

AUSTRALIAN**NEWS**

Volume 5 Number 5

APRIL 1984

EBONY BOOKS ANNOUNCE FIRST PUBLICATION

Fay Weldon: Like Vonnegut, Broderick
makes us choke while we laugh

TRANSMITTERS

Damien Broderick

EBONY

RUSSELL and JENNY BLACKFORD have announced the establishment of their new publishing company EBONY BOOKS, and that they are publishing first up a new novel by DAMIEN BRODERICK titled TRANSMITTERS.

This non-science fiction/fantasy novel by Broderick is rumoured to be based on science fiction fandom in Australia, and those who have heard about it are anxiously waiting to read its possible scandalous content.

TRANSMITTERS will be released the week before Easter and officially launched during EUREKACON. It is in a trade paperback format and features the cover illustration depicted above.

1984 DITMAR AWARD Nominations

THE AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION & FANTASY ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

BEST AUSTRALIAN LONG SCIENCE FICTION OR FANTASY

THE TEMPTING OF THE WITCHKING - Russell Blackford (Cory & Collins)
THE JUDAS MANDALA - Damien Broderick (Timescape)
VALENCIES - Damien Broderick and Rory Barnes (U. Queensland Press)
KELLY COUNTRY - A. Bertram Chandler (Penguin)
YESTERDAY'S MEN - George Turner (Faber)
THOR'S HAMMER - Wynne Whiteford (Cory and Collins)

BEST AUSTRALIAN SHORT SCIENCE FICTION OR FANTASY

"Crystal Soldier" - Russell Blackford (DREAMWORKS, ed. David King, Norstrilia Press)

"Life the Solitude" - Kevin McKay

"Land Deal" - Gerald Murnane

"Above Atlas His Shoulders" - Andrew Whitmore

BEST INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE FICTION OR FANTASY

THE BIRTH OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF ANTARCTICA - John Calvin Batchelor (Dial Press)
THE TEMPTING OF THE WITCHKING - Russell Blackford (Cory & Collins)
DR WHO - B.B.C
PILGERMAN - Russell Hoban (Jonathan Cape)
YESTERDAY'S MEN - George Turner (Faber)
THOR'S HAMMER - Wynne Whiteford (Cory & Collins)

BEST AUSTRALIAN FANZINE

AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION NEWS - edited Merv Binns
ORNITHOPTER/RATAPLAN - edited Leigh Edmonds
SCIENCE FICTION - edited Van Ikin
THYME - edited Roger Weddall
WAHF-FULL - edited Jack Herman

BEST AUSTRALIAN FAN WRITER

Leigh Edmonds
Terry Frost
Jack Herman
Seth Lockwood

BEST AUSTRALIAN SF OR F ARTIST

Neville Bain
Steph Campbell
Mike Dutkiewicz
Chris Johnston
Nick Stathopoulos

BEST AUSTRALIAN SF OR F CARTOONIST

Bill Flowers
Terry Frost
Craig Hilton
Mike McGann
John Packer
Clint Strickland

BEST AUSTRALIAN SF OR F EDITOR

Paul Collins
Van Ikin
David King
Norstrilia Press
(Rob Gerrand, Bruce Gillespie and Cary Handfield)

Voting closes by 13th of April. Members of Eurekacon only can vote.

IN THIS ISSUE:

A REPORT ON HARRY HARRISON'S VISIT TO AUSTRALIA -
JOHN FOYSTER WRITES ON GEORGE TURNER, CRITIC AND NOVELIST -
NEBULA AWARD NOMINATIONS - HARLAN ELLISON AND TERRY DOWLING
ANNOUNCE AN ORIGINAL AUSTRALIAN ANTHOLOGY (SEE LETTER COLUMN)-
BOOK REVIEWS - LETTERS - NEWS - CONVENTIONS

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by

Damien Broderick



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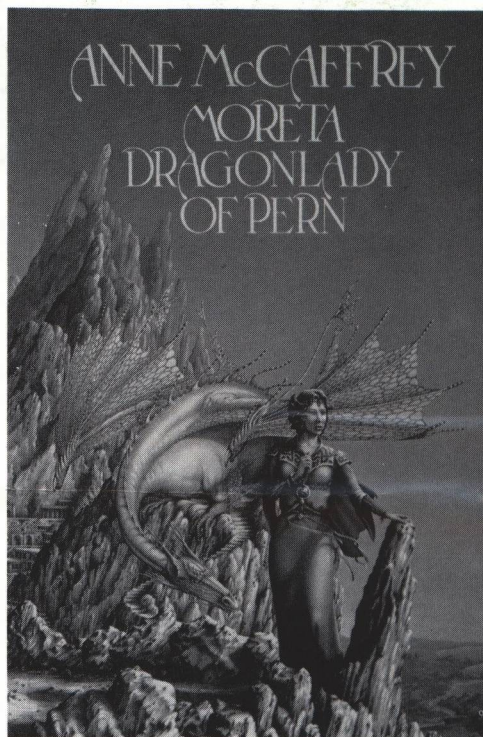
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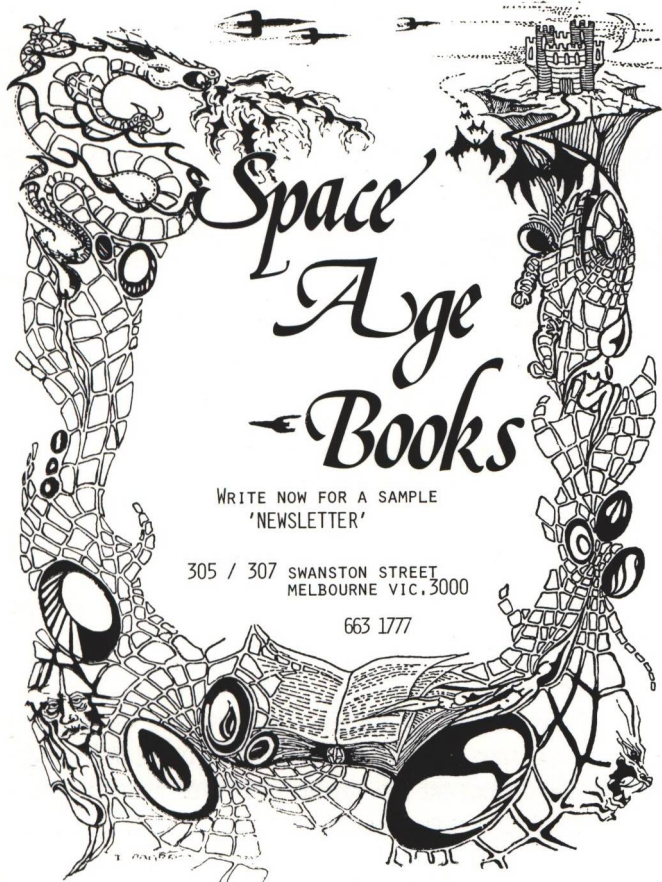
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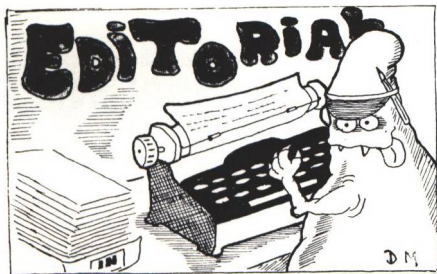
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Dear Readers,

This issue of the NEWS I hope will be on sale before EUREKACON. I did not intend it to be twenty pages and it will most likely get smaller in the future. I will make every effort to get the NEWS out as often as possible, but until I get over some of my current problems I cannot promise when the next issue will be out, or how much information it will include.

I have put off working on the new F&SF BOOKLIST, but this will be out early in May and will cover some books from late 1983, plus all titles known through January to April 1984. This listing is taking over the function of the "Books" list previously seen in the NEWS and Space Age Books SF Newsletter sf list. Space Age regular sf customers will receive the BOOKLIST free. A smaller Newsletter will cover all other Space Age stock part from the F&SF, and will be sent to all customers as usual. The subscription to the F&SF BOOKLIST is now \$7.50 for 4 issues.

Well, I am pleased that enough people made the effort to nominate in the DITMAR AWARDS to allow for the Best Long and the Best Short Fiction to be separated. But! Don't ask me how you can have locally published books up against overseas books, and how in hell did a TV series get in there. This is taking things too far. The wording of the National SF Convention constitution relating to the Achievement Awards, may be somewhat loose, and wide open to interpretation, but surely some discretion on the part of the Eurekacon Awards sub-committee should have been exerted.

It is also rather astonishing that the book THE BIRTH OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF ANTARCTICA could get on the final list, when to my knowledge, only a very limited number of copies of the book are in the country. The book may be very good, but this indicates again that we need many more people voting for the awards to make them properly representative. It makes little sense that books such as Asimov's FOUNDATION'S EDGE and other better books that have received wide distribution, did not even get mentioned. Perhaps some people are trying to point out that the rules and regulations relating to the awards are stupid and must be changed. Whatever, the Best International Fiction category in this case is ridiculous and deserves to be ignored.

The really astonishing thing regarding the nominations for the DITMARS is that all the short stories are from one book, DREAMWORKS, edited by David King for Norstrilia Press. An achievement that is not likely to be bettered for a long time.

I do appreciate the response I get from people when I ask for articles or spec-

ific reports, such as Brian Aldiss' piece on Harry Harrison last issue and John Foyster's article on George Turner in this issue. In my haste to get things done, I do not always thank people or reply to letters they write to me, but I do appreciate your help.

Merv Binns/ Editor.



The Australian publishing scene is very quiet at present. Norstrilia Press had hoped to have George Turner's non-fiction, autobiographical book, FANCY BRED, published in time for his appearance as GoH at EUREKACON, but problems have delayed its release until probably June or July.

Penguin Books published the Australian Children's Book Award winner, MASTER OF THE GROVE in 1983. They recently published, also in the Puffin imprint, FORBIDDEN PATHS and THE HUNTER OF SHADROTH, both by Victor Kelleher and both juvenile fantasies, similar in style to the award winning novel.

Penguin will publish a paperback edition of WAITING FOR THE END OF THE WORLD by LEE HARDING, early in 1985. Harding's novel DISPLACED PERSON, is now in its fourth printing.

Some big local releases of British editions included Asimov's FOUNDATION'S EDGE, in Granada from William Collins, Anne McCaffrey's MORETA: DRAGON LADY OF PERN from Corgi, Julian May's THE ADVERSARY

from William Collins in Pan and after a long delay, JUXTAPOSITION by Piers Anthony in Granada from Gordon & Gotch.

Due to Granada Publishers being sold to William Collins in the U.K., William Collins Australia have now taken over the distribution of their paperbacks in Australia from Gordon & Gotch. In another distribution change, Hodder have relinquished Arrow Books from their overloaded inventory and Gordon and Gotch are taking them over. They already have Hamlyn, which was recently taken over in the UK by Arrow and which Arrow have kept as a separate imprint.

AUTHORS & Other People In the NEWS

ISAAC ASIMOV elected to have heart surgery last December. The triple-bypass operation was not an emergency, but Asimov now has a much better chance of living a normal life than he would have had without it. Not missing an opportunity, Asimov has written up his operation in detail for an F&SF essay.

ANNE MCCAFFREY, who was the first sf writer to break through the barrier onto the bestseller lists, has now had three books on the list, including MORETA: DRAGON LADY OF PERN, which has just been released here by Corgi in a large format pb edition. She realised an ambition in getting on the bestseller list, but did not really expect to be the first sf writer to do so.

McCaffrey has finished DINOSAUR PLANET SURVIVORS for Futura, which will be released as a trade pb in August. Underwood - Miller are to publish an early gothic of McCaffrey's, A STITCH IN SNOW, in their new line, Brandywyne Books.

McCaffrey is working on a screenplay for DRAGONFLIGHT, but she is not saying for whom at present. Filmmation may do a morning TV series based on Pern. There

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SCIENCE FICTION BOOKS PUBLISHED IN BRITAIN: \$3.15 for 6 issues.

is also a lot of interest in a movie of CRYSTAL SINGER, which McCaffrey intends to do a sequel to, probably called KILLASHANDRA. She has partly given in to requests by Futura to write a family saga-type novel, and will write a non-sf/f novel, (backed by her love of horses), about a veterinary nurse, probably titled THE LADY TOUCH, in memory of a favourite mare.

More Dragon books? "Your guess is as good as mine," she said.

ROBERT SILVERBERG is being pushed hard by Arbor House to complete his fantasy novel GILGAMESH THE KING. He planned to have it completed by May, but the publishers have announced an August release date and have already printed the cover.

BILL ROTSLER, had by February, completed two of the four STAR TREK III books contracted by Pocket. No details on titles or release are available yet.

DOUGLAS ADAMS is definitely writing a fourth "Hitchhiker" book, to be called SO LONG AND THANKS FOR ALL THE FISH; a message to the doomed earthlings from dolphins on their way into space, just before Earth is leveled for an intergalactic by-pass.

Adams is also working on the script for a movie of "Hitchhiker", to be produced by Ivan Reitman for Columbia. He has moved to New York from England, saying he was getting bored with Europe. Large offers by Pan and Pocket, for a fourth "Hitchhiker" book, have induced Adams to write it, despite his previous statements that the series was complete.

RAYMOND FEIST, the author of MAGICIAN, which was seen here recently in the Granada edition, has sold a sequel, SILVERTHORN, to Doubleday for publication in August this year, with a third title, DARKNESS AT SETHANON to follow.

ANDRE NORTON and ROBERT ADAMS are editing a series of five volumes of fantasy stories, "Magic in Ithkar", for TOR. They are all invitational anthologies and the first two volumes are filled. The Cherry Weiner Agency handled the sales.

A.E.VAN VOGT has written a third "Null A" book for a French publisher, who asked him to write it because of the great popularity of the first two books there. To date there is no indication, if or when, we might see an English language edition.

MARION ZIMMER BRADLEY is currently writing NIGHT'S DAUGHTER, which is based on Mozart's THE MAGIC FLUTE. It is written in a style similar to C.L.Moore-Henry Kutner. She will also be doing a book based on the Trojan war and possibly other Greek mythology themes, plus the Mutiny on the Bounty.

MISTS OF AVALON has sold over 100,000 copies in the German edition published by S.Fischer. Another German publisher, Moewig, is to publish ten of the "Darkover" books.

TOR is publishing a new occult novel by Marion Zimmer Bradley, THE INHERITOR and are going all out on publicity for it.

STEPHEN DONALDSON has announced that he will not write any more "Thomas Covenant"

books for the time being. He does have a grand scheme in mind that calls for one more book to be called "The Last Chronicle of Thomas Covenant", but it may be a long, long time before he does it. Meanwhile, he should by now be working on a new fantasy novel. A collection called DAUGHTER OF RECALLS & OTHER TALES, is due for publication by Del Rey in the U.S.A. and William Collins in Britain.



ROBERTA A. MACAVOY

Photo C.N.Brown

Author ROBERTA A. MACAVOY has proved that it pays to keep trying. She has been writing for 15 years, producing one book a year, with little success, now suddenly her TEA WITH THE BLACK DRAGON is in its third printing. DAMIANO went back for reprinting before release. DAMIANO'S LUTE is due for May publication. Her latest project is a collaboration with Sharon Devlin, called THE BOOK OF KELLS, featuring an artist who has illustrated the famous Irish illuminated manuscript.

In a recent circular letter, GORDON R. DICKSON reported that he had an operation on his nose, which will relieve asthma problems and he hopes, improve his health in general. THE FINAL ENCYCLOPEDIA he said, was delivered to Ace in November '82 and he can only blame the changes at Ace for the delay. He has been working on WAY OF A PILGRIM, two chunks" of which appeared in Analog. Dickson will be Guest of Honour at this year's World SF Convention in Los Angeles.

ROBERT SHECKLEY has completed a new novel, THESEUS IN MAGNESSA and is working on various other projects with JAY ROTHBELL SHECKLEY and SIMON GONDOLFI. Sheckley and Jay expect to formalise their relationship in a civil marriage later this year.

JACK WILLIAMSON has completed a new novel for Del Rey, LIFE BURST. His autobiography, WONDER'S CHILD: MY LIFE IN SCIENCE FICTION, is due to be published by Bluejay in May.

JEAN AUEL'S third book in the Earth's Children series, THE MAMMOTH HUNTERS, is due to be published in the American edition by Crown late this year.

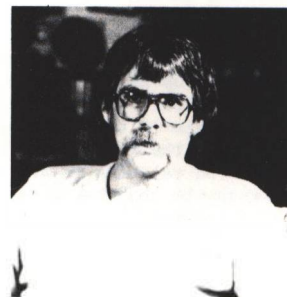
JOE and GAY HALDEMAN are still based at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, teaching science fiction, until June 1st. Joe has also been taking part in a poetry class. Some of his poetry has been published in Omni and I.A.S.F.M. Joe and Gay will be amongst the many fans and authors from the U.S.A., who are expected to attend AUSSIECON TWO next year.

DAVE LANGFORD, (who hopes his new book, THE LEAKY ESTABLISHMENT, a satirical look at a fictitious nuclear research establishment, does not upset the Ministry of Defence) is writing a new novel for Arrow Books, titled WILDERNESS OF MIRRORS.

IAN WATSON has sold THE BOOK OF THE STARS to Gollancz, the second in his "Black Current Trilogy" and he has been working on the third, THE BOOK OF BEING.

JOHN BRUNNER has completed CONTINUUM for Del Rey, who will publish it in Spring this year. Brunner's agent, Leslie Flood, described the novel as "first class" and as good as anything he has written.

MICHAEL SHEA, winner of the World Fantasy Award for Best Novel, with his NIFT THE LEAN, could not attend the World Fantasy Convention to receive his award, due to the cost of getting there. He has been employed as a carpenter's assistant and laborer in San Francisco, and as much as he would like to take writing his full time occupation, he has been unable to, up to date. He hopes his new agent, Virginia Kidd, will sell more of his already completed work. Meanwhile, he is working on IN YANNA THE TOUCH OF UNDYING, a horror fantasy, and a science fiction novel, IN THE WINDS OF THE BEHEMOTH. Shea said a lot of the credit for the popularity of the award winning novel, NIFT THE LEAN, must go to Michael Whelen's cover illustration.



MICHAEL SHEA

Photo C.N.Brown

In an interview in LOCUS, British writer D.G.COMPTON, now living in the U.S.A., spoke about his efforts to get his books published. Although appreciated by the editors, Compton's work has not been popular with the readers. He never recognised his writing as sf until Hodder and Stoughton told him it was, after reading QUALITY OF MERCY. He received only a pittance for three books he did for Hodder, and in fact, was not paid for THE STEEL CROCODILE.

Michael Joseph accepted CHRONOCULES, but they did not like the title, so he supplied some silly ones, from which they chose HOT WIRELESS SETS, ASPRIN TABLETS, THE SANDPAPER SIDES OF USED MATCHBOXES AND SOMETHING THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN CASTOR OIL. They hoped it would become known for its long title. They sold 467 copies.

Agent, Virginia Kidd, took Compton on and sold all his novels to U.S.A. publishers, but in the long run he said, that was probably a bad thing, because they all lost so much money, they now obviously do not want to know anything about him. Terry Carr, when editing the first range of ACE Specials, encouraged him, and Don

Wollheim took THE CONTINUOUS KATHERINE MORTENHOE, which as he puts it, "...laid one of my biggest eggs."

Never an sf convention goer and never having had much contact with fandom, he was surprised to be asked to attend Humanicon, in New Hampshire, where he was presented with an award for his services to human values in sf. This pleased him very much, as "human values" are what he has been going on about for all these years.

Compton recently rewrote THE PALACE (ACE 1969) and it is currently going the rounds of publishers. His main work has been in publishing and he was looking for more editorial work on a trip back to England. His own writing having to take a back seat again. "Life is not easy for a maverick in the field", as Locus put it.



D.G.COMPTON

Photo C.N.Brown

Editorial comment:

I feel that I must make a comment on D.G.Compton and perhaps other authors in the field in the same predicament.

The sf field is now, more than ever, a very competitive one. Gone are the days when publishers of any types of books, publish just for the fun or prestige of it. It costs too much now and as most publishers are in the business to make a profit, any books published must have a good chance of selling reasonably well. I realise that there are probably many things that have an influence on what makes a book popular these days, and I would suggest that in the case of science fiction and fantasy, that it is in most cases not what the ffsf literati would like to see having the most influence. However, it is the readers and the type of stories they want to read, that dictates to the publishers what to publish.

I have said it before in these pages and elsewhere, and I will say it again, that an author must write the type of story and in a style the readers like, if he is to sell his work and make money. Where do you draw the line between art and business or commercialism however? I admit I would not know where to start answering that question. It does seem to me that the most successful writers are those who can write well and yet still be commercial, but the ones who make the most money are those who write to a formula. The rest, like Compton I guess, must accept the fact that although their writing may be far better, far more literary than many of

the popular, bestselling authors, it is not what most of the sf reading public want to read.

It is more than likely that I will cop some flak over these comments. I know one person, who often encouraged me to read Compton's books, but when I did, I must admit that they did not appeal to me. That person will most likely find fault with what I have said. OK! Let me have it! I will be glad to publish any letters I receive.

Merv Binns Ed.

PUBLISHING NEWS

BAEN BOOKS ANNOUNCE FIRST PUBLICATIONS

Baen Enterprises are releasing some games to start the ball rolling, in April. The games based on Fred Saberhagen's "Berserker" series will be distributed by Simon and Schuster. Their first books will be dated August and will be available to order in July. AMERICA: A BLUEPRINT FOR THE FUTURE by Newt Ginrich with David Drake is a non-fiction title, followed by WEB OF DARKNESS by Marion Zimmer Bradley (a Timescape scheduled title originally), FRONTERA by Lewis Shiner and THE BEST SF OF THE YEAR edited by Terry Carr. FIRETIME by Poul Anderson is another title on the August list, which Baen Books took over from Timescape.

These titles mentioned are all apparently paperbacks. The first hard cover, due for September release, is BIRDS OF PREY by David Drake. Tor is doing the mass market pb edition. Some titles for publication later include THE ZANZIBAR CAT by Joanna Russ, THE HOUR OF THE HORDE by Gordon R. Dickson and the FORTY MINUTE WAR by Janet and Chris Morris.

TOR will also do reprints of other books by Janet Morris. Other authors to be published include C.J. Cherry, Joe Haldeman, Jack Vance and Keith Laumer among others.

The contract between Baen and Pocket was signed in February, but details were not made public.

A few more titles are still to appear in hard cover under the Timescape imprint from Pocket. They are: SHATTERED WORLDS by Michael Reaves, A DAY FOR DAMNATION by David Gerrold, CIRCUMPOLAR by Richard Lupoff, WINTER'S DAUGHTERS by Charles Whitmore, and THE YEARS OF THE CITY by Frederick Pohl. All to be published, one a month, up to August.

All the sf publishers in the U.S.A. had a good year with sf in 1983, apart from Pocket. They may, incidentally, continue to publish two paperback sf titles per month, extra to the "Star Trek" titles, as well as distributing Baen Books.

American publisher St. Martin's Press has announced plans to publish and distribute mass market paperbacks, while at the same time, expanding its sf line and offer hard cover capability to publishers who now only do paperbacks. As authors are demanding hard cover and paperback arrangements, St. Martin's president, Tom McCormick, feels that integration of the two, is a logical

step. St. Martins will distribute TOR books and will in future, allow TOR to do hard covers if they wish. They are distributing Bluejay publications already. TOR's Tom Dougherty, who said that TOR's sales had doubled in the past year, was delighted with the arrangement with St. Martins.

St. Martins have a number of sf hard covers coming up, including Fred Pohl's sequel to THE SPACE MERCHANTS.

Highly regarded editor, Beth Meacham has moved from Berkley to Tor, as senior editor. She will be working on her own projects along with consulting editorial staff that includes Terry Carr, Ben Bova and David Hartwell.

Editor-in-chief at Berkley/Ace, Susan Allison, said that Meacham would be hard to replace, but she has found an excellent replacement in Ginjer Buchanan, who has worked with David Hartwell for various publishers and was most recently first reader for the SF Book Club.

Tor announced that they will be doing something about the copyrights on their books, and previous errors will be corrected.

Editor, Bill Thompson, who is credited with discovering Stephen King, has been appointed editorial director at Arbor House. Thompson has worked with a number of major publishers and is primarily interested in fantasy, having been Peter Straub's editor at Putnam, and he also edited TALISMAN, the King /Straub collaboration. Arbor House confirmed that Robert Silverberg will still be the science fiction consultant, with Thompson most likely his editor.

Bluejay Books recently published DR ADDER by K.W. JETER. They have now purchased two more books by Jeter; THE GLASS HAMMER and INFERNAL DEVICES. They have also purchased FIRE SANCTUARY by KATHERINE E. KIMBRIEL and THE MAN WHO MELTED by JACK DANN.

HEROINES OF SCIENCE FICTION, an illustrated encyclopedia covering major female protagonists from the 1930's through to now, by Janrae Frank, Ron Miller and Hank Stine, is currently going the rounds of publishers. Is this the title announced a year or two back by Starblaze?

Some books announced by STARBLAZE have now been cancelled and others delayed as follows: MR MONSTER'S BEAUTIES AND THE BEAST by Forest J. Ackerman - cancelled, AN EDGE IN MY VOICE by Harlan Ellison - postponed; WOLF QUEST AND THE SORCERESS OF QAR by Ted White - postponed; THE COMING OF THE VOIDAL AND THE HAND OF THE VOIDAL by Adrian Cole - postponed to Fall '84; MORE THAN MELCHISADECH by R.A. Lafferty - delayed until Fall 1984; and some previously delayed, but now out, include: THE BRONZE GOD OF RHODES by L. Sprague de Camp; WEB OF DARKNESS by Marion Z. Bradley; WORLDS BEYOND: The Art of Chesley Bonestell.

Underwood/Miller are publishing a limited edition of CUGEL'S SAGA by Jack Vance, which will incorporate a few small changes made by the author. They will also be doing RHIALTO THE MARVELLOUS, a sequel to THE DYING EARTH.

erkley/Ace are acquiring lots of new books and reprinting many others. Amongst the new titles are LYONESSE II and III by Jack Vance, HELLICONIA SUMMER and ARCTIC HELLICONIA by Brian Aldiss, THE WARLOCK IS WANDERING and THE WARLOCK IS MISSING by Christopher Stasheff and TIME OF THE ANNIHILATOR and QUESTING OF KEDRIGERN by John Morressy.

Bantam will publish two more books by the author of STARTIDE RISING, David Brin. THE GORILLA (working title only) and THE POSTMAN which will be based on Brin's Hugo-nominated novella. From Norman Spinrad, they have CHILD OF FORTUNE, two new novels by Mike McQuay and a collection by Robert Silverberg, THE CONGLOMEROID COCKTAIL PARTY. They will also publish the third book in the "Inquistor" series by Somtow Sucharitkul, which is a linked story collection titled UTOPIA HUNTERS. Timescape published the first two books in the series. The last book in the series, THE REBEL SHADOWS, will be published in 1985.

Bantam will also publish CASTLES, an art book by Alan Lee, (who illustrated the MABINOIGION) as a hard cover, in 1984.

Doubleday will publish a new collection of PHILIP K. DICK stories, put together by Mark Hurst and Paul Williams. It contains the most recent uncollected stories, plus one previously unpublished story and a speech by Dick, on the craft of sf writing.

Nemo Press will publish a bibliography of Harlan Ellison, tentatively titled A SPECIAL DREAMER: AN ILLUSTRATED HARLAN ELLISON BIBLIOGRAPHY, it has been compiled by Leslie K. Swigart.

Donald M. Grant are reprinting 10,000 copies of THE GUNSLINGER by Stephen King. They took this unprecedented step because they received a lot of requests when the title was included on a list published of King's books.

Whispers Press are doing a limited signed edition of Robert Heinlein's new novel, JOB: A COMEDY OF JUSTICE.

MacDonald/Futura are doing hard cover editions of Larry Niven's THE PATCHWORK GIRL and DREAM PARK by Niven and Barnes.

Del Rey plan to publish two reference volumes next year: THE ATLAS OF PERN and THE GUIDE TO THE LAND.

NEW ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM BRITISH PUBLISHERS FOR 1984

A new publisher, JOHN GOODCHILD, has announced a number of new editions in hard cover of famous sf titles including: HOTHOUSE by Brian Aldiss, TIGER! TIGER! by Alfred Bester, THE SPACE MERCHANTS by Frederik Pohl and C.M. Kornbluth, BEASTS by John Crowley, THIS IMMORTAL by Roger Zelazny and THE WORLD OF NULL-A by A.E. Van Vogt.

GRANADA published Asimov's THE ROBOTS OF DAWN in February, and to follow, they have INCARNATE by Ramsey Campbell, WEST OF EDEN by Harry Harrison, THE SUN SHINES BRIGHT by Isaac Asimov and SPRING OF '84: A CHOICE OF FUTURES by Arthur C. Clarke. The last two being non-fiction titles.

GOLLANCZ titles include: HERETICS OF DUNE by Frank Herbert, THE STEPS TO THE SUN by Walter Tevis, SUPERLUMINAL by

Vonda N McIntyre, THE TITHONIAN FACTOR by Richard Cowper, A THEATRE OF TIMESMITHS by Garry Kilworth, *PAVANE by Keith Roberts, THE BOOK OF THE RIVER by Ian Watson, LIES, INC. by Philip K. Dick, VALENTINE PONTIFEX by Robert Silverberg, FIRE PATTERN by Bob Shaw, THE LUNATICS OF TERRA by John Sladek, NEOROMANCER by William Gibson, HEECHEE LENDEZVOUS by Frederik Pohl, EXILES OF COLSEC by Douglas Hill (Juv.), GIANT COLD by Peter Dickinson (Juv.), and reprints including RINGWORLD by Larry Niven, THE DRAGON IN THE SEA by Frank Herbert, Z FOR ZACHARIAH by Robert C. O'Brien, THE WEATHERMONGER, HEARTSEASE, and THE DEVIL'S CHILDREN by Peter Dickinson and the three "Wizard of Earthsea" books by Ursula K. LeGuin. A very impressive list.
* Keith Roberts's PAVANE is a new edition, but all other new titles are either first British publication or first time anywhere.

HAMLIN PUBLISHING have a number of collections: THE BEST GHOST STORIES, THE BEST HORROR STORIES, THE BEST SCIENCE FICTION STORIES and an sf/"faction" title, SPACEBASE 2000 by Stewart Crowley.

More details on all of these books and more from other publishers, will be covered in our associate publication, THE FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION CHECKLIST.



NEBULA AWARD NOMINATIONS 1983

BEST NOVEL:

AGAINST INFINITY, Gregory Benford (Timescape)
STARTIDE RISING, David Brin (Bantam)
TEA WITH THE BLACK DRAGON, R.A. MacAvoy (Bantam)
THE VOID CAPTAIN'S TABLE by Norman Spinrad (Timescape)
LYONESSE, Jack Vance (Berkley)
THE CITADEL OF THE AUTARCH, Gene Wolfe (Timescape)

BEST NOVELLA:

"Hardfought", Greg Bear (Asimov's 2/83)
"The Gospel According to Gamaliel Grucis", Michael Bishop (Asimov's 11/83)
"Her Habiline Husband", Michael Bishop (Universe 13)
"Eszterhazy And The Autogondola-Invention", Avram Davidson (Amazing 11/83)
"Transit", Vonda N. McIntyre (Asimov's 10/83)
"Homefaring", Robert Silverberg (Amazing 11/83)

BEST NOVELETTE:

"Blood Music", Greg Bear (Analog 6/83)
"Blind Shemmy", Jack Dann (Omni 4/83)
"The Monkey Treatment", George R.R. Martin (F&SF 3/83)
"Black Air", Kim Stanley Robinson (F&SF 3/83)
"Cicada Queen", Bruce Sterling (Universe 13)
"Slow Birds", Ian Watson (F&SF 6/83)
"The Sidon In The Mirror", Connie Willis (Asimov's 4/83)

BEST SHORT STORY:

"The Peacemaker", Gardner Dozois (Asimov's 8/83)
"Her Furry Face", Leigh Kennedy (Asimov's 12/15/83)
"Cryptic", Jack McDevitt (Asimov's 4/83)
"Ghost Town", Chad Oliver (Analog 9/15/83)
"The Geometry of Narrative", Hilbert Schenck (Analog 8/83)
"Wong's Lost And Found Emporium", William F. Wu (Amazing 5/83)

The Nebulas are voted upon only by the members of the Science Fiction Writers of America association. They are dated for the year the stories are published and not the year given like the Hugos. There is a "no award" allowed for in each category. The winners will be announced at the Nebula Banquet on April 28th.

THE BRITISH FANTASY AWARDS

The 1983 British Fantasy Awards were announced at Fantasycon VIII, held on October 14th to 16th in Birmingham, England. The winners and runners-up were:

NOVEL: THE SWORD OF THE LICTOR by Gene Wolfe, IN VIRICONIUM by M. John Harrison, and PSYCHO II by Robert Bloch (tied for second place).

SHORT FICTION: "The Breathing Method" by Stephen King, "Apt Pupil" by Stephen King, "Name and Number" by Brian Lumley.

SMALL PRESS: Fantasy Tales, edited by Stephen Jones and David Sutton, Dark Horizons, edited by David Sutton, Whispers, edited by Stuart Schiff.

FILM: BLADERUNNER, E.T. -- THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL, CONAN THE BARBARIAN.

ARTIST: Dave Carson, Stephen Jones, John Stewart.

SPECIAL AWARD: (given by the British Fantasy Society Committee): Karl Edward Wagner.

The award winners are underlined, with the second and third runners in order.

THE PHILIP K. DICK AWARD NOMINATIONS

Nominations for the third annual Philip K. Dick Memorial Award for best paperback original of the year are:

THE ANUBIS GATES by Tim Powers (ACE)
BENEFITS by Zoe Fairburn (Avon)
THE FLOATING GODS by M. John Harrison (Timescape)

MILLENIUM by John Varley (Berkley)
TEA WITH THE BLACK DRAGON by R.A. MacAvoy (Bantam)

THE ZEN GUN by Barrington J. Bayley (DAW)

The award, originated by Tom Fisch, has been taken over by Norwescon and it will be presented in Seattle in March. The judges for next year will be John Sladek, Roland Green and Ted Michelfeld.

THE ALPHA AWARD

Not another award! Yes, another award. This time, it's the Alpha Award. The Alpha Award is presented by SF Review Corner (a radio program on SEBI-FM run by Tom Callaghan and Jeff Harris) to someone who has contributed significantly to South Australian fandom over a number of years. The first recipient of the award (in 1982) was Allan Bray. Allan's award took the form of two engraved silver goblets. This year (1983, that is) the second Alpha Award was presented to Jan Jackson. Jan's award was a silver.

tray For those of you who don't know Jan, she has been a leading light of SA fandom, particularly amongst the Trek fans and the younger sf fans in Adelaide. As Tom said, Jan is also, in every sense of the word, a lady. She certainly deserved the award. Congratulations, Jan.

Reported by Cathie Kerrigan

MORE PEOPLE & PUBLISHING

The winner of the 1983 Nobel Prize for Literature, WILLIAM GOLDING, has, it is worth noting, written a number of borderline ffsf novels and shorter stories. His best known is *LORD OF THE FLIES* (1954) while the *INHERITORS* (1955), features a confrontation of prehistoric men, and *THE SCORPION GOD* (1971), that features three novellas. One of these novellas, "Envoy Extraordinary", was published and performed as a play, *THE BRASS BUTTERFLY* (1958).

British writer ADRIAN COLE's new novel *THE SLEEP GIANTS*, was published last October. It is loosely connected to *MOORSTONES*, published 1982. The books are described as children's books but not "juveniles". His "Voidal" series was due to be released by Starblaze in the US a year ago, but the latest indication is Fall '84. Starblaze have more difficulty keeping to their schedule than ASFN!

PUBLISH AND BE DAMNED!

SCANDALOUS REPORTS, EMBARRASSING MOMENTS, CRITICAL REMARKS AND INNUENDOS in the SCIENCE FICTION WORLD

The *Oakland Tribune* newspaper of August 18th 1983, carried an article questioning the death of PHILIP K. DICK. There were some anomalies regarding identification of the body, the abrupt cremation, with no accompanying funeral service and the unknown fate of a considerable amount of cash. The reporter who wrote the article, David Alcott, advanced the theory that the seeming death of PKD was a hoax, giving Dick the chance to start a new, pseudonymous, life. Dick's daughter, Laura Coelho, her mother Anne Dick, and Dick's father, all said that they believed him to be truly dead, but it is an interesting theory. Just the sort of thing Dick would have written into one of his novels, which all his readers can testify to, knowing that he did write about death, fraud, and matters of truth and illusion in many of his works.

Author William Blatty filed suit late last year against the *New York Times*, because his book *LEGION* was late making their bestseller list. Although the book was named as a bestseller by *Publishers Weekly* back in July, the NYT did not include the title on their preprinted form listing 36 books, (which they send to all the booksellers to fill in and return), until August. It immediately made the NYT list the following week. Blatty is claiming "negligence" on the part of the NYT.

Numerous authors descended on Britain to take part in the Book Marketing Council's VENTURE INTO SCIENCE FICTION

obituaries

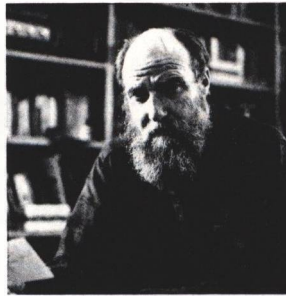


MARY RENAUDT

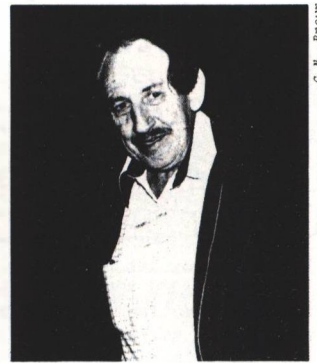
MARY RENAUDT, the noted historical novelist died December 13th in a Cape Town Hospital. She was 78. Although her novels were not strictly fantasy, her reinterpretation of the Theseus legend had a great influence on the field. *THE LAST OF THE WINE* ('56), *THE KING MUST DIE* ('58), *THE BULL FROM THE SEA* ('62), and *THE CHARIOTEER* ('53) are probably her best known works. Marion Zimmer Bradley chided her for not writing about women in any of her novels, but after reading *MISTS OF AVALON*, Renault suggested Bradley write about the women of Greek legends. "Now I'll have to," said Bradley.

LEONARD WIBBERLEY, who wrote *THE MOUSE THAT ROARED*, died on November 22nd last, of a heart attack in Santa Monica. He was 68. Born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1915, he moved to London with his family when he was 8. His first job was as a copy boy for the London *Sunday Express*, and went on to work for newspapers in many other places throughout the world. His first novel, (the first of 100 books) was *THE KING'S BEARD*. His fantasy novels included: the sequels to *THE MOUSE THAT ROARED*, *THE MOUSE ON THE MOON* and *THE MOUSE ON WALL STREET*, *QUEST FOR EXCALIBUR*, *MRS SEARWOOD'S SECRET WEAPON* and others.

WILLIAM L. CRAWFORD, died of cancer on January 26th. He was buried at sea by the Neptune Society. Crawford is credited



LEONARD WIBBERLEY



BILL CRAWFORD

with starting the semi-professional magazine field in 1934, with *Marvel Tales* and *Unusual Stories*, and the small press field in 1935, with publication of *MARS MOUNTAIN*.

Crawford who was born on September 11th 1911, endeavoured to give sf a new image other than that presented in the pulp magazines. In 1936, his Visionary Press published *THE SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH* by H.P. Lovecraft, but other plans he had to publish books and magazines at that time, never eventuated. In 1947, he and his wife started The Fantasy Publishing Company, and they published among others, *OUT OF THE UNKNOWN* by A.E. Van Vogt, *DEATH'S DEPUTY* by L. Ron Hubbard, *THE UNDESIRE PRINCESS* by L. Sprague de Camp and *THE IRON STAR* by John Taine. In 1953, he launched the magazine *Spaceway*, and in 1970, he dropped that to publish *Coven 13*. In the seventies, he became involved in running conventions, and one being held this Easter, the sixth SF Weekend, will be held as a memorial to him. A man to whom the sf field owes a lot.

OTTO MESSMER, the film animator who created "Felix the Cat" died October 28th last. He was 91. He also created 300 short films in the 1920s and 1930s and drew the daily "Felix the Cat" newspaper strip.

promotion, last October. British authors and overseas authors took part in book signings, appeared on TV shows and attended various other promotional events. The promotion was aimed at encouraging more readers to read sf, but a campaign aimed at fans is a future possibility. (Australian publishers and distributors should consider something along these lines to coincide with AUSSIECON 2 in August '85.) Despite the campaign's apparent success, Christopher Priest, sometimes called St. Christopher by those who do not agree with his comments in such places as *Ansible* and *The British Bookseller*, criticised the campaign rather vehemently. We gather that his main 'beef' was the poor choice of books, that the publishers chose to include in the promotion.

MAGAZINE NEWS

The American news and review magazine *Fantasy Newsletter*, has been retitled *Fantasy Review*. Editor Robert Collins has got together with Neil Barron, who was producing *Science Fiction and Fantasy Book Review* and they have combined the two publications, with Barron as review editor.

Jim Baen Associates and Jerry Pournelle Associates are to produce a new sf magazine called *Far Frontiers*. It will be published quarterly and be similar in concept and editorial direction to the "Destinies" series Baen edited for ACE. The magazine will include original fiction and non-fiction. Baen and Pournelle will be editorial directors and John F. Carr, managing editor. They are looking for stories that J.W. Campbell would have published in *Astounding*, with an emphasis on hard science and a good story well told. They will also be publishing some poetry and the occasional *Unknown*-type fantasy story. Payment will be 5¢ per word, with higher rates for higher name authors and for stories used in the ongoing anthologies, such as "There Will Be War". For more details write to J.E. Pournelle & Associates, Attention John F. Carr, 3960 Laurel Canyon Blvd., Suite 372, Studio City CA 91604 - 3791 U.S.A.

Editor Richard Monaco is trying to find a new publisher for *IMAGO*, which was scheduled for a September '83 release, but cancelled when the publisher, Chelseas House, reneged on the deal.



Leonard Nimoy has brought in **STAR TREK III: THE SEARCH FOR SPOCK**, (his first feature-directing project) on schedule and several million dollars below budget. The film has all the original cast, but Kirstie Alley, who created the character Lt. Saavik in the **STAR TREK II** film, has been replaced by newcomer Robin Curtis, who is a fashion model. Dame Judith Anderson is also in the film, and the villain is played by Christopher Lloyd who played Reverend Jim in TV's **TAXI**. The scheduled release date for the film is June 1984.

In a newspaper interview, Nimoy said that he thinks that he has used the characters better than ever before. In the first film, they went along for the ride with the special effects, the second film used them more effectively, but the actors think Nimoy has done such a good job that they want him to direct the fourth film. When he first asked Judith Anderson to appear in the film, she said she had never heard of **STAR TREK**, but some of her young relatives put her in the picture.

Nimoy cut off a TV and movie directing career to originally appear in the TV series of **STAR TREK**, but he has now come full circle and in so doing, may have opened the way to other directorial assignments. He has appeared in many other diverse roles from Golda Meir's husband in the TV mini-series "Golda", to the character Achmet in another TV mini-series "Marco Polo" and stage roles such as "The King and I".

Following the success of the Jim Henson film **THE DARK CRYSTAL**, another film is to be made. Artist Brian Froud is currently producing designs for the film. Froud's pop-up book **GOBLINS** has been a very popular item in Britain and the U.S.A. The Australian edition also sold out over Christmas last. Pop-up books are a steadily growing, popular item, and **GOBLINS** is particularly outstanding in this field.

Universal will produce films of Jean Auel's novels **THE CLAN OF THE CAVE BEAR** and **THE VALLEY OF THE HORSES**, for theatrical release. The films will be made simultaneously, with Peter Guber and Jon Peters (**FLASHDANCE**) as executive producers.

Roy Scheider has been chosen to play Haywood Floyd in MGM/UA's film of **2010: ODYSSEY TWO**, with John Lithgow and Bob Balaban playing two of the American astronauts in the story. Peter Hyams, who directed **OUTLAND**, is directing and producing, and wrote the screenplay for the film. Technical people on the film will include Richard Edlund, special effects supervisor on **STAR WARS**, **RETURN OF THE JEDI** and **RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK**, production designer Albert Brenner, and artist Syd Mead, who was

responsible for most of **BLADERUNNER**'s look.

STREETS OF FIRE is an unusual film in that it is set in a 50's period, but not the 50's as we know them. It is directed by Walter Hill who made **THE WARRIORS** and **48 HOURS**.

A new production company, Salem Productions, formed by William J. Immerman, has bought L. Ron Hubbard's **BATTLEFIELD EARTH**. Immerman will make two films, the first of which will start filming late '84 on a \$15 million budget.

CONAN, KING OF THIEVES started filming in Mexico recently. It will star Arnold Schwarzenegger in the title role again. A Dino De Laurentiis production, it is directed by Richard Fleisher and written by Stanley Mann. Universal will release.

Martin Sheen replaced Burt Lancaster on **FIRESTARTER** after Lancaster underwent a heart operation. Lancaster was reported to be doing well.

CBS will screen a 12 hour mini-series based on James Michener's **SPACE**. The script is being written by Stirling Silliphant. It will include extensive use of actual space scenery borrowed from NASA.

Following the screening here of the films **THE DAY AFTER** and **TESTAMENT**, both of which deal with nuclear disasters, the Edgley organisation, who produced the films **PHARLAP** and **THE MAN FROM SNOWY RIVER**, have produced a post nuclear disaster film, **ONE NIGHT STAND**, in which a group of young people camp in the Sydney Opera House, as the world is destroyed around them. Other associated films include **DOOMSDAY RUN**, in which a group steal nuclear materials, and a film tentatively titled **RED DAWN** and **THE TIN SOLDIERS**, which involves a group of young people trying to survive an atomic blast.

Disney will release its first full-length animated feature since **SLEEPING BEAUTY** in 1959, when it releases **THE BLACK CAULDRON** in 1985. The studio has been working on this \$25 million medieval fantasy for six years.

A third "Mad Max" film is to be made by George Miller, but it is unlikely that Mel Gibson will be involved. Gibson has become a very hot property since appearing in **THE YEAR OF LIVING DANGEROUSLY**, which has done well in the U.S.A. American actress Linda Hunt, won the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress in the same film, and is appearing in the film of **DUNE**.

GHOSTBUSTERS is a comedy film written by Dan Ackroyd and Harold Ramis, which will star Ackroyd, Ramis, and Sigourney Weaver. The film was originally planned to star Ackroyd and his late friend John Belushi. Special effects, which include a giant model of Manhattan's Central Park West skyline, which takes so much power to light that part of the power to other parts of the studio has to be cut off, are being supervised by Oscar winner Richard Edlund.

Tanya Roberts is starring in a Columbia pictures version of **SHEENA, QUEEN OF THE JUNGLE**, based on the 1930's comic strip character, previously screened as a serial.

Parke Godwin is doing the treatment and screenplay for "The Fire When It Comes", a novella optioned by Noble Enterprises. Shooting will probably commence late '84.

A film based on Barry Longyear's novel **ENEMY MINE**, is being made in England by King's Road productions.

Tobe Hooper, who directed **POLTERGEIST**, will direct **SPACE VAMPIRES** for Cannon Films. John Dykstra is in charge of special effects.

Gary Kurtz is producing **RETURN TO OZ** for Disney Studios. The story is a compilation of characters and plot elements from 12 of the Frank L. Baum books that Disney hold the rights on. Walter Murch has written the script and will direct at Elstree studios, and on location in Italy. There will be extensive special effects.

NBC have paid \$3 million for two screenings of **THE ROAD WARRIOR (MAD MAX)**. This is the first all-Australian made and cast film screened on American network TV.

Disney studios are making **BABY**, which is set in Africa, where the discovery of some surviving dinosaurs has been made. Special effects will include a dinosaur 15 feet tall and 75 feet long.

Dan O'Bannon in his first directing job, is working on **RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD** for Hemdale Leisure Corp. George Romero was trying to stop the name being used as he intended to use it himself, following his earlier "Living Dead" movies. Dan O'Bannon replaced Tobe Hooper as director of the film which is now being backed by Orion Pictures.

New World Pictures and Cinema Group Inc. have combined to make **THE PHILADELPHIA EXPERIMENT**, which deals with an experiment purportedly carried out by the U.S. navy during the war, in which a battleship was made to disappear and materialise later and in another place. John Carpenter is executive producer.

British actor Peter Arne, who appeared in numerous British films and TV productions, including a number in the sf and horror category, was murdered last year by a young Italian teacher, homosexual pickup, who consequently drowned himself in the Thames. We were ironically reminded of his death on seeing him in an episode of the TV series **HART TO HART**, in which the character he played was also murdered. Truth is stranger than fiction!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks as usual to **LOCUS** and **SCIENCE FICTION CHRONICLE** for most of the overseas news in this issue. The film news, in particular, is mostly from Kay Anderson's Continuum column in **SFC**, for which we are most appreciative.

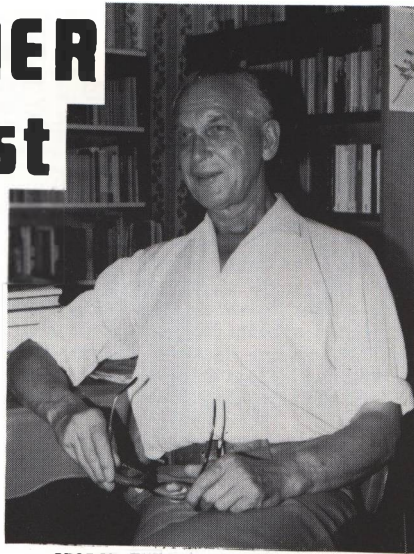
My thanks to Jullianne Wylie, Karen Quinlan, and Cathie Kerrigan for helping with typing on this issue. Jullianne is also doing a good job in endeavouring to find all my typos and grammatical blunders, since Justin Ackroyd is not around. I will still need more help with typing and proof-reading on future issues, since I cannot afford to continue to use Space Age staff, who should be doing other things. Any volunteers?

M.B.

GEORGE TURNER

Critic & Novelist

by John Foyster



GEORGE TURNER Photo Merv Binns

George Turner began his career as 'practicing critic' with an article in the first anniversary issue of *Australian Science Fiction Review*, June 1967. For this edition, John Bangsund had persuaded many of his regular contributors to provide pieces of fiction, with the result that ASFR 10 is not at all typical of what the magazine had previously been. George Turner's contribution is the only long piece of criticism in this issue. In time, as we shall see, John Bangsund did exert his persuasive powers upon George Turner also, with greater success.

George Turner's concerns in this first article, 'The Double Standard', have remained with him; in 1984, some seventeen years later, he felt a strong urge to lead a Nova Mob meeting on the subject of the nature of the criticism of science fiction. In 1967, he was concerned to distinguish reviewing from criticism: he draws the line, as the subtitle of his article reveals, between 'the short look and the long, hard look'.

This article had its origins, according to Turner, in exchanges of ideas with John Bangsund. In introducing himself to his readers George Turner uses the same stylistic touches he is to retain throughout his SF writing career; he writes as he speaks, colloquially if this is appropriate, and without pretension or strain. Here, as elsewhere, his style assists the reader to follow comfortably (and at times it may appear all too comfortably) his flow of ideas.

In this and several other early pieces George Turner reveals much of his philosophy of science fiction, and this article will therefore, in dealing with his non-fiction, refer only to the article already cited, together with 'Nothing to lose but the chains' (ASFR 12, October 1967), 'On writing about science fiction' (ASFR 18, December 1968) (and his review of Armytage's *YESTERDAY'S TOMORROWS* in that issue) and 'Up the Pohl' (ASFR 19, March 1969). (Only the original article is dealt with in that article.)

Later in his career, George became a regular reviewer of science fiction (and later again, by preference, mainstream literature) for the *Melbourne AGE*. Here he was able to function along the lines described in this earliest piece: he could 'give the reader of his periodical a guide to what is on the market'. But such a reviewer, he wrote in 1967, 'is of no use at all to the writer or to the serious reader who considers literature a major amenity of civilisation, one which must be treated with exactness and great care.' (ASFR 10,10)

In 'The Double Standard' George Turner aimed to go beyond this; he 'proposed to take a popular and much lauded sf novel and treat it on several levels of criticism'; he was to be 'concerned with causes, effects and ultimate values'.

The work to be dealt with was Alfred Bester's *THE DEMOLISHED MAN* (though Turner argues that more or less the same remarks could be made about *THE STARS MY DESTINATION*) and ranged against this work was to be George Turner - an sf reader for 39 years, a student of literature for 30 and a practising novelist for ten years (not science fiction).

(George Turner's mainstream novels are *YOUNG MAN OF TALENT* (1959), *A STRANGER AND AFRAID* (1961), *THE CUPBOARD UNDER THE STAIRS* (1962), *A WASTE OF SHAME* (1965), *THE LAME DOG MAN* (1967) and *TRANSIT OF CASSIDY* (1978). He received the Miles Franklin award for *THE CUPBOARD UNDER THE STAIRS* and his own feelings about his novels are summarised in these remarks (CONTEMPORARY NOVELISTS, 1976);

I am sufficiently old fashioned to prefer a story with a beginning, a development and a resolution (though not to the point of tying up every loose end in sight) but sufficiently of my time to avoid moral and ethical attitudes. Those of my characters who display them are apt to come to grief as the theme tests and retests them

For this reason, I have been termed "existentialist", which is probably true, and I have also been said to have no moral or ethical views at all, which is not. I merely condemn rigidity of attitude and I suppose that in the final summation, that is what my novels so far have been about.

George introduces his remarks about *THE DEMOLISHED MAN* with a series of quotations, mostly invented, but attributed to various generally anonymous labourers in the field of science fiction, one of whom is Sam Moskowitz. The imagined review by Moskowitz is printed as:

This magnificent novel sets a new literary standard in sf. Bester fulfils the promise shown in his

trail-blazing short stories and crowns his career with a soruscating cascade of sheer genius. This novel marks a new development in sf.

Turner claims not to know whether Moskowitz ever did review *THE DEMOLISHED MAN*. Moskowitz's actual review (*Science Fiction Plus*, August 1953) can be used to show how sound George's ear is.

This novel represents the ultimate achieved to date in that particular direction of science-fiction (archness of writing and loss of central ideas and plotting.) Alfred Bester, an experienced radio script writer, pulls off every gimmick in a writer's retinue and even invents a few never seen before. He goes a step further and employs trick typesetting for special effects. The result is completely different and effective science fiction novel. In its direction, it is good enough to discourage wise writers from exploring this vein any further. It is unlikely that they will be able to do better than Bester, and when an entire story must stand or fall by its writing, only the best is acceptable.

Although the plot when recited sounds asinine, and the pace and special-effects slacken somewhat at about the halfway mark, this book is nevertheless an important experiment in the evolution of science fiction writing.

Near enough.

But the way into George's article is not through Moskowitz, but along the Via Norstrilia (as it was later to become) - a review by Rob Gerrand. George asserts that Gerrand invents virtues in *THE DEMOLISHED MAN* and turns to take his 'long, hard look.'

This is based, apparently, upon several readings of *THE DEMOLISHED MAN*: no one will be able to doubt that George Turner took the book seriously. During the course of these readings, Turner finds his feelings about the book evolving - something not entirely surprising. A book which at first was hard to put down becomes first a snow job and then, ten years later, hard going. Is this a change in the reader, one must wonder? Then Turner moves to his criticism, a long hard look which is to be framed by several questions: Does *THE DEMOLISHED MAN* deserve a high place? Is it good sf? Is it a good thriller? What does *THE DEMOLISHED MAN* tell us about a telepathic society? Is it a high point in sf or a high point in fooling the reader?

Turner acknowledges that it is an ingenious thriller - perhaps too much so. This can be used as an explanation of his initial reaction to *THE DEMOLISHED MAN*. But is it good sf? Here Turner begins to use his notions of what constitutes good sf: he begins to worry about ultimate values.

For George, a work must be consistent within its own guidelines; speculative ideas in an sf novel must be able to withstand scrutiny. From this point, he moves on to what he sees as the central motif of *THE DEMOLISHED MAN* the telepathic society within which it is set. For him, the book can stand

or fall on the handling of telepathy. (It is useful to recall here that George Turner's fiction trilogy, written some years later, depends substantially upon telepathy.)

(But George does not consider, at least in print, the consequences for his judgement if Bester claims that the centre of his novel is not the telepathic content at all, but that this is incidental to his goal, the construction of an sf thriller at which Bester seems, to the reader Turner, to have been successful.)

(Here is a flaw; for one would need to be very sure that one was judging a book by its cover story - in George's words it must 'be consistent within the bounds of its own convention', but this surely does not require it to be consistent with the readers convention. The question to be resolved is whether George Turner's claim that THE DEMOLISHED MAN's success or failure turns on the satisfactoriness of the depiction of telepathy is a reasonable one or not. But Turner uses this question to deal with greater matters - if the treatment of telepathy is unsatisfactory then the writer may, in addition, have been dishonest - if he knows that his treatment has been unsatisfactory. Thus, inside one uncertain question lies the worm of deceit. But if the challenge to Bester's treatment of telepathy is accurate but irrelevant then the question of honesty does not exist.)

Turner's challenge to Bester takes place in a small arena: three incidents are identified and discussed. For each incident Turner asserts that there is a flaw and that Bester was aware of the flaw. That Bester, having known about the flaw, ignores it. In two of the three cases, in fact, Turner gives details of the method used by Bester to divert the reader's attention from the difficulty he has got himself into. It is hard to see this as a matter of ignoring a problem, unless one is talking about a philosophical treatise, which generally speaking those analysing a work of science fiction are not doing; certainly the writer of the thriller, which George Turner found 'a most entertaining tale', took a step which some at least might find acceptable 'within the bounds of its own convention.'

Here is the crux of the matter. It is the point of departure for George Turner's voyage into criticism; is there a double standard? Is George Turner, the first reader, he who finds THE DEMOLISHED MAN hard to put down, the reviewer, the reader for whom THE DEMOLISHED MAN was constructed, or is it George Turner, crusty critic, who at the third reading finds THE DEMOLISHED MAN hard going and full of dishonesty in its treatment of telepathy that Alfred Bester worked for in those sweaty hours of 1951? Alas, the number of seasoned George Turners reading *Galaxy* in 1951-1952 was very small indeed: the author investing in time in serving those readers might find himself, ah, misdirecting his effort.

George Turner argues extensively about the necessity for a rationale for telepathy and the use of it in the novel. He does not, says the critic, 'suggest how telepathic powers are brought into existence' or 'discuss the techniques of using and directing these powers'. He 'never suggests a *raison d'être*'.

He 'should set up some rules, and abide by them' for 'Science is dependent on rules, and even sf must obey a few, if it is to have validity or even intelligibility'.

There's something echoing in here, which needs to be spelled out; the Gernsbackian sugar-coated pill manifested in the reading of the young George Turner (if he read *Wonder Stories*), with the 'What is your Science Knowledge?' feature of the magazine, in which the young enthusiasts of science were quizzed on the extent to which they had absorbed the garbled scientific content of their favourite reading matter. (Gernsback assumed his readers had poor memories; it is remarkable how often some questions re-appeared.) Science fiction, for George Turner, echoes some of that Gernsback philosophy; though Gernsback is, of course, *passé*, the science content of science fiction cannot be denied or even slighted. By a curious coincidence, just as THE DEMOLISHED MAN was finishing its serial run in *Galaxy Science Fiction*, over at *Startling Stories* (March 1952) Kendall Foster Crossen was hard at work continuing to stick pins into the hot air balloon of Gernsbackian scientism with THINGS OF DISTINCTION, complete with scientific footnotes such as (in part only)

Erwin Dibble, as everyone should know, first made his reputation in advertising in 3027 when he managed to rearrange the positions of a number of stars, in the neighbourhood of Polaris, so that they spelled STELLA-COLA. He accomplished this with a patented process (UGH Pat. 475621F89036) which was based on the formula:

$$qp - pq = \frac{ih}{2\pi}$$

etc. etc.

One might reasonably suggest that George Turner's feelings about the place of science in science fiction are not universally held. Yet most significant writers would not deny that science does play some part in the construction of works of science fiction. The question may not be, then, quite so absolute as George Turner's rendering of it in his analysis of THE DEMOLISHED MAN. There is a question of degree, and perhaps one may legitimately take a softer line than he does on the authenticity of Bester's treatment of telepathy. But certainly we have identified one of George Turner's ultimate values with some precision; that in science fiction central scientific ideas should be worked out in some detail, and laws - ones which cannot be ignored - posited concerning those ideas.

Beyond this central concern, Turner goes on to deal with two other matters not, in 1952, much in fashion in science fiction. In a sense, these are dealt with rather more briefly than seems justified (and more briefly than one suspects the later George Turner would find satisfactory). In addressing the question of characterization, in one paragraph Turner acknowledges that the characters are 'very striking (and) admirably suited to the uses to which Bester puts them' but draws to our attention the failure of these characters to develop. There's a weakness in this paragraph which one can imagine a more careful Turner excising: he 'wonders...

how an ass like Ben Reich managed to hold his financial empire together'. There's now altogether too much public evidence as to the ways in which asses do hold together empires of one kind or another.

The skill with which Bester has depicted the society of THE DEMOLISHED MAN is also treated harshly, again in a single paragraph. But then, taking what has gone before and adding a note about Reich, George Turner puts his case together. Although THE DEMOLISHED MAN has 'virtues of style and speed and ingenuity', the evidence from three distinct investigations is that it is shallow or dishonest. Dishonest, and therefore a bad book.

Having dealt thus with the work itself, Turner moves back from his analysis to examine the reaction of readers to THE DEMOLISHED MAN, and considers what this means about science fiction as a branch of literature. He sees two major consequences. First, the warmth with which such a book is received by the science fiction community will lead serious thinkers to reject science fiction as an object worthy of study. Second, if readers like such a work, then editors and publishers will encourage the production of similar works. This also is to be deplored.

Indirectly, such a response to THE DEMOLISHED MAN will make it more difficult for writers, who seek to produce science fiction of quality. For they must turn their backs on popularity.

It is far more desirable, argues Turner, to have readers with taste, and to encourage amongst all readers the acquisition of taste. It is to this theme that he is to return, in the article 'On writing about science fiction' late in 1968.

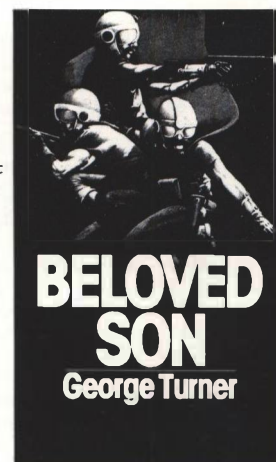
In this early article George Turner not only foreshadows much of the later criticism he has to write; he also outlines the basis upon which he constructed his science fiction, beginning with BELOVED SON. Rarely, if ever in science fiction, has a writer so thoroughly described and then put into practice a theory of science fiction.

John Foyster, March 1984.

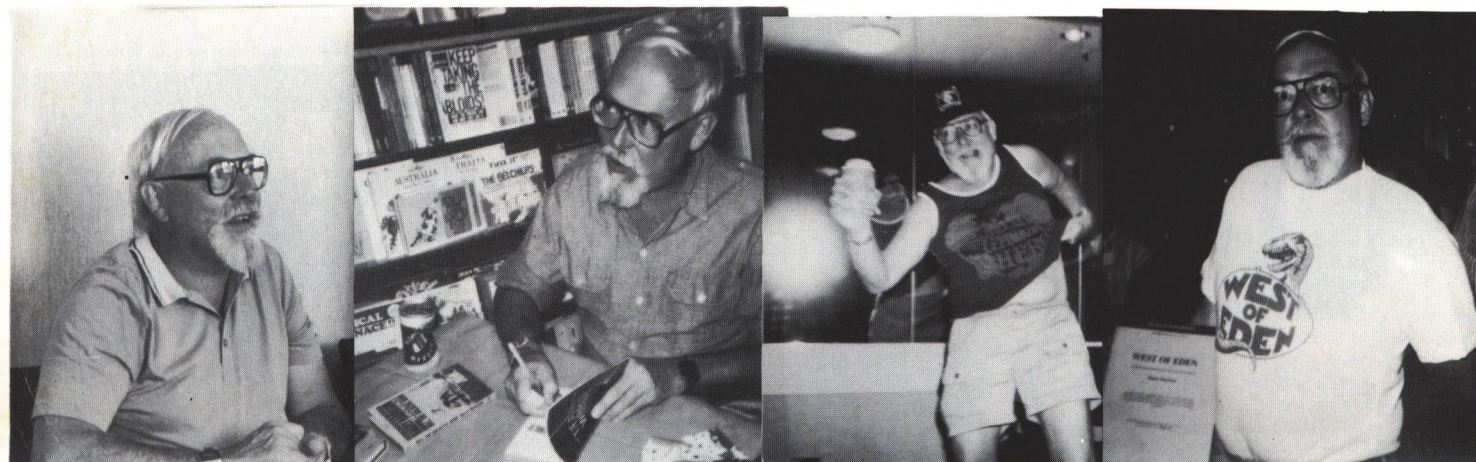
(This is an extract from a much longer article about George Turner as critic and novelist of science fiction.)

George Turner is the Guest of Honour of EUREKACON, the 1984 National Australian SF Convention, in Melbourne over Easter.

A lost cover design for BELOVED SON in the U.S. Pocket Books edition, that was dropped for what was considered a better one.



HARRY HARRISON in Australia



THE MANY FACES OF A SCIENCE FICTION AUTHOR:

Conversationalist

Autographer

Imbiber

Publicist

American author HARRY HARRISON, visited Australia from late January to mid March. He attended SWANCON NINE in Perth as their GoH and then travelled on to Melbourne, Sydney and Queensland. According to all the reports, SWANCON NINE was as crazy as Perth conventions usually are, and Harry and his wife Joan had a great time. Paul and Kit Stevens attended the Perth convention and although they spent most of their time getting suntanned on Cottesloe Beach, they managed to see a lot of the convention. Paul said that Swancon Nine lived up to the reputation of previous Perth conventions, with plenty of fun and frivolity. It opened on the Friday evening with Harry Harrison and Perth fans taking part in a "TV" interview with the film makers in the novel *TECHNICOLOUR TIME MACHINE*. It was hilarious. In fact, Harry appeared on almost every panel, or so it seemed, but enjoyed himself never the less. He and Joan were big hits with everybody.

The inevitable 'Fan Olympics' were part of the programme and one event that should be introduced at a Melbourne convention, was the pie throwing. Members of the committee were auctioned off and the winners had the joy of smashing a pie into the face of the person they had paid for. Paul added fiendishly, that he could think of many people in Melbourne that he would love to let have a pie in the moosh.

The highlight of the con was probably the masquerade and the musical entertainment that accompanied it. To sum up, you haven't lived until you have been to an sf convention in Perth.

After attending SWANCON Harry and Joan came to Melbourne, where a one-day-affair, HARRYCON, was to be held at the Victoria Hotel. Where else? It turned out to be a quite successful day and the Melbourne SF Club, who sponsored the con and helped organise it along with Merv Binns and Space Age Books, actually made a small profit. The programme consisted mainly of speakers talking about science fiction in various parts of the world today, including America, Britain, Europe and Australia.

MARC ORTLIEB spoke about the American scene and the influence of American sf

writing on the rest of the English speaking sf world. Pointing out that the most successful British writers, such as Arthur C. Clarke, have been writing in the American style. Sf has still not been accepted by the academia, with some publishers in Britain even going so far as to say that their "sf" books are not sf at all. Penguin Books and their John Wyndham titles, for instance.

The major influence in American sf is money. If you produce one popular book, you produce fifty more in the same style and make lots of cash. Marc then quoted an article by David Lake in Leigh Edward's zine *RATAPLAN*, in which he said that sf writing is doomed, basically because science fact is outpacing it, and that everybody should be writing fantasy because that is what the readers want. Fantasy is very big in American writing at the moment, Marc added, but sf is still with us. Many interesting aspects were covered in a question time that followed, with comments from George Turner and Harry Harrison, who mentioned the influence of the anti-communist attitudes in the U.S.A. on sf writing.

George Turner, who had actually organised the discussion part of the programme, then introduced JOHN FOYSTER, who spoke about European sf and how it differs in presentation and style to American and British sf. Magazines for instance in some cases, carry a lot of only remotely related material. The quality of the production of sf publications is good, but a lot is reprinted from other sources, and in some cases, without permission. Also, they do not always get their facts right. Translation has been a problem and many stories written in English have become shorter when they are published in Germany, for instance. More recently, the influence of fans there, has forced the publishers to demand better translations.

French magazines have been very similar to the American style, with a mixture of original and translated fiction and articles. Germany has seen quite a bit of critical writing on sf, due probably to the influence of fan/collector/writer, Franz Rottensteiner.

GEORGE TURNER himself then spoke about British sf. The French, he said, might be blamed for inventing sf and other countries have produced the odd titles that will always be with us, such as *WE* by Yevgeny Zamiatin, but British writers from Wells to Aldiss have exerted a great deal of influence on the field. He went on to deal at length with the writing of Brian Aldiss, the British "New Wave SF" as invented by Michael Moorcock and the style of writing being produced, for example, by Ian Watson. In the main, most of the sf being written in Britain today is just plain dull. The writing, he said was nice and correct, but lacking in original ideas. British sf's last hope, seems to lay in the hands of writers such as Christopher Priest, not forgetting the great contribution of Brian Aldiss, whose newest effort, "Helliconia", Turner admitted, he likes very much. Other authors are writing books that are not regarded as sf, but could not have been written if sf had not been written first. The works of Doris Lessing, RIDLEY WALKER by Russell Hoban, LANARK by Alisdair Gray and other writers, are looking at sf's ideas and saying we can do something like this and are going ahead and doing it.

A stultifying influence on British sf is the British SF Foundation, whose style of reviewing is influencing the genre greatly, to its detriment. Turner added that revolution is due in British sf and it most likely will not come from the establishment. Harry Harrison reminded Turner he had not mentioned John Brunner, and Turner promptly told the audience why, in that Brunner had got onto one track with his novels *STAND ON ZANZIBAR* and *THE SHEEP LOOK UP* and has written little of significance since. Harrison also pointed out that Russell Hoban is an American author, now living in London. In question-time, other authors were mentioned, including James White, Brian Stableford, Christopher Evans and Edmund Cooper. White in particular, being an author who always turns out a good story.

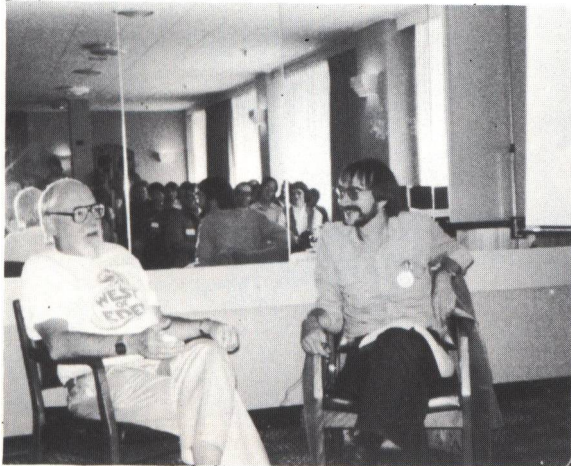
The afternoon session of HARRYCON commenced with an interview with HARRY

Bruce Gillespie receiving his
World Science Fiction Award



Photos on this page and the previous
by Kit Stevens, John Foyster and
Alex Wasiliew

Paul Stevens interviewing Harry Harrison



Joan Harrison at Space Age Books



HARRISON conducted by PAUL STEVENS. Harrison commented briefly on his work in the comic field in the 50s, which led him into illustrating sf magazines and book covers. Then he discovered that writers made more money than comic artists, after writing a story and having it accepted straight off for \$100.

He soon found himself writing for John W. Campbell at *ASTOUNDING* and his first novel, *DEATHWORLD* was accepted by Campbell for \$2100. Always being a traveller, he moved from his then home in Mexico, to Denmark and set to work on another "Deathworld" novel. He spent seven years in Denmark, where he wrote *BILL THE GALACTIC HERO*, as well as the other "Deathworld" novels, moved on to England for a year and then to San Diego. He said that it was quite true that Robert Heinlein has not spoken to him since he wrote *BILL THE GALACTIC HERO*.

The Harrison family lived in San Diego for a while, until a freeway threatened to divide their house in two, and it was put on a truck and sold in Mexico. They returned to England for a while, but a short trip to Ireland convinced them that there was a nice place to live. All this travelling around seems to have had little influence on Harrison's writing. The main reason for moving around, has been to do with climate

Talking about Harry Harrison the convention goer, he said that in Perth, he was listed to go on two panels, but out of twenty three programme items he was on twenty four. He attended the very small first World con in New York in '39, and he realised while at SEACON, the '79 World Con at Brighton, England, that at least 13 of the attendees in '39, were at SEACON. Once a fan always a fan!

Following some hilarious recollections of con-going in the U.S.A., Europe and other places, Harrison spoke about the various fandoms he had been involved with, including Finnish, German, Swedish, Irish and others. He told us about the provisions made for those who drink too much at Swedish conventions, the way everything is so well organised in Germany, and the methods used by Godzilla-like-bouncers and Japanese karate experts, to remove those who have drunk too much in Finland.

Harry Harrison, the book publicist, in answering a question on the subject put by Mr Stevens, quickly told the audience about his current project, *WEST OF EDEN*. He told us how he had made full use of his word processor to produce a corrected manuscript and recording, which the printer could use directly to print the book. Even before the printer had the manuscript, he pointed out that he was able to supply a limited number of galleys, for purposes of publicity, etcetera. He had some difficulty in convincing his publisher however, that the book could be printed directly from the disc (?) from his word processor, without the need for further correcting of printers proofs.

WEST OF EDEN is to be published by Granada in the U.K. and Bantam in the U.S.A. around August 1984. It is the first part of a three part novel, based on the premise that a giant meteorite did not strike the Earth millions of years ago; that the dinosaurs were not wiped out, and that they consequently become the dominant species on the planet.

This novel is the product of contact and co-operation with various people, experts in their fields, who pointed out the holes in Harrison's ideas and put him on the right track. One idea, directly resulting from this contact, was that the dinosaur technology would be biological rather than mechanical, as human technology has become.

The book was originally planned as one book, but has grown so much, that it now must be published in three parts. Harrison sees it as being his best chance of making the bestseller list, as the concept involved, is something that will appeal to a wide variety of readers, not just sf, although sf has been doing well on the bestseller lists of late.

In the question-time period, somebody asked Harrison what he thought of the film *SOYLENT GREEN*. Apart from the fact that he was ripped off by the people who bought the option and he only received a pittance for the film rights, he was disgusted with the screenplay, which was written by somebody called Stanley Greenberg, who promptly disappeared right after turning in the script and

has never been heard of since. During the filming, Harrison managed to get a few changes made for the better, but it finished only a "half good picture", that got over the idea of over-population, but missed a lot of the points made in the novel. The title change caused all sorts of problems in trying to get the film screened in non-English speaking countries. They could not translate the title.

Asked how his non-sf books sell in relation to the sf, Harrison said that the thrillers sell reasonably well. *QE2* was well publicised by Anthony Cheetham at Futura and *SKYFALL* was very well advertised by Tom Dougherty at TOR and sold 250,000 copies, but non-sf by sf writers should sell well, because the sf fans will buy authors they know and general readers will buy them also.

Somebody in the audience, of course, had to ask Harrison if he had any Harlan Ellison stories. He had, including when they first met and Harlan, who was a young fan at the time, threatened to blacklist Harrison in fandom, because he had run a hoax UFO story in the magazine he was editing, *Science Fiction Adventures*. In another funny account, Harrison told us that he had taken his phone off the hook, because Joan had been getting some obscene phone calls. Harlan who had been frantically trying to phone Harry, finally got through and Harlan being Harlan, uttered a few choice words in the process.

In the afternoon session at HARRYCON, BRUCE GILLESPIE surveyed the Australian scene. He spoke about the limitations of science fiction publishing in Australia and the many problems involved. Gillespie told us of his experiences as one of the members of Norstrilia Press. He said it is impossible to make any money out of publishing sf in Australia and all Norstrilia can hope to do is cover costs. Apart from one or two exceptions, such as Lee Harding's *DISPLACED PERSON*, which won the Children's Book Award, Australian sf sales have been very small.

The situation where Australian authors are being published overseas is a little more significant. Lee Harding, Damien

Broderick and George Turner have all been published in the U.K. or the U.S.A., but their writing is most likely not being recognised as distinctly Australian. Bert Chandler has done very well, but his latest novel, *KELLY COUNTRY*, finally published by Penguin in Australia, is unlikely to be published anywhere else, due to the fact that it is "too Australian".

Gillespie added that he recommended authors to submit their work to overseas publishers, and when asked if this meant Norstrilia was only getting the books that other publishers would not publish, he admitted, that in fact, the books they are doing are a bit off trail. When asked if he had any sales figures for Australian published sf paperbacks, Gillespie said that Norstrilia did not publish small paperbacks and he had no idea what Cory & Collins were doing. Penguin, however, had tried publishing original Australian sf and he said they were not pleased with the outcome.

AUSSIECON TWO may be a good time to make an attempt to encourage people to read Australian sf and Gillespie said that the publishers could get together on this.

HARRY HARRISON was next to the podium to talk about the organisation he began called WORLD SCIENCE FICTION. The original idea was to get the sf authors together from all over the world. The regular conventions were getting too big for the authors, agents and publishers to get together, so he set about organising the first meeting of World SF in Ireland. Over 100 authors and professionals from all over the world (after a few problems involving cultural relations were ironed out) attended. It has been difficult to keep things going because nobody wanted to do the paper work involved, but World SF is still very much alive.

A number of awards were instituted by the World SF Organisation said Harrison, who then took the opportunity to present Bruce Gillespie with his trophy for the "Harrison Award", in recognition of his efforts in Increasing the Status of Science Fiction Internationally.

Gillespie said, that he was not sure if it was for past efforts with his publication *SF Commentary*, or an attempt to get him to start publishing it again. The award was announced at the last meeting of the World SF in Zagreb, Yugoslavia last year.

The evening session of the programme saw Harry Harrison and Paul Stevens discussing humour in sf and, in particular, Harrison's sf. Harry was dressed for the occasion in shorts, T-shirt, cap and carrying a tinny (can of beer). This item was followed by a number of fans in costumes, depicting Harrison characters, who proceeded to complain about the way they had been treated by their author. The winners of the fancy dress costume were announced next, followed by the screening of the film "The Time Bandits".

On Sunday, many of the HARRYCON attendees accompanied Harry and Joan on a trip on "Puffing Billy", a small steam train that runs on a short line in Melbourne's Dandenong Mountains. The Harrisons and all the fans enjoyed the trip very much. Later in the day, a small group of fans travelled with the Harrisons over to the Healesville Wildlife Sanctuary. A quite successful finish to an enjoyable weekend.

After leaving Melbourne, the Harrisons went to Sydney where they attended SYNCON '84 and then were scheduled to spend a few days on the Barrier Reef.

RUSSELL HOBAN IN AUSTRALIA

Author RUSSELL HOBAN was one of a group of authors brought to Australia to speak at the Adelaide Festival in March. Space Age Books were pleased to have him in their shop on Wednesday the 14th of March, where he signed copies of the new Picador paperback edition of his novel *PILGERMAN* and other titles.

Readers may remember that Hoban's previous novel *RIDLEY WALKER*, won the DITMAR last year for Best International SF. He is

keen on seeing *RIDLEY WALKER* on the screen and has hopes of George (MAD MAX) Miller being interested.

Space Age Books have been keen promoters of Hoban's books, starting with *THE MOUSE AND HIS CHILD*, *THE LION OF BOAZ-JACHIN*, *JACHIN BOAZ*, *TURTLE DIARY*, *KLEINZEIT* and more recently *PILGERMAN*, and they were particularly pleased to have him for the signing session. Originally from the US, Hoban now lives in London.

BJO TRIMBLE ON VISIT

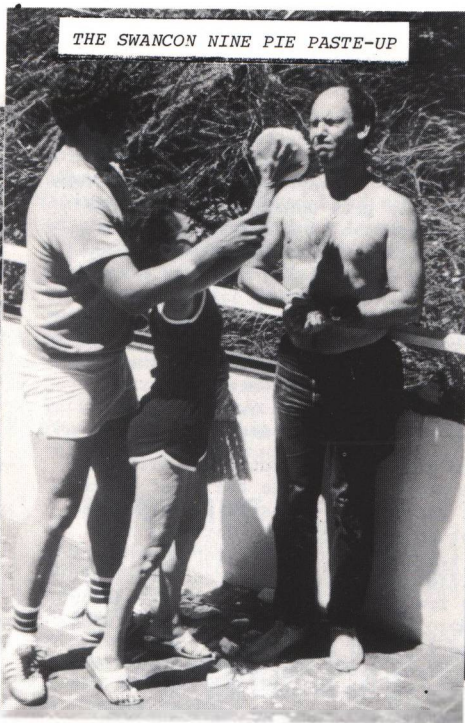
Los Angeles fan and writer BJO TRIMBLE, author of *ON THE GOOD SHIP ENTERPRISE* and other "Star Trek" books, was recently in Australia as GoH at MEDTREK, media sf convention. Bjo is a member of long standing of the Los Angeles SF Society, has been involved in organising sf and Star Trek conventions and is particularly concerned with art shows and costume events at conventions. She told us that she had enjoyed her trip to Australia very much, and would be coming back next year with her family for AUSSIECON TWO.

While in Melbourne, she had dinner with a few old friends, including John Foyster, Bill Wright and others. People involved in organising AUSSIECON TWO were pleased to have the opportunity to talk to her, and take advantage of her convention organising experience.

Bestsellers

GILDEN FIRE by Stephen Donaldson in a hard cover edition from William Collins Australia, was fourth on the Bestseller list over the February/March '84 period. The interest in this series in Australia is quite outstanding, as indicated by the sales of this \$9.95 hard cover. Not so surprising when you think about it, but still unusual for a book published first in the '40s, was George Orwell's *NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR*, as best-selling-paperback title. A Penguin new issue. *2010: ODYSSEY TWO*, by Arthur C. Clarke in Granada pb from Gordon and Gotch (probably their last big Granada title) was seventh on the list.

Numerous f&sf titles were on the US Bestseller lists over the last year, currently however, only *PET SEMATRY* by Stephen King (Doubleday HC) and *FLOATING DRAGON* by Peter Straub (Berkley PB), were on the Publishers Weekly List, with no sf at all!



Photos by Steve Roylance

Joan Harrison & friend about to give it to Ian Nicholls.



John McDouall and Mark Denbow about to let fly.



STRANGE TERRITORY

By Jean West Penna

(Walrus Books, Australia, 1983) \$5.95

Jean West Penna's *STRANGE TERRITORY* is a galactic robinsoniad in which three characters, the Lady Clytha, her servant Elney and a crewman Fram, are marooned on an unnamed and unknown planet, after their spaceship the Ten-X-Three, was wrecked by a one-man mutiny. It is an account of their survival and adaption to an alien environment. However, it is as much about the psychological and emotional problems as about their physical problems of survival. The main conflicts are between the characters with the necessity of survival acting as a constant driving force. Overall, there are a number of problems about discussing this book; basically they boil down to saying it could have been better than it is.

You can't judge a book by its cover, or so they say. We all do so, irrespective of fine sentiments. This one could have packaged better. I know nothing of Walrus Books, an Australian publisher, nor anything of their other publications. The blurb on the back, and the Mediaevalish high-fantasy style cover illustration of an elegant archeress, apparently bedecked with flowers with a jewelled bow plus a bluish dappled unicorn, led me to expect a galactic gothic fantasy romance. While there is a different touch of it in places, this is not a 'Mills and Boon' in space. It worries me that the book may not have been packaged to appeal to its appropriate market. This is despite it having been widely distributed; certainly true in Adelaide, but of other Australian cities, I know not.

There is a strong sense and feeling for living things--plants and animals --that runs through the book. Menstruation, pregnancy and childbirth feature enough to make big strong macho boys go weak at the knees. In fact, even humble edible fungi get a guerney. There is a fine collection of imagined organisms on the planet; mainly with appropriate names. Mothaves, crustacean konkoes, extraordinarily rapacious eels, night-felines, rattles (rat-like, gotcha?), roc-like quadrens, and the Watchers (who are the local natives). The flora and fauna is rather like a toned down version of the savagely exotic lifeforms in the French-Czechoslovak animated feature film, *Fantastic Planet*. I have doubts about the scientific soundness of the biology and the ecology. For example, the quadrens would have to be too big and too heavy to fly in the higher gravity of the planet. Despite that, I enjoyed the vigour and the vitality

of the imagination that invented these alien creatures. It is one of the best features of the book.

Speaking of cinematic influences, I think I detected a replay of Commander Leslie Nielsen zapping the tiger with his blaster in the garden on Altair 4 in *Forbidden Planet* when Fram disintegrated the night-feline with his beamer. Which, even if true, does not detract, in the least, as the scene was well executed.

In this type of book, the main action has to concentrate on the characters. Fram, the first person narrator, is sopping wet and far too humble for words. He is consistently his own worst enemy. Lady Cynthia, an aristocrat and super-snob from Sparia, is absolutely and utterly dedicated to her own comfort and care; expecting all else to do likewise and do so at her instant beck and call. She does have her few ennobling moments, but not enough to detract from her imperious nature, thank heavens. If only she had been given more plausible substance to her actions and behaviour. Elney, her body-maid, is allowed to be more plausible. She spends most of her time infuriating Fram by constantly caring for her mistress. Fram lacked the gumption and emotional confidence to assert himself properly to correct matters. Altorr, the villain of the piece, is more blackhearted than a black hole in a star-less universe, and the absolute epitome of masculine violence. A totally deranged psychopath yet technically competent, courageous, confident, and exceptionally determined. Utterly implausible as a character. If the Terran crew had not been so thoroughly incompetent he should have been gracing the ship's cells to be court-martialled back on Earth.

I said earlier that this book has problems and that it could have been better. This is a first novel and its author deserves to be given a chance to improve. I agree with George Turner's dictum that bad writing by established writers should be shot down in flames. Simply, this book was published before it had been properly edited.

Actually, the book gets into its own, once the obnoxious is disposed of. It is a bit much to ask readers to work their way halfway through a book before it really gets underway. Fram needs more backbone as a character--he is the protagonist, as such needs to be, capable of surviving on alien planets, even with a liability like the Sparian Lady Clytha. Generally, the characters need to be fleshed out, and interacting in ways that exemplify their survival problems. Clytha's anti-survival behaviour has to be overcome, or at the very least circumvented, for example.

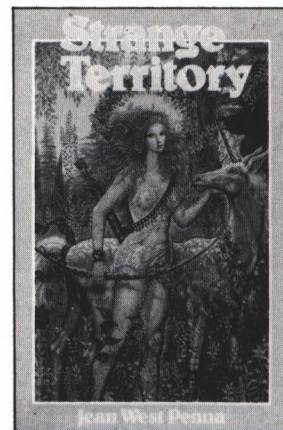
The prose is too cautiously written. It is overwritten to the point where it reads as if it is in a passive and not an active voice. This may seem a trivial point, but it represents the difference between easy and difficult to read prose. Even the title can be improved. *Strange Territory* could be the title of any number of books---it means everything and nothing. A title should be precisely and specifically relevant to the story.

It should be an enticement to make to make someone want to read the tale.

Fixing the prose should have been done by the author. The prose in the second half of the book demonstrates this. More thought could have been given to the construction of the story. It does not really need a madman to wreck the spaceship. The polarisation between Fram and Altorr is excessive. A sane and sensible person would have had no choice in leaving Altorr for dead. Not *de rigueur* for a properly ethically motivated protagonist, but Altorr had an extremely bad track record. However, more should have been made of the characterisation of three principals. Only after a relationship is allowed to develop between Fram and Elney, do the elements of the story coalesce properly. They should have done so right from the start. With more work and a good editor, I should expect the next novel will be much better.

While the alien environment of *Strange Territory* is no place to bring up children, I warn the reader not to be put off by the cover, and be prepared to persevere until the middle.

Reviewed by Jeff Harris



SAVAGE TOMORROW

by Trevor Donohue
Cory & Collins
PB 154pp \$3.95

Conan in a crash helmet, Hell's Angels hurling along an hyborean highway, Mad Max in black and white prose rather than on the technicolour widescreen. Yes, all these glib phrases, and more, are easily conjured to mind by this fable. If you have seen the MAD MAX films you already know what this book is about.

It is fitting that Australia - the land that brought this sub-genre of heroic fantasy to maturity on the cine screen - should be putting it into book form. In *SAVAGE TOMORROW* (an unfortunate choice of title; bland and abstract, could be about anything), the time and place is post-Holocaust Melbourne with mechanized mayhem, machismo, and massacre the order of the day.

Morgan, the lone roader, encounters and joins forces with Ice, the strong woman who fights by side, and Slapsie, the almost comic relief sidekick callow and devious but ultimately loyal. They fight with, get captured by, escape from, and finally overcome murderous bikie gangs, an all-female fighting force, cannibalistic

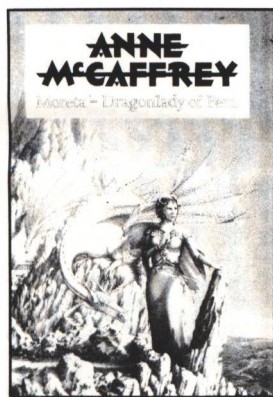
mutrons, the cloned spawn of a mad scientist and a mammoth mechanical monster.

As a genre heroic fantasy has hardly raised its gaze beyond the horizon mapped out by Robert E. Howard. There have been faint indications of new arenas of heroic fantasy to be explored and exploited (to say conquered is too strong an expression in this context). However, Norman Spinrad's *THE IRON DREAM* and Roger Corman's action flick *DEATHRACE*, foreshadowed a new style of mechanized macho madness to warm the carbon-encrusted cockles of any heroic fantasy freak. "Power, tension, and speed", the basic characteristics of the action thriller noted by George Orwell in a literary essay. Donohue's tale has them in abundance. Now the mechanized divisions of the Robert E. Howard thick-ear fairy tales are doing wheelies, high-powered pursuits, and gas-guzzling gladiatorial displays on the printed page.

Dostoyevsky, it ain't, but it isn't intended to be. Science fiction, it ain't either. Fuel supplies couldn't last long enough to keep the action moving along a la Donohue. This makes it a speculative impossibility, therefore it is a fantasy with a nuclear war to set the wheels turning. Alas, too many gallons per mile are burned to make it last. There are other possibilities. The latest *SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN* has it that "the right bicycle can do 60 mph". Say no more. "MAD MAX VERSUS THE BMX BANDITS". It may be the mighty thunder of pedals that terrorizes the aftermath of Western civilization.

If you liked *MAD MAX*, live in Melbourne (you can follow the characters' burning round the burnt-out town), and are crazy about cars and bikes, this is the book for you. In words of Tom Lehrer, "sentiment will not endear it", what's important is the price. At \$3.95 *SAVAGE TOMORROW* is cheaper than seeing *MAD MAX* on film or video, and it can be read in the same amount of time. Not art in terms of adding permanently to our culture, but art in terms of entertaining.

Reviewed by Jeff Harris



MORETA - DRAGONLADY OF PERN

By Anne McCaffrey
Severn House HC \$19.95

Another book in the famous "Dragon" series. I didn't find this one quite as fascinating as the previous ones, but I certainly did enjoy it.

Moreta is a Weyrwoman, who becomes deeply involved in a serious problem: a very severe epidemic is sweeping across the continent and killing both people and runnerbeasts. Most of the

book concerns the detective-type efforts by Moreta and others to determine what's causing the epidemic and how to stop it. The book is full of suspense, excitement, adventure, and good characterisation, all very well written. I especially appreciated the ending, which was very fitting after all that had gone before - but was very sad.

Reviewed by Jean Weber

WHEN VOIHA WAKES

By Joy Chant
Unwin Paperback; \$7.95

This book is marketed as fantasy, but the only real "fantasy" element is its setting in a different universe. It's a feminist book, but without being preachy; it's also a love story.

Here is a society in which the men and women live separately. Women are the law-makers, the merchants, etc; men are craftsmen or labourers. There is a clear division of sex roles and very strong societal pressure not to transgress those roles.

The book is 'feminist' primarily in its treatment of the relationship between the two main characters, Rahike and Mairilek. As their friendship (and later, love) develops, the author has opportunity to question their sex roles and our own. Despite the rigid sex roles, there was no suggestion that one person would try to dominate the other the other, or that either would give up his or her "future" for the other. Rahike helps Mairilek to pursue his destiny, even though she knows he will have to leave her to do so. But because she loves him, she will let him go. A beautiful and moving story.

Reviewed by Jean Weber

MISTS OF AVALON

by Marion Zimmer Bradley
Michael Joseph(Nelson)
HC \$19.95 ARP

The publishers of *MISTS OF AVALON* have done Marion Zimmer Bradley a disservice. If this had been the first of the author's books I had read, it would also have been the last. The legend of Arthur told from Morgan le Fay's point of view is basically a good idea. Unfortunately, the plot is cluttered and characterisation generally weak, so that by the third "book" you are wishing the story over.

THENDARA HOUSE

by Marion Zimmer Bradley
Daw Books
PB 414pp \$5.45

THENDARA HOUSE by the same author seems to have suffered the same problem. An editor with a newly sharpened pencil could have greatly improved both novels.

This is not what I would call a "Darkover" novel, although it is published as such and is purportedly set on that world. Too little of the action is set on Darkover and too much in the minds of the protagonists, in whose deliberations we are endlessly mired. I can only conclude that this book is for Darkover fans like myself, who are willing to put up with

almost anything (including feminist treatises) to learn a little more of Darkover from the mind of the creator. My curiosity is insatiable.

Reviewed by Jane Tisell.

HELLICONIA SUMMER

By Brian Aldiss
Jonathon Cape; 398pp; \$22.95

Possibly because of its concentration on theme and setting rather than plot, *HELLICONIA SPRING* received, I feel, less than proper recognition in Australia. *HELLICONIA SUMMER*, redresses the balance with a narrative of intrigue, battle, blood and sex wherein kings play for crowns and alien mercenaries finally pose a bigger threat than any human conflict. And the onset of a three-millennia winter is the greatest threat of all.

The first volume of this huge novel sets out the playing area -- an Earth-like planet orbiting one star of a double sun in an enormously elongated eclipse which allows only a comparatively short summer every three thousand years or so. During this warm period the humanoid inhabitants recover the culture that has been lost or distorted in the struggle to survive the savage winter. Each summer represents a short step forward and in this volume the culture can be equated with Europe's late medieval, a period of warring egos which Aldiss exploits so fully, that the major theme is sometimes in danger of being lost.

That theme (too briefly stated here) is that cosmic events determine human history and that man does what he must rather than what he will. This is emphasised when the humans discover that the subject race, the Phagors, is better adapted than they to survive the long winter and is probably the true major species of the planet.

Also, circling Helliconia is a Terrestrial observation satellite, itself a miniature 'generation ship' cut off from home by light years. Here, too, cultural changes have developed over centuries of exile, and it begins to seem that Aldiss is developing an extended fictional commentary on the nature and evolution of culture. The outcome and summation should appear (I hope) in the third volume, *HELLICONIA WINTER*.

This is a work of true speculative science wedded to fiction without falling into the traps of dullness which have snared Hal Clement and James Hogan. The difference is that between the informed artist and the over-academic plodder.

Reviewed by George Turner.

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EARTHCHILD
by Sharon Webb
Bantam PB \$2.50 US 176pp

The first of (yet another!) trilogy, this volume reads as if it started out as three short stories. The first part was well written and convincing, conveying the horror of public reaction to learning that an immortality process had been perfected - but it only worked on people under 16 or so. Vast numbers of adults react by slaughtering children in jealous rage.

Part 2, which takes place 5 years later, I found less convincing; and Part 3, 99 years later, is even worse. When it's realised that immortality and creativity seem to be incompatible, certain exceptionally promising children are given the "opportunity" to choose not to take the immortality treatments, and thus serve humanity through brief, dazzlingly productive lives. Perhaps if the author had spent a whole book developing this theme, it would have been better.

GOLDEN WITCHBREED
by Mary Gentle 480pp
Gollancz HC (Hutchinson Aust.) \$19.95 ARP

This book deserves lots of superlatives. The theme is that of an earth envoy - in this case a woman - who meets the alien culture and learns not only about the aliens, but also about herself and her own culture. Superficially, the book appears to follow the style of: new envoy takes a trip around part of the alien planet, meeting various races and having adventures along the way.

But Gentle's story is more than a series of adventures, though plenty of those happen: it all fits into a coherent whole. She has also worked in as a sub-theme the question: how would a society develop if its children were not raised as females or males, but all the same? Gentle's Ortheans are neuter until their equivalent of puberty, when they become the sex they will remain for the rest of their lives. However, since until then no one has any idea which sex that will be, all children are naturally raised simply as children. And since by the time they "change", they are fairly well trained in some skill, virtually all occupations have both male and female practitioners. The Earth envoy does not understand the true situation until one day she suddenly realises that Orthean children are neuter, and at the same time her Orthean companion realises that Earth children are sexed. Both are shocked.

But what about this Golden Witchbreed stuff in the title? They are the central mystery of the book, always lurking in the background. Fera of the Witchbreed underlies a great deal of the customs of Orthean society. We are eventually told who and what they were, and what they did, but neither the envoy nor the reader learn whether they are still around.

Reviewed by Jean Weber

SCIENCE FICTION STORY COMPETITION

The Melbourne SF Club is organising a short story competition. Entry forms can be obtained from the M.S.F.C. WRITING COMPETITION, 145 Faraday St., Carlton 3053, Victoria. Entries should be in by May 4th. Further enquiries may be made by ringing Michael Wauchope on 347 6102 or Jodi Willis on 478 9645.



OF RECENT SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY BOOKS

By PAUL J. STEVENS

THE JAUNDICED EYE/DOUBLE JAUNDICE

In the last issue of ASFN, our beloved editor listed the winners of the 1983 Hugo awards. Now, in mid-January, the nomination forms for the 1984 awards have lurched onto my desk and are confronting me like the spectre at the feast. Nominate, they say to me, nominate! Hell I had trouble even voting in last year's Hugo awards, so how the hell can I nominate?

Looking over last year's crop of sf is rather like looking over our political leaders, everything looks slightly moth-eaten. The leading contender will have to be Asimov's ROBOTS OF DAWN, a novel that is admittedly better than the poor choice that won for Asimov last year. FOUNDATION'S EDGE was not a good novel and I've marked it second on my voting ballot, right after 'no award'. "2010" came third with MERCHANTER'S LUCK following on behind. Last year was not a good year for the Hugo. Mediocre is the way I describe it.

What else is looming large for a nomination? There is Anne McCaffrey's MORETA; DRAGON-LADY OF PERN and Marion Zimmer Bradley's MISTS OF AVALON, yet another of those rewritings of the Arthurian legends, this time told from a feminist viewpoint. Mary Stewart's THE WICKED DAY is also a contender, though I doubt if it will make it onto the final ballot. There has been a novel by Phillip Jose Farmer, GODS OF RIVERWORLD.....

Whatever novels make it onto the final ballot, no doubt the choice will be emotional rather than critical. I'll plump for ROBOTS OF DAWN to win.

The other nomination paper to hit my desk was the Ditmar or the Australian Science Fiction Achievement Awards. This one is a little easier, as there has been about a dozen or so sf and fantasy novels published within Australia during the preceding twelve months. Top of the list has to be Bert Chandler's KELLY COUNTRY, followed by several publications from Norstrilia Press and several novels from Cory and Collins. Unfortunately, the very small number of fans who nominate for this award, let alone vote, means that the Ditmar has lost something of its lustre in my eyes. I would like to see a lot more Australian SF/fantasy readers voting for this award, rather than just those fans who happen to be fully paid up members of the Australian national sf convention.

THE ROBOTS OF DAWN Isaac Asimov
Doubleday HC \$19.95 US (Granada HC due from William Collins in April '84)
This is the third in the Elijah Bailey series and is part of Asimov's attempt to tie together his earlier novels into a coherent whole. The plot is slow and ponderous, with Bailey being given an impossible murder to solve and some interesting ideas about Earth and Spacer society, that must also be solved if Earth is to move into Space. How the robots

fit into all this, is only partly explained and there will be more in forthcoming novels. Robots of Dawn is interesting, but only as a fragment of a wider tapestry and not as a novel in its own right.

THE WELL OF DARKNESS Randall Garrett and Vicki Ann Heydron. Bantam pb \$2.50 (US)
Part 4 of a series, that looks like going on a few more books yet. A thin plot in 165 pages, but better written than most.

A CENTURY OF PROGRESS Fred Saberhagen
Tor pb \$4.60

Now here is a good idea for a story, nasty Nazis battling the forces of good, across multiple time tracks, and to be fair to Saberhagen, it works up until the last few chapters when everything falls rather flat. Could be we may get a series out of this!

AMBUSH OF SHADOWS Paul O Williams Del Rey
\$4.60 pb

Book five of the Pelbar series and one of the best new writers I have read recently. A good story and well worth catching up with. The first four books were excellent.

THE LAND OF LAUGHS Jonathan Carroll
Hamlyn \$5.95 ARP pb 241pp
Here is the book I would list as the best and most unusual I read during 1983, a mixture of fantasy, horror and humour. Any attempt to describe it, would only destroy the reader's enjoyment of the story. Seek out this novel!

THE SEREN SENACLES Victor Norwood
pb Bantam \$3.95 ARP

Lots of good plot elements in this novel, a strange series of events at a mine on an isolated planetoid, an ancient alien race, a coverup by authorities and an ancient weapon. Good entertainment from Victor Norwood again.

ESCAPE VELOCITY Christopher Stasheff
Ace pb \$4.60 SAB
The origins of the planet of THE WARLOCK IN SPIKE OF HIMSELF which unfortunately doesn't live up to the original story. Rather blah.

PAWN OF PROPHECY David Eddings Corgi
pb \$4.95 ARP First of a five-part series. Yet another one of those bloody series books, that seem to be springing up all over. This one is entertaining and reads well and has sold very well in the US edition. You could do worse.

DINOSAUR TALES Ray Bradbury Bantam TPB
\$9.95 ARP A collection of poems and tales and illustrations on dinosaurs by Bradbury. This is a volume that school libraries will want on their shelves, and should have! Good value.

SCI FI
FILM
DAYS

STAR TREK
OUTER LIMITS

Screening dates at THE NATIONAL MUTUAL THEATRE in Melbourne: Saturdays May 5th, June 2nd, June 16th and July 7th.
At Anzac House Cinema, Sydney, 26 College Street: April 28th, May 19th, June 18th and July 21st.

More details will be included in the next issue of ASFN, meanwhile you can ring Sydney, 367-6138 for full programme details.

LETTER COLUMN



Terry Carr
11037 Broadway Tce
Oakland, Calif 94611
Oct 26, 1983

Dear Merv,

Many thanks for the copies of Omega that you've been sending.

News: I'm just finishing my work editing six new books for the New Ace Science Fiction Specials and I'm extremely pleased with the novels for this series. They are all first novels by excellent writers, some of whom will be unfamiliar to most readers, though Kim Stanley Robinson, Howard Waldrop, and Michael Swanwick have been getting attention for their short fiction, as has Bill Gibson, whose novel NEUROMANCER I especially recommend (though it's hard to pick a single favourite in this series). The books will appear from Ace beginning in March 1984 and every two months thereafter. Gollancz has already bought U.K. rights to Gibson's novel.

With my work on the Specials about finished -- though there may well be further Specials later if the first six sell well -- I've signed a contract with Tor Books to become their Associate Editor. I'll be buying and editing six books for them, of a somewhat different sort than those for the Specials: I'm not looking particularly for first novels nor will the "slant" of these books be as specifically literary. I'm looking for quality novels with good commercial potential -- which means, in general, more emphasis on plot, colour, and action (and possibly on Name writers). The books will still have to be very well written, however. Advances will be very competitive.

Hope you and everybody else there are well.

Best,
Terry

23 Lushington Rd
London NW 10, UK
23 Nov 1983

Dear Merv,

Thanks for the latest issue of Oz SF News. You'll be glad to hear I've forgiven you for printing my last letter back to front in two different parts of the magazine (I was wondering why I was making more sense than usual).

Anyway, seasonal greetings from Lushington Road, hang-out of the biggest lush of them all. I won't be sorry to see the end of this year, it's been a bummer and a half. But one bright spot was the publication of SLIMER in September, which I wrote with Leroy Kettle. We had a Slimer Launch Party in a drinking club (of course), in an attempt to promote the book ourselves. The cream of the London sf fraternity, turned up (curdled though it may be these days) and a good time was had by all, but the party resulted in not one iota of publicity. However, we did get a mention in the Times. "Slimer Drools Okay," said the reviewer.

SLIMER came out under the name of Harry Adam Knight and there'll be another Knight book from Star, in June next year. Written by me alone, unfortunately (it therefore lacks the kinky sex and nastiness that were Leroy's main contribution to SLIMER) it will be called CARNOSAUR and is about dinosaurs. Genetically engineered dinosaurs, that is, that run around in present-day Cambridgeshire making a nuisance of themselves.

You may wonder why I chose to write a book about dinosaurs. Well, last April a friend returned from a trip to Hollywood and when I asked what the new Hollywood trend was going to be he said, 'Dinosaurs.' Apparently, everyone was making films about dinosaurs for some reason. Disney was doing BABY, someone else was remaking GODZILLA and Ray Harryhausen was at work on a dinosaur epic, set in the Victorian era. And the new Indiana Jones movie, INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DEATH, also features dinosaurs (no-one is supposed to know this yet - it is still officially A Big Secret). Obviously, 1984 is going to be the Year of the Dinosaur. And hopefully, millions of dinosaur-crazed twits are going to buy CARNOSAUR and make me rich. Yeah...sure.

One book that won't make me rich is THE MIDAS DEEP which is published tomorrow. Originally it was supposed to be a lead title, but as SKYSHIP went down like the Titanic with the reading public, Hamlyn Paperbacks decided to try and keep very quiet about Midas. So far they've been 100% successful. I have a feeling it will go straight from the warehouse to the remainder shops, thus cutting out the middlemen.

I guess I was naive to expect that manganese nodules would become a major popular interest with the public (I've yet to see a woman wearing a manganese nodule around her neck). And there's already been another book out on the subject. Called DEEPWATER, it has a plot strikingly similar to mine, but it failed to make any splash at all. It was published in hardcover by Hutchinsons who, ironically, are now the owners of Hamlyn Paperbacks. Yes, by some cosmic fluke, Hutchinsons ended up publishing two books about manganese nodules in '83. No other publisher can make this claim, nor would any other publisher want to...

Worst thing about MIDAS DEEP - my name on the jacket is printed in the same colour as the background, thus making it unreadable. The cruelest blow of all.

Cheers,

J. Brosnan

Christopher Priest
1 Ortygia House
6 Lower Road
Harrow Middlesex HA2 ODA
22nd November 1983

Dear Merv,

ASFN just blew in, brimming with elderly news. Is this the Curse of Surface Mail?

Actually, I am impelled to write by your exceedingly feeble and weedy synopsis of my article in The Bookseller. To say that it described my "enjoying" the Young Brits promotion is to misrepresent it. The whole point of the article was to expose the arrogance and conceit of the self-styled top writers, such as Ian McEwan and

Martin Amis, and to discuss frankly the trivial and misleading coverage given to writers by the so-called responsible press. Or does The Bookseller arrive in Australia devoid of the few balls it actually has?

That first article in The Bookseller led to a commission to write more articles, and since then, I have been writing about one a month. Most people in fandom will immediately recognise the stuff as fanwriting, which is a nice irony lost on 99% of the people who read The Bookseller. Of course, I am now better known in the book trade for these articles, than I am for my books.

Since this seems to shading over into news, here's the rest. The great Priest/Tuttle plunge into oblivion continues with bankruptcy ever closer. I have had nothing in print in the USA for two or three years, and in Britain, only one paperback remains. Most of my transatlantic editions have also gone out of print. Collapse looms. Lisa's FAMILIAR SPIRIT seemed to dematerialize instantly on publication. Undismayed, we are both working on new novels, and will probably finish them around the same time, in the early New Year. I don't know much about Lisa's, as we make a practice of not discussing our work. Mine is presently called THE GLAMOUR, and is quite long and very complex to describe. It is possibly closer to science fiction than THE AFFIRMATION, but not much.

In all, although the lights are slowly going out here in Harrow, I'm extremely busy. The Hogarth Press will be reissuing some H.G. Wells next year, and I shall be writing at least two of the introductions. I write occasional book reviews for New Statesman, but not of novels. I've recently written a television dramatization of my novella "The Watched", which will be going out in early February (they're recording it next week). I'm planning to revive my fanzine Deadloss in the New Year, when the novel is finished. And perhaps my most enjoyable new enterprise, is that I've started a small part-time literary agency, concentrating on the more adventurous sf writers, such as William Gibson, Rudy Rucker and Bruce Sterling. And, of course, I'm delighted to be the UK rep for Norstrilia Press. (Carey Handfield did himself a lot of good while he was here earlier this month.) but the novel is my main commitment at the moment, and I work a six-day week on it.

Congratulations to all in Melbourne on the Worldcon, and I wish I could be there for it.

Cheers,

Chris

18/11/83

Dave Langford,
94 London Rd.,
Reading, Berkshire,
RG1 5AU U.K.

Dear Merv,

Life is hectic here. One of the great continuing mysteries of the writing life is how one can be so poor and so over-worked, more or less simultaneously, for years on end.. Am still waiting patiently for Pocket Books, God rot the souls of everyone in their accounting and contracts departments, to so much as issue a contract and pay an advance for the book (THE SPACE EATER) the minky, pox-ridden sods published back in February. 17

Hope to get out another Ansible prior to Christmas, but in case I don't: Merry Xmas to all of you in sunny Australia. By the way, I received some money the other day from the Sydney Morning Herald for their reprint of a (Moderately worthless and trivial) computer program of mine. Funny thing is, that the program was from a column I do sometimes over here, and makes little sense without the supporting explanation...which wasn't (or won't be) reprinted.

All the best ever

Dave

Damien Broderick
10 Marks Street,
Brunswick, VIC 3056

16th December, 1983

Dear Mervyn,

A brief note of thanks for your often unrecognised efforts in bringing AUSTRALIAN SF NEWS to us all. At a time when other important fan publishers have been obliged by rising costs to restrict or abandon production, your dedication to the NEWS is heroic. Finding an issue waiting for me in the mailbox -- with its mixture of news fannish and writerly, lunatic letters, reviews high and low -- cheers me up even though I am stuck in Melbourne.

While we're in the context of unappreciated worth, it might give you pleasure to know that Robert Conquest (British co-editor, with Kingsley Amis, of the important Spectrum SF anthologies) wrote this March in Quadrant that "the best sf bookshop I have ever been into was, and I hope still is, in Melbourne."

Best Wishes, Sport.

Damien

Maxim Jakubowski,
95 Finchley Lane,
London NW4 1BY,
Great Britain.

4th January, 1984.

Dear Merv,

For a biography of American SF writer Philip K. Dick, commissioned by Bluejay Books, New York and Editions Denoel, Paris and being written with the full knowledge of the author's estate and Literary Executor, I would appreciate hearing from anyone who knew him or corresponded with him and has information about his life. Interviews can be conducted later in 1984 in the USA or through correspondence/exchange of tapes.

Thanking you in advance for inserting this Author Query in your publication whenever possible.

Yours faithfully,

Maxim Jakubowski.

Betty de Gabriele
19 Collins Street,
St. Albans, 3021

Dear Merv,

I know that in general SF and fantasy

fans are in some cases slightly mad (in a very nice way) but they are also a very caring and humane group of people and I am happy to be one of them.

For this reason, I would like to bring to their attention a number of movies that have been black banned by the American Humane Society for their cruelty towards animals in the pursuit of realism. Chief among these is the current fantasy flick 'Conan the Barbarian' (along with other non fantasy; Heartland, First Blood, Triumphs of a Man called Horse and that incredible flop Heaven's Gate.)

I just hope that the quickie producers that jump on any popular trend, don't turn the current fantasy film popularity into something to be avoided.

I salute your excellent zine and look forward to receiving my next issue.

Sincerely,

Betty.

Terry Dowling
PO Box A777
Sydney South, 2000

2nd March, 1984.

Dear Merv,

Two things led to this letter. First, I had to thank you very much for the copies of ASFN you've been sending. I've always thought it an excellent publication, doing a very important job in helping to maintain that sense of a national and international community.

You made things sound grim enough in your latest editorial, that I just had to make sure you didn't go unthanked from this end. I hope the problems of production anticipated in your last issue, don't prove too great.

The other reason for writing is to give you some news on the book Harlan and I are putting together - DOWN DEEP: STORIES OF FUTURE AUSTRALIS - to be published here first by Norstrilia Press. I've just spent two months at Harlan's editing THE ESSENTIAL HARLAN ELLISON, and we received many submissions for DEEP DOWN (though the pre-Olympic mails made this a pocket nightmare).

We're very excited about this project, needless to say; but here it is in Harlan's own words:

"What we're after in DOWN DEEP: STORIES OF FUTURE AUSTRALIS is the capturing in contemporary terms of the mythic quality that drenches Australia. I found when I was there, and came back to the cities after wandering in the outback and the Flinders Ranges particularly, that what I had seen and felt was greeted with wonder by Melbourneans and Sydneysiders alike. I was surprised and a bit dismayed, that so many urbanites were dulled to the magic that lay just beyond the paved streets.

"(It is difficult for me to express all of this...but I was touched more deeply by your land than ever I've been on my own...or by any other place I've ever been. And I suppose, that's why I burn to share in the creation of this very special project with Terry. I want to pass along to Americans and Australians both, the power and mystery I experienced while in that land.)

"The book is intended to present an open-door on the mythic Australia. The power, the ancient magic, the super-imposed precontinuum that one feels at Hanging Rock, up in the Flinders Ranges, when meeting a native Aboriginal on the dusty streets of Hawker. In short, that inexplicable sense of region and milieu that Peter Weir captured in PICNIC AT HANGING ROCK, that Bert Chandler evokes in KELLY COUNTRY, that Peter Carey conjures up in so many of his stories. A country both real and dreamlike...To be specific, a sense of Australia as a land of power and myth, a place of new magic sunk to its roots in ancient mysteries.

"So far only Leanne Frahm and Lucy Sussex have come close to our mark. (Sussex's 'The Poor New People' is steeped in that heady concept of mythic power. Add to this basic quality, an innovative plotting, that moves through characterization to a satisfying denouement...you can understand with what whoops of jollity, we greeted Sussex at full throttle.)

"The land itself is alive. The land has human characteristics, or even super-human characteristics. That's what we're trying to capture...Not just another book of so-so yarns that could be published anywhere, but a gestalt that will be echt-Australian. That opens for Australians and non-Australians, a doorway into a landscape of strangeness and, again, ancient mystery. The sort of feeling one does get watching Peter Weir's PICNIC AT HANGING ROCK: that sense of looking through a rift in normal space-time, into a place where the Mary Celeste and the Wandering Jew and Caspar Hauser might exist side-by-side.

The essence of this search is, I fear, The Grail. We want the kind of stories that have never been written before. We want thoughts never thought before, places never described before, and insights into the human condition that produce a frisson of recognition, while leading us into the unknown. Better than that, we cannot provide clues.

"What we're trying to cajole, chivvy, taunt and direct the writers to do, is the chore of bottling the magic. What I saw and felt in PICNIC and THE LAST WAVE; the myth-turned-to-narrative in KELLY COUNTRY: the compulsion and fantastic ambience in THE DREAMING DRAGONS. Not so much, I guess, acceptable "science-fiction" as the sort of story that resists categorisation: Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery", Fritz Leiber's OUR LADY OF DARKNESS, THE LORD OF THE FLIES, Ballard's "The Drowned Giant", Lafferty's "Narrow Valley".

(Dowling interjects: This is not to say we just want endless re-workings of the same thing. We need hardly fear this anyway, given the individual imagination and the unlimited possibilities of the subject. Nor does it mean that the non-mythic, more conventionally future-oriented stories are to be excluded. A skillful blending of modes and material is possible here. And quality will always win out.)

"These will be, I'm sure, harder stories to pull out of people than the sort of things Omni and Analog would buy.

We're steadfastly holding out for the stories that hurt the writers to produce. ...That means we're going to have to beat a lot of big-name, established authors about the head and shoulders to get them to produce something better than they have ever produced before. We're greedy, and we're arrogant, and we will settle only for that which has never existed.

"Why bother? My answer--is to convey the thoughts above, about how wonderful and strange Australia is. That, and a showcase for Australian writers in the eyes of provincial American readers, are the reasons for this book...We want ...no, we hunger to have Australian writers speak of their land in these stories in a way that will make others want to come and lay their hands on the rocks, to feel the power!"

So there it is, Merv. I do hope it's of interest to you. We're offering 10¢ a word and have a June '84 deadline, though we're after a good book, not just a book, so this may be extended until we get what we want. We're after 80,000 words, and we have a solid 14,000 of those already. So it's just a matter of time.

Best wishes,

Terry Dowling for
Harlan Ellison and Terry Dowling

Dear People,

Thank you very much for your letters. I do not have the space to reply to you all personally and I apologise for the delay in publishing your letters, but if you have been reading my editorials, you will know I have my problems at the moment. Letters from Rick Kennett, Michael Hailstone, Josephine Dorian and Ron Putnins will appear next issue.

The AUSTRALIAN HORROR & FANTASY MAGAZINE wrote last year, asking for stories and I have not been able to squeeze in their letter. Write S.Studach, 234 Jamison Rd., Penrith, N.S.W. 2750, Australia for details.

Merv B.Ed.



EUREKACON

THE 1984 NATIONAL CONVENTION

Easter April 20 - 23

THE VICTORIA HOTEL
Little Collins Street,
Melbourne

GoH: GEORGE TURNER

THEME: IT'S A BAD, BAD, BAD WORLD!

Programme: Discussions, Masquerade,
a Vagon Poetry Contest.

Memberships up to April 20th

\$25 attending - \$15 supporting.

At the door \$35 - Daily rate \$10

Address for further details: Box 175,
South Melbourne 3205, Vic.

PHANTASTACON

Australia's Premiere
Games Convention

April 20th-23rd 1984

The Diplomat Motor Inn, 12 Acland St.,
StKilda. Activities will include a
Dungeons and Dragons Tournament, A
Traveller Tournament and other games
competitions, plus a dinner and a
masquerade. The convention is sponsored by
the games distributors, The Jedko Games
Company, who will provide prizes for the
various competitions. For further details
contact P.O.Box 45, Mitcham, 3132, Vic.

KINKON

Queen's Birthday Weekend
June 9-11 '84

The Victoria Hotel, Little Collins St.,
Melbourne - Melbourne fandom's most
popular venue for SF conventions for
many years. Theme : Sight and Sound in
Science Fiction and Fantasy The Guests
of Honour are ALAN FINNEY and JOHN FLAUS.
Full membership is \$20, Supporting \$10,
Day \$10, Hucksters \$40 (Including mem-
bership and 1 table). A feature of the
con will be the Masquerade with the
theme of "Sexuality in SF" and a \$300
prize. For further details ring
Ruth Murphy on 7931706, or write to
29 Alexander Avenue, Dandenong 3175,
Victoria.

NECROMICON ONE

AUSTRALIA'S FIRST CONVENTION OF GAMERS
FOR GAMERS

Previous games conventions have been
sponsored by distributors of games in
Australia. The organisers of this con,
say that they will have complete free-
dom to give the gaming fans exactly
what they want. For more details con-
tact Necromicon 1, P.O.Box 706,
Dandenong 3175, Vic. Australia.

14th - 16th September, The Victoria
Hotel, Little Collins St., Melbourne

L.A. CON

The 42nd World Science
Fiction Convention 1984
August 30 - September 3

The Anaheim Convention Centre (Close
to Disneyland)) Guest of Honour:
GORDON R.DICKSON, Fan GoH:DICK ENEY.
Toastmasters: ROBERT BLOCH and JERRY
POURNELLE. Supporting memberships,
which are not convertible to attending,
can be had for \$20.00US. These entitle
purchasers to vote for the Hugo, the
site selection and receive all publica-
tions.

Attending membership of LA CON is \$50.00
US, as of January 1st up to July 15th.
The rate at the door will be \$75.00.US
Write LA CON II, Box 8442, Van Nuys,
CA 91409, USA. There is no Australian -
agent for LA CON.

AUSSIECON TWO

43RD WORLD SF CONVENTION

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
August 22nd - 26th 1985

The Southern Cross Hotel
For more details write : G.P.O.Box 2253U
Melbourne,3001, Victoria, AUSTRALIA
The First Progress Report was sent out
to members of AUSSIECON TWO in March.
If you are a member and have not
received a copy, we suggest you contact
the committee now. PRI contains a message
from Chairman John Foyster, details on
membership rates, facilities and accom-
modation, programming, the masquerade,

the art show, and the repeated call for
people to help run the convention.
AUSSIECON TWO NEEDS YOU NOW!

FAN NEWS AND NOTICES

MARC ORTLIEB, who recently moved from
Adelaide to Melbourne and Melbourne fan
CATHIE CIRCOSTA, announced their engage-
ment in February.

THE SYDNEY SPACE ASSOCIATION

For details of meetings of this group,
write to Val Rogers, P.O.Box 1374,
Crows Nest, 2065, N.S.W.

THE NEW VARANGIAN GUARD

If you like dressing up in medieval
costume and such, contact Michael in
Melbourne, on 826304 and join the New
Varangian Guard.

FAN FUNDS

JACK HERMAN has won DUFF. 101 people
voted, with 78 votes going to Herman,
11 to John Packer, 8 no preference,
2 hold over funds, 2 write in. Jack
intends to attend as many conventions
as possible in the U.S.A. between the
time he leaves Sydney on August 15th
and when he leaves for home again on
September 24th. Any U.S. fans who would
like to contact him and tell him what
cons are on in the U.S.A., can write
to him at Box 272, Wentworth Building,
University of Sydney, NSW, Australia.

GUFF winner Justin Ackroyd said goodbye
to Space Age Books on March 30th, got
drunk at a send-off party that night
and caught the plane taking him off
overseas the next morning. He intends
to spend as long as possible overseas,
after attending EASTERCON in Brighton,
England, and will be visiting other places
including conventions in the U.S.A. Space
Age are sorry to see him leave, but are
not seeking a replacement at present.

Marc Ortlieb, who has just sent out a new
issue of his AUSTRALIAN FAN FUND'S NEWS-
LETTER, is looking after the GUFF fund
until Justin's return. For details on
all the funds including the SHAW FUND,
write to Mark now, at G.P.O. Box 2708X,
Melbourne 3001, Victoria, Australia.
A couple of dollars donation would not
go astray, although he does not give a
sub rate.

There are some rather pointed comments on
the lack of Fan Fund Trip Reports by
winners, in Mark's Newsletter, which we
tend to agree with. Winners should not
expect the funds to pay for the printing
of their reports. They should keep them
short if need be and produce them cheaply
at their own cost. That, in my opinion, is
the least they can do. However I have
offered to help Paul Stevens with his, so
you may see it out by AUSSIECON TWO.....

Well, I have run out of space again and I
had so much more to include. Cathie's
METREK REPORT and Fanzone Reviews will
have to wait till the next issue, along
with the All Our Yesterdays Photographs.
Detailed reports on SWANCON NINE and
SYNCON '84 are to be found in Roger
Weddall's zine THYME, Number 32. Roger's
address is 79 Bell St., Fitzroy 3065
Subscription \$5.00 for ten issues.
This issue must be out before Easter, so
time has run out..... M.B. 19

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Jon Sable

Barks Library



Elfquest Book 3

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