

Lincroft-Holmdel Science Fiction Club
Club Notice - 12/3/86 -- Vol. 5, No. 21

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.

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12/10 LZ: THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS by Ursula K. LeGuin (Sexual Identity)

12/17 MT: ENDER'S GAME by Orson Scott Card (War in Space)

01/7/87 LZ: NEUROMANCER by William Gibson (Consciousness)

HO Chair: John Jetzt HO 1E-525 834-1563

LZ Chair: Rob Mitchell LZ 1B-306 576-6106

MT Chair: Mark Leeper MT 3E-433 957-5619

HO Librarian: Tim Schroeder HO 2G-427A 949-5866

LZ Librarian: Lance Larsen LZ 1C-117 576-2068

MT Librarian: Bruce Szablak MT 4C-418 957-5868

Jill-of-all-trades: Evelyn Leeper MT 1F-329 957-2070

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1. Christmas time is coming and the Leeperhouse film festival will remember the old tradition of telling ghost stories at Yuletide. On Thursday, December 11, at 7 PM we will be showing two salty ghost stories.

Seaside Spirits

ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN MARVEL Chap. 1 (1941) dir. by Witney & English

EYES OF THE AMARYLIS (1982) dir. by Frederik King Keller

THE UNINVITED (1944) dir. by Lewis Allen

EYES OF THE AMARYLIS is a genuinely obscure ghost story of a young girl who goes to live by the seaside with her grandmother. Her grandfather was lost at sea thirty years earlier, but her grandmother still waits for his return. This is a subtle and atmospheric film.

THE UNINVITED has long been a favorite ghost story. A writer (Ray Milland) and his sister buy an old house by the Cornish seaside only to discover that the house is haunted and will remain so until the unhappy spirits are appeased. This is a great old(-ish) film.

" _ T _ H _ E _ A _ D _ V _ E _ N _ T _ U _ R _ E _ S _ O _ F _ C _ A _ P _ T _ A _ I _ N

_ M _ A _ R _ V _ E _ L _ w _ a _ s _ r _ o _ a _ r _ i _ n _ g _ g _ o _ o _ d
_ j _ u _ v _ e _ n _ i _ l _ e
entertainment. The twelve-chapter serial was a good example of what happens when the right people undertake a project at the right time... The elements of direction and stunt work made CAPTAIN MARVEL and outstanding serial."

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Raymond Stedman
THE SERIALS

I have never seen ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN MARVEL. I previewed the first two chapters and it seems to me to be one of the best serials. After seeing FLASH GORDON, I was pleased to see that the plot actually advances in CAPTAIN MARVEL. There is a real story to it and if I have to keep missing it to answer the door... well... I won't be happy. Admittedly one reason we show serial is to give people more time to show up before the main feature, but do try to be a little more punctual, huh?

2. Since Mark mentioned punctuality, I might as well iterate (or re-iterate) some of the "house rules":

- Be prompt (see comment above). Having people trickle in throughout the serial is bad enough, but having to answer the door every ten minutes throughout the entire first feature is very distracting to everyone.
- No smoking. (No one's tried yet, but we might as well make this clear.)
- No heckling. There's nothing wrong with reacting to the film, but "humorous" commentary is not welcome. This is particularly true for this week's films, which rely a lot on atmosphere.
- It's fun to talk about the films afterward, and a certain amount of discussion is expected, but people should be aware that *our* working hours start at 8 AM. While you may be able to "sleep in" on Friday, we have to get up at

6:30 AM. So plan on leaving by midnight at the latest
(leeway allowed if the films are extra-long).

[-ecl]

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

STAR TREK 4: THE VOYAGE HOME
A film review by Mark R. Leeper

Capsule review: The one-time crew of the Enterprise
are back in what is probably their best film so far.

While the script occasionally borrows from T_i_m_e_a_f_t_e_r
T_i_m_e or lapses into low comedy (with a rather silly
hospital visit), the main plot is new and engaging and
the special effects are--occasionally--very impressive.

I usually try to start my reviews by giving a little bit of
background information. Well, if there's anyone out there who is
unfamiliar with what "Star Trek" is, send me mail and I will fill you
in. I have just seen the fourth and (well, so much for suspense) best
entry of the "Star Trek" film series. It continues the story started

with S_t_a_r_T_r_e_k_I: T_h_e_W_r_a_t_h_o_f_K_h_a_n,
picking up shortly after S_t_a_r_T_r_e_k
I_I_I: T_h_e_S_e_a_r_c_h_f_o_r_S_p_o_c_k left off. But for most of

the screen time the

characters are involved in an unrelated adventure that takes them to San Francisco in the 1980's. (How convenient! The TV series had let Kirk see Earth of the 1960's but never had he seen Earth as it was in the 1980's.) While Lucas's "Star Wars" series purports to tell one long story, the segments of the "Star Trek" series are much better integrated together. In fact, with the fourth film the "Star Trek" series may be surpassing the "Star Wars" series for the quality of its story-telling. It certainly doesn't hurt that the "Star Trek" series is getting away from the scientifically flawed concept of the Genesis Project.

Ah, but these are generalities. Specifically, what is S t a r T r e k I V : T h e V o y a g e H o m e about? Unfortunately, I cannot say very much about that. There is a giant thingee from space that is menacing Earth and to save Earth Kirk and the regulars of the cast must go back in time to our present. I could say more but if you've seen the film you'd already know what I would say and if you haven't you wouldn't want to know the nature of the menace beforehand. The problem is the plot comes in so unexpectedly that almost anything I could say about it would be spoiler. Suffice it to say that the crew is set loose in modern-day San Francisco and must try to seem normal there as H. G. Wells did in Nicholas Meyer's film T i m e a f t e r T i m e. In fact, in several places the script borrows heavily from T i m e a f t e r T i m e. That need not be so surprising since one of the four listed authors for the script was Nicholas Meyer. The script takes on a slightly didactic tone in espousing one of the commoner causes of our day, but it is well-justified by the plot.

With the exception of three strikingly unconvincing matte paintings, Industrial Light and Magic has provided some terrific special effects. Most of the film required no special effects at all, so the effects budget could be focused on the few scenes where it was really needed. Some of those are spectacular and constitute the main reasons you want to see this film on a wide screen if at all possible. The

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music by Leonard Rosenman is in several places reminiscent of his score to L o r d o f t h e R i n g s. It is competent but on the whole probably not up to James Horner's score for S t a r T r e k I. I am not sure why Horner was replaced except perhaps that his score for S t a r T r e k I I was too much like his previous score.

_ S _ t _ a _ r _ T _ r _ e _ k _ I _ V is fun and still tells a reasonable science fiction story. Rate it a low +3 on the -4 to +4 scale.

Retrospective on THE WALKING DEAD
A film review by Mark R. Leeper

After Boris Karloff made a name for himself in Universal horror films like *F_r_a_n_k_e_n_s_t_e_i_n*, *T_h_e_B_l_a_c_k_C_a_t*, *T_h_e_R_a_v_e_n*, *T_h_e_M_u_m_m_y*, and *B_r_i_d_e_o_f_F_r_a_n_k_e_n_s_t_e_i_n*, he starred in a number of lesser horror films for other studios. All of them seem to have similar plots that have Karloff returning from the dead after having been executed as he was in *T_h_e_M_a_n_T_h_e_y_C_o_u_l_d_N_o_t_H_a_n_g* or frozen as he was in *M_a_n_w_i_t_h_N_i_n_e_L_i_v_e_s*. Similar films include *T_h_e_M_a_n_W_h_o_L_i_v_e_d_A_g_a_i_n* and *B_e_f_o_r_e_I_H_a_n_g*. Most of these were less than memorable, but one does stand out. That film is the 1936 *T_h_e_W_a_l_k_i_n_g_D_e_a_d*. It was the earliest of Karloff's man-returned-from-the-dead films for other studios and by far the best.

Warner Brothers made *T_h_e_W_a_l_k_i_n_g_D_e_a_d* a year after *B_r_i_d_e_o_f_F_r_a_n_k_e_n_s_t_e_i_n* and designed it to appeal to both their gangster film audience and Universal's horror film audience. A criminal gang wants to get revenge on a judge who sentenced one of their number to prison. They decide to murder him and frame an innocent man. Boris Karloff plays John Ellman, whom the same judge had sentenced to prison years earlier and who has just been released. They kill the judge and frame Ellman, but their crime was witnessed by a pair of young assistants to Dr. Beaumont (played by Edmund Gwenn), a great medical researcher. The witnesses, played by Warren Hull and Margarete Churchill, remain silent, having been threatened by the mob. Finally on Ellman's execution day, they can keep quiet no more and tell Ellman's attorney who is actually in league with the mob. The attorney delays stopping the execution until it is too late to save Ellman. Dr. Beaumont steps in and asks for Ellman's body, then brings it back to life.

Returning from the dead, John Ellman seems to have learned in death that he had been framed. He visits each of the racketeers, simply asking why they wanted to kill him, but his sepulchral appearance and the expectation of his vengeance frightens them literally to death. (Not surprisingly, death has hollowed Ellman's cheeks, bent his neck, and given him stiff hair with a shock of grey so that he looks almost like a punk rocker!) Dr. Beaumont ignores all this in his mania to find out what Ellman experienced while dead. Beaumont never finds out and as Ellman dies a second time--shot by the last gangsters he frightened to death--he tells Beaumont to let the dead stay dead.

To direct their horror/gangster film, Warner Brothers chose Michael

Curtiz, who had previously directed for them such horror films as D_r_ X,
M_y_s_t_e_r_y_i_n_t_h_e_W_a_x_M_u_s_e_u_m, and
C_a_p_t_a_i_n_B_l_o_o_d. Curtiz went on to direct
A_d_v_e_n_t_u_r_e_s_o_f_R_o_b_i_n_H_o_o_d,
A_n_g_e_l_s_w_i_t_h_D_i_r_t_y_F_a_c_e_s, T_h_e_S_e_a
H_a_w_k, T_h_e_S_e_a
W_o_l_f, Y_a_n_k_e_e_D_o_o_d_l_e_D_a_n_d_y,
M_i_l_d_r_e_d_P_i_e_r_c_e, and, of course, C_a_s_a_b_l_a_n_c_a.

I For me T_h_e_W_a_l_k_i_n_g_D_e_a_d has always been the film I think of when
I want to give evidence that Karloff was a good actor. The pathos in

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Ellman caught in a vice of circumstance, pitifully objecting to a
gangster's cruelty with "But they said that you'd help me" is an
effective piece of acting.

Besides Karloff, the film featured Edmund Gwenn, who made a career
of likable, if strong-willed, old men. Gwenn is probably best
remembered for playing Kris Kringle in M_i_r_a_c_l_e_o_n_3_4_t_h
S_t_r_e_e_t. He also
played the scientist in T_h_e_m!. Also in the film as hoods were Barton
McLane, a familiar face, who usually played either a crook or a
policeman like Lt. Dundy, who menaced Bogart in T_h_e_M_a_l_t_e_s_e
F_a_l_c_o_n. Joe
Sawyer went on to play various gangster roles as well as the comical
Sgt. O'Hara in the television series R_i_n_T_i_n_T_i_n. He also played a
telephone lineman possessed by aliens in I_t_C_a_m_e_f_r_o_m_O_u_t_e_r
S_p_a_c_e.

T_h_e_W_a_l_k_i_n_g_D_e_a_d is a long way from greatness but it is a quality
production whose somber tone somehow brightened the Saturday night late
movie several times when I was a teenager. The resurrected John
Ellman's piano recital could be the inspiration for the singing and
dancing monster scene in Y_o_u_n_g_F_r_a_n_k_e_n_s_t_e_i_n, but it is
played
melodramatically serious. As the dark sunken eyes of John Ellman sweep
the room accusingly at the men who had him killed and now have come to
hear him play, the film offers a lasting chill.

