

BCSFA NEWSLETTER #20

January 1975

The BCSFA Newsletter is edited by the Association's Information Officer, Mike Bailey. Membership fees for the B.C. Science Fiction cost \$1.00 (good until May 1975 -- else \$3.00 yearly) and subscriptions to the newsletter alone cost \$1.50 a year. Contributions, enquiries and fees may be sent to BCSFA, P.O. Box 35577 'E', Vancouver B.C. V6M 4G9. Copyright 1975 by Mike Bailey on behalf of the BCSFA. All back issues are available. A Mad Dog Publication.

MEETING REPORT AND VARIOUS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The December meeting of the BCSFA which was held at Michael and Susam Walsh's brought out more persons than have appeared at recent gatherings. About 30 people attended the meeting itself and several others came to the dinner, but did not come to the Walsh's later.

Should I describe the dinner? Well, the food was good, but the service was atrocious, attritional, and lacking -- if not worse. If we (at the table at which I sat) had received all the dishes we ordered (waited around in other words), I'm sure we wouldn't have escaped until 10:30, four hours after we took our seats.

When reading the following sketchy account of the meeting itself, you'll have to consider that your reporter absorbed several whiskey sours while awaiting his food.

Let's see -- I remember Mike Walsh commenting on my driving seconds after I pulled away from the curb. I remember parking near the the Walsh's "near" the curb, entering the house and immediately uncapping a beer. From that time on, the shadow of alcohol clouded my mind except briefly during the panel. Brent MacLean, Fran Skene, and Ed Beauregard were on it and appeared, Rob Scott was and didn't (so he didn't receive his two free tickets to Mazatlan as per the club draw).

The January meeting of the BCSFA will be held at Fran Skene's house (207 W. 21st Ave.) on Saturday, January 18 at 8:00 PM. As usual the format is BYOB and BYOF. Recent meetings have been heavily programmed and consequently this time we are not having any special events. It will be a social gathering, a time to get to know new members. (so turn out, new members) There are yet some left-over convention beverages.

Because of the danger of a postal strike, we are announcing at this time that there will be no February meeting of the BCSFA. However, there will be an informal gathering of members at Vcon IV in the BCSFA suite (or whatever it may be denoted as) on the 40th floor of the Sheraton-Landmark. (By the way, convention advertising is about to take an upswing, so if you haven't joined yet, don't count on being able to join at the door. Memberships may be purchased at the January meeting for \$5.00 and on February 1, the cost rises to \$7.00. Progress Report # 2 is available now, and among other things, it lists the banquet menu.)

The BCSFA is renting a table at Vcon IV in order to solicit new memberships. Anyone who is not a convention member and wishes a free ticket (1 membership goes with each table) in return for soliciting contact someone on the executive before February 1 (if possible). Additionally the convention committee needs volunteers to help with numerous small chores during the convention.

Even though the service at the December dinner was atrocious, the current executive as its last act, will hold another one in May (at a different location, of course).

According to my plan, there will be a coupon on the bottom of this page. It will be a ballot which members may fill out and return to the BCSFA by mail or in person at a future meeting. What you members are voting for is the new name of the association. As far as the executive knows, all of the names listed on the ballot are acceptable to the provincial government, and if you're unhappy with the choices, write in your own choice. If you don't vote, it will be assumed that you don't care one way or the other.

FUTURE CONVENTIONS OF INTEREST

As all members know, the BCSFA is bidding for an SF convention, Westercon, to be held in Vancouver in 1977. Westercon is the largest western North American SF convention and the oldest regional. Perhaps Star Trek conventions held on the west coast are larger, but Star Trek hasn't been around for thirty years and isn't likely to.

The site selection for Westercon takes place at the Westercon held two years earlier. Thus, the voting for the 1977 one will take place in Oakland this July. In order to help the BCSFA secure the selection, the executive urges all members to attend this year's Westercon (so that they may vote for the site). If you're planning your vacation now, consider Westercon 28.

This convention will be held July 3-6, 1975 at the Hotel Leamington in Oakland California. The guest of honour will be David Gerrold, the fan guests of honour will be Charlie and Dena Brown, and the special guests of honour will be Ian and Betty Ballantine. Membership for this convention costs \$5.00 until May 31, \$6.00 afterwards. Cheques should be made payable to Westercon 28 and be mailed to Westercon 28, P.O. Box 24560, Los Angeles Ca. 90024.

The World Science Fiction Convention (Worldcon) is operated in a manner similar to Westercon. Sites for future Worldcons are selected two years in advance and hence bidding may begin three or more years before the convention. At the December meeting of the executive of the BCSFA, it was decided to bid for the 1978 Worldcon to be held in Vancouver. Hotel reservations have been made and the Convention Bureau notified.

If by chance, you're in a position to plan your 1976 vacation, consider travelling to Kansas City for the 34th World Science Fiction Convention. Midamericon will be held September 1-6, 1976 in Kansas City, Missouri. The guest of honour is Robert A. Heinlein, the fan guest of honour is artist George Barr and the toastmaster is Bob Tucker, (AKA Wilson Tucker). The cost of an attending membership is \$6.00 through December 31, 1975.

Con'd overleaf

BALLOT FOR NEW NAME OF THE BCSFA

My choice for the new name of the association is:

West Coast Science Fiction Association _____
Western Canada Science Fiction Association _____
Western Science Fiction Association of British Columbia _____

Now this is important: fearing an attendance of 6,000 or more, the con committee has decided to limit attendance. Consequently, by the time you read this, the committee may not be accepting any new memberships. But you can try.

Mike Bailey

BOOK REVIEWS by Fran Skene

Lichtenberg, Jacqueline House of Zeor Doubleday 1974 \$5.95

Willer, Jim Paramind McClelland 1973 \$7.95

The degree of originality of a novel can often be expressed by a number: the number of volumes purchased by public libraries. For example: at V.P.L. most new titles are chosen by Central, then branch heads piggyback on the orders. If only the one or two volumes ordered by Central are bought you know that the book, at least as indicated in the reviews, is fairly unusual. At the other end of the scale: if 10-15 copies are bought for the system in this initial order, you know that the story includes popular myths, world views, plots, and themes. It is The Glass Grotto, Thursday the Rabbi Woke Up (and quit boring people), The Canaries of War, Teeth, or Time Enough For Romance. Other factors, including quality of writing, are of course considered but the estimated popularity is given the greatest weight. On this scale Lichtenberg's House of Zeor (Central and Pool) and Willer's Paramind (Central only) are perhaps rather way out. And they are indeed, although in differing ways.

Recently, an acquaintance, not finding me at a reference desk, came looking for me in a library workroom to ask me to choose some science fiction for her. Why? Her answer went something like this: "The last book you gave me was so enjoyable I figure that any SF you recommend will be good!". The story she was so enthusiastic about was House of Zeor. (Incidentally, I then gave her The Fifth Head of Cerberus and The Inverted World.) This is a first novel by the author of three books about the Star Trek fandom movement, a Berkeley graduate (Chemistry), and a reader of science fiction since childhood. The story is "way out" because of its basic premise: mutations following a world war resulted in two new kinds of humans which supplanted the old. These are the Gens, whose bodies produce a kind of energy called selyn, and the Simes, who need the selyn but have not been able to get it from Gens without killing them. At the time of the story a new kind of Sime, the channel, who can take selyn safely from Gens and then transfer it to other Simes, has evolved. These still rare people are obviously the one hope for survival of the human race, but most Simes and Gens, living in different areas except for the pens of domesticated Gens kept like cattle by the Simes, don't yet see it that way.

The above is only a beginning in describing this unusual future world. Yet I predict this: within minutes after you start reading, the world of Simes and Gens will seem quite normal. The main protagonists are Hugh Valleroy, a Gen policeman who is sent into Sime territory, undercover, to find and possibly rescue a politically important person who had been kidnapped by Sime raiders; and Klyd Farris, a channel and head of the House of Zeor, who is the Gen police force's contact on the Sime side of the border. Hugh, as you might expect, finds it hard at first not to bolt like a frightened rabbit, but in the course of his and Klyd's perilous journeys together--well, better read the book. The climactic scene is reminiscent of Le Guin's Left Hand of Darkness. This book is apparently only the first in the projected

"Sime Series". I'm certainly looking forward to the next one.

As solidly entertaining a science fiction novel as House of Zeor could only have been written by a long time fan. I doubt that Jim Willer, author of Paramind, is in that category, or for that matter that he is a science fiction writer, really. I have the strong impression that he simply had some things to say and it just happened that the result was in the form of a science fiction novel. Incidentally, Willer lives in West Vancouver and earns his living as a sculptor (apparently well known). He was interviewed for CoOp Radio (at last report starting up Jan. 15) in connection with his book and presumably the tapes will be broadcast sometime soon.

Paramind takes place in the early part of the 21st century, a time when automation has developed considerably, partly to avert any further famine or pollution. The story is about the development and birth of the first "conscious" computer. It starts out as the story from childhood of Paramind's creator, Thomas Kasgar, then takes him through his career as a computer scientist. But Paramind is no Harlie; rather, it regards itself as superior to and in competition with man and soon takes over the government. It sees an obvious analogy between man's evolution from ape and its evolution from man. Kasgar, of course, comes to see Paramind as mainly a danger to man and finally he attempts to destroy his creation only to be outsmarted and destroyed himself instead. The theme of the novel is that conscious machine is the logical end product of continuing improvements in automation and of society's increasing dependence on same.

All this could have been turned into a dramatic or at least an entertaining novel. Unfortunately, Willer's obvious aim is to predict the future as realistically as he can--no galactic suburbia for him! The result is a society that is alien to us in some ways but anyone who thinks back a mere decade will realize how fast things are changing; the world of 2001 and after, even though most of us will still be around, will indeed be strange. The problem with Paramind, and the reason that it is regarded as way out, is that the author is too accurate, allowing as few aspects of present day culture as possible to creep in. He then describes many things that would normally be assumed and the story bogs down in the welter of information. In addition, the characters are strictly cardboard because they are generally not allowed 20th century psyches yet are not given convincing replacements. I finally managed to finish the book but only after keeping it out two weeks overdue.

Why did I bother? Because when taken a few pages at a time Paramind is absolutely delightful. Like the following:

"We lived where the city of Interlake melts in the bush less than a mile from the Plant. The Reclamation Plant was beautiful. A river of broken machines, utensils, furniture, electronic gadgetry, garbage, an indescribable Xanadu surfacing to the north of us, a trickle from every apartment, creeks of junk pouring in from larger complexes, underground tributaries of discarded apparatus flowing into the sacred river. With the other kids, or alone, I used to burrow under the fences, swarm over the treasure like a rat drunk on evocation." (pp 16-17)

"A sound of splashing water and voices--someone had switched on the tittersphere downstairs. President Gryphon appeared in the middle of the domed room. It was a re-broadcast of the speech he had made earlier that day in Florida. His expression alone would have told the viewer he had come to talk about a matter of grave urgency. It looked very much as if the titter cameras had been

rushed to his Tampa retreat...he stood there, dripping, still wearing his wet-suit and holding a spear...one of the hotel staff, a girl, 'green' from the country, ran out of the room to look for a bucket and mop." (pp. 164-165)

Willer won the Imperial Tobacco Centennial Award for Canadian writing with the manuscript of Paramind and, I think, rightly so. His ideas are original, his insights fresh, and his vision clear. I am reminded of Marshall McLuhan's statement that it is the artists who are able to look around and see the world as it really is. If Jim Willer had teamed up with, say, Robert Silverberg, who has similar interests and is a pro, we might have seen something really great.

Fran Skene

NEW SCIENCE FICTION TITLES AT V.P.L.

- Asimov, Isaac The Best of Isaac Asimov Doubleday 1974 \$7.95
Twelve stories, selected by the author; from "Marooned off Vesta" (1939) to "Mirror Image" (1972)
- Beynon, John (John Wyndham) Secret People
(London) Joseph 1974(c. 1935) \$5.90 (Also Avail. in pb)
Some catastrophe but mainly a very unusual plot.
- Clarke, Arthur C. The Best of Arthur C. Clarke ed. Angus Wells
Sidgwick 1973 \$5.80
Eighteen stories followed by a bibliography of his books.
- Disch, Thomas M. Getting Into Death Hart-Davis 1973 \$5.80
A collection of short stories, some of which are SF, first published in the '60's. For Disch fans only.
- Disch, Thomas M. 334 MacGibbon 1972 \$5.22
Five short stories followed by the celebrated "334", described as "this generation's Brave New World".
- Gunn, James Some Dreams Are Nightmares Scribner's 1974 \$6.95
One short story, one novelette, and two short novels, first published in the '50's, by the author of The Listeners.
- Haining, Peter, ed. The Monster Makers Taplinger 1974 \$7.95
Stories by Shelley, Poe, Bierce, Well, Lovecraft, Bloch, Sturgeon, Bradbury, Asimov, Emshwiller, and other talented writers.
- Leiber, Fritz Night Monsters Collancz 1974 \$5.22
Four short stories and three novellas by the master; first published 1949-64.
- Heinlein, Robert The Best of Robert Heinlein ed. Angus Wells
Sidgwick 1973 \$5.80
Eight of the author's most entertaining stories (1939-59) followed by a bibliography of his books.
- Knight, Damon The Golden Road; Great Stories of Fantasy and the Supernatural Simon 1973 \$8.95
A superior anthology, with stories from the '30's to the '60's, by Lafferty, Wilhelm, Wells, Kornbluth, Bester, Le Guin, Heinlein, Henderson, Lovecraft, Niven, and others.

Fran Skene

In case you haven't guessed, the typewriter I normally use is out of order and you're reading the efforts of my old manual.

SCIENCE FICTION ON RADIO, PART 6

In this article I wish to list those radio science fiction programs which are isolated examples of a series, where little else is known about the series, or where only a few shows have survived from a long series.

The Mysterious Traveler was on radio from 1943 until 1952. Very few programs from this series have surfaced so far, but a large proportion of those which have are SF.

29 Dec 46 "If You Believe"
27 Jul 47 "The Man the Insects Hated"
14 Oct 49 "The Last Survivor"
1 May 51 "The Planet Zevius"
28 Aug 51 "Fire in the Sky"
9 Oct 51 "The Man Who Knew Everything"
13 Nov 51 "The Most Famous Man in the World"
19 Feb 52 "Strange New World"
1952 "Murder in 2952"

Escape ran on the CBS network from 1947 until 1954.

7 Feb 50 "The Outer Limit"
2 Jun 50 "Mars Is Heaven"
5 and 22 Oct 50 "Earth Abides"
27 Oct 50 "The Time Machine"
31 Dec 50 "The Man Who Could Work Miracles"
25 Jul 51 "The Earthman"
29 Jun 53 "The Invader"
6 Jul 53 "North of Polaris"

Favourite Story, late 40's, ran only one SF story that I can find. no date "The Time Machine"

Murder At Midnight also ran one: no date "The Heavy Death"

Stand By...For Crime, again no dates available, had one SF program "Electric Current Interceptor Ray"

In 1965 an attempt was made to revive an interest in dramatic radio with a series called Theater Five. A portion of the programs were devoted to SF. No individual dates are available, with one exception.

22 Apr 65 "Tomorrow 6-1212"
"The Last Land Rush"
"Those Wonderful Stamps From El Dorado"
"First Encounter"
"Diddle, Diddle, Dumpling, My Son X One"
"Living Credit"
"Toby's Wonderful Egg"
"Incident At Apogee"
"Look Who's Talking"

"Terror From Beyond"
"The Wandering Spaceman"

Two Thousand Plus began in 1950, but only ran for a few years. It was devoted entirely to SF.

29 Mar 50 "The Men From Mars"
27 May 50 "When the Worlds Met"
28 Sep 50 "The Green Thing"
8 Nov 50 "Worlds Apart"
15 Aug 51 "The Insect"
12 Sep 51 "The Brooklyn Brain"
no date "The Robot Killer"
no date "The Rocket And the Skull"

Only one program is known from a series called Beyond Tomorrow.

11 Apr 50 "Incident At Switchpath"

Exploring Tomorrow was produced, narrated, and occasionally written by John W. Campbell. The program appears to have been on the air in 1957-58, but only one date has been given. Titles were not given.

1 Jan 58 "First Contact"
Experimental Planet, or Planet of Geniuses
Venus: Diamond Mountain
Telepath
Country Boy
Flashback
First Man On The Moon

Desert Object (a beachball-like creature is found near its spaceship in the desert. It can only say "Nago" and look imploringly at its captors.)
Time Traveler
The Gift
Overpopulation
The Secret
The Liar
Made In Avak
The Martian Queen
Time Heals
Kimit
The Convict
The Stowaway
Dreams
The Trouble With Robots
The Last Doctor

to be continued

A. R. Betz