer had a faster access to the law database and could cite (and use) more references and relevant cases for substantiation. When it came down to the final showdown, Kingsfield posed a hypothetical situation to the computer, which proceeded to apply more and more of its resources to the problem until it barfed.

My question is this: Is there such a thing as a machine that will, without regard to its own life and limb and programming, consume itself by applying more resources (i.e., CPU power, memory, etc.) to solve a particular problem?

This theme has been shown in quite a few SF movies and shows (Forbidden Planet and the Star Trek episode with the Mark V computer, to name two). It bothers me a little that whenever we see a version of Man vs. Computer, man always wins because computer barfs.

Does anybody out in net.sf.land know of a situation where this has not happened; that is, where either computer wins and man barfs, or where computer gives up (note: I don't consider Wargames in this category)?

John Barbee

>From ihnp4!zehntel!hplabs!sri-unix!donn@utah-cs Sun Jul 8 20:32:24 1984

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Subject: A review of NEUROMANCER by William Gibson

NEUROMANCER. William Gibson. Ace Specials, c1984.

Non-spoiler review: Buy it, buy it!

Micro-spoiler review:

This is a futuristic thriller which deals with 'cyberspace'. Some between-the-lines tribute is given to Vernor Vinge's TRUE NAMES, which seems to have been the first real implementation of the idea. Gibson's world is very

different from Vinge's, however, and the action takes place in various seedy settings reminiscent of the movie BLADERUNNER. The action is nonstop, and the characters and setting have a gritty, realistic feel. If you are afraid of downer novels, beware that the protagonists of NEUROMANCER are not particularly sympathetic (in fact they are all professional criminals), and a lot of, well, bad language is used. But the book is so skillfully done and the suspense is so great that I couldn't put the book down once I'd started it.

Mini-spoiler review:

This is William Gibson's first novel -- NEUROMANCER is the third Ace Special in the series edited by Terry Carr, where all the books (so far) are first novels. (I've reviewed the previous two Specials here before: THE WILD SHORE by Kim Stanley Robinson and GREEN EYES by Lucius Shepard. Algis Budrys in F&SF thought THE WILD SHORE was very good (with some qualifications) and went ga-ga over GREEN EYES; my feelings are similar. By the way, NEUROMANCER apparently got very good reviews from Norman Spinrad in IASFM recently.) For a first novel, this book is amazingly good.

Now a little plot teaser. (Those of you who hate to hear anything about plots, skip this paragraph.) Case used to be a cyberspace cowboy, someone who could jack into the world of cyberspace and penetrate corporate defenses to bring back data for whoever could pay the price. He crossed his bosses once, though, and they poisoned him with a mycotoxin which destroys the nerve endings necessary to be able to jack, leaving him stranded in the world of 'meat'. Now he is slowly degenerating into drug addiction, petty crime and suicidal mania in the Japanese city of Chiba, where anyone with the money can have any kind of surgery done, but Case hasn't the money to repair himself. Case cheats the fence he deals with and the fence sends some hoods to rub Case out, but at the last possible moment Case is rescued by members of an organization without a name. They hold out the possibility of a deal: they will reconstruct Case's ravaged nervous system if he will agree to go on an extremely dangerous mission whose object they refuse to divulge. The course of the mission takes Case to BAMA, the city with the slang name of Sprawl which covers the old eastern seaboard of the US, to the warrens of Istanbul, and to the satellite of Freeside where the rich go to play and occasionally to die. The climax, however, is in cyberspace, where Case must penetrate a massively secure system without being 'flatlined', i.e., avoiding brain death from overstimulation. This plus ninja assassins,

the Turing police, punk terrorists, the Rastafarian Space Navy and lots more.

In some ways this book resembles Alfred Bester's *THE STARS MY DESTINATION*, especially from the point of view of the incredible pacing and the violence and the plot fireworks, but there are also a few similarities in characters. The descriptive language and dialogue really grab you with detail; this world comes alive, detestable as some of it is. Curiously, this book is hard science fiction, although it doesn't read like it, and you get the feeling that the social consequences of the technology that he postulates have all been carefully worked out (although I have a few nits to pick, as usual). *NEUROMANCER* sort of one-ups *TRUE NAMES* -- if Vinge is working on an expanded version of *TRUE NAMES*, it will be interesting to see how they compare...

Enjoy,

Donn Seeley University of Utah CS Dept. donn@utah-cs.UTAH

