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AN AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION NEWS MAGAZINE November 2000 ISSUE #132

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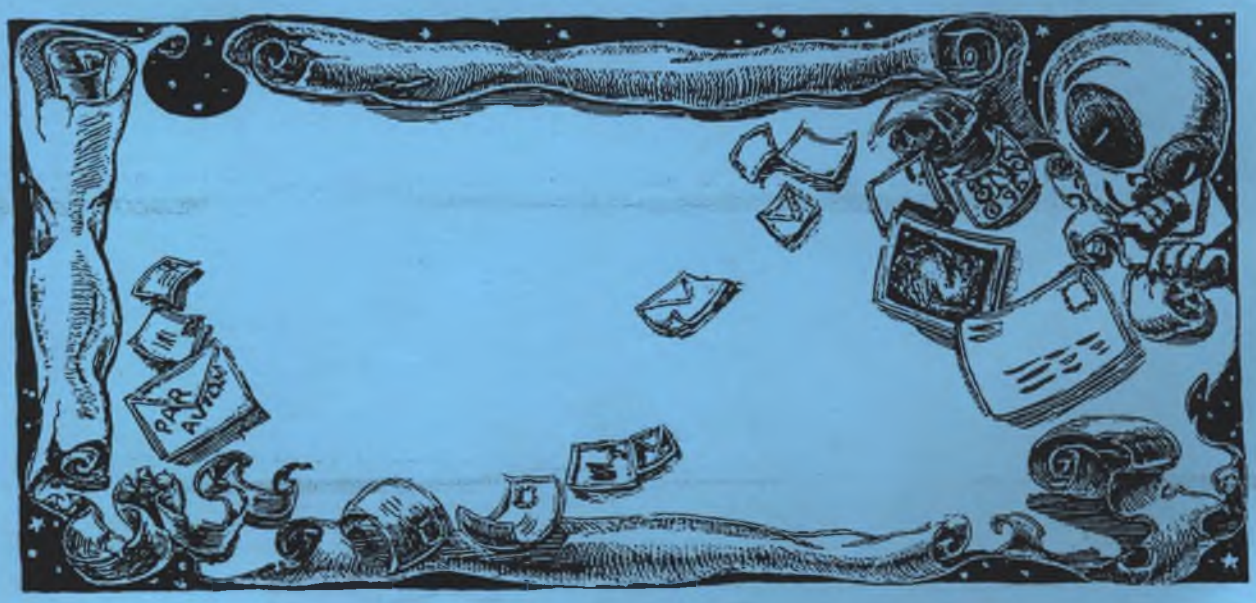


News

Karen Johnson and **John Gory** are engaged to be married. The wedding is being planned to take place in Florida USA next year. (September)

Anna Hepworth gave birth to healthy baby boy. 'Anna, Art and Isaac would like to announce the birth of a son (3.95kg) on December 21.'

US author **Emil Petaja** died on August 17. He was the author of 13 novels and more than 100 short stories. In 1995 he was named the first ever Author Emeritus by the Science Fiction Writers of America.

For those who met **Robert Sacks** at Aussiecon Three last year, I thought that I should pass on the news of his death last week. Although I hadn't met Robert before his arrival in Melbourne last year, he was an enthusiastic contributor to *The Monotreme* with reports of convention events such as the WSFS Business Meetings and the Masquerade. His passing at such an early age is, I think, sad news for fandom as well as his family. Robert had high blood pressure, and was found in his bathtub August 18, preliminary prognosis indicates an Aortic Dissection to be the cause of death. (Mark Loney)

Fan **Cheryl Straede** died on 31 August. The following obituary appeared in *The Age* (7 October).

Cheryl Marjorie Straede, Clinical psychologist, 10-11-1951 – 31-8-2000. Cheryl was born in Melbourne, the third of four daughters to Norman and Marjorie Gow. Disabled due to a congenital ataxia, in the latter part of her life she used a wheelchair. Cheryl had a wonderful mother who never believed in giving up and taught Cheryl the power of determination. In turn, Cheryl achieved above and beyond everyone's expectations. She left school at 15 and worked for the Health Department. At 27 she did an arts course as an external student with the University of New England. She became the executive officer with the Ionospheric Prediction Service and then moved to the Australian Taxation Office where she was the IT manager in their Chatswood office. She continued to study for her bachelor of arts degree and then a master of letters in psychology. She then won a commissioner's scholarship to do a clinical psychology degree. Her triumphs continued, but not without the support of her husband John, who tirelessly supported her in all her endeavors. The two had moved to Sydney in 1975 and it was in Sydney that Cheryl was killed in a car accident. Cheryl was theurapeutic manager at the Mulawa Women's prison and was admitted to the College of Clinical Psychologists.

Curt Siodmak, who wrote the science fiction novel *Donovan's Brain*, died on September 2.

Nancy Tucker Shaw, widow of Bob Shaw and well-known fan in her own right, died on September 17.

Keith Roberts, author of *Pavane* and other notable SF, died on October 5.

Bill Donaho died on 28 November. He'd had a stroke some time back and had never quite recovered. He was back among the SF community when he died. A variety of fans posted to the Memoryhole mailing list on the subject of how much influence Bill's great fanzine, *Habakkuk*, has had on their experience in fandom.

News From the Vaults: Events in the second half of 2000
(Courtesy Marc Ortlieb's *Australian SF Bullsheet*)

The Australian Review of Books (August) has Damien Broderick's article "The Future is Now" as its cover feature. The issue also has an interview with Canberra librarian and SF critic Colin Steele, a letter from Sophie Masson, and a piece on books by Linda Jaivin, author of *Rock and Roll Babes from Outer Space*.

Phantasia Bookshop will be restructuring as a direct mail/mail order/internet bookshop in the new year. Between now and then they are still trading out of the shopfront at 443 High Street, Penrith (phone 02 47223 600) or phantasia@ozemail.com.au. While they have a secure online shopping facility via www.phantasia.com.au, the site will be upgraded with lots of extra features some time around January 2001. Anyone who's interested in joining their direct mail customer list is invited to contact them. In the meantime they have some great discounts instore between now and when they finally close the shopfront.

Stephen Dedman, Sherry-Ann Jacobs and Dave Luckett were involved in the Fremantle Writer's and Reader's Festival.

Guests at the Melbourne Writers' Festival, August 25 to September 3, included Carmel Bird, Damien Broderick, Isobelle Carmody, Gary Crew, Jack Dann, Kinky Friedman, Beverley Macdonald, John Marsden, Alex Miller, Garth Nix, Michael Pryor, Lucy Sussex, Shaun Tan, Sean Williams, and a telephone link with Sir Arthur C Clarke. Lucy Sussex notes that Garth Nix had to cancel out due to illness and so she got to take his place, making five appearances on the same day.

Damien Broderick reports in more detail.

"At 10 pm on Saturday August 26, in the Merlyn theatre as part of the Melbourne Writers' Festival, Russell Blackford and I hosted a virtual meeting with Sir Arthur C Clarke, snug at home in Colombo, Sri Lanka, four hours behind us. The gig went reasonably well, a few hundred in the audience, an amusing and Australia-oriented 10-minute pre-recorded video from Arthur to set the ball rolling, including a cheerio message to his `niece' Tamara Ekanayake, daughter of his long-time associates Hector and Valerie, who is at boarding school in Melbourne and whom I'd invited by email to the event; ACC mentioned that his first pivotal exposure to SF had been *Out of The Silence*, the remarkable early SF novel by Australian Erle Cox. I spoke at the lectern about how Sir Arthur had made me the creature I am today and what a fine fellow he was, then we were linked by phone to Colombo and Russell and I sat under the blazing lights staring at the open phone next to our mikes waiting for the sage to speak. Silence, more silence. We squeaked nervously at the phone. Eventually a Tamil gentleman said telephone-connecting things and ACC came on. A webcam display on the wall behind us showed him sitting in his living room. When he spoke he did so in discrete jerky movements, of course, webcams being what they are, so I speculated aloud that we were actually speaking to his android double; he denied that he had Parkinson's disease, and everything was off to a merry start.

I mentioned NASA news, just out that day, about salt water oceans on Europa, as he'd predicted in various 2001 offspring books, and the announcement from UCLA of a reconfigurable molecular nano-switch some 25 years ahead of schedule, and he said a few words back, and I asked him about holding the Olympics on the Moon and Mars and he said someone had already done a freefall ballet in the vomit comet, then Russell took over for a bit, posed a complex and elegant question about the 2 faces of ACC, scientist and literary visionary, and the phone went dead.

We stared helplessly at this miracle of futurist tech for what seemed like half an hour. Nothing *we* could do. I assumed someone in the control booth would hit redial and Bob's your uncle, but it took longer than that, waaaay longer. Russell was about to leap up and begin reading a mighty dissertation on Clarke when the line reopened. We waffled on (entertainingly I hope) and he asked if Tamara was there. A dim figure waved, and we insisted she come to the mike. This provided some sentimental if protracted moments as the poor girl circumnavigated the theatre finding a way up. Tall, quite beautiful, very long black hair and leather trousers and a sort of Indian top and if I'm not mistaken lots of bangles – not at all the knock-kneed bespectacled 13-year-old Harriet Potter I'd somehow expected. They said they loved each other very much and everyone clapped as she went back to her seat, and so the night proceeded for the full hour.

I seized the chance as we parted to insist that I still hoped to be allowed to write a sequel to *The City and the Stars* (which Sir Arthur sort of promised in a throw-away line reprinted in his huge retrospective *Greetings, Carbon-based Bipeds*, a book promoted a few times during the course of the evening), but he hasn't rushed a contract to me by return email... Our pals in the audience declared that the event had gone well. In a country scout-hall kinda way, I thought."

Kathleen Ager reports "Alice and The Red Queen would rather not be on their own for their Mad Tea Party at Swancon 26.

Although, there have been nibbles for the roles of White Knight, Caterpillar, Queen and King of Hearts, Mad Hatter, and the Cheshire Cat, none have been confirmed, and four months from the con, we need to get a bit of affirmative action going.

Those who had tentatively put their names forward, or been cajoled into doing so, probably need to consider whether they are ready to make a firm commitment. Others may want to consider this fun event.

Is there a character is the Alice books that fascinates you? That you can identify with? Or that others identify you with? Would you like to take on that persona for a couple of hours at Swancon 26? You will not have to act out he character word for word, just dress up like it, and take on its characteristics...

We are also recruiting a White Rabbit, a March Hare, a Red King, a Mouse, a Dormouse and a White King and Queen, a Dodo, or for that matter, anyone else you would like to be.

To find out more about The Alice Event, click on http://www.wn.com.au/kager/l%20am/Science%20Fiction/Alice%20Event.htm. kager@wn.com.au."

The Flinders University Library Newsletter from September 2000 described the setting up of the Allan Bray Science Fiction Collection. It is housed in Special Collections at the University and is available to researchers in the Special Collections reading room. More information is available by contacting the Special Collections Librarian on (08) 8201-5238 or via e-mail Gillian. Dooley@Flinders.edu.au

John Foyster writes "Erika Lacey has just set up a web page from which you can access all issues of my PDF fanzine eFNAC. John August's report on Swancon 2000, and Zara Baxter's on Freecon 2200 appear in the latest issue. The address is http://efnac.virtualave.net."

Robert Jan notes: Zero-G has been dragged kicking and screaming into the 20th Century, just in time for the 21st! Email address is now: zerog_robjan@hotmail.com.

Web sites

Edwin A Scribner reports that he has created a web page for Freecon http://members.optushome.com.au/aussff/Freecon2.html and that he's developing the http://members.optushome.com.au/aussff as a site for all homeless info concerning Australian science fiction and fantasy, but especially for New South Wales information. So he has stuff on Garry Dalrymple's Freecons (four pages all linked to the home page and soon to be linked to each other), Edwina Harvey's relaxacon and 'Tol Harndor', the only Australian Tolkien group affiliated with the Tolkien Society. He hopes to get more material: possibly a central site for the Sydney Futurians which are a bit fragmented.

Barb dela Hunty notes additions to the site that she and Geoff Jagoe run, http://www.mastery.com.au/afa/index.html. Lots more fannish photos.

Erika Maria Lacey reports: on the fan webpages a website of mine is listed as http://www.tande.com/ozsf more accurate it would be http://www.grailsearch.cjb.net/. The old URL was for Australian SF Online, which is more a 'miscellaneous' site, and is at http://www.asf-online.org/.

New

SCoT
http://www.eagles.com.au/~scot

Double Gamma Voting Form
http://www.eagles.com.au/~scot/dgform.htm

OdysseyCon
http://www.odysseycon.sf.org.nz

Southern Science Fiction and Fantasy Group
http://members.optushome.com.au/aussff/Southern_SF&F.html

Cat Sparks
http://www.uow.edu.au/~rhood/cyberchick/

NSW Club Listing
http://members.optushome.com.au/aussff/SFNSW.html

Fan Fund Page (Irwin Hirsh)
http://www.users.bigpond.net.au/hirsh/fanfunds.html

Moved

Antipodean SF
http://www.antisf.com

Brisbane Doctor Who Fan Club
http://www.galaxycorp.com/bdwfc

Corrected

Whovention
http://www.eagles.com.au/~whovention

Fan Funds GUFF

The results of the 2000 GUFF race, which will bring an Australian fan to the 2001 Eastercon in the UK are as follows:

	Damien Warman & Juliette Woods	Eric Lindsay & Jean Weber	No Preference	Total
UK	19	17	3	39
Australia	12	22	0	34
Rest of World	3	10	1	14
Total	34	49	4	87

The winner, therefore, is Eric Lindsay & Jean Weber.

For further details, contact Paul Kincaid, 60 Bournemouth Road, Folkestone, Kent, CT19 5AZ, UK guff@appomattox.demon.co.uk

DUFF

The DUFF 2001 race is underway! We have fine candidates in Steven Silver and Naomi Fisher and Patrick Molloy. The winner will attend the 40th Australian National Science Fiction Convention being held April 13-16 in Perth. Ballots and the latest newsletter are available from an administrator or at http://home.pacbell.net/jgelb/duff2k.html. The deadline for ballots to be received is January 15, 2001.
North American Administrator Janice Gelb, 1070 Mercedes Ave. #2, Los Altos, CA, 94022, USA. j_gelb@yahoo.com
Australasian Administrator Cathy Cupitt, PO Box 915, Nedlands, 6909, WA. ccupitt@geocities.com

Copies of Janice Gelb's 1999 DUFF Trip Report *Janice's Adventures in Down-Underland* are now available for a donation of $5 in person/$6.50 by surface mail in either US or Australian currency (more if you're feeling generous!). They are available from Janice or Cathy (see above) or from Terry Frost, 4/8 Walker St, West Brunswick, Victoria, 3055. Checks should be made out to the addressee.
DUFF auctions at Rivercon and Chicon raised US$1200 and US$2100 respectively.

TAFF

The 2001 TAFF race is on with candidates Victor Gonzalez and Tom Springer. The winner will attend Paragon, the 52nd annual British National Science Fiction Convention (Eastercon), to be held April 13-16 2001 in Hinckley, Leicestershire. Ballots are available in hard copy and in RTF format. TAFF only accepts paper ballots. Deadline for voting is January 31 2001.
North American Administrator Vijay Bowen, PO Box 156, Village Station, New York, NY, 10014-0156 vjbowen@aol.com

Awards

2000 Ditmar Awards

Novel

The Book of Revelation	Damien Broderick & Rory Barnes
Teranesia	**Greg Egan**
Hidden From View	Richard Harland
A Dark Victory	Dave Luckett
Foreign Bodies	Stephen Dedman
Aramaya	Jane Routley
Souls in the Great Machine	Sean McMullen

Short Fiction

"The Habokov Affair", Paul Collins	(*Australian Short Stories* 63)
"Ground Underfoot", Robert Hood	(*Aurealis* 23)
"Generation X", Paul Collins & Jack Wodhams	(*Cicada* Nov/Dec 99)
"Primal Etiquette", Robert Hood	(*Orb* 0)
"Written In Blood", Chris Lawson	**(*Asimov's SF* June 99)**

Collected Work

New Adventures in Sci-Fi	**Sean Williams**
Centaurus	Damien Broderick & David Hartwell (eds)
Antique Futures	Terry Dowling
Spinouts	Paul Collins & Meredith Costain (eds)
The Lady of Situations	Stephen Dedman

Artwork

Shaun Tan, cover to *The Coode St Review of Science Fiction*
Nick Stathopoulos, cover to *Aussiecon Three Program Book*
Marc McBride, covers to *Spinouts*

Fan Writer	Fan Artist
Bruce Gillespie	Dick Jenssen
Alan Stewart	**Catriona Sparks**
Karen Johnson	
Robin Pen	
Merv Binns	

Fan Production

The Coode St Review of Science Fiction	Jonathan Strahan, Stephen Paulsen (eds)
Thyme	Alan Stewart (ed)
The Rhizome Factor	Cathy Cupitt (ed)
Aussiecon Three Masquerade Ceremony	Danny Heap, Nick Stathopoulos
Aussiecon Three Opening Ceremony Video	**Danny Heap**
Interstellar Ramjet Scoop	Bill Wright (ed)
Ethel the Aardvark	Karen Pender-Gunn (ed)

William Atheling Jr Award for Criticism or Review

Robert Hood, writings in iam website.
Tess Williams, Helen Merrick (eds) *Women of Other Worlds*
Jonathan Strahan, reviews in *Locus*
Russell Blackford, Van Ikin, Sean McMullen, *Strange Constellations: A History of Australian Science Fiction*
Jonathan Strahan, Stephen Paulsen, *The Coode St Review of Science Fiction*

2000 Hugo Awards

(x) = number of nominations received

Novel (929 ballots counted)

A Deepness in the Sky, Vernor Vinge (103)	246	246	279	312	433
A Civil Campaign, Lois McMaster Bujold (74)	237	237	257	308	356
Cryptonomicon, Neil Stephenson (66)	171	171	199	227	
Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban (46)	151	151	170		
Darwin's Radio, Greg Bear (44)	114	114			
No Award	10				

=10th (21) *Souls in the Great Machine*, Sean McMullen
=10th (21) *Teranesia*, Greg Egan

Novella (713 ballots counted)

"The Winds of Marble Arch", Connie Willis (40)	182	182	211	254	325
"The Astronaut From Wyoming", Castro + (28)	176	177	199	213	257
"Forty, Counting Down", Harry Turtledove (34)	127	127	138	171	
"Hunting the Snark", Mike Resnick (36)	121	121	127		
"Son Observe the Time", Kaje Baker (28)	87	87			
No Award	20				

Novelette (622 ballots counted)

"10^16 to 1", James Patrick Kelly (15)	125	125	140	150	183	250
"Border Guards", Greg Egan (16)	124	125	137	148	183	229
"Stellar Harvest", Eleanor Arnason (20)	137	137	143	152	174	
"The Secret History of the Ornithopter" (17)	98	99	112	125		
"Fossil Games", Tom Purdom (15)	56	56	60			
"The Chop Girl", Ian Macleod (21)	54	55				
No Award	28					

9th (14) "The Queen of Erewhon", Lucy Sussex

Short Story (659 ballots counted)

"Scherzo with Tyrannosaur", Swanwick (22)	150	151	175	229	312
"macs", Terry Bisson (25)	132	132	156	188	227
"Hothouse Flowers", Mike Resnick (18)	125	125	147	174	
"Ancient Engines", Michael Swanwick (26)	114	115	128		
"Sarajevo", Nick DiChario	97	98			
No Award	41				

Related Book (681 ballots counted)

Science Fiction of 20th Century, Robinson (51)	211	212	233	259	320
Sandman: The Dream Hunters, Gaiman + (12)	135	135	154	185	221
The Science of Discworld, Pratchett + (32)	126	126	127	152	
Minicon 34 Restaurant Guide, Cooper + (34)	112	112	117		
Spectrum 6, Cathy & Arnie Ferner (26)	66	67			
No Award	31				

7th (10) *Women of Other Worlds*, Helen Merrick & Tess Williams (eds)
=9th (8) *Strange Constellations: A Brief History of Australian Science Fiction*
=10th (7) *George Turner: A Life*, Judith Buckrich

Dramatic Presentation (1007 ballots counted)

Galaxy Quest (152)	284	285	323	381	501
The Matrix (149)	300	300	321	349	442
The Sixth Sense (103)	177	178	194	238	
Being John Malkovich (57)	136	137	145		
The Iron Giant (54)	90	92			
No Award	20				

Professional Editor (726 ballots counted)

Gardner Dozois (86)	225	226	250	287	382
Stanley Schmidt (66)	160	160	180	196	243
Patrick Nielsen Hayden (49)	136	136	145	183	
David G Hartwell (48)	99	99	114		
Gordon Van Gelder (63)	86	86			
No Award	20				

Professional Artist (705 ballots counted)

Michael Whelan (32)	222	222	237	265	332
Bob Eggleton (82)	151	152	186	223	290
Don Maitz (32)	114	114	134	163	
Donato Giancola (21)	102	103	120		
Jim Burns (34)	98	98			
No Award	18				

=6th (15) Nick Stathopoulos
=12th (10) Shaun Tan

Semiprozine (697 ballots counted)

Locus (93)	240	240	258	280	342
Interzone (48)	113	114	140	184	247
Science Fiction Chronicle (54)	127	128	145	166	
The New York Review of Science Fiction (37)	105	106	112		
Speculations (30)	88	88			
No Award	24				

Fan Writer (503 ballots counted)

Dave Langford (31)	144	156	158	172	205
Mike Glyer (31)	105	118	119	137	173
Evelyn C Leeper (30)	79	94	95	110	
Steven H Silver (26)	70	75	75		
No Award	56	56			
Bob Devney (24)	49				

=6th (17) Lloyd Penney
=9th (14) Cheryl Morgan

Fanzine (494 ballots counted)

File 770 (56)	121	122	135	158	194
Mimosa (40)	87	87	110	140	177
Ansible (39)	110	110	117	136	
Plokta (27)	73	74	89		
Challenger (27)	65	66			
No Award	38				

11th (14) *Thyme*
=12th (12) *Emerald City*

Fan Artist (520 ballots counted)

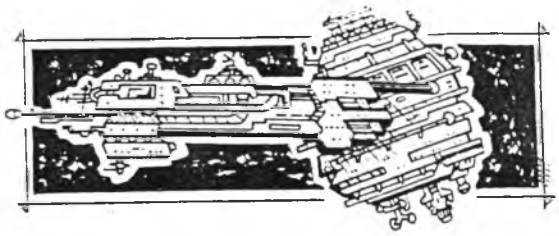
Joe Mayhew (56)	203	212	213	227
Teddy Harvia (54)	79	91	92	123
Freddie Baer (26)	74	81	81	92
Brad Foster (21)	71	75	75	
No Award	50	51		
Taral Wayne (23)	43			

6th (17) Sheryl Birkhead
=10th (8) Ian Gunn
=10th (8) Peggy Ranson

John W Campbell Award (514 ballots counted)

Cory Doctorow (16)	128	129	141	171	195
Ellen Klages (15)	119	119	124	138	178
Kristine Smith (18)	99	99	106	119	
Shane Tourtellotte (15)	84	84	89		
Thomas Harlan (12)	55	55			
No Award	29				

=15th (5) Catherine S McMullen



2000 Locus Award Winners

Science Fiction novel: *Cryptonomicon*, Neal Stephenson

Fantasy novel: *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, J K Rowling

First novel: *The Silk Code*, Paul Levinson

Novella: "Orphans of the Helix", Dan Simmons (*Far Horizons*)

Novelette: (tie) "Huddle", Stephen Baxter (*F&SF* 5/99)
"Border Guards", Greg Egan (*Interzone* 10/99)

Short story: "macs", Terry Bisson (*F&SF* 10-11/99)

Non-fiction: *Sixty Years of Arkham House*, S T Joshi

Art book: *Science Fiction of the Twentieth Century: An Illustrated History*, Frank M Robinson

Collection: *The Martians*, Kim Stanley Robinson

Anthology: *Far Horizons*, Robert Silverberg (ed)

Artist: Michael Whelan Editor: Gardner Dozois

Magazine: *Isaac Asimov's SF Magazine* Publisher: Tor

2000 World Fantasy Award Nominees
(Winners in bold)

Novel

Tamsin, Peter S Beagle (Roc)
The Rainy Season, James P Blaylock (Ace)
Gardens of the Moon, Steven Erikson (Corgi)
A Witness to Life, Terence M Green (Tor)
A Red Heart of Memories, Nina Kiriki Hoffman (Ace)
***Thraxas*, Martin Scott (Little Brown)**

Novella

"Scarlet and Gold", Tanith Lee (*Weird Tales* Summer 99)
"The Wizard Retires", Michael Meddor (*F&SF* 9/99)
"Crocodile Rock", Lucius Shepard (*F&SF* 10-11/99)
"The Transformation of Martin Lake", Jeff Van der Meer (*Palace Corbie* 8)
"The Winds of Marble Arch", Connie Willis (*Asimov's SF* 10-11/99)
"Sky Eyes", Laurel Winter (*F&SF* 3/99)

Short fiction

"The Grammarian's Five Daughters", Eleanor Arnason (*Realms of Fantasy* 6/99)
"Naming the Dead", Paul J McAuley (*Interzone* 11/99)
"The Chop Girl", Ian R Macleod (*Asimov's SF* 12/99)
"Amerikanski Dead at the Moscow Morgue", Kim Newman (*999: New Stories of Horror and Suspense*)
"Human Bay", Robert Reed (*Asimov's SF* 5/99)
"The Parwat Ruby", Delia Sherman (*F&SF* 6/99)
"The Dynasters Vol. 1: On the Downs", Howard Waldrop (*F&SF* 10-11/99)

Anthology

***Silver Birch, Blood Moon*, Ellen Datlow & Terri Windling (eds) (Avon)**
The Year's Best Fantasy and Horror, Twelfth Annual Collection, Ellen Datlow & Teri Windling (eds) (St Martins)
Northern Frights 5, Don Hutchinson (ed)
Dark Detectives, Stephen Jones (ed)
999: New Stories of Horror and Suspense, Al Sarrantonio (ed) (Avon)

Collection

***Moonlight and Vines*, Charles De Lint (Tor)**
***Reave the Just and Other Tales*, Stephen Donaldson (HarperCollins)**
Hearts in Atlantis, Stephen King (Hodder & Stoughton)
Deep into That Darkness Peering, Tom Piccinelli (Terminal Fright Press)
Necromancies and Netherworlds, Darrell Schweitzer & Jason Van Holander (eds) (Wildside Press)

Artist Les Edwards
Bob Eggleton
Stephen E Fabian
Jason Van Hollander

Special Award: Professional

John Betancourt, for Wildside Press
Seamus Heaney, for the new translation of *Beowulf*
Stephen Jones, for *The Essential Monster Movie Guide*
Warren Lapine, for DNA Publications
Kim Newman, for *Millennium Movies*
Gordon Van Gelder, for editing (St Martin's Press, *F&SF*)

Special Award: Non-professional

Ken Abner, for Terminal Fright Press
The British Fantasy Society
Dwayne Olson, Peter Wagtskjold, Scott Wyatt, for Fedogan & Bremer
Rosemary Pardoe, for The Haunted Library
R B Russell, for Tartare Press
William K Schafer, for Subterranean Press

Lifetime Achievement Marion Zimmer Bradley
Michael Moorcock

2000 Bram Stoker Award Winners
(Voted on by the Horror Writers' Association)

Novel: *Mr X*, Peter Straub (Ballantine)

First novel: *Wither*, J G Passarella (Pocket)

Long fiction (tie): "Five days in April", Brain A Hopkins (*Chiaroscuro* 7/99)
"Mad Dog Summer", Joe R Lansdale (*999: New Stories of Horror and Suspense*)

Short fiction: "After Shock", F Paul Wilson (*Realms of Fantasy* 12/99)

Collection: *The Nightmare Chronicles*, Douglas Clegg (Leisure)

Anthology: *999: New Stories of Horror and Suspense*, Al Sarrantonio (ed) (Avon)

Non-fiction: *Dark Echo* (all 1999 issues), Paul Guran (ed)

Comic book, graphic novel, or other illustrated narrative:
The Sandman: The Dream Hunters, Neil Gaiman & Yoshitaka Amano (DC)

Screenplay: *The Sixth Sense*, M Night Shyamalan

Work for young readers: *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, J K Rowling (Bloomsbury)

Other media: *I Have No Mouth, and I Must Scream* (audio), Harlan Ellison

Lifetime achievement: Edward Gorey, Charles L Grant

Speciality press: Christopher & Barbara Roden, for Ash-tree Press

Steele Rudd Prize

Merlinda Bobis' *White Turtle*, a collection of stories which included some excellent examples of fantasy, has been rewarded with the Steele Rudd Prize.

Faces of Fandom

An ongoing feature of *Thyme* which will put faces to the names of fans in Australia and overseas. If you have photos you'd like to send in, go ahead. Fairly recent, say taken since 1995 would be best, and all originals will be returned.

[Sean-Paul Smith, Gary Russell (Doctor Who author), Whovention, February 2001]

[Geoff Chan, Samantha Whitehead, Whovention. 19-2-01]

[Sean-Paul Smith, Claire Mckenna, at MSFC. 13-10-00]
[All photos supplied by Geoff Chan]

SF Publishing News

Kate Orman has a story "Cactus Land" in the August 2000 issue of *Realms of Fantasy*. Sean McMullen's short story "Mask of Terminus" appears in the October 2000 *Analog*.

There's a series of critical works from Nimrod Publications: Hyperdreams: Damien Broderick's Space/Time Fiction, Russell Blackford; Michael Frayn and the Fantasy of Everyday Life, Rosaleen Love; Opulent Darkness: The Werewolves of Tanith Lee, Justine Larbalestier; Towards a "Good Death": The Fantasy Fiction of C S Lewis and the Experience of Reading, Cath Filmer-Davies; Beyond the Eternal Champion: Fantasies of Michael Moorcock, David Connell; Betwixt Wood-Woman, Wolf and Bear: The Heroic-Age Romances of William Morris, Norman Talbot; A Glance From Nowhere: Sheri S Tepper's Fantasy & SF, Sylvia Kelso; J R R Tolkien's The Silmarillion, Rhonda Beare; Darwin and Doom: H G Wells and the Time Machine, David Lake; and Minmers Marooned and Planet of the Marsupials: The Science Fiction Novels of Cherry Wilder, Yvonne Rousseau.

Chris Lawson's short story "Unborn Again" has been optioned for feature film development by producer Louise Smith of Igloo Films and director Derin Seale. "Unborn Again" first appeared in Jack and Janeen's anthology *Dreaming Down-Under* and was reprinted in Gardner Dozois' *Year's Best Science Fiction #16*.

George Ivanoff notes that the second set of SpinOuts books, edited by Paul Collins and Meredith Costain is out. I've got a story in one of the them, so here's the details for that volume *Beyond the Grave*, part of the SpinOuts series, Pearson Education: Lucy Sussex, "Anzac Spirit"; George Ivanoff, "Night of the Unright"; Penelope Love, "Grandpa's Ghost".

Mary Anne Mohanraj notes: "Strange Horizons has officially launched (we're building the first issue week-to-week, so a full issue should be up by the end of September), and we'd be delighted if you stopped by. We're a weekly non-profit online magazine, publishing articles, fiction, poetry, reviews, and a monthly featured artist in our gallery. Submission guidelines are available on-site; we pay 3 cents/word for fiction, $10/20 per poem, and $75/illustration (purchasing one illustration/month)." http://www.strangehorizons.com

David Hearne reports: My sci-fi novel, *Ruminations Of A Wayfarer* has been self-published through Iuniverse and is now available worldwide via amazon.com and Barnesandnoble.com. My website contains the prologue and some of the feedback I've received thus far. This is an Aussie book despite the US publisher. I'm based in Toowoomba, QLD.

Eidolon magazine, last seen in print in April 2000 with Issue 29/30, will close officially during the ongoing development of the eidolon.net website.

Damien Broderick writes "Blatant advert follows, be warned: I see that Fictionwise.com, that noble purveyor of e-texts (especially sf/fantasy) have now put up my bio, pic and link to several-times-anthologised story "Schrodinger's Dog" at http://www.fictionwise.com/servlet/mwserve?action=view&template=author.htm&authorid.
You can download this marvel of extrapolation for a US buck and a half. Even more fun is a much longer novella "The Game of Stars and Souls". **Warning!** It is half a novel (well, 2/3rds), being drawn from the now-out-of-print Aphelion novel *The Sea's Furthest End*. I think it's a lot of fun. It'll cost you a bit over $US3 to download it.

Ticonderoga On-line will be changing to a quarterly format. Over the next three months, several major changes will take place to the site. Writer Chris Lawson has agreed to contribute a regular column, 'Counter-intuitive', highlighting interesting developments in science. Fan and Playwright Grant Watson's 'Mutant Tube' column will touch on just about everything and anything. Reviewers Marianne de Courtenay and Jonathan Strahan have agreed to contribute regular review columns. The first instalment of each of these will be on-line by the end of September.
Ticonderoga aims to publish 4 stories each quarter. Check the site for guidelines.
The first full quarterly issue will go on-line in December. Until then the site will remain in a fluid state of redesign. Check the site weekly for updates. Russell B Farr, editor, Ticonderoga On-line http://www.sf.org.au/ticonderoga.

Stefan Vucak's first book will be released early in September by a US electronic book publisher.

Ion Newcombe reports that AntipodeanSF 30 includes four offerings from Antipodean writers: "A Small Thing", Tony Nichols; "Relativity", Peter Cook; "Bloodshed", Brent Lillie; and, "Pastimes", Simon Haynes. AntipodeanSF also now resides on its own domain and may be found by keying the following address into any web browser: www.antisf.com. Issue 31 features the following Australian stories: "Situs Inversus", Brendan Carson; "Message Received", Rob Bleckly; "Visitation", Edgar Crook; "Towards a Fourth Millennium", Lincoln Donald. Issue 32 contains "Brooklyn Blues", Brent Lillie; "Significant Figure", Brendan Carson; "It Does Matter", Peter Cook; "Hell Planet", Tom Dullemond; "The Pen Is Mightier", Ashley Arnold. Issue 33 is also now available in Microsoft Reader (.lit), and palm reader (.pdb) format, so if you'd like to read AntiSF 'on the go' you can now download the magazine 'to go'. This month's selection of stories features the following offerings by Antipodeans: "Vernon", Rob Cox; "Problem Solving 101", Andrew Sullivan; "Europans", Stephanie Koorey. Issue 34 has no less than six speculative flash fiction stories for your enjoyment, featuring: "Cigarettes Not Included", Peter Cook; "Counting The Days", Graham Bensley; "Inheritance", Carol Ryles; "Error of Judgement", Simon Wood; "Forgiveness", Rob Bleckly; "The Company You Keep", James Spence. Four of these stories are by certified Antipodeans, and two from Anti-Antipodeans. Why not drop by, read their stories, and see if you can figure out who is from where?

Article

by Lyn McConchie

Plagiarism or coincidence?

Back in 1953 a classic SF book appeared. Titled *The Kraken Wakes* by John Wyndham it was the story of a possible invasion of Earth. It never quite said so, it made suggestions, hinted, implied, and reading between the lines, yes, it was the invasion of Earth by forces from – possibly – Jupiter. It was, as were most of Wyndham's books, well-written, a story which grabbed the attention, and involved the reader with characters they liked and were eager to see triumph.

I read it in the early sixties and loved it. Nor was I alone in that. The book sold. Between publication in 1953 and 1980 it was reprinted in Penguin editions alone over twenty times. The author's *Day of the Triffids* may have been preferred by some but personally I like the characters in *Kraken* better. They are a decent couple doing their best and a lot of the dialogue and interaction between them helped make the book. Mysterious, savage and painful events contrasted so well against this background of two pleasant ordinary people who were anything but mysterious or savage.

However, some years ago an acquaintance died. Now years before I had come across some of Murray Leinster's books. In particular the 'Medship' series. I'd really liked those and added the six I could find to my personal library. I'd found other Leinster tales and added those later. Now with Les's death I was gifted with a number of books from his library as it was broken up and sold. Amongst them was a hardcover Leinster book I didn't know, *The Listeners*.

It was another of the 'holocaust' sub-genre which I like. I read it, added it to the shelves and the only thing which registered at the time was a strong feeling it had been familiar. At the time I assumed it too must have been one of the older SF books I'd read in the sixties. I might have continued believing that for a while longer if it hadn't been for a book shortage over the Christmas/ New Year holiday period. I couldn't get in to the library, had run out of new books, and turned to my own shelves as I usually do.

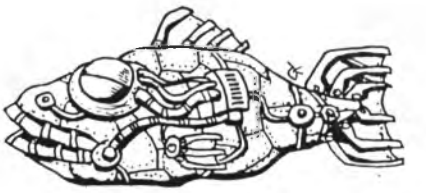
Feeling in the mood to read 'end of the world/country/city' books, I started in at one end of the shelf which contained them. I worked my way happily through *The Giant Stumbles*, *The Furies*, *The Tide Went Out*, *The Death of Grass*, *Alas Babylon*, the classic *Earth Abides*, the NZ classic *The Red Dust*. After which I moved into Wyndham with *Day of the Triffids* followed by *The Kraken wakes*. I then picked up Leinster's *The Listeners* to read next.

I might have missed the similarity several years ago when I first received and read the second book but reading the pair side by side I couldn't possibly miss what I now realised. They had identical plots. Of course, there can be some likeness, coincidences happen. I once created an odd made-up name for a character in a story which was printed in *Marion Zimmer Bradley's Fantasy Magazine* in 1991. A short time later I read an anthology and in one of the stories was a character with the same name. There was no way that had been plagiarism since the stories would have been offered to editors around the same time.

But in the case of this book duo the 'coincidences' were a bit startling. Both stories involved strange UFOs/fireballs raining down on Earth and vanishing into the ocean's great deeps. Subsequently shipping began to be affected by strange happenings apparently orchestrated by whatever had been contained in the fireballs. The inhabitants of which also controlled sea creatures, using them to attack people and ships. In the end the conclusion is that the creatures which invaded us probably came from Jupiter and chose the deeps because conditions there with the pressure and darkness would be similar.

In fact, *The Listeners* reads as an inferior clone of *The Kraken Wakes*. Which is puzzling. Surely if it was offered for publication around 1960 when *Kraken* had already been out several years and was well-known, the similarities would have been noticed? After all, by that year *Kraken* had already appeared in five editions. It's been my observation writers of a genre tend to read it. Surely Leinster would have read *The Kraken Wakes*, been familiar with the book, probably even known the author.

In fact it is likely. In the 50s the SF community was smaller. Leinster was writing through much of the time Wyndham was also doing his best work. In the hardcopy of *The Listeners* the information at the beginning in small print states 'originally published in the USA by Berkley Publishing Corporation under the title *Creatures of the Abyss*'. That has a very 'fifties' ring to it. Was it possible that *The Listeners* was actually the earlier work somehow?



I wondered if perhaps it had originally been written as a shorter work for publication in one of the 50s' pulps. I searched the internet but could find no indication if this was so. So for those who read this I have questions. Does anyone out there know if somewhere *Creatures of the Abyss* was published before *The Kraken Wakes*? Or can anyone shed any light on why publishers would allow a Leinster work, so similar to a previous Wyndham novel, to appear and why no complaint of plagiarism was made? Or if the Leinster book was first, why his publishers didn't complain over *Kraken* when it appeared? It all seems a bit odd to me.

Con Report

Chicon 2000 by Edward McArdle

Chicon was my fifth Worldcon in a row. It was about twenty hours travel from Melbourne. I arrived about 6 pm on the Monday before, and decided to walk downtown instead of going straight to bed. My first Big Mistake of the con. I was struggling to stay awake every night for the week. I found Border's, and bought a remaindered copy of *Vulcan's Heart* for $4, thinking I might get it autographed by the authors, but I never thought about it again.

Chicago is a beautiful city, with a lot of spectacular architecture, and stretches 29 miles along Lake Erie. I found the weather a bit different. The first two days there was fog and wind. I am used to wind driving fog away, but as someone pointed out, there is a huge source of fog just next to the city, and past that Canada. After the convention started the weather became sunny, but as I was in closed retreat for five of those days, I didn't see much of it. There was always wind, though. Registration was open from Tuesday morning. I registered and bought three shirts and a cap. On Wednesday it moved to its permanent location, about two storeys underground. The hotel had two towers, with a street between them, but joined above and below ground. Some of the meeting rooms were in one tower, one and two storeys below ground, while the 'ballroom' areas were under the other tower, as were registration, the Fan Lounge, and yet further down, the Dealers' Room and Art Show. As well as the normal art show, there was a display of art elsewhere by famous artists such as Frank Kelly Freas and Wally Wood.

From my point of view everything ran smoothly. The Dealers' Room opened at 11 each day, and was as huge as usual, but I didn't end up buying much. There did not seem to be any new books being launched, and any books I wanted I could get in Melbourne. I was a little excited to see Tim Powers' new book, but it was in a limited signed edition, and cost US$100! I'll wait for the normal edition in January. Getting into narrative mode, the bid parties and others began Wednesday night, technically a bit early! I tried one bid party, but went to bed about 11.30. I keep trying, but in fact I don't like noise or crowds, so I don't like parties.

On Thursday I browsed around, orienting myself, until the Dealers' Room opened, as did the Fan Lounge and Bids area. I bought another shirt, but didn't find much else. There was a proof copy of the next Laurell K Hamilton novel on sale, which it probably shouldn't have been, and I might have bought it if it had still been there after I had done my first circuit! I ate at Macdonalds, which was over the bridge, between two parts of the Wrigley Building. Lots of conventioneers failed to find it, so my previous wanderings paid off.

My first panel was 'Good villains and bad heroes', which was a pleasant start. Panelists discussed how their villains often turned into Good Guys, and vice versa. At 4 I went to 'Faanish web sites', where various sites were critiqued by Janice Gelb and others. 'Revamping the Hugos' at 5.30 concerned breaking up the media Hugo into separate television and movies awards. We were urged to attend the Preliminary Business Meeting next morning to discuss the matter. At 7 there was a discussion on media tie-ins. Are they driving non-media books off the shelf?

There was a gathering 'Meet the Pros' at the Fairmont Hotel, a block away. Writers, including Romance writers, would sign books in a party setting. I went around, but was repelled as usual by the large crowd, so I went back to the 'Expected Star Trek panel'. This turned out to be full also (in a small room), so I repaired to the internet room opposite for a while, and drooled over their latest iMacs. Eventually I found I could get into the Star Trek room, and I did. No revelations were forthcoming. I went back to the depleted 'meet the pros' and took a couple of unsuccessful photos – a digital with the flash turned off, and ate ice cream and cake. After watching the summary of the day's US Open tennis, I retired about midnight.

In the morning I attended the Business Meeting, as exhorted. Eventually the motion about the Hugos arrived. There were three alternatives to be listed as motions. 'Who votes in favor of alternative A?' 'B?' 'C?' As there had not been two thirds of the meeting in favor of any one alternative they were gone! I hadn't understood this, and suspected most others hadn't either, but nobody protested, and there were rumblings of satisfaction, so I left.

I caught a panel on 'modeling worlds', about how to make the world you create believable, which I enjoyed, then 'comics as literature' which was somewhat without focus. I had a rest, and went to a rather weak showing of slides from Galileo. The fact that I was struggling to stay awake may have detracted from my interest. I should have gone to bed when I got off that plane! I might even have been able to attend parties. At 5 I went to a rather incestuous panel on rasff, but since I read that newsgroup I enjoyed it. I ate in the hotel buffet, and then joined briefly in a singalong around the piano with Erwin "Filthy Pierre" Strauss playing. I briefly tried another party for SFF.Net, but went to bed about 9.30.

After such an early night, I woke at 6.30 and ate at Macdonalds. I walked down Madison Street and around some blocks. At 9 I saw three of the bridges opened for a tiny yacht. There are 58 bridges across the river, so I hope they didn't have to open the lot! At 10 I went to a very jovial panel on short stories with Robert Reed, Gardner Dozois, Gene Wolfe, Bill Johnson and Adam Troy-Castro. Gene recommended a collection called *Such a Pretty Face*. The next was 'On the shoulders of giants', which I found disappointing, but that might have been because only three of the five panelists turned up. At four I had two choices. There was a welcome for Cathy Cupitt (DUFF) and Sue Mason (TAFF) in the fan lounge, and a raft of the authors of *Such a Pretty Face* were signing copies in the dealers room. I went to the first, took a couple of pictures, and got to the second in time to buy a copy. About 11 of the writers were there, but not Gene Wolfe. The Hugos were on at 8, but I was tired again! The newsletters had been emphasising that we couldn't all fit in, and we could watch on our room tellies, but I went off to sleep again, and woke about 6.30 again. I went to Mass at 8.30 in the Fairmont. There were about 80 there, which made it one of the better-attended panels. The priest usually wears vestments with a science-fiction theme, but not this year. My panel at 10 wasn't on, and I went to a showing of upcoming books from Eos at 11.30 for something to do. I was gossiping with a couple of authors, but I don't know who they were.

At 1, a panel on favorite science writers, with Perrianne Lurie, Connie Willis and others was interesting. At 2.30 a panel on 'pro-tech, anti-tech' seemed to have no point, but a lot of people spoke up anyway! I went to a panel on nanotech in one of the Grand Ballrooms, but I left early because I was freezing (and not terribly interested). The 'film previews' at 5.30 were very crowded, but were just internet downloads, and afterwards I went into the Internet Lounge and had a look at the Zentertainment page,

where I found them all. The previews all played instantly, which impressed me. They may have had a cable connection, but there were dozens of computers in the room.

I went out into the 'downtown' area to eat at Macdonalds or somewhere similar, and was amazed to discover downtown was closed! One of the Americans I was talking to later said this was typical of big cities. Everyone was moving out to the suburbs, and the centres were dying. I met a group I knew on their way to a restaurant, but I didn't want to impose myself, so I bought some food at the grocer under the hotel. I found the masquerade somewhat boring, with too much of a cow theme. (Mrs O'Leary's cow was accused of burning down Chicago. She is now believed innocent. The fire has resulted in Chicago being a very new city, with a foreshore park built from the bulldozed ruins.) I went back to my room to watch on TV, but gave up. I'm told there were some good entries later. I spent some time on the internet. Someone had found a *Star Wars* parody and many were playing it. Later I thought I should give filk a go. The one I picked had gathered such a crowd it was moving to a bigger Regency room. But I sat around for ten minutes or more, and all that had happened was self-indulgent waffle, so I went to bed.

I slept in a little, and missed the 8.30 panels, not that I had any in mind. Only two of the panelists turned up to my next panel, 'fiction of the year so far'. It was focused on short stories, but interesting. I wrote down a number of names to read. A panel on using Photoshop followed, then one on the 'rebirth of hard SF', with Sean McMullen, Catherine Asaro, David G Hartwell and Nancy Kress, which attracted a large audience. The closing ceremonies were at three o'clock, and well-attended. The Internet room proved to be still open, and I browsed until shortly after four. I decided to go for a walk, and had to scoot back for a pullover! Then the road turned out to only go about fifty metres! I ate with some friends, then tried the Charlotte in 2004 party. It was too loud, so I tried the Dead Crane Frefan party. This was small, and had seats! I settled in. The woman next to me had been working hard, and she was now either exhausted or tired and emotional, occasionally uttering some non-sequitur and lapsing back into silence. Two men were discussing Minicon, and got louder and louder, and became so excited that both became incomprehensible – and they were agreeing with each other! They became so loud I retired about 11.

On Tuesday I visited a couple of museums with Andy Dyer. He had organised a get together in the Big Bar at 6.30 for those remaining. It hadn't occurred to us that the bar might be *full*! But we gradually occupied a few tables, and about 17 accreted. I gossiped with Jay Kay Klein, who writes biologs in *Analog*. That was my last gasp for the convention. I walked all the next day, visiting the planetarium and the Sears tower, and I watched the *Witchblade* film that night. The Qantas flights between Melbourne and Los Angeles were both only about two thirds full, but it is still a long way! For me, this was one of the lesser Worldcons, because I didn't really get into it, but general opinion was that it was very good. I didn't get into the parties, and I didn't find the panels as engrossing. But that might just be that I have been to too many panels, and may need to widen my approach.

Convention Commentaries

Convex Rose Mitchell

Irwin Hirsh has encouraged me to dash off a couple of paragraphs about my recent visit to South Australia and ConVex, the sercon held by Critical Mass at the end of September.

This was a great little con, around 50 people, which made it quite conducive to smoozing. The single-streamed program provided for interesting panels covering such diverse topics as violence in pulp SF&F, obscure Aussie SF shows and cryptography. Real life mathematician-cryptographer and GUFF nominee Damien Warman proved his hypothesis that Starfleet, if it was real and not a TV show (much emphasis was made of this point), would be a much compromised organisation: secrets and security would be non-existent due to the nature of subspace transmissions.

Guest of Honor Sean Williams regaled the crowd with tales of his early writing efforts and publishing successes while still a fresh-faced schoolboy. Not much has changed in his life over the years it seems! However, the highlight of the day must have been the panel, 'Is this the Golden Years of Australian SF?' One of the panelists claimed that Mr Williams, 'could be a much better writer if you weren't so lazy and pulled your finger out.' Mr Williams took the criticism very good-naturedly and even agreed that he should indeed pull his finger out if he was ever going to get anywhere in the literary field. Claims were then made about several other noted Australian authors! At that point I fell off my chair. 'What sacrilege', thought I and immediately decided that these fans who'd dared to malign the sacred cows of Aussie SF literature were an extremely brave mob albeit softened by a sense of humor.

My gracious hosts, Damien Warman and Juliette Woods, ensured the rest of my stay in South Australia was quite memorable. Adelaide is a lovely city and the Adelaide fannish community is open and friendly; truly delightful and refreshing.

One of the most humbling things I learnt over the weekend was that South Australia has a very active fannish community. With two writers groups based on SF&F (Critical Mass, which is similar to Melbourne's Nova Mob and meets at the Adelaide Writers' Centre, and the Blackwood Writers Group), university SF groups at all the major campuses and a regular weekly get together at a city restaurant, not to mention the various small press operations about, there appears to be quite varied activity for the estimated 100 active fans in and around Adelaide. And this is not counting media fen who tend to keep to themselves and rarely if ever, crossover between the two genres. This may be the reason why people seem to get on with each other, respect each other's point of view and generally like each other. That will teach me to make assumptions. Melbourne, it seems is not the centre of Australian fanac.

Postscript: Adelaide would make a great place to hold a convention, if not the natcon. Good venues, good eateries, an experienced con-running people base, lively fanac. I hope the Adelaide fen can be persuaded to take up this suggestion in the near future.

Nelcon Edwina Harvey

My final feelings about Nelcon are, 'That was fun'. The feedback I've received to date has impressed me that this is what many other people thought as well.

Not bad for a con that almost folded before it opened. In early March (**after** I'd started advertising Nelcon and the associated pre-GST accommodation rate) I was contacted by Touraust and informed the pre-GST accommodation rate was $72 per person per night, considerably more than the original written quote I'd received. At this stage we had 3 members paid up to attend (I was number 3) so I figured I could easily cut my losses and write refund cheques for the other two. I stood my ground and said 'Then cancel my booking'.

Fortunately they decided to stick with the quote I was originally given, and Nelcon went ahead. We were lucky to get such a good deal.

The staff of The Country Comfort all seemed very friendly and helpful. I sent them a 'Thank you' card on behalf of us all yesterday.

For me, if Nelcon had attracted 10 members it would have been a success. Our final attending membership was 22, which included one fan from Melbourne and one fan from Canberra (with 1 non-attending member and a last minute substitute: Judy Johnson replacing Erika Lacey).

It was an eclectic mix of people – a collection of old and new friends getting along well, with everyone contributing to the program in their own way. Ted Scribner mentioned 'A committee of one gets things done' in his post con report, and I'd like to add that it might have been a committee of one, but I had 21 helpers.

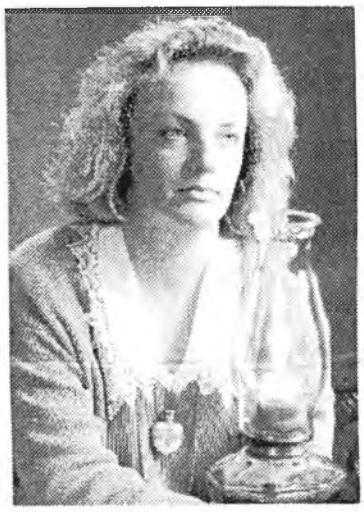
Thanks to everyone who brought a bottle of their favorite tipple to the wine and cheese party on Friday night, but special thanks goes to Ted Scribner for the mead and Rebecca Kennedy for raiding her impressive cellar! The imbibing eased the resistance of all those 'volunteers' who took part in watching and reading "Horse Phasers".

Special thanks to Sue Pears for quiet competence at getting things done when I was busy getting other things done. And special thanks to Lucy Zinkiewicz for her late-night 'spring cleans' of the apartment we used. 'No, you *must* let me tidy. I'm a compulsive cleaner, I tell you!' (Hey, who can argue with logic like that?)

In conclusion, I'd like to say 'Well, that went off all right... maybe we should try another relaxacon in a couple of years from now'. Yeah, right... anyone who's read the con book will have some idea of how long that could take!

Interview

Sara Douglass



15 May 1999

Interviewed by
Donna Heenan (D)
and Alan Stewart (A)

D Because this magazine is actually going overseas could you give us just a brief potted biography of yourself, your working career, what you've been doing, that sort of thing.

I don't know where to start. Well, I was born. I grew up in the south east of South Australia on a farm. Moved to Adelaide when I was a young girl, went to school there, became a nurse there, became tired of that. Started a BA, went on to do a PhD in Medieval History, moved to Bendigo, got tired of teaching Medieval History, started to write and here I am.

A Are you writing full time now?

Yes. I'm writing full time now. I gave up work on the first of April, April Fool's Day.

D Congratulations! Medieval History in Bendigo, not a lot of demand? (Bendigo is a city in country Victoria.)

The classes were huge. Classes for Medieval History in Universities around Australia are absolutely huge. Australian History can't drag them in but they love Medieval History. It's got far more appeal. Australian History is perceived as being very boring. I mean there are no massive invasions. No swords. No pikes. No Charges of the Light Brigade.

D Escapist History, basically?

Not escapist history. We're a very European culture and have shown a chosen preference for learning about our past. Just because we're Australians doesn't mean that we don't want to know about our greater past.

D So you're now committed to full time writing, how are you finding that? Seeing you've been doing it for a month and a bit now.

It's wonderful I don't have as much time off as I thought I would. There always seems to be something to do.

D The first series, the Axis trilogy, where Axis was the hero was very good. Made a big splash in the Australian scene, and then you started the second series, The Wayfarer Redemption, and suddenly Drago is the good guy, the hero, and Axis seemed to be the bad guy. He seemed to be the one who was lacking the understanding, mistreating his son Drago.

Axis was never was a good guy. He was always a very selfish man, he never treated the people he was close to all that well. He was never the pure golden hero. He always had a rather dark selfish side to him. When we see him in the next series, The Wayfarer Redemption, he doesn't do well as a dad. He mistreats his children. He enjoys being the god but he doesn't make a good dad. He didn't make a particularly good husband, he was just carrying on being his usual self.

D That was the selfish side of him that allowed him to sacrifice Faraday?

Yes. And to keep the two girls going on the side at the same time. Being able to justify that in his own mind. There was a scene in *Enchanter*, I think, where he put a man to death in a most excrutiatingly cruel way and he does have this very cruel side to him. So that just came out more I think in The Wayfarer Redemption. He simply didn't know how to treat his children well.

D Fair enough. That's what led to Drago being such a, what do you call it, a lost dog, lacking in confidence?

All of his children have problems dealing with parents who are gods. One of the things I sat back and thought about when I started to write The Wayfarer Redemption was 'how would you feel if your parents were gods? How easy is it to carry on when your parents are gods?'

D It's bad enough when they are rock stars, let alone gods.

Yes. I don't think gods make good mums and dads. The children had appalling lives always trying to live up to the fact that mum and dad were gods.

D I don't suppose there's much higher you can rise. Beating your parents in the success stakes makes it very difficult. Tencendor, the continent your characters live on, where did that come from, what influences did you feel went into making Tencendor?

I think from teaching Medieval History. It's a very European background but it isn't a land anywhere. There's some alps here and plains there, with some towns and a misty off shore island. You always have to have a misty off shore island.

D The god Artor, The Ploughman, that comes from our past?

From the culture. Medieval peasants live their entire lives around their plough. Their plough was very important to them because it was their connection to the land and how the land was going to provide them with food and so on. The plough was really the most important thing in their lives and just thinking back I think I did read about in the Dark Ages there was a plough god.

D And yet the plough god comes across as a god of evil.

The medieval Christian church taught that mankind had to plough the Earth, had to subject the Earth to mankind. If mankind didn't plough the Earth, didn't turn it into fields, didn't turn the wild landscape into fields, that landscape was evil. So in part that justified the Europeans going all around the New World and bringing all that under their domination as well because they could see the native peoples didn't plough their land. Therefore the Europeans were allowed to come in and take their land from them. This was just a medieval church thing, that mankind had to plough, had to subject the wasteland in order to try and get over the internal sin within. Ploughing the wasteland was an external way of trying to overcome the sin they'd been born with.

D So that's the battle we saw in the medieval ages between the Christian church and the great unknown 'here be dragons'? Controlling the land with the plough, destroying the natural forest and its magic as opposed to the "chaos" of uncontrolled forest and it's wild denizens?

Yes. And we still see it now. We all prefer nice straight roads and square fields and it's only very recently in the last two hundred years that we've come to appreciate the untamed landscape.

D When we have it under control.

We still have this great urge which comes from the medieval church times to go out and bring that landscape under control. There's a high mountain out there, we've got to climb it. In *Star Trek* we've got to go where no man has gone before. We've got to do it.

D Taking our laws, our culture?

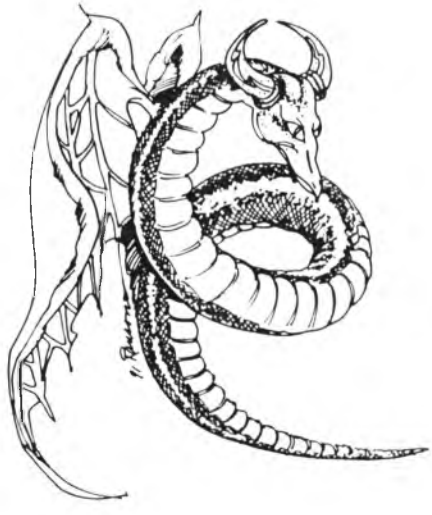
We have to expand. This is really harking back to the medieval idea that in order to overcome the sin within we've got to overcome this wasteland.

D That Christian philosophy of the sin within, how much has that translated into your books, how do you feel it has showed up?

Very much. *Crusader* ends up in the Garden of Eden again where I completely redo the Adam and Eve myth. The whole thing with trying to overcome this wasteland comes from the original Adam and Eve tale. Where, because of Eve's sin, the way she gave in to temptation, she and Adam were thrown out of the Garden of Eden and the wasteland they were thrown into, the wasteland being this Earth, symbolised their sin, being thrown out of the Garden of Eden, so they had to overcome that sin by trying to tame the landscape. How do I use it in my books? I continually return to this theme.

D I was actually going to bring up Crusader and the fact that the ending seemed awfully like going into paradise, into an Eden, and I sort of wondered. You've destroyed Tencendor, had it crash into the ocean, and it's been resurrected as paradise essentially, yet you've still got all these people running around in their contentment. How happy are they actually going to be?

Probably not that much. It's still got a fairly uncomfortable feel to the end of it.



D Yes, it did have. The whole Wayfarer series was very uncomfortable. It was very violent and very cold in many ways. An awful lot of violence happens in that book. Where's that violence coming from?

I don't know. People ask me this, and I sort of all curl up, because I don't know. I honestly don't know.

D It has some very horrific scenes like when Stardrifter has his wings torn off and Zenith is basically clawed apart in pieces. That is actually quite horrific violence.

I don't know. I guess I enjoy using very stark images. One of the things in fantasy books that I had never liked when I'd been reading them many years ago was how people were living. They were often put into very violent worlds but you never saw this violence, it was always tamed down a bit. So I guess maybe that the fact that I do use it comes from that lack of violence, a little bit of a reaction against that. I always wanted when I was reading fantasy books to see a dark side, as they were often living in very dark worlds. The medieval world was a vastly violent world, a very harsh violent world where violence was an accepted part of society. Violence still is now, yet today we try to blend it out and every thing is sweet, and there's still child abuse going on and spousal abuse going on. We try very hard not to see that because we don't want to see it. We are still a very violent society.

D I would have to agree with that. I suppose with what is actually happening in Tencendor there's not a chance to explore the lighter, gentler side of society.

I guess I just really enjoyed exploring the dark side of societies.

D Certainly you have some very dark characters. Sunwolf and Starlaugher Sunsoar are just absolutely dark characters. No redemption in any of those characters.

Starlaugher is quite fun though. I quite like her, even though she's an evil witch.

D I enjoyed the way she just decided there was hope for her and Sunwolf and that she was going to go get her man.

Nothing was going to stand in her way.

D One of the things that I did have trouble with was when Tencendor died. I always thought the violence that was happening to Tencendor was actually happening to the whole world and suddenly I discovered that the Empire down below hadn't been touched. The demons hadn't got that far, their influence had not extended that far. I thought they were more powerful than that.

I did explain that in the book in someway. Because so many songs had escaped into sanctuary, and because the Starson was still alive they couldn't afford to expand until they'd actually disposed of him. They do sit down and talk about this at one point. They say that once they have disposed of the Starson then they can expand across the entire world, and then destroy the entire world. Then off they will go again to find something else to eat up.

D So you've got Stardrifter's wings torn off and poor Stardrifter going down to the court as the opening for the next series?

I've left an opening there, but I won't return and write another series for years. Maybe one day I'll do it, but not for a while. One of the reasons that I blew Tencendor up is so that I wouldn't be forced to go back there again. It's gone, it's gone, I can't go back. I often feel that I really should have stopped after three books. I wasn't too sure that I should have gone on to the next series.

D So how do you feel about the next three. Was it worthwhile going there again?

It was worthwhile because when I was writing the first three I had always had this idea that something from the outside stars was going to actually come back so I was always going to want to expand that idea. I'm glad I did them but I'm also kind of glad that they're over and done and I can move on to something very different now.

D Where are you going now, what's the next project?

I'm writing a trilogy set in fourteenth century Europe. I'm actually writing an historical fantasy. Using characters like Henry the Fifth, and Joan of Arc. A medieval world as they saw it with demons, gargoyles and sprites and so on.

D As dark as the Wayfarer?

It's going to be a fairly factual fantasy, so yes it will be as dark. Human society is dark. The medieval world is very dark and the fourteenth century was the worst time in European history that we know about. Two thirds of the European population died during that hundred years so it was just an awful time. I've got the Black Death to play with, numerous wars, plagues and things like that.

D What about things like short stories?

I've only done two or three. I don't really like writing them. Once I start to write something I really like to be able to write for eight hundred pages. I don't like to wind up in twelve.

A Pilgrim has been nominated for a Ditmar award this year. Did winning the Aurealis award affect your sales or change your strategy or anything?

It's been very nice to win that award but I didn't really expect it and I don't write for awards. I don't write for readers either. I write for me, what I enjoy. Which must mean that I enjoy violence.

D Is it a worry?

I need to see someone.

D Why? I mean I thought the idea of writing about such things was so that you didn't have to pay a therapist.

That's a good idea.

A Were you writing then to see the change in society that you had set and plotted out, or were you writing to see what the characters would do in the series?

I think I was writing to see where the characters would go. I was never really too sure what they were going to do from one page to the next. I always had a grand overall plan where a series would go but how the characters would get there, it was sort of fun sometimes. At times I really broke. I hate some characters because they wouldn't do what I wanted them to.

D Which characters were those?

Lyle was supposed to die off very early in the Axis series, and he made it right through to the end. Faraday was only ever supposed to appear in one scene and she became the hero of the entire series.

D I can understand your frustration with Faraday. The eternal 'lamb being sacrificed' got very tired after a while. I'm sure your characters found that too.

Yes. I was glad to see the end of her. She will never appear in another book again as long as I write.

D So Dragonstar and Faraday won't be coming back?

No, they won't. We won't see them again. Touch wood.

D I do find it amusing when writers talk about their characters as if they have a life of their own.

Well they do. I mean sometimes they just don't do what you want them to do. I don't know why that is. You think that the author will always be in control but it's not true, the characters are.

A You mentioned that you like writing eight hundred pages and trilogies. Where did Threshold come from then?

Threshold is my favorite book. My true romance. My romantic heart coming out there. I don't know where Threshold came from. It was a story that I'd been dreaming about for a very long time. I just adored that book.

D And the mathematics in it, like the number one?

I actually think it was attending some classes in ancient maths. I was just intrigued by them. I hated maths at school, but attended these classes in ancient maths and they were wonderful. Numbers had once been worshiped as gods.

D What society worshiped numbers?

The ancient Egyptians and many of the ancient Eastern cultures tended to. The number one was virtually worshiped as a god by the Greeks, I think. The church, the medieval church, loathed zero, as being a number of demons, and always taught it that way. The church fought for hundreds of years to stop the zero entering Europe. I was just really intrigued by that, and thought I'd try and work it into a book.

A Have the series been sold overseas?

The Axis trilogy has just been released in the UK, but that's it so far.

A Did they get repackaged with new covers, or are they the same as the Australian editions?

They're basically the same as the Australian editions. I haven't really heard how they are going so far.

D I wish you the best of luck over there. You're probably one of the first writers who've actually managed to make it full time in many ways, certainly in recent times it's been very hard for our writers. So are you going to remain in Bendigo?

For the time being. Eventually I'd like to find somewhere on the coast. Not too far up north. Say between here and Sydney somewhere down the south coast of Victoria.

D You're not a city person? Definitely a country person?

I think so. Somehow I don't think I'd like to move back to the big smoke. I like the pace. I think it allows me to actually live in my books which I really enjoy. When I'm writing I really like to be able to live in the same world as the one that I write about. Being able to live in a nice peaceful country town without seeing the trams and the cars and the planes and so on, it helps.

A Do you get much feedback from readers via your website?

I do get a fair bit and it's always good on book signing tours, hearing what people say. Who I shouldn't have killed off. And who I should kill off. Why did I do such and such. Sometimes I feel that I haven't done very well with the book and the readers say they loved it.

D I suppose we are always our own harshest critics. We know where we could have done better and didn't. What would you like to talk about? If someone was to come up to you, what would be your favorite topic you'd like to talk about? Your passions.

I think trying to find a different name for the genre. Fantasy doesn't really suit it. I don't know what we'd call it though. Fantasy, I've never liked that term. It implies that it's rather childish and pushes it to one side of the mainstream. It puts people off reading it because they think it's just something airy fairy.

D Is that because it seems to relate so much to fairy tales or has Tolkien done a disservice?

I think people relate it too much to Tolkien and to sweet little tales of elves and gnomes and so on. Yet I think grand heroic fantasy is just the most wonderful thing.

A I was listing Jack Dann's book The Silent, which is an American Civil War book, in forthcoming books, and I had to call it historic fantasy. I thought he's put so much work into it, it's not really fantasy, but what else can you call it? It's like you medieval stuff. You said you'd be writing historical fantasy.

But it's still got demons and so on in it. It's got lots of magic and enchantment. I can't see Jack doing much like that.

A You need a different name for it. What else could you call it? They're not really historical novels as they weren't written then, but they're really a serious book about the past.

Historical fantasy is the term that I loath but I've got no idea what else to call it. Epic romance would put people off.

It doesn't really describe the magical component of it either. Maybe it's just that fantasy is a perfectly good word but it's been abused. We need to give it some guts again. You could make that your crusade in life, to give fantasy back its guts.

I try. Actually that is one of the things I've really tried to do, to put a lot of grit and guts in and violent bits, I guess.

D Certainly there's enough guts in the Wayfarer. Definitely.

I remember someone asked me at the Melbourne Writers' Festival, when it was time to ask questions, in a crowded hall someone right up the back stood up and yelled out 'Sara Douglass' he said 'Why are you so keen on incest?'. I hadn't realised but I also make a fair bit of that. A lot of the distress in Crusader and the bad bits are caused because two characters refuse to indulge in incest.

D The whole Sunsoar family seem to have a lot of incest going on. You've made that a theme, that love clings to blood. It is a theme and I suppose in many ways you get to close with the themes in your books so they don't mean as much to you as they do to other readers from the outside.

I probably started out with that, just with the intent to cause a bit of a shock, to bring something in.

D One of those gritty subjects that you don't tend to find in elfy fairy fantasy books.

A family that habitually indulged in incest and thought that it was a good thing.

D The genetics of it could be horrendous. Maybe that's why they are all such selfish people.

A You mentioned the Writers' Festival, so obviously you appeal to a wider audience than just SF and fantasy fandom.

I appeal to just about all sections of society. From eleven up to death. I don't think there's one particular group or age group or one professional group or whatever. Builder's laborers, professors, kids.

D Certainly your publishers have been good in pushing you. They've given you lovely covers. Absolutely superb covers.

Shaun Tan's done some of the most wonderful work.

D I love the cover of Pilgrim as well. I thought that was excellent. So you've been getting very good treatment from them. You've gotten such wonderful shelf space as well that's excellent to see, competing against the Americans.

A Your surname is reasonably near the start of the alphabet so you tend to be at about eye height. Is Sara Douglass your real name?

It's not my real name. I was told that I had to change my name and that I had to pick a name between D and M. Louise at HarperCollins told me that I had to face a name change. My own name was a W and I was told that if I stuck with that only dwarves who fell over in bookshops would ever see my books down there on the lower shelves so I had to change it.

A It seems to have worked. How difficult was the change to start signing things Sara Douglass?

Sometimes hard. When I first start a signing tour I just have to remember 'Douglass, Douglass'.

D Aussiecon Three is coming later this year. Are you coming?

The Worldcon. I think Jack's asked me to come down and do something. Kate's suggested that I come down.

D So can I start programming you in?

Talk to me about what you'll be programming me into, we'll work out dates and so on.

D I was thinking about putting up a panel with our latest crop of fantasy writers, of which I'd like you to be the feature, talking about the battles you faced writing fantasy in Australia.

That'd be good.

Thyme LoCs

jan howard finder

It is about time I sent you a response to *Thyme* #130. The weekend has been the pits as my operating system seems to be undergoing decomposition. With some luck I'll have things up and running in a couple days. Lost my Outlook Express as well. The problem was eventually solved. Since then I've actually been able to upgrade my computer and add a firewall.

It seems we have too many RIPs of late. I knew a few of the folk. I met Eddie Jones at British cons when I was living in Europe back in the 70s. He even did a marvelous cover for my zine, *The Spang Blah*. I'm off to Easterson in a few days. I'll be seeing Jean Weber and Eric Lindsay there. Small world and all that. Back in '95 I met Dennis and Delma Stocks for dinner in London. It seemed reasonable at the time. The con was good. The hotel was strange and the food lousy. I had a good time.

It was interesting to read the stats on Aussiecon Three. All in all the folk who were just attending should have had a marvelous time. I'm glad to hear that Aussiecon Three didn't lose too much money. How is Australia in 007 or whenever coming along? I haven't heard anything back for quite a while. Back before Aussiecon Three I had posed the question, in *Thyme*, as to what makes an Australian or American or British, etc. con. No one responded. Well, the question will be a panel at Eastercon in the UK. I was speaking with Vincent Docherty, who is bid chair for UK in '05. He will or has already been hit with 'We want a British Worldcon not an American Worldcon'. We discussed what the differences might be and agreed the question would make a fine panel at Eastercon. As long as Oz is considering another bid, this question might be a good panel at the Australian NatCons. Of course, it would help to have a visiting American there to have on the panel. I find the material differences minimal, though the ambience is much different. This is true in the States among the different regions. Since y'all like to use America as a whipping boy, I would like to point out that I find American cons great fun. However, I also find British, continental, Canadian and Australian cons fun as well. Just different flavors. The panel seemed to

agree that the basics of the Worldcon or any SF con were much the same. It is the little bits that the local and expectations add that give it a national flavor. I've suggested to the powers that be that the UK bid have a international cricket match the day prior to the con. The UK vs. the rest of the world. A 25 to 35 limited overs match. As it happens there is a cricket pitch very near the convention centre. [Lloyd, you might run this panel at a few Canadian cons. You might get some valuable input for Torcon.]

I wonder if I'll see Craig Macbride in Philly? The room rate for a single at the main Worldcon hotel is over $300 a night, plus about $45 a day for parking. Craig! You thought the Centra was expensive?

I enjoyed Edward McArdle's con report. I had hoped to visit Tasmania one day, but that doesn't look like it will happen. When I worked up my yearlong trip around and through Tasmania, I found lots of neat places to visit and hike. Oh well.

Come the end of the year I may break down and go see the first part of *The Lord of the Rings*. The scope of the book is so big I'm not sure a movie or movies can do it justice. Part of the fun of the book was the poetry.

E B Frovhet needs to know that YooHoo is still around. Well, it was in '98. That was one of the drinks available at the Skip Barber Racing School.

Life goes on here. I leave for the UK in a few days. I return for the final days leading up to SFRA 2001, an academic conference on SF, at the end of May which I'm organizing. I'll be hitting a number of cons during the year, including Westercon in Portland, Conglomeration [new and near Louisville], Milphil and, of course, Albacon.

SFRA 2001 was a success. We even had one person from Australia. The program ran as proposed and we ended up in the black.

[By the way we offer free memberships in Albacon to anyone with a valid non-North American passport. If you hold an American passport, hide it and show us your other one. We give good con!]

There is a '1 in a Sagan' chance I'll be in Oz in December of 2002 for the eclipse. I rather doubt it at this time, but one never knows.

As usual I enjoyed Merv's Memories. Looking back I never lived in an area with a real fan base. The last time I lived in a big city was Chicago in 1968. I wasn't in fandom then. While we have a small group of fans in the Albany area, the number is maybe a couple of dozen. This is quite a little bit different from living in LA, NYC, Boston, Chicago, etc. Oh well, I have the whole world to keep in touch with. To keep busy, I accidentally found some free time, I've taken up sailing. It is neat!

Joseph Nicholas josephn@globalnet.co.uk

Thanks for the latest issue of *Thyme* to have reached us (number 131). But... this is a newszine? Dated July 2000? With 'news' that is now over a year old?

I had occasionally wondered whether there might have been fantastic delays in the mails – although possible delays of this length are usually rare, and usually one-offs rather than a series – but a reference in Lyn McConchie's letter to a hope that you might one day catch up reveals all. To which the response has to be: why are you even trying to catch up? To publish information this old might fulfill some desire to be a journal of true record, but from a practical point of view is a complete waste of time. The conventions have been held, the books published and now remaindered or out-of-print, even the non-news material is no longer fresh – for example, Lyn McConchie's tale of struggles with her new therapist has already appeared elsewhere (*Weber Woman's Wrevenge*), so even if it had been offered to you first the publication of it now is mere repetition.

My advice to you, therefore, is that if you want people to pay attention to what you're doing you should abandon any hopes of catching up. Junk everything in your files with a date earlier than this month, and concentrate instead on what's happening now and what's about to happen in September and October this year rather than last. Otherwise, why bother?

[There's a few reasons why I'm putting out 'catch-up' issues. Reviewers and columnists have contributed pieces which need to be published in chronological order, or junked, and I'm not prepared to do that. Some libraries have taken out subscriptions and need to receive an appropriate number of dated issues per year. Current news was being supplied by Marc Ortlieb's Bullsheet, so I didn't have that pressure of being right up to date in everything. The convention listings are current at time of printing, as is the letter column. Surveying Thyme readers at Aussiecon Three revealed only 1 read it for the news. I distribute Ansible with Australian copies, and some subscribers may not wish to miss out a year's worth of issues. By the end of the year I should be back on track. AS]

Sheryl Birkhead 25509 Jonnie Court
Gaithersburg MD 20882 USA

Nice to see so much of Craig Hilton's work, I miss it. Very nice pieces from Julia Morgan-Scott and Brad and ... But you know the drill, nice set of art credits. I really like Ian's on page 9, especially in light of the upcoming *Star Trek: Enterprise*.

I agree with John Tipper, if there was Olympic envelope stuffing you'd win the gold hands down.

I've heard that clips from *Lord of the Rings* and the Harry Potter movie have been viewed. Did they make the trip down under? *[The Harry Potter preview has been on at the cinemas, but I've only personally seen the Lord of the Rings preview downloaded on a computer. AS]*

Lyn's letter just shows bureaucracy at its 'finest'. Why waste time and energy on actually listening when you can push ahead with your preconceived notions of what you already think you know.

I've already heard some concerns about Philadelphia, but since I'm not directly involved, I'll wait and see how things unfold. Then again, I'd rather hear about potential problems before the con and have time to repair potential damage. Time will tell.

Harry Andruschak PO Box 5309
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Thyme #131 has arrived. My main fannish activity the last few months has been to write up my first fanzine of any kind in nine years. It is *Diary of a Dafiate*, and will appear in LASFAPA #300, the 25th anniversary mailing. I am sending you a copy of this zine by separate email. Please announce in *Thyme* that I will send any one who requests it a copy of this zine, either by email or snail mail (free).

Brad Foster POB 165246
Irving TX 75016 USA

Okay, I think now I get it! The only 'important' recording item on each issue is the issue number, not the issue date, since 'Thyme' = 'time', and it's all about this Buck Rogers 'sci-fi' stuff, then thyme(time) is time(thyme) travelling each issue, and so the date doesn't have to reflect the current date the issue actually appears.

Lloyd Penney 1706-24 Eva Rd.
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Thyme #131 arrived here yesterday, and I can tell when Worldcon is approaching because my supply of fanzines to respond to dries right up. At least that means that when a zine does arrive, it can be responded to immediately, and that's what I'm going to do.

In the news column, there is news of two SF bookstores closing, in Perth and South Australia. These days, the advent of the monster bookstore chain is causing the closing of the nifty little bookstores we all enjoy. Toronto bookstores, including Bakka Books, our own SF bookstore, are suffering from reduced sales, as not only do the monster bookstores have an amazing selection of books and other items, but they also have coffee shops inside. (In Canada, one monster bookstore chain, Chapters, has just taken over another, Indigo.) Montreal lost its own SF bookstore, Nebula Books, about two years ago now. The success of the monster chains, plus dropping literacy and falling interest in reading a book when video games, television and the Net/Web beckon, means that most specialty bookstores are in danger of closing down. Some fine book stores in Toronto have gone exclusively to the Web. Old but all too true joke... how do you make a million dollars running a bookstore? You start with two million dollars...

Many thanks for $10 with this issue, and I have replaced it with $C10 to go into the CUFF treasury, currently being managed by 2001 CUFF winner Murray Moore of Mississauga. I'll be getting your copy of our CUFF trip report in the mail at the end of this week.

In my letter, I mentioned something about discussions on a cross-Australia fan fund, and not long after those discussions, NAFF, the National Australian Fan Fund, was born. I've explained NAFF to some Canadian fans as being much like CUFF, our own Canadian Unity Fan Fund. I wish this new fan fund well, and would like to see more about its operation... other fan funds may benefit.

Our future plans: Yvonne and I, in spite of previous doubts, will be going to this year's Worldcon, the Millennium Philcon, in Philadelphia for a good time with few commitments to any group. However, because the exchange rate is so ridiculous, we'll only be going for a few days. Then, in November, this year's World Fantasy Convention will be held in Montreal, and we'll be driving there to run the panelists' green room.

Bob Smith 37 St Johns Road
Bradbury NSW 2560

Lotsa luverly news, as usual; but I draw the line at reading an *Ansible* that is over twelve months old. A waste of paper and postage, I would have thought.

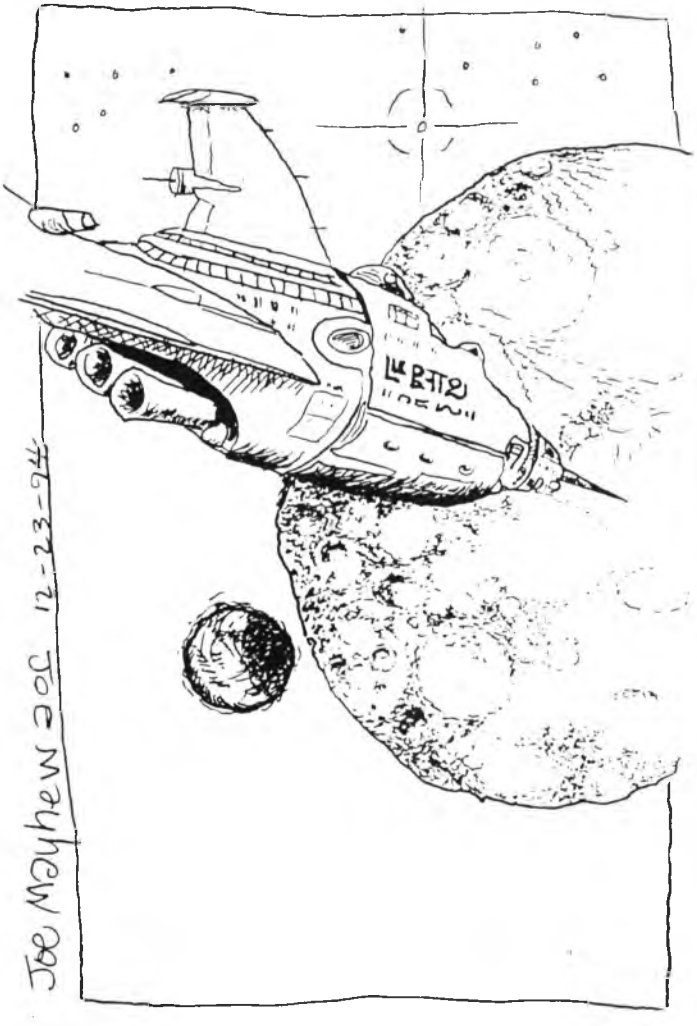
Interesting what Robin Hobb had to say about using the computer etc., and I remember with dubious nostalgia my early portable typewriters (a smith-Corona, bought at the PX in Japan, 1953, whilst scouting for the latest prozines.)

Lyn McConchie's piece didn't really tell me anything I hadn't already picked up from various TV documentaries and selected reading, but it's nice to read an informed opinion in a science fiction news magazine. I guess I was intrigued by her vision of the near future split into highlanders and lowlanders and their/our possible fate. However, I'm sure she realises that global warming will have many other effects that will touch everybody, regardless of their sea level

Two 'something(s)' in a sentence? I stick to my guns: acting is a tough profession, bit-part playing is tough and chockfull of not always pleasant work, their acting schools appear to be equally tough and demanding places. *Star Trek* in its various disguises has been around long enough for the aspiring actors to have a pretty good idea what they might be in for.

There are, of course, individuals who would give their eye teeth to discover a hoard like John Tipper has, and I can visualise certain dealers licking their chops in anticipation.

WAHF Mervyn Barrett, Steven Butler, Ian Deal, Stefan Lakh, Linda Lounsbury, Peter Motte, Sarah Murray-White, Robert Rogers, David L Russell and Bill Wright.



Social Calendar

(The "If you hold an event, they will come" edition.)

October

1	Conquest		QLD. Red Cross Centre, 409 Adelaide St, Brisbane.
1	Gamers' Guild	9.30 am	WA. Lan party. St. Joachim's Hall just south of Perth, on Shepperton Rd, Victoria Park.
4	Nova Mob	8 pm	Ian Mond on Joe Lansdale. 13 Frederick St, Brunswick.
4	Critical Mass		SA. David Hansen 'Some work of Timothy Zahn'. Writers Centre, Adelaide.
6	Food Mob	6-7.30 pm	ANZAPA collected. Informal eating and nattering. Myers Cafeteria, Melbourne.
6	MSFC	8.30 pm	(Melbourne Science Fiction Club) Gourmet Food Night – Hot dogs. St David's Uniting Church Hall, 74 Melville Road, West Brunswick.
7	Austrek	2 pm	Celebration of Star Trek Literature. St Mark's Church Hall, cnr Burke and Canterbury Roads, Camberwell.
7	Guy Browning	7.30 pm	Art Bebe Exhibition. Studio Soma, 91 Chapel Street, Windsor.
8	SF & horror films	4 pm	Short Stuff Gets Spooky. Revolver Upstairs, 229 Chapel St, Prahran. Special guests include Richard Frankland, Stephen Feneley, Fenella Kernebone. $5.50.
8	Quest		QLD. Red Cross Centre, Brisbane.
9	Spaced Out	7.30 pm	Monday Munchies. Spargo's Sidewalk Cafe, Commercial Rd, Prahran.
11	DSFS	8 pm	(Dandenong Science Fiction Society) Video night. Dandenong Library Meeting Room.
13	Food Mob	6-7.30 pm	ANZAPA distributed. Informal eating and nattering. Myers Cafeteria, Melbourne.
13	MSFC	8.30 pm	Witches, warlocks and Buffy. St David's Uniting Church Hall.
14	Skyforce	1 pm	Charles Pearson Theatre, ERC, University of Melbourne.
14	DWCV		(Doctor Who Club of Victoria)
15	Stargate: SG-1		QLD. Red Cross Centre, Brisbane.
18	CSFG		ACT. (Canberra Speculative Fiction Guild) Writers Centre, Gorman House.
18	SF & horror films	7 pm	Short Stuff Gets Spooky. Revolver Upstairs, 229 Chapel St, Prahran. Special guests include Richard Frankland, Stephen Feneley, Fenella Kernebone. $5.50.
20	Food Mob	6-7.30 pm	Informal eating and nattering. Myers Cafeteria, Melbourne.
20	MSFC	8.30 pm	Super 8 film night. St David's Uniting Church Hall.
20	Futurians	7 pm	NSW. Room 1615, 16th floor, UTS, Tower building, Broadway.
21	SSFFG	2.30 pm	NSW. (Southern Science Fiction and Fantasy Group)
21	West Lodge	10 am	WA. (Doctor Who Group) Farscape day. 160 Wright St, Kewdale. $8.
22	Skyforce	noon	NSW. Lidcombe Catholic Workmen's Club, 24 John Street, Lidcombe.
25	Buffy		QLD. Red Cross Centre, Brisbane.
26	BDWC		QLD. (Brisbane Dr Who Club) Red Cross Centre, Brisbane.
27	Food Mob	6-7.30 pm	Informal eating and nattering. Myers Cafeteria, Melbourne.
27	MSFC	8.30 pm	PC Games Night. St David's Uniting Church Hall.
28	AB5FC	1 pm	(Australian Babylon 5 Fan Club) Melbourne Museum.
28	Enterprise		Pon Farr Meeting.
29	Costumers' Guild		Ross House, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne.
29	Parsec	noon	SA. (Aussie Star Wars Appreciation Society) Adelaide High School.

November

1	Nova Mob	8 pm	
1	Critical Mass		SA. Jacq Felis.
3	Food Mob	6-7.30 pm	Informal eating and nattering. Myers Cafeteria, Melbourne.
3	MSFC	8.30 pm	Food night – BBQ; Collectors' Fair #2. St David's Uniting Church Hall.
4	Austrek	2 pm	Gaming Day. St Mark's Church Hall.
7	Skyforce	noon	Melbourne Cup Day Picnic, Bundoora Park.
8	DSFS	8 pm	Dandenong Library Meeting Room.
10	Food Mob	6-7.30 pm	Informal eating and nattering. Myers Cafeteria, Melbourne.
10	MSFC	8.30 pm	Lego Building Competition. St David's Uniting Church Hall.
11	Spaced Out		Annual AIDS Memorial Candlelight Vigil and Quilt Display.
11	DWCV		
11	Skyforce	6 pm	Trivia Nite, Inkerman Hotel, Balaclava.
12	Quest		QLD. Red Cross Centre, Brisbane.
15	CSFG		ACT. Writers Centre, Gorman House.
17	Food Mob	6-7.30 pm	Informal eating and nattering. Myers Cafeteria, Melbourne.
17	MSFC	8.30 pm	SF on Pay TV: Videos and discussion. St David's Uniting Church Hall.
18	SSFFG		NSW.
18	AB5FC	1 pm	Flinders St Clocks: Foot Rally.
19	Multiverse	8.30 am	5th birthday outing to Luna Park, St Kilda.
23	DWCV	7 pm	Official 37th Anniversary of Doctor Who. Smorgy's, 415 Warrigal Rd, Burwood.
24	Food Mob	6-7.30 pm	Informal eating and nattering. Myers Cafeteria, Melbourne.
24	MSFC	8.30 pm	Author Night. Guest SF author. St David's Uniting Church Hall.
24	Futurians.		NSW. Annual Dinner Meeting.
25	Buffy		QLD. Red Cross Centre, Brisbane.
25	DWCV	noon	DVD Information Day. Melbourne University, Union House, Grattan Street, Parkville.
25	Enterprise		Christmas Party.
25	Skyforce	8 am	Shopping Day. Starts from Gate 4, Grattan St, University of Melbourne.
26	DWCA	11 am	NSW. (Dr Who Club of Australia) 'The Lives and Time of Tom Baker'. $7, $4 children under 12 (members $5). Upstairs function rooms of Drummoyne RSL, 162 Victoria Rd, Drummoyne.
26	BDWC		QLD. Red Cross Centre, Brisbane.
26	Parsec	noon	SA. Adelaide High School.
26	Costumers' Guild		Ross House, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne.

December

1	Food Mob	6-7.30 pm	Informal eating and nattering. Myers Cafeteria, Melbourne.
1	MSFC	8.30 pm	Coffee, Cake, Ice Cream and Conversation. St David's Uniting Church Hall.
1	SSFG		NSW. (Sydney SF Group) 'Corinna and Zara's whacky guide to rating SF'. Zara Baxter's house, Marrickville.
1	Tavern group	7 pm	NSW. Food Court, Broadway Shopping Centre, cnr. Broadway and Bay St, Glebe.
2	Austrek		Christmas Barbecue.
2	West Lodge	12.30 pm	WA. Collins Street Centre.
3	Conquest		QLD. Red Cross Centre, Brisbane.
3	Skyforce	noon	NSW. $10 members, $12 non-members.
3	Swancon 2001	1 pm	WA. Open programming meeting. Dome Café, Northbridge.
8	Food Mob	6-7.30 pm	ANZAPA collected. Informal eating and nattering. Myers Cafeteria, Melbourne.
8	MSFC	8.30 pm	Trivia Night. St David's Uniting Church Hall.
8	Swancon 2001	8.40 pm	WA. (with JAFWA) *Chicken Run* screening. Astor Cinema, Mt Lawley, $10.
9	Spaced Out		Saturnalia Festivities (End of Year Party).
9	DWCV	noon	Annual Christmas Party. Studley Park Boathouse, Kew.
9	Skyforce		Christmas Party. St Mark's Church Hall, Camberwell.
10	Quest		QLD. Red Cross Centre, Brisbane.
10	West Lodge	1 pm	WA. Farscape fundraiser. $5. 798a Canning Highway, Applecross.
11	Spaced Out	7.30 pm	Monday Munchies. Spargo's Sidewalk Café, Commercial Rd, Prahran.
13	DSFS		Christmas party, games night.
13	Multiverse	7 pm	*Titan A. E.* preview. Hoyts Cinema Centre, 140 Bourke St, Melbourne.
15	Food Mob	6-7.30 pm	ANZAPA delivered. Informal eating and nattering. Myers Cafeteria, Melbourne.
15	MSFC	8.30 pm	Final meeting for 2000; organise Christmas party. St David's Uniting Church Hall.
16	MSFC		Christmas party. St David's Uniting Church Hall.
16	Enterprise	1 pm	Pon Farr/7th Birthday/Xmas get together. Royal Children's Hospital, Ella Latham Theatre Area.
16	Swancon 25	8 pm	WA. Ditmar ceremony and party. 6 Florence Road, Nedlands.
16-17	SF films		Marathon. Westgarth Cinema, High Street, Northcote.
17	Nova Mob	1.30 pm	Lunch. Shark Fin Inn, 50 Little Bourke St, Melbourne.
17	Buffy		QLD. Red Cross Centre, Brisbane.
17	AB5FC	noon	Christmas BBQ. Foreshore, Kings Domain.

January

5	Food Mob	6-7.30 pm	ANZAPA delivered. Informal eating and nattering. Myers Cafeteria, Melbourne.
10	Gamers' Guild	7 pm	WA. *Dungeons & Dragons* preview. Hoytes Carousal, $10.
10	Multiverse	6.30 pm	*The Sixth Day* preview. Hoyts Cinema Centre, Bourke St.
12	Food Mob	6-7.30 pm	ANZAPA delivered. Informal eating and nattering. Myers Cafeteria, Melbourne.
13	Skyforce	noon	Beach Day. Sandringham Beach.
17	CSFG		ACT. Writers'Centre, Gorman House, Braddon.
19	Food Mob	6-7.30 pm	ANZAPA delivered. Informal eating and nattering. Myers Cafeteria, Melbourne.
19	MSFC	8.30 pm	Coffee, Cake & Conversation. St David's Uniting Church Hall.
19	Futurians	7 pm	NSW. Room 1615, 16th floor, UTS, Tower building, Broadway.
21	ASFF	2 pm	(Australian Science Fiction Foundation) AGM.
25	Multiverse	7 pm	*Bedazzled* screening. Hoyts Cinema Centre, Bourke Street. $10.50 per adult, $8.50 per child.
26	Food Mob	6-7.30 pm	Informal eating and nattering. Myers Cafeteria, Melbourne.
26	MSFC	8.30 pm	Australian SF: panel and discussion. St David's Uniting Church Hall.
27	Enterprise		Beach Day.

2000 Conventions

NELCON November 17-19
(Relaxacon) The Country Comfort Motel, Port Stephens, NSW **Rates** $20 **Room Rates** $57 per night per person **Email** Edwina Harvey e.harvey@unsw.edu.au **Mail** c/- 12 Flinders St, Matraville, 2036.

CAMP COSTUME December 8-10
Polana Camp, Healesville, Victoria **Rates** $60 until 29-10-00, $75 to 1-12-00, $100 from 2-12-00 to the door. Cost includes all meals from Friday dinner through to Sunday lunch, accommodation, all workshops and events. BYO sleeping gear, drinks and special snacks. **Mail** Wendy - Camp Costume, The Australian Costumers' Guild, PO Box 322, Bentleigh, Vic, 3204 **Phone** Chris (03) 94574061.

TOTAL SECRETCON! December 8-15
Tone River Cottages. 42km down Muir Highway, just off Manjimup (WA) Curtin Imagination Association and Murdoch Alternative Reality Society **Email** CIA Secretary, Jocelyn Kuan, jaws@msquared.com.au, MARS President, Dean Caruana, d caruana@student.murdoch.edu.au **Phone** 0418925055
Rates 8-15 December $60, 8-11 December $35.

2001 Conventions

ARCANACON 2001 January 25-28
(Role-Playing Convention) Collingwood Education Centre, Collingwood, Victoria **Rates** $5 registration plus a pay by the game rate that peaks at $45 for the whole weekend. **Mail** PO Box 125, Parkville, Victoria, 3052 **Web** http://arcanacon.vurt.net/ arcanacon@vurt.net.

BEST OF BOTH WORLDS 11 February 2-4
(Stargate SG1) Southern Cross, corner Elizabeth and Goulburn Streets, Sydney **Guests** Teryl Rothery, Christopher Judge, Don S Davis
Phone (02) 9453 0290 **Web** http://www.bobw.com.au.

ARMAGEDDON PULP CULTURE EXPO February 10-11
Auckland, New Zealand **Guests** Kevin Smith, Virginia Hey, Teryl Rothery, Colin Baker, Walter and Louise Simonson, Diana Schutz, Brian Michael Bendis
Rates Entry only $NZ10 **Web** http://www pulpexpo.com.

WHOVENTION 2001 February 16-18
(Doctor Who) Rydges, 54 McLaren St, North Sydney **Guests** Colin Baker, Katy Manning, Louis Scholten **Rates** 31-8-00 $60 for DWCA members, $80 for non DWCA members; Until 30-11-00, $90 or $110. Until 15-1-01 $105 or $120. **Banquet** $45 **Mail** PO Box 4, Epping, NSW, 2121 **Web** http://www.eagles.com.au/~whovention whovention@dwca.org.au.

STUDIO HOLLYWOOD CONVENTION February 24
10am to 5pm Lidcombe Catholic Workers Club, John Street, Lidcombe, NSW **Guests** Lani Tupu, Claudia Black, Mark Allen **Rates** $66. After Party, same venue 6pm – midnight $39 **Phone** 02 9344 3509 **Fax** 02 9349 6587 **Email** tpace@bigpond.com.

HIGHLANDER DOWNUNDER 4 April 6-8
(Highlander) Mercure Hotel, Brisbane **Guests** Peter Wingfield, Elizabeth Gracen (ocp) **Rates** $175; day rates available **Email** sonja@hldu.com **Web** http://www.hldu.org **Mail** PO Box 198, Albert St, Brisbane, QLD, 4002.

SWANCON 2001: MASQUERADE (Australian Natcon) April 12-16
Rydges Hotel Perth **GoHs** Robert Silverberg, Karen Haber, Scott Frazier, Rosaleen Love, Marilyn Pride, Lewis Morley, Kate Orman, Jonathan Blum, Sue Ackerman **Rates** Attending $80; $100 at door. Supporting $20 **Room Rates** single $146/night; twin $170/night **Mail** GPO Box G429, Perth, WA **Email** swancon2001committee@egroups.com **Web** http://www.sf.org.au/swancon2001.

ODYSSEY CON (New Zealand Natcon) April 13-16
Hotel Grand Chancellor, Auckland **GoHs** Mercedes Lackey, Larry Dixon, Lyn McConchie, Sean McMullen, Brian Howell **Rates** $NZ60 until 31-12-00; $NZ70 until 12-4-01; $NZ80 at the door; Supporting $NZ20; day rates available **Banquet** $NZ33 **Room Rates** $NZ123.75 per night **Mail** PO Box 74-013, Market Rd, Auckland, NEW ZEALAND **Email** enquiries@odysseycon.sf.org.nz **Web** http://www.odysseycon.sf.org.nz.

CONQUEST April 13-16
(Games) Melbourne High School **Email** enquiries@conquest.asn.au **Phone** (03) 9442 2075 **Web** http://www.conquest.asn.au.

FRIENDS OF SCIENCE FICTION May 20
(Buffy) Lidcombe Catholic Club, Sydney **Guest** James Marsters **Email** bookings@fsf.com.au **Rates** FSF Members $50, Non-members $70 **Web** http://www.fsf.com.au.

ARMAGEDDON INVITATIONAL May 26
NZI convention centre, Aotea centre, Auckland **Guests** James Marsters, Brian Thompson **Rates** $NZ60 **Web** www.pulpexpo.com.

STUDIO HOLLYWOOD June 2
Sydney **Guests** Emma Caulfield, Brian Thompson **Email** tpace@bigpond.com **Rates** $75.

FRIENDS OF SCIENCE FICTION June 3
(Buffy) Lidcombe Catholic Club, Sydney **Guests** Emma Caulfield, Brian Thompson **Rates** FSF Members $60, Non-members $75 **Email** bookings@fsf.com.au **Web** http://www.fsf.com.au.

STAR TREK CONVENTION June 4
Burswood Hotel, Perth **Guest** Robert Picardo **Web** http://www.startrek.com.au/.

MULTIVERSE 4 June 8-11
Edmund Barton Centre, 488 South Road, Moorabbin **GoHs** John Cook, Anthony Daniels, Jack Dann, Virginia Hey, Brian Thompson **Rates** $140 (to 15-3-01); $160 (to 15-5-01); at door $175 (members of member clubs cheaper). Day rates available. **Banquet** $55 **Trivia Night** $10 **Mail** PO Box 355, World Trade Centre, Melbourne, Victoria, 3005 **Web** www.multiverse.org.au **Email** multiverse@multiverse.org.au.

BOBW XII July 20-22
(Earth:Final Conflict) Southern Cross Hotel, corner Goulburn and Elizabeth Streets, Sydney **Guests** Leni Parker, Anita La Silva, Richard Chevolleau, Eugene Roddenberry Jr. **Rates** Convention Day 1 $99. Convention Day 2 $99. **Web** http://www.bobw.com.au **Email** alc@nlc.net.au **Phone** (02) 9453 0290.

MANIFEST 2001 August 11-12
(Anime) Old Arts Building, Melbourne University **Mail** PO Box 14191, Melbourne, 8110 **Email** manifest@metva.com.au.

THE MILLENIUM PHILCON (59th WorldCon) August 30 - September 3
The Pennsylvania Convention Center and Philadelphia Marriott Hotel **GoHs** Greg Bear, Stephen Youll, Gardner Dozois, George Scithers. Toastmaster: Esther Friesner **Rates** Supporting $US40 **Mail** PO Box 310, Huntingdon Valley, PA, 19006-0310, USA **Email** phil2001@unix3.netaxs.com **Web** http://www.netaxs.com/~phil2001.

ARMAGEDDON PULP CULTURE EXPO September 15-16
Michael Fowler Centre, Wellington, New Zealand **Guests** Richard Biggs, Marjean Holden, Gigi Edgley, Wayne Pygram, Sean Schemmel, John Romita Jr, Richard Arnold. **Rates** Entry only $NZ10 **Web** www.pulpexpo.com.

CONQUEST September 21-23
Quest Hotel, Brisbane **Guests** Richard Hatch, Richard Biggs, Richard Arnold, Marjean Holden **Rates** $215 **Mail** GPO Box 1376, Brisbane, Qld, 4001 **Email** wrags@bigpond.net.au

FORCE 3.75 October 13
(Star Wars fan film festival) University of Melbourne, Charles Pearson Theatre, Education Resource Centre **Rates** $12 Star Walking members, $15 Multiverse members, $20 non-members **Email** starwalking@starwalking.net **Web** http://www.starwalking.net **Phone** 05005 53347.

BOBW 12 October 20-21
(Stargate SG-1) Gazebo Hotel Rushcutters Bay, Sydney **Guests** Michael Shanks, Tony Amendola, Alexis Cruz, Colin Cunningham. **Web** http://www.bobw.com.au **Email** alc@nlc.net.au **Mail** PO Box 215, Forestville, NSW, 2087 **Phone** (02) 9453 0290 **Fax** +61 2 9975 6043.

FREECON November 10
North Sydney Library **Email** Garry Dalrymple gary-peter.dalrymple@tafensw.edu.au.

Number 92 **AUSTRALIAN SF NEWS** November 2000

Edited by

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SF&F Publishing and Book News

Allen & Unwin Australia continue to be the leaders in SF&F distribution in Australia. Admittedly almost all their releases are from Millennium/Gollancz UK and we have to rely on Harper Collins, and to a lesser degree Random House, for original Australian publishing in our field, amongst their British and US releases. It is to be hoped that all the reprints that Gollancz Millennium are doing are selling well and that this program they have embarked upon continues. There are lots of new fantasy volumes being published in Britain and here, but not so much new SF, so it is great to see all the classic reprints becoming available.

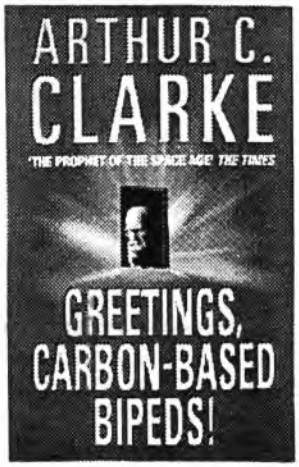
The October releases from Allen & Unwin start off with the third book in the Elita series by locally based author, Kate Jacoby, *Black Eagle Rising*, in which our hero Robert Douglas works against his enemies to free his country from tyranny, tpb. *Salt* is a debut SF novel by Adam Roberts, about a world covered entirely with sodium chloride and two groups of people who endeavor to establish colonies there, with disastrous results, tpb. *Dawn Thief* by James Barclay is the first of a multi-volumed epic fantasy series, 'The Chronicles of Raven', featuring a band of sword wielding mercenaries, of six men and an elf, who call themselves The Raven, new in small pb. In the second volume, *Noonshade*, The Raven must deal with an interdimensional rift that is growing, while the hordes of the enemy Dragon brood are pouring into their land, tpb. This month's SF Collectors' editions bring together some well known classic SF novels, starting off with *The Reproductive System* by John Sladek, a tale of robotics gone wrong; *Big Planet* by Jack Vance, at his most colorful and extremely imaginative best; *The End of Eternity* by acknowledged master Isaac Asimov, is one of the best ever time travel tales, emphasising the paradoxes that can result; and *The Best of Walter M Miller, Jr*, which is a collection of award winning stories and more by the author of the outstanding SF novel *A Canticle For Liebowitz*. All of those in tpbs with the familiar yellow dust wrappers. The SF Masterwork release this month, #31, is *The Centauri Device* by M John Harrison and the Fantasy Masterwork #7 is his *Viriconium*, with all the original four novels in this sequence in one volume, both tpbs. *The Gods Trilogy* is an omnibus volume of three of Terry Pratchett's novels, *Pyramids*, *Small Gods* and *Hogfather*, in hc. The husband and wife team of Mercedes Lackey and Larry Dixon have produced a fantasy series featuring their hero Darian Firkin. The first was *Owlflight*, which is followed by *Owlsight* new in pb and next month A&U will release *Owlknight*, in which Darian, now a Knight of Valdemar still has problems, romantic and otherwise, to contend with, tpb. Another new edition, although not included in the classic reprint series, is Frank Herbert's *The Dosadi Experiment*, in which a breeding experiment goes wrong and millions of brutal beings are threatening to engulf the galaxy wide Consentiency, pb. From Herbert and co-author Bill Ransom we also have *The Jesus Incident*, in which colonists on a hostile planet must contend with their computer which insists that it is a god, pb. *White Time* is a collection of fantasy tales for young adults by Australian author Margo Lanagan, tpb. Finally for October another Dr Who CD, *The Massacre*, the original BBC TV story soundtrack, featuring William Hartnell. Our old friend Robert Bloch's famous novel *Psycho* is read by William Hope on a BBC audio disc and is also published by Bloomsbury in book form, tpb. Terrry Pratchett's *Discworld Collector's Edition Calendar* and *The Discworld Fools' Guild Yearbook And Diary*, both for 2001, are due out in October.

First up for November we have *Rhapsody: Child of Blood* by Elizabeth Haydon, which stands out amongst the numerous fantasy novels being published. Already a best seller in the USA, it features the character Rhapsody who is a singer with powerful speech and song and two companions, on a journey which takes them through time. It doesn't sound like anything very original but reviewers and critics such as Jennifer Robeson say 'In a genre choking with predictable worlds and characters, Haydon blows in on the fresh air of new insights and talents. She makes the old fantasy new again', pb. The winner of the Aurealis Award for 1999 is next on the list, *Teranesia* by Greg Egan, set on an island in the Indian Ocean, where strange evolutionary events are taking place, new in pb. Amongst all the reprints and new editions, it is good to see some new SF and we have *Bios* this month, by Robert Charles Wilson, author of the outstanding novel *Darwinia*, set on an exotic but deadly planet called Isis, and our heroine, genetically engineered Zoe Fisher, is sent to learn its secrets, pb. *World's End*, Book 1 of 'The Age of Misrule' by Mark Chadbourn, is a fantasy tale set in a Britain where the creatures of ancient legend are coming to life, threatening the existence of life as we know it, new in pb. The SF Masterwork for this month, #32, is Philip K Dick's *Dr Bloodmoney* which is a typical PKD jaundiced view of things, pb. The Fantasy Masterwork this month, #8, is *The Conan Chronicles Volume 1*, which includes Robert E Howard's original stories in the correct order, tpb. *The Marriage of Sticks* by Jonathan Carroll, whose fiction is described as being like nobody else's, features a woman who learns the horrifying truth about herself and her own immortal existence, pb. *Dark Visions* is a collection of three horror stories by Stephen King, George R R Martin and Dan Simmons, in its first British pb edition. In the SF Collectors' series we have four famous novels, reprinted in trade pb, with the familiar Gollancz yellow dust wrappers: *The Door into Summer* by Robert Heinlein, is another one of those novels which are definitely very entertaining, but once again illustrate the paradoxes of time travel. *The Jagged Orbit* by John Brunner is a view of a dark future with society collapsing under the pressure of drugs and corruption. *Roadside Picnic* is by the only Russian SF authors that I know of, who have really made an impression on the English speaking SF world, Boris and Arkady Strugatsky, and is the story of a man who collects artefacts from an area vacated by alien visitors. '... a truly superb tale' said the late Theodore Sturgeon. And *Sirius* by Olaf Stapledon, which Brian Aldiss describes as one of the finest novels with an alien protagonist, ever written. Finally for this month, a children's Arthurian title of note, the first in a trilogy, *The Seeing Stone* by Kevin Crossley-Holland, hc.

The December list includes more SF but we start off with Simon Green's light hearted fantasy adventure *Beyond The Blue Moon*, featuring Hawk and Fisher in another adventure in which they have to leave the land of Haven and track down a murderer, tpb. The SF novel *The Collapsium* is by Wil McCarthy, set in the solar system Queendom of Sol, where sabotage is threatening to destroy the things which enable this highly scientifically advanced civilization to exist, tpb. Some authors seem to come up with their very own fantasy worlds like nobody else's and such is the case

with Mark Chadbourn in his *Darkest Hour*, Book 2 of 'The Age of Misrule', in which we have on one side a beautiful people filled with the might of the angels and on the other, monstrous devils intent on destroying all human existence, tpb. *Distraction*, by Bruce Sterling, is set in a nasty, too realistic for comfort, near future in which a possible spin doctor to the next President must resolve a world crisis that only he can visualise, pb. A new author, Kathleen Ann Goonan, bursts on to the scene with *Crescent City Rhapsody*, in which an electromagnetic burst from space signals the collapse of world communications, but nanotechnolgy may yet save human society from collapse, or destroy it, pb. We do not all sing the praises of Philip K Dick's later works, but we all appreciate the originality and the joy of reading his early works such as *The Man Who Japed*, *Dr Futurity* and *Vulcan's Hammer*, now brought together in *Three Early Novels*, in one tpb volume. *Shrine of Stars* by Paul J McAuley is the 'Third Book of Confluence', completing this colorful SF trilogy, new in pb. The SF Masterwork title, #33, for this month is Brian Aldiss's *Non-stop*, based on a premise that other writers have endeavored to exploit, but nobody does it better than this one, tpb. *Demon Apostle* is the third and final volume in a dark fantasy adventure sequence by R A Salvatore, pb. Another fantasy, new in pb is *Legion of Thunder: Orcs First Blood 2* by Stan Nicholls, in which our Orc hero Stryke is fighting to survive against the humans, while knowing that there is something bigger threatening their land. The Fantasy Masterwork #9 is Jonathan Carroll's *The Land of Laughs*, set in a small town called Galen, where the writings of a legendary writer of children's books lived and died, but his magic appears to be living on after him, tpb. All SF movie fans will agree that *Alien* is one of the best SF movies made and a complete script of the movie written by Dan O'Bannon, comments by the director Ridley Scott and previously unpublished photos and scenes not included in the movie, are included in this hard cover at $49.95. And to finish off the year, more VGSF reprints to be released by Allen & Unwin in Australia include: *A Transatlantic Tunnel, Hurrah!* by Harry Harrison; *Mindplayers* by Pat Cadigan; *The Embedding* by Ian Watson; and *Wolfbane* by Frederik Pohl and C M Kornbluth, all tpb editions with the familiar yellow covers.

It is quite amazing the number of good fantasy writers that HarperCollins themselves have discovered in Australia and yet another one to add to their stable is Australian born Jane Routley, since they have taken over the distribution of the American Avon publications in Australia. Ms Routley divides her time with stays in Australia and Copenhagen, Denmark. The first in her series featuring the mage Dion Holyhands, *Mage Heart*, is on re-release in September, followed by the second in the series, *Fire Angels* in October, and the third, *Aramaya*, which won the Aurealis Award for best fantasy novel in 1999, in November, all in pbs. This series of magic and intrigue in high places is set to continue. Fantasy and SF author Katherine Kerr's 'Dragon Mage' trilogy comes to a conclusion with *The Fire Dragon*, in which the elven dwoemermaster Dallandra must use her powers to save thousands of innocent lives, tpb.



Yet another author has set his tale in 14th century Medieval Europe against the Hundred Years' War, with *Search for the Holy Grail* by Bernard Cornwell, in which a mercenary is sent on a secret quest by one side of the split Christian Church, tpb. Many science fiction authors have no doubt kept up with their research, and have predicted many scientific advances in our world, although most will point out that is not their purpose, rather just to entertain, but Arthur C Clarke has been quietly going about his job not only entertaining us, but wonderfully pointing the way to things we now take for granted. *Greetings Carbon-based Bipeds* is a collection of his non-fiction writings which anticipated many of the current hundred years' scientific and technological advances, tpb. The term 'hard SF' probably applies to British author Stephen Baxter as much as any whom we have in the field. The cosmological and theoretical physics concepts he incorporates in his writing is to put it mildly mindbending. A great example of this is a sequence of which we have seen two books so far, *Time* in pb, and *Space* in tpb, which takes the idea of alien contact to the limit. Lastly for October we saw American author Sherri S Tepper's SF novel, *The Awakeners*, new in pb, which also deals with the interaction of humans and aliens.

The November and December releases from HarperCollins start off with *Sea as Mirror* by Tess Williams, the story of a woman endeavoring to talk to an orca whale, that results in a new understanding of the relationship of humanity and the sea and a view to a better future for the world, tpb. *Inheritance* by Simon Brown is the first in the 'Keys of Power' trilogy, a tale of royal intrigue in which siblings wage a bitter fight to be the monarch of their kingdom, pb. The third in the Krondor series by Raymond Feist, *Krondor: Tear of the Gods*, is the tale of the loss of a holy jewel which enables the priest to speak with their gods and a decade of uncertainty until a replacement is found, hc. *Priestess of Avalon* by Marion Zimmer Bradley is the third and final volume in this famous historical romance, completed with the assistance of Diana Paxson and probably the last book we will see by the late author of this series and the extremely popular 'Darkover' tales. Set in Roman Britain times, featuring the priestess Helena, it portends the end of Roman rule of Britain, following the birth of Helena's and her Roman lover Constantius' son, tpb. *The Redemption of Althalus* by David & Leigh Eddings, previously mentioned as hc, is a December tpb. SF writers are perhaps a bit obsessed with alien contact, aren't we all, and we have seen some terrific stories as well a lot of junk, but *Slow Lightning* by Jack McDevitt, who always tells a great story, describes a human future of a thousand years of space exploration and no contact until an expedition indicates that the universe does not belong to us alone, pb. I love some of the things that publishers put in the blurbs and publicity for their books and as they are meant to do, they awaken our curiosity. Such is the case with a new British fantasy, first in a trilogy, *Prospero's Children* by Jan Siegel, in which a sixteen-year-old young lady discovers that she has the Gift and the means to access a fantasy world which has been sought by the forces of good and evil for millennia, pb. The second in the series, *The Dragon-charmer*, takes place twelve years after the first volume and our heroine, Fern Capel, cannot dismiss lightly the magical events of her past or deny that she has the gift and must master it, tpb. Finally for September, *Well of Darkness* by Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman, first in their 'Sovereign Stone' trilogy, tpb. With Christmas coming up HarperCollins are offering a few J R R Tolkien items: *The Hobbit Gift Pack* with a copy of *The Hobbit*, a full color map of Hobbit land, postcards and a CD of Tolkien reading extracts from the book; an Alan Lee illustrated edition of *The Hobbit*, hc; *the Silmarillion* illustrated by Ted Nasmith, hc; *The Lord of The Rings* Millennium Edition, in seven volumes, tpb; *The 2001 Tolkien Calendar* with artwork by John Howe, designer on the forthcoming movie (which will no doubt start the whole Tolkien phenomena off again and delight our friends at HarperCollins);

and a *2001 Tolkien Diary*, also illustrated by John Howe.

Hodder & Stoughton have a new thriller from Dean Koontz, who manages to introduce horror into relatively ordinary situations, and *False Memory* deals with cases of a rare mental problem, autophobia, fear of oneself, but when the patients of a doctor treating such patients start dropping off like flies, and our otherwise sane protagonist is beginning to succumb, he smells a rat, pb. Another pb listed is *Summer Witch* by British fantasist Louise Cooper. On October release was the closest thing, we are told, that we will ever get to his autobiography, *Stephen King: On Writing – A Memoir*, hc. Brian Herbert, son of Frank Herbert, author of *Dune*, has combined with Kevin J Anderson to come up with a prequel to his father's famous novel, *Prelude to Dune: House Harkonnen*, which leads us up to the events depicted in Dune and the fall of House Atreides, tpb. Also noted for this month is a title by a long established SF author, Harry Harrison, called *Stars and Stripes in Peril*, pb. Lastly from Hodder and the only one of interest to us for the rest of the year 2000, is another Stephen Koontz off-beat thriller, *From the Corner of his Eye*, about a young blind man who mysteriously regains his sight.

The Pan Macmillan list for October starts off with a Ken Follett thriller, *Code Zero*, set around the beginning of the space race between the USA and Russia, with the launch of the satellite Exlporer in 1958, pb. In November we have Peter Hamilton's companion volume to his 'Night's Dawn' series, *Confederation Handbook*, listing all the characters, the worlds and the timeline and if you have read or are reading the series as I am now, this would be helpful to try and keep track of the myriad of these things in the stories, tpb. Boxtree Publishers, who are distributed by Pan Macmillan here, have published two books based on the *Farscape* TV series, *Ship of Ghosts* and *Dark Side of the Sun*. Both in pb and no author given. In December we have a fantasy novel by Jack Whyte, *The Sorceror Metamorphosis*, an Arthurian fantasy, volume 6 in a series and Merlyn Britannicus realises his dream to see Britain united under one king, Arthur, pb. *Dervish Is Digital* by Pat Cadigan is an SF detective come cyberpunk novel, featuring Dore Konstantin, an officer in charge of the Techno Crime Artificial Reality Division, tpb. *Angel Gateway* by Jane Adams is a ghost story come timeshift tale about a man recovering from horrific petrol bomb injuries who helps the ghost of a woman from the past with similar injuries to seal her fate, pb. Finally from Pan this year is *Universe* by Nigel Henbest and Heather Couper, based on the TV series screened a while back on the ABC, hc, from Boxtree at $30.00. Just one more thing from Pan, *The Wheel of Time Calender* 2001, featuring twelve illustrations from Robert Jordan's fantasy epic series.

Random House do send us titles for review, such as *Hero in the Shadows* by David Gemmell, a tale featuring the character Waylander and his adventures in the land of Drenai, November pb. Anne McCaffrey's *Pegasus in Space* is due out in pb in December, in Corgi. Two from Terry Pratchett are *The Fifth Elephant* new in pb, and *The Truth*, which is the 25th Discworld novel, featuring William de Worde, the editor of Discworld's first newspaper, hc, November.

And that is all for this list. For further details on current releases and more I suggest you contact Justin Ackroyd at Slow Glass Books, GPO Box 2708X, Melbourne, 3001.

MOVIES (March 2000)

There has been an upsurge in SF&F movies recently and we have been able to catch up with a few. The Tom Hanks movie based on Stephen King's *The Green Mile* was very well done and you have to hand it to King, he comes up with some ideas that you think you have come across before, but you somehow cannot put your finger on them. More likely it is just his ability to twist various concepts around, which he is very clever at. If you missed this one at the cinema, don't miss it on video. We saw *Dark City* finally, on video, and we were suitably impressed. I liked Helena's description as 'film noir in color'. Movie makers are making full use of the incredible special effects that can now be generated by computers and *Dark City*, *Matrix* and *The Phantom Menace* are prime examples. I want to borrow the video of the latter as soon as I can, and just continually freeze frame through it, which will allow me to fully appreciate the marvelous background scenery. Getting back to *Dark City*, the final scene of the city in space would make us all think of James Blish's 'Cities in Flight' stories, no doubt.

Devotees of Isaac Asimov will probably have lots of criticisms of Robin Williams' starring movie, *Bicentennial Man*, but I really liked it though Helena had reservations. Here again the visual aspects are great, with some stunning scenes such as the robot workshop, with body parts hanging on the walls, a view of a future San Francisco, other impressive interiors and Robin Williams' robot costume and makeup is great. Appreciate this movie for what it is, like *Starship Troopers*, which had little to do with the original Heinlein novel, but was really a great spoof on space war stories and we enjoyed it. And if you want to see the best SF parody yet, don't miss *Galaxy Quest*, with Tim Allen, Sigourney Weaver (looking very different from her roles in the 'Alien' movies) and Alan Rickman, taking the mickey out of *Star Trek*. The story begins at a convention for a defunct SF TV series, where amongst all the costumed fans appears an original group of funny speaking characters, who turn out to be real aliens. They want the *Galaxy Quest* cast, who they think are really conquering the glalaxy and not just in a TV series, to come and help them fight their enemies, who turn out to be even more grotesque monsters than even they really are underneath their human disguises. There are repeated digs at *Star Trek* and perhaps other sf TV series, all the way through the movie, and *ST* fans will love it, but even if you are not a *ST* fan and specially if you hate it, I am sure you will all appreciate this zany movie also.

Another current release is *Mission to Mars* starring Tim Robbins, Gary Sinise, Jerry O'Connell (*Sliders*, *Joe's Apartment*) and others. This one comes out as a sort of homage to *2001:A Space Odyssey*, in that the face on Mars that has been purported to be seen in photographs of the planet, is really there and how. Before we get to the alien contact mumbo jumbo part, which sort of borrows bits from *Close Encounters* as well as *2001*, the voyage to Mars lets us see some great space stuff, which might have come right out of actual NASA footage. The camera work in the space vehicle for instance not only makes it look like the crew are in free fall, but the way the camera swings around makes you feel it. I would not pretend that this movie is another *2001*, but it is most definitely worth seeing. The makers are obviously fans of *2001*, but where Kubrick left us a bit in the dark so to speak at the end of his film, the *Mission to Mars* makers let it all hang out.

It seems that we will be seeing a lot more science fiction and fantasy movies, with computer animation and other sfx to the fore. They have even resurrected the historical epic in ancient Rome, with Russell Crowe starring in *Gladiator*, which we are told, using special effects, makes an even bigger spectacle than ever before. So we can look forward to see more SF&F at the cinema, but TV is another question. All we get is tired old, many years behind, episodes of *Star Trek* and rubbish like *Seven Days*, and *Stargate SG-1*, which is not much better. *The Legend of the Leprachauns*, screened here this last week, made by the same people who made the TV special *Merlin*. What a load of crap it was! Even Colm Meany (*ST: Deep Space 9*) as the head Leprachaun and the pretty sfx, including a fairy floating city, could not save it. Even young viewers, who I think by now expect a bit more sophistication in such things, would not have been impressed. Let us hope that our friend Michael J Straczynski gets to work again soon and brings us another Babylon 5.

MB

Local Releases

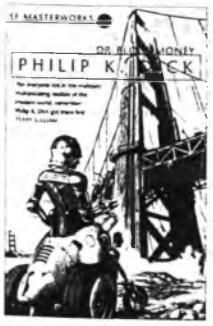
hc = hard cover | pb = mass market paperback | tpb = trade paperback
f = fantasy | h = horror | hm = humor | j = juvenile | nf = non-fiction
a = anthology | c = collection | n = novel | sf = science fiction

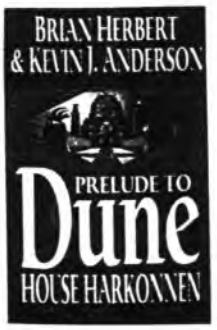
October 2000

SF Collectors: The End of Eternity	Isaac Asimov	VGSF	sf n	tpb	$29.95
Raven 1: Dawnthief	James Barclay	Millennium	f n	pb	$16.95
Raven 2: Noonshade	James Barclay	VGSF	f n	tpb	$27.95
Space	Stephen Baxter	Voyager	sf n	tpb	$27.50
Time	Stephen Baxter	Voyager	sf n	pb	$17.54
Greetings Carbon-based Bipeds	Arthur C Clarke	Voyager	nf	tpb	$20.84
Search for the Holy Grail	Bernard Cornwell	Voyager	f n	tpb	$27.44
Valley of Bones	Gary Crew & Mark Wilson	Lothian	f j	hc	$26.95
The Summoning God	K O Gear & W M Gear	Tor (Pan)	f n	tpb	$27.41
Stars and Stripes in Peril	Harry Harrison	Hodder	f n	pb	$18.50
SF Masterworks 31: The Centauri Device	M John Harrison	Millennium	sf n	tpb	$16.95
Fantasy Masterworks 7: Virconium	M John Harrison	Millennium	f n	tpb	$16.95
Prelude to Dune 2: House Harkonnen	B Herbert & K J Anderson	Hodder	sf n	hc	$49.95
The Dosadi Experiment	Frank Herbert	Millennium	sf n	tpb	$16.95
The Jesus Incident	F Herbert & B Ransom	Millennium	sf n	tpb	$16.95
Elita 3: Black Eagle Rising	Kate Jacoby	VGSF	f n	tpb	$27.95
Redwall 13: Lord Brocktree	Brian Jacques	Random House	f n	hc	$36.20
Dragon Mage 3: The Fire Dragon	Katherine Kerr	Voyager	f n	tpb	$27.50
On Writing: A Memoir	Stephen King	Hodder & Stoughton	nf	hc	$45.00
Salem's Lot	Stephen King	Hodder	h n	hc	$49.95
Discworld Calendar 2001	Josh Kirby et al	VGSF	calendar		$24.95
2: Owlsight	M Lackey & L Dixon	Millennium	f n	tpb	$16.95
White Time	Margo Lanagan	Allen & Unwin	sf c	pb	$15.95
Deja Vu	John Larkin	Random House	sf n	pb	$16.40
Star Wars: Agents of Chaos 2 – Jedi Eclipse	James Lucerno	Random House	sf n	pb	$17.50
Necroscope Defilers	Brian Lumley	Hodder	h n	hc	$49.95
The Green Prince	Sophie Masson	Hodder	f n	pb	$16.50
SF Collectors: The Best of Walter M Miller, Jr	Walter M Miller, Jr	VGSF	sf c	tpb	$29.95
The Meeting of the Waters	Caisel Mor	Simon & Schuster	f n	tpb	$26.95
Discworld Fools' Guild Diary 2001	T Pratchett & S Briggs	VGSF	diary	hc	$24.95
The Gods Trilogy	Terry Pratchett	VGSF	f n	hc	$45.00
Salt	Adam Roberts	VGSF	sf n	tpb	$27.95
2: Fire Angels	Jane Routley	Voyager	f n	pb	$17.55
SF Collectors: The Reproductive System	John Sladek	VGSF	sf n	tpb	$29.95
The Awakeners	Sheri S Tepper	Voyager	sf n	pb	$18.64
SF Collectors: Big Planet	Jack Vance	VGSF	sf n	tpb	$29.95
The Resurrectionists	Kim Wilkins	HarperCollins	h n	tpb	$27.50

November 2000

Look To Windward	Iain M Banks	Orbit	sf n	tpb	$27.00
Priestess of Avalon	M Z Bradley & D Paxson	Voyager	f n	tpb	$27.50
SF Collectors: The Jabbed Orbit	John Brunner	VGSF	sf n	tpb	$29.95
Sten 2: The Wolf Worlds	Chris Bunch & Allan Cole	Orbit	sf n	pb	$17.95
The Marriage of Sticks	Jonathan Carroll	Millennium	f n	tpb	$19.95
Age of Misrule 1: World's End	Mark Chadbourn	Millennium	f n	pb	$19.95
SF Masterworks 32: Dr. Bloodmoney	Philip K Dick	Millennium	sf n	tpb	$16.95
Crucible 1: The Nameless Day	Sara Douglass	Voyager	f n	tpb	$27.50
Teranesia	Greg Egan	Millennium	sf n	pb	$17.95
Krondor: Tear of the Gods	Raymond E Feist	Voyager	f n	hc	$39.95
Hero in the Shadows	David Gemmell	Corgi	f n	pb	$17.50
All Tomorrow's Parties	William Gibson	Penguin	sf n	pb	$19.95
Rhapsody: Child of Blood	Elizabeth Haydon	Millennium	f n	pb	$17.95
SF Collectors: The Door Into Summer	Robert A Heinlein	VGSF	sf n	tpb	$29.95





Fantasy Masterworks 8. Conan Chronicles 1	Robert E Howard	Millennium	sf n	tpb	$16.95
The Last Albatross	Ian Irvine	Simon & Schuster	f n	tpb	$26.95
3: Owlknight	M Lackey & L Dixon	VGSF	f n	tpb	$27.95
Slow Lightning	Jack McDevitt	Voyager	sf n	pb	$17.50
The Fifth Elephant	Terry Pratchett	Corgi	f n	pb	$17.50
The Truth	Terry Pratchett	Doubleday	f n	hc	$43.85
3: Aramaya	Jane Routley	Voyager	f n	pb	$17.55
1: Prospero's Children	Jan Siegel	Voyager	f n	pb	$17.50
2: The Dragon-charmer	Jan Siegel	Voyager	f n	tpb	$27.50
SF Collectors: Sirius	Olaf Stapledon	VGSF	sf n	tpb	$29.95
SF Collectors: Roadside Picnic	Arkady & Boris Strugatsky	VGSF	sf n	tpb	$29.95
The Hobbit (illustrated by Alan Lee)	J R R Tolkien	HarperCollins	f n	hc	$38.50
The Hobbit Gift Pack	J R R Tolkien	HarperCollins	f n	hc	$54.94
The Lord of the Rings (7 vol.,Millennium ed.)	J R R Tolkien	HarperCollins	f n	pb	$65.94
Star Wars: New Jedi Order – Balance Point	Kathy Tyers	Century	sf n	hc	$38.45
Bios	Robert Charles Wilson	Millennium	sf n	pb	$16.95

December 2000

SF Masterworks 33: Non-stop	Brian Aldiss	Millennium	sf n	tpb	$16.95
Keys of Power 1: Inheritance	Simon Brown	Voyager	f n	pb	$17.50
SF Collectors: Mindplayers	Pat Cadigan	VGSF	sf n	tpb	$29.95
1: Ender's Shadow	Orson Scott Card	Orbit	sf n	pb	$18.50
Fantasy Masterworks 9: The Land of Laughs	Jonathan Carroll	Millennium	f n	tpb	$16.95
Age of Misrule 2: Darkest Hour	Mark Chadbourn	VGSF	f n	tpb	$27.95
Three Early Novels	Philip K Dick	Millennium	sf n	tpb	$19.95
The Redemption of Althalus	David & Leigh Eddings	Voyager	f n	tpb	$27.50
Native Tongue	Suzette Haden Elgin	Spinifex	sf n	tpb	$26.95
Crown of Stars 4: Child of Flame	Kate Elliot	Orbit	f n	tpb	$28.00
Crescent City Rhapsody	Kathleen Ann Goonan	Millennium	sf n	pb	$17.95
Realm of the Ring Lords	Laurence Gardner	Element	nf	tpb	$28.00
Colony	Rob Grant	Viking	sf n	hc	$39.00
Beyond the Blue Moon	Simon R Green	VGSF	f n	tpb	$27.95
SF Collectors: A Transatlantic Tunnel, Hurrah!	Harry Harrison	VGSF	sf n	tpb	$29.95
Wheel of Time 9: Winter's Heart	Robert Jordan	Orbit	f n	tpb	$30.00
From the Corner of His Eye	Dean Koontz	Headline	h n	tpb	$29.95
Confluence 3: Shrine of Stars	Paul J McAuley	Millennium	sf n	pb	$17.95
Pegasus In Space	Anne McCaffrey	Corgi	sf n	pb	$17.50
The Collapsium	Wil McCarthy	Millennium	sf n	tpb	$29.95
Orcs First Blood 2: Legion of Thunder	Stan Nicholls	Millennium	f n	pb	$16.95
The Darwin Awards	Wendy Northcutt	Orion	nf	pb	$16.95
Alien: The Complete Illustrated Screenplay	Dan O'Bannon	Orion	nf	hc	$49.95
SF Collectors: Wolfbane	F Pohl & C M Kornbluth	VGSF	sf n	tpb	$29.95
3: Demon Apostle	R A Salvatore	Millennium	f n	tpb	$16.95
Distraction	Bruce Sterling	Millennium	sf n	pb	$17.95
The Silmarillion	J R R Tolkien	HarperCollins	f n	hc	$38.44
SF Collectors: The Embedding	Ian Watson	VGSF	sf n	tpb	$29.95
Otherland 3: Mountain of Black Glass	Tad Williams	Orbit	f n	pb	$18.50
Sea as Mirror	Tess Williams	Voyager	sf n	tpb	$27.50

January 2001

Sten 4: Fleet of the Damned	Chris Bunch & Allan Cole	Orbit	sf n	pb	$17.95
SF Masterworks 34: The Fountains of Paradise	Arthur C Clarke	Millennium	sf n	tpb	$16.95
The Trigger	A C Clarke & M Kube-McDowell	Voyager	sf n	pb	$18.50
Fantasy Masterworks 10: Compleat Enchanter	L S de Camp & F Pratt	Millennium	f c	tpb	$16.95
Lord of the Isles 3. Servant of the Dragon	David Drake	Millennium	f n	pb	$16.95
Blending Enthroned 1: Intrigues	Sharon Green	Eos (Pan)	f n	pb	$17.50
Blue Moon Rising	Simon R Green	Millennium	f n	pb	$16.95
Liveship Traders 3: Ship of Destiny	Robin Hobb	Voyager	f n	pb	$18.50
Year of the Griffin	Diana Wynn Jones	VGSF	f n	tpb	$27.95
Dark Terrors 5	S Jones & D Sutton (eds)	VGSF	h a	tpb	$27.95
Celtic Crusades 2: The Black Rood	Stephen Lawhead	Voyager	f n	pb	$17.50
Legacy of Gird 1: Surrender None	Elizabeth Moon	Orbit	f n	pb	$18.95
Legacy of Gird 2: Liar's Oath	Elizabeth Moon	Orbit	f n	pb	$18.95
The Stargate Conspiracy	L Picknett & C Prince	Warner	nf	tpb	$22.00
The Flightless Falcon	Mickey Zucker Reichert	VGSF	f n	tpb	$27.95
In Legend Born	Laura Resnick	Tor (Pan)	f n	pb	$16.95
A Dragon-lover's Treasury of the Fantastic	Margaret Weis (ed)	Warner	f a	pb	$17.95

Reviews

Marc Ortlieb reviews:

Evergence 1:
The Prodigal Sun

by Sean Williams & Shane Dix

Voyager pb February 2000
407 pages $14.95
ISBN 0-7322-6569-X

Evergence 2:
The Dying Light

by Sean Williams & Shane Dix

Voyager pb July 2000
402 pages $17.54
ISBN 0-7322-6714-5

These are the first two books in the Evergence series. In the mid-1970s I felt that the Australian Science Fiction Industry really needed some solid space adventures of the type that Poul Anderson used to produce in the USA. My thought was that novels of that nature would draw in the general readers who could later be introduced to more thoughtful science fiction. In the Evergence series we have exactly that. Neither of these novels have literary pretensions. For both you have to suspend your disbelief and watch the characters survive extreme environments and the political machinations of warring galactic governments.

Williams and Dix have scripted these novels well. Over the books, they build up a well balanced crew – the career space service officer, a smart-arsed Artificial Intelligence, an esp adept, a super soldier with an uncertain agenda from an ancient civilisation, the maverick renegade with assorted prostheses, a cyborg integrated with their transportation – in short everything you'd need for a good SF role playing game. To provide interesting scenarios, we have a far future galaxy where humans come in a variety of types, ranging from those who insist on maintaining ordinary bodies, to those who adapt themselves to suit their environments to those who have transcended the physical form, altogether. Add to that warring alliances, remnants of past civilisations and technologies and space gypsies and you have the potential for any number of dashing adventure stories.

The Prodigal Sun acts as a good introduction to the series as a whole. The crew is assembled through a series of adventures and their strengths and abilities are established. *The Dying Light* tries to over-complicate things through adding too many different factors too quickly. In addition to the throwing in of a second super-soldier we get a psionic sub-plot with confusing psionic quotation marks and names such as The Cruel One and The Shining One. Hopefully the third volume in the series will tie some of this together. I will admit that the plot device of having them setting off for the fabled Sol System for their final showdown with the second super-soldier is a worry. Still, I suppose that there are some new readers who wouldn't carbon date the reference to the early Gernsbackian Era.

Such quibbles aside, the books are, in general, very readable and one sinks into the background easily for most of the time, except when the psionic sub-plot intrudes in the second book. They are certainly the sorts of books that, if properly marketed, should draw new readers into the fold. I'll certainly be on the lookout for the third in the series – but I hope that they do stop at three rather than getting into Dumarest of Terratory.

Sue Bursztynski reviews:

The Devil's Own by Deborah Lisson

Lothian tpb May 2000 169 pages $12.95 ISBN 0-7344-0128-0
(first published by Walter McVitty Books, 1990)

In 1629, the Batavia, a Dutch East India Company ship, was wrecked off the coast of Western Australia. The crew mutinied and started killing off or abusing the passengers, before meeting a well-deserved end.

The incident was the basis for two novels short listed for Australian Children's Book of the Year in 1990. One was Gary Crew's semi-horror novel, *Strange Objects*, in which an already disturbed teenager becomes increasingly insane under the malign influence of a ring belonging to a mutineer, before committing murder himself. It won the prize.

The Devil's Own was the other. Personally, I preferred this one, if only because the other was in no way a children's or even young adult novel, apart from the age of the nasty protagonist.

Lothian has done a new paperback edition with a cover more likely to attract young readers than the original 'pretty' McVitty cover. It's a simple photograph of a girl's face with a sailing-ship superimposed, in sombre colors.

Julie Dykstra, a bratty Dutch-Australian teenager with an attitude problem, slips away from the family's home-built yacht one night to investigate smoke coming from an island which should be empty. Somehow, the trip across to the island takes her 300 years into the past, into the middle of the Batavia incident. She finds herself with a group of soldiers resisting the mutineers and a boy called Dirk, who was apprentice ship's carpenter. The group believe her to be the daughter of one of the French soldiers – father and daughter had both actually drowned – whom she closely resembles. In the course of the story, the rebellious teenager learns courage, unselfishness and love.

I like time travel stories. This one reminds me a little of *Playing Beatie Bow*, Ruth Park's time travel tale about a modern, rebellious girl who travels to nineteenth century Sydney, where she learns courage and love and comes to understand how her mother can still love the father who walked out on them and want to forgive him.

There's no time machine, no scientific explanation, only a hint that such things might have happened in the past, as one of the characters comments that he doesn't believe in ghosts anywhere but out there, among the islands.

The novel is gentler than Crew's, but pulls no punches. It's a nasty historical event. Characters die messily, the mutineers abuse their female prisoners, the heroine is in real danger of rape and murder a number of times and ferocious seventeenth century punishments are carried out, to the approval of even the good guys.

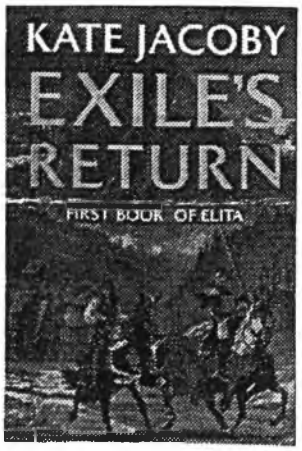
Buy it for your teenager or yourself. Recommended.

Alan Stewart reviews: **Marrow** by Robert Reed

Tor hc August 2000 351 pages $US 25.95 ISBN 0-312-86801-4

It's his 9th novel, and based on a previously published novella, yet it teems with freshness and vivacity. Not content with a ship larger than a planet, crewed by immortals, sailing between the galaxies, Reed hides something at its heart. It's the exploration of this 'marrow', the personnel involved, the time, the endeavor, which makes enthralling reading.

Very much hard SF, *Marrow* comes with lots of ideas and a tale to tell. You don't know what's going to happen, and layer upon layer of explanation is revealed as the novel progresses. Recommended to all readers of SF.



Murray MacLachlan reviews:

Elita 1: Exile's Return by Kate Jacoby

Millennium pb September 1999 442 pages $14.95
ISBN 1-85798-878-7

I was probably given this book to review because I'm a newcomer to Melbourne SF fandom and Kate Jacoby is the rather nifty pseudonym of local fan Ms Tracey Oliphant, so one is best to adhere limpet-like to Ursula Le Guin's advice 'never write a review that one wouldn't feel honest giving to the author'. The key word is not comfortable, just honest. And my honest opinion on *Exile's Return* as artistic statement is that it's a peculiarly formed romance with occasional signs of something deeper than the routine; regrettably the routine dominates. The venue is a medieval fantasy world with psi powers; the story is a descendant of *Wuthering Heights*.

At first I thought this was a close-focus fantasy, one of those interminable epics where the point of view is through the wrong end of a telescope and the Cast of Characters at the back is essential to remember who is who, because the characters' names don't help. For *Exile's Return* opens with exposition about the ruling families and how the Kingdom has fallen, and for a time we are in that familiar place a Castle, descendent of Otranto. But this all turns out to be background material, essential only to understand the role of the exiled noble hero Robert Douglas. Before we leave the Castle, however, we have one of the finest portraits in the book, that of the Trapped Queen. Her predicament is well drawn, and for her I felt genuine terror, the Real rather than the Romantic.

By far the bulk of the book by contrast is a romance as the exiled Robert Douglas and the orphan Jenn meet, have misunderstandings, and then, through an accident to the normally capable Robert, are brought together again only to be again torn apart by circumstance. This is purest Mills and Boon; the Real is abandoned for the Romantic.

Jacoby does something quite interesting with Robert Douglas. Let us place the Trapped Queen at one end of a continuum: passive. At the other end is her husband, the active king, the conqueror. (This is a quasi-medieval society and the 'female = passive, male = active' equation is stock-in-trade.) Now introduce Robert, the returned exile. He appears to have free will and the ability to shape his destiny, yet is peculiarly passive and will not act against the usurper king, for he is trapped by Oaths, a Prophecy, the Code of Chivalry, and his own Character.

Robert refuses to act as the focus for a rebellion. Other nobles see him as too passive, indeed traitorous. For example, Robert's brother pleads, cajoles, and argues with him, but Robert doesn't explain his motives, for oaths and prophecies are secret. There is some funny business with the death of Robert's wife, which leads to rumor and deception. There is more stuff with magic and a long-hidden cabal of sorcerers. These are all triggers for arguments where a number of characters whose voices begin to sound repetitious attempt to get Robert to Do Something.

It is unusual to have so passive a central male character in a fantasy novel. In another critical article, Ursula Le Guin says she is tired of active male heroes dominating the fantasy landscape (I paraphrase) and on these terms Jacoby is attempting something quite innovative. The main narrative hook of the story is to solve the puzzle of 'what makes Robert tick?' but to extend this question over three hundred pages is optimistic, particularly for a first novel. The risk is that, like the characters around him, we find Robert boring, unpleasantly enigmatic, or a wimp.

To her credit, Jacoby adds other narrative hooks to pull the reader through the text. Largely these are to do with a second mystery, who is Jenn? The answer is common coin, please forgive me for putting it in terms similar to those of Jones' *The Tough Guide to Fantasyland*: Jenn is an ORPHAN with PSI POWERS whom a SECRET SIGN reveals to be from one of the GREAT FAMILIES and who can MIND-SPEAK but only with the strangely-passive HERO so it is quite possible to assume after some MISUNDERSTANDINGS the two will become SOUL-MATES.

Having solved the mystery of Jenn, the narrative question becomes 'will Jenn unlock the love and passion of the strangely-passive hero?' One of the strongest appeals to me as a thirteen-year-old reader of E E 'Doc' Smith was the rapture with which he described mind-to-mind communication between lovers, achieved through the magnificent magical Lens. I was profoundly affected, indeed I retained for an embarrassing number of years a fondness for titian-haired women as a consequence. Mind-to-mind communication between couples is powerful stuff, and in *Exile's Return* the promise for readers who identify with Jenn is to see the locked transformed, the enigmatic revealed, the inarticulate allowed a voice.

It is this unlocking of the hero that reminds me of *Wuthering Heights*. The elemental, incoherent and powerful Heathcliff is forever chained to Cathy; no matter that she feels just as bound to him, the fact remains that until his dying day Heathcliff seeks 'his' Cathy and indeed is only partial without her. We are firmly in the territory of the Gothic romance, where too often romance is seen as synonymous with poor communication skills and misunderstandings. Such stuff leaves me cold, in *Exile's Return* as it did in *Wuthering Heights*.

As for how the story is told, I struggled with *Exile's Return* for reasons other than the romantic promise at the heart of the book. I was profoundly irritated that an accident had to befall the hero Robert in order to create a life-threatening situation from which the heroine Jenn could rescue him. I forgive characters speaking in cliches, but the authorial voice also speaks in cliches (random page opening at p. 386: a character's face is 'white with shock', p. 387: Jenn's heart is 'racing'). These are understandable legacies of the romantic tradition, but they should not be inevitable.

The book could be considerably shorter (I blame fantasy market norms).

The sense of place is vague; too often I felt that the action was happening on a stage with a painted backdrop.

The action scenes are not well described.

Maybe the items I have listed are not faults but virtues to you, and my opinion is curmudgeonly. If so, you may well enjoy this medieval fantasy with psi powers. My thoughts keep turning to the trapped Queen, and the sense that in this part of the novel Jacoby could have transcended the commonplace.

Edward McArdle reviews: **Djinn Rummy** by Tom Holt

Orbit hc 1995 277 pages $35.00 ISBN 1-85723-329-8

After being intrigued by the plot summary of some Tom Holt novels in the Slow Glass catalog, I borrowed one from the MSFC library and bought another. *Djinn Rummy* is about the world of genies. They are immortal beings who can be trapped in bottles, and grant three wishes. The tale begins when the heroine of the story is about to kill herself, but finds a genie – in a bottle of aspirins.

The story's focus, if it can be said to have one, is on the genie, and his mortal enemy. Sorry, immortal enemy. The story seems to be something the author made up as he went along, something in the manner of Hitchhiker's Guide. New characters are constantly being introduced, and nonsensical directions taken in the plot. Some parts are quite funny, and this is a book in which characterisation is totally irrelevant. This has the disadvantage that the reader does not really care about what happens to anyone. If you are not being amused, there is not much in the book to entertain you. But I was amused.

Snow White and the Seven Samurai by Tom Holt

Orbit hc 2000

The other book was *Snow White and the Seven Samurai*, and I liked this one a lot more. While the plot is pretty complex, it does seem as if the author made it up before he started writing! This is also a lot easier to read because it has some characters to sympathise with.

Almost the whole thing takes place in a computer program, where the world of fairy tales runs under Mirrors 1.1. Three children crash the program, after hacking their way in as mice, and we follow Sis, the girl, and the Wicked Queen as they try to sort things out. There are a lot of funny scenes as various tales are twisted. Snow White is the Bad Girl of the story, and she has. . well, you've read the title. The Big Bad Wolf and the Three Pigs are also important characters. We encounter a number of fairy tale characters, including... Frankenstein and Igor?? The whole story does have a logic to it, and I enjoyed it.

Sue Bursztynski reviews:

Shadow of the Minotaur by Alan Gibbons

Dolphin tpb May 2000 217 pages $12.95 ISBN 1-85881-721-8

If you like stories where kids get transported into the world of a computer game, this one is a beauty! Only it's not actually a computer game, it's a portal to a parallel universe of Greek mythology, ruled by something nasty somewhere in cyberspace (we're never told precisely who or what the evil presence is).

Nerdy young Phoenix Graves, son of a computer geek, is privileged to be the first to try out the new virtual reality game Legendeer, on which his father is working. In real life Phoenix is a weakling, bullied by small-town loser Steve Adams. In the world of Legendeer he can be Theseus or Perseus, battling monsters, all very realistic in his VR body suit.

The only problem is, the world of the game is too realistic. The Minotaur won't obligingly hit the dirt. The Gorgon can actually turn you to stone. Worst of all, Phoenix has no choice but to play the game till the end, because it has kidnapped his father and his only friend, and the school bully is in there also, playing all the young villain parts with great enjoyment...

This is a thoroughly entertaining combination of the computer SF story and the mythological fantasy tale that might just encourage children to go searching for the original myths. Phoenix develops as a character and becomes the hero he's playing. His friend Laura could have been better used. She does save his life a couple of times, but seems to be hanging around behind him waiting for her moments of glory, complaining away meanwhile, and he goes right on being the one who gets ideas and issues instructions, a boy who was being beaten up only a few chapters ago!

Another point of interest is the quote from Aechylus at the start: 'Like flies to wanton boys are we to the gods'. I always thought that was Shakespeare, 'As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods/They kill us for their sport' as spoken by blinded Gloucester in *King Lear*. Oh, well, maybe Shakespeare was quoting, he pinched enough lines, goodness knows.

Recommended for children between twelve and fourteen years of age.

Sue Bursztynski reviews:

Warriors of the Raven

by Alan Gibbons

Orion pb 2001
166 pages $14.95

This is the third of the Legendeer trilogy that began with *Shadow of the Minotaur*. Two novels later, Phoenix is trying to track down the company making Legendeer 3, Warriors of the Raven, which is about to go on the market. This time the Gamesmaster has set the game in the world of Norse myth, a universe in which it can win, because the Norse believed evil would ultimately triumph at Ragnarok and there was nothing you could do about that, and it has taken over Steve Adams' body. With his friend Laura and another boy, Jon, whose father was testing this version of the game, Phoenix must somehow stop the Gamesmaster, but how can he do that when the ending is already scripted and the good guys can't win?

Once again, a nifty idea and in some ways even cleverer than the original tale. How do you beat the villain when the myth says you can't? The Viking hall described in the story is nicely grotty and the old shaman smells particularly awful.

I do have a couple of quibbles, as an adult, though young readers probably won't notice. As in the first novel, the author still doesn't know what to do with his female character. Laura is a nice girl and helpful, but doesn't play a huge role in the story, though she is potentially an interesting character. She does shoot a few arrows during the final battle, under orders from Phoenix, but they are shot at fire-demons, a complete waste of wooden ammunition, surely? The novel would have worked perfectly well without her, to be honest.

The other thing that bothers me is that as in so many fantasy novels, the horses are treated as furry machines. After three years of Fimbulwinter, signaling the end of the world, Viking Lord Halfdan and his Berserkers are reduced to eating pine bark bread and walrus belly stew, yet somehow still have horses to ride into battle! You'd think the horses would have been slaughtered and eaten long ago, because any grain left would be needed for the humans.

However, don't let this stop you buying the novel; boys who enjoyed the first two will certainly like this one.

Robert Jan reviews:

Time Future

by Maxine McArthur

Bantam pb September 1999
454 pages $15.95
ISBN 1-86325-194-4

Orbiting a dead planet, Jocasta, a second-hand structure abandoned by aliens has been refitted to become Earth's first deep space station. Five years after its establishment in 2116 it has been abandoned again, this time by the Confederacy, an alliance of worlds of which Earth is a junior member. The humans managing the station can ill afford the suspension of protection and assistance when it's the mysterious Seouras who have cut off outside contact by blockading Jocasta with their powerful warships.

Keeping the battered station operational is a job that's devolved upon Commander Halley, a human engineering officer. Tired, and wrung out from months of growing resource shortages and unrest amongst Jocasta's inhabitants she wants to know why the Confederacy hasn't acted to break the siege and what are the Seouras waiting for? In the midst of ongoing chaos a sleeper ship launched long ago from Earth arrives with a cryogenic cargo of frozen humans and, not at all incidentally, there's also a murderous alien monster stalking the corridors of the station!

Time Future is Canberra based Maxine McArthur's first published novel and it won the 1999 George Turner Prize. One definite plus is the complex set up and the way in which the reader is literally dropped in the middle of things. The understandably gloomy atmosphere reminded me of another genre novel where desperation was the watchword, *We All Died At Breakway Station*. Although I personally found *Time Future*'s narrative a tad slow paced up to about page 300 that didn't stop me from appreciating Commander Halley as a well drawn character. This was critical since the story was told from her viewpoint. Not a superwoman, her exhausted but game efforts are that much more courageously admirable. Unfortunately, many of the other characters are a bit sketchy, and they didn't really give Halley much to bounce off.

It is perhaps inevitable that there are strong coincidental echoes in *Time Future* of the station based television shows *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* and *Babylon 5*. Writers setting their stories aboard similar constructs are bound to run the risk of comparable plot elements turning up, usually to the detriment of whoever is last in line. I know that with today's media savvy genre readership that I can leave it up to them to spot the resemblances. Speaking of 'hunting' though, the search for the amok alien is particularly resonant of events in the film *Aliens*. What a dilemma modern genre writers have! There has been a deluge of SF media in the last fifty years, and it's impossible (and probably not wise!) to keep up with it all. On the other, er, claw *Aliens* is a major classic of the genre. Anyone who has seen it will be struck by the similarities and be unhelpfully distracted by them, as I was. This is, incidentally, not a problem unique to McArthur, and will only grow more noticeable as the genre keeps expanding.

Ah the trials of the long-distance reviewer! Perhaps though, I'm **too** veteran an SF reader to fully appreciate what is really a reasonably well crafted novel with a great deal to offer **newcomers** to the genre. Pity about the lame title though, *Time Future* sounds like an unsubtle marketing attempt to come up with something as catchy as *Star Trek*!

Damien Saunders reviews:

Star Wars – Darth Maul: Shadow Hunter by Michael Reaves

Century hc March 2001 307 pages $44.95 ISBN 0-7126-8417-4

This book is the latest set before the action involved in *A New Hope*, around the time of *The Phantom Menace*. The time period is immediately before the start of the Trade Federation's blockade of Naboo. As the cover and title imply the main character is Darth Maul.

The basic plot is as follows: one of the top people in the Trade Federation delegation who knows about the upcoming blockade is missing. Darth Sidious suspects betrayal and sends his apprentice Darth Maul off to contain any possible leak of this information. The Nemoidian with the plans of the Trade Federation and Darth Sidious on a datachip makes his way to Coruscant to sell and move into hiding and live off the proceeds.

A young Jedi padawan is under going her test of ascension in being a Jedi and comes across the targets of Darth Maul. Another young Jedi comes across the aftermath of some of Darth Maul's fights and has 'a bad feeling about this' in regards to the feel of the force in the area.

The novel itself is a good example of a chase/mystery story with only a few twists in it. Well worth a read if you want to find out more background on Darth Maul.

Craig Macbride reviews:

Luci in the Sky

by Chris Fox

Hutchinson tpb March 2001
453 pages $27.95
ISBN 0-09-179387-4

LUCI is an artificial intelligence chip, designed by a brilliant young woman named Maria. It's designed to play a warplane simulation game, but gets stolen by a defence contractor to become the heart of a real plane. What the company building the plane doesn't know is that the chip is designed such that, at the point when the player is doing best, it will override the controls and destroy your home base.

Maria enlists the assistance of an industrial spy and the two of them go through a series of adventures together. Will they manage to prevent the new plane from destroying the Pentagon? Will they survive? Will they fall in love and live happily ever after? I don't want to give too much away, but I have to say you can probably guess all the answers.

Given that we can guess the ending, does this book, as the back cover suggests, 'reinvent the high-tech thriller genre'? I'm afraid I don't think so. It's quite a fun story and I quite liked the author's writing much of the time. However, the book is way longer than need be, at over 450 pages. A thriller should compel me to keep reading, even when it's 2 am and my eyes are tired, but this one's easy to put down.

Paul Ewins reviews:

Chronicles of Magravandias 1 & 2 by Storm Constantine

Sea Dragon Heir

VGSF tpb September 1999 343 pages $22.95
ISBN 0-575-06780-2

Crown of Silence

Gollancz tpb September 2000 344 pages $27.95
ISBN 0-575-07079-X

Storm Constantine has written a number of fine books, but by her standards lately all she has been writing is rubbish. Of course compared to some of the fantasy novels that get published this is pure genius, but since *Stalking Tender Prey* she seems to have lost something. The Grigori trilogy stalled in book 2 and ultimately finished with a whimper and this latest series seems to have lost its way already. Of course it is difficult to judge a series until the last book is out, but what I have read so far is not encouraging. Again, I would stress that it isn't bad, just that I had hoped for better from an author who had enthralled me in the past with imaginative stories and quality writing.

Most of the annoyance stems from the fact that this is very much generic fantasy. There is very little that hasn't been done before a hundred times. We have a prince trying to deliver his land from its conquerors. Being the rightful rulers, his family have a magical link to the sea dragons that live in the nearby depths. There are wise magicians living in a secret wood. One of them trains a young apprentice who, despite being a nobody peasant, is vitally important. They go on a quest to recover a magical artifact and are tested to see if they are true. We even get a quick flash of elf.

The actions starts in Caradore, that part of fantasy that shall ever be England. The gentry care about the peasants who in turn are loyal to the 'rightful rulers'. It is all very green and pastoral. The oppressors hail from decadent Magrast, home of the god Magradore and capital of Magravandias. When not off conquering the world they retreat to their dens for sex, drugs and politics. Magrast is magnificent, disgusting and dangerous. Another place we visit is Mewt, which is a far off land full of gods, cats, heat and magicians that is ruled by an enigmatic queen. Egypt and Cleopatra was the immediate thought. Bree is a place full of deep dark woods with yet more magicians and finally there is Cos, a desolate land useful only as a place to become lost in. Chronologically speaking the story is set in a Renaissance era. There are cannons and muskets and the Magravandian army is composed of officers and men, not knights and peasant soldiers. Socially we see free villages with squires rather than lords and their villeins. This is a later setting than most fantasy books, but still in the safe pre-tech era where magic can exist without competition from steam or electrical power and the hero(s) can fight an evil king or wizard rather than a self-serving government and a corrupt bureaucracy.

The magic in this series seems to be a bit of a mixed bag, varying from place to place and also with the circumstances. In Magravandias and Caradore it is fairly remote and high level, concerning the fate of the land and being linked to elemental beings, the sea dragons of Caradore and the firedrakes of Magravandias. In Mewt it is a lot more evident, with priestesses handing out prophecy in the temples and magicians studying in schools. In the forests of Bree the magic is very mixed. Some of it is practical magic, scrying and such, but then there are excursions into earth magic and also mysticism. I hope that Storm has some way of tying this all together because I am having a lot of trouble reconciling places like Bree where magic is abundant with Caradore where it is almost mythical.

Naturally, being Storm, there is a fair amount of sex involved in these books; none of it particularly mainstream in nature and much of it the cause of great unhappiness. In her past novels sex in any form has rarely been viewed in a really negative light, but here the attitudes of the Magravandians to sex seem to be linked to cruelty and decadence, while the more restrained people of Caradore are the purer folk. Later however, the self-disgust that Kaster feels for his attractions to Tayven are written to show him as weak. Nobody gets the love they want, and the only positive message seems to involve the love of a boy healing the heart of a man, but we are yet to see whether that actually happens. The really annoying thing is that all that sex seems to be more or less gratuitous, included for shock value or perhaps even titillation. In the Wraeththu series sex was about evolution and in the Grigori it was about transcendence, here it seems to be about power and possession and thus the displays of rape, debauchery and infidelity where the only true love is the 'forbidden' love.

So where does that leave us after two books with an unspecified amount to go? Well, although I have been disappointed so far I will be reading the next one because Storm is far too good a writer to make a complete hash of things. Her disappointments are other people's gems and I'm sure that most regular fantasy readers will enjoy these books. Maybe the next book will tie the disparate threads together and it will all start to feel 'real'. If, on the other hand, we get a conclusion as weak as *Stealing Sacred Fire*, then I think it will be high time that Storm goes back to writing stand alone SF novels and leave trilogies to the true fantasy hacks.

Alan Stewart reviews:

Aurealis #25/26 edited by Dirk Strasser & Stephen Higgins

Chimaera Publications magazine June 2000 236 pages $19.50 ISBN 0-95859414-7 ISSN 1035-1205

A big chunky 236 pages, plus covers (with ads inside), but there's only 120 pages of fiction! Only about half the package is new stuff, and an awful lot is wasted on Aurealis self-promotion and review of past issues. This comes across as much thinner than recent Australian anthologies, but at least ir's one way of getting 13 new stories, including one by one of the editors.

A very busy cover with some of the text all but vanishing in the detail. I'm not sure how true the cover blurb 'Featuring: The Next Wave' is, only time will tell, but there's more SF in this issue than usual, the horror has been cut back. No story came across as really outstanding, but they were all promising.

The best thing in this issue was Van Ikin's interview with Sean McMullen. Bill Congreve continues his reviews of books by Australian authors, and there's more info for aspiring writers, albeit a bit dated.

Overall a better issue than usual, but still too much wasted paper from this familiar reader's point of view.

Sue Bursztynski reviews:

The Rescue of Princess Athena

by Kathryn England

Lothian tpb July 2000
224 pages $12.95
ISBN 0-7344-0137-X
(Takeaways series)

Princess Athena, daughter of the King and Queen of the Golden City, has been kidnapped by Dark Lord Mordlon. Mordlon has taken over most of the country and is threatening to kill the princess if the head wizards don't surrender. They send a couple of unlikely rescuers—Seth, student wizard (second bottom of his class, though he **can** turn people into frogs) and his friend Mim, whose mysterious parentage eventually becomes clear (just think Luke Skywalker).

Despite some humorous moments, it isn't really a funny story; it's as if the author couldn't make up her mind. That's a pity, because it could have been a much better story if she had decided to make it funny. There are endless possibilities here, with Seth playing straight man to Mim, and Mordlon has to be the most incompetent Dark Lord ever to utter an evil spell. He has acquired all his magic from a stolen book and his army of darkness is fairly useless—the skeletons are stupid and the wraiths are only invisible when they're hungry and when they're hungry they get irritable. He also leaves the magic gems that give him his power lying around the castle to be found by the heroes. It's also a shame that there are no female characters playing an active role; Princess Athena appears twice, once to be gloated over, once to be rescued.

Still, it's a fairly readable straight fantasy adventure for children. I'd recommend it for about eight to ten years of age; older kids tend to be reading either young adult or adult fiction.

Rose Mitchell reviews:

Evergence 1: The Prodigal Sun by Sean Williams & Shane Dix

Voyager pb February 2000 407 pages $14.95
ISBN 0-7322-6569-X

In *The Prodigal Sun*, the first book of the Evergence Trilogy, Sean Williams and co-author Shane Dix set a cast of nicely contrasting characters in the far reaches of space in the distant future. They come up against mystery, intrigue, injustice, cruelty, conspiracies, cold war politics, big explosions, lots of blood and guts, possible sexual tension – you know, the usual elements that make a rip-roaring adventure of the Willis persuasion.

Humanity has spread profusely far and wide across the galaxy and developed into a complex hierarchy of 'castes'. The Sol System, and Earth, from whence humans ventured in the dim mists of time, is the stuff of legends.

Commander Morgan Roche, a female intelligence officer in the Commonwealth of Empires, has been assigned a mundane duty of escorting a valuable piece of technology, a highly sophisticated AI, known as 'Box', which inevitably is not all it appears. Roche and Box gather friends and foes along the way: a mysterious hitchhiker, Adoni Cane, who has little or no recollection of his past or purpose but has all the bearing of a powerful soldier; a young female telepath, Maii who immediately bonds with Roche (it's a female thing or possibly a male fantasy....) and a crusty old trader, Veden, who is Maii's guardian.

When the space vessel this motley group is traveling aboard is attacked, the five escape to a nearby prison planet, conveniently hook up with a mercenary, Haid, and embark on a race across the planet blowing up stuff and killing lots of people whilst being chased by an opposing, evil force, the Dato Bloc, recently seceded from the COE, who want – the Box! Various other minor characters, all of whom have crucial roles to play in the adventure, move in and out of the frame along the way.

Needless to say the plot thickens, however Williams and Dix are considerate of their readers and provide a reasonable and satisfactory conclusion to this episode of their saga. The authors while offering nothing new either to science fiction or block-buster adventures, tell this story in a highly entertaining if not riveting fashion. Particularly interesting is their portrayal of women. When men try to write women it can be a tad patronizing; not so these guys, who do women rather well!

The Prodigal Sun is an enjoyable, enthralling novel that soundly sets up the next novel in the series. You just have to know what happens after the band of adventurers set off into the yonder, staring meaningful and purposefully into the distance. Highly recommended for space opera fans, and not just boy space opera fans either!

Rose Mitchell reviews:

Evergence 2: The Dying Light

by Sean Williams & Shane Dix

Voyager pb July 2000
402 pages $17.54
ISBN 0-7322-6714-5

The second installment in the Evergence series sees our adventurers setting off for the Palasian system to investigate a space anomaly – what else – which may have something to do with the Sol Apotheosis Movement, a quasi religious group dedicated to achieving 'Transcendence'. No tree hugging hippies, the Movement reeks of sinister motives.

There's Morgan Roche, now a renegade intelligence officer in command of the captured Data Bloc ship, the Ana Vereine, Box, the powerful AI with numerous hidden agendas, Haid the mercenary, who in this outing gets a makeover leading one to speculate for whom, Maii the young Surin telepath, Cane the clone warrior of mysterious origins and Uri Kajic the former captain of the Ana Vereine, surgically interfaced to the ship!

The motley crew of the Ana Vereine run a blockade set up by the Commonwealth of Empires, the supposedly good guys to investigate happenings in the Palasian System, a sparsely populated solar system near the border of the Data Bloc, the suspected bad guys, which has been decimated by forces

unknown. They are also looking for another Sol Wunderkind, an ancient clone warrior and possible sibling to Adoni Cane. Apart from death and destruction what they find in the System is government conspiracy, cover-up, intrigue and subterfuge.

The senior personnel of the remaining major population centre of the system, Galine Four, are in league with the Kesh, a fierce and cruel caste who our heroes soon come to logger heads with. Roche, with the aid of the Outriggers, a race of unique miners who live their entire lives within their 'all-suits', wage fierce and vast battles in the blackness of space. Needless to say our heroes prevail, in a fashion. Roche, Haid and the Box are the stars in *The Dying Light*; they get to dash about this solar system in full *Die Hard* mode; poor Cane, Maii and Kajic are neglected somewhat, though due to Maii's dilemma we meet another race important to the resolution of the drama. The second Sol Wunderkind warrior, while central to the action, is not used nearly enough and spends a goodly part of its time lurking about. However, Williams and Dix throw in a rather neat twist concerning the second clone that leads to a great many questions which no doubt will be answered in Episode 3.

Messrs Williams and Dix while once again set a cracking pace with space ship chases, explosions and the like, tend to explore some of the characters a little more in this outing, thus slowing down the action. Doubtless this is because it's the middle story, however, they do move the plot along, albeit only slightly. Overall, the authors effectively introduce new, vital clues and components into the saga. While the conclusion to this episode is less satisfactory than the first, it nevertheless sets up the necessary teasers for the final episode. Again, highly recommended but be warned: you will need to read the next novel. A pity that the third and final installment is not due to be published in Australia till mid-2001 and rather frustrating for those who have become hooked and need resolution to this highly entertaining series.

Paula McGrath reviews:

Age of Tyrants 1: The Jackal of Nar by John Marco

Millennium tpb May 1999 660 pages $24.95
ISBN 1-85798-567-2

When I picked up this book for the first time I flipped it over to the back and immediately saw the comparison to Robert Jordan's 'Wheel of Time'. For a moment I was daunted, remembering the hours I spent trying to wade through that enormous work. Then I decided that I would judge this book on its' own merits and give it a try. I was very impressed.

This is the first novel from this author and I can only hope that the following novels in this series are just as engrossing as this one. The hero of the book is Richius Vantran who is also known as Jackal to his enemies, thus the title of the book. He is a prince of a land that has only recently been absorbed into the empire of Nar and is now embroiled in a war of his emperor's making .

The plot of the book is quite complex revolving around the conflict between two large nations and their leaders. On one side you have the Empire of Nar with their technological advantage and vast numbers. On the other you have Lucel-Lor, a hodge-podge of warlords and tribes suddenly joined together under one ruler to stop the encroachment of Nar.

Richius is caught in the middle, a brilliant tactician forced to wage a war he doesn't believe in. When he meets Dyana, a woman of Lucel-Lor, he falls deeply in love with her. He tries to help her escape but in the process they are swept up by a mysterious mist. He then learns that the rumors of magic in Lucel-Lor are true. This is the reason for the war. The Emperor is dying and he believes that the magic is the only thing that will restore his youth.

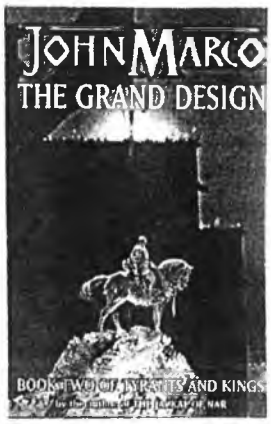
Court politics and machinations make up a lot of this book and you have to feel sorry for the hero, up against such malevolent opposition like Count Biagio who seems to have his fingers in every pie. Cheer for the hero, because even though he loses the war and his kingdom he does win the girl in the end.

If this review seems a bit confused it is simply that there is so much happening in this book that it is extremely hard to digest into a few paragraphs. I can heartily recommend this book. For a first novel it is extremely well written and avoids all the horrid cliches you read in a lot of fantasy nowadays. I was impressed.

Tyrants and Kings 2: The Grand Design

by John Marco

Gollancz tpb
September 2000
575 pages $27.95
ISBN 0-575-07073-0



Well, let me say this. I thought the first book was great but this one is even better. The author has obviously used his experience from the first book to improve his next book and the result is flawless. Just as twisty as the first one, *The Grand Design* introduces a few new characters for the delight of the reader. While Richius is still the hero there are several other storylines running at the same time. Count Biagio the villian and Bishop Herrith are both fighting to fill the void of the dead emperor and their battle is epic. Count Biagio is a complex man who has a grand design to both rule the empire and revenge himself upon Richius, thus the title.

Again the plot is too complex to try and explain in too much detail but Richius must decide between his daughter's safety and the fight for survival of his adopted country and people. I urge you all to read this marvelous book and I await eagerly the next instalment in the series.

Edward McArdle reviews:

Such A Pretty Face edited by Lee Martindale

Meisha Merlin Publishing (Atlanta)

At the Worldcon Gene Wolfe recommended a book to which he had contributed a short story. Immediately afterwards I discovered that about a dozen of the authors (but not Gene Wolfe) would be signing copies in the Dealers Room. So I bought my one book of the convention. It is called *Such A Pretty Face*, as in, 'You have such a pretty face, what a pity you are fat'. The stories feature heroes and heroines who are severely overweight, or old, or both.

I read through this, which was probably a mistake. I had an impression of sameness, and the stories are not really alike, except that a preponderance, if that is a socially acceptable term, are sword and sorcery, or pagan. It is just that I remained aware of the theme of overweightness.

There was nothing I felt impelled to nominate for a Hugo, but there were a few interesting ideas – lower caste vampires who shapeshift into furniture instead of animals; and a were-elephant. I felt that the stories which had the clever ideas did not develop them into great plots.

Worth buying, but don't read it all at once.

Alan Stewart reviews:

On Writing

by Stephen King

Hodder & Stoughton
hc October 2000
238 pages $45.00
ISBN 0-340-76996-3

A book about writing by Stephen King. Interesting that there's no table of contents, but there are three Forewards (5 pages); C. V. (73 pages); What writing is (4); Toolbox (24); On writing (93); Postscript (15); Editing example (13); Reading list (4). Basically it is a brief history of King's life (C. V.), his comments on writing (On writing), plus peripheral extras. His life story has been detailed in places such as *Danse Macabre*, so what the reader gets here is about 80 pages of commentary. Though fans may be more interested in the 15 page Postscript which deals with King's 1999 accident and recovery.

King keeps his promise to omit needless words. On writing is a solid read, direct to the point of brevity, and very readable. Some of the examples used come across as boring, but fit with the theme of writing as a job. There are better and more detailed 'How to write' books out there, but if King's name can get someone to read it and use what he says, why not?

In the end the book offers not much more than what King recommends in his Second Foreward – read *The Elements of Style* by William Strunk Jr and E B White.

Marc Ortlieb reviews:

Memorial

by Gary Crew,
illustrated by Shaun Tan

Lothian hc April 1999
32 pages $22.95
ISBN 0-85091-983-5

Nothing to do with fantasy or SF in anyway, but a stunning example of the type of picture book that adults will buy for kids because they think that the kids should read it, and because they want to admire it themselves. Not that it's bad. Shaun Tan's artwork is quite stunning. He blends montage with some excellent botanical drawing. If you admire his work, then you'll really enjoy this for its visual impact.

The story is a touch on the trendy side, blending grassroots environmentalism with the reconciliation of Australian returned servicemen. We have the story of three generations of Australians, veterans of World War I, World War II and the Vietnam War as seen through the eyes of the fourth generation, a young boy determined to save a Morton Bay Fig that he sees as a memorial to Aussie Diggers. Crew weaves in the message that the symbol isn't as important as the memory and Tan's artwork supports this through images on continuity and regrowth. His little Christmas Beetle cum scarab is a nice touch.

Some interesting blending of text and artwork in places, but not as strong as their previous book, *The Viewer*.

Murray MacLachlan reviews:

The Sundered World by Frank Ryan

Voyager pb March 2000 350 pages $15.95
ISBN 0-7322-6676-9

Do not buy this poorly written, poorly edited and poorly packaged routine heroic fantasy novel by Frank Ryan. There are far better books for your dollar. The reader might reasonably conclude that the publisher, faced with a substandard manuscript, skimped on both editing and packaging. The best part of this book is Mark Salkowski's cover art, a cliche fantasy harbor scene with a probable title of 'Galleons at Dusk'. There is also a gratifying absence of typos.

Packaging: the book is the first in a series. Nowhere is this mentioned on the cover or in the title pages. Instead, the reader, expecting all loose ends to be tied up in the one book, finds the story cuts off part way through. In better hands this would have been a cliff-hanger. In *The Sundered World* I didn't care.

Poor writing: in better hands the hackneyed plot, commonplace fantasy venues, and stock characters might have been transformed into something of interest. Sadly, this is not the case. The plot is age-old: the man Duval is transported from the streets of London to the world Tor where he learns to use his new magic powers and save the nice people from the evil Tyrant of the Wastelands. A second thread, where the adolescent Duval and some friends meet magic and evil on a mountainside in Ireland, moves with glacial slowness and in this book has no links with the main plot thread. The plot is picaresque: the hero and his companions travel by foot and boat, with intermittent battle scenes as they barely manage to escape with their lives from the well-trained professional soldiers of the Tyrant. The settings are common coin: the Wood, the River, the Inn, the Walled City, the Abandoned Citadel. Even where Ryan attempts to evoke a sense of wonder – often through the device of gigantism – his prose fails to excite:

> *there – it seemed impossible, for the scale was beyond any human aspiration, yet suddenly there it was – towering above them, a great figure of stone, rising out of the deep and as much as a thousand feet high. It guarded the left gate of the pass in the gigantic figure of a man – a man seated not upon a dais but upon the shelf of rocky outcrop, his legs crossed at the ankles and his arms folded.*
>
> *Behold the Pass of Kloshe Lamah!*
>
> *Shocked to full wakefulness, Duval stared up at the massive sculpture. He was so awed he had to lean against the rail for support.*
>
> *More than any other aspect, it was the head – a tumulus of granite, as great as the entire Sphynx – that cast a brooding threat over their forward passage.* [pages 221-2].

A 'tumulus' is a burial mound, so Ryan is telling us that the head of this thousand-foot high statue is a burial mound, and made of granite. 'Aspect' in this extract shows an unfortunate ambiguity: the angle of a head shows an aspect, whereas Ryan is describing the qualities of the statue as a whole. Previous text has mentioned that the hero and his companions are on a boat, heading downstream, so the phrase 'forward passage' is tautological and indeed raises possibilities such as sideways passage or passages slightly at a angle. For some odd reason Ryan appears to assume that the reader's mind's eye would have such a statue seated on a dais, otherwise why else did he write the clause 'seated not upon a dais'? What purpose is served by describing specifically 'the shelf of rocky outcrop' instead of 'a shelf of rocky outcrop' or indeed removing the unnecessary specificity and tautologies and referring to 'a rocky shelf' or 'an outcrop'. Similar odd reasoning is in the phrase 'beyond human aspiration': are human aspirations limited to statues of under a thousand feet in height and the reader might well ask, for instance, are statues of a mere eight hundred feet the most to which humans can aspire? The English language is

the writer's tool; Ryan's use is inept.

Stilted dialogue accompanies the poor description and bloated prose:

"Tell me why you anticipate treachery, Kemtuk?"

"I always expect it. Yet this talisman confuses me. The Legion know where we are. They allowed us entry to this town by open river or, as you tell me, through unguarded gates. They spy on all we do, even from moment to moment. Yet still they withhold their attack. I would wager that they fear you, Duval. Perhaps they sit in counsel even now, considering a way in which they might test your power before they are prepared to attack." [page175]

Perhaps the answer is simpler: the author does not want an attack to happen, no matter into what corner he has written himself. Magic is useful to get out of such corners, at the cost of making magic appear haphazard to suit the author's needs. Similarly with the tribe accompanying Duval's quest – at times his companions appear as a small ill-supplied, poorly-equipped family group, including sick, young and elderly, at other times when required they seem to swell in numbers enough to fight off hordes of warriors. Such inconstancy is unfair on the reader.

Ryan tells us what his dialogue will do, then does it, as if his dialogue cannot speak for itself:

Impulsively, with a spin of his body and a wave of both his arms, Siam called for a celebration.

"The Mage Lord has come back to give us purpose! Gather more timber to feed the fire. Let them come close to warm their weary bones. And then we shall feast as best we can. Dance – and music! Let these poor walls shake and the roof lift with the joy that springs from the deliverance of our friend, Alan Duval, who came to us from another world, and who will lead the Olhyiu to Carfon and freedom!" [page 169]

This extract shows how desperately Ryan avoids the word 'said', but in truth it is difficult to make such a complicated utterance solely with a spin and a flick of the limbs. The author appears not to have read his dialogue aloud to test whether he would feel inspired by such a call to celebration. The critic William Atheling, Jr said that often dialogue so dire is due to the writer focusing on how things are said, not what is said. Chapter 18 'The Vale of Tazan' was selected at random and uses the following as speech tags (it should be noted that the word 'said' occurs once only in this chapter):

Saying something verbally: asked [1] declared [2] exclaimed [1] insisted [1] piping voice [1] talking reflectively [1] thundered [1] wailed [1] (and, at the threshold of hearing, a cluster of speech tags associated with very soft voices): muttered [1] murmured or murmuring [2] murmured softly [1] spoke softly [1] little above a whisper [1] whisper or whispered [2] spoke softer than a whisper [1] breathed [1].

Dialogue where somebody paradoxically communicates using speech yet does so inarticulately: groaned [1] groan of fright [1] incredulous growl [1]. Again communicating dialogue but by non-oral methods: replied with a shrug [1] smiled [1] terrified babbling [1].

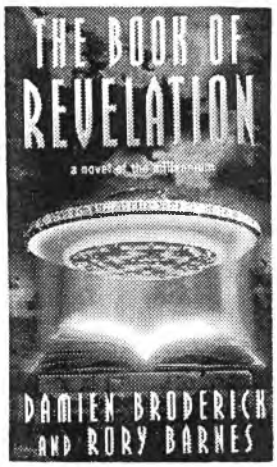
Because how things are said is more important than what is said, peoples' eyes become more than mere visual sensory organs: eyes are 'red-veined with malice', 'are furies', are 'wild' (all from Chapter Ten, 'Taken By the Storm Wolves'). Cliches, as the cliche has it, are rife.

There are other flaws in this mediocre novel. Ryan does not follow through on the implications of his material. The beginning chapters involve Duval learning about his passage through the magic portal, and at least a dozen times Duval says 'bloody hell' or variants thereof in italics when exclaiming on his situation. Such emphasis indicates something more than an oath, maybe that the author is setting up a heaven/hell dynamic as a theme in the novel. No, it's merely repetition to no planned effect. Indeed, Ryan often repeats himself: a mutter is bound to be followed by more muttering within several paragraphs.

The names have little magic and appear to be a grab-bag: Carfon is reminiscent of the ancient Roman town in Wales, the people Shee have no connection with the Irish spirits, other names are reminiscent of Toltec, Olmec and Mayan civilisation but the mythology conjured by these names is not used. A villain is called Snakoil (Snake-oil, greasy snake, get it?). Travel through portals is a commonplace in heroic fantasy, but Duval takes more than seventy pages to comprehend the fact that he moved from Earth to Tor. In 1912, Edgar Rice Burrough's heroes took less wordcount, and that was before fantasy flooded the market creating a relatively sophisticated audience.

Good editing should have fixed many of these problems. Maybe the publishers expected more from a writer's fourth novel than was in fact delivered. Maybe there was too much work to do: the only clue to the original manuscript is an acknowledgement to two people for (among other things) 'great patience and help with the typescript' and a third person for his 'sensitive contribution to the editing'.

Robert Jan reviews:



The Book Of Revelation

by Rory Barnes
and Damien Broderick

Voyager pb September 1999
393 pages $14.95
ISBN 0-7322-6474-X

Mr Barnes and Mr Broderick seem to have been drinking from the same satirical well as Robert Rankin! Which, of course, means that *The Book Of Revelation* has a plot that defies easy summation.

No worries.

This is the story (more or less) of the not very Reverend Daimon 'Deems' Keith of the Church of Jesus Christ, Time Traveller, and how he got that way. Deems has a bafflingly complicated relationship with filmmaker Margaret Rosch, leading to the birth of a daughter Rosa, who, not at all incidentally, functions as a substitute narrator. *The Book Of Revelation* is (sort of) an account of Deemsy's incredible life as an alien abductee and knockabout guru. Rosa refers to the book and to her own recollections of her father throughout the novel.

There is a distinct Australian flavor, somewhere between chocolate beer and vanilla slices in batter, to this freewheeling piss-take, which successfully captures the deranged spirit of past decades of itinerant Aussies on walkabout. The UFO schtick wobbles happily alongside this, leading to the title's amusing Revelation, which turns out to be several light-years more elegant than anything cobbled together for *The X-Files*. I particularly enjoyed the dissertation on the relative intellectual merits of cats and horses, which boils down to the significant fact that cats eat horsemeat but horses don't eat catmeat. The sly send up of millennial cults and screwball religions is timely, even after the fireworks have died down and the doomsday types have emerged blinking from their bunkers.

Besides, as Rory and Broderick wickedly point out, there's still the True-End-Of-Millennium to worry about! *The Book Of Revelation* is a welcome entry in the growing field of Australian genre send-ups. Expect to see it in the ET waiting room next time you're booked in for a quick anal probe and microchipping!

Alan Stewart reviews:

The Darwin Awards

edited by Wendy Northcutt

Orion tpb December 2000
286 pages $16.95
ISBN 0-75283-871-7

Based on the website, this book collects the winners, nominations and urban legends which have accumulated over the past 5 years. Nearly 200 stories of how dumb humans have died, damaged themselves or just contributed to folklore.

The tales are collected in sections based on a theme, and include titles such as "I fought the law...": Stupid Criminal Tricks and Leaps of Faith: Fatal Falls. Each entry is labeled 'confirmed', 'unconfirmed', 'personal account' or 'urban legend'. There's bound to be at least one story you've heard before, but many more to delight you.

As the editor suggests, it's best to read a few at a time, dip into a section, and wonder just how stupid some people can be.

Alan Stewart reviews:

Into the Dark

by Victor Kelleher

Viking tpb March 1999
393 pages $24.95
ISBN 0-670-88464-2

Into the Dark is a more adult novel than some of Kelleher's recent works. It tells of a young man who is called to be a servant at Castle Dracula.

It's an unusual take on the classic tale. Familiar names—Mina, Jonathan Harker, Van Helsing, and Count Dracula himself. Set in Transylvania, and including a trip to London, it's at once familiar and yet novel. As bloody as the most recent special effects version, but written like a nineteenth century tale.

Kelleher remains an accomplished novelist, and this does not disappoint.

Murray MacLachlan reviews: **Forever Peace** by Joe Haldeman

Millennium pb February 2000 351 pages $14.95
ISBN 1-85798-899-X

Among the many pleasures of *Forever Peace* is a sense of wonder, for Haldeman has a utopian vision of stunning appeal and (uncommonly for a utopia) a means of getting there. Sadly this path to utopia is strewn with coincidences and I wondered just how many rabbits a SF writer can legitimately pull out of a hat before a work must be considered as a fantasy and not SF. The whole novel is skillfully told to ensure the reader suspends disbelief, and history shows that the fate of the world has hinged on coincidences and accidents of timing, but a novel is an artistic creation and on these terms there are too many deus ex machina in this enjoyable novel for it to be ultimately satisfying.

Readers should not expect a sequel to the Hugo-winning *The Forever War* but there are thematic similarities. This novel is about wealth, work and war, and *get[ting] rid of soldiering as an occupation* [page182].

Forever Peace is set in the near future where the rich nations war against the have-not nations in hot spots such as Costa Rica, Lagos, Rangoon, and the Magreb. The Alliance has nanoforges, equivalent to Aladdin's wonderful lamp or the grails of Phillip Farmer's Riverworld, and nanoforge riches are doled out to 'most favored' have-not nations. Also the rich have soldierboys: fearsome combat golems animated by soldiers hundreds of miles away. The platoons who operate the soldierboys are connected to them and each other via jacks: neural implants that allow telepathy.

Julian Class is a soldierboy platoon leader, selected partly for his personality type and mainly because he can precisely fit into the soldierboy simulacrum. In time off outside his national service Class works as a university post-doc teaching physics. He has a lover, Amelia Harding, a physics professor whose circle of friends includes the inventors of the jacks and whose work includes a critique of the Jupiter Project, a supercollider designed to test the 'accelerated universe' theory of how the universe developed immediately after the Big Bang.

This is an economic war where our current tensions are writ large and ironies resonate. With no world hunger and prosperity guaranteed by the nanoforges, ideological battles are still iterated and it is the rich alone who have become richer. A mere six thousand soldierboys subjugate Central America. Armed children fight the soldierboys. Jacks allow perfect communication and so are used to create weapons of war. It's a class war (note the hero's name), and Julian, his forename descended from the Caesars, has more power than any Roman Emperor yet is just a soldierboy's 'mechanic'. A black man, he is instrumental in the predominantly white North's subjugation of the black and yellow South. A foot soldier, he teaches advanced physics in his other life. He knows more about how it feels to be female than any man previous – there are five women in his telepathic platoon – but he and Harding still have problems communicating. Haldeman is acutely conscious of the implications of his material and often uses the last sentence in a paragraph to throw the previous text into ironic relief:

> *Fewer than a dozen nuclear weapons, small ones, had been used in twelve years of war. A large one had destroyed Atlanta, and although the Ngumi denied responsibility, the Alliance responded by giving twenty-four hours notice, and then leveling Mandellaville and Sao Paulo. Ngumi contended that the Alliance had cynically sacrificed one nonstrategic city so it could have an excuse to destroy two important ones. Julian suspected they might be right.* [page 11].

Forever Peace has much in common with a bestselling thriller. The reader feels present in the world (there is no fog on the window as the reader peers at 2043 AD) whether the matter is relationships, sex, combat scenes, or politics. The prose is well crafted, with humor, surprise, some beauty in the metaphors, and it never gets in the way of telling the story. The alternating points of view work well, moving between first-person Class and third-person omniscient narrator. The people in this novel are adults and even secondary characters are more than stock spear-carriers. The pace is driven first by adrenalin and curiosity about the effects of technology on combat, then by interest in the main characters' emotional lives as jack technology brings them together and drives them apart, and then by a thriller plot about whether the world will be destroyed or redeemed. That the problem of evil can be solved by technology is also a narrative hook. In short, the reader trusts Haldeman to tell an interesting story and tell it well.

Thrillers sometimes suffer by being beyond belief; *Forever Peace* would fall apart without its coincidences. Harding finds she has to save the world but cannot discuss the secret with Class because of his telepathic jack; within twenty pages Class

loses access to his jack. Harding's circle of friends have such a range of knowledge and skills that they can bring the entire US military-industrial complex to a standstill. What is the likelihood of the technology to achieve utopia – the jacks and nanoforges – appearing at the same time as a project such as the Jupiter Project? Finally, the medical procedure required to solve the problem of evil moves abruptly from being a complex process to a very swift intervention, just when the heroes are running out of time.

The author's sleight-of-hand is so well done that many readers will be willing to give Haldeman the benefit of the doubt on these matters and not let them distract from a very good read. And it meets Brian Stableford's dictum that the best moral SF should finish with a line such as 'the whole world lived happily ever after'. Overall a flawed yet enjoyable near-future fantasy thriller.

Paul Ewins reviews:

Polar City Nightmare

by Katherine Kerr & Kate Daniel

Gollancz tpb July 2000
357 pages $27.95
ISBN 0-575-06860-4

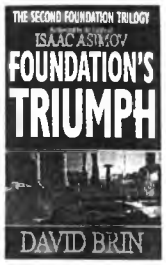
This is a sequel to the 1991 novel *Polar City Blues*. Ms Kerr takes care to point out that this is a true collaboration, not a franchise, and having read both books back to back there is little to suggest otherwise. Despite a nine year gap *Polar City Nightmare* feels just like *Polar City Blues*, which is fortunate as *Polar City Blues* was a book that I quite enjoyed, with interesting characters and a strong story.

The action takes up nine months later, with things not entirely rosy between Jack Mulligan and Bobbie Lacey. Once again the central thread is baseball. The local team makes the Galactic Series and their star pitcher is being blackmailed because he, like Jack, is a telepath. The blackmailer wants some smuggling done, a stolen alien artifact, but this all goes badly wrong and people start dying. Bobbie, Jack, Nunks and Buddy on one side and Chief Bates on the other combine to solve the crime and prevent disaster.

Polar City Nightmare is just as much a crime novel as it is an SF novel. The plot is a basic whodunit, with a few extra complications, but there is more to the SF side than just the setting and the psi. As in *Polar City Blues* the story is told from a human viewpoint, but the alien cultures have a strong bearing on the story and we get to learn a little about them. The other strong theme is the underdog. Bobbie was a naval officer but was court-martialled and now lives near the slum she grew up in. Jack is an outcast because of his psi abilities, while the entire planet is part of a small galactic republic squeezed between much larger neighbors. While humans live on many planets they are masters of only a few. The other major theme is loyalty and there are a lot of examples of how it is tested and where it is misplaced. It adds an extra dimension to something that could just as easily have been Miss Marple in Space.

I would recommend reading *Polar City Blues* first, not only does it help a little with the relationships between the various characters, but it is an enjoyable book. *Polar City Nightmare* is just as good. It's nicely paced, with interesting characters and a few ideas to make you pause and think. Once Ms Kerr finally finishes the Deverry fantasy series I hope that she will write more SF novels like this one.

Robert Jan reviews:



Second Foundation Trilogy 3: Foundation's Triumph

by David Brin

Orbit hc September 1999
328 pages $39.95
ISBN 1-85723-753-6

Isaac Asimov's massive landmark science fiction series, *The Foundation Trilogy* was written in instalments between 1942 and 1950, helping create the template for writers wanting to set their stories on a galactic scale. Big story, bigger concept, as the mathematician Hari Seldon, aided by his institutional creations, the great Foundations, used the fictional science of psychohistory to delay the fall of the human populated Galactic Empire, ameliorate the suffering when it did eventually collapse, and create a dynamic new society from the mighty ruins.

Psychohistory, like Asimov's famous Three Laws Of Robotics, was a great science fiction idea, a complex statistical method which enabled Seldon to chart and anticipate future large scale socio-political trends. Apart from the ambitious *Foundation Trilogy* Asimov was also well known for his famous series of robot based short stories and novels. In the 1980s he managed the difficult trick of amalgamating the two sequences in a new series of five novels comprising *The Robots of Dawn, Robots and Empire, Prelude To Foundation, Foundation's Edge,* and *Forward the Foundation.*

As nightfall follows dawn it was inevitable that someone would get around to building anew upon Asimov's *Foundation/Robot* series after the good doctor's death in 1992. The science fiction community breathed a collective sigh of relief when the three 'Killer Bs' as they are affectionately known, Gregory Benford, Greg Bear and David Brin were selected as new standard bearers.

Benford and Bear successfully added a new layer of complexity to the saga with *Foundation's Fear* and *Foundation and Chaos*, and Brin brings things to a satisfying conclusion in this third and final linked volume, *Foundation's Triumph*.

Along the way the authors have managed to effectively answer nagging questions and tie up many loose ends. As Benford put it in his introduction to the first of the new novels, 'Why were there no aliens in the galaxy? What role did computers play? Particularly vs robots? What did the theory of psychohistory actually look like?' This affectionate exercise in 'plotholing' has resulted in some very elegantly filled gaps, with the overriding theme being the further exploration of the life of Hari Seldon as a character and man.

Brin picks up where the others left off, producing a thoughtful coda to the second trilogy that reveals all against the backdrop of Seldon's declining years. He pits robot faction against robot faction in a sometimes comical free-for-all fashion that reminds me of his own *Uplift* stories. I bet Brin must have itched to write about those elusive aliens in the Empire's past, juicy ET characters being a signature of his! Along the way Brin, as have the other writers, cheekily incorporates Asimov's other works, such as *The Currents of Space* and *Pebble in ihe Sky*.

It's going to take a while before this new trilogy can be placed properly in context, but even at this close range it seems to fit well within Asimov's overall concept. Like the best sequels it does no damage to its inspiration, but at the same time takes it in new directions. Be warned though, none of the writers pretend to mimic Asimov's spartan, remarkably asexual style, so if you're looking for a clone of his writing this won't be the place to find it.

Foundation's Triumph is the last room in a brand new extension of science fiction's most famous house with hints of

further renovations to come. Makes me want to go back and reread the original trilogy, so that's a point in its favor to start with!

Paula McGrath reviews:

The Age of Misrule 1: World's End

by Mark Chadbourn

VGSF tpb November 1999
424 pages $24.95
ISBN 0-575-06782-9

This book comes in my favorite category of fantasy. Mixing the modern world with old world magic and myth. Most of the books I read in this category are fairly lighthearted e.g. Mercedes Lackey or watch on TV like *Buffy* and *Charmed*.

World's End is slightly different. It starts with a series of steadily escalating paranormal mishaps culminating in a dragon landing on a motorway and the High Hunt chasing innocent victims over the roofs of a seaside resort. Five people have been chosen by the Sidhe to recover some ancient artifacts which will help the New World adapt to all the magic inundating it.

Of course nothing is as simple as it sounds and even though they have a talisman that points them in the direction of the artifacts it seems that anything that can go wrong does.

All five are flawed characters. Church, the unofficial leader of the group, has blamed himself for his wife's suicide for two years. He goes through life in a complete indifferent haze. When he and Ruth, another of the group, see a demon killing a man near the Thames, they both realise that something is wrong. They meet another of the group, Laura, when she posts to the net saying that she knows the meaning behind the weird goings on.

As the group slowly comes together they are joined by a mysterious figure named Tom who has specialized knowledge of what is happening. He tells them of their task to recover the artifacts and the consequences if they fail.

What follows is both terrifying and entertaining as the heroes are chased by increasingly horrible monsters. I normally don't like the darker fantasies but this is well written and easy to read. Will the Brothers and Sisters of Dragons prevail? I don't know. I have to read *The Darkest Hour* which is book 2 in the series. I'll let you know.

Alan Stewart reviews:

The Fifth Elephant

by Terry Pratchett

Doubleday hc November 1999
317 pages $36.95
ISBN 0-385-40995-8

It's the 24th Discworld novel; it features Sam Vimes; too much Chekov; and one of the best titles in the series. Oh, and there's werewolves, but what would you expect in the snowy mountains of Uberwald. But Vimes being Vimes, just being ambassador isn't enough and he soon finds a crime to solve amongst the foreign court intrigues and faction fighting.

I suppose you could classify it as a 'Watch' novel, but it's a Watch separated and in some cases at a loss away from their beloved Ankh-Morpork. It's an average Discworld novel. Some intriguing Pratchett touches, with the Uberwald politics more dynastic than party, and the whole idea behind the 'fifth elephant' and it's effect on the Discworld. The intrusion of mundane Chekov allusions didn't work for me, as I'd have preferred more Discworld mythos and invention.

Recommended. But if you're a Discworld fan, you'll already have it!

Paul Ewins reviews:

Green Rider

by Kristen Britain

Earthlight
(Simon & Schuster)
tpb April 1999
504 pages $22.95
ISBN 0-684-85828-2

Well here's a bit of a turn up; a first **novel** by a fantasy author. That's right, a single book with a beginning, a middle and an end. That's not to say that there won't be a sequel, but the story officially ends at page 504. No cliff-hanger, no enemy awaiting, no book 2 (not to mention 3, 4 & 5) just a nice clean defeat for the bad guy.

Green Rider isn't a marvelous book, in fact is very much generic fantasy. There are a few cliches and one rather contrived plot device and it all seems terribly familiar. Nothing in it is particularly new or exciting, but neither is it badly written or dull. In short, not a bad effort for a first attempt.

As is fairly typical for female fantasy authors we have a feisty heroine suddenly forced into a different, more dangerous role. Ms Britain has made her particular version of mediaeval European society a much more equal opportunity place than normal, so involving the heroine in various armed conflicts doesn't seem as contrived as it normally does. Having said that, most of the authority figures are still male so I guess she has unconsciously recreated the style of her favorite fantasies which stick a lot closer to actual mediaeval Europe.

The plot has two strands; a life or death message given to the heroine by a dying courier (one of the green riders of the title) which must be delivered to the king and a plot to depose that same king. The unifying thread is an evil magician; your basic black robed, fireball throwing necromancer. It's fairly light reading and doesn't tread any new ground, but it doesn't stumble much either and was pleasantly entertaining.

A whole series written at this level would not be worth the wait between books, but with just a single book it is worth reading. I hope the author will tackle a different subject next time and give herself a chance to grow, rather than follow the usual fantasy practice of writing the same book five times in a row.

Books Received

The End of Eternity	Isaac Asimov	Gollancz	tpb
Chronicles of the Raven 1: Dawnthief	James Barclay	Millennium	pb
Chronicles of the Raven 2: Noonshade	James Barclay	Gollancz	tpb
Beyond Heaven's River	Greg Bear	Millennium	pb
Queen of Angels	Greg Bear	Millennium	pb
Tangents	Greg Bear	Millennium	pb
Keys to Avalon: True Location of Arthur's Kingdom Revealed	Steve Blake & Scott Lloyd	Element	tpb
SF Masterworks 30: A Case of Conscience	James Blish	Millennium	tpb
The Word and the Void 3: Angel Fire East	Terry Brooks	Orbit	pb
Virex 1: New York Nights	Eric Brown	Gollancz	hc
Homecoming 4: Earthfall	Orson Scott Card	Orbit	pb
The Chanur Saga	C J Cherryh	Daw (Penguin)	pb
The Light of Other Days	Arthur C Clarke & Stephen Baxter	Voyager	tpb
Magravandias 1: Sea Dragon Heir	Storm Constantine	Millennium	pb
Magravandias 2: Crown of Silence	Storm Constantine	Gollancz	tpb
Fantasy Masterworks 5: Little, Big	John Crowley	Millennium	tpb
T'En 1: The Last T'En	Cory Daniells	Bantam	pb
T'En 2: Dark Legacy	Cory Daniells	Bantam	pb
Collected Stories 4: Minority Report	Philip K Dick	Millennium	tpb
Collected Stories 5: We Can Remember It For You Wholesale	Philip K Dick	Millennium	tpb
SF Masterworks 32: Dr. Bloodmoney	Philip K Dick	Millennium	tpb
Stone 2: Stone & Sea	Graham Edwards	Voyager	pb
Teranesia	Greg Egan	Millennium	pb
The Rescue of Princess Athena	Kathryn England	Lothian	tpb
Demon Child 1: Medalon	Jennifer Fallon	Voyager	pb
Nightrunner 3: Traitor's Moon	Lynn Flewelling	Voyager	pb
Witches of Eileanan 4: The Forbidden Land	Kate Forsyth	Arrow	pb
Shadowleague 1: The Heart of Myrial	Maggie Furey	Orbit	pb
Ash: A Secret History	Mary Gentle	Gollancz	tpb
Sword of Truth 6: Faith of the Fallen	Terry Goodkind	Gollancz	hc
Hawk & Fisher 2: Fear and Loathing in Haven	Simon R Green	Millennium	pb
Mindbridge	Joe Haldeman	Gollancz	tpb
Night's Dawn 3: The Naked God	Peter F Hamilton	Pan	pb
Mystery, Magic, Voodoo & the Holy Grail	Traci Harding et al	Voyager	tpb
Fantasy Masterworks 7: Virconium	M John Harrison	Millennium	tpb
SF Masterworks 31: The Centauri Device	M John Harrison	Millennium	tpb
Rhapsody	Elizabeth Haydon	Millennium	pb
The Dosadi Experiment	Frank Herbert	Millennium	pb
The Jesus Incident	Frank Herbert & Bill Ransom	Millennium	pb
Red Dwarf Programme Guide (third revised edition)	Chris Howarth & Steve Lyons	Virgin	pb
The Road to Mars	Eric Idle	Pan	pb
Elita 2: Voice of the Demon	Kate Jacoby	Millennium	pb
Elita 3: Black Eagle Rising	Kate Jacoby	Gollancz	tpb
Polar City Nightmare	Katherine Kerr & Kate Daniel	Gollancz	tpb
Owlsight	Mercedes Lackey & Larry Dixon	Millennium	pb
The Wanderer	Fritz Leiber	Gollancz	tpb
Everien 1: The Company of Glass	Valery Leith	Millennium	pb
Secret Texts 2: Vengeance of Dragons	Holly Lisle	Gollancz	tpb
The Devil's Own	Deborah Lisson	Lothian	tpb
Star Wars: New Jedi Order - Agents of Chaos 1: Hero's Trail	James Luceno	Arrow	pb
3: Acorna's People	A McCaffrey & E Scarborough	Corgi	pb
Bloom	Wil McCarthy	Millennium	pb
Tyrants and Kings 2: The Grand Design	John Marco	Gollancz	tpb
Sevenwaters 2: Son of the Shadows	Juliet Marillier	Macmillan	tpb
A Song of Ice and Fire 3: A Storm of Swords	George R R Martin	Voyager	tpb
The Best of Walter M Miller, Jr	Walter M Miller, Jr	Gollancz	tpb
Gravity's Dreams	L E Modesitt, Jr	Orbit	pb
SF Masterworks 29: Man Plus	Frederik Pohl	Millennium	tpb
Eric	Terry Pratchett	Millennium	pb
The Gods Trilogy	Terry Pratchett	Gollancz	hc
Salt	Adam Roberts	Gollancz	tpb
Waiting	Frank M Robinson	Tor (Pan Macmillan)	pb
Star Wars: New Jedi Order – Vector Prime	R A Salvatore	Arrow	pb
The Reproductive System	John Sladek	Gollancz	tpb
Norstrilia	Cordwainer Smith	Gollancz	tpb
Aurealis #25/26	D Strasser & S Higgins (eds)	Chimaera	magazine
Singer From the Sea	Sheri S Tepper	Gollancz	tpb
Big Planet	Jack Vance	Gollancz	tpb
Evergence 2: The Dying Light	Sean Williams and Shane Dix	Voyager	pb
Alliance of Light 2: Grand Conspiracy	Janny Wurts	Voyager	pb
Fantasy Masterworks 6: The Chronicles of Amber	Roger Zelazny	Millennium	tpb
This Immortal	Roger Zelazny	Gollancz	tpb

NOBODY GETS AWAY WITH POKING OUT THEIR TONGUE AT ME LIKE THAT!
DEC. 2000