

The arts

Lawnchair liberalism

by Kim St. Clair

Deny it if you will; the generation gap does exist. It's just a case of pretending - your tastes and views simply cannot copy those of your parents.

Witness Stage West's latest theatrical venture, *Norman, is that you?*, featuring *The Lucy Show's* own Gale Gordon (Mr. Money to all who remember). There is a production written solely for middle class, middle-aged, strait-laced conservatives. Namely, your sires. But while this namby-pamby bit of theatrical prattle may be acceptable and quite pleasing to them, it can be nothing more than trite and insufficient to any university audience.

The play deals with the touchy subject of homosexuality. Most people don't care to acknowledge the existence of homosexuality and this is especially true of your parents' generation. The playwrights decided to write in favour of homosexuality, and, writing for an audience likely to take offense at that topic, took the easiest way out: they wrote a really inoffensive play. Never is there humour black, the dialogue rocking, or the story line startling. If they were, they could rest most uncomfortably on top of the Stage West bookery. At least it would with most of the Stage West patrons.

What we have then, is no more than a nullifying, sedating,umbing television script.

The acting itself leaves little to criticize. An adequate job on the whole; a fully satisfying job on the part of Gale Gordon. That Gale Gordon does he does extremely well. The poise, the precise expression, the sardonic voice, a curled lip, a popping finger - all are flawlessly designed to milk maximum laughter from the audience.

We see in Gordon's portrayal of Dayton dry-cleaner Chambers the epitomy of middle aged North American self-consciousness. His character mirrors the audience reactions that are carefully looked by the script. Upon discovering his son Norman played rather stiffly by Michael Hill) is a homosexual, Chambers reacts precisely as you would expect him to. When Norman mouths the line in the play most likely to make the audience squirm with embarrassment: "Don't you think it's possible for two men to experience true love and affection for each other?", Gordon's immediate reply is "You shut up!"

At which point the audience laughs. They have been graciously relieved of all obligation to feel upset.

At no point does this play give cause for indignation, and never is the audience forced to make a stand either for or against homosexuality. For the most part, on-lookers are entertained with stereotyped views of the flouncing faggot, Garson Hobart (a very discerning performance by Richard Lucas). Garson, not surprisingly, comes complete with red velvet pants, swinging hips and effeminate voice (oh, you rogue, you!).

By act three, the crowd is sufficiently pacified to feel at ease with this identifiable homosexual and the predictably disapproving dry-cleaner. Everything becomes fashionably acceptable. When the son refuses to change his habits, and when Gale Gordon decides that he must "learn to accept it," the audience (feeling quite liberal by now), also decides it must "learn to accept it."

So the playwrights (Ron Clark and Sam Bobrick) get the desired reaction and the audience is sated. What, then, is the complaint?

It's simply this: who needs to be fed the kind of lawnchair liberalism this play provides? The laughs are not worth the price of the ticket, and I for one don't like being pandered to like I was just one more undiscerning television viewer.

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Brave New Society formed

It was going to be called the Edmonton Science Fiction Fantasy Sword and Sorcery Nostalgia Occult and Comic Book Club.

But that was just a bit too long, so it was shortened to Edmonton Science Fiction and Comic Art Society (SFCAS). The group was formed last

December, and its aim, according to group president Ian Fraser, is to provide and promote both entertainment forms for Edmonton audiences.

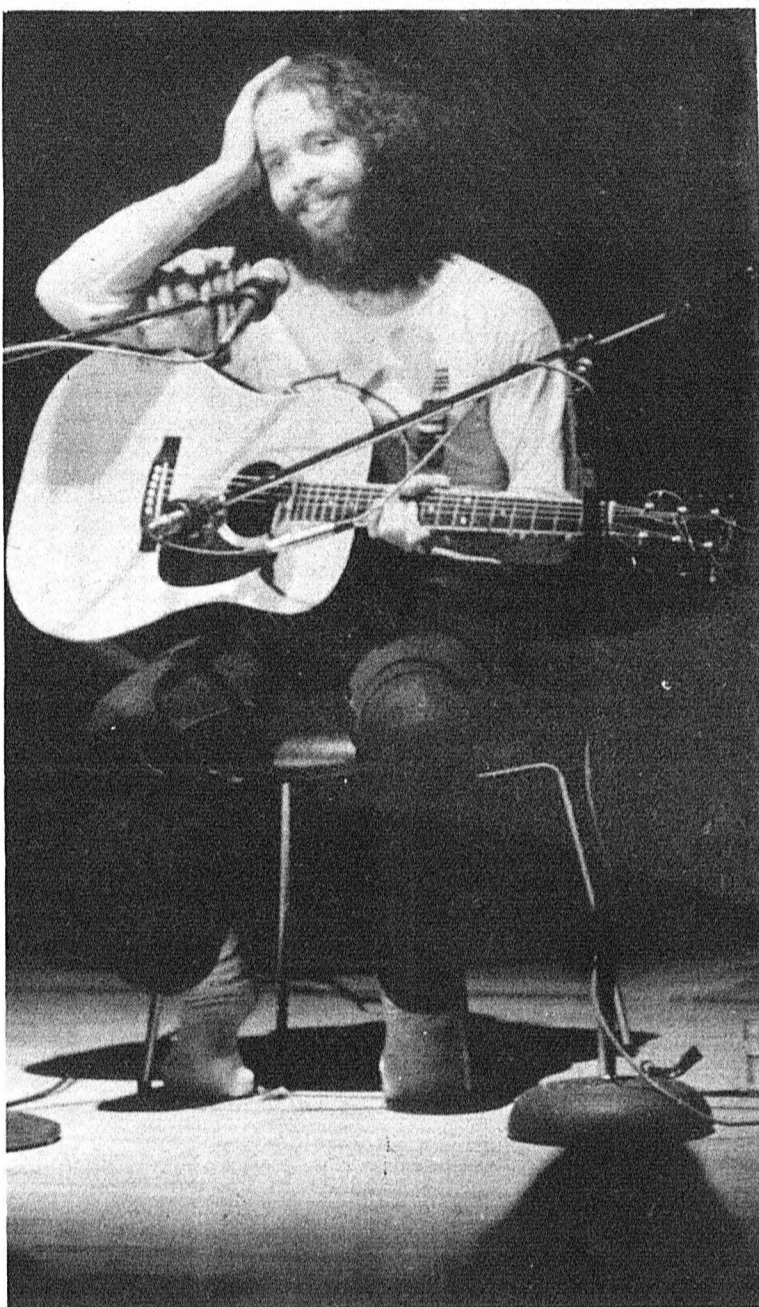
Beginning Mar. 23, the group will hold monthly meetings that will combine Society business and social activities, including films and speakers. The Mar. 23 meeting is at 7 p.m. in the Edmonton Art Gallery. At 7:30 p.m., the German film *Nosferatu* (1922) will be shown. According to Society president Fraser, the film is the "first and finest Dracula film ever made - and the most terrifying." The first three chapters of a Buck Rogers serial (circa 1940) will also be shown, and was described by Fraser as "hilarious." Admission is \$2 for members and \$2.50 for non-members. Memberships can be bought at the door.

The SFCAS plans to publish two fanzines (magazines produced by fans, as opposed to prozines, which are produced by professionals). One fanzine is designed to deal solely with science fiction topics and the other solely with comic books. The latter is now ready to go to the printers, and should be available soon.

The society plans to sponsor workshops designed to help people write comic books and science fiction. It will also make volume purchase of hard-to-obtain science fiction books and imported comic books, working to obtain discounts for society members in certain city stores at the same time.

It is hoped that early next fall the society will hold a one or two day convention, with speakers, films, panel discussion, comic book trading sessions and much more.

For further information about the SFCAS, phone Ian at 435-7855 or Lorna at 433-0207, or better yet, attend the Mar. 23 meeting.



DAN HILL ... Juno-award-winning young musician performed for almost 400 people at SUB Theatre last Friday night. Photo by Michael Amerongen.

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Inside Insight One

A theatre performance that shouldn't be missed will be given in Rm. 142 SUB on Thursday, Mar. 25 at 12:30 p.m. For 30 minutes, sketches will be performed by *Insight One*, a theatre group composed of five Edmonton women. These sketches will dramatize the

women's suffrage movement, role of women and women's liberation.

This performance is held in conjunction with the Western Canadian Conference on Women in Education which is hosted by the Women's Program Centre on campus.

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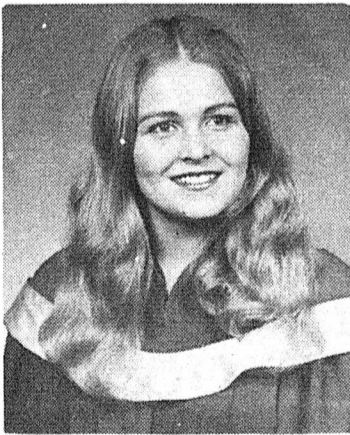
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