

Deadline approaches for Canada Council's book donation program

by Shirley Whittington
The Canada Council is playing Santa Claus to institutions, groups or organizations that don't have funds to buy books, but who agree to make books available for use in the community.

The Council's book donation program was started in 1972 and so far those who have taken advantage of the giveaway have been school libraries, in remote areas, homes for the aged, hospitals, cultural

centres voluntary charitable associations and prisons.

The books are distributed in kits of 200 titles each and the kits are free. The Department of External Affairs looks after distribution to universities, cultural centres and institutions in other countries.

This year, the Council has spent \$700,000 on the program which includes kits in French or English, or in both languages.

Who chooses the kits?

Each year the committee consists of a bookseller, a literary critic, a librarian and a writer. This year's English language selection committee was composed of A.E. Cummings, Peter Buitenhuis, Norman Horrocks and Sheila Watson.

They chose novels, essays, and poetry collections as well as works on history, fine arts and ecology. Some of this year's titles are *Dancing Girls* by Margaret

Atwood, *Ten Lost Years* by Barry Broadfoot, *A Painter's Country* by A.Y. Jackson and Anne Hebert's *The Silent Rooms*.

Groups or organizations who wish to apply for a book kit have until January 31, 1978 to do so. They must promise to share the books they receive with the community, and they may make application by writing to the Writing and Publication Section of the Canada Council, P.O. Box

1047, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5V8.

Metric conversion
A book on the metric mystery might be a good stocking stuffer and one of the handiest I've seen is a small Hurlig publication called, forthrightly, *The Canadian Metric Conversion Handbook*.

We are being urged to think metric, and to cast inches and ounces from our collective minds, and as a result many metric texts and guidebooks

refuse to answer the current Canadian question - "But what is it in miles or pounds or ounces?"

Hurlig recognizes this dilemma with pages of conversions including one a motorist may want to commit to memory: "50 km/h is equivalent to 30 mph; 60 km/h is equivalent to 40 mph and 100 km/h is equivalent to 50 mph."

Comparison shoppers of instant coffee will be

happy to discover that 1 ounce avoirdupois equals 28.349 grams.

The Metric Conversion Handbook is small enough to fit into a pocket or purse, and sells for \$1.45.

Letters to Emma Jane
You may, in your travels through the book stores come across a little book with a decorous pink cover called *Letters to Emma Jane*. Don't give it to your maiden aunt unless she has a sense of humour. In the preface,

by Kenneth Tynan, Emma Jane is introduced as a "charming young call girl" and the publication of letters written to her is promised as "a document that makes the Happy Hooker sound like the memoirs of a jubilant Rugby footballer."

Promises, promises. Letters is a moderately funny put down of the hooker-type correspondence. A writer asks "We are eager to try 'going the other way' but

we are not quite sure what the expression means. Can you explain?"

...sally forth together...once outside your flat, wave good bye and walk in an easterly direction. Janet meanwhile should march off in westerly direction...it could fairly be said that she will be 'going the other way'."

And so on. Kenneth Tynan obviously had a lot of fun writing *Letters to Emma Jane*. It may be

one of those books that was more fun to write than to read.

Letters to Emma Jane was published by Methuen and sells for \$6.95.

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STAR WARS

Good holiday features at local theatres

by Terry Dupuis
A very good Christmas holiday show starts this Friday at the Odeon Theatre in Midland. Carl Reiner's comedy "Oh, God!" is pure delight; whimsical and amusing and full of good cheer.

Singer John Denver makes his movie debut in "Oh, God!" as the assistant manager of a California supermarket. A shy and unassuming family man, his routine existence is turned upside down when he finds himself selected by God to deliver a divine message to the world.

God explains to Denver that He could have appeared to him in any human form, and that if He appeared to Denver as He really is, Denver's mind couldn't comprehend it. So the Supreme Being has chosen to assume the form of a gruff but genial old man who wears a fishing cap and tennis shoes. This role is most agreeably played by 81-year-old George Burns.

John Denver comes across as quite amusing

in his first screen performance. And there is some nice supporting work by Teri Garr as his patient wife and by Ralph Bellamy as a crafty lawyer. And Paul Sorvino is hilarious in the role of the Rev. Willie Williams, who is a phony money-grubbing evangelist.

But the show really belongs to George Burns, and he makes the most of it with his deft delivery of dozens of one-liners in the style which he has perfected over half a century. The humour in "Oh, God!" is gentle and

inoffensive. At the same time, the film does manage to put across a message in a non-preachy manner.

Star Wars
Another excellent holiday attraction is the science-fiction movie "Star Wars". It opens in Penetanguishene at the Pen the day after Christmas.

Star Wars is pure entertainment from beginning to end, one of the most entertaining movies I've seen all year. It is technically brilliant in its depiction of the

usual gadgetry of science-fiction. There are two extremely likeable robots named C3-PO and R2-D2 who seem almost human; there are rocketships, space stations, laser-beam swords and all sorts of unusual creatures from various galaxies.

But the brilliance of Star Wars is that it goes even beyond the limits of science-fiction to cover

the whole spectrum of movie adventure and imagination. There are traces in Star Wars of the Wizard of Oz, the Hardy Boys, old westerns and war movies and the old Saturday matinee serials.

Star Wars can be enjoyed by all ages, and those who lament that there are no decent movies to take the family to see these days, will

have to eat their words now that Star Wars has arrived on the movie scene.

In my column several weeks ago I selected Star Wars as one of my 50 Favourite movies of all times. And recently the American Film Institute voted Star Wars to be one of the 10 Best Movies Ever Made.

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