

THE SOUTH AFRICAN SF CLUB.

NEWSLETTER NO. 3.

The Annual General Meeting.

The minutes of the First Annual General Meeting held at the home of Simon Scott, 5 Jessie Ave., Norwood, Johannesburg, on Friday, October 3, 1969 from 8.00 - 10.50pm.

Members present: Yvonne and Andy Kapp, Simon and Mary Scott, Felicity and Frank Gentile, Joyce Burton, Colin Mallinick, Jeff Valvarisky, Len Schlebusch Robert May, Robbie Wolter, Keith Mackie and Tex Cooper.

Apologies received: Cheryl "Joe" Fay, Tertius Du Plessis, Simon Waskins Nicholas Shears, A. Botha, B. Sutcliffe, Niels Christensen and Frans Kruger.

1. Chairman's Welcome: Tex welcomed the members present and gave a brief resume of the Committee's activities from the date of the Inaugural meeting. The total paid-up membership is 30, including married couples. Three Committee meetings have been held, two newsletters published and a Constitution drawn up. Tex thanked the Committee members for their help, especially Simon for his work in preparing the newsletters, and hoped that the next Committee would continue the good work.

2. The minutes of the inaugural meeting were accepted.

3. Finance: A saving account has been opened at the Sunnyside branch of the S.A. Permanent, and at present the financial position is sound. We have received in entrance fees and subs the amount of R62.75. Expenses for printing of newsletters and postage amounts to R22.70. This leaves a balance of R41.05.

4. Constitution: The Committee has drafted a Constitution for the Club. This was accepted and a copy will be published in the next Newsletter.

5. Name of Club: The Club is officially known as S.F.S.A. Final voting figures were as follows: S.F.S.A. - 18: Sci-fi S.A. - 11.

6. Short Story Contest: As we would like to enter a Short Story in HBP's Short Story Contest next year, it was agreed that a contest should be run. The details of the contest were left for the Committee to decide.

7. Emblem: The Club needs an emblem. Members are requested to submit their entries to the Editor. Sketches (4"x4") will appear in a newsletter and members will be able to vote for the emblem they want.

8. Lending Library: Tex has decided to act as Librarian for the lending library. At present the library has about 20 books plus a few fanzines. A list will be published in due course, together with library regulations. Anyone wishing to donate books may send them to Tex. It is envisaged that in the near future a branch will be opened in Johannesburg at Simon's home.

9. Should the Club be fully bi-lingual? It will be too expensive to duplicate the Newsletter in both languages. However, if a member wishes to write to the Newsletter in Afrikaans, he is welcome to do so.

10. It was suggested that regional groups hold regular meetings to meet the members socially. Colin suggested that project groups be started for members with similar interests. Keith suggested that scientific personalities be invited to speak at these meetings. Braaivleis' or picnics could also be organised. It is now up to the various regions to organise something.

11. The Newsletter will have to be limited to approximately 5 pages at first because of the cost. The Committee will investigate the hire of a roneo machine.

To facilitate the 'getting together' in regional groups, here is a list of members for the period October 1969 to October 1970.

JOHANNESBURG:

JOYCE HUTTON, 976 Eccleston Crescent, Bryanston	766-5729.
ROBERT HAY, 34 Low Goldenhurst Dr., Durbanville Ext.	41-1936.
JEFF KAMARINSKY, 22 York Street, Berea.	44-7152.
LEN SCHULFUSCH, 75 Yeo Street, Bellevue.	43-4862.
SYMON and MARY SCOTT, 5 Jessie Ave., Norwood.	728-1777.
NICHOLAS SHEARS, 52 Garden Way, Northcliff Ext. 4.	46-2368.

PRETORIA:

TEX COOPER, 1206 Carter Avenue, Queenswood.	9-1733.
THEOPHILUS DE FLESSIS, 47 Las Vegas, Sunnyside.	4-8393.
BYRON BAINING, 69 Bootes Str., Waterkloof Ridge.	78-2126.
CHERYL HAY, c/o Students Residence, Onderstepoort.	
COLIN MALLINCK, 27 Standard Court, Sunnyside.	
ROBERT WOLTER, 398b Muckleneuk Dr., Muckleneuk.	4-1412.

CAPE TOWN:

KEVIN MACDONNELL, Paxville, Wembly Rd., Gardens.	
ASHLEY PRINCE, Gregg's Crest, Rochester St., Palmer Estates.	30732.
G. THORNTON, P.O. Box 3959.	
KEITH VETTER, 302 High Places, Quarry Hill, Kloofnek Rd.	27449.

PORT ELIZABETH:

PIETAS CHRISTIANSEN, 604 St. Leonards, Beach Rd., Homewood	25217.
CLAUDE LITCHBURN, 8 Barbett St., Cotswold Ext.	36344.

CAPE PROVINCE:

FRANK KUNIGER, 6 van Rietvelt St., De War.	75.
JOHN LYLS, P.O. Box 53, Starkspruit.	
PIETER WAGENER, University College, Port Harb.	

NAIIB:

LEONARD BISHOP, 5 St. James Court, Durban.	26018
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TRANSVAAL:

ANDREW ACKERMAN, P.O. Box 6, Daggafontein.	56-5817.
MARK FLOYD, P.O. Box 222, Warmbaths.	44.
FRANK and FELICITY GENTLE, 34 Gorst Ave., Primrose,	
Germiston.	58-1187.
ANDY and YVONNE KAPP, Flying Training School, Sunnottar.	734-3364.
LOUIS and LINETTE LAMBERT, 9 Steyn St., Lydenburg.	

So... phone the people living near you, and invite them round. After all, we read S.F. for entertainment.

AN APOLOGY FROM
NICHOLAS. THE
BOOK MENTIONED
WAS NOT HEINLEIN
IT WAS THE CRUEL
PURPLE MOON BY
PRESTON WINDSOR

ADD. MEMBER
ANNE FREEMANTLE
302 GREENERIAR
71 DORSET RD
PARKWOOD JHB
Tel. 47-2077

Editorial:

What is Science Fiction?

Science Fiction is often regarded as an unorthodox form of literature. Why this is so is probably a direct result of the fact that only a certain type of personality finds it enjoyable - those people with imagination. After all, science fiction is basically only a few odd facts with lots of imagination - the 'odd facts' being not necessarily scientifically correct. In fact, some of the best science fiction ever written has been scientifically incorrect and only some of the worst concerns itself with trying to achieve adherence to scientific fact. (S.F. does not predict, or else it would be written in the future tense, not the past. It is a form of entertainment.)

Now a days one generally writes about ordinary people, not, as previously, about Kings, Queens and Great people. Often the result is a pretty ordinary story. Generally science fiction concerns itself with ordinary people, but the story itself takes place far in time and space, on different planets and introduces alien creatures and with them strange customs. The only difference between these ordinary people and us is that they exist in the future.

When does the future begin? In 2001 or 1984, next minute or now? Whatever the answer, we cannot reach it. All we can do is imagine the future, and everyone imagines a different future according to his hopes, fears and personality in general. That is why people in stories of the future seem so real to us - they are us, as we hope or dread ourselves to be.

Science fiction is an excellent medium for dramatising sociological or scientific developments. However seriously we take it, it is foolish to forget that it is a source of great enjoyment and amusement. It is a token of the scope of science fiction that some people read it for intellectual stimulus and others for escape.

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Science Fact:

The Jekyll and Hyde Substance.

By Simon Scott.

A topic which has once again come into the news through discussion at various congresses and in the Press is the fluoridation of drinking water. As much emotional heat has been generated in the arguments, and as many opinions, informed and otherwise have been expressed, that one may wonder what this fluoridation is all about.

Until recently the element fluorine (chemical symbol F.) has remained a mystery because it has never been found in Nature uncombined with any other substance. This is hardly surprising as, being the most electro-negative of all elements, it is also the most reactive. It reacts with explosive violence with any electro-positive element (such as hydrogen or metals) and somewhat less dramatically with other electro-negative elements (such as oxygen). In fact fluorine combines readily with any other substance except the 'noble' gases. However, in 1962 it was combined with xenon, forming xenon fluoride.

Since the 18th century attempts have been made to isolate fluorine gas from its compounds, with murderous results to many of the researchers. Apart from fluorine being highly toxic, hydrogen fluoride, often produced by these experiments, is only slightly less so, and hydrogen fluoride poisoning is believed to be partly responsible for the premature deaths of the Swedish chemist Carl Wilhelm Scheele, and the English one, Humphrey Davy, both of whom worked on the isolation of fluorine in the late 18th century.

Two English brothers, Thomas and George Knox, suffered long illnesses after attempting to prepare fluorine by reacting chlorine with mercuric fluoride in the 1830's. Shortly afterwards a Belgian chemist, P. Louyet tried to prepare it by the same method, and was killed in the attempt.

It was the French chemist, Ferdinand Frederic Henri Moissan, who finally succeeded, by the electrolysis of anhydrous hydrogen fluoride containing potassium fluoride in a U-shaped platinum-iridium alloy tube (slightly fluorine resistant) with carefully carved fluorite (the main fluorine-bearing mineral) stoppers. This was successfully done for the first time on June 26th, 1886, and later in 1899 Moissan demonstrated a better method using copper vessels, which although attacked by the fluorine soon became coated with copper fluoride which stopped any further attack. Moissan received a well-deserved Nobel Prize in 1906 and died the following year at the age of 54 - another victim of hydrogen fluoride.

Because of the high reactivity of fluorine and hydrogen fluoride, fluorine compounds are generally highly inert and have many uses. Hydrogen fluoride is used to etch glass whilst uranium hexafluoride is used to separate uranium isotopes. Some plastics containing fluorine (Teflon, Fluon and Kel-F) are virtually indestructible by conventional means, whilst fluorocarbon liquids are used as refrigerants (Freon-12), and in fire extinguishers (tri fluoro bromo methane) because of their inertness and non-toxicity!

Hence the reason behind the move to fluoridate drinking water supplies by the addition of sodium fluoride. This causes fluorine atoms to enter the molecular structure of teeth, bones and nails of growing children. The fluorine atoms form stable compounds, giving the bones and teeth strength and durability. This advantage is nullified and in fact reversed by the excessive use of fluoride, which causes fluorosis and mottled teeth.

It should be noted that an extremely low proportion of water supplies is drunk by growing children. (Adults would not benefit from fluoridated water.) Some water supplies, particularly in certain Farroo regions, contain fluoride (mainly sodium and calcium) and the effect on the local population varies from excellent teeth in some people to mild fluorosis in others.

Perhaps a solution to the fluoridation controversy which will displease nobody would be to obtain bottled supplies of natural water from areas with the correct fluoride concentration, and make it available at a nominal price in other areas.

#### Some of the 'Vital Statistics' of Fluorine:

The pale yellow gas condenses at -188 degrees C to a clear yellow liquid which solidifies at -223 degrees. The yellow colour disappears at -252 degrees. The gas is 1.32 times as dense as air, while the liquid is 1.108 times as dense as water.

Fluorine occurs in minerals such as fluorospar (calcium fluoride) and to a lesser extent in cryolite ( $\text{Na}_3\text{AlF}_6$ ), fluorapatite ( $\text{CaF}_2 \cdot 3\text{Ca}_3(\text{PO}_4)_2$ ), and in sea water. It is widely distributed.

Footnote: The author advises against members trying to prepare fluorine in their spare time: the S.F. Club has too few members to afford to lose any this way.