

JFFS

JAPANESE FANTASY FILM SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Spring-Summer 1982

Vol. 3, No. 4

UPDATE ON A NEW GODZILLA FILM--In case you haven't figured it out yet, the review printed at the right is not actually a review of a real film, but is instead a spoof from an unknown periodical sent into the JFFS by one of our members. The real news is that two separate sources in Japan have indicated that Toho does indeed plan to produce a new film starring the King of the Monsters in the near future. With an estimated budget of 1.5 billion yen (approximately \$6 million), the film would supposedly be released in Japan for the summer of 1983. One fact which seems to lend a bit of credibility to these reports is the previous reports that a new Godzilla adventure would be forthcoming around this time in order to celebrate Toho's 50th anniversary in the motion picture business.

The rumors concerning the special effects team for this project have two candidates in the running for the lead spot--Teruyoshi Nakano (who has handled the Godzilla series since the death of Eiji Tsuburaya as well as other effects films at Toho) and a Mr. Kitagawa (likely the person who created the special effects for the recent STAR WOLF tv series). The reaction from Japanese sources seems to show a marked preference for Kitagawa instead of Nakano. Undoubtedly such sentiment is a direct result of some poor work done by Nakano on Toho's last major science fiction film THE WAR IN SPACE. Although Nakano has been able to create some extremely impressive special effects during the 1970's, especially in the field of pyrotechnics, there is an underlying dissatisfaction with Nakano's treatment of monsters in his films by the Japanese fans. In fact, Nakano's nickname among fans is "fireworks man" in contrast to Eiji Tsuburaya's reputation as the "monster man". Another factor that has probably hindered Nakano's popularity is simply that he had the unenviable job of trying to fill the shoes of Tsuburaya, whose reputation in Japan is enormous. However, in the final analysis, regardless of the choice for special effects director, it would seem that Godzilla fans should be in for a treat if

☐ GODZILLA VERSUS A BIG DOG

This long-awaited 16th Godzilla feature was five years in the making, and it seems overripe. Its villain, a little puppy, grows in the course of a year into a full-size German shepherd. The big dog runs amuck in the suburbs of Tokyo, chasing cats and digging up lawns. "Only Godzilla can save us now!" declares the general. Luckily, some teenagers picnicking on Monster Island wake Godzilla with their loud music. But the Godzilla that awakens is no longer the original actor, witty Akira Mishune, who at 58 has hung up his scales. The giant lizard is now portrayed by Roger Moore, heretofore famous only as Sean Connery's replacement. The title as well is something of a deception as Moore/monster incinerates the big dog with his fiery breath 20 minutes into the picture. The remainder of the film is a showcase for a rather wooden performance by Moore, as he lackadaisically stomps on model tanks and delivers haymakers to apartment buildings. Moore's glib tag lines, such as "I'll take mine plane," as he devours a Japanese jet, are out of place in this role. The film is the real disaster here; it can boast only of the usual fine special effects and supporting cast. (G)

Godzilla and a Big Dog star as
Godzilla and a Big Dog in *Godzilla
Versus a Big Dog*.



the special effects seen in some of the recent live action tv shows is any indication of what may be expected.

And speaking of big treats, perhaps the best news to come out of all these preliminary rumors of a new Godzilla film is that Akira Ifukube will come out of retirement to author the musical score. Unquestionably the most popular and distinctive film composer to come out of Japan, Ifukube's return can be seen as nothing other than a step in the right direction for this film, perhaps indicating a harkening back to the quality days of the 50's and 60's.

Yet, despite all this promising information, it might be wise not to get our hopes up too high. Since Godzilla made his last screen appearance in 1975 with *TERROR OF MECHAGODZILLA*, fans have anxiously awaited the return of the King of the Monsters, and rumors have flown about this a number of times. In 1978, a rumor persisted that a new film would be produced, financed with the cooperation of Henry Saperstien and UPA and to be titled *GODZILLA VS. THE DEVIL (GOJIRA TAI DEBIRU)*. The budget was said to be \$6 million. After a great deal of procrastination, nothing developed from this other than Toho granting Saperstien the rights to do the late and not-so-great Godzilla animated series for Saturday morning television in America. Saperstien also picked up the television rights to *TERROR OF MECHAGODZILLA* and any new merchandising rights to the Godzilla character in America.

Following this in August 1979, the 25th anniversary of the release of the original *GODZILLA* occurred, reviving much interest in the monster. This was celebrated with a Godzilla 25th Anniversary Festival at the theaters where the entire Godzilla series plus 10 other Toho science fiction films were shown in theaters. The festival was accompanied by an intensive merchandising campaign which went over quite well. Taking note of this, Tomoyuki Tanaka (executive producer at Toho) publicly announced plans for a new Godzilla film for 1980, confirming these intentions to your editor during a conversation on my visit to Toho at that time. Even the wire services picked up on the announcement from Toho's publicity department, and it received some play in the media here (for example, the newspaper article reproduced on page 3 as it appeared in November 1979). Nonetheless, the months elapsed and nothing further was heard on the matter. Finally, early in 1980, the new film was put off indefinitely, giving way to the proposed *GODZILLA SHOW MOVIE*--merely a compilation of footage from the entire Godzilla series put together in the form of a retrospective. Even this film quickly died off, and when all was said and done, a March 1980 rerelease of *GODZILLA VS. THE THING* was all that Toho offered to ease the disappointment of Godzilla fans.

So, given the number of false alarms which have already occurred, it is not difficult to view this latest news without a heavy dose of skepticism. Just as *STAR TREK* fans were constantly taken on a roller coaster ride of anticipation and disappointment for 10 years until their patience was rewarded, it seems that Godzilla fans are in for a similar time. There will most certainly be a lot of news on this topic to come out of the 2nd Annual Special Effects Convention to be held in Tokyo this August, and your editor will be on hand. Look for extensive coverage of this event to appear in the next issue of the JFFS Newsletter!

SPACE CRUISER YAMATO NEWS--The final episode in the Yamato saga is now set to be released in Japan during the Spring of 1983 with the latest title being given as *YAMATO--THE FINAL VOYAGE*. Kodai and the crew of the Yamato will face the threat of the Vulcan Empire in this film.

Closer to home, Westchester Corporation persists in saying that a new season of 52 episodes of *STARBLAZERS* will be released for syndication this fall. Production on these episodes is supposedly near completion, and indeed some stations around the country which still run *STARBLAZERS* have announced new episodes for the fall.

Godzilla

Coming soon! Monster to battle forces of evil in nuclear age

By ANDREW HORVAT
Associated Press Writer

TOKYO — Godzilla, the Japanese movie monster that first stomped across the screen 25 years ago as a film argument against the A-bomb, will make a comeback next year as the hero of a nuclear power plant accident.

Born in the South Seas as a result of U.S. atomic-bomb testing, and a veteran in the fight against the powers of evil, the prehistoric monster will reappear after a six-year absence, apparently a confirmed good guy.

"It will be a serious film, just like the first movie, which was a reaction to uncontrolled atomic bomb testing in the atmosphere," said Tomoyuki Tanaka, president of the Toho Motion Picture Co. in an interview Friday.

"We are in the middle of script-writing," Tanaka said. "The Japanese are now fearful of the future much as at the time of the 1954 film," said Tanaka, creator of the series of 15 movies starring a giant flying prehistoric monster that tore up commuter trains and kicked its way through oil refineries.

The monster's 25th birthday was celebrated in July in New York and this month in Tokyo with a screening of all 15 films. Tanaka said the new film is a response to renewed popular interest in Godzilla. About 60,000 persons saw the film revival in Tokyo.

Godzilla toys brought in \$4.5 million for makers in the past four years and books

and other memorabilia also are said to be selling well after a lapse.

Isiro Honda, director of 10 of the 15 movies, said: "We went downhill in the last five or six pictures. The first film was pactistic in intent."

Tanaka said European critics saw Godzilla as a Japanese reaction to the atom bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States during World War II. "I think that appraisal is correct. Godzilla shows the Japanese attitude toward the atom," he said.

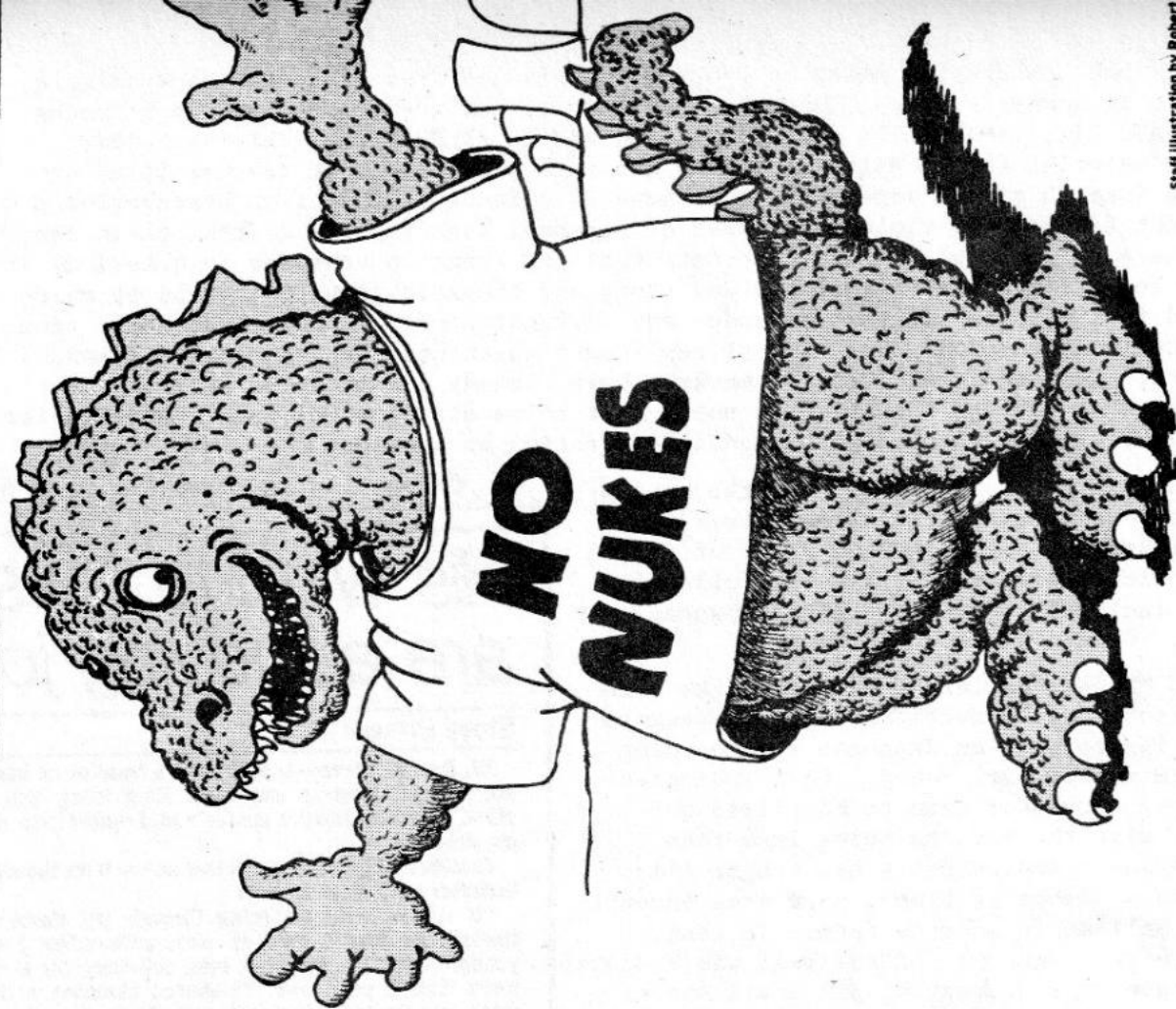
The monster turned friendly in later films, and in one epic warded off monsters from outer space.

In the first film, a monster emerges from the depths of the South Pacific after U.S. atom bomb testing in the Bikini atoll.

In the American version, Raymond Burr, later to be known as "Perry Mason" and "Ironside," played the part of an American reporter investigating the appearance of a monster in Japan. Burr's investigating activities were shot in Hollywood and spliced into the Japanese film.

The first film featured major Japanese actors but the later, cheaper films used mostly lesser-known younger talent. "Godzilla is a hard act to follow," said director Honda.

There was even a Godzilla film that dealt with the dangers of industrial pollution, which are very serious in Japan. Another monster called Hedora, from the Japanese word "hedoro" meaning industrial sludge, rose from polluted Japanese seas and engulfed everything in its path.



Staff illustration by Robert

Exactly how Westchester plans to produce 52 episodes from the material available to them is anyone's guess since all that remains for them to use are 25 episodes of YAMATO III, YAMATO--THE NEW VOYAGE, and YAMATO BE FOREVER. This is hardly enough material for 40 episodes (given the fact that the above feature films are cut up into 25 minute segments), much less 52 episodes. And given Westchester's penchant for editing violence, scenes of personal sacrifice, etc., this claim seems all the more doubtful. Given the content of the Yamato adventures in question, it would be difficult to imagine how any story and thematic integrity could be maintained in a Westchester release under any circumstances. In any event, only time will tell exactly just what kind of new Yamato adventures Westchester will manufacture. Supposedly at least 40 markets have already committed to pick up the new episodes (though Chicago does not appear to be one of them), and a merchandise agreement will be reached with Bandai Corporation of America.

JFFS MEMBER MAKES HEADLINES!--As the accompanying newspaper article attests to, JFFS member Arthur Compean gained a bit of recent nationwide publicity for his toy collection which includes some interesting Japanese items. Congratulations, Arthur!

ANDROS MELOS, the latest Ultraman-like hero from Tsuburaya Productions, does not seem to be faring to well on Japanese tv according to JFFS member Carl Young. Carl indicates that any sets used seem to be filmed outdoors, with the results being less than convincing. Andros Melos has fought Alien Baltaan a number of times, once even encountering Baltaan in android form. In that particular adventure, Andros Wolf was enslaved in a cave on a distant planet until Andros Melos arrived to vanquish the android Baltaan.

SPRING VACATION RELEASES--The month of March saw the beginning of Spring vacation from school in Japan, and with it came the usual wave of science fiction and fantasy films released to theaters. Most prominent among these films was the release of GUNDAM III on March 13th. Despite the enormous ongoing success story of the Gundam series which had already been adapted into 2 previous feature films, GUNDAM III was not very well received critically, and no further plans exist at this time to continue the Gundam saga.

Other March releases were Toei's animated film ALADDIN AND THE MAGIC LAMP, a SUN VULCAN feature film consisting of a couple tv episodes edited together, another new adventure for the ever-popular children's hero DORAEMON, a QUEEN MILLENIA film (QUEEN OF 1000 YEARS), BALDIOS (a futuristic animated adventure), and even a feture film starring DR. SLUMP.....

JAPANESE TV continues to be inundated with both live action and animated shows about giant combination robots who battle alien hordes and their armies of giant robots, or Gundam-style giant robots. The current season's lineup includes the animated series DOUGRAM, XABUNGLE, GOD MARZ, GO SHOGUN, DAYORGER 15, SPACE CYCLONE

Chicago Sun-Times, Saturday, March 6, 1982

His windup toys are a moving joy

Steve Brewer

EL PASO, Texas—Armed with a handful of batteries, Arthur Compean can make King Kong beat his chest, Godzilla breathe smoke and Frankenstein drop his drawers.

Compean, 26, collects toys that move, with the aid of batteries or a windup key.

"It started with me going through my closet and finding the toys I used to play with when I was young," Compean, who has been collecting for a little more than a year, said. "I started checking antique stores and finding a few more toys. Pretty soon, I had a whole collection."

The oldest toys in Compean's collection are a dented tin zeppelin called the Los Angeles made in the early 1920s and a tin Santa and sleigh dated 1923. Several of the toys are from the tin toys' heyday in the 1930s, including a Flash Gordon ray gun that still spews sparks when the trigger is pulled.

Associated Press

BRYGER, and the live-action shows SPACE SHERRIF GARVAN and GOGGLE V. All of these shows, most of which are Toei and Nippon Sunrise productions, are virtually interchangeable with their robots, characters, and villains. Apparently these kinds of shows must still be quite popular, but it is difficult to imagine how long this glut of giant robot shows can last. Hopefully, Japanese fantasy will not stagnate at this level for long. The time seems ripe for some creativity to show forth from Japan in the form of shows with new themes and situations.

THUNDERBIRDS, the popular marionette SF rescue team from Gerry Anderson, has been adapted for Japanese television as an animated series. Though the show's characters and vehicles are not exactly identical to the Gerry Anderson series, their inspiration seems unmistakable.

LATE NEWS ON YAMATO III--It seems that previous reports on the reason for the abrupt ending to YAMATO III were erroneous. YAMATO III was not cancelled due to low ratings according to some sources in Japan--these sources indicate that Yamato series always draw a large audience share. The average audience share for YAMATO III was a healthy 24%. Instead, it was producer Yoshinobu Nishizaki himself who cut the series short.



GUNDAM III

Nishizaki was said to have expressed a desire to get YAMATO III out of the way so that he could concentrate on other new projects of his, especially QUEEN OF 1000 YEARS. The producer has said that he has grown tired of YAMATO and wishes to finish the Yamato tales once and for all with the upcoming feature film that has been announced for 1983. Shabby treatment for a property which has made Nishizaki a fortune.

This concludes the JFFS Newsletter for this time. Apologies to all for the lateness of this issue which was caused by some problems with your editor's health mainly. Till next time.....sayonara!



ALADDIN AND THE MAGIC LAMP

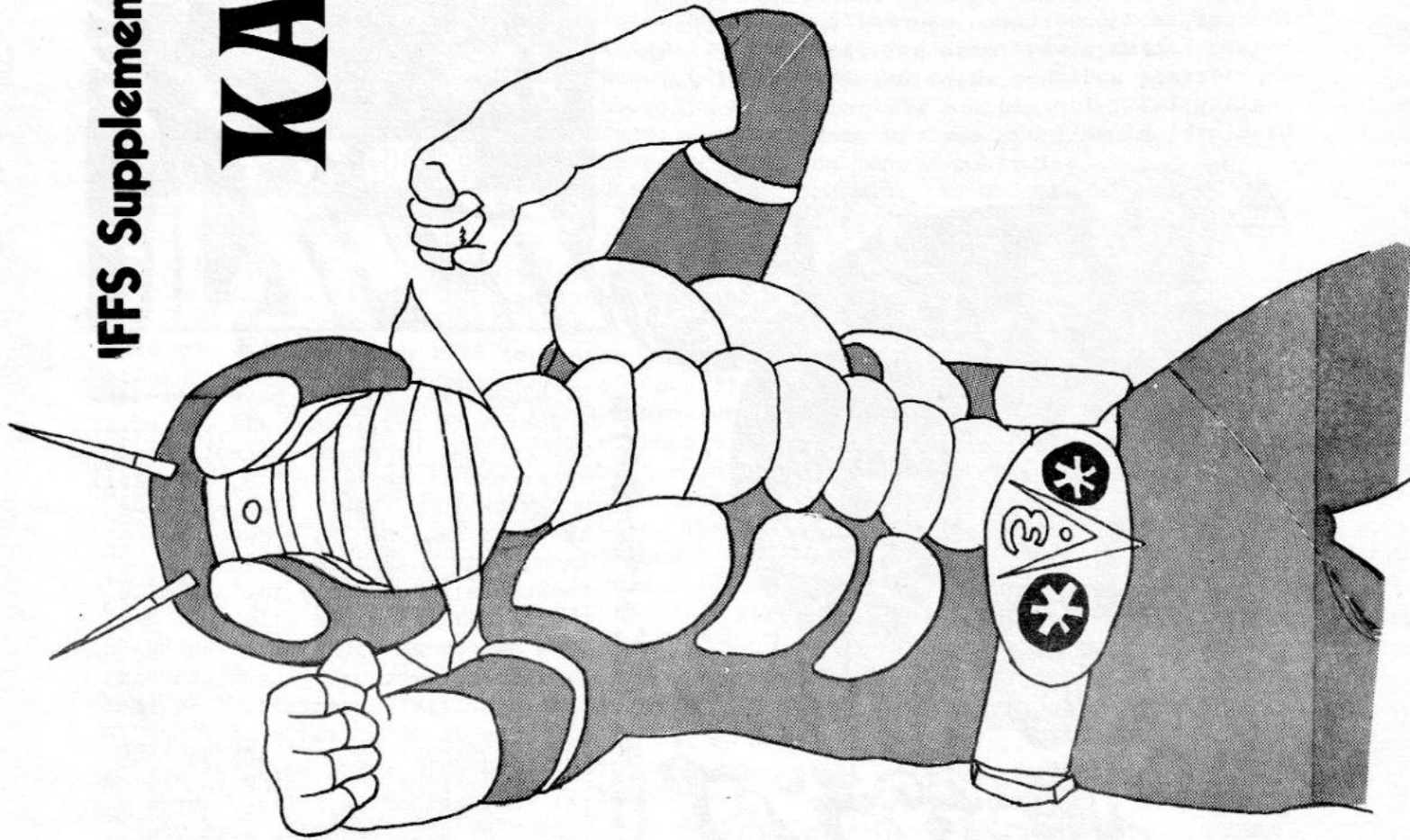
夢と冒険と楽しさいっぱい。*東映まん
特製下見

文部省選定
優秀映画賞
青少年映画賞
中央児童福祉協議会推薦
日本PTA全国協議会推薦

製作・東映動画
配給・東映
主役歌
コダイゴ
(コロムビアレコード)
テーマ曲/魔法のあかり
サブテーマ/アラジンのラブ

KAMEN RAIDA

V-3



ORIGIN OF KAMEN RIDER V-3: During a decisive battle between Kamen Riders 1 and 2 and the evil monster army of the villain Destron, the two brave heroes sacrifice their lives to thwart Destron's plans. But just before they perish, Riders 1 and 2 gave their strength and powers to a man named Shiro, thus transforming him into Kamen Rider V-3! This new hero has the characteristics of a bee.

11. POWERS OF KAMEN RIDER V-3:

1. DOUBLE TYPHOONS--these are the circular objects on the Rider's belt which draw in the wind and convert it to energy that allows V-3 to perform amazing deeds!
2. HOPPER DEVICE--a missile-like object which goes high into the air to locate Destron's monsters
3. MENTAL TELEPATHY--allows V-3 to communicate with all other Riders
4. CENTRIFUGAL KICK--V-3 can leap high in the air and kick around in a complete circle
5. SUPER MUSCLES--when Shiro turns into V-3, his muscles become hard as steel, making him invulnerable to even bullets and rockets
6. SCREW KICK--rotating kick $2\frac{1}{2}$ times more powerful than kicks of Rider-1 or Rider-2
7. SPRING MUSCLES--super strong shoulder muscles
8. DRILL ATTACK--spinning attack to draw in enemies
9. "O" SIGNAL--helmet signal to spot nearby enemies
10. RED LAMP POWER--when belt light comes on, V-3's powers are doubled and nothing can penetrate him
11. V-3 BALIYA--neck device that absorbs electricity