The Arts

Fire presents a fascinating (and true) story

Fire in the Sky

Directed by Robert Lidberman
Written by Tracy Torrn
Starring D. B. Sweeney, Robert Patrick, Craig Sheffer, Peter Borg, and James Garner.
Locations: Colorado, Arizona, and Denver.

By John Jacobs

What's strange about Fire in the Sky is that it's based on a true story. That's what the makers of this movie want us to believe, anyway.

On Nov. 5, 1975, in northeastern Arizona, Travis Walton was abducted by aliens. In the small fragment that he remembers of the five days and six hours that he was missing, he saw humanoids perform experiments on him. He was found, disoriented, on a highway near where he was taken.

At this point, it was only one of a series of similar stories: Someone is abducted, aliens perform grotesque experiments on reproductive organs, take samples, generally treat the victim like a laboratory rat, and return him, after failing to hypnotize him into forgetting the whole incident, to near where he was abducted. It occurred to me, as I watched the movie, that maybe aliens are trying to get on track for some of our more painful and unnecessary experiments on animals. Maybe everyone in PETA (the radical group whose members break into labs and free animals that have ingested lipstick) is an alien. In the movie, the aliens claim that Walton was abducted as a kid for a live bug when he removes its legs, one by one. The scene in which they experiment on this poor guy is the most uncomfortable in the movie. Let me leave it at that.

Walton's story is uniquely believable because six other people witnessed the abduction. All seven of them passed the detector test. According to Walton, Waldon passed one just five weeks ago. For five days after the incident, people believed that Walton had simply been murdered by the other six, and the story was an (overly) elaborate cover; but then Walton was found near the highway, naked and severely traumatized, but not quite dead. Others then claimed that the "abduction" was the result of drug use (six people saw exactly the same thing, but a second saw himself get sucked through a portal on the underside of a hallucinogen), so the group was forced to take drug and alcohol tests. All passed. The next most credible alternative theory that skeptics proposed was that the entire story had been concocted by the group, all loggers who had been returning them to work on a mountainside, to get out of a U.S. Forest Service contract. There are much easier ways to do that, too. As they are portrayed in the movie, they are simple and honest people, with no motive to fabricate such a story.

The movie is intentionally like a dramatized documentary. The producers want us to share their belief in Walton's story. To make the story appear more believable, they use the real names of the loggers, shy away from fancy special effects that would distract the audience from the plot (the UFO looks like two pie-pans taped together, like Walton said it did), and, besides James Garner, don't use any celebrity actors. These factors, combined, give the movie a distinct "true" feel to it.

It's also interesting that Walton and the other six loggers stand by their story to this day, and they have not benefited, in any obvious way, from having done so. (Well, almost. Walton wrote a book, and now his story is a movie, but who thinks 20 years ahead?) In addition, Walton has dealt with prejudice in the town he's lived in his entire life, Rogers. The leader of the logging group and Walton's best friend, lost his districting wife when she was unable to deal with her new image in town.

The movie is very interesting and rather original. The prospect of Walton's story being true is fascinating and as entertaining as fiction. As Calvin (of comic strip fame) says, though, the proof that there is intelligent extraterrestrial life "is that they haven't tried to contact us."

Mighty Mighty Bosstones

give us an EP for everyone

SKA-CORE, THE DEVIL AND MORE

The Mighty Mighty Bosstones.

By Douglas D. Keller

Ska-Core, the Devil and More is The Mighty Mighty Bosstones' long-awaited record to date and its first EP on its new label, Mercury Records. Yes, this EP has only seven tracks, but it is a full 20 minutes longer than the Bosstones' two full-length albums, Night Out and More Noise & Other Disturbances.

Ska-Core contains one new track, "Sunday's Surprise," plus two more tracks from the five live tracks recorded at Avalon last December. "Sunday's Surprise" constitutes the Bosstones' tradition of mixing punk, trash, ska, soul, funk, and anything else they can get their hands on into a balled-up sound. The EP pays tribute to the Bosstones' heavy metal influences through three covers: The Angry Samoans' "Lights Out," Minor Threat's "Think Again," and SSDecontrol's "Police Beat." All three together last about four minutes as the Bosstones pound through the number three on their set list. In addition, Ska-Core has two of the Bosstones' favorite three covers: the Wailers' 1963 "Summer Down." If I RAIN

Groovy star Flip (Jose I. Ortiz '93) stands with glamorous actress Passionola (Sarah Maslowskis '96) as she accepts an acting award at Act II of the Musical Theater Guild's presentation of The Apple That The Devil Gave Adam (above). The title number "The Apple That The Devil Gave Adam" illustrates the one-door-to-the-liger, one-door-to-the-beautiful-woman system of justice meted out in the Act II (below) of the play. The play will be performed this weekend and the next in Kresge Little Theater.

THE MIGHTY MIGHTY

BOSSONES

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