

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE — MAY 2009

The Norma K Hemming Award

for race, gender, class and sexuality in speculative fiction

Inaugural award 2010



*Norma Hemming with two
young Arcturian players*

Norma Kathleen Hemming (1927–1960) was a British author who migrated to Australia in 1949 and wrote for local pulp magazine *Thrills Incorporated* and enthusiastically participated in the Australian fan scene. She was a founding member of the femme fan group Vertical Horizons, and wrote and acted for the SF theatrical group The Arcturian Players. Norma returned to international publishing in the late 1950s with stories in *Nebula SF* and *New Worlds*, but died at the age of 33 of lung cancer on 4 July 1960.

The Norma K Hemming Award marks excellence in the exploration of themes of race, gender, class and sexuality:

- in the form of science fiction and fantasy or related artwork or media
- produced either in Australia or by Australian citizens
- first published, released or presented in the calendar year preceding the year in which the award is given.

The [Australian Science Fiction Foundation](#) (ASFF) will launch this major new award at [Aussiecon 4](#), the 68th World Science Fiction Convention, being held in Melbourne on 2–6 September 2010. Jurors for selection of the first recipient will be writer/editor Russell Blackford, editor/publisher Rob Gerrand, authors Kim Wilkins and Tess Williams and editor Sarah Endacott.

The award will not necessarily be given annually, and a selection will only be made if there is a work that meets an appropriate standard of excellence.

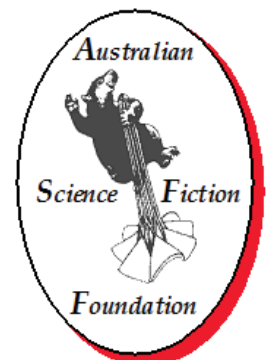
Dr Toby Burrows (Scholars Centre, University of Western Australia) is putting together an edition of Norma Hemming's collected writings, planned for publication next year.

Melbourne science fiction fans, assisted by Perth-based director and actor Grant Watson, are hoping to stage a performance of Norma Hemming's play *The Matriarchs of Renok*, which premiered at the 6th Australian national science fiction convention in Richmond Town Hall, Melbourne, in April 1958.

Both these events are planned to celebrate the award's inauguration in conjunction with the world convention.

Further information on Norma K Hemming and her work follows.

*The Norma K Hemming
Award encourages positive
images of racial, sexual and
gender diversity in
Australian speculative*



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Norma K Hemming — a bibliography

courtesy of University of WA librarian, David Medlen

In one short decade Norma Hemming wrote nineteen stories, four radio plays and five stage plays:

- 'Loser Take All' *Science Fantasy* Winter 1951–52 vol. 1 no. 3
- 'Death Ray for Roma' *Thrills Incorporated* October 1951 no. 16
- 'Amazons of the Asteroids' *Thrills Incorporated* November 1951 no. 17 *
- 'Return of the Roc-Men' *Thrills Incorporated* January 1952 no. 18
- 'Lifeline on Luna' *Thrills Incorporated* February 1952 no. 19
- 'Last of the Rocketeers' *Thrills Incorporated* March 1952 no. 20
- 'Vengeance of Artilla' *Thrills Incorporated* April 1952 no. 21
- 'The Terror of Terra — A Short Story' *Vertical Horizons* April 1952 no. 1
- 'Peril of the Sea Planet' *Thrills Incorporated* May 1952 no. 22 *
- 'Rocketeers at Bay' *Thrills Incorporated* June 1952 no. 23 *
- 'Starchild' *Forerunner* Spring 1952 no. 1
- 'You Can't Stop a Spaceman' *Action Monthly Magazine* 1953 no. 12
- 'Fancy Dress' *The Daily Mirror* 19 February 1953
- 'Symbiosis' *Popular Science Fiction* March 1954 no. 3
- 'Clearing Station' *Fantast Sidetrack* April/May 1954 — supplement to UK fanzine *Operation Fantast*
- 'As We Were' *Future Science Fiction* November 1954 vol. 1 no. 5
- 'Dwellers in Silence' *New Worlds* August 1958 no. 51
- 'Debt of Lassar' *Nebula SF* August 1958
- 'Call them Earthmen' *Science Fiction Adventures* 1959 vol. 2 no. 10

Audio plays:

Space Lure, *Trouble with a Time Machine*, *Witches of Arcturus 4* and an untitled comedy sketch set in prehistoric times. The material is undated. The plays were almost certainly read by the amateur science fiction play group, The Arcturian Players.

Stage plays:

That's the Way It Goes (Syncon 1964 — lost), *Miss Denton's Dilemma* (Syncon 1955 — lost), *The Balance of Power* (Melbourne Convention 1956), *The Carson Effect* (1956–7 — lost), *The Matriarchy of Renok* (Melbourne Convention 1958).

These sources contain more information about Norma Hemming and her life and times:

- Prophet and Pioneer: The Science Fiction of Norma Hemming*, by Sean McMullen & Russell Blackford, in *Fantasy Annual #2*, edited by Philip Harbottle and Sean Wallace (1998)
- The MUP Encyclopaedia of Australian Science Fiction and Fantasy*, edited by Paul Collins, documenting the Australian genre scene from the 50s (1998)
- Strange Constellations: A History of Australian Science Fiction* by Russell Blackford, Van Ikin and Sean McMullen (1999)
- The Best Australian Science Fiction Writing: A Fifty Year Collection*, edited by Rob Gerrand, Black Inc (2004)
- Hemming Bibliography*, by WA academic librarian David Medlen (2008 — above)
- 'I Wasn't Expecting That!' *The Career of Norma Hemming*, by David Medlen, in *Science Fiction: A Review of Speculative Fiction #45* Volume 71 Number 1, 2008.
- Address to the members of Swancon 2009 regional SF convention in Perth at Easter 2009, by David Medlen, printed in the program book for MSFC minicon on April 18, 2009.

Authorised in Melbourne by ASFF awards administrator Bill Wright for general release May 2009. Please request images of magazine covers of asterisked items () through bilw@iprimus.com.au.*