

Quest For Fire *a \$12 million box office smash*

by Terry Dupuis

Back in 1968 Stanley Kubrick's science fiction epic 2001: A Space Odyssey opened with a 20 minute segment called "The Dawn Of Man" which dwelt with prehistoric times. Last year, Mel Brooks spoofed this episode in his opening segment of his History Of The World comedy, and Ringo Starr appeared in a comedy bomb last summer called Caveman. This year has seen the recent release of a prehistoric adventure film called Quest For Fire.

It is easily the most ambitious and the most realistic of all the "cave man" epics.

Quest For Fire is a \$12 million dollar production which gives a detailed account of what prehistoric life might have been like.

The movie's maker, Jean-Jacques Annaud spent several years filming this project which he calls "the toughest, most challenging film" of his career. He shrewdly avoided casting any big name stars for his film. The sight of a familiar screen actor like Burt Reynolds romping around as a caveman would provoke unwarranted laughter from the audience. Using a cast of unknowns for Quest For Fire makes the film more credible.

The Ulam is the name of the tribe which discovers fire, and at the beginning of the movie they are almost wiped out in a ferocious attack by another tribe called The Wagabou.

The Ulams' most prized possession, their

life-giving fire, is stolen by the enemy tribe, and they realize that they are doomed without it. Three of the Ulams' best warrior are sent out on a mission, to get possession of the fire; thus, the meaning of the movie's title.

Annaud's film has an authentic and realistic feel to it, and not only because his actors are unfamiliar faces to the audience. The authenticity is helped along by the fact that the actors do not speak English or a kind of pig Latin. There aren't even any subtitles. Instead an entire "language" was invented and developed by novelist and screenwriter Anthony Burgess for the movie.

Annaud makes shrewd use of rugged terrain which looks convincingly prehistoric. Apparently he scouted locations around the

world, and he came up with such diverse areas as Kenya, Scotland, and parts of Ontario! There is no phony studio or sound stage set in Quest For Fire.

It was all photographed outdoors in weather which was often inclement. You can see the frost on the characters' breath. It must have been rough going on the scantily clad actors who had to endure cold damp weather and rugged locations. But it gave Annaud's movie the atmosphere which he wanted.

Obviously the adventure and the hardships of making this adventure about prehistoric hardships has paid off. Quest For Fire has become one of this season's unqualified box office hits.

Annual event

by Dorothea Arthur

President John Lucas welcomed everyone to the March 18 meeting of the Midland-Penetang Field Naturalist's Club. The evening was the club's annual "Member's Night".

Ten members volunteered to participate making it a complete success.

Joe Burns led off with a humorous story of an old fellow he had met hitchhiking into town for groceries, and the chap's adventures with the wildlife around his lodge in the woods.

Betty Carter showed slides of flowering cacti taken on a recent hiking trip through the desert.

David Hawke explained the compilation of the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas to us. This is still in the data finding stage, and is sponsored by the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, and Longpoint. Rick Bobette gave a slide presentation of a botanist's journey into spring.

His first slide was of a snowy winter's day, his next of the first spring wildflower--the Skunk Cabbage! Red Osier Dogwood, Indian Pipes, Willows, Violets, yellow, white and blue blossomed before everyone's eyes. The interesting Sedges were followed by Hepaticas and Wood Anemones.

Those of us who annually do battle with Horsetails in our gardens, had even mellowed enough over the winter to almost enjoy seeing them on a slide. The Foam flowers, Ferns and Orchids brought us gently into spring, and it was with regret we viewed the last beautiful slide.

Edna Lucas arrived with a large suitcase which she opened to reveal her outstanding weaver's art. Edna has been greatly interested in fabric and fabric design since her childhood. She compares her loom to an organ, and her beautifully woven colours and designs to music.

Warren Jacklin displayed his most recent paintings, one depicting an osprey, and the other a Ruff Grouse.



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