

BCSFA NEWSLETTER #7

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This newsletter is written, typed, run off, collated, and mailed by Mike Bailey (#4-2416 W 3rd Ave Vancouver 9 B.C. V6K 1L8) (731-8451 or 666-6604) on behalf of the British Columbia Science Fiction Association (P.O. Box 35577 Station E Vancouver B.C. V6M 4G9), and contains official convention information.

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

The January meeting will be held at Chuck and Edna Davis' house (1704 E. 14th Ave. in the city) on Saturday, January 19th. As usual, the meeting is BYOB and it will run from 8:00 PM to midnight. This will be the last meeting before our convention in February. In fact our February meeting will be the convention -- so please join the convention, if you haven't already.

CONVENTION NEWS

For those who are receiving this newsletter the first time, Vcon III, the Third Vancouver Science Fiction Convention, takes place February 22-24 at the Georgia Hotel. The guest of honour is Frank Herbert. The convention membership cost is \$3.50 (up to February 1 -- \$5.00 thereafter) and the banquet costs \$6.50 (\$7.00 after February 1). (Note that the banquet is a convention event and although it's not obligatory to purchase a ticket, you'll be missing part of the convention if you don't.) If you're coming to the con and haven't paid already, I suggest that a good time to pay will be at the January meeting.

Three information sheets (general, hucksters, art show) have been prepared and are available upon request. These sheets give information such as banquet menus, programming highlights, and probable order of events.

For people who plan to travel to the convention and are worried about travelling because of fuel shortages (at previous conventions, we've had people from Alberta, Saskatchewan, Washington, Oregon, and California), I'd like to point out that this may be your last opportunity to travel cheaply, and if you come by automobile, your last long distance drive -- ever. (There's no fuel or energy shortage in Western Canada, and in fact, a few weeks ago, there was mention of a possible gas war.)

This newsletter is the only official disseminator of information about the convention. All other sources are either rumour or opinion. If you have any questions direct them towards the convention committee which is (alphabetically): Mike Bailey, Pat Burrows, David George, Ed Hutchings, Diana Keswick, Robert Leung, and Ron Norton.

ELRON AWARDS

I've received some nominations for Elrons (given to discourage persons of ineptitude from contributing more to SF) and to my surprise there has been some consistency in them. Apparently, Duncan Lunan is writing some first class garbage in IF. As the nominators put it, "I can understand how a male editor could forgive blatant sexism in Lunan's stories but PLAIN BAD WRITING??" and "Dull, leaden prose; I've read better on cereal packages -- at least they snap, crackle, and pop." Also, extremely busy anthologist, Roger Elwood, has been nominated more than once.

If you have any nominations, let me know quickly.

OTHER NEWS

A movie version of Stranger In A Strange Land is being planned. The star -- David Bowie. ZARDOZ, a science fiction film directed by John Boorman, starring Sean Connery has been completed.

Katherine Kurtz's next Deryni book is titled Camber Of Culdi and it should be out from Ballantine by next Christmas. This book is set about 200 years before the Deryni trilogy. The fifth book is untitled, but is about the young king's (Kelson) search for a bride.

Phil Dick is interviewed in the next issue of VERTEX. Also, two of his previous books, Man In The High Castle, and Now Wait For Last Year will be republished this year.

His new book, Flow My Tears, The Policeman Said is being published by Doubleday in February

Richard Purtill who was on the myth and religion panel at the Bellingham Convention has a book on the philosophy and fantasy of C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien coming out this month. It's entitled Lord of the Elves and Eldils.

CORRESPONDENCE AND ODD NOTES

From Chetwynd B.C., Michael Barton writes, "I'm writing this letter...((because of))... the writing on the last page of the BCSFA newspaper... 'Last issue without a response'. I got a slight idea of what you mean by that -- no more BCSFA newsletter. I still want to receive it, typing errors and all... here is some money to take care of postage". So it comes.

Phil Dick wrote from California, "Bob Ness wrote me to say that some 'heavy radio people' wanted to do a phone interview with me about the new comet, but they never phoned. Anyhow, what do I know about a comet? What do I know about anything, in fact? Ponder that, and write me IMMEDIATELY... or you will disappear oddly, with no warning. The comet will get you."

Phil enclosed the dust jacket of his new novel, Flow My Tears, The Policeman Said and wrote, "it's a good one, since there is a photo of me on the back cover. The blurb, however... (Don't quote that remark... just mention how good I look, like I'm seeing into the far future with Vast Understanding.)" Geo, Phil, to me it looks like you're staring into the future with Vast Puzzlement, or perhaps staring into the future and trying not to laugh.

When I read the blurb, I realized that I had been missing those one or two Philip K. Dick books each year. When you read a blurb which begins, "Jason Taverner wakes up one morning to find that no one remembers him. Some shock for a man familiar to thirty million television watchers.", what author other than Philip K. Dick, does it bring to mind?

F.M. Busby writes from Seattle, "... any panel that includes me had best not start until 1 PM at the earliest, unless you want to hold it in my room. Well, Vonda (McIntyre) and Bubbles (Broxon) aren't early-risers either -- especially at Cons... the last time I was on a panel was... at the 1963 Westercon... I only agreed to get up in front of the crowd if Bill Donaho and Alva Rogers (the Committee) provided free beer... I think that's a lovely precedent...

"...you certainly have our support for 'Westercon in '77'. I think the group needs a snappier name, but the only word I can think of, that alliterates with Vancouver, is Vanquished. Not so good, huh? I don't suppose, 'B.C. Beasts' grabs you, either..." Buz, instead of the Nameless Ones (or Twos), how about the Seattle Seagulls? What I really want to know is what does "F.M." stand for.

From down south in Los Angeles, Bjo Trimble writes, "Isn't it awfully C*O*L*D in Vancouver in Feb? A nice little convention sure sounds good, though; I'm pretty tired of cons that are so large you never get to talk to anyone at all, because you spend all your time going around trying to find them." It's January 6th as I type this, Bjo, and looking outside I see a clear, blue sky (and it's been that way for a couple of weeks) and the only snow visible is on the north shore mountains. C*O*L*D? Well, I'll admit to chilly.

"Despite my statistical questions and the enclosed Elron nomination, I am not a rabid man-hating feminist. I'm a gentle, reasonable, rabid stupid-hating humanist. In the War of the Sexes I try to run the Red Cross." So sayeth Bubbles Broxon.

BOOKS

Dare I do a real book review? The trouble is: where are the real books? When will Ursula Le Guin's long delayed The Dispossessed appear?

I'm tired of waiting for Dumarest to find Earth.

Loren MacGregor writes from Seattle that Var the Stick is good. Brent MacLean says it isn't.

John Brunner's More Things in Heaven is another re-working of an older novel. Currently, I'm struggling through Again, Dangerous Visions. The introductions and afterwords are good. Gene Wolfe's vignettes in the anthology show his writing power. I hope he finds something to wrap his mood-evoking talent around. Actually, ADV is a good anthology, but it's been hyped so much by the editor Harlan Ellison that I expected more. I think that if I walked into a store and "discovered" it, I would be much more enthusiastic over the contents.

Meanwhile, Barry Malzberg's Beyond Apollo is available in paperback. Malzberg is quickly becoming a good writer (another SF author who broke in by writing porno) and I anticipate liking this novel. His recent, In The Enclosure, had existentialist overtones and I grudgingly admit, it could provide enough substance for a real book review.

Ursula Le Guin's fantasy, The Farthest Shore, also provides a lot of substance for a reviewer. This novel won the National Book Award for Children's Literature (children of all ages, that is). It's the third (and final?) of her Earthsea series. The theme might be summarized as -- if you're afraid of living, you're afraid of dying ¹¹ or perhaps the converse. If you think this is just another fantasy with all the standard fantasy scenarios (cliches), you're wrong. Mrs. Le Guin adds her own distinctive toughes to scenes which another author would have turned into cliches.

Philip Jose Farmer shows he's getting out of his Tarzan kick in Traitor To The Living (from Ballantine Books). The plot involves a machine with which people are able to communicate with the dead. An interesting aspect of the novel is that he revives the character Harold Child, who was featured in two of his pornographic novels (Blown and The Image Of The Beast).

THE FLYING SORCERERS REVISITED

A couple of years ago a novel which was written by Larry Niven and a nobody named David Gerrold appeared -- The Flying Sorcerers. Most reviewers panned it and a few commented about the inclusion of SF authors as local gods. Nowhere did I ever read a review which mentioned the major of the novel. # I wonder -- was it missed?

I enjoyed this novel because it could be read successfully on two levels -- a rip-roaring SF adventure story, or as an immense pun on SF authors. For example, there is "Musk-watz, the god of the winds", i.e., Sam Moskowitz; Elcin, the "Great and Tiny God of Lightning and Loud Noises", Harlan Ellison; Rotn'bair, the god of sheep -- Gene Roddenberry of STAR TREK fame; Nils'n, "sketch a horned box", his sign, "a diagonal slash with an empty circle on either side of it" = Nielson TV ratings and ties in with STAR TREK and David Gerrold -- does Gerrold really think Trekkies are sheep? -- ; Filfo-mar, the river god = Philip Jose Farmer and the Riverworld Series; the suns are Oucells and Virn = H.G. Wells and Jules Verne; Blok, the god of violence = Robert Bloch of Psycho.fame; Tis'turzhin, the god of love = Ted Sturgeon; Fineline, the god of engineers = Robert Heinlein; Hitch, the god of birds = Alfred Hitchcock; Ran'll the quaff-maker = Randall Garrett, known for his quaffs; Tukker, the god of names = Wilson Tucker; Caff, the ~~god~~ of dragons = Anne McCaffrey?; Furman, the god of Fasl = Ed Ferman, editor of F & SF; and the list could go on and on and...

The native women are given names in the book -- names such as Kate, Judy, Anne, Ursula, Karen, Andre, Marian, Leigh, etc.

But the central pun in the novel is not so obvious. A clue lies in the original title, The Misspelled Magishun. Consider the plot: a scientist lands on a primitive world and through mishap he is stranded. He undertakes teaching science to the natives. What SF author teaches science? He is described as a man who can't see without his glasses. His translating machine gives his "three syllable name" as "As a color, shade of purple gray", and throughout the novel he is called Purple or Purple Gray. Let's see -- mauve is purple gray -- as a colour, mauve -- as-a-mauve -- Isaac Asimov. With this information in mind, then an exchange such as: "It was over the mountain called Critic's Tooth when Elcin's hammer struck it."

"Elcin?"

"The small, but mighty, god of thunder."

"Ah, yes. I know him. You say he struck my egg?"

become filled with new meaning. Isaac Asimov lay an egg? Never, you say?

So it goes. Last issue 150+ copies; this issue ?