

Number 18.

S C A N S I O N

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SCIENCE FICTION NEWSLETTER .....

After a break of some weeks, occasioned by two of SCANSION's editors being tied up in University of Technology examinations, and the antics of a character who considered himself to have been insulted in SCANSION 17, edited by Pat Burke, SCANSION is back. This is good? ... well, take your own line on that.

The antics of the individual mentioned above deserve some comment; the attitude struck by one of science fiction fandom's more controversial figures, who has been maintaining that Sydney fans have split into an intellectual and a "bobby socks" (his expression) group, he and our "insulted" friend belonging to the intellectual section, of course, lost a certain amount of its force when the latter arrived at the doorway of the bobby-sockers' headquarters the other Thursday night, and announced "Where's Burke? I'm going to flatten him."

Was there a brutal assault on the editor of No.17? Was SCANSION put out of action for three weeks by intimidation? Is that how our libelled friend succeeded in disturbing our schedule? No. He was offered the opportunity of producing a SCANSION himself, and, apparently feeling he wished to unburden himself of a few choice remarks, he verbally accepted. However, when we attempted to confirm his intended appearance in this printed forum, the courtesy of a reply was not forthcoming. How ignorant can an "intellectual" get?

The annual examinations have not left your present editor much time to scan the science fiction that's around at the moment, WILD TALENT, serialized in NEW WORLDS, concluded as well as the earlier two parts had led us to believe it would. A slower moving tale than THE LONG LOUD SILENCE, and without the vividly convincing manner of THE CITY IN THE SEA, it is yet a story that is quite successful within the scope of the object the author has set himself. The plot is best described as "standard S-F thriller, with telepathy, spies, two beautiful women, and the usual trimmings". However the standard of writing is high, and the sketching in of character, if not strikingly good, is competent.

I have not yet embarked on THEY'D RATHER BE RIGHT, or GLADIATOR AT LAW, recent serials in ASTOUNDING and GALAXY respectively, since I haven't as yet all the parts. However, the run of extremely bad short stories, and the two sad specimens of short novels in the Sept. and Oct. (USA) ASTOUNDING must be remarked upon. The shorts are all idea stories, skimpily written about ideas that were either silly or overworked to start with. Of the two short novels, Anderson's THE BIG RAIN is a similar mixture of very convincing passages and interesting ideas, with laughable blood-and-gut-spilling sequences and end-justifies-the-means philosophy, to his earlier UN-MAN, Fred Brown's MARTIANS GO HOME reads as though pounded out without revision in a grim overnight session to pay the rent. There is little more pathetic than an unsuccessful comedy, and this will certainly bring a tear to the eye of those who treasure the memory of PARADOX LOST and ARENA. The idea has been used



to much better effect by John Beynon.

The other item up for review is Sturgeon's blown-up BABY IS THREE. This novel, given the International Fantasy Award for 1954, is far from being a successful whole. It is obviously BABY IS THREE with fore and aft parts tacked on by a Sturgeon who has become somewhat impressed with his own ability as a writer. The novel still repays the reader most handsomely, but the thought content and the character work groan under the load of far too much "writing".

With 1954 just about run down, the Fourth Convention is getting very close. We of the Committee regret that this coming Convention has not received the support from one of the more affluent sections of Sydney's fans that it deserves, a state of affairs which has necessitated our planning on a modest scale than otherwise would have been possible. However, the support given by the majority of Sydney fans and all fans interstate has allowed us to make arrangements for a show that should not compare unfavourably with the previous three. Secretary Arthur Haddon is preparing an announcement of details to be available at the same date as this SCANSION.

From the peace and quiet of Thursday night science fiction club meetings, we are moved to wonder as to what, if anything, is going through the minds of our Futurian brothers. No, not the august executive leadership, whose motives seem to be quite apparent to all, but the seemingly feeble-minded and spiritless rank and file, who will vote out a motion to ban fellow fans of differing views from the Darlinghurst clubrooms, leaving only the proposer and seconder voting for the motion, then permit their executive to impose the ban anyhow. Whatever we may think of the present Director of that body, it seems that the rest of the membership put together lacks the character to oppose him. The only issue on which even rumour seems to indicate he has not been able to achieve his own way was in his desire to ban from the room a person from whom, we have been told, he feared physical violence. It appears that the Committee would not agree to this, and so SHE may still enter.

R.I.P. Australasian Science Fiction Society: we learned at last year's Convention that the organizer of this society, possibly having extracted as much boost for a struggling little ego as he could, intended to allow it to collapse. However, he now seems to be trading on its past reputation to support his own little splinter organization, continuing mailing, but cutting his opponents off his mailing list, without of course, returning their subscriptions. A.S.F.S. did a fine job at one stage, it's a pity to see it fall on such times.

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