

be stupider than."

Castleman's individualism led her to an itinerant lifestyle before she settled down in Portland about five years ago.

"Those were the hippy years. I was being a hippy for a while; a spiritual tramp traveling with spiritual groups. Then I dreamed I was in Portland and it's been five years since I returned," Castleman said.

"I like Portland. If I'm going to be walking and riding Tri-Met, why not do it where it's pleasant. And there's a literate group of lesbians in Portland."

Joining B.J. Castleman as the Angry Housewives are Almá La Wrentz, Robin Rosemond and Trish Trout.

Angry Housewives plays Thursday through Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 7 p.m. at Sumus Theatre, 13 NW 13th Ave., through December 22.

Comedy Isn't Pretty

A new troupe of entertainers, calling themselves the "Un-pretty Comedians," are premiering their variety show *Comedy Isn't Pretty*, on November 4 at 8 p.m. at JR's showbar, 300 N.W. 10th Avenue.

Comedy Isn't Pretty is a non-profit organization which will give its proceeds to various social service agencies in the community. The recipient during the month of November will be the Men's Resource Center. *Comedy Isn't Pretty* will run every Tuesday night, opening night will feature champagne and hors d'oeuvres. Tickets for the opening are \$7.50; thereafter tickets are \$3.

Written and directed by David Lee, *Comedy Isn't Pretty* will feature a guest host, Kevin Koesel, popular Portland actor, will appear during the inaugural month. Koesel has acted in many local productions including Doric Wilson's *Street Theatre: Babes on Burnside* and *Quarters* at Storefront Actors Theatre; and *Stray Dog Story* and *West Side Gang* at the Open Door Theatre.

Kindred spirits

Kindred Spirits, Jeffrey Elliot, ed.; Alyson Publications, Inc., 1984

by Jim Hunger

Among literary genre, science fiction ranks highly in potential to develop new ideas and to educate its readers, not only in the flaws of the old ways, but also in the exciting possibilities of new directions. One area of science fiction is known as utopian fiction, in fact, and encompasses stories which describe alien or futuristic societies that have developed novel methods for members to interact socially and to deal with social problems. Often these "utopias" turn out to be less than perfect, as in the cases of *Brave New World* and *1984*. But even so, the framework is there upon which to present novel ideas and solutions that might influence and inspire readers.

Kindred Spirits is an anthology of science fiction short stories which will be of paramount interest to gay sci-fi aficionados, since all of the stories deal in some way with same-sex love. Lesbian readers will be especially pleased to discover that this collection doesn't merely pay lip service to gay women, as a third of the stories are authored by women, and in over a third of them lesbian relationships are an integral factor.

Gay readers in general, however, may be disappointed to discover that this is not a collection of stories which take advantage of the opportunity that the sci-fi genre avails the writer, to portray positive new ways of looking at and dealing with certain aspects of society, such as homosexuality. Some of the tales do, in fact, present gayness in a complimentary light, and some describe cultures in which sexual taboos have been overcome; others, however, include homosexuality only in a peripheral way, or even as a negative factor.

In one story, the paternal love felt but never physically expressed by an aging space com-

mander for a young cadet is the only detail which might be interpreted as a suggestion of homosexuality. In another, the male protagonist is trying to develop a hetero love relationship despite considerable odds, but is thwarted by a sinister force that possesses him and throws him into the arms of — *shudder!* — another man.

In one story in particular, "Nuclear Fission," author Paul Novitski does make a conscious attempt to portray a society in which sexual double standards and stereotyping have been surmounted in a positive way. Novitski, a Seattle writer, uses the Willamette River Valley as the setting for his story, which describes a communal society in which reproduction and romance are recognized as not necessarily integrally connected, and same-sex love is commonplace and uninhibited by social mores.

Curiously, all of the stories authored by women contain some form of physical violence, either chivalric battling or gun play and mentions of duels; the twist is that women are the executors of the violent acts, rather than men, as is typical in mainstream fiction. One can't help wondering whether this is a positive development, or in fact an unfortunate case of women identifying in a backlash way with less savory aspects of what is generally perceived to be masculine behavior.

No discussion has been included thus far of writing style because, while all of the stories are more than adequate in this area, the ideas presented are more important than the literary style of the authors, which is a basic truth for most science fiction. Also, one assumes that a multi-authored anthology of stories will have a higher literary standard, since the selections were chosen for their quality and relevance rather than because they were written by a particular author. *Kindred Spirits* is 262 pages of entertaining and undemanding science fiction which have as a unifying factor some mention of homosexuality in each story. Most of the tales do not portray societies which have come to terms with same-sex love, and so one of the most positive aspects of the genre of science fiction is

not apparent in this collection; however, a number of the stories do contain heroic gay characters, which is a refreshing change from the standard treatment of gay characters in mainstream fiction.

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