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The Australia in Seventy-Five Bulletin

Number One : June 1971

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AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE

With the present proliferation of science fiction fan publications in Australia - at least two of them largely devoted to reporting sf news - it seems at first glance rather absurd to be adding to their number by launching yet another fanzine.

But we feel there is a need for this publication. We know there are hundreds of people in Australia interested in the prospect of a World Science Flotion Convention being held in this country four years from now. Most of these people know that a committee exists to make the bid, but the reports they see on this committee's activities are often conflicting, confusing, inaccurate, incomplete. This is unfortunate for all concerned. The committee is at work, engaged on many projects, large and small. We want you to know what we are up to, and we want you to know what you can do to help, and we want you to tell us what else you think we could or should be doing. After all, it's your Worldcon.

At a recent committee meeting Leigh Edmonds was asked to edit this journal, and I was asked to prepare, print and distribute it. To this we agreed, and here is the first issue. It consists mainly of a recounting by Leigh of the story of "Australia in 75" from its birth as a half-joking slogan to the present state of the bid. There is a lot more to tell, and in succeeding issues we aim to fill in more and more background and to keep you right up with the latest news.

Our production schedule is tight. The regular committee meeting is held on the last Saturday of each month and we plan to have A75B out by the first Friday of each month. If you would like to help, get in touch. All communications, please, to the editor. Encourage him.' - send money.

John Bangsund

AUSTRALIA IN SEVENTY-FIVE

The Background Story - by LEIGH EDMONDS

At the New Year Convention in Melboume a resolution was passed which made official the Australian bid to hold the World Science Fiction Convention here in 1975. Until that time, even though a great deal of energy had been spent on fostering the idea of an Australian Worldcon, there had been no official decision to proceed.

The first mention of an Australian Worldcon must have occurred back in 1967 with the publishing of a slogan in <u>Australian Science Fiction Review</u>: "MELBOURNE IN 1984!" At first the idea was nothing much more than a joke, but some people must have seen some possibility in it for soon the idea began to spread. The first real suggestion of an Australian Worldcon appeared in the programme booklet for the New York LunaCon of 1968. It was simply a map of Australia and the slogan which had appeared in ASFR.

Somewhere along the line the slogan changed. It became "AUSTRALIA IN '75!" - probably because as science fiction fandom grew it no longer seemed that Melbourne was the only city in Australia with a fan population large enough to host such a convention. The date was brought brought back probably because, as far off as 1975 might have seemed, 1984 was just too far distant.

Despite a lot of private speculation about this Australian Worldcon idea, no science fiction group here actually did anything about it. Then, at the New Year Convention in Sydney last year (SynCon 70), a panel discussion was held on the subject. The consensus of opinion seemed to be that the audience was in favour of bidding for the Worldcon, but not at all sure that a successful bid could be entered. It was decided that more talking was needed, and I was given the job of producing a small fortnightly discussion-zine. This publication, entitled <u>Australia in 75?</u>. appeared regularly for three months, when the whole subject was again discussed at the Easter Convention in Melbourne.

Once again it was obvious that most people liked the idea. But, quite apart from the question of our ability to host a Worldcon, a new problem had come to light.

A75B June 1971

The rules governing the bidding for a World Convention seemed to make it highly unlikely that any such convention held in Australia - or any other country outside the USA, for that matter - would be successful.

The rules, which had only been introduced the previous year, called for the setting-up of a system whereby Worldcons could be held outside America in any year - but in that year an American National Convention (dubbed the "NasfiC") would be held. Obviously this NasfiC would virtually run in competition with the Worldcon. Since the majority of the world's sf fans live in America, any Worldcon depends for its success on the attendance of a large number of Americans; and since the minority of American fans has the resources to attend two big conventions in the same year and in different countries, it seemed likely that most of them would choose to attend the NasfiC rather than a foreign Worldcon.

Those attending the Easter Convention discussion did not like the idea of an Australian Worldcon which might easily turn out to be no different from any other large local convention. It was therefore agreed to appoint a committee to look into the possibility of having the Worldcon tules changed in such a way as to allow a non-American convention to be a Worldcon in fact, and not just in name.

This committee was appointed. It corresponded with people overseas, advertised widely in overseas fanzines and convention handbooks, and managed to have a couple of representatives at the 1970 Worldcon in Heidelberg, Germany.

At Heidelberg the rules were changed, and in a way which favoured our prospects. There is still the possibility that a NasfiC might be held in competition with a foreign Worldcon: the new rules do not specifically exclude that possibility. But mainly they provide that a Worldcon may be held outside America whenever some other country makes a successful hid for it.

Robin Johnson (one of the Australians who went to Heidelberg; the other was Ron Clarke) reported in detail to the 10th Australian Convention in Melbourne at the New Year, and the convention made the definite decision to proceed with the bid officially. The committee elected the previous year was now empowered to bid for the 1975 Worldcon on behalf of Australian fandom.

Between the New Year Convention and the simultaneous Easter Conventions in Brisbane and

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1

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Melbourne, the committee has been active in forwarding the Australian bid. Visible activity has been mainly confined to advertising the bid in overseas convention Progress Reports - the NorEasCon (the 1971 Worldcon in Boston) and the LA Con (the 1972 Worldcon in Los Angeles). A committee member will attend NorEasCon, and several plan to go to Los Angeles next year. But most of the activity has been "invisible" - the constant keeping up of correspondence with people around the world whose co-operation and advice we need if we are to succeed. We have to know what sort of things need to be done - and not just in general, but in precise, finicky, boring detail.

Lately we have felt that while what we are doing is of the utmost importance and urgency, we haven't been doing enough about keeping in touch with the people we are doing all this work for: you, the Australian fans. You have a right to know what is going on, and we are determined that from here on you will have every opportunity to do just that.

That's what this journal is for. In future issues we will be telling you more and more about what we are doing. But, more than this, we will be telling you about things which we feel you could do to help.

A Worldcon bid involves a lot of publicity, politics and money, but in the final analysis a Worldcon is for people. It is the individual person who has to be convinced that it should be Australia in '75, and to a large extent it has to be the individual Australian who convinces him. We have a good committee, we think, but we don't know everything, and we can't do everything. We need your help.

The Convention Site

After a great deal of thought, talk and correspondence, the committee has decided that (if our bid is successful) the site for the 1975 World Science Fiction Convention will be Melbourne.

Originally it was felt that Sydney would be the better choice, since it is probably better known to people overseas, but, as it turned out, most of the overseas people we have spoken or written to prefer Melbourne. (And, of course, anyone flying in from overseas would have plenty of opportunity to see Sydney as well.) The other good reason for choosing Melbourne

A75B June 1971

5

is that Melboume is, and has been for some years, the strongest centre of fan activities in Australia. This situation could change, but it is the situation the overseas people know, and as of this moment it is the Melboume fans they most want to meet. Having said that, we want to stress that out bid will continue to be for AUSTRALIA in '75. This is an Australian convention we are working for.

(Oddly enough, when the committee first started discussing the site, most of the Melboume people favoured Sydney, and most of the Sydney people Melbourne. This might have had something to do with the growing awareness of the immense work which would need to be done by the host city. Looked at in this light, the Melbourne committee members lost out.)

DUFF

One of our big projects in connection with the bid is to launch a fund to bring an American fan to the 11th Australian Convention next year.

DUFF stands for "Down Under Fan Fund", and the Idea is based on the well-known TAFF ("Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund") system. Nominations will close probably in October this year, and voting in May 1972.

The fund will be raised in the traditional way of selling votes, but in addition the committee has pledged \$500 to the fund.

We'll tell you more about this in future issues.

Fanzines

Within science fiction fandom the most active and effective form of communication is the fanzine. Fanzines have an immense influence on the way fans think - and vote.

We want Australian fans to become more and more involved in fanzines - in two basic ways.

First: If you publish a fanzine, send copies to overseas fans. If you don't know who to send them to, we'll send you a list. If you can't afford to produce the extra copies needed, tell us, and we'll see what can be done about it.

Second: Whether you publish a fanzine or not, write to the overseas fanzine publishers. Nothing gladdens the heart of a fanzine publisher more than a letter of comment: even if he doesn't publish it, he knows you are interested enough in

A758 June 1971

what he is doing to take the trouble to let him know you are interested. When you write, you don't need to make a great pitch for Australia in '75. You've done that already, simply by sending him a letter.

We would like to see every Australian fan who can write a letter (and that means every Australian fan - even you-know who) adopt at least one overseas fanzine as his very own responsibility. To determine, no matter how good or had that fanzine might be, to write a letter of comment on every single issue.

This will cost you time and effort and money. But - quite apart from doing something very constructive and valuable and personal for Australia in '75 - you might even enjoy it.

Where do you start? If you have literally never written to a fanzine publisher, start here: 1. Write to John Bangsund, GPO Box 4946, Melbourne 3001, for a copy of ASFM 2. ASFM is defunct, but on page 30 of that issue there is a list of Australian fanzine publishers. 2. Write to some of those Australian publishers and ask for samples. Enclose a few stamps as encouragement.

 When you get these local fanzines, write letters to their editors. They'll love you, and send you more. Some of the fanzines will contain lists of overseas publications.
Start writing overseas. If you don't get enough information about overseas fanzines from the local ones, take the big step and subscribe to one of the publications which regularly teviews fanzines. Among them: HAVERINGS (Ethel Lindsay, UK: local agent John Bangsund: 6 for \$1) CHECKPOINT (Peter Roberts, UK: local agent David Grigg, 1556 Main Rd, Research, Vic 3095:8 for \$1) LOCUS (Charlle Brown, USA: local agent Bruce Gillespic, GPO Box 5195 AA, Melbourne 3001: 10 for \$3, 50).

NEXT ISSUE:

We need a <u>volunteer</u> to compile a checklist of current overseas fanzines. You'll get all the help we can give you, but it'll still take a fair bit of work. Deadline: 26th June.

And we want to run a checklist of all clubs, publications, agents for overseas fanzines &c. If you think the information we have is inadequate or outdated, please get in touch. Same deadline.

A75B June 1971

1

