

BCSFA NEWSLETTER #13

December 1974

This club newszine is edited by Mike Bailey on behalf of the British Columbia Science Fiction Association which receives mail at P.O. Box 35577 'E', Vancouver B.C. V6M 4G9. Memberships to the Association cost \$3.00 a year, but because they expire in May, they are available for \$2.00 now. Subscriptions to the newsletter cost \$1.50 a year. Gary Walker read the last issue before it was run off. Advertising rates upon request. Copyright 1974 by Mike Bailey on behalf of the BCSFA. A Mad Dog Publication.

MEETINGS, DINNERS AND REPORTS

The November meeting was held at Chuck and Edna Davis' house on 14th Avenue and was attended by approximately 25 members. In addition to imbibing and socializing, we had a heavier than average program. I showed some slides of past conventions (hoping to delay the panel), then we had the panel on Pornography and Science Fiction (panelists Michael Walsh, Ed Hutchings, and me) which had moments. Earlier in the evening, Al Betz played a radio version of Asimov's "Nightfall" which most people thought was hilarious. Consequently, at the subsequent executive meeting, we decided to have a panel on Humour and/or Science Fiction to be held at the December meeting.

The December meeting will be hosted by Michael and Susan Walsh (2965 W. 11th Ave.) at (about) 8:00 PM on Saturday, December 14th. The panel (see above) will be composed of Ed Beauregard, Fran, "The Flasher", Skene, Rob Scott, and Brent MacLean and will be "moderated" by Mike Bailey. (As usual, BYOB and BYOF. Vcon III beverages will be available.)

Previous to the meeting there will be a dinner at Kingsland Restaurant (987 Granville St.) which features Chinese and western cuisine. Al Betz has made an attempt to contact all members who live in the Vancouver area to find out who wishes to come. Up to December 1, 22 persons have reserved a place. If you haven't been contacted and wish to come, phone Al at 733-7607.

On New Year's Eve, Fran Skene will be holding an open house (207 W. 21st Ave.) and anybody who receives this newsletter and who BYOBs and BYOFs, is welcome.

Mike Bailey

VCON IV

As of December 1, Vcon IV had 50+ members and Nick Grimshawe has prepared the first Progress Report (to be sent to convention members). Now that a guest of honour and a hotel have been secured, the committee is turning most of its energies to programming. Some surprises will be in store for convention attendees -- for example --well, join and find out.

Note that memberships to Vcon IV cost \$5.00 (\$7.00 after January 31, 1975) and * checks or money orders should be made payable to Vcon IV, in Canadian funds. The treasurer will probably accept American cheques for memberships, but not for the banquet. There is no cushion for the cost of the banquet: all of the \$9.75 goes to the hotel. (Checks payable in U.S. currency are discounted in two ways -- a handling charge and a currency conversion charge.)

I'm not going to list the menu of the buffet dinner here (it will appear in PR #2), but some of the items on it are: "Roast Prime Ribs of Beef (Chef in Attendance)", "Swedish Meat Balls Rice Pilaf", "West Coast Baby Shrimp au Patty Shell", "Glazed Virginia Ham", "Pacific Salmon", "Roast Butter Ball Turkey", and even "Coffee, Tea or Milk".

NEWS FROM OTHER SOURCES

Richard E. Geis, winner of a Hugo for his fanzine THE ALIEN CRITIC, has decided to publish a new personalzine, RICHARD E. GEIS. This is a clever move, because it will increase his chances to win a Hugo for best fan writer. However, in order to receive the

zine, the subscriber has to sign a declaration that he is at least 18 years old. Another Greenleaf in the making?

LOCUS reports that one of Brent MacLean's favourite authors (along with Stanton A. Coblenz), Otto Binder, died recently. Additionally John Kippax (The Neutral Stars, A Thunder of Stars) was killed in an auto accident on July 17. Further, William M. Sloane (The Edge of Running Water) died in New York City on September 28.

Bantam Books purchased paperback rights to Ursula Le Guin's The Tombs of Atuan and The Farthest Shore for \$62,500. Incidentally, Bantam's schedule includes Dahlgren (by Delany) in January and The Female Man (Russ) in February.

The most recent LOCUS carries a full page ad for The Mote In God's Eye by Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle. It contains the quote, "Possibly the finest science fiction novel I have ever read," Robert A. Heinlein. This 570 page novel is possibly the only competition Ursula Le Guin will have this year.

Mike Bailey

TREASURER'S REPORT

On June 17, 1974, our savings account contained \$542.01. On October 7, 1974, \$125.00 was withdrawn for deposit into our checking account, leaving a balance of \$417.01. No other transactions involving this account have taken place. ((At the time he wrote this, Al did not know the amount credited to the savings account in the form of interest.))

On June 17, 1974, our checking account stood at \$16.16. Since then, and to date, November 16, 1974, \$219.08 has been deposited, from the following sources:

Memberships	\$42.00
Sale of left-over con beverages	\$32.58
Birch Bay receipts	\$19.50
Deposit from savings account	\$125.00
	<u>\$219.08</u>

We have disbursed \$194.04 during the same period, as follows:

Birch Bay cabin rental	\$33.60
Newsletter printing and postage	\$34.94
Refund of membership and/or newsletter overpayments	\$2.75
Post Office Box rental	\$10.00
Vcon IV committee	\$100.00
Telephone charges	\$6.75
Monthly account charges	\$6.00
	<u>\$194.04</u>

At the time of preparation of this report, prior to the meeting of November 16, there are no bills outstanding against our accounts, no monies not deposited, and no accounts receivable, though more left-over con beverages remain available for sale. The accounts now stand as follows:

Savings account	\$417.01
Checking account	\$41.20

Alan R. Betz (signed), Treasurer

LETTERS

Explaining his non-appearance at November's meeting, Dan Say writes, "Dear Frances, I gather that you expected me to be on the panel on SF and Pornography that was held on Saturday. But that was not what I understood.

"When you phoned me you were uncertain that it would go off and I said that I

would go on it if you could confirm it and tell me who the other panelists were... I made a few notes with that telephone call but did nothing else about it, thinking that a call would be coming. I thought that you had taken my protests to heart that Michael Bailey and Michael Walsh had more in their collections than I and knew more.

"Perhaps if there is a next time a confirming and a reminding call or letters would be useful. I'm very sorry to have been trouble for you."

And from 207 W. 21st Ave. comes this missile, "I would like to respond to Mike Coney's letter (November newsletter) regarding my review of Watership Down."

"First of all, Mike quotes his co-worker as saying that anyone finding sexism in this book 'should petition for the closure of ((the)) Stanley Park Zoo.' Later on in his letter Mike Coney refers to it simply as 'a book about rabbits'. It seems that these people regard Watership Down as zoologically accurate and thus they have missed what I thought was obvious: that since this is a work of fiction (imagine the confusion of a library patron who is given Watership Down in response to a request for 'a book about rabbits') the story must come first, with the novelist incorporating or ignoring 'facts' as he thinks best in the course of getting the story told. That Richard Adams has brought science and good literature closer together than anyone else has so far still does not negate this. Do real rabbits have a language, legends, a god? Do they play tricks, make plans, mount rescue missions for mice and seagulls? Moreover, at least two facts about real rabbits are not given: 1) their sense of smell is an important factor in their survival, and 2) their own excreta is used extensively as markers.

"But these things are not relevant if we evaluate Watership Down as a story like any other, with attention given to style, theme, plot, and characterization. And could anyone seriously claim that a novelist's personal prejudices won't come through just because his main characters are rabbits? This is a story, mind you, that is beautifully written, and generally successful in its use of factual material as enrichment. But let's not fall into the common trap of saying, 'I really like this (him/her), therefore it (he/she) has no faults.'

"Re the points about Blackavar and Hyzenthlai on which Mike Coney and I disagree, here is a plea to the readers of this newsletter: please write and let us know what you think. (about Watership Down or anything else! The club P.O. Box will do nicely as an address.)

"Just one more item. Mike Coney closed his letter with the question, 'Why should anyone want to discover offensive sexism in... any book?' May I point out that this is rather curious, coming as it does from the person who so publically objected to the Nebula winner by Russ, "When It Changed", on precisely those grounds -- of offensive sexism!" A letter from Fran Skene. By the way, readers, Mike Coney is coming to our dinner at Kingsland.

BOOK REVIEW

To Die In Italbar by Roger Zelazny

I have been disappointed by almost everything I've read by Roger Zelazny in the last five years. I'm sorry to say that his recent novel To Die In Italbar (DAW pb) is no exception, despite LOCUS' claim that in it 'Zelazny has regained his stride as a first rate writer of sf adventure.'

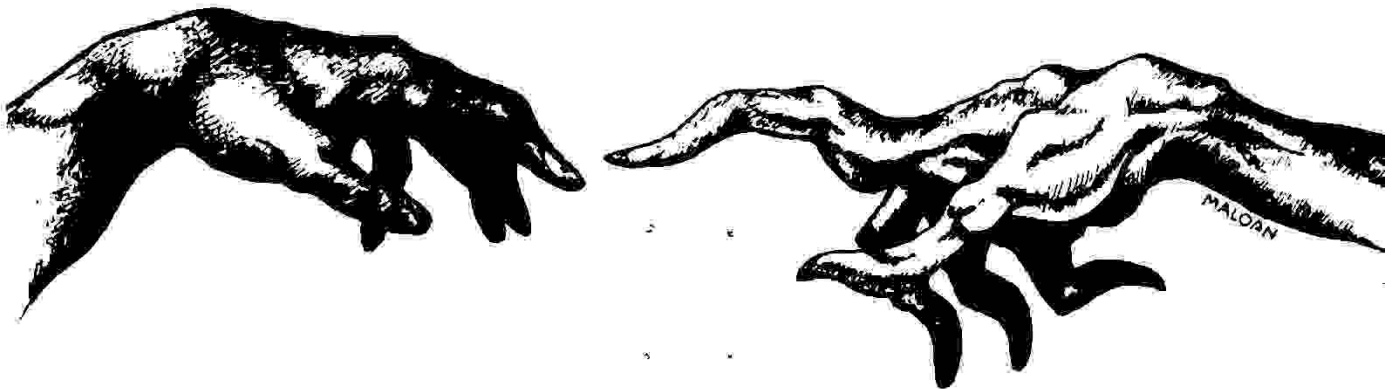
One of the things I have always liked about Zelazny is his use of characters and images that approach the semi-symbolic level of the figures in myth. Italbar has plenty of these and they are all striking: the two-faced goddess who can bring of life or death; her human servant 'H' who is immune to the mass of diseases he carries and so can cause or cure them in others; Dr. Pels, hanging between life and death in perpetual free fall; Morwin the telepathic artist who can pull another person's dream into reality, but never his own. Any one of these would provide material for a long story at least, and in some cases a novel. Unfortunately Italbar is only 174 pages long and these figures merely get in each other's way until they are subordinated to the main character, Malacar Miles, and to the plot which consists of Miles' search for H as a possible

weapon against Miles' enemies. For me this is a bad failure of imagination (or effort) on Zelazny's part.

Then there is the style. The rich, often ostentatious verbal brilliance of the early Zelazny has been replaced here by a language terse, efficient, and rather flat. It is a purely narrative style in the narrowest sense: it cannot dwell on and explore any scene or image beyond its immediate plot function, but puts the scene in front of the reader as sparsely as possible, then hurries on to what happens next. Zelazny reinforces this by introducing his characters in short scenes and then rapidly cutting between them, and for three quarters of the book he develops enough momentum to make up for the thinness of his treatment. But he pays the price in the final climax. Then it matters that he never justified importing a genuine goddess into his universe space-drives, hand-guns and interstellar empires, it matters that his male characters are practically indistinguishable and the girl, Jackara, never becomes more than a stereotype: it matters most of all that H's shifts of personality were unconvincing psychologically, and trivial if rationalised as the pure manipulations of the goddess. Instead of pathos, we are left with anticlimax and sentimentality.

To Die In Italbar is not a bad novel -- it moves too briskly with too many good ideas and momentary images for that -- but it is an average novel, overall a forgettable novel; and from the author of "A Rose For Ecclesiastes" and The Dream Master, that is a disappointment.

John Park



Science Fiction On Radio Pt. 5

by A. R. Betz

Conclusion of X Minus One Log	27 Mar 57 At The Post, H. L. Gold
26 Sep 56 The Map Makers, Fred Pohl	3 Apr 57 Martian Sam, Ernest Kinoy
3 Oct 56 Protective Mimicry, Algis Budrys	10 Apr 57 Something For Nothing, Robert Sheckley
10 Oct 56 Colony, Philip K. Dick	17 Apr 57 The Discovery Of Monriel Mathaway, William Tenn
17 Oct 56 Soldier Boy, Michael Shaara	24 Apr 57 Man's Best Friend, Evelyn Smith
24 Oct 56 Pictures Don't Lie, Katherine MacLean	20 Jun 57 Inside Story, Richard Wilson
31 Oct 56 Sam, This Is You, Murray Leinster	27 Jun 57 The Category Inventor, Arthur Sellings
7 Nov 56 Appointment In Tomorrow, Fritz Leiber	4 Jul 57 Skulking Permit, (rerun)
14 Nov 56 The Martian Death March, (rerun)	11 Jul 57 Early Model, Robert Sheckley
21 Nov 56 Chain Of Command, Stephen Arr	18 Jul 57 The Merchants Of Venus, A.H. Phelps, Jr.
28 Nov 56 The Castaways, (rerun)	25 Jul 57 The Haunted Corpse, Frederick Pohl
5 Dec 56 There Will Come Soft Rains, Ray Bradbury	1 Aug 57 End As A World, F. L. Wallace
12 Dec 56 Hostess, Isaac Asimov	8 Aug 57 The Scapegoat, Richard Maples
19 Dec 56 The Reluctant Heroes, Frank M. Robinson	15 Aug 57 At The Post, (rerun)
26 Dec 56 Honeymoon In Hell, Frederic Brown	22 Aug 57 Drop Dead, Clifford D. Simak
2 Jan 57 The Moon Is Green, Fritz Leiber	29 Aug 57 Volpla, Wyman Guinn
9 Jan 57 Saucer Of Loneliness, Theodore Sturgeon	5 Sep 57 Saucer Of Loneliness, (rerun)
16 Jan 57 The Girls From Earth, Frank M. Robinson	12 Sep 57 The Old Die Rich, (rerun)
23 Jan 57 Open Warfare, James E. Gunn	19 Sep 57 Tsyana, James E. Gunn
30 Jan 57 Caretaker, James H. Schmitz	26 Sep 57 The Native Problem, Robert Sheckley
6 Feb 57 Venus Is A Man's World, William Tenn	3 Oct 57 A Wind Is Rising, Robert Sheckley
13 Feb 57 The Trap, Robert Sheckley	10 Oct 57 Death Wish, Ned Lang
20 Feb 57 Field Study, Peter Phillip	17 Oct 57 Point Of Departure, Vaughn Shelton
27 Feb 57 Real Gone, Ernest Kinoy	24 Oct 57 The Light, Poul Anderson
6 Mar 57 The Seventh Victim, Robert Sheckley	31 Oct 57 Lulu, Clifford D. Simak
13 Mar 57 The Lights On Precipice Peak, Stephen Tall	21 Nov 57 The Coffin Cure, Alan E. Nourse
20 Mar 57 Protection, Robert Sheckley	28 Nov 57 Shocktroop, Daniel F. Galouye
	12 Dec 57 The Haunted Corpse, (rerun)
	19 Dec 57 Double Dare, Robert Silverberg
	26 Dec 57 Target One, Frederick Pohl
	2 Jan 58 Prime Difference, Alan E. Nourse
	9 Jan 58 Gray Flannel Armor, Robert Sheckley

The CBS Radio Workshop, "the theatre of the mind", was a series of only 84 programs, generally excellently done. Of this total, ten programs, including two having two half-hour parts each, were SF or nearly so. Following is a list of these programs.

27 Jan 56 Brave New World, Part 1, Aldous Huxley	11 May 56 The Enormous Radio
3 Feb 56 Brave New World, Part 2	14 Sep 56 A Pride Of Carrots
17 Feb 56 Season Of Disbelief/Hail and Farewell, Ray Bradbury	11 Nov 56 Report On The We'Uns
9 Mar 56 Report On ESP	17 Feb 57 The Space Merchants, Part 1
13 Apr 56 Jacob's Hand	24 Feb 57 The Space Merchants, Part 2
	16 Jun 57 Housing Problem
	21 Jul 57 The Green Hills Of Earth