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SCIENCE and
FANTASY

FAN REPORTER

EXCLUSIVE!

CURRAWONG'S PLANS FOR MORE STF ANOTHER BOOK SOON.

The other day your editor found himself with a couple of hours to spare, so he wandered up to the office of Currawong Publications, to see if he could get an interview.

He could, and did.

And fandom should be very pleased with the result.

I thanked them for answering our letters, and for a while we talked of "The Living Dead" and "Subterranean City." I asked how the books had sold and was informed that their rapid sale had surprised them.

I gave the hint that more of the same type would also sell well, and Currawong said "As a matter of fact, there's another one coming up now."

So "Time Marches Off" was revealed. This is written by Heming, under the pseudonym of Paul de Tredor and is due to be released in a couple of weeks. It is the story of two men who travel forward in time, and meet with many adventures, some thrilling, and some amusing. I had a look through the manuscript, and it seemed to me to be a lot better than Heming's two previous attempts. The science in it is hazy, but the whole story seems to be more scientific than the others. Cover is by Andrews.

Talking of covers I mentioned putting the words "science fiction" on the fronts. This idea was not received so well. Although they admitted that some regular readers would be gained this way, they were not certain as to whether the number of readers attracted
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CURRAWONG INTERVIEW (contd.)

this way would make up for the number turned away by the subtitle. The risk of putting out such a book was too great, they thought. Still, no definite decision was made.

On this subject, too, was the question of more science in the stories. Here again there was a doubt. They thought that a straight stf yarn would be a failure, hence the emphasis on adventure in their stories. But whilst they would not go from science-adventure to straight stf in one hop, they said they would consider gradually increasing the science content, until a limit was found. This is quite a reasonable idea, and it is to be hoped that it is carried out. As Currawong said, "We will have to educate the public to science-fiction." (There did they hear that?)

However, they are definitely in favour of the stf books in some form or other. As the first 2 have sold so well, they have decided to include a science-fiction book in each batch they bring out, as long as they sell, of course. And if they pick their stories well they should sell for a very long time.

They are certainly taking notice of the fans. An interplanetary story was suggested, because I thought it would suit Heming's style. They told Heming, who promised to "look into it" although actually he was not too keen about it. (Why, I could not find out.)

Currawong are also after suggestions. That they really want is the nucleus of a plot - the scientific basis on which the story itself will rest. So if you have any good ones, don't keep them secret.

To sum up, Currawong intend to publish at least one stf book each time, and perhaps tend more and more towards straight stf. Covers may (but do not count on it) get better. And finally, Currawong will listen to the fans, which is more than American pros do. They realize that they and the fans can help each other to a great extent. The fans should know this, too. We have a wonderful chance here. We should not let it slip.

Lastly, by what I have seen of it "Time Marches Off" should be a "must read" for every fan. To interstate fans who cannot get copies, and want some, write NOW to me, and when the book comes out I will send them down. Enclose the money (sixpence each, post-free) with your letter. And remember, it is an excellent book to send overseas in exchange for American magazines.

FSS NEWS.THREE AT MEETING

The rain was not the only thing to make a record last Friday night. The FSS also made one, by holding its smallest meeting ever. Three members were present for the meeting. Members Eric and Ted Russell, and guest Stephen Cooper did not turn up, and only Colin Roien, Vol Molesworth and Graham Stone were present.

Notwithstanding the small attendance, several club items were decided. The revised set of rules was passed, and a letter drawn up to send to Currawong Publications.

FFA.

The FSS will try and get back the records of the FFA, for safe keeping until someone else is empowered to keep them. After the records are secure, notices will be sent to all members asking for suggestions as to what should be done. The club will put into operation the most favoured, then leave the Federation to the control of its members.

QUIZ COMPETITION

The FSS is soon to have its first club competition it being a series of competitive quizzes, with the prize of a five-shilling air book at the end.

The competition will extend over five meetings. At each meeting one member will submit the quiz, dropping out of the scoring for that meeting. So each member will answer four quizzes, and ask one. Twenty five points are allotted to each quiz, thus the maximum point score for a member is 100.

Various rules have been drawn up to keep the questions within reason. Any member asking a question that no one can answer loses one point from his score, so extra-difficult questions should not crop up too often.

Prize is an air book valued at about five shillings. Winner will be allowed to pick his own books.

The competition will probably start at the meeting after next. The small attendance at the last meeting caused the holdup, as all the details could not be arranged.

EDITORIAL: Stoppap?

Currarwong's sixpennies, like the Dweller in "The Moon Pool," have brought both happiness and sorrow. Happiness, because they represent a definite Australian attempt to put stf on the market. Sorrow, because the type of stf chosen is not of a very high quality.

Naturally there follows the question "If the type of stf published does not satisfy the fans, why do they take such an interest in it?"

The answer is that any type of science-fiction is preferable to none, provided that the publisher has some sort of intention to continue publishing stf.

Currarwong has such an intention, as is shown elsewhere in this issue. So the fans are supporting their books.

The fans' ultimate aim, of course, is to see a regular Australian magazine appear, of very high standard. But this is impossible during the war.

When the war is over, though, such a magazine will be distinctly possible. And what will be our attitude towards the little sixpennies then? Will our interest in them cease?

It should not. The sixpennies should not be just regarded as something that will do until something better is possible. They should be regarded as the base of Australian stf, the stepping stones which will lead directly to better things. "We must concentrate on them, and try to improve them, rather than invent fanciful ideas about an almost impossibility. For if we keep on trying to improve the small books, we will very likely be rewarded with a better publication, whereas if we try straight out for our "ultimate" and neglect the others, we will probably lose both.

Colin Roden, Editor.

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