

BCSFA NEWSLETTER #9

March 1974

This newsletter is written, typed, run off, collated and mailed by Mike Bailey (#4-2416 W. 3rd ave. Vancouver 8 B.C. V6K 1L8, 731-8451 or 666-6604) on behalf of the B.C. Science Fiction Association. It is mailed to members (\$3.00 p.a.) or subscribers (\$1.50 p.a.), and others. Diana Keswick helped with the last issue.

POST CONVENTION REPORT

What happened? I only attended one event during the entire con and so I really don't know what happened or how events were received. I don't even know who won the Elrons, or how many people attended. Personally I didn't really enjoy the convention, however I guess that's part of the price I had to pay to be one of the executive.

More on this topic later in the newsletter.

OTHER NEWS

The Hugo nomination ballot for 1973 is now available. In order to nominate, you must be a member of either Torcon 2 (last year's Worldcon) or Discon II (this year's Worldcon). A supporting membership to Discon costs \$3.00 (DISCON II, Box 31127, Washington DC 20031). The guest of honour is Roger Zelazny. Only members of Discon II may vote on the final ballot. I'll send a copy of the nomination form to anyone who is interested.

The 27th annual Westercon (West Coast Science Fantasy Conference) will be held July 3 - July 7 1974 at the Francisco Torres, Goleta California (Santa Barbara). (We are bidding to hold the 1977 Westercon in Vancouver at the Hyatt Regency.) I intend to go to this convention and hopefully so do a number of other BCSFA people. Westercon is a large convention having an attendance of 1000-2000 persons and is enjoyable to people interested in any facet of SF. So why not plan your vacation now to include a trip to Santa Barbara and let me know. If enough people are interested, we can work out some group transportation arrangements. I hope to drive, but...

Westercon is cheap. Membership and room and board costs just \$70 for single occupancy. For further information contact me or inquire to Westercon XXVII, P.O. Box 1, Santa Monica Ca. 90406. By the way, the guest of "honor" is Philip K. Dick, the guest of "honour" at Vcon II.

A Science Fiction Writing Workshop under the tutelage of Judith Merrill will be held at the University of Toronto July 3-12.

DAW Books will be publishing some Cthulhu Mythos (H.P. Lovecraft-type) novels. Brian Lumley's is already available -- The Burrowers Beneath -- and Phil Farmer is writing a Doc Caliban versus the Cthulhu Mythos novel.

- Ejler Jakobsson has resigned as editor to GALAXY.

CORRESPONDENCE

"Enjoy the newsletter, but wish you'd credit items from Locus. We just gave up on mimeo & are going to pro printing & need all the free advertising we can get.

"I'm one of those opposed to the Elron awards mainly because they seem to breed nothing but bad feeling...the awards mostly go to a disappointing book-not really a bad book." Charlie Brown (Locus Publications, Box 3938 San Francisco Ca 94119 -- 18 issues for \$6.00 by first class mail). LOCUS is a newszine published more frequently than our newsletter.

Phil Farmer wrote to comment on the review of Image of the Beast which appeared in the last newsletter. "Amazing and fantastic though it is ((astounding?)), I had never read a pornographic book before I wrote Image...So when I wrote Image and Feast I didn't know that you were supposed to inspire erections when you wrote 'pornography.' I wrote Image as a sort of modern-day Gothic with smog taking the place of the conventional fog...What is pornography, anyway?"

I predict Jim Maloon will not appear in LAST Dangerous Visions, because...

"After eighteen years as a professional writer, after paying dues that total 800 stories, 26 books, two dozen teleplays, half a dozen series pilots, eight or nine movies, after being praised by critics ranging from Dorothy Parker to James Blish...the work is finally in. I no longer have to concern myself with my ultimate worth as a writer. Yay, the word is in:

"From Port Coquitlam, Jim Maloan writes, "...I also consider Harlan Ellison the most overrated Fantasy Writer in existence."

"What a relief to get, at long last, an authoritative and well-reasoned assessment of my talent from a learned student of modern literature. This unsolicited but nonetheless incisive statement at long last dispels the cloud of ambivalence that has shrouded my self-evaluation. Clearly, I'm a bum, whose virtually nonexistent talent has been pumped full of air by know-nothings like the over two hundred academic anthologists who have selected my stories for college-level textbooks on contemporary literature.

"In point of fact, so invaluable do I consider Mr. Maloan's opinion, that I am forwarding a Xerox of your Newsletter to Messrs. Whaley & Cook, whose text/anthology, MAN: UNWEPT: VISIONS FROM THE INNER EYE, came in the same mail as your circular. It is the sixtieth reprinting for college students of my story "I Have No Mouth and I Must Scream", and they've foolishly sandwiched it between selections by William Butler Yeats and Jonathan Swift, two more vastly overrated fantasy writers. When they perceive the clarity of Mr. Maloan's literary criticism, I'm sure they'll have McGraw-Hill recall all those books, to snip out my dumb story.

"So, these few words of thanks are sent with utmost gratitude for cleaning up my muddy thinking. Why, would believe...for simply years I've thought I was a good writer? And mass hysteria has done the rest.

"But now things are all straight, and I've decided to make life richer for Mr. Maloan: I'm returning to truck driving as an occupation, just as soon as I can sell my type-writer.

"Gee whiz, fellahs, I wouldn't know what to do if it weren't for the constant support and serious literary analyses in fanzines. Makes a guy humble to think of the fecundity and range of insight of the fan audience.

"Is it any wonder Bob Heinlein put up an electrified fence around his home?

"Incidentally, I'm sure when Joanna Russ is apprised of Mr. Maloan's terrific opinion of her work, she'll forget all this selly liberated woman nonsense and pack up her typer, and go out and find some nice guy who'll marry her, and give her a buncha kids, and buy her a Fanny Farmer Cookbook so she can discover her True mission in life: making a good home for some swell guy. Golly, it's good to have straight thinkers like Maloan around to put us wrongos on the right path.

"With undying thanks,"

A letter in full from Harlan Ellison. Some people have a way with words, don't they?

BOOK REVIEWS

Beyond Apollo by Barry N. Malzberg Pocket Books 95¢

"This will never work" -- Man into Machine

Malzberg won the John Campbell Award for this novel, although I doubt that Campbell would ever have published it. It is an anti-technology novel that is attacking our technological culture which is engulfing us, making psychopathy a survival characteristic.

The story is about a two-man mission to Venus. Apparently only one man returns, (I say "apparently" because nothing is really spelled out in the book.), and he is insane. His training has almost made him into a machine, leaving him neither human nor a machine. Speaking to his wife (the novel is written in first person),

"I begin to fuck her like a proper astronaut, hands clamped into fists at her side, the whole body geared to the piston of the prick which is so neatly inserted into its aperture of proper tension. Fluids rise and billow within me; hatches fall on schedule. I come quietly, efficiently, touching no part of her, and remain above, staring at the ceiling."

Even the Captain (always capitalized), who fails to return with the space craft, is portrayed as being insane. He forces the narrator of the story, Evans, to guess the true purpose of their mission. Evans goes through all the standard SF cliches for such missions and the Captain rejects them all. Why send men to Venus? Is Malzberg trying to say that there is no reason? No, something worse.

"...events control our lives, although we have no understanding of them nor do they have any motivation. Everything is blind chance, happenstance, occurrence; in an infinite universe anything can happen. After the fact we find reasons. We're going to Venus because the dice came up." Einstein, "God doesn't play dice with the universe", would turn in his grave.

And maybe the dice will turn up a Hugo for Malzberg someday. (If I had read it in time I would have nominated it for a Torcon Hugo.)

Hello Summer, Goodbye by Michael G. Coney (a manuscript)

Coney is a modern SF writer. Instead of "getting there", his colonists are there and no one cares how. What Coney does in most of his novels is to introduce men into an alien environment and then observe the results. Those who adapt to the environment survive and those who don't, die. If a technological terraforming is attempted, it usually fails. Except for the colonists, so it is in Hello Summer, Goodbye. There are no humans in the book, although the aliens could be described as at least as humanoid.

The planet on which the story takes place has an orbit which causes it to revolve around two primaries, one being a large planet. In every 2,000 years ~~it~~ it spends 40 revolving around the planet and during this time the inhabited world undergoes a minor ice age. The technology of the aliens is destroyed and mortality is close to 100%.

The plot of this novel involves the inhabitants, having an 1850 technology, nearing their ice age and not realizing it. However, some politicians discover their doom and prepare an underground installation with supplies to last 40 years. Although the ending is left deliberately murky, the politicians fail and the people who are going to survive do so by a natural method -- a type of hibernation.

However the real story is the interaction of the characters under their unique environmental conditions. The book's major character is a boy who is growing up (presented in a Jack Vance manner). He is the son of a politician and he falls in love with the daughter of a tavern keeper. Through these two characters he is able to introduce a number of three-dimensional diverse persons to mirror the society. This is Coney's strength -- three-dimensional characters interacting within an unusual environment. He is a story teller and not a philosopher.

I enjoyed this novel and I suspect most people would. However, Coney's agent doesn't approve of it because the plot has too much character interaction and really doesn't seem to require the science fiction element. Perhaps Coney is unwittingly turning from a filthy pro to a filthy rich mainstream pro.

And now the bad news or

FANDOM REVEALED OR ... WHEN YOU'RE UP TO YOUR ASS IN CROCODILES...

At a meeting of the convention committee Mike Bailey was removed from his office as treasurer of the convention. Although all of the committee members who were present realized that the conflict was in essence a ~~clash~~ clash of personalities between Mike Bailey and David George/Pat Burrows, the vote was unanimous, and the conflict will now be brought into the open. Some facts to consider are:

Mike Bailey remains as Co-chairman of the convention and treasurer of the BCSFA;

Both sides have consulted lawyers and the question of who pays for legal expenses should arise;

The BCSFA is not registered in Victoria under the Societies Act and no constitution for it exists;

The only paid up members of the BCSFA are those who have paid their money to the treasurer, Mike Bailey;

Mike Bailey was removed as a signing authority of the Association account by the convention committee, although it was admitted that the convention committee was not the BCSFA executive and hence had no authority to do so.

The above are the "clean" facts. I'm not going to list any "dirty" facts or charges here. Apparently, a general meeting of the BCSFA will be called by the convention committee (I hope I am invited) in order to present both cases to the membership and try to let them decide whether or not to fire me as treasurer of the BCSFA or (at least) severely censure David George and Pat Burrows. Consequently I advise everyone to turn up at this meeting (even if you haven't paid) because it is very important for the future of the BCSFA, the production of this newsletter, and for me personally.

Because of this conflict, no financial statement can be prepared at this time -- I don't have the necessary records.

Note that this is the official BCSFA NEWSLETTER and the other you will receive is a convention committee newsletter. If anyone doesn't receive my newsletter, it's not by design, it's because I have been unable to secure all the necessary addresses.

I FORGOT TO DRAIN THE SWAMP

Last issue 300 copies. this issue 275 copies



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