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THE BRITISH COLUMBIA SCIENCE FICTION
ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Number 25
June 1975

Edited by Fran Skene, Information Officer. Subscriptions for non-members \$1.50/year. All unsigned material is by the editor. A Pterodactyl Publication.

RENEWAL NOTICE: All memberships and subscriptions not renewed or obtained this year expired last month. Until August 24, 1975 renewals may be obtained at the old rates: \$1.50 for a subscription and \$3.00 for membership. Send to the above address or see the treasurer, Al Betz at a meeting.

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The JUNE MEETING will be held at Chuck and Edna Davis' house, 1704 East 14th Ave., Vancouver at 8 P.M. or thereabouts on Saturday, June 21. BYOB & snack.

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To NEWER MEMBERS and those who have been coming infrequently: I suggest that you locate Vicki Bushell at the meeting and introduce yourself to her. Vicki has been appointed OFFICIAL GREETER (yes, suggestions for a better title will be considered) and she will see that you get to know some of the other members.

I remember my first meeting, back in October 1973 when the club was getting on its feet. After being at the Bellingham conference in the summer my name got on a list and so I was informed of the meeting but I didn't really know anyone and was feeling great trepidation when I arrived, alone, on a Saturday night, at a private home filled with strangers. I didn't even bring something to drink as I thought I might just scoot right out again. As it happened Chuck Davis (he of the books and the radio show) turned out to be the soul of affability as he greeted me at the door and then Dan Say and Michael Walsh zeroed in as they do to many new female attendees. It took, though, several months before I felt really at ease at a BCSFA meeting. One problem is the natural tendency for people to form cliques. Now I'm hoping that we can all make BCSFA meetings more enjoyable. How about "Have I talked to someone new tonight?" as something to ask yourself?

GUESTS are welcome provided you don't think they will be too bored by science fictional topics of conversation. Also recently we have had a fair amount of business at meetings, which rather dampens party spirits. Hopefully more of this can now be put in the newsletter instead, leaving the general meetings free for socializing, movies, slides, etc.

OUT OF TOWN MEMBERS who wish to attend a meeting can be billeted for free. Just let us know in advance and bring a sleeping bag.

SMOKING is fine although you should wait until a formal meeting or program is over or else go to another room. That way it makes it easier for those bothered by the smoke to move away.

BOOZE, SOFT DRINKS, AND FOOD. Some members have come to each meeting intending not to eat and/or drink and then have been lured by the spread brought by others. Let's try for some realism. If you know from experience that you will be reaching for some cheese or a glass of someone's mixer then BRING SOMETHING to share with them in return. O.K.?

CALENDAR

For further information phone
Ed or Norma Beauregard at
732-8202 (Vancouver)

- Wed., June 11 Westercon bidding committee meeting at David George's,
Apt. 104, 8771 Montcalm at 7:30 P.M.
- Thurs., June 12 Meeting to examine the Constitution and By-Laws at
Fran Skene's, 207 W. 21st Ave. at 7:30 P.M.
- Wed., June 18 Westercon bidding committee meeting at Fran Skene's
at 7:30 P.M.
- Sat., June 21 General meeting at Chuck and Edna Davis' (see page one)
- Mon., June 23 Westercon bidding committee meeting at Vicki Bushell's,
1975 Tolmie at 7:30 P.M.
- Thurs., June 26 Meeting of executive committee, at Mike Bailey's,
Apt. 108, 1972 York at 7:30 P.M.
- Thurs., July 3 to Sunday, July 6 WESTERCON 28
The Leamington Hotel, Oakland, Calif.
Registration: \$6.00 Room rates: \$15.00 for singles
Banquet: \$10.00 \$19.00 for doubles
Make all checks payable to Westercon 28,
P.O. Box 24560, Los Angeles Ca. 90024
(Rooms can be paid for at the convention)
- **If you have been planning to stay at the hotel but haven't yet registered this should be done like yesterday as room in the hotel is on a first come basis. Other people will have to stay in nearby hotels with higher, non-guaranteed rates. Since the BCSFA is bidding for Westercon 30 we will have a suite at the hotel for parties and PR purposes. Site selection for that convention (1977) will be at the business meeting Sunday, July 6. Thus the more BCSFA members and supporters who can make it to the convention first of all, then join the '77 con and get up on Sunday morning to vote for us the better. Those who need a ride down to Oakland and hopefully also can do their share of driving should check with me (Fran Skene, 207 W. 21st Ave., Vancouver B.C. V5Y 2E4 Phone 879-7009, Bus. 682-5911 Loc. 37) and I'll try to match you up with someone. Victoria members could easily be met at the Tsawassen terminal. Plane fare is also reasonable: \$121 return Vancouver - San Francisco.
- Saturday, July 19 JULY MEETING - in Victoria - at the house of Mike
Coney, 1016 Cypress Road, Sidney, B.C., 8 P.M.
BYOB and snack.
Victoria people: can anyone find room for those

from the mainland to sock out? If so, please phone the Beauregards collect (phone number above) or write to the club box number.

Will those who will need rides or accomodation please phone (not collect), write, or talk to a member of the executive at the June meeting.

Saturday, August 16 AUGUST MEETING This may be in rented quarters at White Rock or Squamish (if the latter we could take the train from North Vancouver-- scenic and cheap).
This will be a movie meeting. Already lined up is "Twenty thousand leagues under the sea".

FICTION, MINUTES, AND MINUTES

David George,
Secretary

May general meeting, May 24

Cinematophiles Michael and Susan Walsh hosted the Bring-Your-Own-Supper Annual General Meeting complete with T.L.C. The Total Lunar Catastrophe was observed through various spyglasses from vantage points around the castle, and the dragon did indeed seem to devour the moon. Spurred on by the scurussating neuronics whips of the castle guards, slaves moved the giant laser cannon, cleverly disguised as a Gestetner machine, to the highest battlement. After discovering that the only instruction manual to the fiendish device was written in Linear B, the situation was only saved by the timely arrival of the Gestetner-Laser Corp. serviceman for the monthly tuneup. With a deft flick of both tentacles, he set azimuth, declination, f/stop, frequency, and one-button colour, and the BCSFA got off the first recorded shot at the maleficent beastie, causing it to disgorge a rather battered looking moon. "Looks like it got a few more dents this time," said the serviceman, as he deftly mixed a black-and-tan and retired indoors to watch The Underground Movie.

During these highly secret manoeuvres, the business meeting inside was drawing to a close. It was discovered that another association in B.C. may have been given the right to use the initials B.C., so the incoming executive was directed to examine the possibilities of the BCSFA becoming registered under that name, again. ((Groan)) ((The other organization turned out to be government funded)) At the close of the business meeting, the new executive were sworn in, at, about, etc. They are: President, Ed Beauregard; Vice-President, Mike Bailey; Information Officer, Fran Skene; Treasurer, Al Betz; Secretary, David George. A raffle was conducted for the benefit of the Westercon 30 Bid Committee, and \$12.50 was raised. Movies, above and under ground were shown, and a good time was etc.

Executive meeting, June 2

President Beauregard hosted the meeting and called it to order at 8:00 P.M. ((when David George arrived)) by demolishing his coffeetable with the official gavel. Treasurer Betz reported that we have \$57.67 in the checking account and \$277.67 in the savings account. More is expected as renewals come in. Discussion centered possible other ways of raising money and of how to make the general meetings more fun. It was suggested that perhaps someone ought to be asked to serve as "Greeter"

to welcome new members at each meeting. A new dues structure was approved, to take effect on August 25, 1975. Voting membership will be \$4.00 (family \$6.00), and Associate membership \$2.00. ((more details later))

The June meeting was set for the 21st, and will be at the home of Chuck and Edna Davis, from 8 to midnight. The next executive meeting will be at Mike Bailey's, Thursday June 26th. Any member may attend. The famous Constitution meeting will be at Fran Skene's, Thursday June 12. Consult the Beuregards for further details. The July meeting will be at Michael Coney's, on Vancouver Island but sleeping accommodation will not be available. Fen in Victoria area are earnestly asked to contribute floor space.

Many ideas were run up the flagpole re: the August meeting but no one saluted, although there were a few desultory barks. Ed and Norma will investigate cabins in the White Rock and Squamish areas. There was some discussion on a letter which the Vice-President submitted to the newsletter, and which the Information Officer declared she intended to comment on editorially, after which it was withdrawn for publication Mike's personalzine instead.

After a small amount of debate, a unanimous vote was taken to donate \$25 to the Westercon 30 bid committee. The secretary was asked to keep a record of all items received in the mail. The bank has been notified of the new signing officers. It was suggested that Little Billy's Pizza and Spaghetti House (for real) at 2nd and Nanaimo can possibly hold about 25 people for a future dinner-meeting.

After a record-breaking session of work, the meeting was adjourned at the record time of 10:17 P.M., P.M.

WESTERCON BID -- PROGRESS REPORT

Some time ago the Hyatt Regency Hotel was booked for a Westercon in 1977 and a Worldcon in 1981. The price seemed reasonable and the convention rooms of adequate size. Moreover it is right in the middle of downtown Vancouver, down the street from the Georgia Hotel and a short walk from the Granville Mall. Then came the bad news: hotel prices are shooting up (I suspect partly because of greatly increasing tourism) and neither the Hyatt nor any other of the larger hotels would talk about room rates of less than \$40/day for a single room. When this was compared to the \$15/day at this year's Westercon and the reasonable rates quoted by the group that is bidding to hold the 1977 Worldcon in Orlando it became obvious that the bidding committee would have to look for an alternate site.

Mike Bailey suggested that we see what U.B.C. has to offer. Like the Santa Barbara campus of the University of California, where last year's Westercon took place, some of the residences on the University of B.C. campus operate as a convention center from May to August. Our first choice, after touring both the Gage and Totem residence areas was Gage but it turned out be already booked, starting on the Sunday of the Westercon weekend. In addition they had reserved two of the Totem residence towers in case of overflow. This left four residence towers and all the convention facilities at Totem. In all there will be room for 800 people (650 bedrooms including doubles) with the possibility of overflow into another residence area nearby. However, the advantages of holding a convention at U.B.C. were so great that we went ahead and

booked the Totem facilities for the time of Westercon 30.

At this point Mike Bailey, highly disappointed with our booking of what he termed "left-over accomodation", expressed doubts as to whether we should be trying to put on this convention and reiterated thatt he wanted only to be an "advisor" to the Westercon committee (and attend all the meetings). One thing that really got to him was the lack of a bathroom next to every room but this didn't bother the committee. Our view is that, if given a choice between paying less than \$10 for a single room with bathtubs, showers, and toilets down the hall and paying a considerably greater amount for a room with bath at a hotel most people would happily choose the first. For those who prefer more luxurious accomodation there is a new Holiday Inn on West Broadway, about a 12-13min. drive from the convention centre. The accomodation at Totem consists of single and double rooms, all with single beds.

Which brings us to the number one advantage of the Gage residence area and why we are looking forward to having the next V-Con there in May. There are more than fifty suites available, each in the \$25-30 price range and even the single rooms in the Gage towers are arranged in an innovative and convenient way: six rooms in a semi-circle with shared refrigerator, lounge, and bathroom.

But we saw a number of good things at the Totem residence. Although the Gage convention area (including the student union building) is classier inside and is closer to stores and to the Empire swimming pool (shared with numerous members of the public) Totem is more attractive architecturally and close to Totem Park (where the totems are) and the Nitobe Japanese Garden. The grounds are beautifully landscaped, with flowers, shrubbery, lawn, and patio areas. Several hundred yards away at the bottom of an embankment is Wreck Beach, Vancouver's well known nude swimming area (a morning swim, anyone?). For more conventional swimming and sunning a short trip down Marine Drive gets you to Spanish Banks, Vancouver's largest beach. The convention facilities are the best I've seen: there are enough convention rooms at Totem to meet every conceivable need ranging from small lounges suitable for parties (one on each floor of the towers) to a ballroom that will seat 1000 people and which opens out on to a large patio. Each convention room must be rented individually, which is another thing that makes Mike nervous. But Ed Hutchings, who is in charge of programming, is already thinking about some of the really interesting things that can be done in a place like this.

If Vancouver does not get chosen as the site of Westercon 30 the BCSFA will start planning to bid for Westercon 32 (1979). We're convinced that there are many people Down South who would like to visit what is frequently described as the most beautiful city in the world (just thought I would insert a little chauvinism here).

MOVIE REVIEW by Ed Hutchings:

SOLARIS

USSR 1972 Produced by Mosfilm Co. Based on the novel by Stanislaw Lem; screenplay by Tarkovsky and Friedrich Forenstein. 165 min. 14,850 35mm feet. Russian with English subtitles.

Solaris was shown privately at the Dunbar Theatre about a year ago. A bunch of us saw it, talked about possible ways of reviewing it for a couple of hours and did nothing. Since I exhibited the biggest

mouth at this session, I guess I should be the one to write up, even at this late date. Probably a lot of the ideas here are stolen from Mikes Bailey and Walsh; I can't remember.

The last part of the film SOLARIS is different from the book and the whole plot is simplified, so (especially since the chance of getting it in Vancouver seems to be zilch) I'll give a synopsis:

Psychologist Kelvin is at the height of his career but clearly unable to come to terms with his own life. He is sent by the government to examine conditions on the research station over the planet Solaris. Of the original 85 crewmen, only three remain; one of these kills himself just before Kelvin arrives. The station is 'suicidally dirty' (as in a Larry Niven plot) and the remaining two crewman are demoralized. It turns out that Solaris is haunting the crew, i.e. it concretises figures from their memories and fantasies; and soon Kelvin is

accompanied by Hari, his neglected wife who killed herself ten years earlier. Although physically like a lovely woman, 'Hari' is a fearsome creature, physically and mentally incomplete since she is based on Kelvin's memories; when prevented from following Kelvin constantly she goes into a hysteric state in which she tears through sheet metal. However once created, she is basically a free agent and becomes increasingly more human and sympathetic, while Kelvin manages a certain amount of tolerance. Kelvin and the audience realize that Solaris is intelligent. Being alone, it has no concept of language and is trying to communicate with the men by meddling with their subconscious minds. The planet is effectively unable to 'speak' because each man desperately rejects the images it echoes from his subconscious. Kelvin's relationship with 'Hari' begins to redeem his own humanity but he suffers a nervous collapse and we realize that Solaris is about to intervene. Now, however, Kelvin is willing to face his past. In a stupendous (and vague) ending evidently intended as a humanist reply to the finale of 2001, Solaris makes contact with the positive aspect of Kelvin's mind. The planet has finally 'spoken its first word'.

The first thing that needs to be said is that all this doesn't quite come off. Those of the audience who were unused to the slow pace of the standard 'art film' were just plain bored... Bailey was ready to start snoring. The film buffs were more willing to hang on but found it an effort. In fact this is a true mystical film, not only in pace and mood, but in tradition. It's startling in view of the standard jokes, but in Russia the mystical artists (and also the strongest individualists) are Ukrainian, and Tarkovsky, the Ukrainian director of SOLARIS is right in this line of descent. (For more examples of this style, you might be able to see SHADOWS OF OUR FORGOTTEN ANCESTORS soon at the Cinematheque or Tarkovsky's own ANDREI RUBLEV). Anyway as a true Ukrainian mystic, Tarkovsky takes forever to get started, adding bits of mood here and portent there; and when the story eventually gets going it's always pausing for thought while Bailey fumes.

On this issue, I agree with Bailey. There's no reason why the film couldn't have made all its points mystical, psychological or whatever in half the time, and I guess that we have to put SOLARIS in that irritating category of mainstream art that uses sf ideas but ignores the craft tradition (there is one) of sf. Another difficulty is that Lem's original novel is intellectual and introspective, but not particularly

mystical. In converting the novel to a mystical film, Tarkovsky has left in heaps of dialectical beardmutterings by the crew of the station. This probably went unnoticed in Russia, where film heroes talk like that all the time, but it's jarring to a western audience and is more or less irrelevant to the movie (though not to the novel).

On the other hand the basic idea of the film is tremendous, with its concept of the huge alien who can only speak to man at the instant of man's self-realization. This is a large-scale and also more sensitive version of the standard 'is the earthling worthy of first contact' plot, and I can see why critics have called the ending a 'reply' to the supermanish conclusion of 2001. Another high powered concept is the re-created Hari. She is terrifying at first because she is literally a figment of Kelvin's imagination; but her character grows because she isn't really Kelvin's wife, and Kelvin realizes this and starts to grow too.

On the whole, if you are interested in both sf and film, I'd say that SOLARIS is an almost must. Its ideas put it into the class of 2001 and THINGS TO COME, but even taking the slow pace into consideration, I don't think that the film realizes its possibilities. I even have the impression that the director was just not quite big enough for the ideas in the film. To compete with Kubrick's academic totalitarianism in 'liberal' terms, the film would need the courageous humanity of a Bergman. And it doesn't get it.

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NEW SCIENCE FICTION AT V.P.L.

- Ellison, Harlan Approaching oblivion Walker 1974 8.95
Reprint collection; includes "Paulie Charmed the sleeping woman" and "Catman".
- Ellison, Harlan Deathbird stories Harper 1975 8.95
Reprint collection; includes "adrift just off the islets of Langerhans . . ." and "Deathbird".
- Farmer, Philip Mother was a lovely beast Chilton 1974 6.95
Stories about people raised by animals. Includes "The god of Tarzan" by Burroughs and "Tarzan of the grapes" by Wolfe. Fun.
- Neeper, Cary A place beyond man Scribner's 1975 7.95
First contact and ecological ruin all in one.
- Silverberg, Robert Sundance and other science fiction stories Nelson 1974 6.50
Reprint collection; includes one of the stories read by the author at V-Con 4. Attractive cover.
- Spinrad, Norman Modern science fiction Anchor 1974 3.95
An excellent collection of stories, from "Helen O'loy" to "At the mouse circus". Arranged chronologically; with articles on "The golden age", "The postwar awakening", and "The full flowering".
(cont.)

Zelazny, Roger Sign of the unicorn Doubleday 1975 6.95
Third in the Amber series, after Nine princes in Amber
and The guns of Avalon. A good read but finishes too
fast (two more books coming).

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COMING NEXT MONTH: "A Serious Story" by the creative geni
attending the April meeting

Also: "Science Fiction Theatre" by Al Betz

& a book review by Ed Beauregard

RETURN TO
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FRANCES SKENE (M)
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