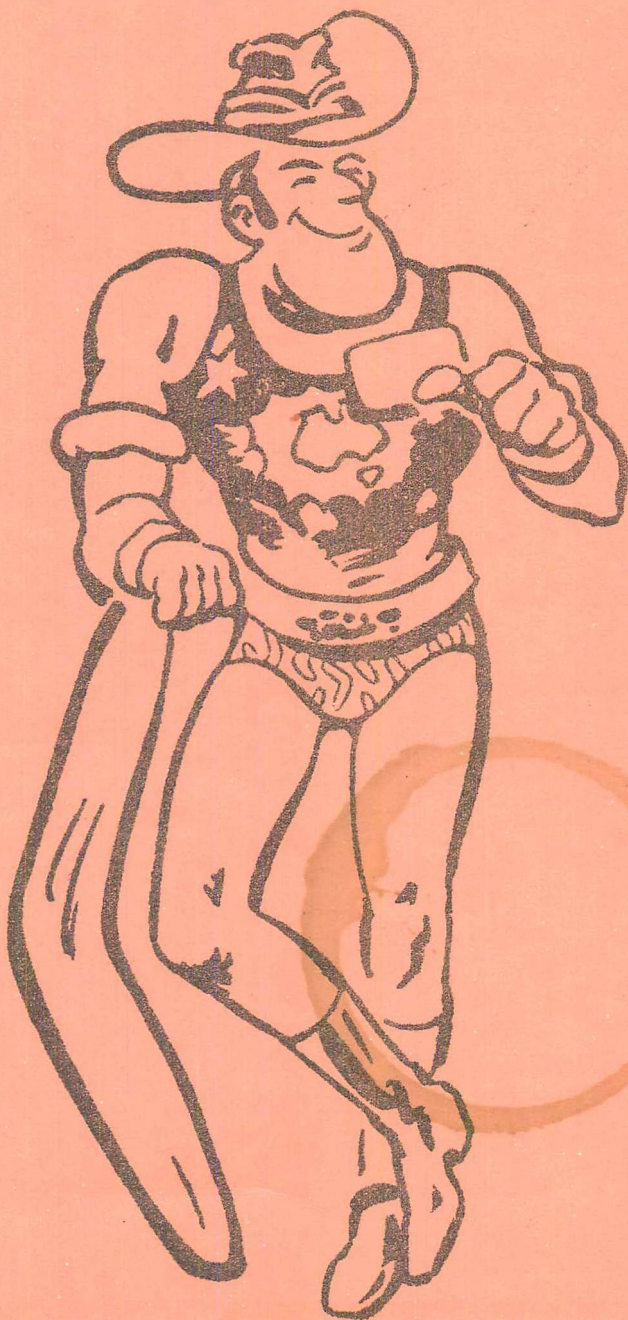


# AUSSIEGON

## *Fifth Anniversary Memorial Fanzine*



August 1980

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printed and published by:

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AUSTRALIA

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THIS ZINE ALSO SUPPORTS  
MINNEAPOLIS IN '73.

## THE AUSSIECON FIFTH ANNIVERSARY MEMORIAL FANZINE

The idea for this zine was born at UNICON VI in Melbourne, Easter 1980. Marc Ortlieb, Peter Toluzzi and I were avoiding a boring panel or something on the last day of the con, by reminiscing on our respective fannish careers.

It rapidly became evident that the three of us had attended our first con in 1975, at AUSSIECON. Less rapidly it occurred to us that August 1980 would be the fifth anniversary of that stupendous event, and that the three of us would be in Perth for SWANCON, the 19th Australian National SF Convention which was being held on the same dates.

Somebody said, "We should have a fifth anniversary party!"

Somebody else said, "We can all wear our AUSSIECON badges!"

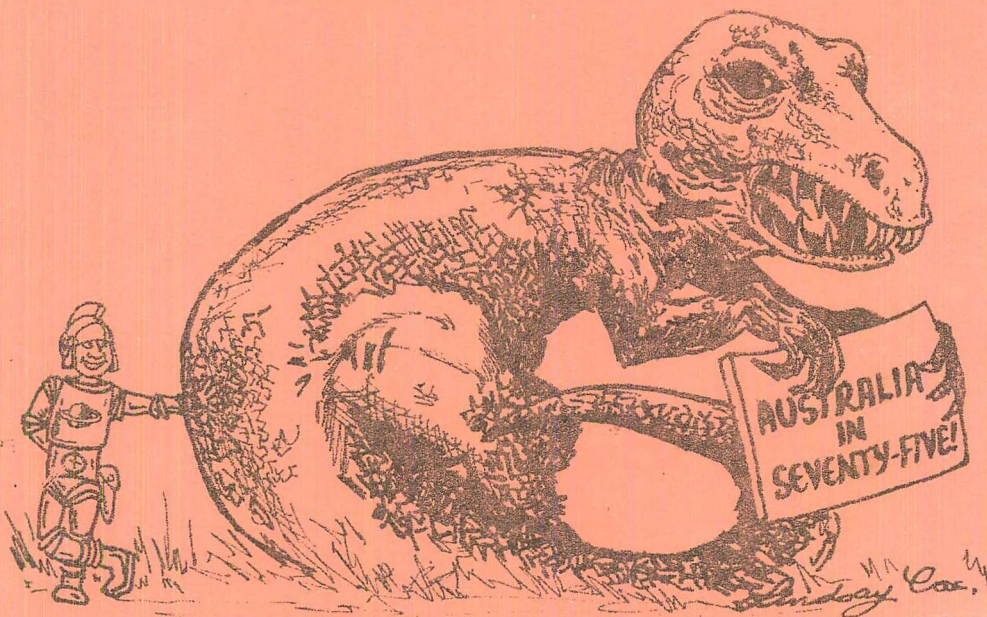
I said, "We should have a memorial fanzine!" Everybody looked at me and agreed, "Great idea, Jean!" and I realised who was going to publish it.

We cornered a lot of people to see who'd been at AUSSIECON - especially who'd been a neo like us - and asked them to contribute. Then I went home and promptly neglected to write reminding people they'd promised, and to contact overseas fens for contributions. Well, you know the usual fannish procrastinations. Some of the offerings in this zine were therefore prepared on rather short notice, for which I'm grateful.

When I did write to people, I suggested the theme "How Aussiecon Changed My Life" - for those who couldn't decide what to write about. Variations on this theme are rampant, as you'll see. I also fossicked through Leigh Edmonds's fanzine collection for con-reports and other memorabilia that I might reprint, and various people sent me artwork and articles to reprint.

I've really enjoyed editing this zine, and I'm sure you'll enjoy reading it. Write and let me know!

-- Jean Weber



IN THE BEGINNING, THERE WAS...

## ★★ John Bangsund ★★

The following advertisement appeared in the AUSSIECON Programme Book. It summarizes the genesis of AUSSIECON and reproduces an early ad for Australia in 75! From such frivolities do great events grow...

ONE UPON A TIME in 1967, John Bangsund, truefan publisher of the late lamented Australian Science Fiction Review, wrote frivolously in a letter to Andy Porter,

### **Fan Diemon's Land in '84!**

The idea caught Andy Porter's fancy, and after Bangsund expressed the idea in an earlier year (1975) and a better location (Sydney, because most actifans lived there in the late 1960's), Andy Porter put this ad in the 1968 Laucon program book:



From there, things went rapidly (downhill?) until Leigh and Robin and John and a whole bunch of people found themselves selling kangaroos to people in the streets of Toronto, and looking at hotels and asking Ursula K. LeGuin to be Guest of Honor. And here you are in this impossible, improbable dream come true; all I can say is

**Very Best Wishes From**

*Andy Porter* & **ALGOL**

**To All Australian Fans.**

*John sent me the following reply to my request for a contribution:*

"I don't think I'm ready yet to write about How Aussiecon Changed My Life. Could you give me another five years, say, to try to get the thing in perspective? Aussiecon really started in 1967, you see, with an incautious remark I made in ASFR [Australian Science Fiction Review] about 'Australia in '84!', and by 1970 the bid (for '75) was on in earnest. So for at least ten years I've been either working up to Aussiecon or coming down from it..."

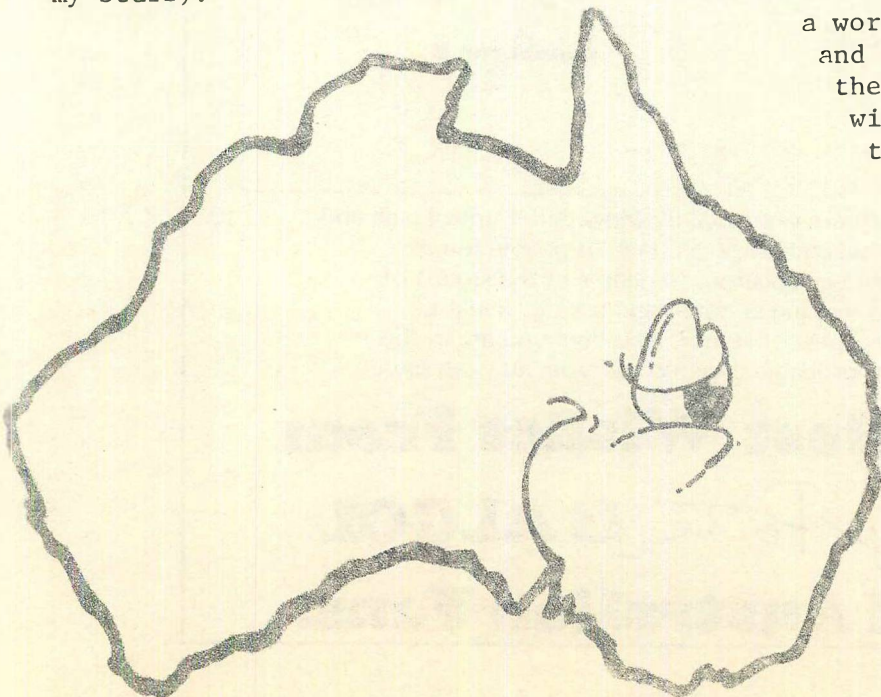
*John continued by suggesting I reprint the following from STUNNED MULLET No. 3 (November 1975), which first appeared in Leigh Edmond's FANEW SLETTER 42, 23.9.75. John's article introduces a theme which appears in many conreports - especially from North American fen - that AUSSIECON was not just the 4 days of the 'official' con, but a three-week period (at least) when dozens of overseas and local fen got to know each other, after years of reading fanzines but not meeting personally.*

"Ben Indick asked me to write a great report on the Thirty-third World Science Fiction Convention (not just for him, of course, but for all seventeen of those wonderful people who read and enjoy my stuff).

Well, let me tell you that the moment I arrived home from Melbourne I started writing my report. I wrote eight pages about the trip back from Melbourne. They're around somewhere. I never quite got to writing about what happened during the five or six days before that. I recall, however, that it was a most pleasant and hectic experience. Oh, and far too many people, too - I should mention that. Over six hundred at times, so I'm told. ('It's an anomaly,' John Berry told me, that last night at the tomato sauce tasting, and he should know. Actually he could have told me anything and I would have burst into sobs as I did then, on hearing my favourite tomato sauce or my favourite worldcon - I'm not sure which he meant, and it doesn't matter - described as an anomaly. That night, less than half an hour before I lurched into Edmonds's wretched pie-and-sauce evening, I had taken my leave of Ursula - and that's when the convention ended. 'Come again,' I said to her. She said 'I'd love to', that's all, and the lights changed, there on the corner of Bourke and Exhibition Streets, and I walked away from her to the Southern Cross mausoleum. To Edmonds's pie-night and John Berry sitting talking about this anomaly, the last of the small worldcons.) I still reckon there were far too many people.

I remember when you could do to a worldcon with two shillings, and there'd be fourteen people there, and you'd come away with twopence change! (Ah, them was days, eh, Jules! Just you and me and H.G. and them nefans. Ah yes.)

Leigh Edmonds asked me to write a piece for him about what happened in Canberra after the convention. I mentioned the threat of an early election, the increase in bus fares and the roadworks on Belconnen Way (part of our Digging Up the Roads Plan for Disruption Of



Traffic Scheme), but he hinted gently that other happenings were upmost in what he is pleased to call his mind. So I wrote the following bilge for him.

About 10.30 pm on Thursday 21 August I dreamt a crazy dream about forty-seven American fans ringing our doorbell. Sally nudged me every so gently and said, 'There are forty-seven American fans at the door!' I woke up sufficiently to put on my VIP dressing-gown before going to the door and switching on a few lights. Blinking at the assembled throng, I remarked in my most hospitable manner, 'Don't stand out there in the cold. Go home!' Ignoring this polite imperative, Susan Wood, John Berry and Carey Handfield (heavily disguised in a Nebraska accent) slipped in before I could slam the door. I still don't know who the other forty-four were. Either I imagined them or they went home.

We sat around and talked and had a few drinks for a few hours, then went to bed. It was 11.30 pm and we'd all had enough. I slept fitfully. I kept on having nightmares about Susan Wood and John Berry being in our house, and forty-two faceless fans milling about our front garden, sullenly cheering the efforts of Jack Chalker and Bob Tucker to slip down our chimney simultaneously.

On Friday morning I swept all the bottles, food scraps, fanzines, cats etc. into a neat pile in the lounge-room where Sally would find them without any trouble when she came home from work, and noticed while doing this a figure resembling Carey Handfield asleep in the room. I poured myself a stiff coffee. The figure roused itself. It now looked like Carey Handfield in pyjamas, which further alarmed me. Fans don't wear pyjamas. I poured myself another stiff coffee, and Carey came back into the room and asked if he could have some. 'Handfield,' I said, 'is it true that you are here in my lounge-room in pyjamas?' 'It is,' he said. 'Is it possible that Susan Wood and John Berry are somewhere in this house?' I asked politely. 'They are,' he said. I opened a bottle.

I forget exactly what we all did that day, apart from talking a lot and walking all over town looking for string, post offices and toy koalas and having lunch about 3 and driving up Mount Ainslie to look at Canberra. Ah, it's coming back to me now. We found this bloke up Mount Ainslie who'd locked his keys in his car, and I said I'd ring the NRMA when we got back down. I did. They asked me for his membership number, and I said he'd locked his card in the car; they asked me for the car's registration number, and I said I'd forgotten to note it. The NRMA bloke sort of sighed and said he would send a service van up the mountain real soon. I suspect he didn't really believe me. If you're ever up Mount Ainslie and you see this bloke looking hungry and confused outside a brownish Ford Escort, would you mind telling him that I rang NRMA for him? Ta.

About 5 we sent Carey out to the airport to pick up Mike Glicksohn and Sheryl Birkhead. I didn't believe he would come back with them, especially since I'd given him a map of Waukegan, Illinois, instead of Canberra, A.C.T., but he did. I keep on forgetting that Burley Griffin came from Illinois. Suddenly we had a house full of fans, and I felt a strange sense of déjà vu (that's Latin for 'When does this convention end!')

About 9 we were all miles away in the depths of sinful New South Wales, eating unpronounceable Yugoslavian food at one of my favourite little restaurants in Queanbeyan. Ask John Berry what the stuff was called: he made a note of it. It wasn't cevapcici, alas, but at least John achieved one of his other ambitions: we had a 1966 Kaiser Stuhl J426 (and a few other distinguished Australian reds that just happened to be lying about the place.) When we all rolled home we found a note under the door that confirmed my fond imaginings of the previous evening. I quote: 'Ve vas here but you vas not, so it goes. We are at the Lytham Flag Inn. Ned Brooks, Chalker, Stu Tait, Joan Srrrano, Jake Waldman.' We consulted maps of Canberra, (and Waukegan, Toronto, Vancouver and Gaithersburg) and

could find no place called Lytham Flag or even Lytham, so we decided it was all a hoax and got down to some more serious talking and drinking.

Saturday morning: a bright, sunny, unseasonable Canberra day. Beside me on the back steps is John Berry. We are drinking Guinness and there is between us a profound sense of communion, of mutual fondness and respect, of wonder, well-being and hangover. We do not speak. Behind us, on the porch, Carey and Mike are playing table tennis. Occasionally one of them steps in the cats' food and there is a polite, gentlemanly oath uttered. Sheryl, Susan and Sally are on the lawn before us, playing with the cats and talking lady talk. If fandom did not exist, I think again to myself, it would need to be invented, if only for idyllic moments like this.

During the afternoon we all sat around listening to an incredible record sent me by Rune Forsgren, a Swedish fan. If you see this, Rune, we would like you to know that we loved Lundsten's 'Nordisk Natursymfoni nr.1'. Thank you for sending it to me, and I promise to write real soon now.

Then some of us went off and invaded the Private Cellar Club, where I picked up a few dozen bottles to replenish my dwindling post-convention stores, and Mike failed to convince the cellar-master of the virtues of Canadian wines. Susan was back at 4 Hartley Street, writing her con-report for Locus, and Sally was there, too, wondering whether she was cooking enough beef stroganoff and kitsch lorraine (in France it's called quiche lorraine, I know, but we only have the Australian stuff) to feed seven. Mike, John, Sheryl and Carey agreed with me that we should drive up Red Hill to look at Canberra from the back end, but the Renault (which has a mind of its own) developed a flat tyre, so we didn't.

We were just about to settle down to dinner when Robin Johnson, Fred Patten and Don Fitch arrived. Sally panicked, of course, but I knew we could rely on her lovely heavy hand.

Most of the ten of us had second helpings. About 8 we were joined by Bobby Saxby and Rosemarie Bell. (Ms Saxby stood unsuccessfully for the local Assembly election some months ago, and I'm sorry I didn't vote for her; the musty corridors of power could do with some fans of her capacity. Rosemarie is one of my trusty unsung collators; she learnt the art two years ago by helping Sally put the Campbell book together. While I supervised, yes.) Twelve isn't a large number for a party, but even so we split into a least three sub-parties before long, with sercon fandom in the livingroom, fannish fandom in the diningroom and dish-washing fandom in the kitchen. I dimly recall talking until all hours with Bobby and Rosemarie in my junk-room (or study, as I sometimes call it) long after the others had departed or gone to bed.

Sunday was sad. We didn't want all these wonderful people to go. There were hugs, kisses and wild promises all round ('See you in Kansas City!' for example), and Don Fitch appeared in the far distance just in time for all of us to wave to him. (He had stayed at the Canberra Youth Hostel. A man of great fortitude, is Don.) Then Carey, John and Susan set off for Sydney, Robin, Fred and Don for the Snowy Mountains, and Sheryl, Mike, Sally and I for the airport. I hate leave-takings, and shall gloss over our feelings at this time.

On Monday, confident that the last North Americans had dribbled out of Canberra, we found ourselves dead tired and attempting to play host to Grace and Don Lundry. A delightful couple they are, too, and we enjoyed their company. I forgive them readily if they did not enjoy ours; we were not exactly at our sparkling best by then.

On Wednesday I came down again with the dreaded Canberra lurgi with galloping irrits. On Thursday Sally conducted her first marriage ceremony. It is now Sunday 31 August and the 33rd World Science Fiction Convention seems a long way in the past. If only I could get over the lingering suspicion that Don Fitch is still out there at the hostel,

# Australian Science Fiction Review

is not dead  
but sleepth!

19 Gladstone Avenue, Northcote, N.16, Melbourne, Australia



and that forty-seven American fans who missed the flight are going to ring our doorbell tonight."

*Thanks, John, for that reprint. Your writing is always enjoyable.*

*In my enthusiasm to introduce you to John Bangsund (as if John could possibly need an introduction!), I seem to have skipped ahead a bit. What about AUSSIECON itself? I think I'll begin with my own version of "How Aussiecon Changed My Life."*

#### OFF THE DEEP END

by Jean Weber

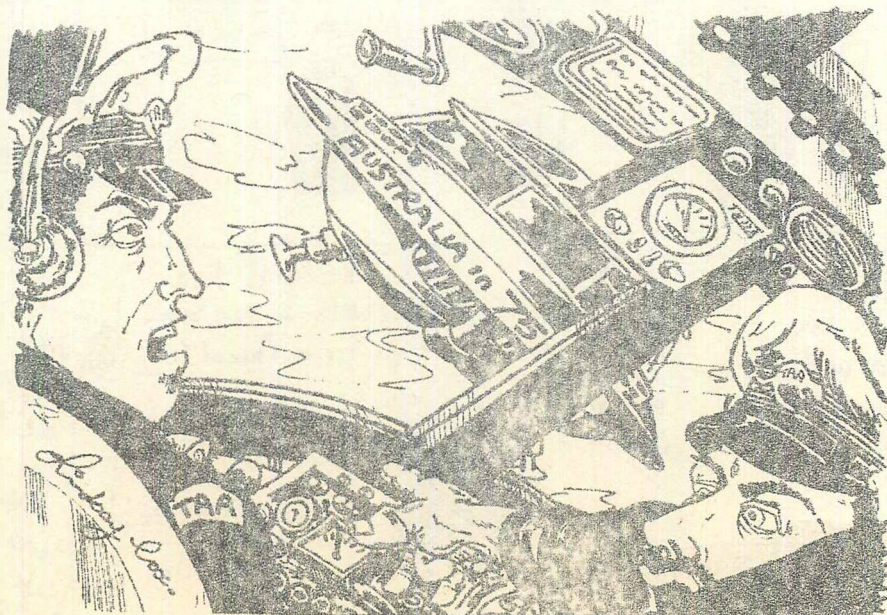
It's all Dick Roepke's fault. I'd heard of fandom before, but had never seen (much less read) a fanzine, or attended a con, although I'd been reading SF for almost as long as I could read. I was living in Townsville, Far North Queensland (having emigrated from America in 1974), and learned that Dick and his wife Chris Callahan were coming out for something called a WORLD SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION in Melbourne in August 1975.

Having not seen Dick or Chris for several years, I determined to attend too. I must say at the time I wasn't quite sure whether or not I was enjoying myself. I'm not one for late nights and smoke-filled parties, did

not know anybody but C & D, wasn't into frivolity, couldn't figure out what the hell was going on, and was too shy to speak to any writers or BNFs. (With one exception: John Bangsund. It turned out that John and I had met professionally several months previously when he was working for AGPS - Australian Government Publishing Service - and editing a scientific monograph that I was also working on.)

Mike Glicksohn sums up the situation very nicely in his Australian Trip Report *THE HAT GOES HOME* (August 1976) when he says:

*"As the first Aussiecon panel, John Bangsund, Rusty [Hevelin] and I are the first to encounter the difficulties of addressing the Aussiecon audience, the great majority of whom are attending their first convention. It isn't so much that they are unresponsive, they just don't know how to respond...They listened politely though, and did their best... But the in-jokes, the fannish references, the by-play all went over their heads and communication was difficult...It wasn't until Susan [Wood] and [Bob] Tucker explained a lot of fannish history to them and the noisy American and Canadian fans made it evident that at a worldcon you don't sit on your hands and clap politely at the end that things started to pick up."*





Things, by the way, have changed a lot since then (not just for me, but for Australian fandom in general).

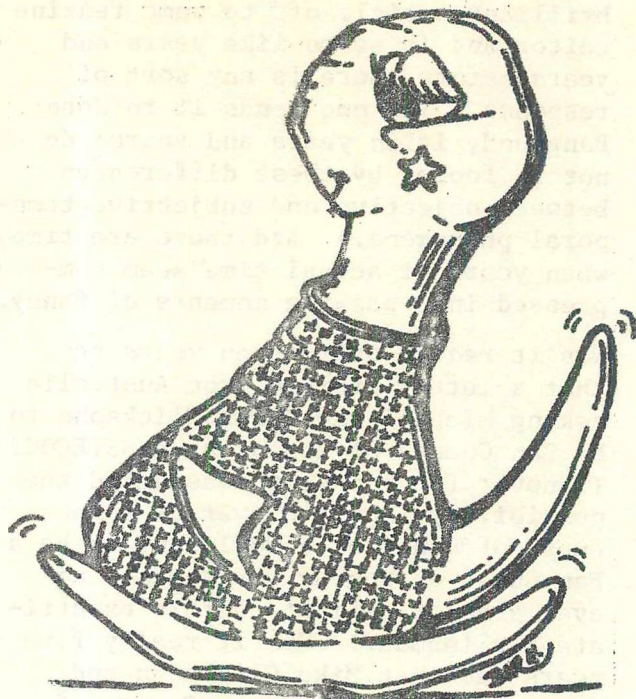
After Aussiecon, I went back to Townsville and proceeded to subscribe to several Australian fanzines (including John Bangsund's, Leigh Edmonds', and Bruce Gillespie's). Several years later, having moved to Canberra in the meantime, I attended UNICON IV (1978) in Melbourne. There I fronted up to Leigh Edmonds and invited myself to sit at his banquet table. Leigh and his tablemates accepted this invasion with good grace and I met Valma Brown, Christine and Derrick Ashby, Helen Swift and Perry Middlemiss, and was well and truly hooked. The next thing I know, I'm on a panel at EASTERCON 1979, in an apa (Applesauce), on another panel at UNICON VI in 1980, editing a genzine - where will it all end??

The best thing about fandom has been the injection of some badly-needed frivolity into my life. I'm still not much of a drinker (heavy on the orange juice, bartender) but I can manage at least one wee-small-hours party a con, and the proliferation of non-smokers has helped. I *still* don't know what the hell's going on, but I'm enjoying it. Cons are obviously more fun when you know a lot of people. In a place like Australia, with a widely-scattered but relatively small fannish population, every con is a real "family reunion". I've made many new friends, several of whom helped save my sanity during a particularly distressing hospital experience this past January.

Another change (at least partly attributable to fandom) has been that I've started writing fiction (sf, what else) seriously again. Talking to writers at cons is very inspirational!

I don't know how Aussie fans compare with the North American variety, but there are some really delightful people, with the most fascinating mixture of seriousness (eg politics) and frivolousness I've ever encountered. As my mundane life is spent among scientists (at work) and political activists (feminist variety),

fans are a welcome third ingredient. (Although I must say many of the scientists I work with could easily be mistaken for fans; their clothing, beards, and mad conversation are not those of your typical public servant -- thank goodness!)



*Having mentioned Mike Glicksohn's reaction to the Aussiecon audience, let's now hear from Mike, five years later:*

#### THE RACE ISN'T TOO SWIFT

by Mike Glicksohn

The life of a fan isn't the same as that of someone who collects stamps or plays chess or reads westerns. Oh, I'm not one of those who claims that an interest in science fiction places one above the rest of the population or is any indication of inherent intelligence or adaptability or any of the other highly specious suggestions put forth by the "Fans are Slans" minority. But while Fans may not be any better than their peers who haven't discovered the joys of Perth, the Ringworld or Valeron, they certainly are different.

And a large part of that difference lies in the accelerated lifetimes that we so casually call "conventions".

I don't think I have to make a case for the self-evident fact that Fans don't live their fannish lives on the same time scale as the rest of the world. There are times when Time itself seems to be swimming through molasses, such as when one sends a brilliant article off to some fanzine editor and it seems like years and years before there is any sort of response. (If one sends it to John Bangsund, it *is* years and years: do not be fooled by these differences between objective and subjective temporal phenomena.) And there are times when years of actual time seem compressed into passing moments of fancy.

Was it *really* over seven years ago that a letter arrived from Australia asking Michael and Susan Glicksohn to be Fan Guests of Honour at AUSSIECON? (I never for a moment considered the possibility that I'd ever be a Fan Guest of Honour at a Worldcon; to be a Fan Guest of Honour was somehow an even greater delight to this expatriate Englishman.) Was it really five years ago that Mike Glicksohn and Susan Wood actually *were* Guests of AUSSIECON? It seems impossible to believe.

Five years since I stood with one foot in Degraeves? Five years since I drank John Alderson's vintage home brewed wine? Five years since I froze my buns off in Shayne McCormack's caravan? Five years since Tucker threw a window five storeys towards the streets of Melbourne? Five years since arachnophobia and fanzinephobia battled within me on the steps of John Bangsund's garage? Five years since Leigh Edmonds ordered "Fish and chips, hold the fish."? Five years since these and a thousand other indelible memories? Well, what if it is? Five years...that's not too many.

But if the five years since we invaded Australia have passed quickly, that's nothing to the speed with which the three incredibly dense weeks we spent down under disappeared.

Whole lifetimes were compressed into that close encounter with a strange land, as if we knew there was a good chance we'd never see this land and these people again (even with the Australia in '83 bid!) and had to compact years of experience into each fleeting day. In a matter of hours I fell in love with Valma Brown. Also with John Alderson so don't read more into that than I intend. I even fell in love with Canberra although I suspect the Bangsund ambience (a French word for "wine cellar") had a lot to do with that. One *had* to do things in a hurry; there wasn't time to dawdle.

I suppose that is why the trip to Australia remains so vivid in my memory, a memory that is notorious for forgetting with whom or for where I made arrangements for lunch yesterday. And yet I remember Australia. A full year after the trip I was still able to write what remains the most complex fanzine I've ever produced (it is undoubtedly the only publication in the entire world ever to include an empty Southern Cross Alka Seltzer package in every copy) and five years afterwards I can easily evoke hundreds of good memories of people, places and experiences. (There are cynics who might claim that listening to Bob Tucker relate Aussiecon adventures at a dozen different cons each year helps keep these stories fresh in my mind but this isn't so. I remember things *despite* hearing Bob tell about them in a dozen entirely different ways annually!) Certainly the sheer intensity with which we lived those three weeks had to make them memorable for us all.

One of the suggested themes for these reminiscences was "How AUSSIECON changed my life" but I'm not sure I can quite put that into words. Undoubtedly I'm a different person for having been honoured with the greatest accolade our subculture can bestow but just how that difference manifests itself I don't know. Perhaps I should stick to the much simpler question of "Why AUSSIECON changed my life."

(In case it hasn't become clear by now, perhaps I ought to point out that when one of the Select Sixty of us Over Here

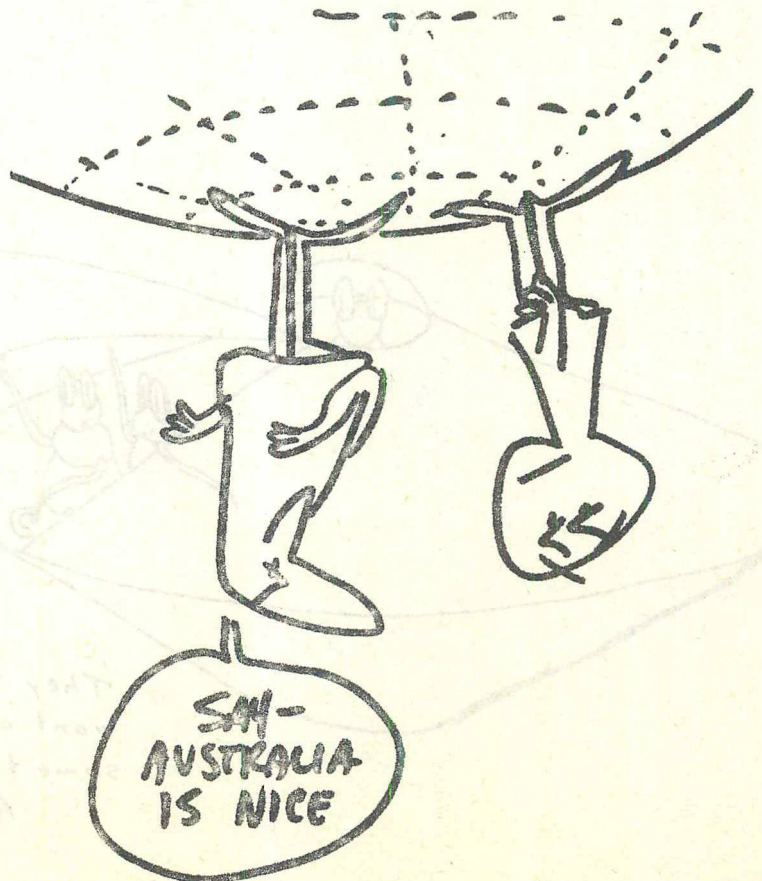
talks about AUSSIECON we mean the entire three week AUSSIECON that we experienced, not just the five day section at the beginning that some Australian fans also attended. The gathering in Canberra that saw fans from three different countries battling for the ping-pong championship of international fandom -- all the time keeping a wary eye out for Black Widow spiders -- was simply Capital AUSSIECON while the pandemonium which is sometimes referred to as AUSSIECON was also known as AUSSIECON North. Clear?

The ways in which AUSSIECON changed my life are myriad. It will undoubtedly be the only convention at which a fan will snatch a program book out of Bob Silverberg's hands because he wants my autograph, not Bob's. It will undoubtedly be the only convention at which ninety percent of the attendees not only don't know *who* the Fan Guests of Honour are but also don't know *what* a Fan Guest of Honour is. It will undoubtedly be the only worldcon at which a man unknown to all the guests introduces a group of people he's never heard of before. It would be impossible to live through these and a thousand other similar incidents without being changed by them. And then, of course, there are wombats!

Who could possibly see a wombat for the first time and remain unchanged? Who could actually *pet* a wombat and stay the same? Who could possibly commune with the noble wombat without becoming a better person for it? ~~Wah Wah~~  
~~Wah Wah~~ Discovering the delights of the wombat was even worth the traumatic shock of realizing that Eric Lindsay *isn't* the most adorable of the native antipodean fauna!

(I've often thought of starting an organization called K.O.A.L.A. -- standing for "Koalas: Over-rated And Largely Antisocial" -- but I'm just not the organizing type.)

There are other things, of course, but it took me thirty eight pages to put them all down when I wrote my trip report on AUSSIECON (was *that* four years ago?) so I won't even attempt a summary here. In three weeks, we compressed a fannish lifetime of experience and none of us returned the same person who left Los Angeles. For me, perhaps the most important that happened in a trip overflowing with memorable events and experiences was that I had a chance to meet and become friends with some of the legends I'd read so much about. Two-dimensional fannish heroes such as Bangsund and Foyster and Alderson and Edmonds sprang into three-dimensional existence and became real people, even



*rotter*

friends. I'll remember Valma's driving long after I've forgotten just what the Sydney Opera House actually looks like; I'll remember the sight of John Alderson bracing himself against the vicissitudes of the motion of the Ballarat train long after I've forgotten what Ballarat itself looks like; I'll remember John Bangsund's beaming face amidst the fan-nishness of Degraives long after Degraives itself has gone; and I'll remember Eric Lindsay forever but that's because when there's an unexpected knock on the door downstairs the odds are seven to two that it'll turn out to be Eric!

In some alternative universe I suppose it's possible that AUSSIECON actually took place five years ago; but you'll have a hard time convincing me of that. Five years is how long it takes to preside over a ninety minute exam, not how long it's been since we shared so much so quickly in Australia. Five years is perhaps enough to mature a

reasonable red wine but it take a life-time to properly appreciate an event as personally significant as AUSSIECON. So with your permission I think I'll pour a glass of good whiskey, don my well-known bush hat, dust off my copy of my trip report and remember for awhile.

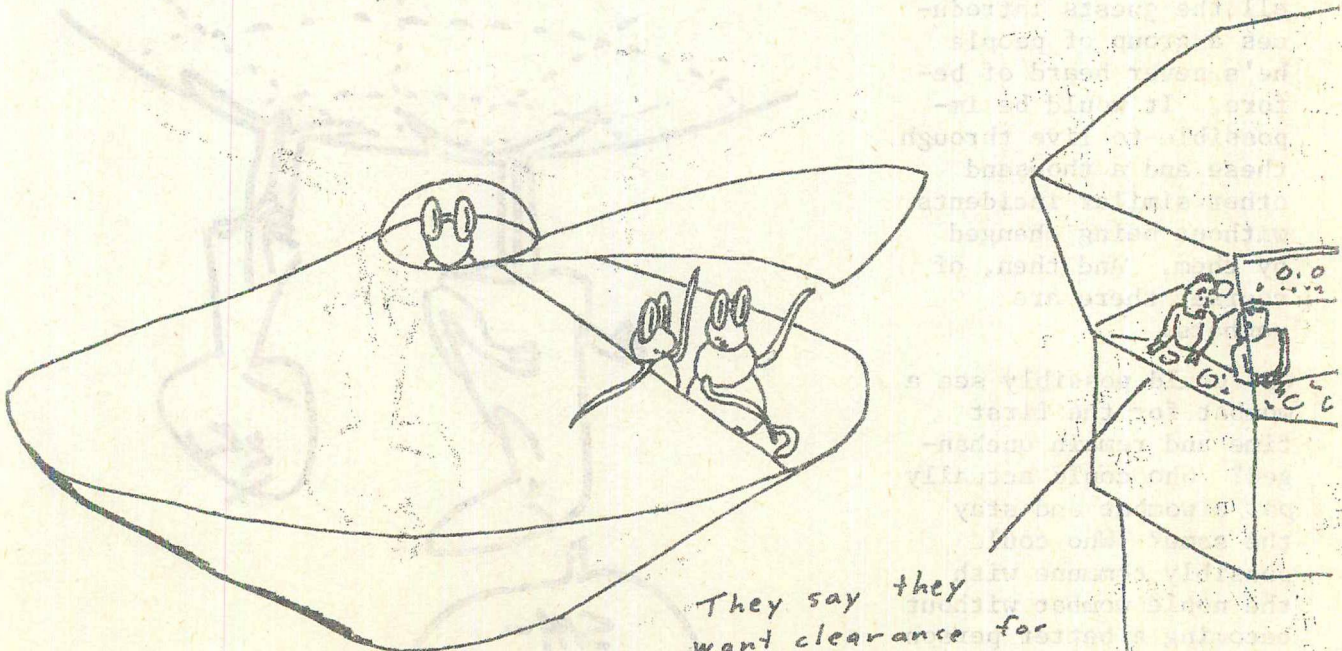
In five years/a moment's time, I hope you'll all do the same for SWANCON...

Thanks, Mike. I'll drink to that....

Reading your article reminds me of how much Canberra fandom has changed in five years, too. John Bangsund now lives in Melbourne (after a time in Adelaide), and Leigh Edmonds, Valma Brown and I now live in Canberra! (Also Neville Angove and various other people but I was just dropping names mentioned in Mike's memoires.)

How about a toast with that glass of whiskey, Mike? Like,

SM00000TH --



They say they want clearance for something called Aussiecon

Sorry about the sh-w-through on the illos of the previous two pages. Very poor planning that. I'll try n-t to let it happen again.

Elizabeth Darling sent me some delightful drawings. Unfortunately I will not be able to share all of them with you (they really are lovely), but a few will find their way in here and there. Elizabeth also sent a letter:

'I was married to John [Foyster] then and spent a good deal of time running round fetching & carrying for him. I remember driving the farm ute into the carpark under the *Southern Cross* and being sneered at by the attendant... he was much more polite the next time when I came back with the Alfa Romeo!

I remember trying to talk to Ben Bova & introducing myself as John Foyster's wife & Ben Bova saying "Who's He?" which suggested he hadn't read the Who's Who of Australian Fandom...

Mostly, when I was there I used my teaching - profession - skill of knowing where people were -- I became a sort of listening-message post... "Where's so & so..." "Tell so & so..." It was rather like overseeing a gigantic school picnic.

I remember having a quiet drink with Del Stocks in the bar downstairs and



That's when we learned the  
Chorus

"It's all Carey Handfield's Fault."

watching the normal cocktail drinkers react with surprise to the appearance of SF fans, and talking with the Commissionaire/Security Officer in charge of the display-paintings area, who thought I was the one *sane* person in a sea of zanies... (I was still wearing my "Official-Conference-Suit" at the time, not my SF beanie.)'

Speaking of John Foyster...

AUSSIECON 1975

by John Foyster

For many Australians attending AUSSIECON the experience was a beginning, an introduction to science fiction fandom. That may well be true for many of the contributors to and readers of this fanzine. For the oldies the feeling is quite different; we're in a minority nowadays, and perhaps some of us should try to set down our feelings about 1975, for after five years we ought to be able to look back dispassionately.

Firstly, the convention is relatively recent. Oh, there have been a few conventions here and there since, but AUSSIECON happened only a few breaths

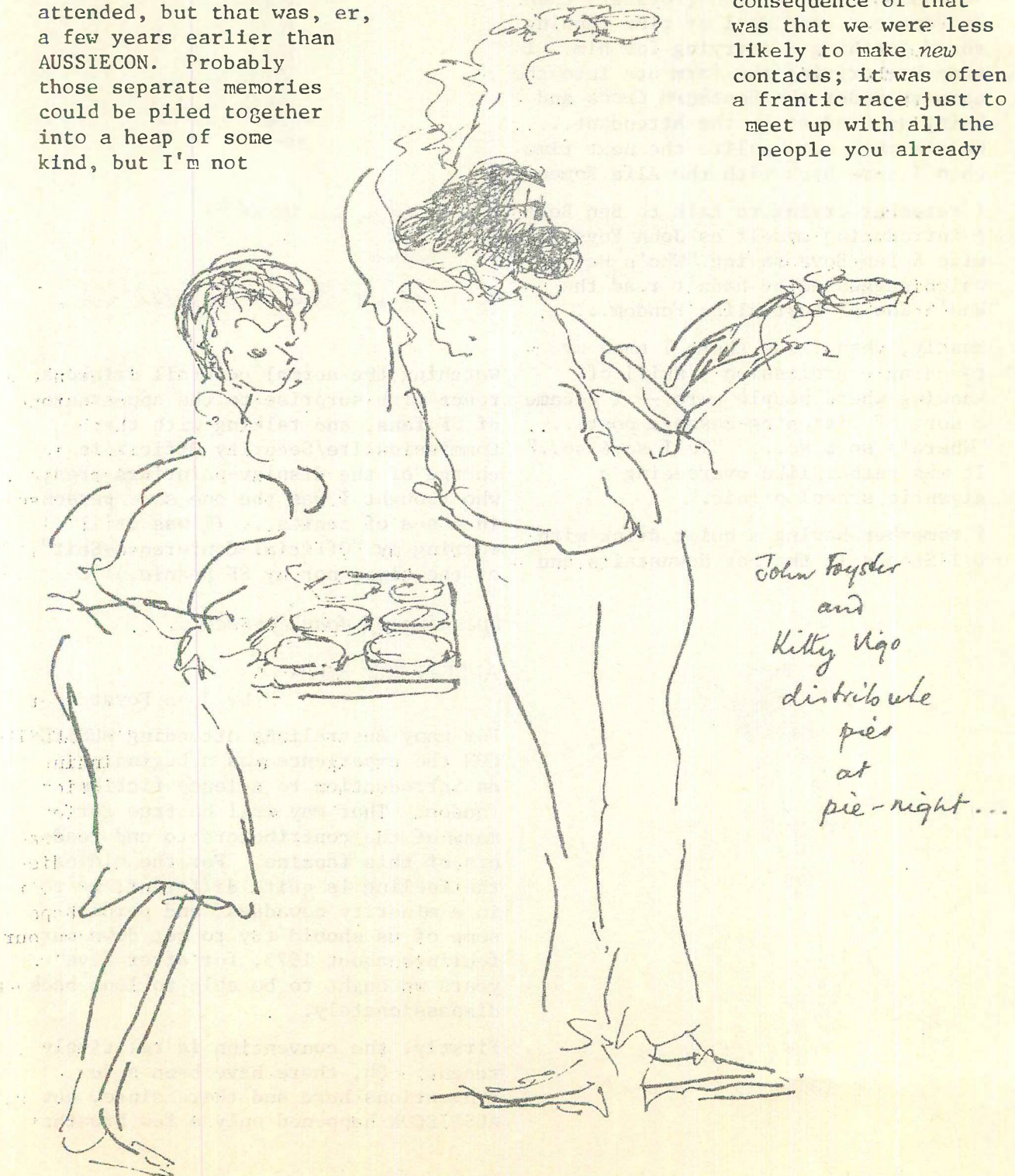


Mike Glickson  
in his Stouch hat

ago. That must distinguish us significantly from the bulk of fans for whom AUSSIECON occurred at or near the beginnings of a fannish career. One consequence of that difference is that perhaps, and I'm not quite sure of my grounds here, my recollections of AUSSIECON tend to be specific, of particular events, rather than general and diffused. (By contrast, I can only recall general details of the first convention I attended, but that was, er, a few years earlier than AUSSIECON. Probably those separate memories could be piled together into a heap of some kind, but I'm not

willing to try just at the moment.

Secondly, while for some AUSSIECON was an introduction, for others it was a culmination. A few of the oldies were seeing again people they had met at overseas conventions. But for most of us it was an opportunity to meet for the first time and perhaps the only time, fans we had corresponded or traded with for years. One consequence of that was that we were less likely to make *new* contacts; it was often a frantic race just to meet up with all the people you already



John Foyster  
and  
Kitty Vago  
distribute  
pies  
at  
pie-night...

'knew'. This probably applied particularly to new Australian fans - they could be met and chatted with at some future convention, while people we had known for ten years or more were available only fleetingly.

And, of course, meeting people had to be squeezed into the ceaseless round of actually running the convention. Just about every old stager with a right arm was signed up as a spear-carrier. Although the rushing around may not have been terribly visible, it certainly was persistent, and at times there were a few worried faces around. When things got really hectic (several times a day) one had to forget about the convention as something which might be enjoyed and view it rather as a monster which had to be controlled. That's probably a third point, come to think of it.

Fourthly, and finally because this could go on for far too long, I suppose we saw AUSSIECON, a little sadly, as the beginning of the end. Science fiction fandom in Australia up until 1975 had been a smallish group (up to 200 at most, say) in which it was possible to know most other people, or at least something about them. As AUSSIECON was planned and projections of attendance made, it became more and more clear that post-AUSSIECON fandom would be different. It is. It's bigger, and there's now no real chance to get to know most other fans. You can know a few of them, but you are doomed not to know the majority. How frustrating that is - now we are surrounded by people just like all those Americans and Britishers one used to know by correspondence at best, except that now the unknown resides in one's own backyard!

Perhaps it's appropriate that I'm not attending SWANCON 5 - thus it becomes the first national SF con in Australia I've not attended for *many* years. It's very expensive and, on balance, I have to spend my fannish budget elsewhere. That may be another difference; I'm not sure.

*Perhaps now would be a good time for a change of pace - to hear from some of the neos (or those who were neos*

*in 1975). We'll start with Gerald Smith -- sorry Gerald, I had to edit this a bit, it was rather long...*



#### THERE ONCE WAS A WORLDCON

By Gerald Smith

During Orientation Week of my first year at University I heard that there was to be a screening of those classics of the SF film genre, 'Buck Rogers' and 'Flash Gordon'. Having been reading SF for years and with nothing better to do along I went. At the door I was greeted by a contingent of members from the Monash University Science Fiction Association (MUSFA). After much cajoling I was persuaded to part with the grand sum of 75c to become a member of this esteemed organisation.

It was not until a few weeks later, in about late March of '75 that I turned up to one of the club meetings. At the time the club was rather inactive with a handful of members turning up to meetings and those that did talking about almost anything but SF. (Something I now know to be an almost unanimous trait of fans. But at the time, of course, I was but a naive newcomer with the innocently held notion that clubs were there to discuss what was supposed to be their aim.)

So it was that shortly thereafter the topic of the upcoming worldcon was mentioned almost in passing. The term used grabbed me however. "Hello, a worldcon", I thought, "this must be important." Eagerly I elicited further details and what I was told certainly

did interest me. It seems that this worldcon was to be held in Melbourne - the first time ever in Australia - it was to be called 'Aussiecon', Ursula K. LeGuin was to be Guest of Honour and, most importantly of all it would only cost me \$5.

I am now going to skip a few months. But before I do that I should perhaps explain a couple of things. First it so happened that the opening two days of the con coincided with the last two days of term at University. Thus the agonising decision had to be made as to which was more important. In the end, after many sleepless nights, the decision was to forsake some of my University education. Secondly I had no idea of what a science fiction convention was all about. (Some would say I still don't but that's by the by.) From films, television and modern mainstream novels (all mostly B grade or worse) I had a rather distorted impression of what other conventions were all about - long boring speeches, much chasing of tail and drunken orgies. Naively I applied these impressions to conjure up what I might expect at Aussiecon. Well I was partly right.

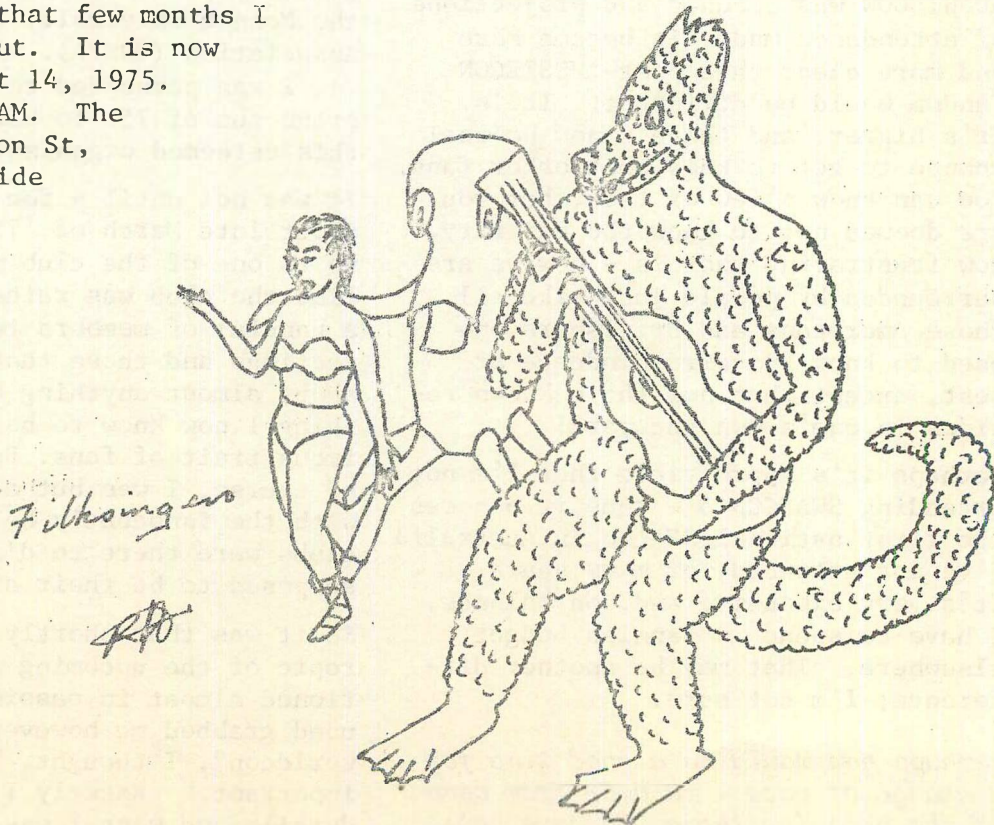
Anyway to skip that few months I was talking about. It is now Thursday, August 14, 1975. The time is 11 AM. The place: Exhibition St, Melbourne, outside

the Southern Cross Hotel. Picture, if you will, a bemused eighteen year old. In one hand is a carry bag with necessary requisites therein, including, for Melbourne, the obligatory raincoat. In the other hand, clutched so tightly as to drain the blood from the knuckles, is the membership ticket sent to me which I intend to use as proof positive of my membership in the event of dispute.

In we go then. But first a pause to extract a copy of THE DISPOSSESSED to finish reading and to further establish my bona fides. First impression is one of organised chaos. There seem to be people everywhere with no apparent means of sorting them out. Yet somehow registration is quickly and efficiently done.

The official opening was nothing to write home about (but then when are they) but I did find the parliamentarian, Race Matthew' discourse on the life of a fan 30 years ago quite fascinating.

I'm afraid that from here on in my convention memory really takes over with





vengeance. I know that during the afternoon of that first day I sat in on a few panels. Their novelty enthralled me. So it is that one false idea of conventions is dissipated. Talks are not necessarily boring and long winded.

I do remember deciding not to see the Guest of Honour speech. This was one talk I definitely considered would have to be boring. And I say that without any wish to cast aspersions on Ursula LeGuin. My feelings at the time harked back to my original false ideas gleaned from the modern literature mentioned earlier. I wish now that I had seen her speech as I have been told many times how good it was.

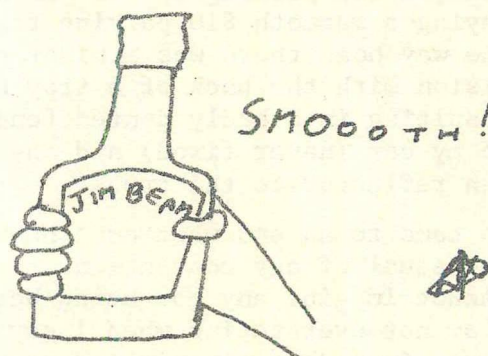
Some time that afternoon I ran into Alf (Katz) and friends. They were waiting outside the lifts preparing to go up and play the Star Trek computer game. So it was that I decided to tag along with them. This was the turning point. From then on I never have looked back. The convention changed from being interesting without being amazing and gradually turned into one of the greatest times of my life. Waiting around to play on the computer, experiencing the excitement of blasting Klingons to atoms, ogling the Barbarella girls, sitting on the floor of the State Suite eating pieces of various pizzas and drinking coke, flying paper planes out of the window of the tenth floor. These are the images that stick in the mind now, five years later, of those late hours of the first day.

The second day I arrived just in time to see some of the auction. It still amazes me how much people are prepared to pay for items of questionable value. But with no knowledge of fan charities at the time I was positively astounded. Visiting Americans in particular seemed to be spending money as if it was going out of fashion.

Memories of what we did for the rest of that day are completely blurred by time. In fact there are only certain highlights of the rest of the convention that stick strongly in my mind.

Naturally the one thing that remains most vivid is my introduction to room

parties. The Friday and Saturday nights saw parties at opposite ends of the sixth floor. Alcohol flowed like water with one room using the bath to great effect overflowing with cans and ice and the other room with a dangerously overfull fridge. Conversation was, given the circumstances, amazingly intelligent and thought provoking. There was much alternating between rooms and into and out of the lifts where at least three lift parties took place - including one solitary person taking a lift to himself and (attempting to) singing at the top of his voice. Of course as alcohol took control the party, by default, moved into the corridor. It just became impossible to move from one end of the hall to the other. Somehow though, rather in contradiction to what has just been said, we managed to make it to the State Suite where unconsciousness became the order of the day.



There was a masquerade on the Saturday night that I remember. The array of costumes was startling in their brilliance. Especially remembered are the superb Lord of Light costumes and the excellent likeness of Nicholas Van Rijn. On the Sunday night was the Hugo banquet. Lee Harding told some rather inane jokes about erotic wombats thus starting a tradition amongst Monash members.

Other parts of the convention are remembered in no particular order:

- the sight of Alf gloating over his skulling a quarter of a bottle of Bob Tucker's treasured Beam's Choice when

invited to take a sip.

- first hearing of George Turner on his pet subject: vitriolic condemnation of science fiction and its writers.

- visiting the hucksters room and having a blurb for Space Age thrust into my hand.

- living on pizza, pies and hot dogs.

- waking on the Monday morning with the most incredible hangover and weary in every bone of my body (over four days I must have managed all of 12 hours sleep). Staggering off to get the train home (I simply wasn't up to driving) with an overwhelming feeling of regret that it was all over.

The convention was not quite over yet however. The next day it was back into Melbourne to pick up the car. Despite almost a solid 24 hours of sleep I was still only going through the motions of movement. So it was that, after picking up the car and paying a mammoth \$10 parking fee, on the way home there was a minor collision with the back of a tray truck resulting in a badly dented fender to my car (never fixed) and one broken reflector to the truck.

So came to an end what must have been the equal of any convention. I just cannot imagine any con being better. I am not overstating when I say that those four days constituted one of the greatest times in my life. There are just not sufficient superlatives to describe how enjoyable this con was. If Australia does end up with the worldcon again in '83 then all I can say is that if it is even half as good as Aussiecon then it will be a great and memorable convention.



*Well, after all these scenes of drunken revelry, perhaps a slightly different point of view...*

ALTERNATE WORLD(CON) - or  
THE EFFECT AUSSIECON HAD ON  
MY LIFE by Marc Ortlieb

As I turned the car into the drive, I noted the condition of the rosebed. Yet another addition to my list of Easter tasks. The thought of gardening and wallpapering the kids' room was not particularly appealing, especially in the light of the folk festival I was missing. Still, marriage has its responsibilities, and one can't really afford weekends in Alice Springs and new wallpaper.

Jo greeted me in the hall. For once I had remembered to wipe my shoes before coming in, so, not being able to pin that on me, she smiled, and said, "Have you looked at the rosebed recently?" "Yes dear," I replied, "I was planning to get to that on Sunday while you are up at your mother's."

"I thought you and J.P. were going fishing."

"No, John's gone to Melbourne for a science fiction conference."

"Yes, I'd forgotten. I really don't know what he sees in those things. I mean, do you remember that Crazy Con he talked us into attending? I'd never even heard of David Lake. Why couldn't they have got Heinlein or Asimov or someone like that?"

I winced. "It was Quasarcon dear, and John says they aren't all like that. Evidently they've got Joe Haldeman as guest of honour at the one John's going to this weekend. I gave him our copy of FOREVER WAR to get autographed,"

Joanne walked into the kitchen, but kept talking. "I hope he doesn't lose it. You know how John is. Still, he's a dear isn't he. Just imagine what would have happened if I hadn't talked him into giving me a lift to Naracoorte on his way to that Aussiecon thing."

I certainly did do some imagining. John and I had planned to meet Rob at Aussiecon, and John was going to pick

me up. The last person I had expected to see outside my flat on that August morning was Joanne. We'd broken our engagement during the previous May holidays, and I'd written her out of my life permanently. However, finding her at my door drove all thoughts of science fiction from my mind, and John had gone on to Aussiecon alone. It was a marvelous weekend, and by the end of it, we had decided to renew our engagement. As it turned out, it wasn't a bad idea at that, since Joanne had forgotten to take her supply of pills. Jason was born four months after the wedding.

My reminiscences were interrupted by Joanne's return with a cup of tea. "Well?" She said. "What do you think of that?"

"Of what dear?" I replied.

Then the shit really hit the fan. "You haven't been listening to a word I said have you?" she screamed.

"Well dear, you were in the kitchen," I said in a conciliatory tone, but I didn't see much chance of stopping the inevitable argument.

Finally I was allowed to retire to the study where I was working on a diorama of the battle of Zama. At least the kids hadn't witnessed that one. They were up at Joanne's mother's for the weekend.

---oOo---

Well, perhaps it is a little improbable, but the scenario above might well have been on the cards had I not gone to Aussiecon. I mean, Joanne and I had had one breakup before we got engaged. Who's to say that we might not have got together again.

One thing is for sure, were it not for Aussiecon, I certainly wouldn't have a Roneo, and a golfball typewriter. Possibilities are that I'd have a Fender Telecaster and amplifier instead, but that's another alternate world altogether.

*In case you might be wondering what Marc's reaction to Aussiecon itself was, here's his report on the Con, from his first fanzine, TANSTAAFL (September 1975).*



"...the following is a fairly fragmented collection of experiences and emotions of one particular Outsider who wishes to somehow become an Insider. Many pieces were written in situ and display a disusting amount of soul bearing and trivia. The record would be incomplete without it. Feel free to laugh at my adolescent reactions to the Convention. Those reactions I am proud of. I displayed all the characteristics of a school-kid in love with his teacher. If you will excuse the expression, I hope that Conventions never cease to engender a "Sense of Wonder" in me.

#### THERE AND BACK AGAIN

A Comedy in several scenes

The time:- Early 1975

The place:- A newsagent in downtown Naracoorte (This is separated from uptown Naracoorte by at least twenty paces.)

Cue 1: The lights fade up to reveal a small town English teacher named Ortlieb thumbing through an unpaid for copy of Fantastic. His jaw drops fifteen feet and his eyes take on the aspect of glowing coals.

Ortlieb: (Reading) "As you know, the 1975 Worldcon will be held in Australia."

Narrator:- His mind races frantically back to a Uni S.F. club fim evening where a little piece of paper

had been handed out saying that Australia was bidding for the 1975 con but hell, why hadn't someone told him that they had been successful.

Cue 2:- Lights fade.

Cue 3:- Lights fade up to a dull amber to reveal a maniacal figure crouched over a piece of paper addressed to the Adelaide Uni SF Assn ((Hell, does it still exist?))

Ortlieb:- (Reads) Dear Sir/Madam, I have heard that the 75 WorldCon is to be held in Australia. I require but three details: Where? When? and how do I join?  
Yours frantically,  
Marc A. Ortlieb.

Cue 4:- Slow fade.

Cue 5:- Lights fade up on a solitary figure pacing through the crud on his kitchen/lounge floor.

Ortlieb:- \$25 a night? Where the hell can I get that sort of money?

Cue 6:- Blackout.

Cue 7:- Lights fade up on a solitary figure pacing through an increased accumulation of crud on his kitchen/lounge floor.

Ortlieb:- How the hell can I get two days off school?

Cue 8: Blackout.

Cue 9: Lights fade up on a solitary figure waist deep in the crud on his kitchen/lounge floor but no longer pacing.

Ortlieb:- Ursula K. LEGUIN WOW! Mygod. I wonder if Asimov will overcome his fear of travel and come. WorldCon, WOW!

Cue 10:- Blackout.

Cue 11:- Dim blue lights fade up on a moving railway carriage. A seated figure in an army great-coat and a cap is sporadically sleeping.

Ortlieb:- Mumble. Bloody trains. Shit I wish I could sleep. Wonder if it's going to be worth it. Will I be able to afford that steel six string? Shit. I wonder how far Hud's place is from the hotel. Shyte. How big is Melbourne anyway?

Cue 12:- Lights fade out.

Cue 13:- Lights fade up on a figure seated in an auditorium.

F.X. Typical witty introduction speech.

Ortlieb:- Hell! Is this what I wasted my money on? Hey, there's Ursula K. LeGuin. She looks just like an ordinary person: Pretty too: Sort of small and tough looking but then, you'd expect her to be. Jesus H. Frog! Mike Whateverhis-name is is a real long-haired freak. Hmn. That bird sitting in front of me looks real good. Mumble. Why doesn't that stupid speaker shut up? I wonder where Darryl and John are.

Cue 14:- Lights fade.

Cue 15:- Lights fade up on seated character.

F.X. Typical speech.

Ortlieb:- Ho humm.

Cue 16:- Lights fade.

Cue 17:- Lights fade up.

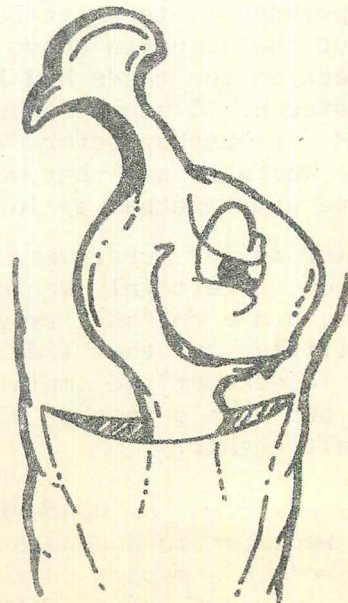
F.X. Speech.

Ortlieb:- Yawn.

Cue 18:- Lights fade.

Cue 19:- Lights fade up on a standing figure wearing a long black caftan. He is straining to see over the heads of those in front of him.

Ortlieb:- Hey! I wish I'd known that the Masquerade was going to be like this. Hell, if I had a staff I could have gone as a wizard. Jeez, look at those swords. They look real. You wouldn't catch me



anywhere near them. That poor M.C. One of these days, someone is going to laugh at one of his jokes and he'll die of shock.

Cue 20:- Lights fade down.

Cue 21:- A film is projected onto a screen on stage.

F.X. Large crowd noises, "Focus, focus"

Cue 23:- Lights fade up on a solitary figure sitting in a corner writing.

Ortlieb:- Now, how will I write this? I know! As a play script with lighting cues. Hey! That character over there looks like one of those fan personalities. If I sit here writing, he may come over and ask me what I'm doing. Hell! What will I do then? I'll turn all red and try to hide it. He wouldn't want to see this crud. I'd better put it away. I wish the session o teaching S.F. would start.

Cue 24:- Lights fade down.

Cue 25:- Lights fade up on a seated figure.

Ortlieb:- The hell with them! Sturgeon is right. 90% is an understatement. Susan Wood. WOW! She's good. The rest? Well, yawn. Hey. Man. LeGuin and Silverberg: Almost close enough to touch. Too much. (Jung would love this) Perhaps pretty isn't the right word for LeGuin. Powerful, delicate. Beautiful. An unusual



combination but good. Hey: That's a nice combination too:- Wierd music and the soft burr of American-Canadian voices. A relief from the Australian twang.

Cue 26:- Fade lights.

Cue 27:- Lights fade up on LeGuin who sits puffing a pipe.

Cue 28:- Lights fade up on Peter Nichols F.X. Sound of video man's walkie-talkie

Ortlieb:- Does Ursula LeGuin write Kiddy Lit?

Cue 30:- Fade lights.

(Into the darkness swims the word "Metaphor". Pity the poor Scientist for he does not understand.)

Cue 31:- Lights fade up on a great-coated figure standing by a microphone. His heart is thumping the shit out of his ribs.

Ortlieb:- My God! I've done it. I'm standing here where everybody can see me. Shit. My head is spinning, my stomach is burning, the shaking of my hands is the only things which is stopping the sweat building up. My God. I've done it. Made a real fool of myself. Acting was never this bad.



Malcolm  
(Aussie Fan)

Cue 32:- Blackout.

Cue 33:- The lights come up on Bourke Street. Two greatcoated figures laden with rucksacks are trudging down the street.

Ortlieb:- I wonder if I can save enough to get to MidWestCon?

Rob:- You must be mad.

Cue 34:- Blackout.

Cue 35:- Lights fade up on a train carriage in which writhes a greatcoated figure.

Ortlieb:- Shit I wish I could get to sleep. Bloody train gets in at 5 a.m. Yard duty at 8.30 a.m. Boy am I ever

going to be dead. It was worth it though. To see LeGuin, Silverberg, Wood, Glicksohn... How does a small country town teacher become a fan? The postage is going to kill me.

Cue 36:- Lights slowly fade. CURTAIN.

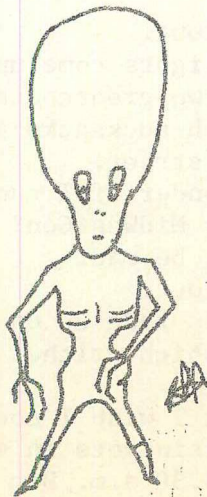
*Evidently Marc figured out some way, as you can tell from the previous piece - he's now got a Roneo and an electric typewriter. He can stand up in front of a crowd and make a fool of himself without seeming to mind, and he publishes lovely fanzines. If you're a North American and haven't met Marc, vote for AUSTRALIA IN '83 and come visit him!*

#### A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

by Richard Faulder

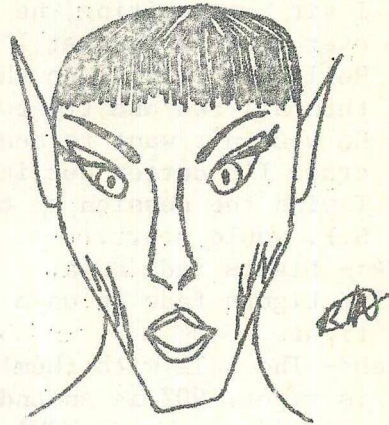
Aussiecon could not be said to have changed my life in any major way. This, however, would probably be true for most of those fans who had been involved in fandom for some years prior to Aussiecon. In my case I had encountered fandom just over five years prior to Aussiecon, and had attended at least one previous con.

Nevertheless, attending Aussiecon marked the greatest effort I had ever made to undertake an activity purely for my own pleasure. My university career, almost over at the time of Aussiecon, had been for my intellectual satisfaction, which is not the same thing, and had in many ways been simply extension of my school career.



Practical farm work in connection with my course had not been something about which I had a choice, and in any event had been partly organised by the university authorities.

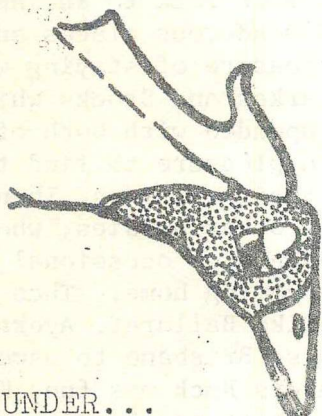
Previous fanac had never involved a continuous exposure to fandom (with the exception of Faulcon I, which had only involved an overnight stay). An evening meeting, a day's duplicating and collating ENIGMA. Any cons I attended were in Sydney, so that I left fairly early to go home to bed.



Nevertheless, no experience can quite prepare one for one's first worldcon. The impact was doubtless heightened by the long journey into the previously unknown state of Victoria and the tatty city of Melbourne, so different from the vibrant Sydney or the orderly Canberra. Having to drop John Snowden off at his hotel, then find the motel where Blair Ramage and I would be sharing a room.

All this paled before the impact of the con itself. The whole was on a different order from anything I had previously experienced. A bustling throng of about six hundred people, one in which I could easily become lost. Nevertheless, a sense of shared feeling, a glue holding all the participants together, so that it was difficult, although not impossible, to feel left out. Meeting those strange creatures, Americans, in large numbers, and finding that they were part of this wider community of which you were only just beginning to become aware.

There are many more impressions and memories tickling away at the inside of the skull, waiting to flicker down the fingers and onto the paper. None of them answer the original question, however. How did Aussiecon change my life? Unfortunately, the answer has to be "not much". The same person arrived back in Sydney as had left it some five days earlier. However, as mentioned earlier, the crucial step, of discovering fandom, had occurred over five years earlier. Nevertheless, attending Aussiecon did mark a further step along the road to trufandom. Making such a large commitment of time and energy to a fannish activity increased my readiness to do so in the future, and also strengthened my links with the fannish community, by helping to make me more a part of its creative anarchy.



..AAAAY  
DOWN UNDER...

*Another change of pace, and a jump back to North America to hear from two more friends:*

### FRIENDS, FACES, DIRECTIONS...

by Susan Wood

How did Aussiecon change my life?

In every way possible. Or maybe confirmed its direction, I don't know.

I do know this: I have finally reached the stage of being as happy, as at peace with myself, as healthy (touch wood), and possibly even as *tanned* as I was five years ago, when at this time I was where I am now: in California, lying in the sun, not worrying about anything but seeing my friends.

Aussiecon gave me new friends, and gave me the faces to put to the names of friends I'd already made through the mail. Aussiecon gave me, finally, the chance to meet Ursula K. LeGuin -- whom, again, I knew only through the mail. That meeting led to a Hugo nomination this year for us both, for *THE LANGUAGE OF THE NIGHT: ESSAYS ON FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION* by Ursula K. LeGuin, edited by Susan Wood. That book, in turn, helped me get tenure, after five long years, at the University of British Columbia.



*It was a Sydney Oyster.*

The Aussiecon gave me an interest in Australian literature. The University of British Columbia happens to be Canada's best centre for Commonwealth literature studies. I just may do a book comparing Canadian and Australian literature; and if I decide to do so, I may well spend my sabbatical in Sydney -- on a government grant to do research ... and incidentally, attend Aussiecon Two. If not, I'll get there on my own steam, because Bert Chandler gave my friend Peter and me an idea for a novel we'll write instead.

The Aussiecon even gave me, four years later, a brief and idyllic (but platonic) romance on the Isle of Skye.

And so on, and so on. The Aussiecon gave me a lot of happy memories, and a lot of plans for the future. Two years ago, a mundane friend was sitting in my office, watching me run an 800-student class -- taking phone calls, noting things on my desk calendar, wall calendar and purse calendar, answering questions and fielding problems.

"Susan, yuu're so *organized*," he said, rather wistfully. "I bet you even know where you'll be on Labour Day, 1983."

"Probably on a plane coming home from

Sydney, Australia," I said, calmly, answering the phone again.

He looked stunned.

I hope my prediction comes true. I miss you all.



THE IMPORTANCE OF MARSUPIALS  
TO JAN HOWARD FINDER by jhf

It was only a couple of years ago that I didn't know a kiwi from an emu. Now to my great surprise I find myself discussing not only those two birds, but many other 'strange' and wonderful critters found at vast distances from my native habitat.

I'm not sure just who is to blame, but I do know when the whole thing started: 1975.

At that time I was working for the US Air Force in Aviano, Italy, & had been active in British & European SF fandom for about 3 years. I had joined my first worldcon as a Supporting Member in 1973 or '74. However, I was determined to go to Australia in '75. Having learned about TAFF & DUFF thru British fandom, I gave it a try in '75 by standing for DUFF, coming in a sad third. Of course had I known then what I know now about both fan funds, I wouldn't have run, but ignorance is bliss and in the long run I got to meet some super fan and since then have supported and worked hard for both fan funds.

So off I went to the land of 'roos and koalas to enjoy probably the best worldcon/trip I have ever taken. 17 days in Australia and 3 more in New Zealand before heading back to the land of pasta and vino.

There were many good things that happened to me on the trip. From meeting so many good folk to seeing some strange and wonderful places and things. I had the pleasure of staying with both the Clarkes and Stocks while there. I had corresponded with both of them and it was a pleasure to find them even nicer than their writings. Then there were all the other Aussies, whom I knew only thru ANZAPA or occasional letters. It was like coming home. Then there was places like Ballarat, Ayers Rock, Alice Springs, Brisbane to name a few. (Climbing Ayers Rock was fun. When I bought me T-shirt proclaiming as much, the salesperson mentioned that only fools and tourists climb the Rock. I noted that usually they are one and the same.)

However, the item which has changed my life the most was being introduced to Marsupials, wombats in particular. I mean, I did know about marsupials. Hell, I've seen QANTAS commercials. I may have even seen a 'roo in a zoo before. But, here they were all over the bloody place. I hadn't been in the country for more than a day or so, when Sue and Ron Clarke took me to see the downunder critters at a local zoo. It was here that I got to pet me first wombat (and saw Alan Frisbie bitten by one. I make no comment on the wombat's value judgement.) A couple of weeks later I was in Lone Pine Koala Park getting my picture taken holding a



slightly comatose Koala and petting/feeding 'roos.

However, the fates were spinning. During the con and afterward for some strange reason a dumb joke concerning wombats was making the rounds. Also during the con Bob Silverberg had made a comment concerning wombats. Up to this point and even a bit beyond life was still proceeding rather smoothly. (Hmmm, maybe I should have spelt that Smooooothly!)

After the con I began to publish IL VOMBATO, a perzine for members of AUSSIECON fandom. Its main purpose at that point was to plan for a reunion party at MIDAMERICON in Kansas City in 1976. I was also beginning to use the following closing in my letters, but still at that time only to fen who had attended AUSSIECON: Ciao & teggedizzi! May the Ghreat Wombat smile on you.

Finally, the fates stopped spinning and began to weave. I was selling Tolkien posters from my home in Kansas.

This was during '76 and after the Worldcon. The state of Kansas, before giving me a sales tax number, wanted to know the name of my company. I hadn't really thought about it up to then and after much cogitation, decided on WOMBAT ENTERPRISES, UNLIMITED. Don't ask me why. It was just a flash of inspiration, I guess.

Well, it was all in the pouch after that. A couple of months later a very close female friend gave me a T-shirt with the legend WOMBAT ENTERPRISES on the front and THE WOMBAT on the back. It was all over after that. I have since picked up another T-shirt referring to Wombats and also my propensity for giving backrubs, which are reputed to be quite good. I'm sure that there are fen, who have no idea of what my "real" name is.

This association with wombats has had a side effect. I now own a couple of books on marsupials and other mammals of Australia. I'm planning on picking up a few more. I have learned a fair amount about the critters. It seems that wombats can be domesticated and make good pets. I have also received all sorts of clippings and articles from nice fen relating to wombats. It has been a real gas.

(By the way Ken Fletcher the last DUFFwinner from the USA is the campaign illustrator for Woscar the Wombat, who is campaigning for President from The Como Zoo in Minneapolis, MN. One of Woscar's pluses is that he has a sufficiently perspicacious mind to have bitten a St. Paul Alderman when given the chance.)

But another thing has happened. I'm sure that all of you are familiar with the sensation that once you see or learn about something, it or related items to it suddenly keep cropping up in your mundane life. This has happened to me too. For instance I recently ran across an article which mentioned atrocities perpetrated upon wombats in the 1920's: Wombat skin coats. Will man's inhumanity to wombats never cease? Moreover, I suddenly realised that many of my favorite SF books had something to do with marsupials: Heinlein's THE GREEN HILLS OF



THE OUTBACK; Brunner's THE 'RCOS LOOK UP; Niven's A POUCH IN SPACE; Asimov's I, WOMBAT; and the list goes on.

So you see my trip downunder turned my world upside down for more than one reason. It was my first worldcon and I got to meet my first marsupials, my first wombats. I shall never forget AUSSIECON I.

Ciao & teggeddizzi! May the Ghreat Wombat smile on you!

*And now a few words from some more of the people who made it all happen:*

### IMPRESSIONS OF AUSSIECON

by Robin Johnson

There was never much doubt in my mind in the early stages that for us in Australia to hold the 1975 Worldcon would be a lot of work. I'd been to two Worldcons before I moved to Australia in 1969: LONCON II in 1967 and NYCON III in 1969, both of which I enjoyed immensely (the first of which was my first Convention), and in the run-up to 1975 attended three more: HEICON in 1970, L.A.CON in 1972 and DISCON II in 1974. Each of these scared me more as it got harder for me to dodge responsibility for AUSSIECON. As it approached I became more fatalistic, and lots of the things that I'd worried about a lot became less of a worry - largely because of the terrific work done by many people both in and outside Melbourne.

The Con ran from Thursday to Sunday, but a lot of people were arriving at the Southern Cross on the Wednesday, including the main overseas contingent. The American party had arrived in Sydney on the Monday, and I'd travelled up to meet them. Monday night there was a party at the Hyatt where they were staying, and perhaps from my point of view it was just as well that they were still jet-lagged and the party started to wind down by 2 am. Tuesday I flew back to Melbourne with joint Fan Guests-of-Honour Susan Wood and Mike Glicksohn from Canada and our hard-working American agent, Fred Patten.



*Robin .. in tartan trousers.*

Ursula LeGuin was already in Melbourne, ensconced with her husband and two younger children in another central city hotel, to make it easier for us to protect her from the predations of the media.

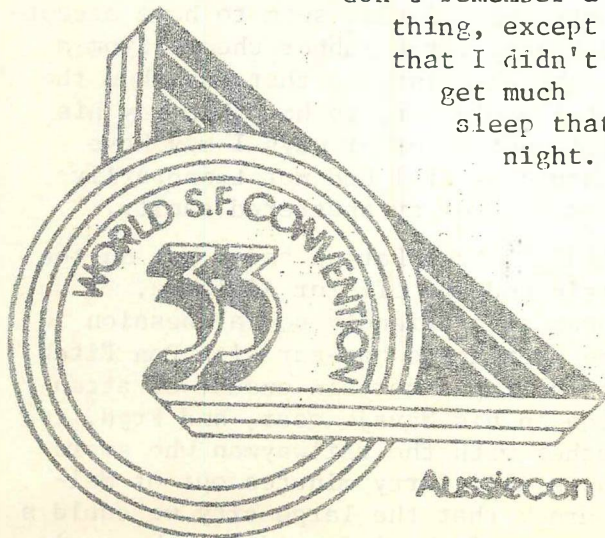
Tuesday night, or most of it, I spent at Sonargraphics in South Melbourne finalising the details of the multi-screen slide show. Fred Patten and John Breden also came along and we set up several different sets of slides to be used to open the various sessions of the Con. I think everyone who was at the Con will feel as I do that this presentation was a really worthwhile feature of the AUSSIECON, and again I place on record our indebtedness to Lindsay Rodda of Sonargraphics for placing the whole multiprojector and screen setup at our disposal. But I didn't get much sleep that night.

Wednesday morning we started the move into the hotel. Not all the rooms were available for our use until the next day, but the publishers were busy setting up their displays using the display units built by Ernie Binns, and they supported the welcoming party that evening in the Convention Committee suite on the top floor, which also was used for the computer Star Trek games, organised by Bill Wright. The parties started in earnest that night, and I didn't get much sleep - partly because my room adjoined the suite, and partly because when I did get to lie down, I kept thinking of things that hadn't been done and should have been, or vice versa.

Thursday was the official opening day. The music started, giving five minutes warning, and people filtered into the ballroom, with a large screen covering the mirror wall on the long side, and video cameras, the multiprojector setup, and the ABC's sound recording setups. As the music grew, the lights dropped, and Ursula LeGuin, Race Mathews, fan-made-good in the big, bad world of Canberra, our Fan Guests of Honour Susan Wood and Mike Glicksohn, Rusty Hevelin the Down Under Fan Fun! winner, and his dad Bob Tucker, and took our places at the table while that lightshow had its grand premiere. When the regular lights came up, and the video lights came up, and up, and UP while the applause for the screening went on, and on, and ON. I stumbled through my remarks to introduce the others, then abandoned the stage, worrying about how to get through the barrier of the lights. The trouble was that from the stage you couldn't see beyond the second row of the audience against the lighting for the video cameras.

It took some time for things to warm up - in fact that first day was pretty sticky, until Ursula's speech. Somehow, she was able to get through the barrier, at the same time to be thought-provoking and light-hearted, intensely personal and cosmic. There were parties that night. I was drunk on survival, and beyond remembering

I had a good time, I don't remember a thing, except that I didn't get much sleep that night.



Friday built up to a peak. The peak was the Masquerade - for me the moment when someone told me a participant in the swordfighting display put on by a local group, the Vikings, during the judging, had collapsed with a seizure was one I could have done without. Gordon, the Viking in question, and he was in question for a time, had been overworking, like many of us - he was one of those involved with videotaping the con - and the viking group really threw themselves into their work. I had visions of giving the eulogy at the funeral. The finalists in the masquerade had to enter and exit through the same door as the exit passage was blocked with people ministering to Gordon, who staged a remarkable recovery. In fact I saw him later that night, video camera in hand, if upside-down, recording one of Ben Bova's bawdier ballads for posterity at a party in the suite next to my bedroom. I didn't get much sleep that night.

Saturday was the day of the Awards Banquet. This was to be, from my myopic point of view, a marvellous opportunity to relax. Of course there were the tensions as to who had won: our Guest of Honour, Ursula LeGuin, was nominated for the Novel Hugo, for *THE DISPOSSESSED*, and was in fact the only one of the Novel Hugo nominees present. The Committee took her to lunch that day at the hotel's Grill Room, I remember. Mike O'Brien did his Maitre D' bit, and David Grigg, as Awards Subcommittee, hosted. The banquet in the evening was set up with round tables for ten people: mine had the four Le Guins, Grace and Don Lundrey, Bill Wright and John and Sally Bangsund.

Early in the meal, Ursula left the table. I knew she had been feeling nervous earlier, but she had been enjoying herself since her speech, and when her husband returned to apologise and give me the news that she had food-poisoning I was shattered. I asked Susan Wood to join our depleted table, and when John Bangsund started his Master of Ceremonies speech leading up to the Awards, Professor LeGuin returned to the table to tell me that Ursula was staying in bed.

It may be that some of John's speech was unintelligible to foreigners. 1975 was perhaps the peak year for Norman Gunston, and John's ad libs - and maybe some of the prepared stuff - seemed to mainly refer to the little bleeder. Then there was the problem over the film Hugo. Paul Stevens had organised for the local distributors for several of the nominees to have a table, in return for making some arrangements for members to see one of the movies which was premiering that week. Somehow John Bangsund was never told of this, and Forry Ackerman, who was much nearer the dais, was called up to accept the award. I could cheerfully have sunk through the floor, but the Best Fan Artist Hugo for Bill Rotsler made me feel a lot better, and when Professor LeGuin accepted Ursula's I was through the roof. In fact, only one Hugo winner collected an award in person: Ben Bova, although we restaged Ursula's presentation at the closing ceremony. The parties that evening were pretty lively, and as usual the State Suite was where many people wound up the night, which meant that I didn't get much sleep until I threw the survivors out about 5.30.

Sunday was closing day. In the morning was the bidding session, when the various committees anxious to host the 1977 Worldcon strutted their stuff. The Orlando bid led by the Lundrysts won, largely on the mail vote. John Breden's last version of the Sonar-graphics show gained tremendous applause, and then I wound things up in my usual shambling way. Leigh Edmonds had organised a pie night in the State Suite, and we were still up bombarding the early-starting workmen on what is now Nauru House next door with paper airplanes. Needless to say, I didn't get much sleep.

Monday was cold and wet - but we had chartered a train from Victorian Railways, so-called because of the vintage of their rolling stock, to take us to Ballarat. There had been some sort of holdup, and by the time the train pulled out of Spencer St everyone was holding a daffodil, courtesy of Susan Wood, which was treated by the Railway staff as a ticket. We wandered around the gold

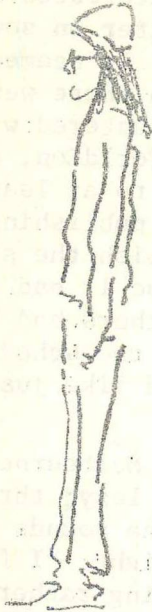
diggings at Sovereign Hill, and eventually got back onto the train, heated this time with hot bricks. There was a certain amount of warmth also from the occasional circulating bottle as we rattled our way through the winter night back to Melbourne. Ginie DiModida was that day's victim: pale green and wavering around the edges, we helped her from the train into a taxi back to the hotel, and we used the taxi radio to summon the hotel's on-call doctor to find out what was wrong. I put my foot down and told her there was NO WAY she could take the 7 am flight to Alice Springs with her group, let alone spend much of the rest of the next day in a bus en route to Ayers Rock. "OK, Robin," she wheezed, but she went anyway. I think that was the night that I offered the spare bed in my room to a fellow whose wife was having a difficult time giving birth at the nearby Austin Hospital, and who kept me up all night on a talking jag.

Tuesday was clear-out-of-the-hotel day. For some reason I don't seem to recall much of it, except for losing my bag, containing such items as Mike Glicksohn's irreplaceable photographs of fans and pros at cons, the key to our safe-deposit box at the hotel, and my receipt and bank books. I do remember going to the station again to collect train tickets for the night train to Adelaide, and for some reason being surprised when walking along the middle of Bourke Street in the middle of the day to find a tram dogging my footsteps. I also seem to have accepted a very large rubber cheque from a slight acquaintance that day when the hotel would not, to help him pay his bill, but in other ways I may have behaved as if I had not temporarily lost hold of my shattered sanity.

Finally, Fred Patten and I got on the train and set off for Adelaide. I remember a friendly social session in the Overland's bar-car with Don Fitch, attracting a certain amount of attention in his Navajo gear, and Fred, together with the railwayman who swore to us all, forty minutes out of Melbourne, that the large city we could see out of the left side of the train lit up in the distance, was Hamilton. Altogether, a strange day. I don't

normally sleep well on trains, but for some reason or other, I slept well that night.

*Somewhere in the corollaries to Murphy's law there must be one that explains why all these articles seem to be ending three or four lines onto a fresh page.*



Leigh Edmonds

AN EVENT: SEVEN SHORT  
RECOLLECTIONS WITH RECITATIVES  
AND CODA

by Leigh Edmonds

They are all dim memories now.

-

1968

It may have been sometimes in the second half of that year, in the lounge room of the large flat that John and Diane Bangsund and Paul Stevens and I shared in St. Kilda. The main impression I can now recall of the flat are smells - a mustiness from the age of the place and from the amount of paper the four of us had. There was the cat, Greshenka, which I didn't get on well with at first. There were also the smells of stencil wax, corflu, ink, fresh duplicating paper, damp clothes in front of the gas heater on cold and wet nights. In my room there were the added smells of plastic model making: glues, solvents, fillers and paints.

Redan Street was the first slant shack of any consequence in Melbourne in a long time, if you want to see what it looks like these days you have only to go and look at the basketball court of the local school because that's where it used to stand. The four of us spent what I recall to be a very enjoyable time. It was a period of making fan-nish plans, for fanzines, convention organising, clubs, tape recordings too and from Pat Terry and other Sydney fans, corresponding and just talking.

Most of the fannish activities took place in what had in better times been the dining room, a large room towards the back of the flat dominated by a big table in the middle of the room upon which most of the fanac took place. When the doors to the hall and kitchen were closed and the gas fire was burning brightly it was warm and cozy on dark and damp winter nights.

We were only there from about May to August that year, and yet I remember it with fondness out of all proportion to that short time.

I don't recall the front lounge room as being very often used. Later in our stay - before we were forced to make room for the basketball courts - a tv set was bought which attracted Diane and Paul in there more often. But that room always seemed to me to be too tall and to feel empty; it was just the room you went through to get into the rest of the house from the front door and the room on the way to the Bandsunds' room.

Still, it was in this room, one Saturday morning perhaps, that John showed us something Andy Porter had sent him, a convention programme book from New York. Inside it there was a large advertisement, an outline of the Australia continent, and across it the words "Australia in '75". For the first time the thought clicked in our minds that such a thing might really be possible... and in that excited state we went to do the shopping.

-

- rearrangements soon took place; I lived in Ripponlea with the others for a time and then in Ferntree Gully with the Bangsunds.

- by the 4th mailing of ANZAPA I was

living with Paul in a flat in Balaclava

- the Bangsunds later moved into the Clifton Hilton

1970

The room was spartan, a bookcase full to overflowing with books and fanzines, a small record player and a growing record collection, a bed of sorts, plastic models, stencils, a typer, corflu... There were the usual smells of fanac and modelling, added was the aroma of hallucinogenic smokes. Outside the door to the room the rest of the flat was full of kipple and unwashed dishes. The main thing which depressed me so much about the place was that Paul and I were staying there in the block on our way to other places, most of the others were there to stay. As a base from which to operate it was useful, as a place to live it was dreadfully utilitarian.

But when you're sitting at the typewriter it really doesn't matter where you are, reality is focused on the words which appear on the stencil as you type.

Somehow or other - during a panel discussion on the possibility of a viable Australian bid for the 1975 Worldcon, during Syncon '70 a couple of months previously - John Foyster



Paul Steseno

had suggested that I publish a fortnightly fanzine to carry on and widen the discussion and to look more closely at some important points of the bid before a final decision was taken at the coming EasterCon. Everybody thought that it was a fine idea; even I had thought so at the time.

I sat, staring blankly at the stencil in the typer and fiddling with the keys, not at all interested in copying out another letter on some often discussed subject. It seemed obvious to me that although there were serious problems to be encountered with entering a bid for the WorldCon, almost everybody was keen to at least try - despite what I was publishing. Still, I had said I'd publish the six issues before Easter and so it had to be done. John Foyster and others had been prodding me to keep up the schedule, but sometimes it seemed like just too much effort.

February nights in Melbourne can be hot and sticky and lazy; through the open window came the sounds of the neighbourhood at night. I felt like doing almost anything rather than typing stencils.

Salvation came in the form of some head friends who dropped around. We went somewhere, saw somebody or other, sampled one substance or another and did something or other. Whatever it was, it felt good. When I got home the stencil was still in the typer. I'd have to work hard tomorrow evening to get everything completed and ready to be run off and collated at the Melbourne SF Club Wednesday night meeting. But my head wasn't in the right place just then to worry too much about it.

- 
- a year or so later I went and lived with Robin Johnson in a house in Moonee Ponds
- a little after that I moved again to live with Valma Brown in St.Kilda
- Paul went to live in the MSFC when it was forced to move to South Yarra
- the bid became a reality and began to pick up momentum
-

1975

The kitchen at the Magic Puddin Club was never the most hygienic of places, neither was it the largest. Yet there were far too many people crowded into it at the last of the Melbourne post-AUSSIECON parties.

Several hours earlier Valma and Judy and I had been in one of the bars at Melbourne Airport having a farewell drink with Mike Glicksohn and Sheryl Birkhead, the last of the overseas fans. It had been a wet and miserable day in which to show them around Melbourne before going out to the airport, not at all the best day for any sort of sightseeing but on the other hand just the right kind of day for the last real day of AUSSIECON.

I was puzzled that I had not toppled into some sort of post convention gloom or succumbed to a stunning bout of weltschmerz. Perhaps I was too tired, exhausted mentally and physically, to even have the strength to indulge myself in such romantic illusions. Instead I sat and observed in a detached manner, along with most of the others, a desultory conversation about the differences between Australian and North American folk culture. The rain drops glistened on the dark kitchen window. Soon Valma and I would be getting up and going home.

During the previous years I had sometimes pondered on what it would be like after AUSSIECON and what it would feel like when it was all over. I was beginning to find out. I looked around me at the other people in the room, many of them were good people but none I would have called truefans. I began to form an idea of the convention as a sort of gigantic whirlpool which had sucked many people with many skills and interests into it, all to become involved in the activities of putting it on and enjoying its fruits. But now that the event was over I wondered what would happen to them. How many would stay in fandom and who would move on to other excitements.

In that kitchen we were one of the small groups left, survivors of AUSSIECON. Outside it was cold and wet, people complained whenever somebody opened the door and let the cold air in. Soon people started to drift off, into the darkness. Finally we too picked up our things, said our farewells to those left and went out into the moonless night to our car.

- and that was all there was to it

1980 - Coda

Here Valma and I are in Canberra, in the winter of 1980. Almost five years have passed since AUSSIECON and a fan for whom that was the first convention has asked the question - "How did AUSSIECON change your life?"

Jean is visiting to have a look at the various fanzines on that convention and I have pulled out all of these things (which I suppose I have begun to regard as historic documents) from my collection. I think that Jean is slightly overawed by the amount of paper that was generated.

I don't think about AUSSIECON very much these days. It was such a drawn out event, such a time and energy consuming event, but five years after.. a lot of ink flows in that time, a lot of conventions



JT80

scale of everything was well beyond anything I was used to and we'd only met two or three people there previous to the event, it seemed only natural that we were there. Time passed too quickly and yet the individual moments seemed timeless. It was as though the convention we'd been to in Albuquerque the previous weekend and in Melbourne the weekend before that were all connected by a hyperspatial tube or something similar and that events in between had not really happened.

Bob Tucker and Rusty Hevelin had dragged Valma and I around the last of the late night parties in the hotel and at about seven-thirty in the morning I foolishly promised Tucker that I'd be at the "Tucker Bag" auction at ten. Exhaustion may be very tiring but a promise is a promise so I'd been there.

Later, behind the table I sat for a while just letting the convention flow past on the other side, chatting to Pete Weston and musing to myself about the marvel of fandom - how this year I could be sitting in the capital of the United States at a WorldCon, and even more amazing that next year the event would be in Melbourne. I wondered what it would be like.

- everything settled down to a final year of preparation
- and then, finally, the overseas fans arrived
- and AUSSIECON began

1975

I was leaning against the glass of one of the windows in the top story suite of the Southern Cross Hotel talking to John Berry about fandom as family and about spelling. Over at a nearby table sat Tucker surrounded by numerous fans; off in another part of the room Susan Wood was talking excitedly with other people. There were others I'd known only by reputation and the knowledge that this was actually happening seemed too good to be true.

But it was true. I glanced out the window and down into Little Collins Street to make sure that it was there and then turned back to John as we

carried on our conversation. For an instant I was overcome with the same emotion I would have more strongly the following day at the official opening of the convention, the feeling which could only find expression in the thought "So it's finally begun - after all these years." It was a cliché and it felt like one, but there were no other words which would come to me to describe the situation.

How many dreams really come true? Not many. But dreams which have been backed by years of hard work by fans much more capable than myself were not insubstantial and it was that work which was finally flowering... such a short lived bloom.

The glass in my hand was almost empty and this was no time for introspection. There were four days in which to make the most of the moment, such opportunities would not come again. I replied to John's comments about my sometimes unusual spelling and our conversation carried on. The feeling of the great family of fandom washed away the introspection.

- a week of unforgettable and exhausting days passed



John Foyster.



and listening to the races on a portable radio, typical and oddly comforting sounds of suburban Melbourne life.

Up two flights of stairs and along a landing used to be the way to get to Robin's flat. When you entered you could not help but wonder at the effort which must have gone into transporting so much stuff there - surely a crane lifting large crates of books, papers and other things up to an open window would have been much more efficient than running up and down the stairs (but not as cheap).

Robin displayed many traits which could perhaps be described as delightfully eccentric; the most obvious to anyone who visited him was - and may still be - his universal random access storage system - everything was everywhere. The other trait which often became apparent during meetings was his fondness for strange foods.

After an invigorating stroll through the streets of St. Kilda and Balaclava and a quick run up the stairs to knock on the door to the flat, one was admitted to be greeted by the familiar faces of the other committee members, and to be brought up to date on what had been missed from dawdling along the way.

The first problem was to find somewhere to sit, you usually did this by taking a pile of papers, books and magazines off one of the chairs. Often you could tell others who had done the same thing because they were reading something they had picked up that way. The next major problem was to find out what the nibblies Robin sometimes provided actually were and whether they were, by consensus, edible.

Although the meetings which took place in this atmosphere were not usually great social events and were sometimes quite difficult, there was the constant feeling of being a part of a communal enterprise and of being among friends. It made the bid worth being involved with.

As to the topics discussed during that pleasant autumn day meeting, don't ask me, I was too busy enjoying the pleasures of existence to remember that sort of thing now.

- the troops returned from Toronto: Australia was to hold the 1975 WorldCon

- more rearrangements took place  
- I stood for the first DUFF from Australia to America and went to the WorldCon in Washington DC

-  
1974

After only two hours sleep I wasn't feeling very lively. For awhile I'd wandered the halls of the convention, had gone to an auction and attended a small panel discussion. Then I'd again found myself back sitting behind the AUSSIECON table at DISCON II.

The table was long and not too wide, four or five people could comfortably sit behind it. There was a covering of green felt littered with promotional literature and receipt books with which we took many supporting memberships for our WorldCon. The DISCON people had set up the table for us in the main concourse from the hotel entrance to the convention facilities and just about every one of the four thousand attending convention members would have passed us at least once.

The concourse was large, the convention rooms were enormous and the hotel facilities were vast. It was very easy to get lost. But no matter where everybody else was, during the mornings and afternoons there were always two or three Australians and some of their supporters at the table. In a crowd of four thousand bodies it was probably better for the people who wanted to meet us to know where we would be rather than rushing about blindly trying to meet up. After seven years in fandom and in contact with many American fans, people I had known for a lot of that time kept on coming up to the table and introducing themselves for the first time; an unusual situation but filled with novelty because I never knew whether the next stranger might be one of my best fan friends.

During the evenings there were vast entertainments known as masquerades, banquets and the like. They were followed by large parties which gradually got smaller as time passed. Although the

1972

The taxi driver pulled up on the other side of the road and sat there looking at us. In Melbourne on Sunday morning not much tended to happen and so a bunch of people standing around while a character in a black cape and floppy black hat ran out of a public toilet and up the street must have been about the only excitement there was.

The toilet is an old one, ornate wrought iron work, painted green - you will have seen it in the AUSSIEFAN film. The first shots taken in that film were the scene in which the mild mannered book-selling Paul Stevens dashes into a public toilet and almost instantly comes out the other door as the evil Anti-Fan. The person who comes out of the toilet after Anti-Fan and scratches his head is the taxi driver.

The toilet is in the middle of one of Melbourne's main wide streets; Lonsdale Street. Cars park in the middle of the street and I imagine that the toilet has been blessed relief for many poor motorists at various times - and probably still is. From the film-maker's point of view the problem was that right behind the toilet is King Street which is probably the main road between the north and south sides of Melbourne over the Yarra River and even on Sunday mornings it is busy. The little cinematic trick that Paul Stevens and John Litchen (the brains behind the film) wanted to pull off depended upon there being no cars driving through the background to give it all away. So somebody was stationed down at the corner to tell us when the lights went red to stop the traffic flow.

When the cars stopped that person would wave, John would start the camera and somebody would yell out to Paul, who had been lurking in the toilet all this time, that he was to do his stuff. The little ritual was repeated several times and probably amused the taxi driver sufficiently that he stayed there. After awhile it occurred to somebody that maybe he wasn't an idle spectator, maybe he was waiting for us to finish so that



he could use the facilities. But instead of going over and asking him that, we asked him if he would like to be part of the film.

Nobody knows if he was waiting to go to the toilet; maybe he was, perhaps not. I wonder what happened as he and Paul waited for the signal that they were to begin the scene. I suppose Paul might remember.

- Valma and I stayed where we were
- most other people moved around a bit
- the bid was going well and the voting was less than a year away.

1973

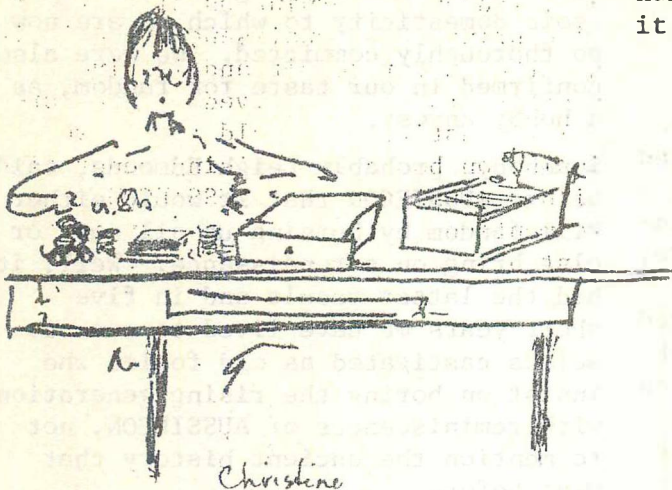
Robin Johnson didn't live too far away from us, he was in a flat in a delightful little street off a main road in Balaclava. On a sunny autumn day it was a pleasure to walk there for a committee meeting. The only unfortunate aspect was that there was nothing but built up residential area all the way with no parks and gardens to loiter in. But by careful choice it was possible to avoid some of the main roads and to stroll down some side streets.

The area we could walk through was so arranged that it became more affluent as we progressed, and some of the home owners paid a great deal of attention to their gardens so that by the beginning of autumn they were still at their peak. It was warm but there was a light cool breeze - somebody was washing their car

happen, a lot of new faces come into fandom and a few old ones depart.

During dinner Jean says, "You're going to be writing something for this fanzine, aren't you?" Well, I really hadn't thought about it, but why not? It should at least be an interesting topic to work with.

I have tried, but it's so hard... so very hard to call back the past and make it live again.



#### AUSSIECON...AND THE MAGIC PUDDIN CLUB by Christine Ashby

I'm always reluctant to write anything resembling memoirs. Without the aid of contemporaneous notes I usually get my facts wrong; with notes, I'm usually embarrassed at the sight and sound of my former self, though I find this less of a problem the further I get from adolescence. Anyway, I looked up my AUSSIECON convention report, which struck me as being short and slightly hysterical (just like its author). It wasn't much help in tackling the grand question of What AUSSIECON Means to Me - at the time it didn't *mean* anything, it just happened.

Obviously, as the treasurer, AUSSIECON was not my first introduction to fandom. Nevertheless I think it did have a significant impact on my life. I would not be Mrs Ashby today had it not been for AUSSIECON, though I hardly noticed Derrick while the convention was running. I would not be a friend of Chris Johnson; it was *me* that dragged him into fandom's warm

embrace by sending him a letter with his art show cheque. I would probably know nothing of the basic principles of convention organizing, although at the time I really didn't have the faintest idea of what was going on and just did what Robin Johnson told me (when I could understand him). As far as crisis management and dealing with people under stress - well, the experience was beyond price.

I must record that it was all Carey Handfield's fault. He dragged me into it, originally to run the art show, which I wriggled out of at first, only to find myself tangled up with it again at the Con. For years, still in awe of Robin Johnson and John Bangsund and John Foyster, I struggled to comprehend incomprehensible committee meetings. On one occasion I was asked to take the minutes, a task rendered impossible by the general disregard of the agends. Later on, when working in the city, I would occasionally attend Degraives; strangely the only clear memory I have of that institution (the food is totally forgotten) is of a very embarrassed Derrick Ashby sitting opposite me next to a very inebriated Donald Ashby who was failing to explain why he hadn't got some printing organized.

Just before the con I did a bit of envelope stuffing, but not much else. Everyone else was running around like headless chooks, so I made a virtue of necessity and sat quite still. I let people telephone me and pour out their worries while I made soothing noises. Immediately before the convention I borrowed some walkie-talkies (ultimately used by the video people) and bought a box of stationery requisites. I failed to interfere in the administration of the writers' workshop (which turned out to be a great mistake when I came to doing the books) and generally led the quiet life. Thus I came to the con bursting with health, vigour and naivety.

My memories of the con are dominated by the CQ room. Heaven knows how many hours I spent in there, often alone, with thousands of dollars in cash. I

must have been completely mad! We never did get around to arranging a roster, and seemed to rely on heroic volunteers like Del Stocks. Mind you we did get plenty of unauthorised persons wandering in attempting to leave their coats or eat their sandwiches or something equally annoying. Of course I remember lots of other things as well, but most of them are either pretty boring (everybody remembers the masquerade) or not printable even now (did I tell you the one about...?).

What I do remember, though, is the Magic Puddin' Club. This little house, conveniently located in the inner suburb of Carlton, was inhabited by what seemed at the time to be an unlimited number of fans and cats. Unwilling to go cold turkey, as it were, after AUSSIECON, I became an habitue of the Pud, where the convention raged on for the rest of the year. Derrick was one of the residents, occupying an airless little room that bred fleas in the summer months (Ghod how I hate seagrass matting!)

I never moved into the Pud - indeed nothing could have persuaded me to do so. In order to make yourself a cup of coffee you had to wash a whole sinkful of dishes, and the kitchen was always full of forlorn vegetables dumped there by some bargain-hunter who couldn't actually be bothered cooking them. The inhabitants ate out rather a lot, and it was hardly surprising that poor Derrick appeared to need fattening up.

You were never bored at the Pud; there was always someone to talk to, at any hour. The transients were perhaps the most interesting characters, though often a sore trial to the permanent inhabitants. Young Randal Flynn, aged 17 ("Hey, let's have a discussion!"), came down from Queensland with the (very lightweight) clothes he stood up in and \$300 - he spent the lot on a typewriter and then did his best to resist well-meaning attempts to feed him because there was practically nothing he would eat. Neil Rest the anarchist believed in people being absolutely free to do whatever he wanted. Bob Hotchkiss had

the curious habit of bunging anything and everything he thought edible into the one bowl and consuming the resultant mess with gusto. As for the Vikings, with whom Donald was temporarily infatuated... I could go on, but I won't.

For me, AUSSIECON ended early in 1976 when the Pud split up and Derrick moved to St. Kilda, sharing briefly with the amazing Dale Davies and later with Keith Taylor. We were both back in work and in training for the bourgeois domesticity to which we are now so thoroughly committed. We were also confirmed in our taste for fandom, as a hobby anyway.

Somebody, probably Leigh Edmonds, said before AUSSIECON that it would either kill fandom by burning us all out, or else bring on a renaissance. Well, it had the latter result and in five short years we have lived to see ourselves castigated as old fogies who insist on boring the rising generation with reminiscences of AUSSIECON, not to mention the ancient history that went before.



*The last contribution to this issue is from Peter Toluzzi, a Sydney fan, also a neo at AUSSIECON, who was one of the perpetrators of this memorial zine.*

## IMAGES OF AUSSIECON

by Peter Toluzzi

I thought of talking about how Aussiecon changed my life - career preferences, social scene, lifestyle, etc.- but that is an Old Story and Tired for almost all fans; many of you will have attended a good convention and experienced the same phenomena. I guess the best I can do is to try to convey some of the inherent magic.

I remember (in no particular order):

- \* The endless slide show in the room next door, belonging to Denny Lien and Ken Konkol. It took me quite some time to appreciate the significance of the Minneapolis in 73 Bid hosting the first room party I went to. I loved the slide from the Torcon Masquerade showing some enterprising lad, bent over double, wearing an unwieldy construction of balsa wood and styrofoam - he claimed to be the Starship Enterprise!
- \* Room 8010 next door was also the scene of my introduction to the "Smoooth!" ceremony. For those few of you unfamiliar with this arcane fannish ritual: Bob Tucker enters room party, equipped with bottle of Beam's Choice bourbon; takes large swig from bottle; puts left hand in to air, passing bottle to person on right; stands there, mouth full of bourbon and arm held high. After a short while the entire roomfull of people are similarly positioned... then, on cue, everyone: swallows, sweeps left hand in an arc through the air, and croons/croaks "Smoooth!" It may sound silly, but just try it sometime.
- \* The afore-mentioned Bob Tucker becoming quickly notorious by handing out cards to all the pretty young things. They read: "Bob Tucker - by appointment. Natural inseminations." (Bob was later rewarded with the Golden Boob Award, as well as a special masquerade award for Most Naked Ladies.)(A group of women organized reply cards to Bob, which read:"You are cordially invited to the theological place of eternal punishment."-jhw))
- \* Four heavy mornings, all aches and drowse, being revived by strong coffee and fannish exuberance at the nearby Pancake Parlour. (Some of the hardier American fan breakfasted on beer and cornflakes!) Aussiecon set a pattern of convention behaviour for me - eat cheaply, sleep wherever it is flat, wander around a lot, and do it all very economically.
- \* After sharing a room with some Vikings (no realli!), I stumbled out one morning into the hospitality suite to find my co-driver being shaken awake by a largish, fiftyish, matronly type with the broadest Midwestern accent: "C'mon, man! The fucking cleaning lady's coming soon, and they don't like people sleeping here. C'mon, move your ass, nan!"... slightly incongruous - but then again, that was the mood for the weekend.
- \* Monday morning, right after Ursula had won the Hugo for "The Dispossessed", I presented her with a copy to autograph, and received a kiss for my efforts.
- \* Sitting up till 4 am talking to Ken Ozanne and a very sloshed Cherry Wilder. When Ken heard that this was my first contact with fans, he dragged me off and introduced me to some members of the Sydney Science Fiction Foundation, thus confirming my ties with fandom. (Send all letter bombs to Faulconbridge.)
- \* Sunday night, at the Dead Dingo Party, most of us spurned the cold pies and warm beer; Ben and Barbara Bova and Barbara Silverberg, and many others, sat around singing rude songs and limericks - with the refrain - "Ai, yi yi yi, your mother swims after troopships!", perhaps my favourite insult.
- \* Being withered by an icy glare from Bob Tucker when I offered him a glass of rough red, at the reunion party in Kings Cross two weeks later. And all the atmosphere was still there - I still hadn't come down...
- \* And on, and on, and on ...

I've been to nearly twenty conventions

in the years since Aussiecon, and have even helped organise a few myself. I am heavily committed to the Australia in '83 bid (which, contrary to some opinions, is *not* dead - but does need your help). The four days of Aussiecon (and the five years following...) were certainly the best time of my life; venturing south to Aussiecon was probably the most important and significant action of my life. I wish more of my friends could have shared the experience...

*Well, that wraps up this issue of THE AUSSIECON FIFTH ANNIVERSARY MEMORIAL FANZINE. Because I suspect that I'll be receiving some late contributions (due to people not hearing about it in time, or being slow off the mark themselves, or victims of the Post Awful), I am planning to publish a sequel about Christmastime (1980, yes!). So if YOU have reminiscences, artwork,*



Shayne

*comments, or whatever, that you'd like to contribute -- please send them along to me. Deadline 15 November. If I don't get enough for a full issue, I'll use them in my new quarterly fanzine, WEBER WOMAN'S WREVENGE, starting early in 1981.*

AUSTRALIA IN 83 \* AUSTRALIA IN 83 \* AUSTRALIA IN 83 \* AUSTRALIA

What can YOU do to help the A in 83 bid? Lots of things:

- \* Donate money; \$1 makes you a "Friend of Australi in 83" and will get you a free drink at the Con if we win (more money welcome).
- \* Join Denvention (1981 WorldCon) at which the venue for '83 will be voted upon - and vote for us!
- \* Australasian fans can send fanzines to overseas fans, or send locs or contributions to overseas zines, to let people know who we are, and how interesting we are, and why they'd love to meet us! (Especially if they missed out the first time.)
- \* If you're travelling overseas, and going to conventions, host an A in 83 room party, or generally let everybody know you're on our side! Contact Jan Howard Finner (address next page) in North America, or Robin Johnson in Australia, to see what you can do. The sequel to the ANTIFAN film, called THE REVENGE OF ANTIFAN, will soon be premiered and shown at American cons.

AUSTRALIA IN 83 \* AUSTRALIA IN 83 \* AUSTRALIA IN 83 \* AUSTRALIA

#### WEBER WOMAN'S WREVENGE

A new quarterly fanzine, coming in January 1981! The first issue will include:

- \* reports on SWANCON (Perth, August) and WINDYCON (Chicago, October) and Jean U.S. trip report (or at least the first installment)
- \* locs on Aussiecon Memorial Zine

- \* Late-arriving articles on Aussiecon or Aussie fandom in general (if I don't do a second issue of this zine.

W<sup>3</sup> will be available for the usual or A\$2.00 (Australian addresses) or US\$4.00 (overseas addresses) per year (4 issues). Contributions and trades particularly welcome. Cheers, Jean Weber

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Elizabeth Darling; 13,14,21,23,26,29,	Jean Weber; 19
30,33,35,38	? Cover,27 (pinched from membership
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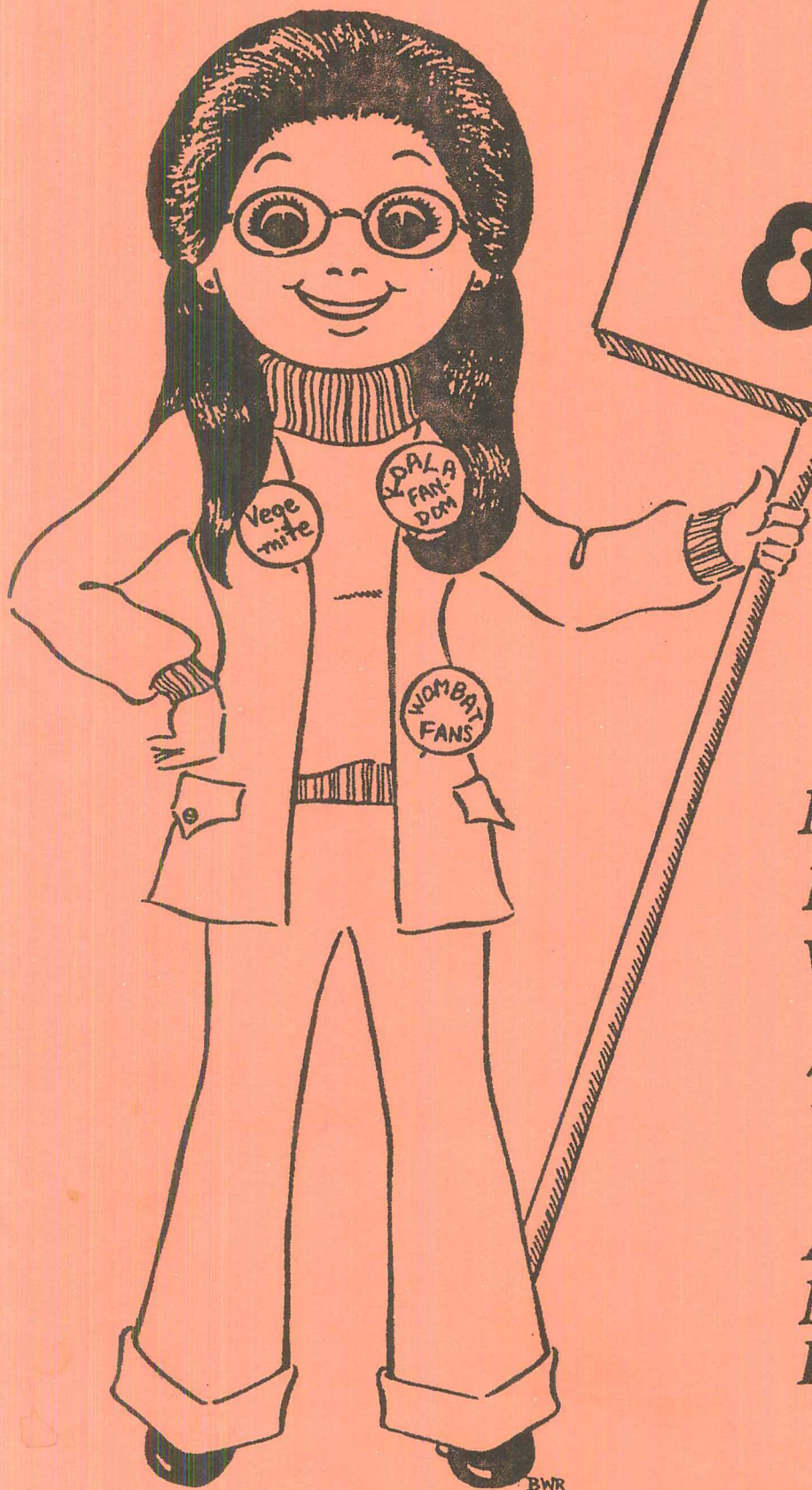
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