

Lincroft-Holmdel Science Fiction Club
Club Notice - 10/15/86 -- Vol. 5, No. 14

MEETINGS UPCOMING:

Unless otherwise stated, all meetings are on Wednesdays at noon.

LZ meetings are in LZ 3A-206; MT meetings are in MT 4A-235.

_D_A_T_E

_T_O_P_I_C

10/29 LZ: MALLWORLD by Somtow Sucharitkul (Commerce)

11/19 LZ: THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS by Ursula K. LeGuin (Sexual Identity)

12/10 LZ: NEUROMANCER by William Gibson (Consciousness)

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. Halloween's coming. That's a time of horror that nobody takes really seriously. The film festival is going to show a couple of zombie films that don't take themselves seriously. On Thursday, October 23, at 7:00 PM, the Leeper's big 26-inch screen will show:

Back from the Dead and Ready to Party
FLASH GORDON CONQUERS THE UNIVERSE, chap. 10
RE-ANIMATOR (1985), dir. by Stuart Gordon
RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD (1985), dir. by Dan O'Bannon

Based on "Herbert West--Re-Animator" by H. P. Lovecraft, RE-ANIMATOR is the story of a man developing a new serum to bring the dead, or pieces thereof, almost back to life. This is an everything-but-the-kitchen-sink sort of film.

RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD is a direct sequel to NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD by the man who wrote the screenplay of the original film. Years after that night, an accident at a biological supply warehouse starts the whole thing up again.

Warning: These films contain unrealistic gore, adult situations, and post-adult situations.

2. The Monmouth County chapter of the L5 Society, an education organization concerned with the exploration and development of space, will meet Thursday, the 16th of October, at 7:30 PM in the main branch of the Middletown Public Library. (The library is on

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New Monmouth Road, about a quarter mile east of route 35. New Monmouth Road is just north of the Pathmark shopping center, and one block south of Sears.) Dale Skran will show the North Jersey L5 chapter slide show. Other topics include our upcoming meeting with Congressman James Howard, prizes for the Murray Hill Science Fair, and plans for a public debate of the Space Defense Initiative. For more information, call Michael Confusione at 671-3218, or Paul S. R. Chisholm at LZ 2476 or 544-1179. Please join us! [-psrc]

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

PEGGY SUE GOT MARRIED
A film review by Mark R. Leeper

Capsule review: Francis Coppola's bittersweet time-travel fantasy is a safe-bet "Twilight Zone" sort of story lacking any of the genius of Coppola's previous films. It is diverting and it tells its story. If it were some other director's low-budget first film it would even be an impressive start.

Who is the most potent force in American entertainment today? I think you could say that it isn't Ted Turner, it isn't Michael Jackson, it's not Mary Tyler Moore. No, Mr. Big in American entertainment is Rod Serling. he may be dead, but he's right up there with Eva Peron in holding the reins of power from beyond the grave. besides the recent "Twilight Zone" movie and the current "Twilight Zone" TV show, there are a lot of films being made that are uncredited remakes of T_w_i_l_i_g_h_t_Z_o_n_e episodes. Instead of sending an armored tank to Little Big Horn, filmmakers send a modern aircraft carrier to Pearl Harbor, but it is substantially the same story. Currently playing at your local theater is another tribute to Rod Serling and T_h_e_T_w_i_l_i_g_h_t_Z_o_n_e.

In P_e_g_g_y_S_u_e_G_o_t_M_a_r_r_i_e_d Kathleen Turner in the title role has a

marriage that is breaking up while she is attending a particularly painful and ugly 25-year high school reunion. Wishing she could go back to high school and fix all the mistakes she made, she suddenly faints and recovers only to find it is 1960 again and with 25 years of knowledge of the future she is back in high school. Ah, but with 25 years of knowledge nobody else has, can you really change the future? This is actually an old question and one on which Jerry Leichtling and Arlene Sarner's screenplay sheds no new light.

At first bemused by her odd situation, Peggy Sue makes all the predictable mistakes of someone pretending to be someone else (or rather, herself from a different age). Once Peggy Sue starts trying to do it right this time, the film bogs down into predictable high school love story cinematic ground. The only relationship that the audience feels anything for--other than an abstract curiosity about past-changing--is Peggy Sue's relationship with her grandparents.

As an emotionally affecting film, P_e_g_g_y_S_u_e_G_o_t_M_a_r_r_i_e_d is weak tea beside S_o_m_e_w_h_e_r_e_i_n_T_i_m_e (which, like P_e_g_g_y_S_u_e_G_o_t_M_a_r_r_i_e_d, had a silky

John Barry score used similarly for emotional impact). As a study of time travel and its possibilities it falls well short of B_a_c_k_t_o_t_h_e_F_u_t_u_r_e. In fact, P_e_g_g_y_S_u_e_G_o_t_M_a_r_r_i_e_d may even lack the intellectual interest of S_o_m_e_w_h_e_r_e_i_n_T_i_m_e and the emotional impact of B_a_c_k_t_o_t_h_e_F_u_t_u_r_e.

P_e_g_g_y_S_u_e_G_o_t_M_a_r_r_i_e_d is competent filmmaking and deserves at least a lukewarm +1 on the -4 to +4 scale. I guess the saddest thing about this bittersweet time-travel story is that the director who did the

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"Godfather" films is now doing extended "Twilight Zone" episodes. Whether that says something about Coppola, about Hollywood, or about audiences (or all three), that's what's going to bring a tear to my eye.

TROLL
A film review by Mark R. Leeper

Capsule review: This is a very surprising little film. The packaging makes it look like a cheap rip-off of G_r_e_m_l_i_n_s. Instead, it blossoms into a very fine fantasy film with some genuinely funny comic touches. It is literate without ever being boring. Recommended.

Something happened when special effects man John Carl Buechler was given T_r_o_l_l to direct. Buechler works for Empire Pictures, one of the many low-budget production companies making films for minimal theatrical release and for videocassette release. Empire's films include G_h_o_u_l_i_e_s, R_e_A_n_i_m_a_t_o_r, T_e_r_r_o_r_V_i_s_i_o_n, L_a_s_e_r_b_l_a_s_t_I_I, D_e_c_a_p_i_t_r_o_n, and Z_o_n_e_T_r_o_o_p_e_r_s.

Their films are predominantly dark horror films. T_r_o_l_l was reportedly originally envisioned as a sort of a F_r_i_d_a_y_t_h_e_1_3_t_h with a magical creature killing people off. But Buechler was given the assignment to do the story as a PG-13 film. You can't do that story as a PG-13 film. What Buechler did instead was to make on the same basic plot a bright and delightful fantasy film. The transformation was almost as remarkable as turning a frog into a prince.

The story deals with a family of four who move into a new apartment building. Almost immediately their daughter is stolen by a troll who transforms himself to look like her. For reasons that become nearly clear, the troll goes around to the various weird residents of the apartment and.... Well, that would be telling. Suffice it to say he doesn't exactly murder them. One might almost say he improves upon them.

Buechler earlier did similar special effects for G_h_o_u_l_i_e_s. That film was a knock-off of G_r_e_m_l_i_n_s. That seems to be how T_r_o_l_l started too. But with Buechler's fantasy modifications and a fun script by horror movie fan Ed Naha, little Empire Pictures has really bested Steven Spielberg. At a much smaller budget, T_r_o_l_l is several times the film that G_r_e_m_l_i_n_s was.

T_r_o_l_l features an odd cast of actors having a good time making the film, but for once not at the audience's expense. Michael Moriarty leads the cast as a very strange father figure. A pretty but untalented Jenny Hack plays his wife. June Lockhart, in one of her best roles, plays the old matron of the building who is clearly more than she seems.

T_r_o_l_l is a great comedy-fantasy lying in wait at your video store. It gets a +2 on the -4 to +4 scale. Give it a chance.

Film Restorations and Gance's NAPOLEON
Film commentary by Mark R. Leeper

One likes to think that all of the great films of history have been preserved. It would seem that if a film is great there would be enough people who care for it that someone would have it in a can somewhere. Good films might be lost for lack of interest, but never great ones. Apparently, however, some are not lost completely, but they get edited down and the edited-out pieces get lost. In some cases films are deliberately destroyed for political reasons or even monetary ones. MGM bought up and destroyed all available copies of certain films when they remade them so that their version would be the only one. All our current copies of the Frederick March version of D_r. J_e_k_y_l_l_a_n_d_M_r. H_y_d_e come from one chopped-down copy that MGM overlooked. They did a less perfect job with G_a_s_l_i_g_h_t--I recently saw a complete version of the original. I don't really call either of these films great, but they were very good.

Apparently, though, there are people around who remember complete versions of some of the really great films of this century and are willing to take the time to find all existing copies, to painstakingly go from one to another making a new version that is the mathematical union of all versions found. This was done very successfully once with Abel Gance's N_a_p_o_l_e_o_n. The long and apparently complete version toured the country with a live orchestral accompaniment. Similar restoration efforts have been less successful. The so-called restoration of M_e_t_r_o_p_o_l_i_s with a rock score is less complete than other versions around and, while a rock score for M_e_t_r_o_p_o_l_i_s is not the total failure that was expected, it fails to be particularly good accompaniment.

The restoration of A_S_t_a_r_I_s_B_o_r_n (the 1954 version), while better-intentioned than that of M_e_t_r_o_p_o_l_i_s, obviously failed to find some of the missing footage and shows, reportedly, stills in some scenes over the original dialogue. It still runs 11 minutes short of the the original release version.

There is a pseudo-restoration of Frank Capra's L_o_s_t_H_o_r_i_z_o_n currently in release. The original film was considered--by its first audiences--to be a real dog. Capra decided that the film simply started too slowly and reportedly cut the credits off the first reel and grafted them onto the second reel. When the credits ended the viewer immediately found himself thrust onto a chaotic airfield in China during some unknown sort of upheaval. It was considered to be one of the simplest and most brilliant coups to save a film ever done. Restoring footage that the director intentionally discarded to improve the film is not my idea of true film restoration.

The one true successful restoration of a truly great film was Abel

Gance's N_a_p_o_l_e_o_n. This apparently complete or nearly-complete

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restoration is just short of four hours in length. It was a French silent film made in 1927 and even for those days this must have been a fabulously expensive picture. The film is a portrait of the early days of Bonaparte's career in heroic--and not entirely unbiased--terms.

Part of what is amazing about this film is the camera-work. If this film weren't silent much of it could have come out of the Sixties. Gance often splits the screen into three or even nine images, splitting it into thirds side-to-side and sometimes also top-to-bottom. Other scenes draw parallel action between Napoleon fighting to stay afloat in a boat during a storm and a stormy meeting of the Revolutionary Council. Intercut with some amazing scenes of the boiling ocean, Gance has placed the camera on a swing over the meeting of the Council. The ocean of faces wash past just as the ocean does.

The first two hours are one exciting scene after another. The pace slows a bit in the second half but there is still plenty of spectacle. If the film seems to whitewash or even deify Napoleon, perhaps it is no more biased than G_a_n_d_h_i or A_M_a_n_f_o_r_A_l_l_S_e_a_s_o_n_s.

I am sorry now that I did not see this great film on a big screen with a live orchestra, but for the cost of one night's video rental, Gance's N_a_p_o_l_e_o_n outclasses anything you are likely to see in a theater. The restoration of this one film has enriched the world heritage of cinema immensely.

THE NAME OF THE ROSE
A film review by Mark R. Leeper

Capsule review: A Sherlock Holmes clone in a Medieval abbey solves a mystery and takes a stand for truth and rationalism over religious fervor. The 14th Century Church takes a serious beating in this entertaining and occasionally gory tale of murder in an abbey.

The #2 best-selling fiction book of 1983 (second only to the R_e_t_u_r_n o_f_t_h_e_J_e_d_i storybook) was Umberto Eco's N_a_m_e_o_f_t_h_e R_o_s_e. The story is of a certain Italian abbey in 1327 where some force, perhaps satanic, is murdering men. Coming to investigate is Brother William of Baskerville, an English monk with a love of the rational mind and a penchant for using his own. Six hundred pages later the Brother knows a good deal more about the workings of this particular abbey and so does the reader. The film has been produced as an Italian-West German-French co-production. (Most current American historical films these days are Westerns or don't go back before the turn of the century.) T_h_e_N_a_m_e_o_f t_h_e_R_o_s_e stars Sean Connery and F. Murray Abraham.

To be sure, the story of T_h_e_N_a_m_e_o_f_t_h_e_R_o_s_e, while based

on a

critically acclaimed novel, is not the totally original effort that a novel about life in a 14th Century abbey might be. It falls back instead, unfortunately, on the proven structure of a Sherlock Holmes story. Brother William may outwardly be a monk, but inwardly there is a good deal more Holmsian about him than just the name Baskerville. He is a perfect analog of Holmes for his century down to the magnifying glass and a Watson-like companion. (His name, Adso, as my wife points out, is very close to "Watson" with the first and last letters dropped.) This "Adventure of the Murdered Monks" has all the plot twists and mystery that Doyle would have put in a similar Holmes story. The film has just barely started when he makes his first deduction: where his assistant can find the abbey privy. His second--how a monk can fall to his death from an unbroken window that does not open is, as Brother William explains, "elementary." At least one of the four men who worked on the screenplay was taking no chances that the viewer might miss the parallels to Sherlock Holmes.

F. Murray Abraham plays the power-mad Inquisitor Bernardo Gui. While he appears only in the final third of the film, the influence of him in particular and men like him in general is felt throughout the entire film. His power and his total indifference to the truth make him a sort of medieval Matthew Hopkins. He comes to symbolize everything that Brother William with his rationalist mind is against.

Director Jean-Jacques Annaud's theme of the importance of enlightenment makes T h e N a m e o f t h e R o s e an interesting companion piece

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to his earlier Q u e s t f o r F i r e . In spite of being derivative, T h e N a m e o f t h e R o s e scores as an historical piece with an unusual setting. There isn't enough in the film to make a great novel--presumably that was lost in transition--but there is more than enough to make two hours of enjoyable watching. Rate it a +2 on the -4 to +4 scale.

The Land of Opportunity
A nihilist editorial by Mark R. Leeper

I was just eating at a York Steak House--one of those where you pick up your own silverware, tray, etc.--and thinking about how this is really becoming the Land of Opportunity. What brought it up is that there were no steak knives to be had. It was an off-hour--there should have been plenty--but the restaurant just did not have enough steak knives. And why? Because enough of their customers had realized over the months that they were holding in their hands steak knives of some value and they had an opportunity to add these knives to their home collections for the price of one washing. What a great opportunity! And the management had foolishly set up a business that provided this opportunity to its customers. This is not to say I don't blame the customers who took the knives even more, a lot more in fact, but human nature is getting better at sniffing out opportunity and the only answer I can see is that the rest of us have to get smart about avoiding the providing of opportunity.

Let me give you an example of such a successful avoidance. It used to be that hotels and motels had in their closets standard hangers for clothing. You know, the sort you have in your closets at home. And, you see, that was the rub: the hotel was putting into guests' hands something that had an intrinsic value. Not much, mind you, but some intrinsic value. They were placing in guests' hands a golden opportunity to get more nice hangers for their homes. And, of course, there were some people who just couldn't pass up such a wonderful opportunity. Then someone got smart; they developed a coat hanger that didn't have a hook at the top. Instead it had a little knob that could be held by a ring around the rod in the closet. Without such rings on the rod of your closet at home, the hanger is useless. The opportunity had disappeared! Of course, so did much of the convenience of using the hangers.

Of course, non-stealable knives may not be as simple an invention. What will probably happen is that the restaurant will just keep buying more knives and increase the prices on their menu. That means they will either go out of business or their patrons will pick up the cost of a business providing this wonderful opportunity.

So what relevance does all this have to science fiction? Well, this keen awareness of opportunity is shaping the future. The world will be different because of it. All kinds of little details and perhaps some really bug ones will be different because there are so many opportunities to take advantage of.

For twenty years or so one of the most convenient ways to administer drugs has been the capsule. You don't need special binders that might cause side effects to hold your drug together. You simply

put it in an easy-to-swallow capsule. Ah, but capsules provide an opportunity to someone. They open up so easily and reclose so untraceably. What a great opportunity to demonstrate your personal power. You can open up the capsules, put in cyanide, close them back up, and you have killed someone--someone you don't even know and who doesn't know you, but you were the most important person in their life.

And the drug industry is closing off this opportunity in the only way it can. It is retreating from using capsules. There is, for the time being, much less opportunity provided by pills with binders.

But that is just the first step. Jell-O boxes provide opportunity too. Hey, they are already full of packets of white powder. Some clever person has already seen his opportunity there and we have had our first non-capsule-related poisoning. And that may be only the beginning. We may be coming out of a period of artificially low food prices because nobody realized what great opportunities our packaging provided. Look through your grocery. Other than the cans all the food comes in resealable bottles, cardboard boxes, cellophane; the produce isn't wrapped at all. Look at all that opportunity out there. We may just have to end up with food coming in something more fortress-like than packaging as we have thought of it, and the pricing for all that packaging is going to be paid for by the consumer. No more looking over the fresh produce before you buy it. That provides too much opportunity.

And there is more opportunity out there. Every little wooded area is a platinum opportunity for some industrialist to save big money on toxic waste disposal. Even roads, unguarded at 2 AM--for the moment--have provided toxic waste dumpers with opportunity to save big bucks.

My father and I once sat in our car at a grocery store waiting for my mother. A young woman, apparently a college co-ed, parked her bicycle and pulled out a heavy chain and proceeded to chain her bicycle to a lamppost. "You know," my father said wistfully, "this would be a much nicer world if people were honest." I am afraid, Dad, that you ain't seen nothing yet. This world is going to get a lot worse before, if ever, it gets better.

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

Subject: *FOUNDATION AND EARTH*(Spoilers)
Path: bellcore!clyde!caip!think!husc6!husc4!gouvea
Date: Fri, 10-Oct-86 23:31:01 EST

This is the latest step in Asimov's project of uniting all of his novels into one grand design, and especially of connecting the Robot novels to the Foundation series. It is at the same time very interesting and a little frustrating.

This one takes place almost immediately after the events in FOUNDATION'S EDGE; Golan Trevize, having chosen "Galaxia" (a sentient, united galaxy) as humanity's future, begins to question his decision, and decides, in a flash of intuition, that he must go to Earth to find answers to his doubts. And so he does. On the way, many of the mysteries created in the previous books (most notably ROBOTS AND EMPIRE) are resolved, everything is nicely concluded, R. Daneel Olivaw's role is made (more) clear, and an opening for a sequel is set up. Nice, pleasant reading.

So why the frustration? The problem is that, in joining together the Robot and the Foundation novels, Asimov has sacrificed the basic themes of each,

and hasn't really replaced them with anything interesting. The Robot novels had as a central strand the idea that eventually robots and people should be able to live together in a balanced situation. However, since he wants to get to the Foundation universe, Asimov must disturb this development. No robot-human society is set up; rather, robots, in the person of Daneel, assume a paternalistic role and are the hidden planners of humanity's future. The Foundation Trilogy was, to a large extent, about determinism versus free will, but also about politics and the state. The last two novels have veered into a discussion of individuality versus collectivity. And the last paragraph of this book suggests that the next step is aliens.

I would much rather Asimov would write novels set in new contexts. Part of the sf game is creating new possible futures. This one is getting old.

Subject: The Moon's Fire-eating Daughter
Path: mtuxo!houxm!mhuxt!mhuxr!ulysses!bellcore!clyde!caip!daemon
Date: Fri, 10-Oct-86 18:44:54 EST

TMFED is a sequel to Silverlock in only the weakest sense. Calling it a sequel on the cover probably caused a lot of people to buy it who wouldn't have, otherwise.

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It does not take place in the Commonwealth. It is a much lighter and less ambitious book than Silverlock. Silverlock ends with the protagonist taking two quaffs from the spring but not being able to hold his water well enough to take the third one, which would make him a bard. TMFED, on the other hand is about someone (in a marginally more mundane setting) who does take that third drink.

The book has some interesting ideas about what makes good poetry. It is worth reading on its own merits, but anyone looking for a sequel to Silverlock will be disappointed.

--Dain Zweig

Subject: Blue Velvet

Path: princeton!rutgers!sri-spam!nike!ucbcad!ucbvax!sdcsvax!sdcc6!sdcc12!st138ak
Date: Mon, 6-Oct-86 14:02:05 EST

I just saw "Blue Velvet", and I thought it was a very powerful movie. The ending was great -- the robin, with the beetle in its mouth -- was designed, I think, to get the audience to draw its own conclusions about Lynch's message. The optimists would undoubtedly agree with Dern's assertion that love is the only force that can overcome the evil and brutality in the world. The pessimists would take the ending to be symbolic of our world, where evil lurks just beneath the surface. Another view would be that to appreciate beauty and goodness, we must have its contradiction, and that good/evil always coexist.

One question I have, about the "well dressed man", is what the point was. My conjecture is that Frank, in his disguise as the "well dressed man" is simply reinforcing Lynch's message that evil lurks beneath the surface, often disguised. It seemed that there were several visual reminders of this message. Any thoughts on this?

Subject: Blue Velvet Path: mtuxo!houxm!ihnp4!qantel!hplabs!sdcrcdf!jon
Date: Mon, 6-Oct-86 15:47:00 EST

I saw "Blue Velvet" last week. An interesting movie, but the overall impression I got is that it is being hyped by an advertising campaign as brilliant as any aspect of the movie. The various descriptions I have seen, weird, dreamlike, genius, controversial etc. etc. suggest that it is off the scale and that whether you like it or not, it can not be judged by the same standards as other movies. I thought that while the wit and cinematography was often very original, the overall motif, a carnal-spiritual conflict, is very reminiscent of some of Bergman's movies. Some have called the movie plotless, which seems to miss the point. It does have a plot, albeit not a very complicated one, but the plot is a vehicle for the cinematography and the mood, much like "Diva". There are some serious flaws in the structure. The climax of the film revolves around David discovering a secret to save himself, yet the

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secret is not foreshadowed and not until it was explicitly spelled, or rather spoken, out did I realize what was going on. Also, Laura Dern may be right on target as an adolescent sweetheart, but the role calls for a sexier, more romantised figure to do mythic battle with the forces

of decadence. This latter problem is reinforced by the flat, campy dialogue. I did not feel particularly close to the character David nor was I very moved by the romance, which robs the film of a lot of potential power. At times it appears that Lynch has calculated every frame with enormous care like when the shadow of the rear view mirror plays across Laura's face. At other times though his devices really clink. I.E. the fat neighbor with the dog who keeps showing up. I believe Lynch was quite serious about the robins theme, but the audience seemed to feel it was a real hoot. In fact the audience seemed to find much of the movie silly and pretentious if the guffaws were any indication. I personally like the film and thought it was very good, and neither genius nor overly pretentious but, hopefully, immature. Given the audience reaction and lack of discussion on the net, I suspect the movie may take root.

Subject: notes on Tough Guys

Path: mtuxo!houxm!ihnp4!qantel!hplabs!sdcrcdf!ism780c!ism780!steven

Date: Mon, 6-Oct-86 13:03:00 EST

You can blame a lot of people for putting out this bad piece of work, but the fact is that it wouldn't have been made if Burt and Kirk hadn't put their names on the dotted line. So, I wag my finger and say, "Shame on you two for disappointing your audience like this."

Burt and Kirk are Harry Doyle and Archie Long, two old friends who have just gotten out of prison after a thirty-year stretch for train robbery. They discover what the new, not-so-improved world has waiting for people society tags as "senior citizens."

Film pads through this fish-out-of-water comedy premise with a depressing, listless predictability. It plays like a lame TV sitcom version of "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid." All of society, it seems, is rude and obnoxious towards the two, with exception of a few thinly developed allies like probation officer Dana Carvey and romantic involvements Alexis Smith (classy) and Darlann Fluegel (sassy).

Sense of humor is broad as a barn door and so obvious as to be almost completely unfunny. It's uncomfortable as well to see such superb performers as Lancaster and Douglas subjecting themselves gamely to such undignified treatment; I guess the difference between the way "Tough Guys" treats them and the way "Arthur" treated John Gielgud is that John got some great crude jokes and Douglas/Lancaster get unfunny crude jokes.

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I would just hate for this to be the last collaboration between Burt Lancaster and Kirk Douglas. I think this is a job for Elmore Leonard and John Huston...

One and a half stars out of four.

Subject: REVIEW: Playing for Keeps
Path: mtuxo!houxm!ihnp4!drutx!druhi!bhilden
Date: Wed, 8-Oct-86 02:14:50 EST

I have only walked out on one movie in the laast 10 years, this one!!!

Since I only paid \$1 to see this waste of celluloid, my distaste is not due to feeling ripped off(though us YUPPIES could claim that our time is more valuable than money!!).

Succinctly put, this is an awful movie. It is not awful because of blatant gratuitous sex, violence or dialogue, there is just nothing there worth watching.

I really should have known, the movie violates the cardinal rule--> it was written, produced and directed by the same guys, definetly a bad omen.

There is so much bad dialogue, awful symbolism, poor characters, etc. that if you really have to see this picture, don't worry it won't be too long before it is on cable.

Oh well, go see "...about last night" instead --> truly one of the great flicks of the 80's. But, be forewarned... your date better laugh at the same lines as you or you are in big trouble!!!

Bruce Hildenbrand

Subject: review of ROUND MIDNIGHT
Path: mtuxo!houxm!ihnp4!cbatt!clyde!wayback!wjh
Date: Tue, 7-Oct-86 14:27:04 EST

The following review of the movie ROUND MIDNIGHT was written by Marcel Simon (ihnp4!h13b5b!mfs), who does not currently have net access. Replies can be sent to him or me for forwarding.

It is not surprising that it has taken a Frenchman, director Bertrand Tavernier, to make an informed, intelligent, and touching movie about American jazz. After all, Europe has long been where musicians received the respect and support they deserve and are not accorded at home. **ROUND MIDNIGHT** is, at long last, an exposition of jazz, its practitioners and

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fans.

Things center around Dale Turner (played by Dexter Gordon) an aging giant of the tenor saxophone, who goes to Paris for an extended engagement. It is 1959. Turner is exhausted: too much booze, junk and who knows what else. As he says "I am tired; of everything except the music." Indeed he is little more than a child: watched constantly by everyone, so he does not sneak away for a binge, he has no control over himself (his wife receives gig payments,) is barely able to walk or even speak coherently. But Turner's spirit shines in the music: the gig opens with a lovely, slow version of "As Time Goes By." Gordon extracts notes from the horn (all the playing in the movie is real, not lip- and hand-synchronized) in slow, tired drags.

Meanwhile Francis (Francois Cluzet) sits outside in the rain; he can't afford to go in, but listens at the window, on and on into the night. Between sets, Turner, out for some air, notices him, mooches a beer Francis can ill afford and Turner should not drink. Francis, almost tongue-tied, reveals his fanatical devotion. Amused, Dale takes him back into the cafe.

There develops a wonderful relationship. Francis takes on the role of mother hen to Dale, retrieving him from the drunk tank, watching over him as he slumps passed out, dealing with cops who just want to get rid of this drunken negro, etc. Francis borrows money from his ex-wife in order to get a new apartment, so Dale can move in with him and his daughter Berangere.

The two men are using each other, and each wins. Francis revels in the reflected glory, in having his hero actually speak to him, depend on him. Dale can count on Francis to take care of him. But a slow change occurs: Dale swears off the booze, and keeps his promise; he starts composing, and playing his long-neglected soprano sax; Francis is inspired by the creativity he sees displayed nightly and produces better

work himself (he is a commercial illustrator.) It is a wonderful love story, of two men who come to rely, trust and finally understand each other. Though Dale finally remains a stranger in France, and must go home to New York and the same old hassle of cabaret cards, union dues and drug pushers, which eventually kill him, he and Francis become a part of each other.

The story is based on reality. Pianist Bud Powell indeed went to Paris and befriended a Frenchman, who helped him regain stability in his playing and his life. In mapping the role to a tenor saxophonist (and out of affection for the Prez,) the movie has grafted onto Turner quite a bit of Lester Young's personality. Gordon, who knew and played with Young, gives a sensational performance as Turner. The mannerisms are eerie: calling everyone 'Lady'; the hand gestures; the sudden pauses in mid-sentence (both musical and conversational;) the way with a phrase ("I'm as fine as wine"); and many others. From Powell come the admiration for Ravel and Debussy, "who opened the music and showed me

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the way bebop should go."

If Dale is based on Prez, then Stacy Leigh (Lonette McKee) would be based on Billie Holiday. The resemblance is much less striking. McKee wisely refrains from adopting Lady Day's mannerisms or singing style. But the famous rapport between Holiday and Young (John Hammond described it as a "profound understanding") shows through in their scenes together. Dale provides heartfelt obbligatos behind her singing. The two carry on an extended, silent exchange, all smiles, looks and held hands, through a dinner scene.

It is fascinating to hear the transformation in Turner/Gordon's sound as the movie progresses. His phrasing becomes more assertive, his tone broadens and deepens; he goes from exhaustedly sitting down to standing while playing. His speech is less slurred, his step more assured.

The film is full of little revealing details: The band weaving complex tapestries of music, with three people in the entire place; Francis watching obliviously, mouth open, hearing what's happening on the bandstand through every pore of his body; Turner remarks: "you can't go and pick a style off a tree; the tree is inside of you, growing all the time."

As a moviegoer, I think ROUND MIDNIGHT is wonderful, but I don't claim movie-reviewing expertise. As a jazz connoisseur and fan, however, I think the movie is a rousing success. First it gives some long-needed exposure to the musicians. Herbie Hancock, Bobby Hutcherson, Wayne Shorter, Billy Higgins, Ron Carter, Freddie Hubbard, Cedar Walton, Pierre Michelot, Tony Williams, Palle Mikkelborg, McKee are all top practitioners of the form. Fans will marvel at the subtle interaction between characters and music and among characters. Non-fans can see that there is nothing mysterious or complicated in jazz. All one has to do is open one's mind, and Listen!

Subject: Peggy Sue Got Married

Path: mtuxo!houxm!ihnp4!cbatt!cbosgd!ucbvax!ucsfcg!pixar!upstill

Date: Fri, 10-Oct-86 15:54:32 EST

Synopsis: Middle-aged woman (Kathleen Turner) passes out at her high-school reunion and winds up reliving her high-school life, especially her relationship with her now-estranged husband (Nicholas Cage).

"Peggy Sue Got Married" is Francis Coppola's (he's even dropped the middle name) comeback film -- coming back to commercial appeal, coming back from the technique-heavy style of his later films, coming back to a simple story well-told. On the whole, he's successful at it. For the first time in ages, he didn't write, or rewrite, the script, and served as essentially a hired hand in the production of a romantic, funny, unashamedly commercial project.

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Kathleen Turner offers her usual insightful, enthusiastic, artful performance. This woman is at least the actress Meryl Streep is. Nicolas Cage (Valley Girl, Birdy) is fine as a Peggy Sue's husband, but the sympathy you should develop for his character never really grows. The supporting cast is really right all the way around, especially Barbara Harris as Peggy Sue's mousy mother.

The movie's greatest strength is its feel for the period. This comes through in the script's skillful use of period dialog, and also in inserting 80's talk into the 50's situation, both providing rich comic

moments. It also comes through in the art direction (expected), and in the characterizations. Something about the people populating the movie just feels right for the 50's, which is also carried through exactly right to the people as they appear in the 80's.

As good as all this sounds, I wasn't nearly as affected by Peggy Sue as I wanted to be, given the subject and the characters. I don't know why that is, whether I was expecting the world (which the hype is wont to make you do), or whether it is just a problem with the movie. I have gotten the same feeling from a number of Coppola movies, like there is a thin veneer of artifice standing between me and the real experience of the film. Some movies, like "Stand by Me" and "Breaker Morant", have the most compelling immediacy that drags you right into the film's world. "The Godfather" was like that, too. It's too bad "Peggy Sue" doesn't. Just be warned.

Overall, though, the film is well worth seeing, very funny and very skillfully executed. *** out of ***, or +2 on the Leeper -4 to +4 scale.

Steve Upstill

Subject: "Dundee" is a crock
Path: bellcore!clyde!caip!rutgers!uwvax!astroatc!prairie!dan
Date: Sat, 11-Oct-86 14:34:22 EST

Don't bother with "Crocodile Dundee". In spite of a very charming male lead, this movie is nothing short of aggravating, especially because of its female lead.

Linda Kozlowski plays a spoiled, arrogant, patronizing New York rich girl who wanders around the bush in designer clothes, and then wanders around New York in designer clothes that don't FIT. This sounds better than it actually is; of course there have been wonderful movies in which apparently spoiled, rich socialites are brought down to earth by solid, backwoodsy guys. Not in this case. Watching Kozlowski's "isn't he a cute poodle" patronizing smile every time Dundee does something in a non-NY way is truly annoying. She doesn't get embarrassed when he grabs someone's crotch at a fancy gallery party; she just says, "It's ok, he's

from Australia". Excuse me?

In addition, the story is flimsy, there is absolutely no chemistry between the romantic leads, and plot developments are broadly telegraphed. Summary: you can't build a good movie around a celebrity unless it's a good movie. One star, out of four, maybe.

Dan Frank

