CINEMAGIC

Number 4

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THE THING
IN THE BASEMENT

Ro[illegible] and [illegible] Linda LaMunyon) ponder the situation on the [illegible] CONQUERS INFINITY (see page 11)

CINEMAGIC

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LETTERS

EDITORS' NOTE ON LETTERS: Send correspondence to Letters Department, CINEMAGIC, P.O. Box 125, Perry Hall, Maryland 21128. All letters become the exclusive property of CINEMAGIC. We reserve the right to edit all letters for grammar, spelling, length, etc. We will make every effort to publish a representative sampling of comments on CINEMAGIC, both favorable and critical.

Richard Allison
Admiral Productions
Rolla, Missouri

I think that the **creative** aspects of amateur filmmaking is where magazines such as **Super 8 Filmaker** and **Today's Filmmaker** leave one high and dry. Magazines such as these cater to people only superficially involved with making films, i.e., making "home movies." By dealing with the creativity in film, CINEMAGIC initiated a new concept in the field of amateur filmmaking periodicals.

Kenneth Marks
Niles, Michigan

The magazine reads like it's written by ten-year-olds for four-year-olds, and it doesn't seem to matter that we already **know** what the hell the writer is talking about.

Though I know this is an amateurs' magazine, some of the filmmaking techniques described are so ridiculous I wouldn't touch them with a ten foot pole. Britt McDonough's wire-and-paper towel creations are a constant source of hilarity for a friend of mine; and the "optical effects" in **The Logos Machine** seem more like **d**efects.

EDITORS' NOTE. *You write very coherently for a four-year-old, but we recognize your big problem:* nobody *should attempt animation via a ten-foot pole! Try using your hands.*

John Friedel
East Meadow, New York

I was saddened to hear about the end of the circulation of your fine magazine. I would like to say that it was the finest magazine that I had ever seen on the subject of cinefantasy, and I hope that you will revive it again in the future.

In issue #3 you stated that you had an article with illustrations on metal armatures and their construction which would be in issue #4.

EDITORS' NOTE: *Well, we are revived, but we can't recall confirming the ball and socket armature article for issue #4. We* did *say we would have such an article in the future, and we'll say it again: we* will *have a ball and socket armature technique article in a future issue—just when, though, depends on the writer of the piece and when* he *gets it to us. We hope that Bruce Dods' feature on a "poor man's armature" in this issue will suffice for a while. . . .*

Andy Austin
Okemos, Michigan

I was sorry to hear that CINEMAGIC had to go. I really enjoyed it. Some day I hope that someone comes up with another magazine as good as CINEMAGIC. I'm glad you at least got three issues out, and I hope you will start another magazine some time in the future.

Ervin Cartwright
First-West Film Productions

I don't know about other CINEMAGIC readers, but I would be willing to pay up to three or four dollars a copy if it would keep the magazine publishing.

EDITORS' NOTE: *We hope things never get* that *bad, but this issue with its higher price will serve as a test to see if fantasy fans are* really *willing to pay for a specialized magazine like CINEMAGIC.*

Bruce L. Davey
Fort Hood, Texas

Nothing but the word fantastic can describe your magazine. I have been an avid science fiction film buff for many years now and CINEMAGIC is just what I've needed to help correct the many problems that have besieged me in my past film attempts.

In your past issues I have been most fascinated by Britt McDonogh's **The Logos Machine,** Bill Schwarz's **Making A Life Mask** article, and of course, Bruce Dods' **Grog**. But your whole magazine is a showplace of fantastic ability in the realm of science fiction and fantasy films, and I have not yet found any article in CINEMAGIC that didn't hold my interest. I hope it continues to grow and bring to all filmmakers the helpful facts and tips that it does now.

Kenneth Walker
Norfolk, Virginia

I for one am really sorry to hear that CINEMAGIC is no longer around. I'm not familiar with any magazine that tried to do what you did. You are to be congratulated.

Remember, if you are ever able to start up production again, you'll have a lot of eager fans waiting out here!
EDITOR'S NOTE: *Amen!*

Robert A. Maine
Pasadena, California

My work on **Flesh Gordon** involved about ten months, and, along with animating the monster sequence I did several animation and traveling matte shots of the swan spaceship, some of the Tiger ships, and assisted in filming any number of the high-speed miniature shots in the film. Basically, though, I was an animator.

About half of the shots I did are not used in the film—the scenes were cut for editorial purposes but were technically as good or better than the shots used.

The main approach to the monster animation was to do a take off on **King Kong,** but using a creature designed like the Cyclops. The Cyclops configuration required careful animation of the legs, as they were quite large and conspicuous. Most leg movements required twenty to twenty-six frames per step for each leg. Unlike the Cyclops, **Flesh's** monster moved his arms as he walked and did many things requiring finger dexterity that required intricate animation, particularly when synchronized with live-action plates, such as his pulling the clothes off of Dale (live process of Dale) and tossing them away.

The major departure from traditional animation creatures was in making the monster talk. Originally he did **not talk,** but when I started shooting I thought it would be interesting to expand his range of facial expressions by giving him the ability to "mumble" as if he was slowly getting more and more annoyed with Flesh and his crew. I started the mumbling with no particular words in mind, and merely kept exaggerating the movements so as to coincide with the violent reactions. Later the

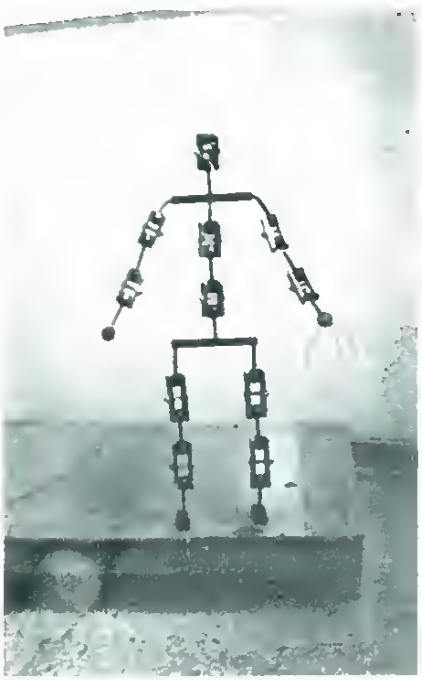
words were carefully dubbed in, and worked quite well. We had no dialogue or script when we shot—everything was done later at the sound lab.

Of course, the film required a lot of rear-projection process work on a screen about five feet across, and we did some split screen shots. Some of the longer shots of the monster involved traveling mattes and matte-paintings.

Animation was not particularly difficult, and on good days we might complete twenty seconds of film—all single frame. The hardest shots were those involving extreme depth-of-field, where the monster walked right into or away from the camera over a long distance. This was difficult because it was necessary for me to stretch out over large sets and twist way around set-pieces without jarring anything. These were slow shots to do.

All in all, the final monster sequence in **Flesh Gordon** turned out to be quite effective, and is one of the few sequences in recent years to utilize extensive miniature sets, process and matte shots, and matte paintings all together.

BELOW: The real McCoy—a ball and socket armature created by Bruce Crawford of Nebraska City, Nebraska, for his film DREAMS AND NIGHTMARES. A "cyclops" was molded over this armature.



REVIVAL!

(editorial)

Welcome to CINEMAGIC. For some of you this issue will be your first encounter with us; for many others, this will be a welcomed revival of a magazine which previously had published three issues—all within a one-year span—before succumbing to an "inevitable" death in early 1974.

Without wasting a lot of space here, suffice it to say that our "timing" was off back then, and that if we could have held out for four or five more months before folding up, we might have made it. However, the old CINEMAGIC era is finished—ring in a brand new start, from scratch, and hope that we can sustain ourselves from one issue to the next. Which brings up our new policy: we will **not** ask for subscriptions (or accept any). We will ask for money on an issue-to-issue basis only. This way nobody loses money. If, between issues, it looks as though our readers aren't going to support the following issue, we simply will stop publishing again. We certainly hope that doesn't happen, but by taking one issue at a time we can play it by ear, and see well in advance how the financial status of the magazine is shaping up. Put more simply: if you filmmakers and fantasy fans truly want CINEMAGIC magazine to continue, you'll have to support it.

In each issue we will have our own advertisement for the following issue (with some previews of articles and features) and an order blank. The thing we ask you to do is send your money for that next issue well in advance. That will help insure printing and distribution. For example: you now have a copy of CINEMAGIC #4 in your hands. Issue #5 will not be out for several months, but we ask that you send your money for **issue #5 only** to us **now.** This will give us a good advance idea of how many readers are willing to support us for each subsequent issue. We realize that this method is a lot less convenient than subscribing, but we will try to make things simpler by reminding you each issue to order the next one.

Enough business. We want to seize this opportunity to say how appreciative we are at the tremendous written response to our demise last year—hundreds of readers wrote to express their sorrow at the loss of CINEMAGIC, and we, quite frankly, were shocked! We knew there was a pretty large following out there, but we didn't realize how sincere the majority of our readers were about the magazine. Your many notes and letters genuinely touched us, and definitely had an influence on our deciding to revive the magazine. Without a lot of schmaltz, we would just like to say: thanks for caring.

See you next time—it may be a while, but if enough advance orders get to us quickly, CINEMAGIC #5 should be out within less than five months. Lots of terrific features coming in future issues, so stay tuned. . . .

— Don Dohler
— Mark Estren

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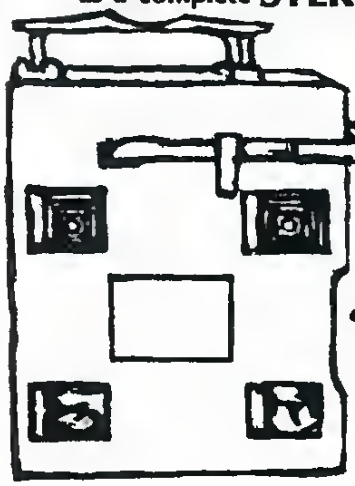

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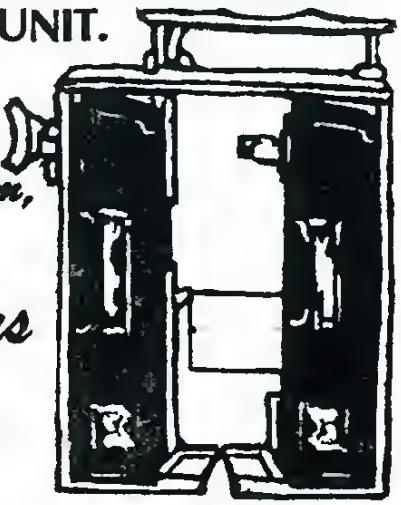

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Film Profile

THE EVILS OF ALCOHOL

by CRAIG REARDON

Craig Reardon, born in 1953, attended El Camino College in Gardena, California. He describes his college program as "courses in music and art, along with a smattering of academics." Craig enjoys almost anything allied with art (drawing, painting, sculpting, photography, etc.), but says his work at present is "lightweight" and "my sculpture is whimsical: it bears no message, but is instead self-indulgent in that I love to do entertaining fantasy scenes with as much technical polish as I can muster."

Craig says his inspiration comes less from so-called Fine Art than from movies, and mentions among his influences designer Saul Bass, composers Bernard Herrmann and Aaron Copland, directors John Ford, Alfred Hitchcock, Billy Wilder and Orson Welles, cameramen Joe August and Gregg Toland, make-up artists Dick Smith, and Jack Pierce, and special-effects man Ray Harryhausen.

Several years ago Craig produced a short, satirical film using a King Kong-inspired model that bears a striking resemblance to the original ape. Here is a short plot-synopsis of Craig's film, **The Evils Of Alcohol,** followed by a description of techniques used in the film.

THE PLOT

The film opens with a panoramic shot of a typical school campus, then cuts to a medium shot of a janitor sweeping up the grounds. He pauses a moment to indulge in a touch of the grape, and belts down a healthy swig of bourbon from a pint bottle he has taken from his hip-pocket. He then wipes the sweat from his forehead with his sleeve, and decides to take a breather in the shade near the school building.

As he sits on a bench guzzling his booze, he is reading a paperback version of "King Kong." He continues to read and drink, until (after several pints of bourbon), he looks up at a building across from him and sees a monstrous ape! The beast towers over the building and is charging at the janitor in a ferocious manner. The half-looped man picks up his rake and heaves it at the ape, but to no avail. Panicky, the janitor runs up into an open stairwell in an attempt to escape the ape's clutches. The ape tromps over to the building and starts punching the stairwell apart. After pulverizing a section of the building, the ape is able to get at the janitor, and picks up the screaming man.

Suddenly, we see a close-up of a horrified janitor waking up on the shaded bench near the school building. It was merely a drunken nightmare, the man realizes, as he drops the copy of "King Kong" in a nearby trashcan.

The end credits give us the moral of the story: If you're going to get plastered while you read, read a copy of Playboy to get much sweeter "nightmares."

— End

MAKING THE FILM

While I was in high school, I worshipped Ray Harryhausen and wanted to make a film with special effects as spectacular as his. Or almost, anyway. It also seemed like a fun notion to show King Kong trampling the campus, and when these two daydreams were eventually combined, the result was **The Evils Of Alcohol.**

To make the film I had to borrow a camera, and buy everything else—an editor, tripod, lights, and even a projector. So the investment was healthy. But I think in terms of film itself the project only cost me around twenty-five dollars. I had a pretty solid background in art, crafts, and theatrical make-up, and these things gave me a natural edge in fighting the enormous problems the film presented. I had two friends who offered great advice; they are Dick Smith and Rick Baker. The first is, in my opinion, the finest make-up man in the business, and my friend of six years. The latter is possibly the second finest make-up man in the business, even though he's relatively new to the game. Together, they furnished me with several shortcuts, and unlocked important secrets.

Jack Howard, my friend for several years from school, played the janitor. Although a non-actor, Jack did a great job. He looks like he's about fifty years old in the film, but he's not—it was a make-up job. I used a foam latex technique similar to the processes described in past issues of CINEMAGIC.

Having acknowledged these debts, I can say that the

rest of it is my film. I shot it, animated it, built the sets for it, edited it—the works. It took about a year to complete the film. This time was mainly spent making miniatures and then filming test reels of them. I was really in totally foreign territory when it came to experimenting with rear-projection. Although exasperating, **Evils Of Alcohol** became a great learning experience. Before doing it, I'd never made an animation puppet; nevar animated anything; never made miniature buildings; never shot any film except for vacation-type home movies; never had any acquaintance with rear-projection, lighting, or editing film. It was indeed challenging.

The miniature building in **Evils** was made from cardboard braced with balsa wood. The detailing was extreme and painstaking. All colors were matched by eye to the original school building, as were proportions. I used several photos of the real building to guide me. Even textures (as of the rough brick facade) were duplicated. I used an acrylic modeling paste, stippled on, for texture, and poster paints for color (they dry flat). Aside from brushes, sponges were used for painting, and razors, knives, and pins were used to form the cardboard. I used Duco cement exclusively, since it dries almost at once and bonds well. The brick effect was not actually three-dimensional; it was drawn on the cardboard with colored pencils. On camera, it worked. A tree made for the film was constructed out of papier mache mix formed over wire, with stained lichen representing the foliage (dilute oil paints make a good stain). The lawn in front of the building was more papier mache mix, textured with sawdust and painted with poster color. The set was constructed over a base of fiber board. Later, it was possible to pin the puppet Kong's feet to this stuff, to keep the model standing.

The ape was modeled in clay, and a plaster mold was cast in two pieces. A wire armature was soldered to fit the mold, and foam rubber was whipped up and poured into both halves. (I lacked an injection gun, so the rubber couldn't be introduced into a closed mold.) Fortunately, fresh-whipped rubber has a consistency like that of shaving cream, and it doesn't run. So I plopped the armature in one half of the mold, gingerly flopped the halves together, and baked it. The ape was pried out, painted grayish brown with a latex acrylic paint mix, and covered with crepe hair in a dark grey shade. This was glued on in the manner of a false beard, using latex as an adhesive, and trimmed. BBs were used for eyes; teeth were cast separately from latex and glued in the jaw.

My filmmaking set-up was extremely slapdash. I had access to our small home workshop, and so I set up the miniatures on my dad's workbench. I propped a ladder up and tied lights to that, and in what little room I had left I set up the camera. Angles were kept low to emphasize the illusion of the ape's height, even though the puppet was a mere seven inches tall. I used an

ABOVE: This particular shot of the model (taken from earlier test footage) bears an amazing resemblance to the original Kong.

extraordinary camera, a German make called Auto-Karena, with a superb Angenieux zoom lens. Lighting was severe, to simulate sunshine, and angled from above. The shots were varied to exploit the set (which was quite small), and to give the impression of greater movement. A backdrop was painted in forced perspective on a sheet of illustration board and propped behind the mini-set.

Animation using the wire-jointed puppet was agonizing. To be smooth, the tiny movements used in animation must be precise, and should progress in a constant forward (or backward) arc; otherwise the puppet seems jittery. With wire, this is difficult, because after you bend it, it tends to spring right back to where it was. You almost have to over-bend it to get it to move ahead—ahead one inch to gain a quarter inch, for example. This is not exactly precision! Unfortunately, I'd had no experience in building a jointed steel armature like the ones the pros use, so the wire one had become a necessary substitute evil. The whole animation sequence only took a week, but it seemed like a year, working in those cramped, cluttered surroundings, sweating out the stubborn puppet, the hot lights, and the frequent camera re-positionings.

One rear-process shot was used, but several others had to be discarded. Without going into detail, I can say that my findings to date are that rear-process is pretty impractical for amateurs using 8mm equipment. I suggest the beginner use miniatures and painted backdrops instead, as I now do. I might add that he should not saddle himself with having to reproduce a real background, but should start out with something imaginary.

The completed film (including titles which I created with crayons and Presstype letters) was entered in the 1971 Kodak Teenage Awards contest and won an award for special effects, which, after all, were the reason for the film's existence. I was quite pleased.

ABOVE: Top—The first view of Kong as seen by the janitor. The building and tree are miniatures. Bottom—Kong is punching apart the miniature building in an attempt to get at the janitor. OPPOSITE PAGE: The two-piece mold the ape was cast in. The round "keys" can be discerned on the flat mold surfaces, and inside the right half of the mold can be seen two small holes, which were drilled to allow the escape of excess foam latex when the mold was pressed closed. The mold is made out of plaster.

CREATING MINIATURE SETS WITH PAPIER MACHE

by Britt McDonough

I have been using a commercial papier mache material for miniature set construction, with great results. It's cheap, it's easy to work with, and it's great stuff—I find it much more controllable than plaster of paris. With this material it is possible to get fantastic detail (with a modeling tool and a lot of work), and detail is all-important in miniatures.

The commercial product is called Celluclay and is available from:

American Handicrafts, Inc.
1418 H Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005

They sell a one-pound bag for $1.00, or a five-pound bag for $4.00. Any arts and crafts supply store should have this material. Instructions on how to mix it come with the Celluclay. I suggest you use a large, flat pan about three inches deep. Put about a quarter inch of water in the pan. Remove the dry mache pulp from its plastic package and crumble it into as fine a material as possible as you sprinkle it into the pan of water. When you have filled the pan with this loose, hand-sifted mache, push it into the water and knead it with your hands, squeezing it tightly between your fingers until the mache and water are thoroughly mixed and there are no dry spots. Be sure, though, to have plenty of dry mache in the pan in the first place: about five parts mache to one part water. The tendency is not to add enough mache and to add too much water. If you don't add enough mache and it comes out too gushy or wet, it will be hard to model. If it is too dry (which happens much less often) add more water, sparingly, using your fingers to sprinkle it gradually into the mache.

You now should have a ball of mache four or five inches in diameter, ready for use. You can make weird plants or mushrooms out of it, or rocks, trees—anything! It's usually necessary to build an understructure of cardboard on which to model the mache; if the mache prop you build is hollow the mache will dry much faster. For example, I recently had to build a nest of three eggs out of the mache. I covered three of those plastic "L'Eggs" (the ones with pantyhose in them) with a thin layer of mache, to give them a more grainy texture. You can add exotic textures to the mache by pressing a coarse sponge into it, or one of those mesh-type sponges for cleaning dishes. Wooden modeling tools are very handy for control in modeling; however, be sure to wash them off in warm water when you're finished using them, or the mache residue on the tool will dry and render the tool useless.

Spreading and modeling mache over a flat cardboard surface, even Masonite (say, to make a background wall) is a problem because the mache tends to warp the material and make it curl with the mache side in. The thing I suggest is to use plywood, which is strong enough to resist the pressure of the mache. You might experiment with pinning down a piece of cardboard to keep it flat while the mache is drying, or you might try putting weights on it.

Mache takes about two days to dry thoroughly; the time depends on the thickness and shape of the object you make from it. As mentioned in the instructions with Celluclay, putting it in an oven at 150-200 degrees (no higher!) accelerates the drying time. It helps to put objects on a grating, or to somehow get air circulating all around the wet mache object. Any side that is not exposed to air will take longer to dry.

I really suggest you buy the Celluclay product rather than make your own papier mache, because it is inexpensive (five pounds goes a long way) and the consistency of the material is very fine and controllable. You can make very smooth objects if you want with Celluclay (a prop ashtray, for example). I'd also like to warn you from buying other brands of ready-mix papier mache —I have tried a few others and they are of a rougher consistency than Celluclay, thus making fine textured detail virtually impossible.

If you wish to make your own mache instead of buying Celluclay, it is certainly possible, but not as convenient as using the commercial product (and the mache may not be as controllable). In this case, buy some wallpaper paste in a hardware store and mix it with scraps of tissue or newspaper and, of course, water. However, making it yourself is, in my opinion, more work than it's worth, as the Celluclay is reasonably priced and ready to use.

A papier mache cave created out of "Celluclay."

rod flash conquers infinity

Interview by DALE WINOGURA

Photos: BEN BURTT

It's exciting and sometimes truly remarkable to see what one can do with limited time and resources, and a couple of USC Cinema majors have done just that.

In a 16mm, six-minute short entitled **Rod Flash Conquers Infinity,** Ben Burtt, Jr. and Richard L. Anderson have wildly spoofed science fiction serials of old, and with a surprising degree of talent and professionalism. The special effects in **Rod Flash** were done with satirical intent by Richard Anderson.

The film was made in May of 1973, with a total production time of one month, and starred its two makers, plus a busty brunette (Linda LaMunyon).

Ben Burtt, Jr. was born July 12, 1948 in Syracuse, New York, and was a filmmaker even at ten years of age when he produced pie and fist fights, and chases, in 8mm. He received an undergraduate degree in Physics from Syracuse University and came to USC for a graduate program in film production.

Richard Anderson was born in Kirkwood, Missouri on August 8, 1951. He was a Biology major in a small Missouri school, then transferred to USC. Like Burtt, he also made 8mm films in his early years.

Along with **Rod Flash,** Burtt did a seven-minute short at Syracuse University entitled **Genesis,** which is a colorful, splashy special effects film about the creation of the universe.

The following discussion with Burtt and Anderson was taped at USC after a screening of the two films.

Q.—How did the basic idea for Rod Flash **come about?**

A.—(Burtt) I was taking the special effects class presented by the SMPTE, a non-credit course, this semester (Spring, 1973). Richard was taking an animation class, and both of us had to do some sort of project. Richard was going to build a dinosaur, and animate it. We went to see **Destination Saturn,** a feature version of the **Buck Rogers** serial, and we both had such a good time that the next morning we made a storyboard based on that, which took an extra day. Rod Flash was a character I played in my old 8mm films, and we added Buddy and Dale.

Q.—In your own words, what is the story?

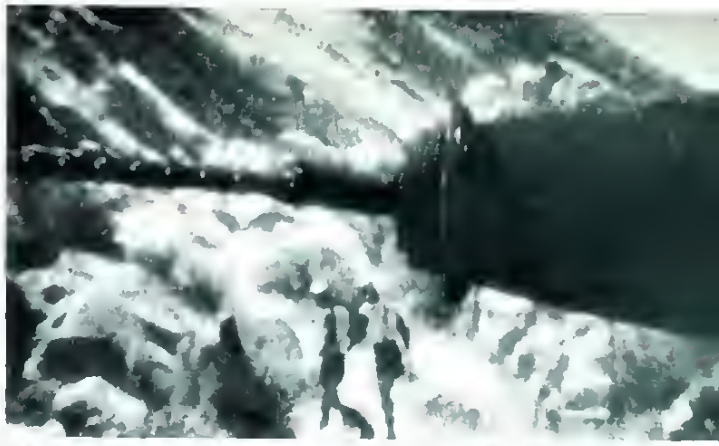
A.—(Burtt) It's Chapter 78 in the never-ending adventures of Rod Flash that also has no beginning. This particular episode is their trip to Extraneous, where they're trying

Top: Rod tells Dale to go "search for some radioactivity." Bottom: Richard Anderson animates the dinosaur which he created for the film.

to find some rare elements to perfect the "Anti-Creation Device." They are attacked by a dinosaur; Rod is eaten, Buddy gets wiped out by its tail, and Dale is squashed. However, we do have a sequel planned, not in production yet. . . .

Q.—What were some of the major production problems?

A.—(Burtt) Like almost any film, time and money are the two biggest things. Technically, the biggest challenges with the three-dimensional animation and front projection composite work, the basis for the film's effects. There were no mattes done. We went out on location, shot the actors running around, processed the film, projected it one frame at a time, and animated the dinosaur in front of the screen. The image from the projector is reflected off a partially-silvered glass and onto the screen.
(Anderson) Really good Scotch-Lite glass is very expensive, and you can only but it in four-hundred-foot rolls. We got some stuff which is technically put out for roadside signs. We had some problems with the color, in that the projected backgrounds went very greenish, and they had to correct for that in the printing at Technicolor Lab.



ABOVE: Front-projected background (note ladder), and miniature spaceship.

BELOW: Top—The dinosaur posed in front of the front-projection screen (Scotchlite). Note the "terrain" on the table, which completes the illusion that the beast is right "in" the scene. Below—A front-projected Ben Burtt battles the dinosaur model.

Q.—How was the spaceship effect done?

A.—(Anderson) I took a plastic V-2 rocket kit and put the engine stuff on the outside. It was about six to seven inches long. For the shot of the actors coming out of ship, we put the ship in front of the screen. We had a ladder in a tree at Vasquez Rocks, photographed us walking down it, blocked off the tree with the rocket ship, and re-photographed it. We used Fay Wray's screams from an old movie when Dale screams. The music was high-cue Columbia stock music, used in old TV shows. The sound effects were the old Flash Gordon raygun and spaceship sounds.

Q.—Ben, how did Genesis **come about?**

A.—(Burtt) That was made several years ago (1971); I was taking an animation class at Syracuse University. It was about a year or so after **2001**, and I was still caught up in all the effects in that—especially the streak photography in the star-gate sequence, which I emulated in a smaller way. For planets, I projected various slides and gels on a sanded volleyball, and hung it on the ceiling. The swirling plasma and lava effects were all liquids photographed in a beaker, about one inch across, of various chemical precipitates. The red material was pharic hydroxide, backed with a red light. I stirred it, photographed it slowing down, and reversed it to get a speeded-up effect.

Q.—The idea of the film seemed to come from the creation scenes in Fantasia.

A.—(Burtt) Yes, it must have. I envisioned the creation of the universe originally as set to a piece by Beethoven, and made the storyboard for that. By the time I finished the film, I became tired of that so I cut it to Stravinsky's "Firebird Suite." I ran tests on everything before I shot it, so I could get the right high-contrast look.

EDITORS' NOTE: The full story on the making of ROD FLASH and GENESIS, plus a complete profile on Ben Burtt, will be a part of the upcoming CINEMAGIC book. See page 17 for details.

PRESS NOTICES

We have now expanded our Press Notices section to include a wide variety of news, information, and miscellany, as well as production notes about amateur films currently in the filming stages. We urge you to send any information to us that you feel is pertinent to this section. If possible, always try to include a photo or illustration, especially with film notices. Send info and photos to: **Press Notices c/o CINEMAGIC, P.O. Box 125, Perry Hall, Maryland 21128.**

Byron Roark and Arnold Fenner of Kansas City recently completed the super 8 production, **Admire The Warrior,** a swashbuckling adventure/horror film set in Europe, with vampires and other types of supernatural creatures. The project culminated into an amateur epic, with period costumes and sets, location filming, and a meticulously staged swordfight. **Admire The Warrior** is a sync-sound, color film costing over $500.00 to produce. It stars Glenda Harrison, Derek Johnson and Arnold Fenner.

Mike Behrman and his **MBKA Productions** are currently at work on **Manlock,** a half-hour, 16mm sound, animation feature. The story is about a demon—Manlock —who lives on a strange mountain on another planet, who has done some dastardly deeds to a neighboring planet. In retaliation, the other planet sends a robot spaceship to destroy Manlock. The film is scheduled for completion in winter of 1975. **MBKA Productions** is based in Chelsea, Michigan.

Harding Film Productions of Adelphi, Maryland, is pleased to announce the completion of **A Man Called Ziegler,** based on a short surreal fantasy story by Herman Hesse written in 190B. Filmed in regular 8 color, the plot centers on the experiences a man has at the zoo after taking a mysterious pill he discovered in an alchemist's lab. When the animals start talking to Ziegler, he knows something must be wrong. . . . In the cast are Joe Bovello, Tom McGovern, Laird White, Gus Garrett, Jim Harding, Dennis Felts and Monica Rupp. The film runs twenty minutes.

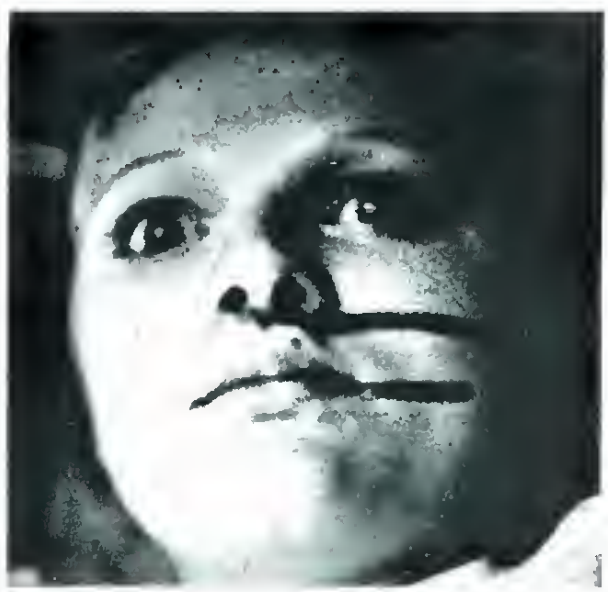
The finishing touches are being applied to **Theta State,** a super 8 film being produced by Russell Scott of Port Washington, New York. A number of weird creatures have been constructed for the film, including a wire-and-latex Harpie. **Theta State** is being shot on a Bauer C-Royal camera, and will be two-hundred feet in length.

Centaur Films of Otisville, Michigan has completed a spy-action thriller entitled **Blade, The Man From A.C.E.** The film stars Rod Jakubik as "Blade" (a handicapped agent who is a double leg amputee, but not confined to a wheelchair), Ted Rae as "The Hitman," and Greg Glashauser as "Travsisco" (the film's villain). **Blade** was scripted by Rod Jakubik, with special effects by Ted Rae. The film was shot in super 8 color and has a running time of twenty-five minutes.

Scott Campbell and 8ill Chessman and their **New Bisco Productions** recently filmed **Attack Of The Space Creeps,** a stop-motion and live action super B color/sound production about a couple of tiny creatures from the asteroid "Goss" who have to bag a human as their initiation test for the "Gossian Signal Corps." The film is based on Scott's story "The Stalking Of Steve Andrews." Sets for the film include an interior and exterior of a flying saucer. **New Bisco** is an Orlando, Florida-based amateur film company.

Sp4 Hubert "Buzz" Dixon and Joe Faber, both stationed at Ft. Huachuca in Arizona, are scripting **Private Jekyll And Sergeant Major Hyde.** The film will be a twelve-minute horror-farce utilizing make-up, but not any special visual effects.

This girl has nosebleed—and mouthbleed. From the full-length feature, FIEND!, produced by Joel Uman's White Noise Productions of Los Angeles, California. The film is currently in search of nationwide distribution.



Paragon Film Productions of Salinas, California recently wrapped up filming of **Disciples Of Dracula,** a full scale super 8 sound production with a running time of ninety minutes! A miniature castle was used in the film, along with several interior sets. The cast includes Tom Dewey, Lynn Michaels, Mark King, Mary Sheppard, and Ervin Cartwright (who also wrote and directed the film), as well as fifteen supporting actors.

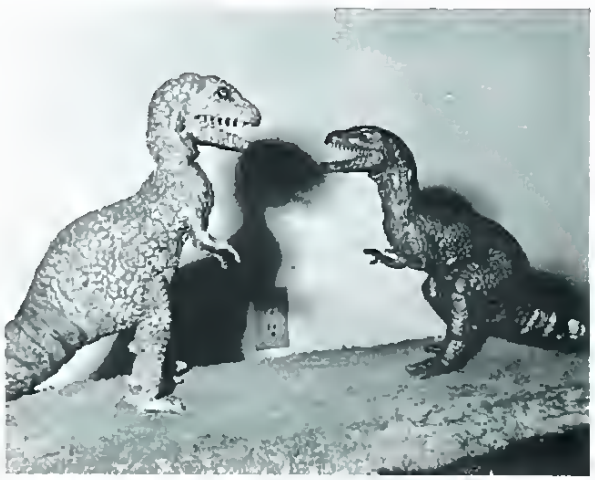
Blue Pooh Studios of Elyria, Ohio have been working on three films. The first is a **Blob**-inspired movie using three-dimensional animation and miniature sets. The second film is a science fiction cartoon. The third production is a live-action vampire film being shot in various locations in Ohio. It stars Steve Pesta as the fiend, Kathy Kunert as the heroine, and Dennis Jackson as the hero. Various victims include Dennis Hildebrandt and Ralph Hines.

Scripts and storyboards are currently in the works for **The Seedling Man,** to be filmed this summer by Frank Kautman of Linden, Michigan. The film will also require the construction and animation of several prehistoric creatures.

Robert Aucutt of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, is working on a new super 8 color/sound film about an undiscovered artist who cannot communicate with people. He is unable to cope with reality and instead lives the worlds of his bizarre paintings.

Andy Mosier of Phoenix, Arizona is hard at work on his fourth animated cartoon, entitled **Marvin's Gas Station,** using his original character, Marvin Mouse. The cartoon is being produced in super 8 color, and will have an original soundtrack. Andy began production in September of 1974.

These two stunning models were created by Bob Young (the Tyrannosaurus) and Gary Jacobson (the Allosaurus) of Tyrone, New Mexico. Both men are at work on films using these models.



Wolf Lore Cinema, a new independent company out of Adrian, Michigan, has begun production on **The Demon Lover,** a high-budget 35mm film to be released theatrically in October of 1975. The main setting for the film is an actual castle located in Jackson, Michigan. Music for **The Demon Lover** is being provided by recording stars Ted Nugent and the Amboy Dukes, who will also make a special guest appearance in the film. Donald G. Jackson and Jerry Younkins share credits for writing, producing and directing.

Janis Romero and friend from THE DEMON LOVER.

Amateur filmmakers, we assume, are eagerly seeking an appreciative audience for their films. Afterall, once you've run through showings to your friends, family, and neighbors, what do you do with your films? Many filmmakers stuff them away neatly into a drawer for "safe keeping." Safe from what? What good is it to have spent hours, weeks, and even months putting together a decent film production only to hide it away? It is our thinking, and that of an increasing number of amateur filmmakers, that several amateur film festivals and contests held each year throughout the United States are an excellent source for "exposure" of your films, **and** your name or production company name—especially if you have aspirations of one day making films on a professional level.

The trouble is, many so-called "festivals" offer nothing for the majority of films entered. It seems that only the winners get attention, recognition, or prestige (by being written up in magazines, for example). So if your film doesn't win anything, you are left high and dry, often without even knowng how you fared against other entries or for what reasons the judges eliminated your

film. Luckily, such cold tactics don't apply to all film contests. Here is a run-down of the few well-run amateur film contests (including the one sponsored by CINEMAGIC's staff) each year. You can count on these contests and festivals to handle your films with care, let you know what the results of the competition are, be prompt in returning your films, and to give you some valuable written comments and suggestions:

THE PERRY HALL FILM FESTIVAL—As mentioned, this one is handled by the CINEMAGIC staff. Every type of film is eligible except travelogues, but a special award plaque is given each year to the most unique fantasy-type film. The overall contest winner (first place, that is) receives a handsome "Oscarette" trophy with engraved nameplate. All of the first five place films receive large, classy-looking Certificates of Award; and the next five place films (six through ten) receive equally nice Honorable Mention certificates. In addition, the first, second and third-place films get a cassette tape critique by the judges. **All** films receive written comments and suggestions, along with judges' scoresheets, contest results and statistics, and a brief write-up about all of the films entered. Many CINEMAGIC readers entered last year (we received a total of thirty-seven films), and we are looking for an equally good turn-out this year. The entry fee is only $1.00 per film to cover postage/insurance when returning the films. We ask that you use regular film mailing containers, or enclose a "Jiffy" mailing bag to return your films. The deadline this year is September 25, 1975. We will return all films as soon as it is humanly possible (probably within a couple of weeks). For details and an entry form write:

Don Dohler
Perry Hall Film Festival
12 Moray Court
Baltimore, Maryland 21236

THE AMATEUR-8 CONTEST—This fine contest is now in its fourth successful year and is smoothly-run by the inimitable Phil Preston. All types of films are eligible. The noteworthy aspect of this contest is that every film, win or lose, receives an **extensive** comment/suggestion summary sheet which carefully analyzes the good and weak points in your film. The Amateur-8 motto: "No amateur film is bad—some are just better than others." Certificates of award are given to the best eight entries (all equally sharing the winning spot), and honorable mention certificates are given to at least four other films. Final results and statistics of the contest are sent to all entrants. There is **no** entry fee, and films are promptly returned. The deadline is November 10, 1975, and details and entry forms may be obtained from:

Phil Preston
Amateur-8 Contest
2971 Longmeadow Drive
Trenton, Michigan 48183

(Note: Both the Perry Hall and Amateur-8 contests are for regular 8mm, super 8mm and single 8mm films only.)

NORTHWEST SIX BEST—This contest is held in March every year. All types of films, in regular 8mm, super 8mm, or 16mm are eligible. Each entrant receives the judges' scoresheets with written comments, plus a printed results sheet. A very nicely run contest, with a reasonably fast return of films, and confirmations sent out quickly when they receive your films. The six best films receive gorgeous certificates of award. A highly recommended contest. To be put on their mailing list for next year, send your name and address to:

Northwest Amateur Movie Council
P. O. Box 545
Tacoma, Washington 98401

As mentioned, the first annual Perry Hall Film Festival was held in September of 1974. Thirty-seven films were received from around the country. The first place film received a gleaming "Oscarette" trophy and a certificate of award. Here are the official results of the contest:

CERTIFICATES OF AWARD:

1. **Dog Catcher Marvin** (Andy Mosier, Phoenix, Ariz.)
2. **Possessed** (Phil Preston, Trenton, Mich.)
3. **Invasion** (Richard Allison, Rolla, Mo.)
4. **Trinity Circle** (Phil Preston, Trenton, Mich.)
5. **Leg Lifts** (Richard Allison, Rolla, Mo.)

HONORABLE MENTION CERTIFICATES:

6. **Pay To The Piper** (Gothic Films, Bethalto, Ill.)
7. **Disciple of Dracula** (Gothic Films, Bethalto, Ill.)
8. **Flat Baroque** (Joe Boyd, Bellingham, Wash.)
9. **The Remains** (Frank Toms, Spartanburg, S.C.)
10. **La Ficelle** (Rose Dabbs, Bronx, N.Y.)

PLAQUE—MOST UNIQUE FANTASY FILM:
Richard Allison, Rolla, Mo. (**Leg Lifts**)

Divine and George Stover. **Photo: B. V. Moore**

That's George Stover as a priest in the latest John Waters film, **Female Trouble.** In the hot seat is the world-famous Divine, who weights in at about 300 pounds. That scar on Divine's face is chunks of latex—a make-up job by Van Smith, who is Divine's personal make-up man. In the film, Divine gets acid thrown in "her" face after she cuts off someone's hand. Nasty business . . . **Female Trouble** had its world premiere last October at the University Of Baltimore's Langsdale Auditorium. It has since been playing (in blown-up 35mm) at the RKO—59th Street in New York City. John Waters, in case you didn't know, is from Baltimore, and also produced the way-out **Pink Flamingos.**

Photo: Frank Debelius

Last Easter weekend (March 28 - 30), an assemblage of over 800 fantasy and science fiction fans gathered at a Hilton Inn hotel in suburban Baltimore County, Maryland, to enjoy **Balticon 9,** the ninth annual convention sponsored by the Baltimore Science Fiction Society. Combined efforts of the **Balticon 9** committee (lead by chairman Charlie Ellis) and CINEMAGIC's Don Dohler produced one of the most intriguing fantasy conventions ever. Among the many programs, events, and sights to behold at **Balticon 9** were two real robots (from Quasar Industries), a moog synthesizer demonstration, several science fiction panel discussions (with such notable authors as Hal Clement and Fred Saberhagen), a live monster make-up demonstration by Ed Litzinger, a comic art discussion by Berni Wrightson, and (we've intentionally saved this for last) a fabulous program of original 16mm fantasy films, a special effects film workshop, and an amateur film contest. We could use ten pages here to cover **Balticon 9** in total, but we'll stick to topics close at hand (and heart). Let's take the three film programs in order:

THE AMATEUR FILM CONTEST

Twenty-five films were entered from all over the country. The films were broken into two public showings: one on Friday evening, March 28th, to a crowd in excess of 250, and one Saturday evening, March 29th, to an audience of about 200 fans. The contest was open to all 8mm and super 8mm films of a fantasy nature. Judges Gary Svehla, Rich Dixon, and Rick Neff selected the top three films: **THE CURE** (PHIL PRESTON, TRENTON MICHIGAN) and **ATTACK FROM OUTER SPACE** (DENNIS AND ROBERT SKOTAK, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN), were awarded a virtual tie for first place. Both films received winners' checks in the amount of $35.00 and handsome certificates of award. **INCREDIBLE INVASION** (DAVID V. GREGORY, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA) received a check for $10.00 and a certificate of award. In addition, the judges selected the following films for special awards: **THE LOGOS MACHINE** by Britt McDonough of Hillcrest Heights, Maryland for special effects; **INCREDIBLE INVASION** by David V. Gregory of Los Angeles, California for special effects; **THE MONSTER FROM BELOW** by Daniel Karlok of Orange, Connecticut for favorite monster; **POSSESSED** by Phil Preston of Trenton, Michigan for delightful perversion.

There will be another amateur fantasy film contest at next year's Balticon (to be held Easter weekend), and we urge you readers to polish up those films and to enter them.

THE SPECIAL EFFECTS WORKSHOP

This interesting new twist to a convention was held Saturday afternoon, March 29th. An enticed audience of

LEFT: Top—The evil Grog model from ABDUCTION OF GROG, one of several models on display at "Balticon 9." Middle: Mrs. CINEMAGIC herself—Pam Dohler—and Tony Malanowski pose as Tony takes a break from being made-up by Ed Litzinger. Bottom: Bruce Dods and Britt McDonough during the special effects workshop.

over one hundred film and fantasy fans watched films, asked questions of the filmmakers, and got a first hand view of several props and models from the films. A world premiere showing of Bruce Dods' **Grog** led off the workshop, followed by a sneak preview of new footage of Bruce's sequel, **The Abduction Of Grog.** Bruce answered many questions about the films, and explained many of the techniques he employs. On hand for the fans to see and hold were the original Grog model, a few of the snakes from **Grog**, and the new "evil" Grog creature from **Abduction Of Grog.**

After that, Britt McDonough showed workprint footage from his latest 16mm fantasy production, **Splat!** He followed suit in answering questions from the audience and displaying several of the animation models from **Splat!,** and some of the models and props from **The Logos Machine.**

Next, Steve Polwort represented filmmaker Dick Taylor by showing outtakes of special effects sequences from Dick's **The Thing In The Basement** (story elsewhere in this issue). This was followed by a gun blast demo film made by Dick, afterwhich Steve answered questions from the audience.

After the film showings and question/answer periods, Bruce Dods, Britt McDonough, Steve Polwort, and Don Dohler were on hand to talk shop with the fans. It was one of the most successful and entertaining programs of the entire convention. More of the same is on tap for next year.

THE 16mm FILM PROGRAM

These films, not included in with the 8mm contest, became a unique part of afternoon and night programs at **Balticon 9:**

GROG (Bruce Dods)
COMICBOOK (Dick Taylor)
RENEWAL (Dick Taylor)
NEVERWHERE (Richard Corben)
ROD FLASH CONQUERS INFINITY (Ben Burtt)
TERMINAL VELOCITY (Dave Berry)
DO NOT DISTURB (Bill George)

Workprint footage from:

THE THING IN THE BASEMENT (Dick Taylor)
SPLAT! (Britt McDonough)
THE ABDUCTION OF GROG (Bruce Dods)

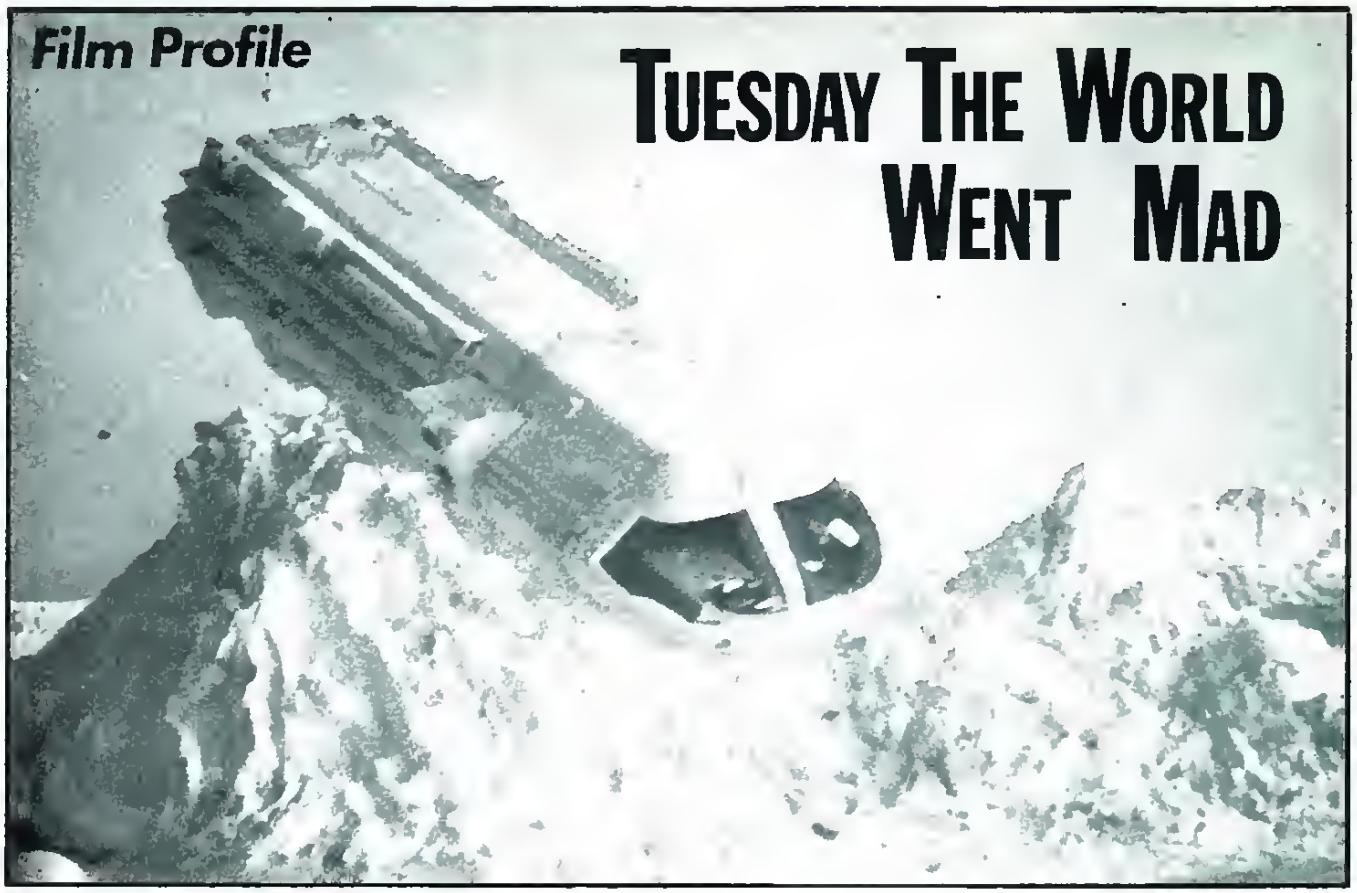
In the professional category, the **Star Trek** blooper reels were shown on Saturday night, as well as two full-length features: **The Day The Earth Stood Still** and **Things To Come.**

All in all, **Balticon 9** presented a special blend of fantasy films and filmmakers, film workshops, and related fantasy programs—enough variety and intrigue to satisfy the most demanding film fan. If you can scratch up some traveling and hotel money by Easter weekend of 1976, definitely plan to come to Balticon 10. It is already in the planning stages and should easily equal or surpass this year's version. To be put on the **Balticon 10** mailing list, send your name and address to:

Charlie Ellis
4221 White Avenue
Baltimore, Md. 21206

Film Profile

TUESDAY THE WORLD WENT MAD



TEXT, PHOTOS, AND ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOEL UMAN

During the spring and summer of 1971 I produced a 25-minute science fiction/fantasy film, **Tuesday The World Went Mad,** in collaboration with Claude Castravelli, who doubled as actor and special effects assistant. Here is a short plot synopsis of the film:

As the film opens, Moon Base has picked up an unidentified flying object on their radar. They launch an "interceptor" to investigate, and the interceptor is quickly shot down by the UFO. Moments later the UFO desrtoys the Moon Base itself.

The titles appear on the screen next, and then the scene switches to Earth. For no apparent reason, a major power station blows up and is completely destroyed. We now meet the protagonist, a young university student who is driving his car home. Turning on the car radio he learns of a rash of unexplained explosions—both on the moon and on Earth. But in the middle of the broadcast, the radio dies and the car stalls. The protagonist runs home through strangely deserted streets, and soon arrives at his apartment. His arrival is watched by a sinister toy robot which acts as though it has a life of its own. The robot locks all the doors and seals all the windows in the apartment and then comes after the protagonist. A scuffle ensues as the human tries to escape—but the robot sets fire to a record player and the fire engulfs the apartment, trapping the human. The robot finally corners the protagonist at the top of a long flight of stairs. The mechanical alien opens fire on the human, who falls to his death at the foot of the stairs.

END

Tuesday featured a number of special effects, particularly in the prologue, which is set on the moon. This entire sequence was shot in miniature and featured a moonscape complete with a "moon base" and two spacecraft.

All the miniatures were very small, the moonscape being an area approximately four feet by three feet. The base of this miniature set was two two-by-three-foot pieces of quarter-inch plywood mounted on a large table. Since this was a small miniature, none of the lunar rocks would be very high, and only a limited number of supports would be needed under the plaster of Paris rocks. I used such things as small, four-inch-square boxes and film cans from hundred-foot loads of 16mm film. Most miniature moonscapes have very tall, very thin mountains, which is anything but the way a moonscape should look. In addition, these models are almost always very roughly textured, when the small size of the miniatures dictates that they be very finely and minutely detailed and textured. With these things in mind I set out to build my lunar rocks, helped by some color photos from the Bantam paperback **The New Dictionary & Handbook of Aerospace**. Since I would only be shooting from the "front" of the set, I did not of course need to finish the backs of the mountains, and in fact the supports (boxes, film cans, etc.) were quite visible at the back. I kept lunar craters to a minimum, as they tend to look rather silly when overdone.

Since the moonscape for **Tuesday The World Went Mad**

would have to represent several different areas of the moon, after shooting certain scenes the moonscape was reworked and photographed again. This saved money and a lot of time, and the results on the screen are, I think, excellent. The plaster was painted grayish brown. All lighting was done from one side, which resulted in a very contrasty moonscape—just as it looked on the pictures relayed from the moon on the various Apollo missions.

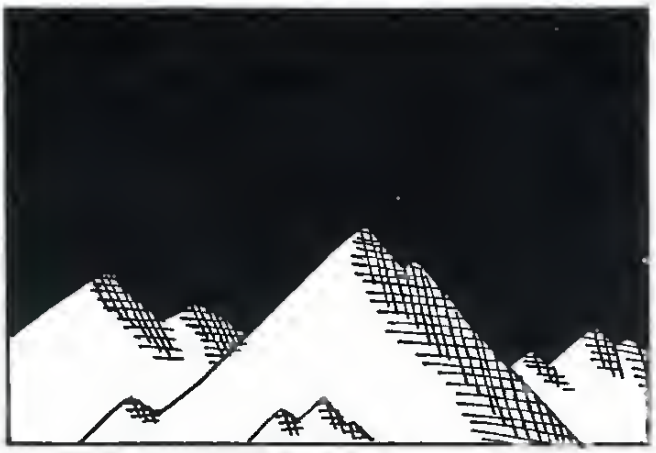
The Moon Base set was to be represented by two silver domes. For the long shot two ping pong ball halves were used; for close-ups two rubber ball halves, approximately eight inches in diameter were used. I used silver spray paint, and after several experiments decided **not** to give them any details. For some reason they looked much more realistic without miniature hatches or radar dishes added. In retrospect, the use of domes for the moon base was a mistake, because even though they looked excellent in the finished film, there is always one joker in the audience who shouts out "Aw, it's only a beach ball!"—which is not very encouraging. I would suggest the use of shapes that don't immediately make the audience think of what **might** have been used as the basis of your miniature. On the English television series **UFO** the moon base looked like two volleyballs, even though it wasn't! All their careful working in the building and detailing of two miniatures was nullified by their unfortunate choice of shape for the moon base.

For the two spacecraft I used two commercially available plastic models and extensively modified them. The moon base's interceptor craft was based on Aurora's excellent moon bus from **2001:A Space Odyssey.** The mysterious UFO from my film was based on Aurora's "flying saucer" from **The Invaders** television series of several years back. Both spacecraft were spray painted matte white, and a miniature light and battery system was hooked up to the moon bus to illuminate its interior.

A black cloth was set up behind the moonscape to serve as the background, and the two spacecraft were suspended on black thread. With careful lighting the thread was rendered virtually invisible. Several different techniques were used to impart motion to the spacecraft. For some scenes the UFO was swung back and forth in a pendulum-like manner—while suspended on three threads—so that it would appear to rush right at the camera and then swoop over it. For most of the other scenes I simply zoomed into and past the model while it was suspended in front of the black background. On the screen it looks as though the spacecraft is moving towards and past the camera. The most successful use of this technique came when this shot was combined with a static shot of the moonscape via double exposure (figure 1). This technique is only possible when you have a camera (such as the Bolex I used) that can rewind the film and hopefully also has a good frame counter. In the scene in which the moon bus lifts off from the surface of the moon, I had Claude Castravelli lift up the spacecraft with four black threads, and at the same time use a small rubber blower (such as is used for cleaning camera lenses) to stir up some plaster dust as the ship "took off," as if the rockets were stirring up the moon dust. Filmed at 64 frames per second to slow down the action of the dust, the effect is startlingly realistic.

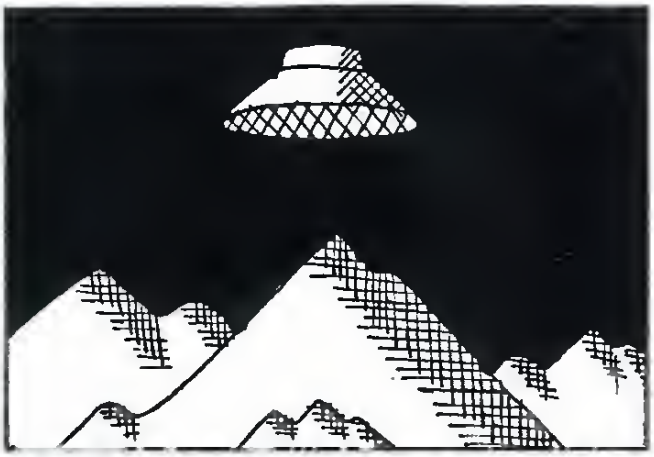
Figure 1

1.



2.

3.



ABOVE: 1. First Exposure: static shot of moonscape. 2. Second exposure: "zoom in and past" shot of UFO against a dead-black background. 3. The resulting double exposure composite shot.

The plaster of Paris moonscape with the dome-shaped "moon base."

To show the ray guns of the UFO firing, I first attempted to use animation. Mounting the camera firmly on one tripod, and mounting the model of the UFO on a second tripod, I framed a small section of the UFO miniature (figure 2). I then shot a few frames of this before adding a small piece of yellow paper to the ray gun and shooting another frame. Adding a differently colored piece of paper (e.g., orange) which is somewhat differently shaped from the first, I shot another frame. I repeated this process several times, shooting one frame of film for each sliver of colored paper, and finally ended the shot with several frames without any paper at all. I had used this technique quite satisfactorily to animate the exhaust of a miniature rocket many years before, but unfortunately the results this time were rather poor, and I ended up using the old "scratch-the-film" technique. I used a sharp X-acto knife to slice carefully through the emulsion of film (just through the emulsion, **not** through the base!) at the point where the ray gun began. I did this over several frames for each time I wanted to show the ray gun shooting, and it produced a reasonably convincing effect.

To show the moon bus blowing up, I once again used plaster dust and the rubber blower (figure 3). I first attached the moon bus to a wooden ruler, then set up the model and ruler combination at a 45-degree angle. I put a pile of plaster dust at the end of the ruler and framed the shot so that the ruler was not visible. Then I used the blower to stir up the dust, which blew along the length of the ruler and formed into a "fireball" shape right above the model. I couldn't put the plaster dust directly on the model because the dust had to be blown about a foot before it started to collect into the fireball shape. This sequence was also filmed at 64 frames per second, and the result is extremely realistic.

In a number of other sequences I used animation effectively. I animated a sinister-looking toy robot, and several items such as windows and doors closing on their own. I also drew several explosions on white paper, then photographed them frame by frame in the same manner as regular cartoon animation (figure 4). These explosions were photographed on special high-contrast film, which registers only black or white but not any of the in-between greys; and in the final process I had them superimposed over a shot of the moon bus moving through space. This technique of superimposition during printing was accomplished by using two rolls of film, one containing the shot of the moon bus and one containing the explosion effect. Both shots are printed onto the same piece of film, resulting in a double exposure. Known as A & B printing, this technique is normally possible only in 16mm.

In one sequence a record player is shown to turn itself on. To show the shot of the switch moving from "off" to "on" I filmed the machine switching itself off, then reversed the film in the editing. If the film was merely

Figure 3

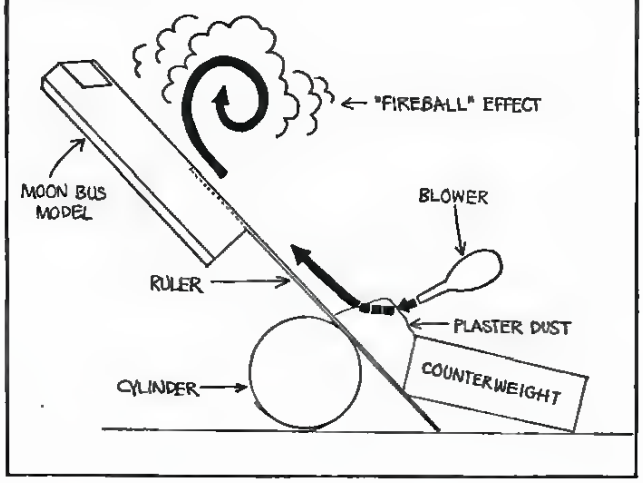


Figure 2

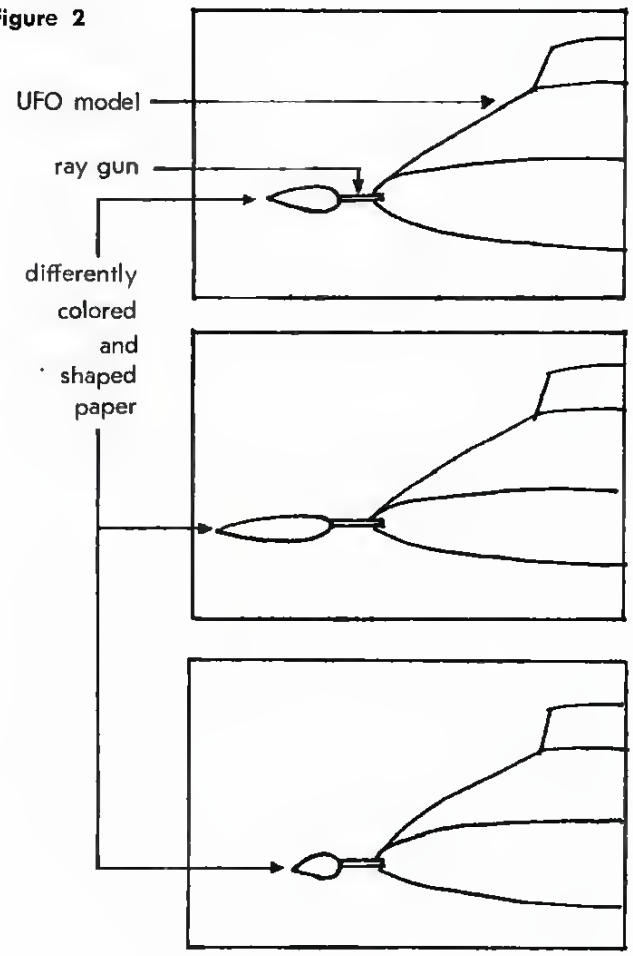
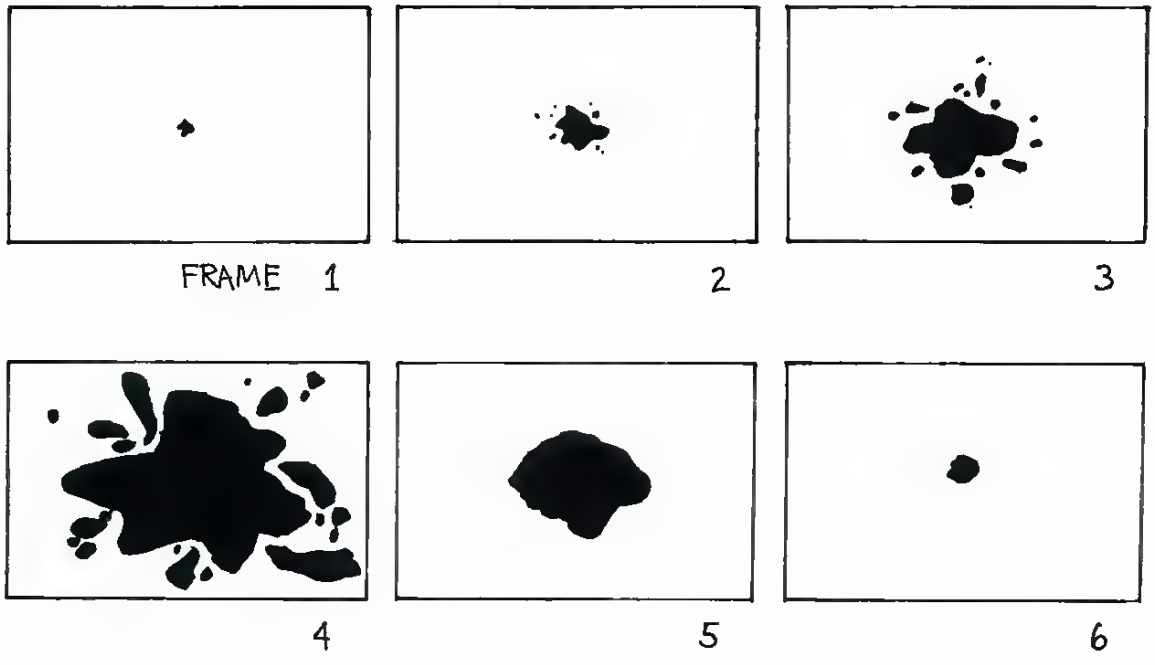


Figure 4



reversed, the resulting image would be upside down. Therefore, during the photography of the shot the camera was inverted. Reversing the film also causes the sprocket holes to be reversed. In 8mm, where there is only one set of perforations, they would be on the wrong side and consequently could not be projected. But when you use double perforation 16mm film this problem does not occur. If you use 8mm film you could flop the film over to correct the position of the perforations, but you would then have the emulsion on the wrong side, causing this shot to be out of focus compared to the rest of the film. So for all intents and purposes, this technique is also limited to 16mm.

To show the record player blowing up, I used flash powder ignited by a fuse and filmed at 64 frames per second. The flash powder came from a small flare that is sold to be used with a number of small "blank" guns available from sporting goods stores, and it produces a nice puff of smoke and flash of light. The fuse is sold to be used with Jetex engines—small little jet engines used for powering toys, and available from most hobby stores. You can also mix up your own flash power, but if you only need a limited amount it is a lot more convenient to buy it already compounded. There are two basic formulas for flash powder. It can be made from equal parts of potassium dichromate and powdered aluminum or from equal parts of potassium nitrate (saltpeter) and powdered magnesium. But be careful when using these mixtures, as violent grinding or pounding can ignite them. Stick to very small amounts. Never confine flash powder when it is being ignited, or you'll find that you've designed a nice explosive.

Almost all of the effects in **Tuesday The World Went Mad** were relatively inexpensive to shoot. The only real hindrance to low-cost special effects work is that in order to film a whole range of effects—as I did in **Tuesday**—you need a top quality camera. Sixteen rather than eight-millimeter is high desirable and the camera should have reflex viewing and focusing, have the ability to run at from 8 or 12 frames per second to 48 or (preferably) 64 frames per second, and have the ability to shoot single frames for animation work. In addition, film rewind in connection with a frame counter enables you to accomplish very sophisticated multiple exposures. If you don't have a camera with all these features, don't be completely discouraged—there is much you can do with simpler cameras. But in the special effects department a very versatile camera is a more than worthwhile asset.

The interceptor is blown up (plaster dust) by the UFO.

THE 15-S
(A STOP-MOTION JOINT)

Text & Photos:
JOHN BRUCE DODS

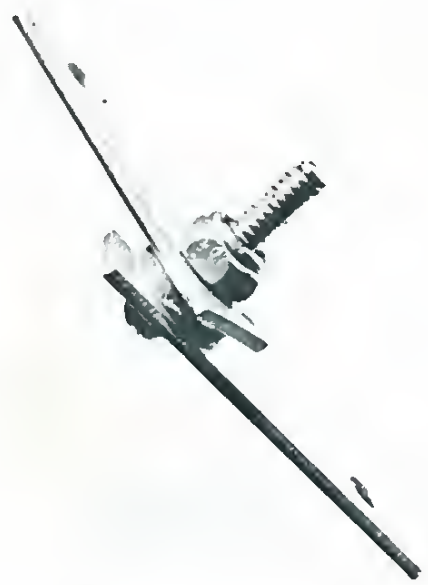
One of the greatest difficulties facing the beginning animator is the scarcity of published data on the "how to" aspect of model construction. I remember, years ago, studying endlessly an indistinct photo reproduction of an original King Kong armature in a film magazine. I wanted to know how the joints were made. When I finally learned the method, I wished it could be easier. Hours of drilling, sawing, and filing metal without special equipment can be difficult and frustrating. It can also be unnecessary. A partial remedy for the difficulty is a joint I call the "15-S." It is smooth-moving, variable in tightness, and durable. One joint takes about fifteen seconds to assemble, thus the name "15-S."

The 15-S consists of two "mending plates," one urethane washer, a bolt and a "lock" or "stop" nut. The washer is sandwiched between two mending-plate ends. A bolt and stop nut hold the assemblage together. The lock nut can be replaced by a conventional nut if epoxy glue is applied both to the thread of the bolt and to the thread of the nut. This method necessitates a delay of waiting for the glue to dry All needed materials are available at hardware stores.

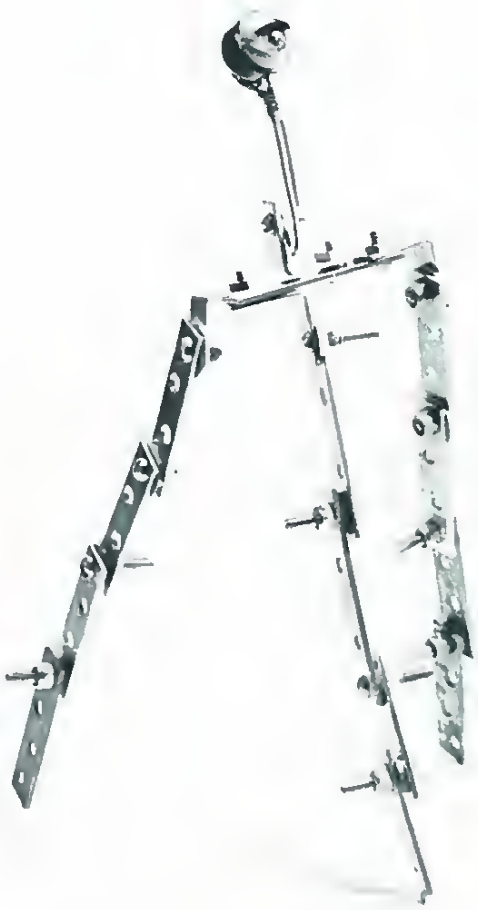
The success of the joint depends on the correct combination of materials. A urethane washer seems to be of just the right hardness and smoothness. Other washers I have tried have caused the stop nut to turn slightly, making the joint loose. The nuts I have found most successful are stop nuts with an open end; the bolt must extend all the way through the nut and protrude slightly (see photo). Those intending to construct the 15-S are warned that some experimentation may be necessary to determine compatability of materials.

The model in the photos is inspired by the stories of H. P. Lovecraft. In keeping with the idea of using simplified techniques, the model is made only of cotton, liquid latex, string, wire, and baby-doll eyes. The cotton was applied in layers directly to the skeleton. The final layers refined it. Liquid latex was applied whenever necessary to hold the cotton in place or make it more firm. String and more latex added surface detail. The joints remained able to resist the pull of the rubber covering; they kept their "staying power."

While there is nothing more exciting to me than a Harryhausen ball-and-socket behemoth, the 15-S may provide a degree of sophistication not demanded by the requirements of an amateur's story. True, the 15-S has its drawbacks and limitations in certain applications, but it doesn't matter. Simple models can be exciting too.



ABOVE: One assembled 15-S joint.



ABOVE: A completed 15-S armature.

The completed model (Amorphous) structured out of string, tissue, and latex over the 15-S armature. The extra eyes were added as an afterthought.

FADE IN
To a bright star-filled sky. We are moving away from the stars in a three dimensional effect. The sky is a deep black. A tiny speck of light appears in the center of the screen. It rushes toward the camera, growing in size. It is a flaming meteor-like object. It fills the screen with a bright flash. The flash forms the words . . .

INTERGALACTIC PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS

CUT TO
The earth surrounded by stars. We are moving slowly toward the planet's surface. The meteor flashes by and heads for the earth.

CUT TO
Reverse angle of the star field. The meteor flashes by heading toward the camera. It explodes in a ball of flames, revealing the title . . .

THE THING

The bottom of the letters flow down to form the complete title . . .

THE THING
IN THE BASEMENT!

—and that's a transcript of page one of the actual shooting script for **The Thing In The Basement,** a film soon to be released by Dick Taylor and Brian Keister, its producers.

CINEMAGIC readers not familiar with Dick Taylor should know that he produced an Atlanta Film Festival winner entitled **Comicbook,** which is a take-off on super hero comics, and employs bi-pack printing to combine cartoon animation with live action. **The Thing In The Basement,** however, contains many different techniques not encountered in **Comicbook.** It all adds up to a most versatile production by filmmakers Keister and Taylor (who also directed, wrote, acted in, and created the special effects).

To carry on a bit further with the script excerpt, here's a brief plot rundown:

Five men are playing cards in a typical suburban home when they hear a rumble and tremendous crash (a meteor). After checking around the house, they discover that a huge hole has been sliced through the roof, the floor joists, and down into the basement. They grab a flashlight and, standing at the top of the basement stairs, shine their searching beam toward the dark basement. They see a glimpse of a grisly looking creature, definitely not of this earth!

One of the men pulls a knife out of his pocket, opens it, and throws it at the alien creature. The knife jabs the creature in the chest—the creature screams, removes the knife from its chest, and raises a pistol-type weapon. It fires a ray at the man who threw the knife, burning a hole right through the human. The other men hit the floor, and are soon joined by a neighbor who has come over to complain about the commotion. Not believing the story of a meteor and an alien thing in the basement, the neighbor smugly walks down the basement steps. Within seconds, though, he is disintegrated by the alien.

The men upstairs meanwhile have procured a small arsenal of weapons and come charging down the steps blasting away at the alien. The thing is knocked back against a wall. Ripped and bleeding, it uses a device of some kind to instantly heal the wounds. The alien then charges back at the men, who open fire again, only to have the bullets bounce off of a forcefield encompassing the alien.

The camera cuts to a view outside the house, as we hear shooting and screaming, and see globs of smoke flowing out of the hole in the roof. . . .

John Buechler in his THING IN THE BASEMENT alien make-up.

ABOVE: Left—Dick Taylor attaches a wire to John Buechler's alien suit for a knife-throwing scene. Right—Buechler reacts as the knife travels down the wire and into his "chest." Several takes were necessary to get the final sequence right.

That's about as far as we can take the plot for now, since **The Thing In The Basement** has a "twist" ending that can't be revealed here, due to the fact that the film is not yet in release. (Plans call for it to be released as a theatrical short, and the film will be available for the convention circuit later this year.)

As mentioned, the film needed many different special effects, including miniature sets of the house, the basement, and the hallway; a miniature meteor prop; many realistic gun blasts; and, of course, the stunning alien make-up and costume. John Buechler designed and wore the alien make-up. His technique was similar to the foam prosthetics processes described in earlier issues of CINEMAGIC—that is, John made a life mask of himself, produced a positive plaster mold onto which the extra alien features were sculpted, made a negative mold of that, and poured and baked the foam latex.

The alien suit was created by Dick Taylor's wife, Kathy, out of rubber furnace insulation and nylon. The completed creature is quite effective in that it is humanoid and reflects a great deal of the "monster" in all of us humans.

The film was photographed with an Arriflex 16mm camera and the sound recorded with a Nagra recorder. To blimp the camera (i.e. to silence the camera motor noise) Dick and crew wrapped it with several sleeping bags—something that looks like a monstrosity but is effective **and** vital when recording live sound.

The Thing In The Basement is a color/sound production, and is certainly worth seeing. Keep an eye out for it in the future at major conventions and at your local theatre. The entire inside story on the making of the film will be included in the forthcoming CINEMAGIC book (see Press Notices in this issue).

These exclusive behind-the-scenes photos were taken for CINEMAGIC by associate editor, Steve Polwort, and are printed by permission of Dick Taylor and Brian Keister.

ABOVE: Top—John Buechler holds the foam latex alien appliance. Bottom—Brian Keister helps hold the sleeping bag "blimp" around the Arriflex camera.

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CREATING A GALACTIC SUNRISE

by Richard Allison

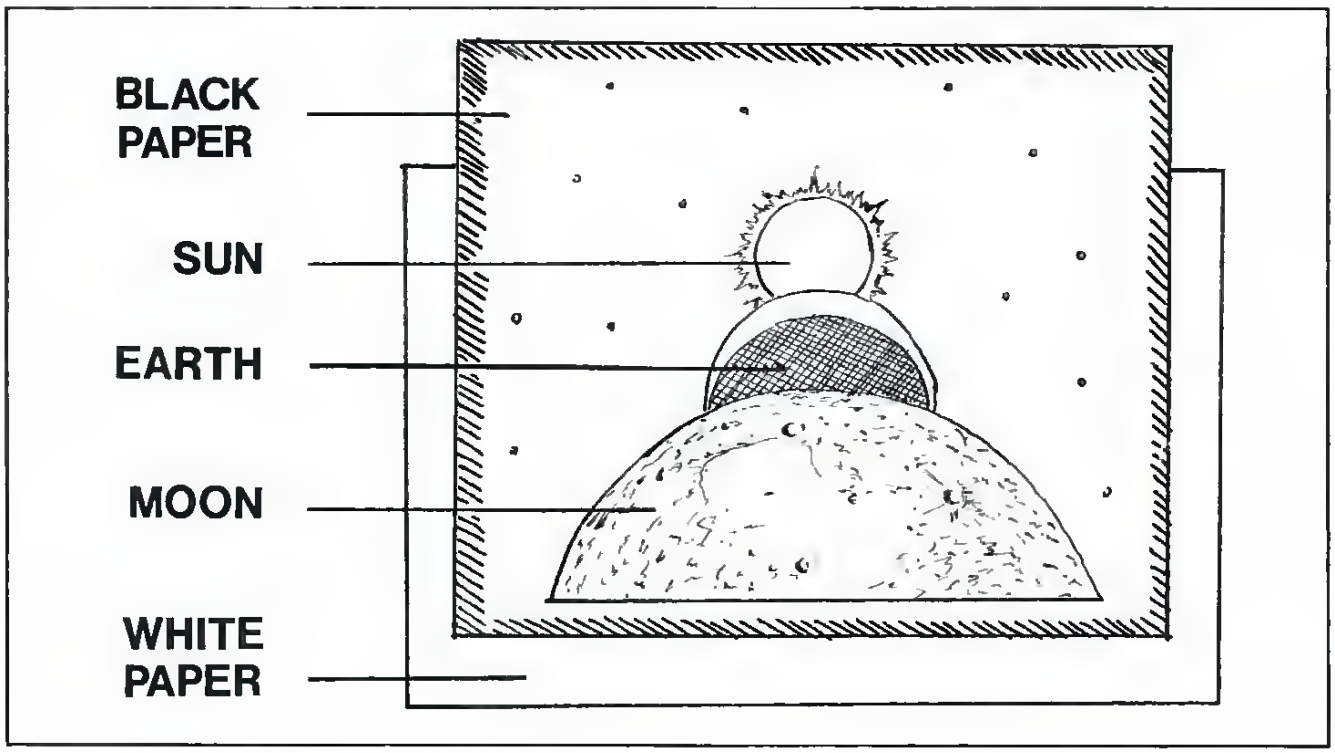
Actual 8mm frame blow-up of the sunrise effect.

Amateur filmmakers are often faced with the problem of creating spectacular effects with a minimal or non-existent budget. Many times however, acceptable results can be achieved without elaborate equipment. A case in point is a film I made called **2002 One-Half And Three-Quarters, A Space Luna-C** (luna as in moon; C as in Coca-Cola), a satire on Stanley Kubrick's **2001:A Space Odyssey.** The opening shot is a reconstruction of the "sunrise" effect. As you might recall, this is the shot in **2001** where the moon drops down revealing the sun rising over the earth.

Creating such an effect is surprisingly simple. An 8 x 10 inch color photograph of the moon (black and white will work just as well in this case) is animated on heavy black paper. The paper itself has small pin-holes for stars and in the center, a large hole for the sun. White paper is placed underneath the black paper to reflect light up through the holes.

The earth is nothing more than a black disk with a crescent of "Scotchlite" around the rim. Scotchlite is the highly reflective material used on road signs. The Scotchlite and the moon photo are illuminated by a photoflood placed alongside the camera. If your picture of the moon is a glossy one, watch out for unwanted reflections. Exposure can be tricky because of the position of the lights and the danger of "hot spots" on the paper and disk. It would probably be best to underexpose at least one stop, or use a polarizing filter to help eliminate reflections. The underexposure should not make the sun and stars appear too dim; but here again, it's a matter of experimentation and balancing out the lighting. At this point, both earth and moon can be animated in relation to one another.

This effect can have many variations, limited only by your imagination, and can prove to be an economical asset to any amateur space epic. For the person with one eye on quality and the other on his pocketbook, this is an ideal route to take.



Film Profile

THE TIME MACHINE

Text & Photos by DENNIS and ROBERT SKOTAK

The Time Machine is an 8mm color, cinemascope production in sound, produced by Cine-Vista. Cine-Vista began in 1959 when Dennis and Robert Skotak, along with Bob Schrader, began producing comedy shorts and TV spoofs. They worked their way up from five-minute silents filmed on a regular 8mm Kodak 8rownie to thirty-minute 16mm full-sound epics. The threesome worked on a cooperative basis, sharing the creative work: direction, editing, writing, sound recording, cinematography, etc. Cinema-Vista's latest project is a full-length 16mm feature entitled **Timespace,** which they hope to release theatrically in the near-future.

The Time Machine, made in 1964, was Cinema-Vista's second major effort. Says Robert Skotak: "We were impressed by George Pal's 1960 version of the H. G. Wells novel and decided to produce a real Hollywood-type epic in 8mm based on the same story. It was shot for the most part on a Bolex H-8 camera in several locations in Detroit, Livonia, Northville and Westland, Michigan."

The following is the story on the making of **The Time Machine,** in the words of Robert Skotak.

There were three main reasons for shooting the film in cinemascope:

Primarily we were attracted to the atmospheric elements in the story. We wanted to highlight the Eden-like mood of the forest terrains and the darkness of the Morlocks' lair. We felt that the wide screen format was best suited toward emphasizing landscape and compositional elements and defining their relationships.

Secondly, we had access only to low ceiling areas (basements and living rooms) in which to build our sets. We tried to take advantage of the horizontal nature of the interior locations by filming in wide screen.

Thirdly, since this was supposed to be an "epic," cinemascope gave it the fashionable look of "bigness."

The optics consisted of a Pan Cinor zoom (8 - 40mm) lens in conjunction with a Konica Hexascope anamorphic lens. A homemade lens mount and lens shade completed the rig.

THE PLOT

The film begins at the turn of the century in the house of George, the inventor of the time machine. His friends scoff at him even after he shows them his invention. He invites them to come back the next evening when be hopes to prove his claim to them. After they leave he sits down in the machine, makes a few adjustments, then pusbes tbe control lever forward. The journey begins.

As days speed by, George watches candles melt and a clock's bands spin around in seconds. The sun and moon fly by in swift cycles and plants wither and die. Clouds rush througb the sky like a flowing ocean current. George blacks out and awakens in the year 802,000 A.D. He wanders about an Eden-like terrain until be comes upon a white-robed young man who is being attacked by a grotesque creature. George comes to the young man's aid and succeeds in knocking down the creature.

The young man takes George to a large dome filled with the people of the future world—the Eloi. George soon grows disgusted with their apathetic nature, and leaves. He finds that his time machine is gone; drag marks of the machine lead him to the doors of a huge Sphinx-like building. A siren then begins to wail and George watches as the Eloi walk in a transfixed state into the Sphinx. He follows them in and discovers that they are being led to slaughter by the inhuman Morlocks. With a flaming torch he fends off tbe attacking Morlocks, then sends the Eloi out of the cavernous building. He sets the whole place on fire by tossing tbe torch into an oil-filled cauldron that erupts violently.

George returns to the past after telling the Eloi that their lives of leisure are over, and that he will return to help them begin anew. In his own time, George tells his incredible story to his friends, who think he is out of his mind. However, they are astonished, and a bit more believing, as they watch George in his time machine disappear into the future.

— End

MAKING THE FILM

The effects demanded by the plot of the film were a real challenge, especially considering that we had no money to spend on them. To produce the scene of the

giant Sphinx, we used a glass shot. We made several paintings of the building as it would appear from different angles. These paintings were cut out and mounted on a large sheet of glass about four feet from the camera. We aligned the paintings through the view-finder so that they appeared to be resting on the ground. When the scene was filmed, the actors would approach the vicinity of the painted Sphinx, and then we would cut to a full-size mock-up of a small portion of it. The actors would continue the rest of the action. To further enhance the illusion of the Sphinx as being actually in the middle of the live landscape, we included two shots of George passing in front of it in medium close-up. In actuality, our actor merely situated himself between the glass painting and the camera. Though this latter effect is limited in application, we found that it worked toward creating a more total illusion. It also helped to disguise the mechanics of the effect.

The effects in the time traveling sequences required a number of different techniques. The melting candle, spinning clock hands, rushing clouds, etc. were simple examples of time-lapse and single-frame photography. The time-lapse scenes of the sun setting and the plant withering required the most patience; in both cases, many hours were necessary to film the sequence.

BELOW: Dennis Skotak poses with one of the Morlock machines built for THE TIME MACHINE.

ABOVE: The time traveler (Bob Schrader) battles one of the Morlocks. The Morlock face is a commercially available mask based on George Pal's version of THE TIME MACHINE.

The mood of the time travel sequence was very important, also. To create an air of strangeness, we mounted colored jells and rotated them in front of the flood lights, and thereby created many striking color combinations. As a follow-up to that effect we filmed a shot of the time traveler seemingly passing down a long tunnel of colored lights—a somewhat symbolic representation of his hectic flight into the future. This effect was accomplished by first isolating the actor and machine against a black background. To give us a large area in which to work, we filmed the actor from far away through a hole cut in a black matte placed in front of the camera. We continued to rotate the colored jells while filming. Then we wound the film back and, placing a black matte in the area the actor had been in the first exposure, we exposed a number of shots of street lights streaming by as seen from a car's back window. Each exposure was done in a different color and taken from a different angle. The resultant composite turned out quite well.

The time machine itself was made up of scrap parts found around the house and, unfortunately, it is one of the weaker elements in the film (though from an amateur standpoint, it suffices). The machine featured a date and year meter that was photographed too hastily to be completely effective. Also, a large decorated wheel on the machine was supposed to rotate, but broke the day we began filming. As a sort of inside joke, we made a replica of the old-fashioned design used on the time machine in the George Pal film and attached it to the front of ours.

We constructed an assortment of weird looking machines to decorate the Morlocks' lair from items found in the garage. Similarly, the Morlocks' costumes were modified burlap potato sacks swiped from our kitchen. For their faces we used a number of plastic Morlock masks designed after the creatures in Pal's film. We disguised them somewhat with thick, black wigs. Using

LEFT: This example shows how to matte out unwanted areas. From the top of the curtains up is a cut-out extension of the live set. The cut-out is placed in perspective between the camera and the full size set. This particular cut-out is three-feet long. It matched the bottom set perfectly when used in the film.

ABOVE: Top—The time traveler tries to convince his scoffing friends that his invention will work. Bottom—This shows how the scenery was extended via a variation of the glass shot technique. About twenty feet beyond the opening in the black paper were the actors in the scene. In front of the camera is a cut-out painting of a Morlock machine. Together the two elements formed an interesting composite shot without any in-camera mattes.

darkened sets for the most part made the costumes quite acceptable.

In another sequence—that of the dome's interior—we did away with the low, raftered basement ceiling via a large drawing of a high, white ceiling placed in front of the camera and aligned with the top of the set.

The Time Machine taught us a few ideas of what **not** to do in producing an effect. For instance, we created and photographed several paintings of supposedly huge, futuristic buildings using the glass shot technique, but these had to be discarded. The reason was that we used colors in the paintings which were simply too bright. The vibrant colors had a tendency to call attention to themselves and were not similar to the types of colors usually seen in real life structures. The structures also appeared to be suspended, rather than resting atop the ground, because of the colors. The subdued colors we used in the Sphinx paintings accounts for their realistic integration with the live surroundings. We've found that aerial perspective (i.e., atmospheric haze) must also be taken into account for these kind of effects.

Since we were concerned with capturing certain moods in the film, we tried to make use of landscape features in the cinematography. We shot a lot of scenes which emphasized the long shadows of the trees across the rolling terrain to evoke a peaceful, quiet mood. The scenes in the Morlocks' underworld were kept dark to create a sense of "the abyss." The traveler's walk through the dark was accented by the use of cold colors (blues and greens) in the lighting. In one sequence, George accidentally turns up a skull. We photographed this scene in slow motion (48 FPS) to evoke a feeling of murkiness. The skull appeared to be covered in slime; in reality it was smeared with oil soap and car polish.

Perhaps fifty percent of the success of atmosphere in a film results from the use of appropriate music. Throughout our film we made use of various pieces of classical music. The theme music is Ravel's "Rhapsodie Espanol," while Bela Bartok's "Miraculous Mandarin Suite" conveys the intended feeling of gloom in the Morlocks' lair. In counterpoint to heavily orchestrated pieces, however, we've found that a simple, subtle sound effect can work just as well. For instance, the opening of the film is a long, cinematic "descent" into the depths of a clock. The whole sequence is only accented by the ticking of a clock growing louder and louder. Judging by audience reactions, it worked well.

The Time Machine, aside from winning an honorable mention in the Kodak teenage movie contest, has recently been acknowledged by the Widescreen Association of America to be the first wide-screen amateur film epic ever made.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

CINEMAGIC #5 won't be available for several months, but in order for it to be published at all, we ask that you send your advance order **now.** All advance orders are recorded as soon as we receive them—envelopes are addressed and ready to go, so that there is no chance of a mix-up. If for any reason we cannot publish the issue, all money received will be refunded—a solid guarantee from us.

What will #5 contain? A great assortment of new material and information. Here is just some of the fabulous contents:

Photo: Michael L. Cohn

THE ABDUCTION OF GROG (a film profile)—The sequel to **Grog** (see CINEMAGIC #2), by the talented Bruce Dods. There is more than one Grog in this film, and one of them is evil! Bruce has developed many new and interesting set-building techniques, and has given a new look to the Grog models.

SON OF STAR TREK: ONE CUBE, OR TWO?—An inside look at a Baltimore stage play based on the **Star Trek** television series, complete with the bridge of the Enterprise, the cast of characters (Kirk, Spock, etc.), and some very intriguing alien make-up by the versatile Ed Litzinger. Baltimore actor George Stover explains the inner workings of the play, which, although not a film, has many similar aspects that can be applied to filmmaking. Lots of nice photos here, including the step-by-step process of creating the "cubehead" alien make-up.

A GUIDE TO CARTOON ANIMATION—Here's an interesting how-to-do-it by a young, award-winning animator. At the age of sixteen, Andy Mosier has drawn and photographed four animated cartoons—and in super 8! He describes his techniques and experiences, and explains the basic methods of doing your own cartoon animation.

PHANTOM ISLAND—Reflections and production notes by a now professional animator, Doug Beswick, of his amateur days. Doug (who did the animation for the film **Dinosaurs, The Terrible Lizards**) discusses his early work in **Phantom Island,** and the many mistakes he made in model-building, set construction, and animation technique.

CINEMAGIC #5 will also contain lots of news and information about new amateur films in production, film contests, film-oriented conventions, and many other features and articles. Be sure to reserve your copy now, and perhaps an extra one for a friend (or for yourself, if you're a collector). The price is $1.50 per copy—checks and money orders made payable to CINEMAGIC. Include your name and address, and mail to:

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COMING: THE ABDUCTION OF GROG, a sequel to Bruce Dods' GROG, will highlight CINEMAGIC #5. See inside this cover for more details.

Cinemagic
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