

A consumer's guide

How to survive Cosmicon

By WARREN CLEMENTS

Walking into a comic art and fantasy convention without prior warning is like asking a Howard Johnson's waiter what ice cream flavours he has.

While movies mesmerize viewers in one room, a teeny-bopper from Ohio sells 1943 copies of the Man of Steel in another, and seven of the finest comic artists in North America hold a panel discussion on the relative merits of their respective publishers.

It's mind-boggling, to say the least. Winters College, under the direction of social-cultural affairs director Ken Ketter, held its first Cosmic Convention (Cosmicon) in 1972. The event lost thousands of dollars, but the fascinating, hectic and reckless spectacle quickly established itself as a major North American convention. Among the guests were French film director Alain Resnais and Marvel comics writer-executive Stan Lee.

Since then, the excitement has cooled and affairs have become slightly more business-like. But there's still enough action to confuse any novice who hasn't looked at the schedule beforehand and circled the events he wants to be certain to attend.

FAMOUS GUESTS

Organizers Anne Scotton and Paul Leonard have spent sleepless nights scheduling this weekend's Cosmicon III. Among the outstanding guests expected are Bill Gaines, publisher of

Mad magazine, and Will Eisner, creator of The Spirit, one of the best comic strips going.

Artists Jeff Jones and Vaughn Bode, both seen regularly in the National Lampoon (Bode created Cheech Wizard), will attend with artists like Gray Morrow, Berni Wrightson, Russ Heath and Neal Adams. There are at least 12 others, including local names like Vince Marchesano and Rob MacIntyre.

The movies, roughly 27 of them, will include The Time Machine, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (with Spencer Tracy), Freaks, Invasion of the Body Snatchers (a Don Siegel classic), Night of the Living Dead, THX-1138 (from George Lucas, director of American Graffiti), and The 5,000 Fingers of Doctor T (directed by Stanley Kramer, with Hans Conreid).

That list doesn't include standards like The Thing and The Raven, or modern films like Soylent Green and The Omega Man.

OPENS TOMORROW

Cosmicon officially opens at 8 p.m. tomorrow night with an opening address in Winters Junior Common Room, the site for all the movies. Meanwhile, the art dealers' room will be running in Winters dining hall, and the Canadian Count Dracula society will be holding an open meeting in the senior common room.

Two things to keep in mind from the

start: most of the times in the schedule are not too accurate, and require continual updating; and 15 of the movies will be re-screened in Curtis LH-I from noon to midnight Saturday and Sunday, just in case you miss your favourite.

There are interesting panels which no self-respecting fan should miss. The Canadian artists and writers panel, which folded last year due to lack of interest, will try again tomorrow night at 8:15 p.m. in the Winters common room.

A panel on Censorship in Comics will convene at noon Saturday in the McLaughlin College dining hall, followed around 1 p.m. by an artists panel discussion and at 3 p.m. by a National Lampoon forum.

At noon Sunday, following a discussion of Quebec comics in the Winters senior room, and a meeting of the Ontario science fiction club, an amateur art show and contest will be judged by professional artists in Room 118 Winters.

COMIC SLIDES

The special events are the slide shows. Will Eisner narrates a show in Winters at 2 p.m. Saturday, Vaughn Bode holds a "cartoon concert" in McLaughlin at 6 p.m., and Bill Gaines shows slides on Mad around noon Sunday in Winters.

During all this, art display rooms in Winters will show the process by which comic strips are drawn up and assembled, and present a wide selection of full-colour paintings, posters and stills by individual guest artists like Mike Kaluta, Bode and Jones.

Advance weekend passes for the Con are \$5 each, and cost \$7 at the door. These let you into everything. Daily passes cost \$3.

And for those who merely want to sit in Curtis LH-I and watch films, admission is \$2 at the lecture hall.

The Winters Absinthe pub is open Friday and Saturday nights until midnight, but the coffee shop remains open to 4 a.m.

For passes, visit Room 271 Winters. For information, call 667-3888. And have an entertaining weekend.



Lugosi pauses for refreshment

Dracula gives Dwight Frye the eye as Frye nurses a bloody razor cut. "A rare vintage," murmurs the Count, siphoning off a pint and sending Ygor down to the wine cellar for a jar.

Dracula won't be shown at Cosmicon, but there's a 1957 film called The Vampire with John Beal, and a 1943 one called The Mad Ghoul with David Bruce. For romantic souls, there's always Jack the Giant Killer.

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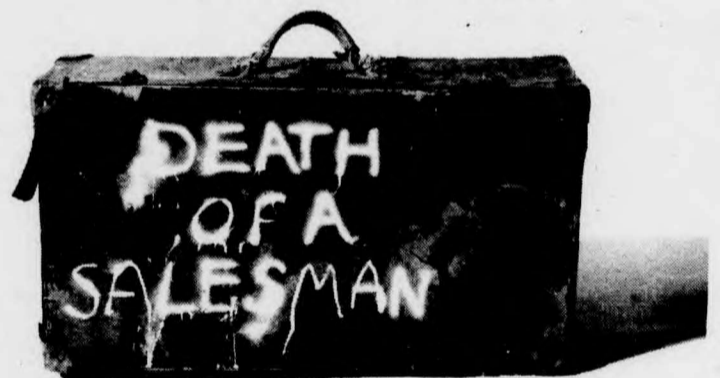
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