

Poles are more than snow and ice

Entertainment

Bob Spence
Thomson News Service

The polar world is much more than a vast desert of snow and ice.

Canadian author Farley Mowat is fascinated by the North's wide abundance of life and activity.

The New North, a two-hour TV documentary on how the North is changing, follows Mowat on a 30,000-mile circumpolar journey.

The documentary focuses on what is "new" in this vast region. The polar world includes Canada's Northwest Territories, Alaska, a large chunk of the USSR, the northern portion of the Scandinavian peninsula, Greenland and the Arctic Sea.

Mowat concentrates on three themes: the indigenous people and their struggle to maintain their cultural identities; the growing industrial development of the North; and the fragile economy.

"The North," says Mowat, "must remain a living world... a place where man can co-exist in dignity and certainty with a world he cherishes and nurtures and which, in turn, nurtures him."

The New North will be telecast April 9 by CTV.

Three years ago, James Pierson, a 42-year-old American father, was shot to death outside his Long Island home.

He was considered to be a typical middle-aged American. The crime made no sense.

Then, the police investigation turned up information that stunned most of the community.

Sixteen-year-old Cheryl Pierson had paid a high school classmate \$400 to kill her father, who had been sexually abusing her.

A Deadly Silence, a docu-drama based on the book New York Times reporter Dena Kleiman wrote about the case, airs April 14 on CTV.

Among the issues raised in the docu-drama is "non-involvement."

Some of the family's friends and neighbors had suspected the daughter was being sexually abused, but they had said nothing.

Sexual abuse was a concept some people were too frightened to confront... until a gun was fired.

Aeron Clement, a Welshman who was incensed by the cruelty mankind showed to badgers, spent three years researching and writing a novel about it.

British publishers scurried away when he tried to get it published.

Clement, a civil engineer who had been forced to retire because of poor health, decided to publish it himself. He and a publican named Bernard Kindred started a publishing company in the back room of Kindred's pub.

The Cold Moons, an adventure story with animals playing the leading roles, was published on Dec. 8, 1987, and became an immediate hit. Penguin Books purchased the paperback rights for 140,000 pounds.

The book, about a colony of badgers fleeing from man, is based on the mid-1970s slaughter of thousands of badgers thought to be carriers of bovine tuberculosis. The Cold Moons, which has become a best-seller in a number of countries, is being released in North America on April 17.

Clement died in January following heart-bypass surgery.

Ritter plays womanizer in 'Skin Deep'

FILMETER



ROBERT DIMATTEO

In Movie Theaters

SKIN DEEP (R) Why does it seem like Blake Edwards is making one movie over and over again? Maybe because this once-inventive writer-director has lately been filling his plots with the same hoary (and whorey) jokes, slapstick and self-pity. From "10" through "The Man Who Loved Women" to "Blind Date," Edwards has tried to convince us that nothing's funnier than drunks tripping over their own feet while seducing anyone in sight.

This time around, Edwards spins his jokes around John Ritter. The TV star plays Zack, a celebrated author suffering from writer's block who wallows in booze and one-night stands. A clumsy, tipsy wreck, Zack can't seem to close a door without pulling off the doorknob. But he does bed every curvaceous babe in L.A.

In what may turn out to be the movie's stroke of commercial savvy, the roles of Zack's conquests are played by a bevy of sexy starlets, including Bruce Springsteen's estranged wife Julianne Phillips. Remember what "10" did for Bo Derek?

While the starlets are disrobing, a fine cast of supporting actors is trying to add spice of a more character-oriented sort. There's sly Vincent Gardenia as Zack's bartender, that likable schlemiel Joel Brooks as his lawyer, and waspish Peter Donat as his agent. Alyson Reed has the thankless role — Zack's level-headed, wronged wife.

Viewers who haven't tired of Edwards' cinematic antics may want to hang around for one of the weirdest gags in recent movies. It has to do with the use of a condom — a fitting subject for a movie full of promiscuous encounters. Leave it to Edwards, though, to turn this into a Playboy-style cartoon bit. **GRADE: ★½**

One thing is certain: You won't sleep through this movie. From beginning to end, Avildsen has directed his actors to scream their lines. After a while, it turns into a style. **GRADE: ★★½**

New Home Video

MARRIED TO THE MOB (R) Orion, \$89.98. A gangster comedy/romance from the freewheeling Jonathan Demme ("Something Wild," "Melvin and Howard"), which means that it's a most twisted gangster comedy/romance. Michelle Pfeiffer is a suburban Long Island wife whose husband is a hit man for a local mobster (Dean Stockwell). When the mobster ices her hubby, Pfeiffer flees with her child to Manhattan in hopes of starting a new life.

She doesn't get far, though. In one bit of quirky slapstick after another, the mobster, two clumsy FBI agents, and the mobster's wildly jealous wife (Mercedes Ruehl) refuse to let Pfeiffer alone. Demme has a terrific appreciation of the kitschy melting-pot details of American life, and Pfeiffer, Stockwell and Ruehl are wonderful. **GRADE: ★★★**

(Film grading: ★★★★★ — excellent, ★★★ — good, ★★ — fair, ★ — poor)

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Is 'Mr. Belvedere' really British?

ASK DICK KLEINER



DICK KLEINER

Q. Recently, friends from England came to visit. I told them one of my favorite comedy shows has an English star, and we turned on "Mr. Belvedere." They said they had never seen or heard of Christopher Hewett. Please tell me whether or not he is really English. If he isn't, he sure plays the part well. I'll mail your response to my friends in Bromsgrove, England. — J.H., Vancouver, Wash.

A. As the old joke goes, if he were any more British he wouldn't be able to talk at all. Hewett was born in Worthing, in Sussex. He served in the RAF in World War II. He began his acting career in England — he was in "The Lavender Hill Mob." But he came to the United States in 1951, and he has lived here ever since.

Q. Please give me some information about Bronson Pinchot of "Perfect Strangers." I'm one of his biggest fans. Nationality? Age? Where does he live? Single? — S.R., Nampa, Idaho.

A. Although he gives the impression of being foreign, as Balki, Bronson Pinchot is an American. He was born in New York and raised in California. He is 29, single and lives in the Los Angeles area.

Q. My husband and I and friends of ours who like westerns are stumped. Could you please tell us the title of the TV western with Andrew Duggan as the ranch owner, Wayne Maunder as his younger son and James Stacy as the older son, who was also a gun-fighter? — T.N.D., Killeen, Texas.



Christopher Hewett



Jack Wagner

A. To unstamp you, that was "Lancer," which ran from 1968 to 1977.

Q. I would like to know who had the starring role in "I Led Three Lives," a TV show of many years ago. — G.W., Louisville, Ohio.

A. Richard Carlson played Herbert Philbrick in that program, which ran from 1953 to 1956.

Q. My girl friend and I are wondering if Frisco Jones (Jack Wagner) from "General Hospital" is coming back. The show isn't the same without him. Why isn't he on any more, and why? — C.B.B., Collegeville, Pa.

A. Why, oh why? Jack Wagner decided he didn't want to do it any more, and left the show to pursue other interests. As of now, he will not be back.

Q. Which came first: the Beatles movie "Help," or the series of "The Monkees"? — R.A., Amarillo, Texas.

A. "Help" came first — it was released in 1965. The Monkees didn't crawl onto the scene until a year later. Their series ran from 1966 to 1968.

(Send your questions to: Ask Dick Kleiner, c/o Newspaper Enterprise Association, 200 Park Ave., New York, N.Y. 10166. Due to the volume of mail, personal replies cannot be provided.)

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