



PO Box 656, Washington, DC 20044 - (202) 232-3141 - Issue #60 - March 1995

WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE MARCH MEETING

as reported by Carl, The Second Speaker

We've got quite an interesting meeting coming up on March 12th! Here are the highlights of what's going to be happening:

LSF TURNS 5 YEARS OLD

That's right, gang, LSF is getting a little older! It was almost 5 years ago (to be exact, on March 14, 1990), that LSF held its first meeting at Al W's home out in Silver Spring. Happy birthday to us!

NETWORK REP NEEDED

At the February meeting, Wayne III announced his intention to resign as LSF's Representative to the Gaylactic Network. He announced that his resignation would officially occur at the March 12th meeting, at which time he would turn over all his records to his successor. That, of course, means that we'll have to *elect* his successor at that meeting, too! (It was decided it to wait until March to hold the election, to give anyone not in attendance at February's meeting a chance to run for the office and/or get in on the voting.)

"But what does the Network Rep *do*?" I hear you asking. (Don't lie to me; I *heard* you ask that!) The job of Network Representative entails:

(1) attending the Board meeting at Gaylaxicon (or sending an informed proxy) to enact or vote on Network business (Gaylaxicon bids, new chap-

ters, etc.); and (2) sending periodic reports/letters to be included in the GNAPA, the official communications link between the Network and LSF.

Interested in the job? Do you want your voice to be heard? In either case (either running for the office, or voting on the candidates), you **MUST** attend the March 12th meeting.

FUND-RAISING PLANS

At the February meeting, Rodney Elin made some suggestions regarding fund-raising activities for LSF, among them a "Quarter Auction." Rodney agreed to write up a description of his plan for publication in the newsletter, so it could be voted on at the March meeting. Here 'tis:

Proposed: That immediately following the conclusion of business at the May, 1995, meeting of LSF, a "Quarter Auction" shall be held, according to the following points:

(1) All items for auction be contributed by members of LSF, and be in some way science fiction-related. Such items could include (but not be limited to) books, comics, trading cards, photographs, videotapes, autographs, toys, or other SF memorabilia. All items to be auctioned must be brought to the May meeting.

(2) Any items not successfully auctioned off **MUST** be removed from the meeting site by the contributor.

(3) All bids will be in increments of 25 cents. (Hence the title: "Quarter Auction.")

(4) The Auctioneer (as well as the contributor) reserves the right to set minimum bids on specific items or to combine several items into "lots." Decisions to do either of these actions shall be made in the interest of: (a) increasing profits to LSF; (b) moving "less desirable" items; and/or (c) the wishes of the membership present.

(5) The Secretary shall be responsible for transcribing information on each item (to whom it was sold, final bid, etc.).

(6) All items purchased at auction **MUST** be removed from the meeting site by the purchaser.

(7) All money is to be paid in full at the end of the auction. All proceeds shall be placed into the Lambda Sci-Fi treasury.

(8) In the event that no one else steps forward to volunteer to be Auctioneer, Rodney Elin will assume the Auctioneer role for this auction.

(9) All decisions by the Auctioneer (such as recognizing bidders, etc.) are final.

(10) If this "Quarter Auction" is a successful endeavor, regular "Quarter Auctions" shall be scheduled by the membership in the future.

Thank you, Rodney, for writing up this proposal. OK, everybody, now it's up to us to decide on it at the March meeting.

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WHAT'S INSIDE?

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**"95% FAT FREE"
MINUTES OF THE
FEB. 12TH MEETING**
recorded by Carl Cipra

We opened the meeting with a social note: Brian and Andrew M. showed up at the meeting after a 2-year hiatus. Coincidentally, they met two years ago at an LSF meeting!

We then progressed through our typical free-for-all show-and-tell session.

At one point, Joe R. reported that he has been talking with members of the **Bisexual Star Trek Support Group** and that they are definitely interested in having joint activities with us.

Wayne III reported that **Gaylaxicon VI** is going along well. "Wizards of the Coast" (producers of *Magic* cardgames) will sponsor gaming at the con. The only disappointing note is that author Jewelle Gomez (G'con V's Guest of Honor) won't be able to appear this year after all.

Rob G. (our Treasurer) discussed various aspects of LSF's finances. He reported that we should continue to get the newsletter printed at Kinko's (rather than our former printer, Copy General) to keep us within our budget. He then sparked a short round-robin discussion of various fund-raising ideas. Rodney E. will be "fleshing out" a proposal for discussion at the March meeting.

Rodney E. also brought along a treat for the attendees - a videotape of **David Duchovny's "drag scenes"** from *Twin Peaks*. (Surely you remember David Duchovny, co-star of *The X-Files*?) Naturally, we took some time out to watch them! [Ed. Note: He's cute on *The X-Files*, but he looks *terrible* in drag!]

Wayne III then led us in a discussion of **Network business**. Lo Cal Gaylaxians (Southern Calif.) has apparently disappeared; and Greater Gotham Gaylaxians (NYC *et al*) has had its old core group "burn out" and apparently been disbanded, too. On an

**A REPORT ON THE
VALENTINE'S DAY
"VIDEO MADNESS" PARTY**
(A few words on the Halloween Party, too!)
by Carl Cipra

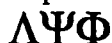


Kudos to Philip and Jeff for hosting another festive, fun-filled (*calorie*-filled, too!) "Video Madness" Party at their home in Silver Spring on February 16th! About a dozen LSF wackos showed up, food and videos in hand, for their latest dose of that dreaded disease, "video madness." (Even the semi-mythical Joe Parra was there - visiting from Outer Mongolia, or wherever-the-heck-it-is he lives!) It was your typical LSF get-together: the food and the companionship were great - and the videos were a kick, too; Philip & Jeff went all-out on the decorations - hearts and flowers everywhere; a great time was had by all! (If you haven't been to one of these video-bashes, then suffice it to say that you're really missing out!)

As announced, the theme of the party was "St. Valentine's Day;" but, as you'll see by the titles, the connection between that holiday and the videos shown was often tenuous at best! Due to a last-minute revolt by the attendees, however, *My Bloody Valentine* was not shown after all. (Thanks, Philip, for handling that insurgency so well.)



even sadder note, **Wayne announced his intention to officially resign his position as LSF's Network Representative at the March meeting.** (House, hubby, and homework - that's quite a load on top of all the Network business he's been doing!) He'll turn over all his records to the newly-elected rep (whoever that turns out to be) at that time. Philip W. led us all in a rousing chorus of "thanks" to Wayne for all his hard (often unappreciated) work as our Network Rep over the years.



There were two "tracks" of programming at the party: "upstairs" and "downstairs." After the usual arduous "weeding-out" process, here's what was shown:

Upstairs: *Leech Woman*; *Waxwork II*; *Vampire Circus*.

Downstairs: "The Tiff" (from *Reboot*); *Cybill* meets (and rebuffs) Jonathan Frakes; 2 *Tick* episodes ("The Mole-Men" & "Arthur's Bank Account"); *The Mask*; *Bride of Reanimator*.

(See what I mean about "tenuous" connections to Valentine's Day? You figure 'em out!)

Thanks again, Philip and Jeff, for hosting this event!

* * * *

You know, when I started writing this report, it suddenly dawned on me that we *never* reported on the Halloween "Video Madness" Party in this newsletter. (Shame on that forgetful newsletter editor, *whoever* he is!) In a nutshell (poor choice of words!), here's what happened at Jeff & Philip's home back on Oct. 22, 1994:

About a dozen of us got introduced to Ernest, the oh-so-friendly basset hound. There was *lots* of food (including 2 - count 'em, 2 - lasagnas! and 2 - count 'em 2 - chocolate cheesecakes!). There were two filmtracks: Upstairs (*It, the Terror from Beyond Space*; *The Haunting*) and Downstairs (*Halloween*; *The Monster Squad*; the "Gay Fairfax" interviews from *Gaylaxicon V*; *The Nightmare Before Christmas*). Fun? You bet!



IN THE MOUTH OF MADNESS**(A Good Scream!)**

a movie review
by
Joseph Parra

Rod Serling used to tell us each week that there is "a land which lies between shadow and substance - of things and ideas. There's a signpost up ahead; you've just crossed over into *The Twilight Zone*." That familiar opening would serve nicely to introduce John Carpenter's latest tale of "right makes fright" - *In the Mouth of Madness*. Make no mistake, this is vintage Carpenter - the stuff of *Halloween* and *The Fog*. With this bizarre tale of insanity and intense supernatural horror, he reminds us that he still knows what scares us. He liberally dishes up doses of terror that are at once foreign but all-too-familiar, like a *deja vu* experience we'd rather forget.

Insurance investigator John Trent (played by Sam Neill, of *Jurassic Park*) is an ace detective, who can spot a "scam" (phoney insurance claim) a mile away. Writer Sutter Cane (played by Jurgen Prochnow, of *The Keep*) has been insured through Trent's company by Trent's publisher (played by Charlton Heston). Cane's influence over the masses that read his terror tales is more than phenomenal - his stories seem to drive people mad, to the point of raving murderous lunacy! Of course, this type of sensational publicity makes people want to read Cane's works all the more. In the midst of the provocative behavior of his readers and the height of his popularity, Cane vanishes without a trace. The publisher wants either his star writer back or a payoff from Trent's insurance company. Accompanying Trent on his subsequent investigation is Ms. Styles (played by Julie Carmen, of *Fright Night 2*), an agent of the publisher; she has got to find Cane, too - her

job depends on it. Together, Trent and Ms. Styles try to piece together clues as to Cane's whereabouts.

Through a rather ingenious method (which must be seen to be appreciated), the intrepid investigators deduce that Cane is in the little town of Hobb's End, New Hampshire. The trouble is that, according to all maps (both old and new), no such place exists or ever did. Yet, after a harrowing drive on the highway, Trent and Styles arrive at Hobb's End and confront the cause of their quest--Sutter Cane.

Framing all of this is Trent's narrative. The most interesting factor about this narrative is that it appears that Trent is actually in an asylum for the criminally insane and is relating his evil tale to a psychiatrist there (played by David Warner, of *Waxwork*). This might lead both shrink and audience to dismiss Trent's story as the ravings of a lunatic, except that quite suddenly there are widespread reports of wholesale murder and mayhem on a global scale - or are these the ravings of a madman, too? In an inspired moment, Trent escapes the asylum and goes to a deserted movie theater to watch *In the Mouth of Madness*, starring John Trent and directed by John Carpenter!! - or is this also a psychotic delusion?

John Carpenter keeps us on our toes constantly during this fantastic tale of horror. Just when we are sure that what we are seeing is a hoax, he shows us something all too terrifyingly real to be fake; and when we are good and hooked, he teases us by hinting that possibly this is all just in someone's warped mind and imagination - BUT

then shows us another terrifying image. The effect is quite unnerving. While part of this is obviously meant to keep the audience off balance, the other part is even eerier, in that suppose *all* conclusions are correct - or worse, suppose *none* of them are?

Not only is Carpenter's direction marvelous, but the performances are excellent. Sam Neill does an excellent job as the initially-cocksure-then-maybe-crazy John Trent. Carmen, Heston, and Prochnow, along with Warner, all turn in extremely credible performances. Industrial Light & Magic handles the special effects, which lend themselves superbly to the "is it real or is it Memorex?" storyline by being, when called for, either incredibly subtle or larger-than-life.

While the storyline borrows liberally from Lovecraft, Poe, Stephen King, *et al*, the audience never feels ripped off. If anything, we are made comfortable, or coaxed into a false sense of security, by the seemingly familiar. After watching this superior fable of madness and evil, you too will scream from *In the Mouth of Madness*!! Enjoy!!

RATING: 3 ½ out of a possible 4

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**IN OUR SOCIETY,
BIG LUSH WOMEN
AND SMALL SLIGHT MEN
GO THROUGH LIFE
WRAPPED AROUND
A SOFTBALL-SIZED
CHUNK OF PAIN;
IT BREAKS SOME,
AND MAKES OTHERS
MAGNIFICENT.**

--- JAKE

(excerpted from
Off the Wall at Callahan's,
by Spider Robinson)

ANNO DRACULA, by Kim Newman
(Carroll & Graff, 1993; Avon Books, 1994)
Reviewed by Two LSF Members



[Ed. note: I don't think this has ever happened to me before - simultaneously receiving two different reviews of the same book! Actually, I think it's kind'a neat; and I decided to print them both in the same issue of the newsletter. Wayne - aka Wayne #1- and Michael - aka "the Red Queen" - each has written an interesting review with his own particular "take" on the story. And, just in case you're interested, I also enjoyed *Anno Dracula* and highly recommend it to you. It's out in paperback now; and you can easily find it at Crown Books.]

Anno Dracula
reviewed by Wayne

The ravens have fled from the Tower of London; the sun has set on the British Empire, making way for the full moon. Long live Vlad Dracula - Carpathian Count, Wallachian Prince, Lord Protector and Prince Consort to Victoria, Queen of England!

This twist on Bram Stoker's original novel hinges on Van Helsing's sudden lack of courage during the final attack on Dracula. Instead of the vampire's defeat and extinction, Jonathan Harker becomes Mina's first snack, while Dracula is free to continue with his plans for the conquest of his new host nation. Van Helsing and Jack Seward are soon hunted down; but while the Professor is dragged off for torture and execution, Dr. Seward is, for some reason, spared by Mina. So, mourning his staked-out beloved, Lucy Westenra, Jack ends up in Whitechapel, a London sinkhole.

Victoria Regina, a newborn vampire herself (courtesy of Dracula), is in seclusion, chained to her 2nd husband's throne, in a Buckingham Palace guarded by Carpathian undead and the impaled enemies of the new State. Lord Ruthven, an English vampire, is Prime Minister, with Lord Godalming as his aide. Vampires of many bloodlines are flocking to London and "coming out" around the world, competing to "turn over" the most mortals. (Being undead is now highly fashionable, you see.) Unfortunately, alive or undead, the Dickensian social problems still exist. (For ex-

ample, prostitutes now sell their wares in exchange for their customers' blood.) Worse, so many of the newly undead are (shall we say) of "tainted" bloodlines - they're as liable to go batty as be able to batmorph. And the "turned" Oscar Wilde is now no more than a tall vampire with very bad teeth.

Dr. Seward keeps a journal, via an "Edisongraph" wax recording machine, sort of hiding out in a poor people's medical clinic. With the aid of a sympathetic Elder (long-term vampire), Genevieve Dieudonne, he helps the frequently over-tanned "newborn" manage their new existences and/or their old sicknesses reborn into more twisted maladies. The Elders' rule of "take care of one's brood" has been discarded; so the slowly maddening Dr. Seward and his charitable crews have taken up the slack.

However, the good Doctor Seward, mourning his Lucy and working long hours, turns "from Jekyll to Hyde," becoming Jack the Ripper (although nicknamed "Silver Knife" here). Thus are galvanized the many movements of resistance, rebellion, etc. - whipped to a frenzy by "the Penny presses." The Queen's vampiric Consort, of course, provides even more reasons to rebel by his harsh, repressive measures. More and more dissidents vanish, to join Sherlock Holmes, Bram Stoker himself, and like-minded Republicans in the concentration camps/blood farms. John Iago, a preacher, is roaring revolution against the abomination; and Scotland Yard (including poor Lestrade) are overwhelmed attempting to keep the

Queen's Writ in the City. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister appoints Godalming as *his* private agent; and the ultra-secret Machiavellian "Diogenes Club" calls up their best operative, Charles Beauregard. Along the way, Beauregard becomes enamored of (and aided by) Genevieve Dieudonne. Soon, of course, all of London is on Silver Knife's trail, selfishly helping and betraying everyone else. Even Dr. Moriarity, a tong or two, and a bunch of other underworld cabals honorably acting in concert, get into the act.

Anno Dracula is a mystery only in wondering how long it will take everyone to figure out it's the good Doctor Seward behind it all. The book is well-written and doesn't drag on too much (despite 353 pages, in hardback). It's also fun to read the descriptions of foggy old London, as the already-wobbly Victorian society goes topsy-turvy ahead into the near-magical liberation of the Enlightenment-by-the-Taking-of-the-Blood - not to mention the fun of trying to remember from which of hundreds of books and stories the multitude of secondary characters came. The ending justifies the rest of the novel; but somehow I never got too fired-up with the narrative.

A nice, enjoyable read - say 3 out of 5, I guess.



[For the 2nd of these two reviews, just follow the bouncing bat to the top of the next page!]



GOD SAVE THE QUEEN!

by Michael Cornett

Kim Newman's novel *Anno Dracula* starts off with a very interesting premise--that Count Dracula *defeats* Harker and Van Helsing, marries Queen Victoria, and places the British Empire under vampire rule. Vampirism becomes the latest style in the Upper Crust; and Merrie Old England turns into a festering pit of vipers.

All this has taken place before the action of the novel begins. We meet the grief-crazed Dr. Seward and the snobbish Lord Godalming (now a vampire), from Stoker's original *Dracula*; we also meet some new characters: semi-secret agent Charles Beauregarde and his vampiric companion/lover, Genevieve. The central plot of the book follows the efforts of Charles and Genevieve to catch a seeming madman who is slaughtering vampire prostitutes in the Whitechapel area of London and calls himself Jack the Ripper.

The action drags in spots; but the book itself is never dull, as Newman carefully takes into consideration how a society of vampires would actually function, as well as what would happen to a civilized country taken over by a medieval warlord. In many ways, *Anno Dracula* is a satire of class-consciousness, with the vampire society being very concerned about associating with "the right sort" of vampires, a very real phenomenon in Victorian England. Newman's grasp of "Ripperology" is quite firm, as far as I can tell.

What makes *Anno Dracula* a real delight is its references to movie vampires, literary vampires, and Victorian detective fiction. Some chapter titles are the titles of prominent Victorian mystery novels. Sherlock Holmes is referred to, as well as lesser-known detectives like Martin Hewitt and Max Carrados. A review of the "villains" featured in the novel yields such well-

known luminaries as Professor Moriarty and Col. Sebastian Moran (from the Holmes stories) and Dr. Fu-Manchu, as well as the lesser-known gentleman-burglar A.J. Raffles, and Guy Boothby's forgotten villain Dr. Nikola. Drs. Jekyll and Moreau pop up, too. Lord Ruthven (from Polidori's "The Vampyre") is Prime Minister, while Lord Varney (of "penny-dreadful" fame) is Governor of India. I also came across references to H. Rider Haggard's novel *She* and Alban Berg's opera *Lulu* (which was made into a silent film entitled *Pandora's Box*). Anne Rice seems to be the only "vampire author" passed by in this work. One could imagine a reader's guide to *Anno Dracula* being published, to give insight to uninstructed readers.

This is not to say that one needs to get all the inside jokes to enjoy the novel. *Anno Dracula* is perfectly enjoyable as a vampire tale, as an alternate history, and as social satire. The inside jokes are merely the cherry on a delectably bloody sundae.

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STAR TREK TRADING CARDS WANTED

by Peter Knapp



As a lot of you may know, I collect *Star Trek* Trading Cards. I'm looking for fellow collectors who would be interested in trading duplicates with me, especially "chase cards." I'm currently trying to complete the two *Star Trek* Art series, the *Star Trek: The Next Generation* "Season One" series, and the *Star Trek: Generations* series.

If you'd like to talk trade, give me a call at (202)483-6369, or send me some e-mail:

peter_knapp@ita.doc.gov

Thanks!

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BOOK SEARCH REQUESTED

by Carl Cipra

Some months ago, Dave Bongard turned me on to Michael Flynn's novel *In the Country of the Blind*, which I really enjoyed. (See my review in last month's newsletter.) In return, I confidently promised him I'd find him copies of two books by Catherine Cook, *The Winged Assassin* and *In the Realm of the Gods* (two volumes of a trilogy). Even though Dave said he'd been having difficulties finding these two books, I figured that I certainly would run across them sooner or later during one of my (numerous) trips to used bookstores or to the dealers' rooms at sci-fi conventions. Alas, pride goeth before a fall! I must admit defeat! Most of the people I've asked about these books hadn't even heard of the author -- several of them tried to tell me I obviously had the name wrong and must be talking about Catherine Cook *de Camp*! Argh!

Well, I decided that it's time to follow along in Chuck's footsteps and advertise my quest in the LSF newsletter. I know that we frequently joke that nobody *ever* reads the newsletter (please, it *is* a joke, isn't it?); but I figured that *someone* out there must have run across these books!

So, HELP!

Once again, the books we're looking for are:

The Winged Assassin

In the Realm of the Gods

by Catherine Cook

If you know where we can get ahold of copies of these two books, please notify either Dave Bongard or me. Or, if you've already got copies of these two books and you're willing to part with them, please contact either of us. (Both of us are in the LSF Directory; or you can write in c/o LSF, PO Box 656, Washington, DC 20044.) Thanks.

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*** * INFORMATION ABOUT LAMBDA SCI-FI: DC AREA GAYLAXIANS * ***

Lambda Sci-Fi is a Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror fan club for Gay people and their friends. Annual membership fees are \$15, for which you will receive this monthly newsletter and a membership directory. Newsletter submissions are always welcome.

Meetings are generally held on the second Sunday of each month at a private residence. The next Lambda Sci-Fi meeting will be held at 2:00 PM on Sunday, March 12th, at Jim C.'s apartment: 1414 17th St., NW, Apt. 413 (near Dupont Circle). Please bring some munchies or soft drinks if you can. Hope to see you there!

Lambda Sci-Fi: DC Area Gaylaxians is an affiliate of the Gaylactic Network, an international organization for gay people and their friends who are interested in science-fiction and fantasy.



Con Calendar

by Carl, Peter, and Jim C.



March 10-12, 1995 **VULKON**: Sheraton Baltimore (Towson, MD - just inside the Balt. Beltway, near Exit 27 No.). Guests: Armin ("Quark") Shimerman, John ("Kor") Colicos, Mira ("Delenn") Furlan. Cost: \$40 /weekend; \$20/day.

March 31-April 2, 1995 **TECHNICON 12**: Virginia Tech Campus (Blacksburg, VA). Guests: Melissa Scott, Don Sakers, Tom Atkinson, Christie Golden, Mike Allen, Dave & Sue McCoy. Cost: \$20 at door.

April 14-16, 1995 **BALTICON 29**: Radisson Lord Baltimore Hotel & Omni Hotel (Baltimore, MD). Guest of Honor: James P. Hogan; Artist GoH: David Cherry; Special Guest: Hal Clement. Cost: \$35 until 3/15/95. For membership, make checks payable to "Balticon 29" and send to: Balticon 29, PO Box 686, Baltimore, MD 21203-0686.

May 19-21, 1995 **GAYLAXICON VI**: Radisson Hotel Niagara Falls (Niagara Falls, NY). Guest of Honor: Don Sakers; Artist GoH: Heather Bruton. Membership: \$25 until 5/1/95 (\$30 at the door). Make checks payable to "Gaylaxicon VI" and send to: Gaylaxicon VI, P.O. Box 160225, St. Louis, MO 63116-8225.

May 27-30, 1995 **DISCLAVE '95**: Renaissance Hotel Techworld (999 9th St., Washington, DC). Guest of Honor: Charles Sheffield; Artist GoH: Bob Eggleton; Special Guest: David Bischoff. Membership: \$30 until 4/30/95, \$40 at the door. Make checks payable to "Disclave '95" and send to: Disclave '95 Registration, PO Box 368, Gaithersburg, MD 20884.

July 13-16, 1995 **NASFiC (North American Science Fiction Convention)/DRAGON*CON 1995**: Atlanta Civic Center & Atlanta Hilton and Towers (Atlanta, GA). Honored Guests: Orson Scott Card, George Alec Effinger, Bjo Trimble, Michael Whelan, Timothy Zahn. Cost: \$50 until 3/15/95, then \$55 until 6/15/95 (\$60 at the door). Make checks payable to "NASFiC'95" and send to: NASFiC/Dragon*Con '95, P.O. Box 47696, Atlanta, GA 30362-0696. For additional information, call the 24-hour Atlanta Convention Info Line at (404) 925-2813.

Aug. 29 - Sept. 2, 1996 **L.A.con III, the 54th World Science Fiction Convention**: Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim Hilton and Towers, & Anaheim Marriott (Anaheim, CA). Writer Guest of Honor: James White; Media Guest of Honor: Roger Corman. Cost: \$90 through 6/30/95; \$110 as of 7/1/95. Make checks payable to "L.A.con III" and send to: L.A.con III, c/o SCIFI, PO Box 8442, Van Nuys, CA 91409.

