

Lincroft-Holmdel Science Fiction Club
Club Notice - 7/23/86 -- Vol. 5, No. 2

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.

_D_A_T_E _T_O_P_I_C

08/06 LZ: TUNNEL IN THE SKY by Robert Heinlein (Faster-Than-Light Travel)

08/27 LZ: 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY by Arthur C. Clarke (Evolution)

HO Chair is John Jetzt, HO 4F-528A (834-1563). LZ Chair is Rob Mitchell, LZ 1B-306 (576-6106). MT Chair is Mark Leeper, MT 3E-433 (957-5619). HO Librarian is Tim Schroeder, HO 2G-427A (949-5866). LZ Librarian is Lance Larsen, LZ 3C-219 (576-2668). MT Librarian is Bruce Szablak, MT 4C-418 (957-5868). Jill-of-all-trades is Evelyn Leeper, MT 1F-329 (957-2070). All material copyright by author unless otherwise noted.

1. The relentless march of progress:

+o Twenty years ago today we were struggling to get an Apollo spacecraft to take people to the moon.

+o Ten years ago today we were struggling to get the space shuttle to to put people in orbit.

+o Today our ceaseless efforts are to make rockets that will get safely off the launching pad.

What new wonders will the next decade bring us? It's clear that even with budget cuts to NASA, our space program has the power to survive and to remain one of the two or three most successful space programs in the world!

2. NESFA (the New England Science Fiction Association), of which we are an associate member, quotes excerpts of the description of Moonwalk, "the craze that is sweeping Middletown," and goes on to say, "[NESFA] could play Moonwalk in Boston, except for the risk of drowning in some of our potzilla-class potholes." Sounds like a challenge to me! [-ecl]

Mark Leeper
MT 3E-433 957-5619
...mtgzz!leeper

THE DRASTIC DRAGON OF DRACO, TEXAS by Elizabeth Scarborough
Bantam/Spectra, 1986, #3.50, 247pp.
(Cover art by E. T. Steadwaid; incorrectly credited to Rowena Morrill)
A book review by Philip J. De Parto
Copyright (c) 1986 by Philip J. De Parto

Anyone who enjoys fantasy but is weary of the same old dreary heroic quests in days of yore should find T_h_e_D_r_a_s_t_i_c_D_r_a_g_o_n_o_f_D_r_a_c_o, T_e_x_a_s a welcome change of pace. Elizabeth Scarborough has been a writer to watch since her first novel, S_o_n_g_o_f_S_o_r_c_e_r_y, appeared. Unfortunately, her subsequent efforts--although certainly workman-like--had failed to reprise the delightful blend of humor and magic which made her first book such a treat.

D_r_a_g_o_n is set in the shoot-em-up-pardner days of the Lone Star State along the Rio Grande. Strange things are afoot--ancient curses, vanishing cattle, an inexplicable drought. Riding into this mess on saddle-sore bones comes our heroine, Pelagia Harper, late of Philadelphia, to make a name for herself as a writer of Western romances.

It is the persona of Ms. Harper that makes the story work. She may not be the supremely competent Amazon that Bradley or others might employ, but she is nobody's fool: "The lookout paced the roof above me, a new and dire sign. When the night guard was too nervous to sleep on duty, the rest of us had good reason to worry." (Page 64.)

Not only does Pelagia have a keen sense of humor and a wry perspective on life, she is an eminently believable heroine. She usually conducts herself with pluck and verve, but can occasionally be caught swooning, panicking, or uttering a comment so inane that it throws hardened killers into convulsions. She has learned from

experience to rein in her tongue. Since she is the chronicler of the adventure, however, she can still get in the last word as the following exchange with Mr. Drake makes clear:

. . . "I built it myself, with little more than grit, brains, and courage." Self-deprecation was not his style. "It's in my blood to break new ground, I reckon. I don't believe I mentioned that my family is kin on my paternal grandfather's side to Sir Francis Drake, famed explorer of Queen Elizabeth's Court?"

"Really?" My ancestors were kin on my paternal grandmother's side to Seamus O'Reilly, famed liar and pickpocket of the County Cork pubs. (Page 43.)

If you can't appreciate that kind of banter, then our funnybones are on different wavelengths. You probably will not like the book. Otherwise, pick up a copy and become acquainted with a truly remarkable woman.

ALIENS

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

Capsule review: James Cameron (T_h_e_T_e_r_m_i_n_a_t_o_r) turns in an exciting sequel to a near=classic science fiction film. In spite of many problems, this will still be, very probably, the best fantasy film of the season.

There are a number of ways to do a sequel to a film. The best sort of sequel broadens the context of the story in ways the second half of a story does to the first half. There is also the more-of-the-same approach to sequel-making. A_l_i_e_n_s is a riveting action film but it is too much of a more-of-the-same sequel. The viewer will leave the theater a bit out of breath, but not knowing much more about the nature of society in the future or the nature of the alien life form. We learn less new about the alien life form in A_l_i_e_n_s than we learn in five minutes of the original film.

The story deals with Ripley (Signourney Weaver) making it back to civilization and a return visit by some very Heinleinesque marines--

loaded with some heavy firepower--to the planet where Ripley's first expedition found the alien. Because of an apparent error in editing we are not sure how much time has passed, but we are led to believe that this is 57 years later and the planet has been terra-formed and colonized by humans.

As a sequel, A_l_i_e_n_s has at least two problems. As the title suggests, where there was one monster in A_l_i_e_n, this film has many. One would expect each one to be as bad as the monster in the first film. No way. The creature in the first film could have eaten for breakfast most of the monsters in the second film. In specific, the creature in the first film was invulnerable to flame throwers, I think. It seems to me that the new creatures of the same species are not. There just is not enough time to make each creature as bad. The film D_a_w_n_o_f_t_h_e_D_e_a_d suffered from the same sort of deflation in monster power.

Another problem is the introduction of "soft characters." The film introduces a child character. It is a serious mistake because scriptwriters are bound by certain unwritten rules akin to chivalry about what can and cannot befall weak and sympathetic characters like children. Compare how much softer the tone, and how much less satisfying, the later "Planet of the Apes" films are when compared to the first one or two films. Consider films like T_h_e_P_o_s_e_i_d_o_n_A_d_v_e_n_t_u_r_e where only the weak survive.

One final problem is the predictability of certain scenes. Relatively early in the film I was seeing scenes and saying to myself, "I bet there will be a scene in which such-and-such happens later." At least twice I was right about important plot twists toward the end.

- 2 -

So with all that going against the film, I must not have liked it, right? Wrong! A_l_i_e_n_s is an exciting film. It is not of the quality of its predecessor, but it has plenty to offer. Rumors were that because it was directed by James Cameron it would be closer to T_e_r_m_i_n_a_t_o_r_I_I than to A_l_i_e_n_I_I. Not so. This is a solid action-packed film and even if it is not the most profound piece of science fiction I've seen in a while, it was solid suspense and action. Pieces of the film have a real Heinleinesque feel to them and there is even a reference to John Campbell's Laws of Robotics (popularized by Asimov). While A_l_i_e_n deserved a high +2 on the -4 to +4 scale, its sequel gets at worst a low

+2. This is likely to be the big science fiction film of the season.

RUTHLESS PEOPLE
A film review by Mark R. Leeper

Capsule review: Walt Disney's new variation on O. Henry's "The Ransom of Red Chief" is a very funny comedy. The A_i_r_p_l_a_n_e! team turns in their first traditional (?) comedy and it should be a hit.

A while back Walt Disney's adult division, Touchstone, did a madcap comedy called D_o_w_n_a_n_d_O_u_t_i_n_B_e_v_e_r_l_y_H_i_l_l_s. It was a remake and an Americanization of a French farce. It did well and now they have returned to do another madcap comedy. Their newest film is R_u_t_h_l_e_s_s_P_e_o_p_l_e and it is a lot better than D_o_w_n_a_n_d_O_u_t. It has better pacing, a better plot, and best of all, it is a lot funnier.

Danny DeVito has very deep feelings about his wife of 15 years (played by Bette Midler). One of the things he feels deeply is that he doesn't want her alive to make it 16. He is ready and willing to kill her when his plans go wrong--sort of. She is kidnapped by two desperate people who will kill her if DeVito doesn't come up with \$500,000. But can they be enticed to carry out their threat? I won't describe the chaos that occurs, but R_u_t_h_l_e_s_s_P_e_o_p_l_e is a sort of a B_l_o_o_d_S_i_m_p_l_e with jokes. Lots of them. And little surprises. This film is directed by the same team that directed A_i_r_p_l_a_n_e!, T_o_p_S_e_c_r_e_t, and TV's P_o_l_i_c_e_S_q_u_a_d. But R_u_t_h_l_e_s_s_P_e_o_p_l_e is a change for them. It tells its story without the surrealistic departures of their previous films. The characters are exaggerated, but not absurd.

R_u_t_h_l_e_s_s_P_e_o_p_l_e is a laugh-out-loud comedy. Feisty little DeVito carries the film with a good-natured malevolence that is a positive joy to watch. Bette Midler's anything-but-helpless kidnap victim will give nightmares to any potential kidnapper in the country. Judge Reinhold and Helen Slater are a little too pat as the kidnappers, but the script even gives them a few good scenes. See this one. Rate it a +2 on the -4 to +4 scale.

_N_O_T_E_S_ _F_R_O_M_ T_H_E_ N_E_T

Subject: KILLASHANDRA by Anne McCaffrey (mild spoiler)
Path: bellcore!decvax!decwrl!pyramid!hplabs!hao!noao!terak!anasazi!duane
Date: Mon, 7-Jul-86 11:56:06 EST

Time: medium-range future (some hundreds of years from now)

Place: planet Ophtheria, mainly.

Introduction: Killashandra is a crystal singer, a person with perfect pitch, able and willing to seek much-needed crystal (of various kinds) on planet Ballybran. It's a love-hate relationship though; singers save enough money selling crystal to leave planet, but, for biological reasons, they always have to return. Killashandra has just excavated a decent load of crystal, not enough to get her very far off planet, but at least enough to take her away from Ballybran. But the head of her guild offers her a short-term job on planet Ophtheria, a planet mainly noted for its crystal-based musical organs. She's to take her load of crystals and install them in the main organ; on the side she's to try and find out why no Ophtherian has ever left the planet.

Main storylines: Killashandra's adventures on Ophtheria, her investigation, and her relationship with a leading islander there.

SF elements: advanced technology, galactic and planetary politics, minor biological changes in some humans (crystal singers).

Critique: This book might be called "The Further Adventures of Killashandra Ree". It starts a few months after CRYSTAL SINGER ends. Killashandra comes across as a believable person, and the worlds seem quite real. The book is paced well enough. I had a bit of trouble believing that Killashandra would strike up the romantic relationship she did, but it's not that improbable, given the nature of her character. I didn't find any particular fault with the book, but I didn't find anything especially gripping or exciting either. It's a pleasant, mildly interesting read. I give it 3.0 stars (good, but I'll trade it in).

Duane Morse ...!noao!mot!anasazi!duane

Subject: West of Eden
Path: mtuxo!mtune!akguc!akgua!gatech!lll-lcc!lll-crg!caip!daemon
Date: Wed, 16-Jul-86 14:04:42 EST

I just finished Harry Harrison's _West_of_Eden_. I highly recommend it.

The premise is intriguing and hinges on the following idea:

(** extremely mild spoiler -- almost a non-spoiler **)

Suppose millions of years ago, the dinosaurs did not die out: Instead, they evolved, and a small race of intelligent reptiles developed. Concurrently, mammalian evolution produced humans. What happens when the two races meet?

(** end spoiler **)

By the way, the jacket blurb for the hardback version contains a semi-spoiler of its own. I wish I hadn't read it before I read the book. Try to avoid

The novel was well-researched and quite credible. The point of view occasionally switches between the human race and the reptile race. Harrison does a fine job of portraying the culture of each race from that race's point of view, allowing the reader to be a sympathetic observer. I was occasionally amused at some of inventions the reptiles used; they sort of reminded me of old Flintstones cartoons. These occasional impressions didn't affect the story's credibility, however. Harrison also laces the story with enough action to keep things moving at a fairly brisk pace. This book "feels" so different from the Stainless Steel Rat series that it's the Rat stories; I enjoyed them as well.)

The back of the book contains some "historical" and biographical information for both races. I wish I'd stopped a third of the way through the book to read these appendices before continuing. At that point, they would have provided some useful background information without giving away information or confusing the issue. Still, I didn't really lose much by reading them last.

Finally, the illustrations which appear at the beginning of each chapter are both delightful and accurate, even if the artist's conception of the various characters didn't always match mine.

The book club accidentally sent me two copies of West of Eden. I'm second one away as a gift.

Brian Clapper

Subject: The Cat Who Walks Thru Walls (One opinion)
Path: mtuxo!houxm!ihnp4!ihlpl!chrise
Date: Fri, 18-Jul-86 14:17:18 EST

I don't normally write reviews...and the content of this posting isn't really intended to be one...but it might be construed as such. This is

- 3 -

in specific response to someone who posted a request a couple of weeks ago for advice appropriate for making a decision as to whether to buy TCWWTW in hardcover. Dissenting opinions are welcome. So if you don't want to read this brief "gripe" (not a spoiler), now is the time to get out.....

I love Heinlien. I think he is my favorite SF author. I don't buy books in hardcover so my wife knows that when gift time comes around she is always safe buying the latest HRH book if it isn't available in softcover yet. I also like cats (we have three) so I sat down and polished off TCWWTW immediately. I was very disappointed. It doesn't meet the promise of the title until very late in the book. The premise is very weak. The plot line is a rehash of "lets bounce around the Universes a little more" that we have seen so often in other LL genera books. It was short and I found it only moderately entertaining. In my view it was a formula book written to make a buck with no redeeming SciFi (sic) value. Don't get me wrong, it wasn't a bad book, but I would never use it as a model for HRH's style and talents. I have since reread the book thinking it was my state of mind at the time which colored my opinions. It wasn't. I still didn't find it to be the all engrossing, mentally stimulating work that other HRH work has been.

Chris Edmonds @ AT&T Something-or-Other, Naperville, IL
...!ihnp4!ihlpl!chrise

Subject: notes on About Last Night...

Path: ihnp4!seismo!nbires!hao!hplabs!sdcrcf!ism780c!ism780!steven
Date: Tue, 8-Jul-86 18:34:00 EST

Danny and Debbie meet in the park, go out, go to bed, then decide that they want to live together and see if they can make it work. And you thought the "relationship" movie went the way of the bison.

Ed Zwick is an AFI grad who copped an Emmy for directing the nuclear newscast thriller "Special Bulletin". Here he proves himself equally adept at handling a potentially dull story and turning it into one of the more perceptive romances of the last few years. By not straining to be oh-so-hip, "About Last Night..." provides a slice of America that seems less contrived and more contemporary than most efforts.

Jim Belushi and Elizabeth Perkins give memorable supporting turns as Mr. Macho and Ms. Bitter. Lowe and Moore, however, have the much more difficult task of making characters with decidedly average lives interesting in a larger-than-life manner. They accomplish it with sincerity rather than charisma. The characterizations supplied first by Mamet, then by co-scenarists (yes, that Tim Kazurinsky) Kazurinsky and DeClue, are filled with sharply etched versions of common quirks and habits (guess I'm thinking of the "I don't want to pressure you to stay or leave but I'd really like you to stay or leave, that is, if you want

- 4 -

to" conversation after their first night together scene).

Picture moves briskly. Too many montages for my taste, though they are all well done. Hit soundtrack syndrome isn't as intrusive as I've seen elsewhere. Very good dialogue. Jim Belushi is right, though: Rob Lowe _ i _ s too pretty. His fine performance'll probably end up underappreciated 'cause of it. He may have to wait until he's 40 to get acknowledged, sort of like Redford.

Three stars out of four.

Subject: REVIEW: Back To School
Path: ihnp4!seismo!rochester!cornell!uw-beaver!fluke!moriarty
Date: Thu, 10-Jul-86 14:15:25 EST

There seems to be a breed of film that, while thriving in the dim, unlit environment of the theatre, tends to dissolve when brought out into the light. They lull the most critical eye during the viewing time, but post-performance examination reveals a creation rivaling swiss cheese in holes. Rodney Dangerfield's BACK TO SCHOOL is just such a creature. I remember enjoying this film a good deal while watching it; I know I recognized the flaws during this period, but overlooked them in the mood I was in. Many of the jokes were crass and unsubtle. Most of the characters are obvious and the sentimentality is gushing. Yet, I still enjoyed it.

In retrospect, maybe you should treat this like a Disney picture with dirty words (come to think of it, Touchstone Productions == Disney with dirty words (in fact, these days Disney == Disney with dirty words)). You know it's obvious, yet you still enjoy yourself. If you're looking for heavy-duty comedy that takes half a brain, go see Hannah and Her Sisters again (it's worth a second viewing); but if you're into an obvious restoration comedy that is pretty well done for that kind of thing, I think you'll enjoy it.

A \$3.00 film. Maximum enjoyment for \$2.00. The over-critical should avoid it like the plague.

Moriarty, aka Jeff Meyer

Subject: Review: ALIENS
Path: mtuxo!houxm!mhuxt!mhuxr!ulysses!bellcore!petrus!magic!science!bambi!steve
Date: Fri, 18-Jul-86 20:40:30 EST

Well, it's out, I saw it, and here's what I think:

- 5 -

This film wastes very little time in recreating the latter two thirds of ALIEN. Most of the (over two hour) movie takes place on the planet where the crew of the Nostromo first found the alien eggs. The "company" has established a colony (70 families) and has begun

terraforming; the air is already breathable. However, contact with the colony is lost shortly after Ripley's return to Earth, some 50 plus years after her escape. Based on her explanations of what destroyed her crew and ship, a platoon of marines is dispatched, along with Ripley, to investigate. From then on, it's science fiction combat, almost non-stop.

Like Boston's second album, if you liked it the first time, you're going to like it this time. But don't expect anything new. This film is (almost) entirely based on the "if it works don't fix it" approach to storytelling. The "almost" derives from the marines themselves. I found their characters to be refreshingly underplayed. Clearly, someone involved knew more about military behavior than can be gleaned from "McHale's Navy." There is a very credible range of personalities deployed, from rough-and-ready to cowardly to gung ho to simply not-too-bright. In particular, the character of Vasquez stands out as most compelling. She is a lot like many of the real soldiers I have known, and neatly sidesteps all of the traps that most female movie grunts fall into. I wouldn't marry her, but she can walk point for me anytime. Some will think the platoon sergeant a bit stereotypical. In fact, marine sergeants LIKE this stereotype, and he too is convincing. I was less happy about the lieutenant; he commands his people by method of radio and tv. Haldeman's Forever War explained why this is a bad idea, and nothing in ALIENS contradicts him. Frankly, I don't believe that marine officers would accept this form of leadership, and I know that their troops would not. This bit of technology seemed superfluous and distracting, leaving the lieutenant with nothing worthwhile to do.

SF fans will enjoy yet another reference to Asimov's Laws of Robotics, although they come off more as Asimov's Pretty Good Idea's. The special effects were done by the L.A. Effects Group, and are slightly inferior to those of the first film. Horner's score sounds like all of Horner's scores; see my reference to Boston. The sets are slightly less satisfying than those of ALIEN (exception: Ripley's apartment), but I have a penchant for spaceship sets. And, of course, there are lots of opportunities for excuses for ALIENSS, should we desire them.

Three stars and a partially coalesced region of incandescent gas out of four.

-Steve ihnp4!bellcore!bambi!steve

Subject: Bughunt! (ALIENS)

Path: cbatt!clyde!caip!nike!ucbcad!ucbvax!decwrl!boyajian@akov68.dec.com

Date: Sat, 19-Jul-86 07:45:05 EST

Bottom line (actually, top line, I guess): Definitely worth seeing.

Abbreviated review: Despite the script being basically a carbon-copy of its predecessor's, ALIENS succeeds in its thrills and chills. It's well acted, written, directed, and photographed. A very worthy follow-up to Ridley Scott's ALIEN.

Plot Summary: Ripley (Sigourney Weaver) and Jones, still in cold sleep, are finally picked up and brought back to Earth --- 57 years later. "The Company" plays at not knowing about the Alien and accuses her of willfully destroying the NOSTROMO and its crew, though obviously they don't have any evidence to formally charge her. In the meantime, a colony has been set up by the Company ostensibly to terraform the world where the Alien was found. Sometime after Ripley's return, all communication with that colony was lost, and the Company persuades Ripley to accompany, as a consultant, a small military force to the planet to find out what happened. Of course, what they find there is a whole nest of Aliens. The rest of the film is taken up by the small war between the Colonial Marines and the Aliens.

Detailed review: ***** Here There Be Spoilers *****

The usual problem with most sequels is that they more often than not are little more than derivative, pale imitations of the originals. The bad news is, as I mentioned above, that ALIENS is very much the same in many plot details as ALIEN. The good news, though, is that while it may be derivative, it's certainly not pale. There are many parallels from the first film to the second, and this often gets in the way of the story. you know just what's going to happen at many points in the film, because you've seen it before. And yet, ALIENS director James (THE TERMINATOR) Cameron manages to keep the suspense going.

Other than this parallelism, I see two major problems with the film. The first is that there is no sense of futurity in the characters. They are all basically 20th-Century types transplanted into the future. The second major problem is a lack of time sense. One can infer that Ripley's debriefing provided information for the Company to send the colonists out looking for the alien derelict, which ended up as the obvious downfall of the colony, and thus, that it was months after Ripley's return that the colony goes south. However, this is not clear in the film, and it seems as if there is a remarkable coincidence that the colony (which has been on the planet for quite some time) should have a pest-control problem just as Ripley reaches Earth.

I also had some problems at the beginning with the characters of the Marines, but this went away as the movie progressed and the people grew

as characters. And that's one of the film's strengths. Few of the "grunts" are faceless Alien-food; most are very distinct individuals that you begin to admire, even while they aren't particularly nice people. Paul Reiser plays the token sleezebag Company-man, and plays him well. Michael (THE TERMINATOR) Biehn does a marvelous job as a Marine

- 7 -

corporal who finds himself in charge of the squad. He doesn't play Hicks as a Rambo-type hero, but as a competent but very soft-spoken man. And Sigourney Weaver does as good a job here as she did in ALIEN. Ripley is a very strong, capable, decisive, and, above all, heroic character.

The special effects are wonderful. As in ALIEN, they are pretty much kept in the background rather than paraded out one after the other. There are some rear-projection shots that are almost unnoticeable, model movements that are very smooth and realistic. The pride and joy is the exo-skeleton, about which I shall say no more. There are some problems with the movement of the Aliens as they scamper around, but the close-up shots are as good as in the first film, though Cameron wisely uses quick cuts and murky lighting to keep the menacing appearance of the Aliens from diminishing by over-exposure.

Few sequels really measure up to their predecessors. The Mad Max films did, THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK did, and ALIENS does.

Subject: Alien(s), the Sequel
Path: cbatt!clyde!caip!ut-sally!pyramid!hplabs!turtlevax!hamachi
Date: Sat, 19-Jul-86 06:41:35 EST

Aliens (the sequel), starring Sigourney Weaver, directed by James Cameron. Story by James Cameron et. al. Screenplay by James Cameron.

Pico review: 3 out of 4 stars.

Nano review: Rambo meets The Creature. At least they're not shooting-up Asians this time. In fact, one guy shoots himself up.

Did anyone see the Statue of Liberty ceremonies, with the 200 Elvis Presley impersonators live on stage? Imagine! Can't get an original,

classy act? No problem, just replicate the same old thing over and over.

Well, now they've really gone and done it! Sigourney (Alien) Weaver reappears as (believe it or not) Ripley, sole survivor of Alien (the original). James (the Terminator) Cameron directs yet another classy action shoot-em-up. Michael (the Terminator) Biehn seems stuck in a rut as the soldier of the future who is cool and capable, who but ultimately gets dragged around by tougher and more capable women. Space marines do the cyborg shuffle, mechanically scanning the scenery and bursting into rapid fire action, to the point where you'd think they were Arnold ("Give me your clothes") Schwarzenegger impersonators. Ripley strips down to her underwear.

What's new in this movie, compared to the original? Well, just look at how original the new title is! Deja vu! No, I take that back. No burning TV sets. No dogs sniffing soldiers' hands.

- 8 -

Undoubtedly, if you liked Alien, and if you liked The Terminator, you'll find much to admire in Aliens. The audience was unusually vocal, cheering wildly as alien guts and gore gushed grandly across the screen. If sheer pacing and intensity were all that counted, James Cameron would be THE director.

Okay, so he twisted my guts too, and everyone seemed real excited walking out of the theater. But after you think about it, you'll see that this is just more of the same stuff. Sure, it will clean up at the box office. Yes, it is a horror. But since I'm not planning on seeing it again, I just want someone who IS planning to see it to note whether those aliens had lamb-chop sideburns, surf boards, or white, sequined suits to go along with their gyrating pelvises.

--Gordon Hamachi

Subject: Aliens
Path: ihnp4!mhuxr!mhuxr!ulysses!ucbvax!ucsfcl!pixar!good
Date: Sat, 19-Jul-86 03:20:51 EST

Let's get something straight. "Alien" is one of my all-time favorite movies. It scared me as much as any movie I can think of. It is still my standard of comparison for other horror films. There must be lots of you out there who feel the same way, if the lines at the Coronet tonight were any indication. What I am about to say might sound heretical.

"Aliens" is, in many ways, better than the original. Before you blow a fuse, let me explain. James Cameron, who directed "Terminator", is not Ridley Scott. His film does not have the same atmosphere as the original "Alien". But it is to his credit that he doesn't try to be Ridley Scott. In no way is this a rip-off sequel. Cameron gives us the kinds of things that Cameron does best, and he is very good at them.

Many of the strengths of the original are still there. Sigourney Weaver is back as Ripley, one of the best characters to ever grace the screen. She's tough, resourceful, vulnerable, and very real. The art direction is also outstanding. The visual effects, while not up to ILM standards in places, are certainly good enough to carry the story. The creature effects, thanks to Stan Winston, are every bit as good as the original. No, they are even better than the original.

In a gutsy and brilliant move, "Aliens" breaks the commercial mold in two key areas. Notice that it is called "Aliens" and not "Alien II". Even better, there is no soon-to-be-a-hit song playing behind the closing credits. There will be no video on MTV from this movie.

Best of all, this film is -- like the original -- plain, out-and-out scary. Don't expect me to reveal one iota of the plot here. Just go see it real soon before too many people tell you what happens.

- 9 -

See it *now*.

--Craig

Subject: Aliens review

Path: mtuxo!mtune!akguc!akgua!gatech!lll-lcc!lll-crg!caip!daemon

Date: Sat, 19-Jul-86 20:36:46 EST

Well, chalk another one up for Ripley. Not only did she kill the first Alien, she spewed a great deal of Alien blood in her sequel, Aliens.

Nutshell Review: Where the original Alien was a sheer horror story, Aliens is an adventure film, and a great one at that. There are no slow building scare sequences, instead we are running from hordes of creatures. This is pure excitement!

The premise (spoilers follow, but nothing substantial):

Ripley is picked up by deep space salvage. She sailed clean through the populated sphere and spent 50 years asleep. She is accused of blowing up her ship pointlessly. There is no evidence of an Alien.

In the meantime, a colony, complete with terraforming equipment, has landed and lost communication with Earth. The Marines are sent in with Ripley as an advisor. They bring along a company man, who is exactly what you would expect and another android, in addition to a contingency of coed marines. The marines are just what you would expect of traditional marines. They are just as unprepared for the Aliens as you would expect when push comes to shove.

All in all, the movie was very consistent and logical. There were no bouts of complete stupidity. No gaping logical holes (that I saw) although there did seem to be a bit too much gravity on the ship, but they never pretended to be in free fall. I also thought the traditional open-the-airlock bit was stretching it a bit, but within limits. You decide for yourself.

Most of the actors I did not recognize, although I thought they did a marvelous job. The only one I recognized was Chip from Weird Science. My commendations go to the point-lady, Hernandez (or however they spelled it). She was tough. "Hey, Hernandez, you ever been mistaken for a man?" "No, have you?" The flick was full of lines like that. Truly a fun and exciting movie. A sequel worth seeing. Four stars. Check it out in 70mm Dolby stereo!

Jon
is the reference to a "bug hunt" straight from Starship Troopers or what?

Subject: notes on Club Paradise

Path: topaz!nike!ucbcad!ucbvax!hplabs!sdcrcf!ism780c!ism780!steven

Date: Mon, 14-Jul-86 18:17:00 EST

This isn't a movie; it's a demon child spawned in Development Hell. Chris Miller, who gets a story credit, has been DEAD since 1982. It probably only got made because at some time in the past everybody's schedule was free to do a movie. Therefore, Warner Bros. gives the picture the green light, regardless of the fact that the story just isn't there; the studio figures that Robin can improvise jokes, right? And maybe Harold will at least capture the flavor and funniness of his earlier directorial effort, "National Lampoon's Vacation", right?

Wrong.

Robin Williams has been loafing around the Carribean island of St. Nicholas with Jimmy Cliff, who happens to own a rundown hotel, Club Paradise. When Cliff's operation is threatened by local official Adolph Caeser and rival hotel operator Brian Doyle-Murray, Robin and Jimmy decide to spruce up the place and make it work. Rest of the movie intermingles this plot with the gags and stories involving the first bunch of tourists who check in to Club Paradise.

"Club Paradise" is excruciatingly unfunny on every level, despite the loads of on-screen talent. Couple of reasons for this: two major leads who cannot act (Twiggy and Jimmy Cliff); movie is constructed with approximately four interweaving subplots, none of which are fleshed out enough to be more than annoying cliches; subject matter (which is implied by title as a parody of the Club Med vacation) doesn't have much potential for parody because not a lot of people have gone through or can relate to the experience being made fun of; most of the performances are too laid back, even nerdsters Eugene Levy and Rick Moranis. Best moments are supplied by Andrea Martin. Robin improvises a few seconds worth of funny stuff. Most of the rest is hackneyed and predictable along the level of an episode of "The Love Boat" filled out with guest stars from "SCTV" and "Saturday Night Live".

Now Warners, which has had a major disappointment with "Cobra" and two disasters from "Under the Cherry Moon" and "Club Paradise", must rely on Savage Steve Holland (the aptly title "Better Off Dead") to rescue their summer with "My Summer Vacation" starring John Cusack and Demi Moore. Yikes!

One and a half stars out of four.

