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Mt. Holz Science Fiction Society
Club Notice - 10/26/90 -- Vol. 9, No. 17

MEETINGS UPCOMING:

Unless otherwise stated, all meetings are on Wednesdays at noon.
   LZ meetings are in LZ 2R-158. MT meetings are in the cafeteria.

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 11/07 MT: WANDERING STARS ed. by Jack Dann (Jewish Science Fiction)
          (MT 4A-229)
 11/14 LZ: WAR WITH THE NEWTS by Karel Capek (Foreign SF)
 12/05 LZ: EQUAL RITES or THE LIGHT FANTASTIC by Terry Pratchett (Humorous SF)

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 11/10 NJSFS: New Jersey Science Fiction Society: TBA
          (phone 201-432-5965 for details) (Saturday)
 11/17 SFABC: Science Fiction Association of Bergen County: TBA
          (phone 201-933-2724 for details) (Saturday)

HO Chair: John Jetzt   HO 1E-525   834-1563 hocpa!jetzt
LZ Chair: Rob Mitchell LZ 1B-306   576-6106 mtuxo!jrrt
MT Chair: Mark Leeper   MT 3D-441   957-5619 mtgzy!leeper
HO Librarian: Tim Schroeder HO 3E-301   949-4488 hotld!tps
LZ Librarian: Lance Larsen LZ 3L-312   576-3346 mtunq!lfl
MT Librarian: Evelyn Leeper MT 1F-329   957-2070 mtgzy!ecl
Factotum: Evelyn Leeper MT 1F-329   957-2070 mtgzy!ecl
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1. I was discussing last week America's ambivalent feelings toward
fish. America's attitude seems to be that they want fish but, more
than that, they want not to eat it. The attitude toward fish is
that less is more. It is like women's bathing suits. I am assured
(by people who should know) that the less cloth you get, the higher
the price.   Similarly, if you order fish, the less fish you get,
the more you pay.

There is a fishery near our house and I like to order their fried combination platter. The price is $7.50. Sometimes you get a really filling portion. And sometimes you get enough to make yourself just a little sick of seafood. If they served it "all-you-can-eat" style, I probably would have a little less. However,

if innocent fish gave their lives to fill this plate, I generally will make the effort. Suffice it to say you get a platter that doesn't quit.

Then there is Red Lobster, a national seafood chain. For about $10 you can get a combination platter with about half as much seafood as you get at the fishery. Still, if you find you want to be virtuous and have eaten fish for dinner, but don't really want to eat fish, there are the local Spanish and Portuguese restaurants. There the seafood is served in a dish called paella. What they do is bring you a bucket of saffron-cooked rice. Buried in it are nuggets of seafood. DO NOT ATTEMPT TO EAT THE WHOLE DISH! If you do, the first glass of water you drink, the rice will swell up, your eyes will pop out, and the little men will pop glass eyes in instead and place you in a diorama at the American Museum of Natural History. No, you eat only a little of the rice. You play Treasure Hunt, digging through the bucket of rice, finding a lobster claw here, a scallop there. I've told my waiter that I want a checklist so I can cross things off on the list as I find them, like in a word-search puzzle. You'd know when you have it all. But then you'd have an inventory and currently you are never really sure how much seafood you are really getting. A lot of it is things like mussels, which are really just clams wearing a coat that's too big. There is a tiny piece of seafood in a big box. There are also the pieces of a build-it-yourself lobster kit, with little tiny pieces of meat in a big ugly shell. (With seafood, the uglier the animal it comes from, the more popular the fish.) Now paella runs about $14 a bucket and if you pull out all the fish nuggets and put them side by side, you get maybe two-thirds of what you got at Red Lobster.

Now let me tell you what I recently paid over $23 for. Admittedly, it was in Brussels, but I think you'd find the same thing here. If

I remember there were two appetizers, a main course, and a dessert. The appetizers were a bowl of tomato soup with some fish flavor and a piece of salmon small enough that I could hide it under my index and third finger held together. The main course, fish en brochette, was three cubes of fish about three quarters of an inch on a side and two slices of lemon on a little skewer and served with a little pile of rice. (The dessert was a small cup of chocolate mousse.) I would estimate that at my local fishery, I get roughly eight times as much for less than one-third the price!

"Ah," you say, "but the more expensive restaurants don't just fry up the fish. You're paying for the fine art of gourmet cooking." "Fish feathers!"~I say. Maybe I don't have an educated palate, but I absolutely swear to you that of the four restaurants I mentioned, each one was a little less flavorful than the previous. The best-tasting seafood was at the cheap fishery where, I assure you, the flavor is quite delightful. The Belgian restaurant just served it grilled or put a little bland white sauce on it. You are paying,

not for good food, but so that you do not have to eat much fish. Less is more.

Till now I've said I hate to see Coca-Cola and McDonalds conquering the world. (I would rarely go to McDonalds in the United States and _ n_ e_ v_ e_ r in another country.) But there is a reason why it is happening. Nobody is holding guns to anybody's heads and telling them to eat hamburgers. For years I have thought that the Southeast is the only part of the United States that really has a distinctive and good cuisine. Wrong! American fast food is a distinctive cuisine and, as little respect as it gets at home, it is popular. I have yet to hear someone Chinese say, "Boy, I hate to see all these Chinese restaurants opening in America," but I have heard a lot of Americans who hate to see McDonalds opening elsewhere, and doing a darn good business too.

                    Mark Leeper
                    MT 3D-441 957-5619
                     ...mtgzy!leeper

Life ... is like a festival; just as some come to the festival to compete, some to ply their trade, but the best people come as spectators, so in life the slavish men go hunting for fame or gain, the philosophers for truth.

                              -- Pythagoras

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