

REVIEWED BY
CHARLES BARR

● Ross Hunter's new musical remake of **LOST HORIZON** is a dull epic, full of incongruities and barren stretches in which nothing much happens. The only good part of the movie is the first half hour, during which members of a relief mission escape a band of guerillas in Southeast Asia, only to be hijacked and flown to a remote area of northern China. The style and tone of this part of the film is reminiscent of Ross Hunter's earlier epic, *AIRPORT*. The movie begins falling apart when the group reaches Shangri-la, an "ideal society" cut off from the rest of civilization. In this seeming paradise, the sun shines warmly all year around, disease is unknown, and nearly everyone lives to a ripe old age. Society is divided into two broad classes: a mass of happy, simple-minded peasants who perform the manual labor, and a group of monks who govern Shangri-la and devote their lives to intellectual and religious contemplation. Socially, it resembles Plato's conception of a country ruled by "philosopher-kings," and the fact that it seems so stagnant and lifeless may say something about the practicality of such benevolent dictatorships. Galt's Gulch it's not. The sense of being in some exotic foreign land is destroyed by Burt Bacharach's bouncy score and the banal lyrics of Hal David. The incongruities of the script and awkward musical transitions make it impossible to judge the performances fairly; the actors seem to struggle along as best they can. None of the characters is fully developed, and motivations are often impossible to decipher. Peter Finch attempts to be thoughtful, but comes off instead as weak and indecisive. Michael York, as Finch's younger brother who wants to escape, seems to be the most intelligent person in the film. Sally Kellerman is frantic as a suicidal war correspondent, Liv Ullmann uninteresting as the school-teacher. Olivia Hussey registers well as a Shangri-la native with a fatal desire to discover the real world. The musical sequences range from spectacular to corny, mostly the latter. With different premises and more conflict, *LOST HORIZON* might have succeeded, but as it stands it's chiefly valuable as a cure for insomnia. Rated "G".

● **SLITHER** is an insane movie, an adventure-comedy populated by such kooky characters that it's often hard to concentrate on the plot, which is alternately hilarious and suspenseful. James Caan, in a departure from his violent role in *THE GODFATHER*, plays an ex-convict attempting to trace some money embezzled by one of his prison buddies, since deceased. His erstwhile cohorts are Sally Kellerman, a freaked-out blonde with a passion for the beach and for armed robbery; Peter Boyle, the embezzler's partner who's an outdoor enthusiast; and Louise Lasser, Boyle's wife, who once had a high-school crush on Caan. On their way to recover the money, the four encounter a succession of equally offbeat people and events, and are pursued by a mysterious (and appropriately frightening) black van, culminating in a wild chase scene. The performers play their freaky roles to the hilt, keeping the film moving at a fast pace. The script by W. D. Richter is full of clever dialogue, and has some fun with the audience in the opening scenes: For about 15 minutes, it's impossible to tell when the events are taking place. At first it seems like the 1930's, then the 1940's, then the early 1950's. It all occurs so naturally that it takes the audience a while to realize it's being conned. But it's all good, mostly clean fun. Rated "PG".

● **THE THIEF WHO CAME TO DINNER** is a sometimes amusing, sometimes flat crime caper film with just enough inventiveness to keep it from becoming tedious. Ryan O'Neal stars as a computer programmer who abandons the world of "corporate crime" to become a burglar because, as he puts it, it's "more honest." Jacqueline Bisset, his partner in crime and other events, walks through her part without a trace of visible emotion. Warren Oates creates an effective and sympathetic character as Ryan O'Neal's nemesis, a hapless but dedicated insurance investigator. Like most films of its type, *THE THIEF WHO CAME TO DINNER* has a gimmick. Each time O'Neal commits a burglary, he leaves a chessman as his trademark. This earns him the nickname of the "chess burglar," and eventually evolves into a battle of wits with the chess editor of the local newspaper, who challenges him to a match. Austin Pendleton is delightful as the temperamental, prima donna chess editor, Zukovsky. The remainder of the plot is fairly predictable, and the film's cool detachment inhibits anything more than superficial audience involvement. *THE THIEF WHO CAME TO DINNER* is a pleasant diversion, and nothing more. Rated "PG".



James Caan attempts to disarm a flipped-out Sally Kellerman in the suspense comedy *SLITHER*, as Louise Lasser watches.

libertarian party correspondent—

Post election activity of the Libertarian Party has centered around the organizational efforts of the thirty affiliated state parties. State organizations from Alaska to New York are laying the groundwork for a greater impact on the political process in 1974.

Less than one year ago 89 delegates met in Denver at the first national convention of the Libertarian Party. Indicative of the subsequent growth of the Party was the first statewide convention of the Libertarian Party of California (LPC), held March 9-11 in Fresno. Because of its significance to the national party I am devoting the majority of this report to that convention.

The California convention was marked by the same enthusiasm evident at the Denver gathering last June. Present were 115 delegates representing 18 of the 20 regions into which the LPC is divided. This meeting possessed, however, an additional element of purposefulness, a kind of quiet confidence on the part of the delegates that did not exist at this time last year. The numerous successes of the past year have apparently convinced many LP members that the public is indeed ready to listen to a rational alternative to the major political parties.

Of interest to libertarians nationally is an initiative petition that the California Party will attempt to get on the ballot in 1974. After discussing possible initiatives on victimless crimes, tax reduction and getting minority parties on the ballot, the Convention selected the idea of placing a time limit on most laws. While the details have yet to be worked out, by requiring the legislature to re-pass laws after they have been on the books 10 or 15 years the initiative would have the effect of disposing of many laws while significantly limiting the time available to our busy bureaucrats to pass new ones.

On the last day of the Convention delegates listened to speeches by libertarian dignitaries John Hospers and Antony Sutton. Hospers spoke on the "Libertarian temperament", identifying it as a creative one interested in changing man's environment and contrasting it to the insecure, defensive temperaments of bureaucrats and most academicians. Sutton, a recent convert to libertarianism

who is the author of *WESTERN TECHNOLOGY AND SOVIET ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT*, identified all "producers" as potential allies of libertarians and encouraged the delegates to find a common area of agreement when discussing libertarianism with a "non-believer", then point out the consistency of the rest of our beliefs.

In other business, the Libertarian Party of California adopted a Constitution providing for a decentralized organization that places responsibility for growth at the local level. Dues will be split equally between the state and its regional subdivisions.

Los Angeles attorney Ed Clark (National LP Vice Chairman) was elected Chairman of the LPC with Bill White and your LP correspondent being chosen as Vice Chairmen for the northern and southern halves of the state, respectively. California now has over 400 members in the state party and if the state convention was any indication it can be expected that this Party will be a major factor in California politics before the end of the decade.

STATE PARTY REPORTS

ALASKA. John Hospers reports back from his recent trip to the Alaskan state convention that there is more enthusiasm for libertarianism among the general populous in that state than in any other he visited. Hospers says the LP is very well organized in the state and that it is looking into the possibility of supporting a growing Alaskan secession movement.

ARIZONA. Freeman Fox deserves considerable credit for helping get this state party organized to the point where it is one of the most active in the nation.

CALIFORNIA. Roger Scime is a candidate for Los Angeles Junior College District Board of Trustees. He is running on a libertarian platform which includes calling for the sale of various academic departments within the junior colleges to private companies so they can run them.

NEW YORK. The Free Libertarian Party will hold its annual convention March 30-April 1 at the Williams Club on East 39th Street. The FLP phone number

is (212)354-0292. The Party's monthly newsletter "Free Libertarian" is excellent and subscriptions may be obtained by writing to FLP, Inc., 15 West 38th Street, New York, New York 11018.

OHIO. The OLP is working on arrangements for the national LP Convention which will be held June 7-10 in Strongsville. Kay Harroff reports that OLP membership is over 50 and growing fast.

OKLAHOMA. The Libertarian City Committee of Norman is running a candidate for the Norman City Council. Steven Browne, a 21-year anthropology major at the University of Oklahoma. Browne is running as an avowed laissez-faire capitalist who wants to severely curtail city government and taxes.

OREGON. Hospers ran 5th in Oregon, ahead of the two socialists and Gus Hall. The Oregon Newsletter reports the following electoral college vote: Hospers 1; Others 537. The Oregon LP has the benefit of receiving advice from the first woman in the history of the United States to get an electoral vote, LP Vice-Presidential candidate Tonie Nathan.

TEXAS. TLP newsletter "Renaissance News" reports that the first annual ILS (Institute for Libertarian Studies) Seminar Conference will be held in Dallas April 21st. Guy Story Brown reports that interest in the seminar is very high and it is hoped that individuals from all parts of the country will attend. For more information write to Mr. Brown c/o TLP, 802 East Elwood, Irvine, Texas 75061.

NOTES

Roger MacBride, new folk hero of the LP, was in Los Angeles recently. As the Virginia elector who cast his electoral vote for John Hospers, LP Presidential candidate, MacBride's presence enabled the LP to receive coverage from the *LOS ANGELES TIMES* at long last . . . State LP parties should send newsletter items to me at the following address: Reason Reports c/o LPC, PO Box 71383, Los Angeles, California 90071 . . .

Ed Crane