

OUT OF THE BIN
November 2013

"..the trees in my forest continue to fall.."

On November 25th we attended a gathering of the friends and family of PETER DARLING, 1946 - 2013, celebrating his life and work as a science fiction fan and an engineer working for TELSTRA. I first knew of Peter as a Sydney SF fan, friend of Gary Mason and others. He was one of the people who organised the first SF convention in Sydney for fourteen years, SYNCON '70. In due course he became involved with the bid to hold a World Science Fiction convention in Melbourne and was a very important member of the bidding committee. He was obviously "married" to his work and remained single until he got together with John Foyster's widow Elizabeth and spent many happy years with her and John's daughter Miranda.

A Sydney SF fan I first met in 1954 was GRAHAM STONE, who passed away recently. Graham was part of early Sydney fandom and The Futurian Society along with Vol Molesworth, both of them being somewhat autocratic figures in the 1940s and 1950s in Sydney fandom. Following the 4th Australian SF Convention held in Sydney in 1954, organised fandom in Sydney remained in limbo until SYNCON '70. Graham however was forever a tireless worker cataloguing all the Australian SF writing he could discover and producing his *SCIENCE FICTION NEWS* (no connection to my publication of the same name) and various lists and THE AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION BIBLIOGRAPHY volume, obviously his life's work, comparatively recently. Graham was a richly deserved recipient of the A. BERTRAM CHANDLER AWARD, honouring his efforts in the SF world.

During my life as a SF fan and bookseller I had the great privilege of meeting many SF writers. One unique meeting was with British author DORIS LESSING. As I was closing up at my bookshop Space Age Books one evening, I received a call from Ms Lessing's publisher in Melbourne asking if I would like to take her to dinner. Space Age may well have been last on the list, as it was late in the day. I didn't hesitate to answer "with pleasure" and I asked our friend, SF author and *Miles Franklin Award* winner George Turner, to join me. I also invited my shop assistant, English teacher and Doris Lessing fan Maureen Walsh, to come along. It turned out to be one of my limited record of brilliant ideas, as George and Doris shared similar interests and got along very well. Ms Lessing died recently and the news of her passing reminded me of that dinner at the *Florentino* restaurant.

Seeing American author GEORGE R. R. MARTIN being interviewed on TV, regarding the TV series *GAME OF THRONES*, based on his *The Game Of Thrones* books, reminded me that I had met him briefly four times. We met at BUBONICON in Albuquerque in New Mexico USA 1982, then at lunch with *LOCUS* editor Charles Brown at the 1982 Worldcon CHICON in Chicago. I met him again when he was GoH at DANSE MACABRE, the 1990 Australian National Convention in St Kilda (Melbourne, Victoria) in 1990. Then in 2010 I was on the stage with him and other award winners at Aussiecon 4 in Melbourne. Good luck to George, he is doing very well.

Perusing the local Carnegie library, I found that they had a number of titles by ORSON SCOTT CARD on their shelf. Having read his original *ENDER* series many years ago I decided to read the spin-offs featuring the other alien destroyer *BEAN*. Rather timely it seems, as a movie is due for release based on the first book, which won a Hugo, *Ender's Game*. Early reports are that the movie is not up to scratch but I will endeavour to see it at any rate. Due to extreme lack of finances we may well not get to it, but we did see *GRAVITY* which despite a few exaggerated bits, was great.

Yes, another year is almost over and we are fixed at our current address for another two years okay, providing that the big tree at the front does not fall on us. The cost of rent (which as usual takes most of our pension), excessive power charges, and massive water bills due to leaking taps, not to mention food and all, means that it will be a very lean Christmas. This blasted digital TV changeover is a pain. We have learned that we may get a little help with an indoor digital antenna and conversion box, but the rest of our old TVs will only be useful for watching our old videotapes.

Whatever, we will make the most of the Christmas season and we wish all our friends a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Merv and Helena