

Arts seminar set for March

The University has given \$2,000 to CON/FUSION.

And now CON/FUSION is getting organized in earnest.

After the success of last year's SCW Literary Seminar, a group of students and faculty proposed that it be followed up with a somewhat similar program of panels and presentations, but with its scope widened to include all the arts.

The proposal lay dormant over the summer. But recently the University Conference Fund came through with \$2,000 for the project.

So now it's full speed ahead for CON/FUSION: A Conference on the Arts.

Asked about the name, conference convenor John Thompson explained:

"The most exciting thing about the arts today is the state of confusion they're in.

"The trend of recent avant-garde developments has been towards erasing the boundary-lines between 'good' art and 'bad', between one art and the next.

"Happenings, 'chance' music, psychedelia, theatre of cruelty (like last year's *Marat-Sade* production by Studio Theatre), 'underground' cinema—all these are radically new ways of bringing arts into a new fusion. And there's where we got the positive side of our name.

"We hope the conference will be both a confusion of ideas and a fusion of minds. Certainly there's enough to debate about. Are these new developments just whims of fashion, are they actively sinister, or are they really the first stirrings

of a new spontaneity and verve in the arts?"

The conference will take place next March 27 through 29.

Its initial organizers are calling a meeting next Tuesday, December 5 at 8 p.m. in Tory 1-93, to which everyone interested in planning, organizing or just plain helping with the conference is invited.

"We want to get as many people involved as possible", says Shirley Swartz, conference treasurer. "I think the campus is ripe for this sort of affair, but there's a lot to be done, and many hands make light work.

"Also, we'd like to get away

from the deadly sort of feeling people sometimes get about conferences—that they're being run by just a few power-mad people. The more people we get 'fused' in the actual running of this particular show, the more successful it will be.

"We hope anyone who has ideas of things he'd like to see done within the general frame-of-reference of the conference will bring them forth on Tuesday".

By next Tuesday CON/FUSION's organizers hope to know whether their first objective has been attained successfully: that of obtaining an extra \$500 for the project from Students' Council.

McKuen's poems nice, but . . .

STANYAN STREET AND OTHER SORROWS; and LISTEN TO THE WARM, by Rod McKuen. Random House, \$4.70 each.

Rod McKuen bathes in the reflected glory of Glenn Yarbrough, who sings the songs that McKuen writes, and has written a preface to the first-mentioned of these two volumes.

It's difficult to say anything cogent about the contents of these books—one can lament the high price, comment on the beautiful binding, or worry about the fact that McKuen is Phyllis Diller's friend; but one cannot know

whether he is to treat the contents as song or as poetry.

That is no small problem, since the oral and written verse forms are so divergent in this age (God bless you, Leonard Cohen, for trying to bring them together again). As songs, even as light verse, McKuen's works are good, very readable, often very touching. But as poems, they are trite, shallow, seeking for profundity where it cannot be found.

John Ciardi, the poetry editor for the *Saturday Review*, once wrote that he judges poems by their first lines. By that standard, we can quote some first lines from McKuen that hold forth no promise of original and startling thought:

—This is the way it was
—How can we be sure of anything
—That time of loving may not come again
—Riding through the cities on the train

Well, I never did like John Ciardi anyway; but his little test does at least tell us that it wouldn't be fair to judge McKuen as poet. His songs are intended for easy listening, mood-capturing, description, and this he does very well indeed.

It is a shame, in a way, that McKuen is not the type of writer whose work will be subject to scrutiny by the scholars. He uses recurring images and symbols—the beach, certain colours—and yet one cannot feel it worthwhile to seek out the meaning of these.

There is, no doubt, a great deal more to be found between these two covers, for those who have the patience to find it. The books can be recommended for those who want nice, smooth, often gooey and often almost-meaningful writing; others had best shy away.

—Terry Donnelly

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films

Who is this guy "Cool Hand Luke?" What does he think he is doing cutting the tops off those parking meters? What the hell is he trying to prove?

Paul Newman sets out to explain this enigma in *Cool Hand Luke*, the current offering at the Capitol. As Lucas Jackson, he is sent to detention camp on a two year sentence for this malicious destruction of public property.

Luke isn't much different from the average citizen who objects to the injustice of the parking meter system, but his way of expressing it is considerably wilder.

His main problem in life is his refusal to tolerantly accept the injustice—he is always out to beat the system. Luke was born to raise hell. A loner not out to prove anything in particular, he leads his own brand of life which tends to run counter to the ordinary standards of acceptable behavior. The ensuing battle is both humorous and tragic.

When he gets to the camp he meets up with more rules: you call the captain "Captain", and you address the other minions as "Boss" and everytime you want to move, you ask permission. There is a whole list of supplementary regulations ranging from fighting down to chewing sunflower seeds in bed, and any contravention gives rise to "one night in the box," a correctional penalty something akin to standing in the corner at school.

Luke's first move is to upset the established social order among the prisoners. He finds himself in a battle with the big leader of the In group, Dragline, who no more succeeds in beating him down than anyone else. Physically Luke is conquered, but his obstinate refusal to stay down as long as he is able to rise draws the match to a stalemate.

His tenacity wins him the general acceptance of the inmates, including Drag, who sees the advantage in associating with a natural hero like Luke.

Luke's winning power bluff gives him the pot, and the nickname "Cool Hand Luke." Cool Hand Luke isn't particular about which system he is beating, and if there isn't one around which interests him, he makes his own. He claims he can eat fifty eggs.

"Why did you have to go and say fifty?" Drag asks him, and the confidence in "his boy" begins to waver at the apparent impossibility of the task. "Why not thirty-five?"

"Oh it seemed like a good round number." Luke takes on the whole camp in the wager, and is enshrined as immortal when he completes the task within the prescribed hour.

His tenacity is not met with the same appreciation from the establishment when he sets his mind to escaping. In the same remarkable way he took everyone's money, his escapes are as astonishing for their quality as for their quantity. He leads the dogs a merry chase over railway bridges, through streams, pig-pens, over barb-wire fences, dumping spices on his trail which gum up the tracking works, and eventually eluding all pursuit. It is only by luck that the system captures him.

"What we got here," the captain insists after Luke's first thoroughly anti-social attempt at escape, "is a failure to communicate." It must be true, because Luke is off again a short time later without asking permission. But the system is getting angry at this repeated flouting of authority and bears down on Luke.

And why isn't *Cool Hand Luke* turned into a humorous melodrama on the evils of parking meters? Because Luke is finally broken by discipline which is out of proportion with his antics. His stupidity is forgiven because of his obstinate soul, and there is something tragic when he is finally crushed by the system.

That one element of stubborn resistance remains with him, and like his fight with Drag, the battle with the system is drawn into a form of stalemate. He is beaten for his crime against society, but never into total submission.

Rosenburg has drawn steady aim on the main character of Don Pearce's novel, and with Newman's excellent performance, *Cool Hand Luke* can be warmly recommended.

—Gordon Auck

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