

# EARTHQUAKE A DISASTER

by D. Moulton

We all saw "Frankenstein" in 3D - now we can all see "Earthquake" with Sensurround. Sensurround is the auditory equivalent to three dimension in film. Emission from massive speakers locate within the theatre enable the audience to relate more specifically to the situation depicted on the screen. With regard to "Earthquake" that entailed loud, racous, trembling sounds, often reaching the point where you felt as if you were really shaking. It was an excellent device to bring home the horror of the film. It helped retain the audience's interest where it otherwise would have lagged.

Although sensurround in itself was a success, "Earthquake" was not. Enriched by sensurround it is in that regard worthy of merit. It is not, however, a good movie - entertaining, certainly - good no. Keeping in line with the latest movie craze, it is a disaster film. And as the title suggests, shows the results of

## Donalee For A Third Time

by D. Moulton

Last Tuesday Saint Mary's University hosted W. O. Mitchell Canadian author of **Who has seen the Wind?** and **The Vanishing Point.** In a highly entertaining, extremely amusing evening W. O. Mitchell presented himself and his works as unique, individual, relevant, and Canadian. Speaking to an audience of over 100, Mitchell read from the aforementioned novels as well as doing a sequence from **Jake and the Kid** - a once popular radio and T.V. series.

Mingled with this assortment were views Mitchell holds and ideas he considers important, concerning writing. Absorption and observation are the requisites of a good writer he says. Quoting Clemens, Mitchell tells us, "One learns people through the heart" and the only expert in this field is the native novelist who has had years of unconscious absorption. Mitchell feels each writer possesses his own subconscious "notebook" and draws from this when he writes. It is this storage which enables the writer to draw the intricate balance between inner and outer. Therefore "every bit of illusion an artist creates is the truth". With reference to one of his works he says "Every single thing the truth, the whole thing a lie."

Officially Mitchell started writing at 18 at the University of Manitoba, although he does not consider these writings worthwhile. Influenced by such greats as Virginia Wolfe, Mitchell feels, "You're really writing for another part of yourself - the reader". Mitchell shared with the audience in an imaginative, amusing, alive evening his philosophy of writing which has made him one of Canada's bests - "something must come before the harness, the horse must come first and the horse is life."

an earthquake on a city, on people, on life. Filmed in California the San Andrea fault naturally was the cause for the earthquake. In the usual sequence of events - the before, during, and after effects of the catastrophe - comprised the format. The hero who died (just to differentiate it from "The Towering Inferno") unfortunately was Charleton Heston. Surrounding this great actor are a host of equal greats - Ava Gardner - his wife, Genevieve Bujould - his lover and Lorne Greene - his boss and father-in law. Typically the plot centered on these characters. Al-

though the acting quality of the film is unquestionably superb it alone cannot give a nondescript movie worth and quality. It helps though as George Kennedy aptly demonstrated. Playing the kind hearted bully of a cop Kennedy adds a touch of imagination to a thoroughly recycled plot.

Most disaster movies do lack imagination and individuality. However, the special effects usually help regain some of this loss. This was not the case with "Earthquake". Proportion was out, moves too jerky and hackneyed, uncoordinated and scenes often too

distantly related. The few well-done scenes lost whatever worth they had by the inconsistent portrayal of the earthquake. All the windows in huge skyscrapers fell shattering to the ground. On the top floor of one building were gathered a group of office workers. Suddenly smoke began to pour into the room! Quickly the boss yelled for someone to break a window. Unreal - the windows on the top would have been the first to break. Even better (worse) is after the earthquake quells, the sexy chick (every disaster has one) enters what remains of a small eatery.

Staring her in the face is a plate of do-nuts. She realizes she's hungry so after looking carefully around she gingerly removes the cover of the display stand and removes a do-nut. Ridiculous! Concrete buildings smash, cars are mutilated, a city is ravaged and yet this glass plate and cover intact! Drama is no excuse for inconsistency.

The former partner in the "Shake & Bake" duet "Earthquake" adds nothing to film, it is not even a well done disaster movie. As a first though it represents a unique dimension in sound and gives some credit to the film industry.

## No Burning Desire To See This One

by D. Moulton

Still playing at the Oxford Theatre is "The Towering Inferno", featuring Paul Newman, Faye Dunaway and Steve McQueen. With stars such as these, a movie must surely get off to a great start. Unfortunately "The Towering Inferno" never got off the ground.

Sister to "The Poisedon Adventure", brother to "Juggernaut" and best friend to "Earthquake", "The Towering Inferno" changed only the setting for disaster. This time the boat didn't tip or the earth split wide open - no - the world's largest skyscraper went up in flames. As another human catastrophe movie, the Inferno succeeded. As far as its much used plot is concerned, the message of the film is explicit. When people face death, the bonds of humanity

are joined together and man learns to respect life and drop the trivialities of material goods and status symbols (sound familiar?) Of course, the bad guy dies a horrid death, the kind-hearted lady also meets her fate, but the hero (this time two - how unique!) lives as a reminder to us all that not only do good guys come out ahead but they deserve to.

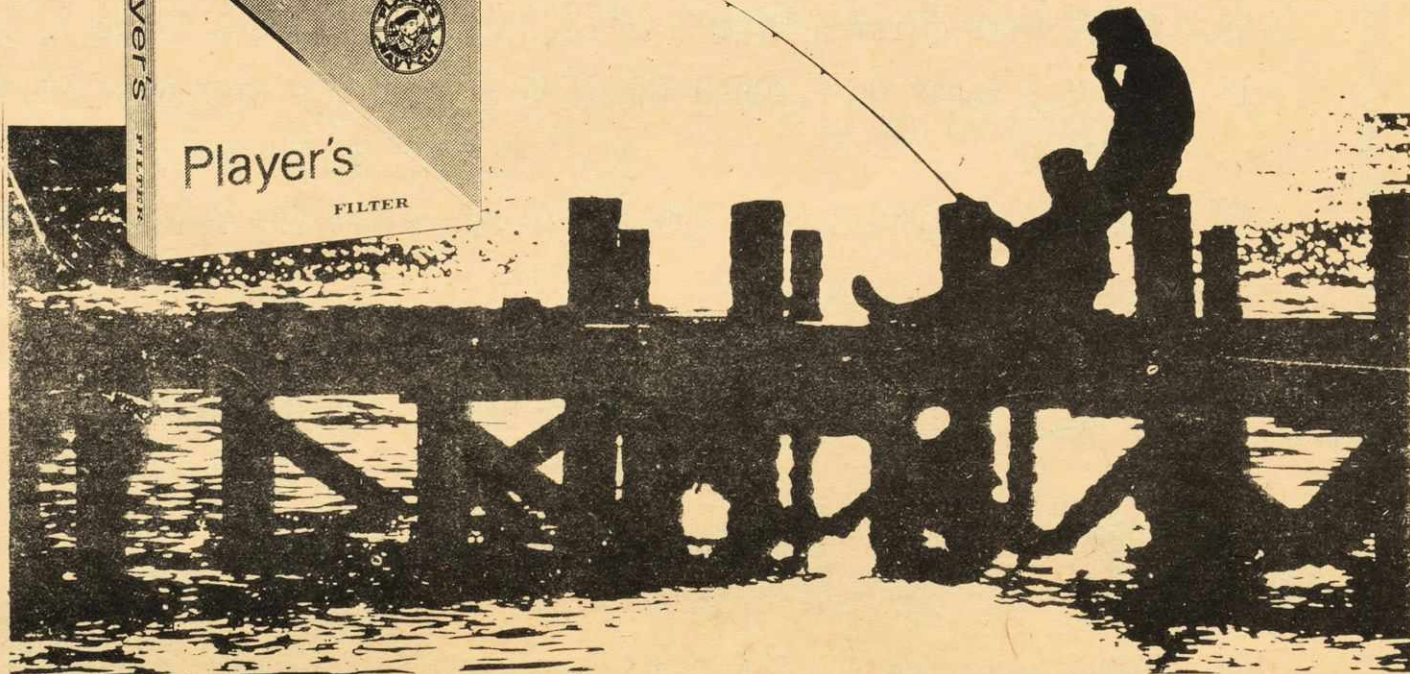
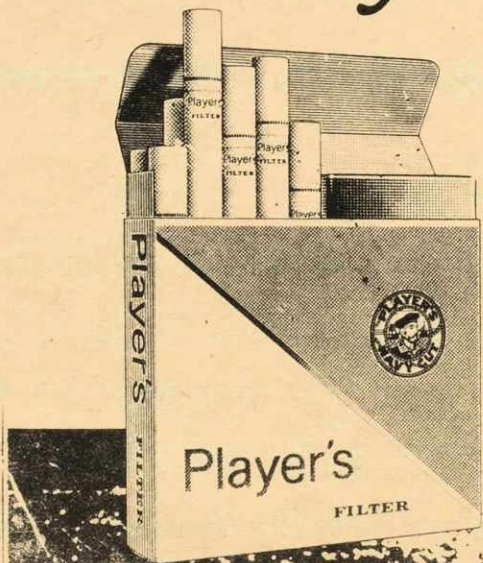
Labelled as a suspense filled drama, "The Towering Inferno" tries to place characters in a real life setting so that the life/death theme will seem a reality. It fails. How could it possibly succeed when actors like Newman are given such stereotyped lines as, "Oh, it was awful up there"?

Written for the screen by incorporating themes and set-

tings from "The Glass Inferno" and "The Tower", the film failed to achieve what both books did. With an over-used suspense core, the film resembled too many others. The only area where the movie was better than average was in the special effects area. However, it takes more than special effects and big names to make a good movie. "The Towering Inferno" was entertaining but it was not the kind of film one remembers weeks after or even days after. In fact, as women fall thousands of feet from a burning building, as ceilings crumble crushing human lives beneath, the audience sighs, checks watches and waits for the conclusion to "The Towering Inferno".



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