

NEWSLETTER NO. 1 (THIRD QUARTER 1969)

HOW THE SOUTH AFRICAN S.F. FAN CLUB WAS LAUNCHED.

On April 13 Tex Cooper placed an advert in the "Sunday Times" inviting interested persons to contact him with a view of forming a Science Fiction Fan Club.

The people who replied and who were in Pretoria or immediate surroundings met at Tex's house on the evening of June 6, and Tex explained the advantages of forming a Club, which could be affiliated with the National Fantasy Fan Federation (N3F) of America (see the accompanying article "Chairman's Cheers").

It was decided that evening to elect a temporary committee. until the time of the Annual General Meeting to be held on October 3.

The Committee met on the evening of June 27 at the home of Jeff Kalwerisky, in Johannesburg, and again on the afternoon of August 3, at the home of Robbie Wolter, in Pretoria.

A further meeting is scheduled for September 5 at the home of Simon Scott, in Johannesburg. At the above meetings the various details were provisionally agreed on regarding finances, publicizing the Club, and what the Club could offer members in return for their hard earned cash.

THIS NEWSLETTER.

It is proposed to issue this Newsletter to Club members at quarterly intervals, or more after if the amount of news and other material for publication warrant it.

In addition to news about the Club, the Newsletter will publish letters and articles from Club Members, and reviews of current books, films and plays.

A Swop column is also contemplated for magazines and books, etc.

Members are therefore invited to send their contributions to Simon Scott, 5 Jessie Avenue, Norwood, Johannesburg, or to Tex Cooper, at 1208 Carter Avenue, Queenswood, Pretoria.

FILM REVIEW: 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY.

OPINION: A spectacular trip.

A three hour epic in Cinerama, this film takes the viewer on a series of awe inspiring visual experiences.

Starting with the dawn of Man's existence, the first sequence depicts some human-like ape men in rugged desert surroundings, switching abruptly some 30 minutes later to a twenty first century sequence of a space station orbiting around the moon. One of the more remarkable aspects of this film is the lack of spoken dialogue - for a start the only sounds emitting from the ape men are a series of grunts.

The final and climatic sequence takes place on a voyage to Jupiter, in which we meet the one and only villain of the story, Hal 9001, a vastly sophisticated guidance computer which can take time off to carry on conversations with, and play games of chess with the crew.

Unfortunately Hal blots his copybook by getting a "bug" in his system, and developing delusions of grandeur, wipes out a trio of crew

members with the idea of taking over the ship.

The "cavalry to the rescue" piece is done here when our hero puts paid to Hal by climbing inside his memory bank and disabling his circuits.

However, Hal was a bit far fetched, and I do not think Armstrong, Aldrin and Collins would have lost any sleep if they had seen this before their own venture.

A weird and psychedelic scene then takes place, symbolizing Man's past and future, in which our spaceman comes face to face with himself in an advanced state of senility and as an unborn baby within the womb.

Messrs Kubrick and Clarke have pulled out all the stops in presenting beautiful photographic effects which become quite bizarre at times, for instance the ape man using a large bone as a club demolishes the skeleton of a large animal in slow motion, and later on excursion module spins away at a fantastically fast and uncontrollable rate into a perpetual course in deep space, carrying a man to his death.

No less awesome are the sound effects: an external repair operation on the Jupiter bound spaceship is accompanied by a horrifyingly loud human breathing sound.

I would go and see the film a second time for the theme music alone.

FILM REVIEW: AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS.

OPINION: Ten years old, but still unrivalled entertainment.

Not science fiction, you might say? Perhaps not, but the author of the story, Jules Verne was one of the original and still one of the greatest of science fiction writers. To be fully appreciated, this film must be seen from the beginning, and right through to the final sequence which presents the titles.

At the beginning the film (which first appeared here in 1958) shows a very old black and white silent movie (which must have been at least half a century old) based on another Verne classic "From the Earth to the Moon". The scene switches dramatically to a countdown and blast off of a pre-Sputnik space probe.

After this the story gets under way, in which Phineas Fogg (played by David Niven), an eccentric and wealthy London club-dweller takes on a wager that he can travel round the world in 80 days, quite a remarkable achievement at the time (the turn of the last century).

Accompanied by his French valet, Passe-Partout (played by the Mexican comedian Cantinflas) off he goes, and the pair become involved in adventure after adventure, Mr. Fogg naturally retaining a stiff upper lip in the face of each unexpected happening.

The film also presents some magnificent colour pictures of the parts of the world they traverse.

The title sequence at the end, incidentally, cost about as much as a normal low budget film.

This is the second time this film has returned to South Africa after its first appearance, it was Mike Todd's last film before his untimely death in a plane crash. It is probably the one film by which