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SPACE AGE BOOKS CLOSING DOWN

SPACE AGE BOOKS, THE MELBOURNE BASED SCIENCE FICTION SPECIALIST BOOKSHOP STARTED BY BOOKSELLER AND FAN, MERVYN BINNS AND SYDNEY BOOK COLLECTOR THE LATE RON GRAHAM, IN 1971, IS BEING FORCED TO CLOSE DOWN DUE TO GROWING AND INSURMOUNTABLE FINANCIAL PROBLEMS.

After almost fifteen years of operation, the organisation which spawned Australian SF NEWS, namely SPACE AGE BOOKS, is about to close its doors. Rumours have been flying around for months that Space Age was breathing its last and I regret to inform you that the rumours were basically true. I have been fighting to keep the ship afloat for years and at times I thought that we could continue, but accumulated old debts, increased direct opposition in the field and the overall increase in the availability of F&SF books everywhere, have all contributed to our collapse. Lack of capital and the high costs of running the business, made it impossible to keep stock coming in on a regular basis over the last year and the situation has gradually deteriorated.

Sales during AUSSIECON 2 were good despite the lack of a wide range of back titles and we have to thank our bank and various suppliers who let us have stock for cash, for that. We did not pay off many of our old debts, but we did have a reasonable range of stock. Business since the con however has taken a nosedive, with most of our customers seemingly deserting us. We have not been able to keep American or even much local stock coming in and I had to finally accept the fact that we could not continue. A steady reduction in costs, with staff cuts and other items, has not helped or were implemented too late.

There was nothing I could do to save Space Age from disaster and I have been looking for a new tenant for the shop for the last six months or more. I intended to start up in a smaller shop in the city or in the suburbs, or just do mail order from home, but getting somebody to take over the lease, which had almost a year to run with the resulting costs, proved difficult. The stress I have been under over the last six months or more has been tremendous and that, plus the simple fact that the situation was only getting

NEW AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE,

APHELION FOR JANUARY RELEASE

A new Australian Science Fiction magazine is due to hit the bookshelves in January 1986. APHELION is being published by people in Adelaide and if you would like to obtain a copy(s), please write to P.O.Box 421, Stirling, South Australia 5152. The first issue will be 96 pages. It will be published quarterly and on subscription. Single copy price \$4.95. Contributions can be sent to the above address. SF stories or non-fiction speculative fact.

worse, finally told me that I had to place the company in the hands of a liquidator. The day after this decision was taken my father found some people who want to take over the shop and probably take all our fittings among other things. That has taken off some of the pressure and I will probably have more to say about that in a month or so.

Why has this happened? Well you may ask. I think that for a start, as I have already said, the availability of sf has grown tremendously over the last few years. We can date our decline from the time of the opening of the Museum Station and Melbourne's underground rail line, but really that must be coincidental. It did add to our costs with increased rates to pay for it and may have changed patterns of passing trade, but we have never relied on passing trade. Coming to the city now is something to be avoided if you can, with the cost of travel, no parking for cars or at least not enough and too expensive. Book buyers can buy all they need in the suburban newsagents and booksellers, suburban shopping centres included. There must be a limit to the number of sf customers and we made the mistake of not keeping up our range of other types of books and records as well, but if we could have kept our range of sf coming in on a regular basis, we probably would have got our share of the market. Mainly because of the financial situation, but not entirely. Our main American supplier really screwed us up by not supplying all the books we needed. Various steps might have been taken by me to save the day, if taken earlier, such as a new partner, and moving to another locality, but now it is all water under the bridge.

What does the future hold for me now? Well the 1

Some readers will not be aware that Space Age Books is closed

way I feel at the moment I never want to see a book again and in the words of the classics, I just want to get away from it all. But a job in a bookshop may be in the offing and with my current financial situation I cannot afford to say no. After all, I suppose it is a bit stupid to throw away 35 years of experience in books and in sf and movies in particular, to go off mowing lawns or something. A bit of fresh air for a while may not be a bad idea however.

Many people reading this will be genuinely sorry to see Space Age go and though you may not be able to commiserate with me personally, I thank you for your thoughts. I am sorry to be letting so many of my customers down, who have relied on me for so long for their fix, but lets face it, there are a lot of other sf shops about now both in Australia and overseas. If you do not know where they are, I will be happy to let you know. I am rather tired of battling to keep a business afloat, so I think it is most unlikely that I will take one on again, but you never know. A second hand bookshop in the suburbs might be the answer, with a mail order service on the side, but it will be some time before I could take that on. Meanwhile, if you do have trouble getting the books you want, do write to me and I will try to help you as best I can.

Also, I do hope to continue publishing AUSTRALIAN SF NEWS as I do not want to lose touch with the field. It has been a labour of love and very time consuming, but I do not think my efforts have gone entirely unappreciated. I want to start enjoying sf for a change and perhaps in the future I may just be able to do that.

One of the problems for readers is knowing what sf books are coming out and with Space Age's lists and ASFN, I have tried to remedy that problem. As far as I know, no Australian bookshop apart from us, have put out a regular current or advance list. The U.S. publications LOCUS and SF CHRONICLE, list all the U.S. books and most of the British books and although they cost a few dollars to subscribe to, they will assist you greatly. I will not make any promises, but I will endeavour to keep ASFN going in the future and in particular list all the new books. But I must point out that I do not expect to be in a position in the near future to supply your sf book requirements. I may be selling off some of my own personal collection and I will send lists to all those people I think may be interested. If you would like to remain on my mailing lists in any capacity, please write and let me know. I may be in the position to supply movie posters of various types, records and eventually, perhaps, books, not necessarily in my own right, but by acting as an agent for some of the publishers.

SPACE AGE and all that has gone with it and all that went on before, with the Melbourne SF Club, my time at McGills, AUSSIECON ONE, and

all the people I have had working with me and in fandom, have all made it worthwhile. The pressure and worries of the last few months and before, have been tremendous. I can now heave a sigh of relief that it is all coming to an end, but that does not alter the good times we had. Finally I can only say I am sorry to the people who are hurt by our crash, but I did my best and it was not good enough.

AUSTRALIAN SF NEWS

As I have said, I want to keep publishing the NEWS, but it will be at the earliest February before you see another issue. Whether I keep publishing will depend on the time I have available to do it and if people want me to do it. I strongly believe there is still a need for it, to tell sf readers what new books are out and to tell people on the fringe of fandom in particular, what conventions are coming up and other fan activities. I, as the owner of Space Age Books and as editor of ASFN, have helped publicise fandom and Australian sf to a large degree and I hope to continue doing so in the future.

Most readers will have been hoping for a report on AUSSIECON TWO, but I am sorry I do not have the time nor the inclination to do one now. Both LOCUS and SF CHRONICLE have covered it very well and if you cannot get hold of copies of those, I can probably get them for you. Incidentally, neither Space Age or ASFN or myself individually, are taking subscriptions to LOCUS or SF CHRONICLE at present, but I may be able to at a later date. Meanwhile you will have to subscribe direct.

Please send all future correspondence to my home address, 1 Glen Eira Road, Ripponlea, 3182, Victoria, Australia. I will have a post office box early in the new year and the number will be advised in the next issue of ASFN. Meanwhile all mail sent to 305/307 Swanston St., will be forwarded on to me. Books sent for review will be reviewed in detail or mentioned in the complete listing of new books. Fanzines are being donated to the MELBOURNE SF CLUB, who are moving to new premises at the St David's Uniting Church, 72 Melville Rd., Brunswick West. Opening early '86.

CONVENTIONS

SWANCON 11 is the 1986 National Australian Convention being held at Easter in Perth. The GoH is U.S. author C.J. Cherryh. Details from P.O. Box 318, Nedlands, 6009. W.A.

UNICON is being held at Adelaide University over the Australia day weekend, January 26-27. Details from the A.U.S.F. Association, c/o Student Activities Office, Union Building, University of Adelaide, S.A. 5001.

KINCON 2 Is being held in Melbourne over the Queen's Birthday weekend in June 1986. More details next issue

Merv Binns

BOOKS RECEIVED

ARROW have published another two titles by Marion Zimmer Bradley in the "Darkover" series: HAWKMISTRESS and THENDARRA HOUSE. Also from Arrow is the hilarious book of quotes from sf books and films, GHASTLY BEYOND BELIEF, compiled by Neil Gaiman and Kim Newman. In the HAMLYN imprint from Arrow we received some VENTURE series titles including COME HUNT AN EARTHMAN by Philip E. High, WE ALL DIED AT BREAKAWAY STATION by Richard C. Meridith, INTSTELLAR EMPIRE by John Brunner, STARWOLF by Edmond Hamilton and STARHUNT by David Gerrold. Now there is a collection to warm any space opera buff's heart. All previously published in the USA, but so long ago in most cases that they are virtually new, to most readers.

BANTAM USA and CORGI & BANTAM Australia, have sent us quite a stack of titles. Not all of these titles will be generally available in Australia. MY SCIENCE PROJECT by Mike McQuay in Bantam is a movie novelization. THE CEREMONIES by T.E.D. Klein is an outstanding horror fantasy epic in the Stephen King style. POLAR FLEET by Warren Norwood is the second title in the "Double Spiral War" series. BELOVED EXILE by Parke Godwin is an Arthurian novel revolving around Guenevere. THE CONGLOMEROID COCKTAIL PARTY by Robert Silverberg is a collection of recent sf stories. THE DARKLING WIND by Somtow Sucharitkul is a 384 page epic space adventure. STARS IN MY POCKET LIKE GRAINS OF SAND is the first pb edition of this novel by the innovative and popular Samuel R. Delany. EYAS by Crawford Killian is a prehistory, fantasy adventure. MEDEA: HARLAN'S WORLD is a collection of stories by various authors based on a concept and edited by Harlan Ellison, in large format pb. Another large pb edition is THE LAST RAINBOW by Parke Godwin, which is an historical fantasy set in Celtic Britain. RAM SONG by Sharon Webb is set in a far future and on a distant planet where music is a way of life. An sf adventure set on a tough planet describes SKINNER by Richard S. McEnroe. SONGS FROM THE STARS by Norman Spinrad sees it's first US pb edition. BRAIN CHILD by John Saul is a new horror tale by the author of "Suffer the Children" and other similar chillers. INFINITIES WEB by Sheila Finch is a tale of alternate worlds. STAR TREK: THE NEW VOYAGES 2, edited by Sondra Marshak and Myrna Culbreath, is a reprint with a new cover illustration. A STAINLESS STEEL RAT IS BORN and WEST OF EDEN, both by Harry Harrison, will definitely be only available in their Bantam editions in the U.S.A. Excellent value from Corgi is THE TRUE GAME by Sheri S. Tepper, which is a large format pb that includes "King's

Blood Four", "Necromancer Nine" and "Wizard's Eleven", which were published separately by ACE in the U.S.A. A fantasy that will appeal to game players.

Australian Publisher GREENHOUSE PUBLICATIONS LTD are reprinting the U.S. publisher Crown's series of classic sf books, in hard cover. Four titles received include THE SHORES OF ANOTHER SEA by Chad Oliver, THE CLASSIC PHILIP JOSE FARMER 1952 -1964, MEN, MARTIANS AND MACHINES by Eric Frank Russell and THE JOY MAKERS by James Gunn. All at a good price of only \$9.95

GOLLANCZ books received, courtesy their Australian distributor Hutchinson, include THE MERCHANT'S WAR, the sequel to "The Space Merchants", by Frederik Pohl. FREE, LIVE FREE by Gene Wolfe, an extraordinary novel mixing sf, fantasy and just simply excellent writing. FOOTFALL by Larry Riven & Jerry Pournelle, the ultimate alien invasion novel. THE MAN IN THE TREE by Damon Knight, his first new novel in many years. All in hard cover of course.

BRANADA titles received courtesy their Australian office at William Collins, include a hard cover edition of Michael Moorcock's THE CHRONICLES OF CASTLE BRASS, which includes "Count Brass", "The Champion of Garathorn" and "The Quest for Tanelorn". Paperbacks include: THE DRAGON MASTERS by Jack Vance. 1984: SPRING, a collection of essays on science and the future by Arthur C. Clarke. Three new J.G. Ballard editions in larger format are CRASH, HIGH-RISE and LOW-FLYING AIRCRAFT. ORBITSVILLE by Bob Shaw is out again with ORBITSVILLE DEPARTURE, the sequel. THE SENTIMENTAL AGENTS IN THE VOLYEN EMPIRE by Doris Lessing in her "Canopus in Argos: Archives" (5th). ELRIC AT THE END OF TIME by Michael Moorcock, The long awaited sequel to Sterling Lanier's "Hiero's Journey", THE UNFORSAKEN HIERO. THE ROBOTS OF DAWN by Isaac Asimov. HELLICONIA SUMMER by Brian Aldiss

STARBLAZE Editions sent to us by the Donning Company in the USA include the big collection of articles by Harlan Ellison, AN EDGE IN MY VOICE. Available in both hard cover and trade pb editions, this book is a must for all Ellison fans. Award winning fantasy author Charles de Lint's THE HARP AND THE ROSE, is the first in a fantasy adventure series featuring the hero Cerin Songweaver.

PENGUIN BOOKS sent us the collection, MACHINES THAT THINK, edited by Isaac Asimov, Patricia S. Warrick and Martin H. Greenberg, in a large format pb, now on sale here. DEMON IN THE SKULL is a revised version of "Plague of Pythons" by Frederik Pohl. SOFTWARE by Rudy Rucker is a story about robots, but

not quite as Isaac Asimov depicts them. THE RINGS OF KETHER by Steve Jackson and Ian Livingstone is #15 in the Adventure Gamebook series.

New UNICORN fantasy titles from Allen and Unwin include THE ARMIES OF DAYLIGHT by Barbara Hambly, the 3rd in the Dawath trilogy. THE WARRIOR WHO CARRIED LIFE by Geoff Ryman is a fantasy based on the Gilgamesh epic. THE FROZEN CITY by David Arscott and David J. Mart, is a science fantasy novel that relies heavily on allegory.

Hodder & Stoughton sent us five books in the excellent KNIGHT/CORONET pb series for young readers, Starstormers by Nicholas Fisk. VOLCANO, SUNBURST, STARSTORMERS, CATFANG and EVIL EYE. All in new editions with new covers.

Finally, a mixed bag of paperbacks received included VALENTINE PONTIFEX by Bob Silverberg in PAN. MERCENARY - Bio Of A Space Pirate Part 2 by Piers Anthony in FUTURA. WHERE EVIL DWELLS by Clifford Simak in METHUEN. FEVER DREAM by George R.R. Martin and TWILIGHT WORLD by Poul Anderson in SPHERE.

Other books received very recently include:

From WILLIAM COLLINS and GRANADA Australia, the latest Piers Anthony series, Incarnations of Immortality Book Two, BEARING AN HOUR GLASS. Harry Harrison's WEST OF EDEN, his best novel ever. Two slightly larger format editions of THE DISASTER AREA and THE ATROCITY EXHIBITION by J.G. Ballard. GALAXIES LIKE GRAINS OF SAND by Brian Aldiss, a reprint of a great collection of stories, with a new introduction by Norman Spinrad. CIRCUMPOLAR!, a highly imaginative novel set on an alternative Earth, by Richard A. Lupoff.

JOURNEY TO THE FLAME by Richard Monaco from Bantam, sports a very sexy cover and is a high adventure tale in the "Indiana Jones" style. SOLD FOR A SPACESHIP by Philip E. High is another title in the Venture space adventure series from Hamlyn. Finally, THE LAST WARRIOR QUEEN by Mary Mackey in the Allen and Unwin Unicorn pb fantasy series.

Book Reviews by George Turner

LANDSCAPE WITH LANDSCAPE
by Gerald Murnane

Norstrilia Press; 267 pp; \$16.95 ARP

There is no other writer in Australia with Murnane's individual view of fiction, and in this novel he comes closer to expressing it than ever before. Like all his work to date it springs from his life experience, but it is not overtly autobiographical as TAMARISK ROW or LIFETIME ON CLOUDS; he dives much deeper into himself for

the makeup of his central figure.

The book is structured as six novellas, each purportedly written by the protagonist of the story preceding it. Thus the major character views himself in a series of receding vistas, moving himself then into each frame to see more clearly -- from a singularly revolting paranoid persona through various approaches ending in surrender to the person he really is. Or is he? There are no certainties here.

It is an extraordinary book, like nothing else in the English language that I know of, fascinating in conception and execution. It could perhaps do with a little trimming but the man's determination to come to terms with himself grips and holds. Also, there are few who will not recognise aspects of themselves held up to the light, nodded at and laid aside. So much that seems individual is in fact universal.

HELLICONIA WINTER
by Brian Aldiss

Jonathan Cape; 283 pp; \$26.95 ARP

The final volume of the "Helliconia" trilogy is both shorter and more tightly composed than the first two, probably because the author was engaged in tying together his various themes as clearly as possible. Except in the condition of old Earth and the observation satellite, he introduces little new basic material but concentrates on the activities of mankind at the onset of the longwinter, with the alternative species, the Phagor, waiting grimly on the great cold which will see their return to power as the better adapted race.

As with the first two volumes the surface story is a journey across the planet to a series of discoveries at its end, and of these the greatest is one which Aldiss reached right back to THE GODS OF MARS to make fine dramatic sense of a notion which in Burrough's hands was only a gimmick.

The strong realism of this trilogy has been its most powerful adjunct; Aldiss's cultures are 'different' but acceptable; the reader feels that he is dealing with easy imaginativeness but rather with a fine consideration of where variations and affinities lie. If I have a reservation it is for the use of a form of ESP in the later pages; ESP has always seemed to me a too easy solution to story problems. But that is a personal reaction which others may not share. In any case, it cannot demean the fact that, of all the giant-sized sf series, 'Helliconia' is by far the most literate and intellectually appealing, leaving DUNE and RIVERWORLD straggling in the dust.

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