

# SCIENCE FICTION *News*

No. 41

May 1972

## HIATUS

When, for one reason or another, a monthly publication doesn't make it monthly, the usual course is to skip issues, go bimonthly perhaps until the situation improves. SF News on the other hand has fallen behind in schedule instead. This issue and the next few will be dated for the time they should have appeared. Eventually we will get back in sync with the mundane calendar.

## ROLE, SCOPE, FUNCTION

The Association has a wide range of possible activities limited by its members' inclinations to make them a reality. Basically it serves to give students of SF a common center and means of keeping in touch. SF News could easily be the vehicle for more active communication if needed: failing any storm of protest however it will continue in its present general form. What we have been doing in recent issues is keep up the current book listing service and present reviews, principally. Let's look at these briefly.

Why the current book list? And what does it set out to do? Very simple. We put you in the picture to some extent on what books are appearing and give some information about them. Not a complete record of every book classifiable as SF -- it would be of some value, but would hardly justify the labor. SF is no longer a limited field

that you can hope to be well read in. It is doubtful that anyone could read everything published even as a full-time occupation, and you wouldn't be in a fit condition for anything else. In fact, only a really dedicated student would want to read everything significant, or a properly representative sample. There's just too much, and after all there are other things in life.

We do list all the books that seem to have some importance or that we can give some information about. The list is a fairly comprehensive coverage of the work of established and recognised authors, and of books reviewed in the main publications that regularly review SF books with some intelligence. But we don't undertake to list all the mediocre and bad books, which are legion. Nor do we undertake to list all the books which though not SF might interest some of us for some reason.

Though there has been no flood of complaints we recognise that these current lists have two defects: no title listing, and no cumulations. Given time we'll get to both of these. In fact, we hope to do something about both before too long. A long range project has been work on at least a selective list of books from the beginning and quite a file of data has been built up.

Meanwhile, work on the proposed index to short stories in books has gone on. We can still use more help on this, and have now reached the stage where the majority of books have been indexed. Those remaining include of course many obscure books, but don't think this has become something for the antiquarian collector. Far from it. Anyone who has been reading for a few years and has a shelf or two of books may have

something that hasn't been covered. If you want to help, we have a list of books wanted to index. If at all possible, we would like to get this project ready for printing in 1973, and with as close as possible to the coverage of a thousand books which we believe is possible. Will you help?

Then there are our own reviews. They offer informed opinions on new books, something we can't get enough of. There is a serious shortage of reviewers, however, and we would like to get more members participating. Budding Millers, forward, please. Anyone interested enough in the subject to join the Association is obviously qualified. If you doubt it, try this little exercise: read a book reviewed recently and consider whether you agree with the reviewer's ideas, then write a few paragraphs explaining why you do or don't.

#### AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION INDEX

This mimeographed book lists all the SF magazines and paperbacks, as well as the few hard covered books, printed in Australia up to 1967, indexing their full contents. It runs to 158 pages and sells for \$3.00. Since the poll on suggested activities we took early in the Association's career showed little interest, this was made an optional membership benefit -- we don't hand it out gratis to members, but offer it to those interested at half price, \$1.50. Recently reprinted but unchanged, this Index is still offered. There is no immediate plan to produce either a new edition or the supplement that was suggested -- Tuck's list for 1960/71 complements it. Get in for your copy now, it is likely to sell out fairly soon and not be replaced for a while.

SCIENCE FICTION NEWS

Published monthly by

Australian Science Fiction Association  
Box 852, P.O., Canberra City, ACT 2601

No. 41

May 1972