

LARRIKIN 8, JANUARY 1987, is edited and published by Perry Middlemiss (GPO Box 2708X, Melbourne, Victoria 3001, AUSTRALIA) and Irwin Hirsh (2/416 Dandenong Rd., Caulfield North, Victoria 3161 AUSTRALIA). This fanzine is available for written contributions - articles, letters of comment, postcards etc. - fanzines in trade (one to each of us please) or even artwork. Many thanks to our contributors, Pam Wells in Britain (as agent), Marc Ortlieb (mailing labels) and Jeanne Gommoll (page 1) and Atom (page 16) for artwork. All rights revert to contributors after publication. This fanzine supports a free and open press, radio and television. Given the unfortunate choice between Holmes a Court and Murdoch we reluctantly have to come down on the side of the former. We would rather they started doing something productive and not think that media takeovers are the be-all and end-all of business acumen.

IRWIN HIRSH FOR GUFF



THE SUNDAY THAT WOULD NEVER END

- Alan Sandercock -

I found it somewhat amusing recently to be reading about a typical Sunday in the life of one John McPharlin (Larrikin 3) particularly when it was in late August that Sue Trowbridge (married to me, you know) and I spent a terribly talkative evening with John in the apartment of Gordon Lingard. If all of that sounds ever so slightly confusing then it really shouldn't be. You see, Sue, Maria (our less than 2 year old child) and yours truly, spent all of August in Australia, and most of that time in good old Adelaide. The purpose of this trip was so that I could see what the old city was like after being away from the place for about 6 years, and perhaps more importantly, for my parents to see their only grand daughter. Well, all of that was accomplished, and then we headed back to America, spending just under a week in Sydney on the way home. We stayed for the most part with Joy Window, but did a little bit of flat sitting for Gordon who, for some reason, needed to get away to Canberra.

I finally contacted John McPharlin on the Saturday night before we were due to leave and we enjoyed a pleasant evening talking about all manner of strange things, although not once did John mention that Sunday was drawing ever closer and that he was going to have to do all of those things which he describes in his insightful little article. And this, you see is all terribly interesting, since while John was making sure that his Sunday was up to par, and all that, this family was doing anything but having a standard Sunday; you will understand, that we were, in fact going through the Sunday that would never end.

Well, anyway that's the way it felt as we sped our way back to the Northern Hemisphere, in the hopefully trusty American Airlines Boeing 747SP. That SP, incidentally stands for Special Performance, and that means that we got to stay up in the air for ever so much longer, making for a non-stop trans-Pacific flight of some 14 hours. Now actually the Sunday did end, but not before we slept through one fore-shortened night on the plane and hit a few airpockets somewhere over the equator. We spent a couple of versions of Sunday morning sitting in airline terminals, as well. The first time we did this was after we made it through the Sydney

International airport outgoing passenger obstacle course, that is known as checking in, paying your airport departure tax, submitting your outgoing visa to immigration authorities, and finally getting into the departure lounge area. The second time was in the Los Angeles Delta Airline terminal but I'll get to that later. At this point (still in Sydney, and in the departure lounge) we could relax somewhat and wait for the boarding announcement. As it turned out we did not actually have assigned seats and so we had to wait until just about the last minute before they let us on the plane. And that was a stroke of good luck since we got to sit in business class, which is only a little bit below first class in quality. We came over in economy class, in which they force three seats into the space they normally allow for two in business and first class. And so the extra room alone was a luxury, especially since Maria had room to sleep at our feet if she didn't mind risking those occasional twenty foot air pocket drops that unexpectedly assaulted the plane. And the combination of those air pockets and our travelling business class is the reason why as part of our extra-long Sunday I came down with dehydrated "private parts" as they used to say in the old days.

We had ordered a couple of those miniature bottles of liqueurs that are given away to people in the better airline seats and the best part of Sue's Benedictine had for some reason gotten spilled in my lap. This rather biting liquid soon found its way through levels of clothing and a stinging sensation then followed. I decided that there was nothing else to do but to go find a toilet and dilute some of this strong "solvent" with a good amount of water, but I walked in the wrong direction and found no relief. As I returned towards our seats, the floor of the plane suddenly decided to exit towards the Pacific below us, leaving me rather embarrassingly suspended in the air in the middle of the plane's aisle. I had sense enough to grab for something solid and found myself scrambling (I don't know how you scramble through the air either!) back to my seat hearing the Captain's urgent voice announcing rather too late that everyone should sit down immediately in the nearest seat (any seat, that is) and that flight attendants should get seated immediately as well. It was really all rather dramatic, in that the whole thing was totally unexpected with no build-up of smaller air pockets that would give me warning to strap in ahead of time. In all of the excitement I had completely forgotten about my soaked pants, and also managed to spill yet another bottle of liqueur that Sue handed me as I struggled back into my seat. Sue was trying to hold Maria, and all in all, it was better for the liqueur to go flying through the air than our child. Well, at least all of this broke the monotony of a long flight for a few minutes.

A couple of hours into the new morning (still Sunday, needless to say) we entered a region of space that was white and brown at the same time. You guessed it, we were getting ready to land at Los Angeles International Airport, better known to seasoned travellers as LAX. I was somewhat concerned to see a small plane flying close to us as we approached the runway, but I decided that the pilot probably knew about small traffic like this. Seven days later at this very same airport, a small plane and an Air Mexico passenger jet collided killing everyone on board both planes, and it was revealed that quite often pilots have to rely upon visual contact to avoid the small fellows that seem to infest the skies around major US airports. I'm glad I wasn't aware of the rather primitive nature of the collision avoidance system at the time we were negotiating our way down to a safe landing!

I was a pleasant Sunday morning to be wandering around LAX although considering that I'd been awake at this point for about nineteen hours, I had trouble being completely alert to the joys of smog and T-shirts in the Delta Tourist shop that cleverly spoke about "Let's YANK the America's Cup Home Again". I did figure, however, that such a sentiment would not sell well on the other side of the Pacific. Anyway, as suggested above we had a connected flight back to Atlanta on Delta, and since our passage through customs and immigration had proceeded gracefully, we were able to relax in the passenger departure lounge for a couple of hours. And at this point the journey really did seem to be just about over, even though we had a five hour plane ride to take before we were truly home.

It's funny how such a trip seem just like going down to the corner store after just taking a trans-Pacific flight. Oh well, the flight was not completely without incident, since we once again found ourselves crammed into seats with Maria taking turns sitting in a lap. This arrangement was fine except for eating when Maria insisted on have some of the rice they served. At the time Maria was not using cutlery, and had a ball throwing the rice around with her hands and generally making life a little bit more like hell for the rest of us. Or maybe at that stage we were just so tired that it seemed worse than it really was. Also Delta didn't have enough food to serve us the correct menu, so we got left-over food, although we didn't really care about that as much as they seemed to think we might. They were probably afraid we were going to sue the airline considering that litigation seems to be all too often the first course of action for many people who have a problem in the US of A.

Eventually we got into Atlanta and it was still only 7.30pm Sunday. By this point John McPharlin would be getting indignant about some 60 Minutes story and we had already come halfway around the world and had the rest of the evening to look forward to.

ART ICLE When Perry and I first discussed doing this fanzine we weren't sure about how much artwork to use, if any, and
- Irwin - we figured the best bet would be to publish a few issues and see how they panned out. Collating the second issue we realised that there was a definite place for artwork in our pages. The way we saw it a different 'header' piece set within the same basic format was a good way of setting up each issue; making each issue that bit different yet still similar. We worked out what we wanted, who we wanted it from, and Perry included Letters of Request in the copies of issue 2 sent to the people on that list. The response is what you see at the head of each and every issue of Larrikin.

The appearance of the first such piece (Taral's in #4) made Marilyn Pride think that she needn't bother with going through with our request. Somehow her reading of our letter made her think we'd be using the same piece on each issue - something which would be no better than using the same letrasetted heading over and over. Hopefully the appearance of a different header on each issue has provided Marilyn with a different interpretation of our original request, and we hope she comes though with her contribution soon.

The date attached to Taral's piece made Brian Earl Brown correctly assume that Taral had met our request by changing a piece of art he had submitted to some other faned. Brian wondered who that faned

could've been, but I don't think we'll embarrass that person by naming her/him. And besides we've already been accused of being somewhat tardy in publishing artwork. In what I've dubbed the Odd Issue Artist Syndrome we seem to be plagued with receiving letters saying "Where's my artwork?" just as we are about to publish the issue with that artist's artwork, and for some reason it only happens prior to the odd-numbered issues. We confidently predict such a letter from Brad Foster three or four days before we publish the next issue.

Perhaps we should explain the way in which we select the piece to head up each issue, if only to make it up to the artists of whom we are still holding their work. It basically comes down to a complex arithmetic formula which takes into consideration such things as when we received the piece in question, the colour of the paper which we think would best set-off the individual pieces, and the timing. An example of the latter can be found in choosing Lucy Huntzinger's piece to head the issue in which we carried the DUFF ballots, and Jeanne Gomoll's piece this issue with the TAFF ballots. This strikes us as a nice way of thanking those particular artists for meeting our request, especially if they were to get a vote out of the process. (By the way, Bill, Brian, Mike, and Robert, we would consider bumping Brad's piece back an issue and carrying the TAFF ballots one more time if you were to provide us with something suitable.)

In addition to providing us with a header or two ATom also sent us some small drawings, something we didn't request. For a while there we weren't sure just how to use these, but looking back I'd say it was ATom getting us to use up that blank space on the mailing 'wrapper' while making it look like it was our idea all along. Some may say we are dumping a nice piece of artwork into a horrible section of the fanzine but we think otherwise. For one thing it provides a bit of character to what is normally a dull yet necessary part of the fanzine package. For another thing, these illos would have to be the first thing someone takes in upon receiving our fanzine. In placing the drawing there we are definitely giving it pride of place.

One disappointing aspect of using artwork in this fanzine has been the lack of substantial comments on same. One of the intentions of this article was to provide the artists with some feedback, away from the response we receive to the words we publish. But flicking through the letter files I find that most of the comments are no more than "Liked _____'s header". Most disappointing, especially as like any article a piece of art has a story to tell. So I'll leave this with Sue Thomason's interpretation of

... what is going on/coming off on the Larrikin 4 header illo. It looks as though the squirrelette at the far left has just made off with someone's clothes. A young male elf who had been crawling in mud is prostrating himself and wriggling his bottom at the five-legged pantomine centaur who is racing to oblige (at least I ASSUME those are all legs; did you know that centaurs don't carry AIDS?). A female elf who has also been crawling in mud is slinging globs of mud at the centaur (she's cross 'cos she wanted first turn?). A naked female elf is pulling a goblinette dressed as a French tart off the centaur's back, and yelling "now look what you've done; broken my dual-purpose electric toothbrush and vibrator". Indeed it lies broken at her feet. A blonde wood-nymph is wondering what the

fluid on her left shoulder is, and the woman in support corset and knee-guards is spraying the assembled company with a sex-pheromone aerosol. Meanwhile, someone in a backpack right at the back of the picture has his hands to his head in horror; the centaur is about to trample all over the only cordless multi-species dildo in 4 parsecs. Luckily they're built to withstand rough treatment...

1986, THE YEAR IN AUSTRALIAN FANDOM

- Perry (with thanks to Justin Ackroyd) -

The year of 1986 started very slowly for Australian fandom (and undoubtedly for the rest of the world as well, but as this article is

about Australia we'll give the others the swerve for the time being). This was probably partly due to the level of torpor remaining from Christmas and New Year celebrations, though more likely as a result of an overwhelming lassitude induced by the second Australian World Science Fiction Convention, BLOWOUTCON II, held the previous August. It says something about the recuperative powers of Oz fandom that it was still suffering some three months later, but what that something is Ghod alone knows.

Noting the aforementioned fannish activity vacuum, Gerald Mander (Gerry to his mates), that once and future politico from Sydney, stepped deftly into the breach in Perth at WAYOUTWESTCON. During the business session of that convention, Mander carried out a remarkable slice-and-dice operation on the Australian SF Society's constitution. The upshot of the whole affair being the reduction of the document to a grand total of eight words. These were reliably purported to be: "I can do whatever I bloody well please", though this is open to conjecture in many quarters.

Whatever the true wording, no mention had been made of the DRACHMAS, the awards handed out each year by the convention committee of the National SF Convention to whomever sulks long enough. The anorexic constitution was considered to be a "good thing" and that Mander had the "right stuff" until he had the misfortune of decide to publicise the DRACHMA awards to be awarded at DEADCON for activity in 1986. This action was, to say the least, ill-advised, and it is suggested that Mander purge his fannish/political advisers before he shows his face in public again. The publication of the award categories in the newzine Sage caused something of a ruckus amongst Australian fans (especially those of the fanzine persuasion) when it suddenly became obvious to a number of them that they were going to have little chance of snatching a gong now that they had to compete against everything from the World's Largest Collection of Used Star Trek Kleenex to Lovingly Blooded SCA Broadwords. The ensuing fracas, carried out in the pages of Sage, resulted in more than one Melbourne fan threatening a midnight raid on Mander's Sydney home armed to the teeth with two-be-fours. Little came of this, however, as the weekly energy levels of most fanzine fans is barely enough to enable them to lick a stamp let alone recognise wood. This writer is happy to announce that the gentlemanly blood-letting is still underway over this topic and can be viewed at regular intervals on that roneoed blue stuff.

The number of fannish charities, otherwise known as fan funds, has gradually increased over the years, and, while it is widely rumoured that these funds exist merely to get rid of a fan or two for a few months, only one such fund currently affects Australian fans

directly. That fund is SLUFF (the Soft Left Urban Fan Fund) which shuffles fans back and forth between England and Australia whenever there is enough money in the coffers or whenever someone starts getting up the noses of too many people. After originally threatening to produce a candidate list longer than the roll-call of recent vice-captains of the Australian cricket team, the administrator, Jason Piggott, could only muster up a grand total of 3 targets for general derision and vilification: Irving Washington, Janice Maxwell, and Yvonne Teacher. This seems quite remarkable given that the winner scores a return airfare to CONtradiction in August and a unique opportunity to see blood and guts split over a vast area as various national and international fannish groupings vent their spleens over the aptly named Topic POQ. Maybe the bloodlust just isn't there these days.

The Australian fanzine scene in 1986 attained a level of excellence approximately halfway between promise and despair (if that's possible). Few of the publications issued during the year could be considered to be above average, though a couple provoked an astounding amount of interest and discussion.

As mentioned above, Warwick Richards and Bearnie Pearson continued to produce a competent newszine in Sage. Although beginning the year mainly concerned with news items, con reports, reviews and things of that sort, the fanzine's editors gradually moved the contents towards topics of greater import - like slagging off at other fans. This section of the fanzine promises to get really vitriolic in the New Year with quite a number of sacrificial fans putting their feet in their mouths and thereby offering themselves up as willing victims for the slaughter. Sage's most amusing incident of the year, however, concerned the number of British fans who wrote in to say that all their fannish friends burnt the magazine immediately on receipt. A quick calculation by this writer revealed that this would mean that Sage was left totally unread in the Land of the Great American Airfield. Most Oz fanzine fans have long considered the current British Ferret Fandom to be a very strange aberration, and this latest revelation leaves one wondering what type of people would write to a magazine they never read.

Mike Roundlove celebrated his tenth year in fanzines with the continued publication of Eye-Sore, which maintained a consistent level of presentation throughout the year without really shining as many of his magazines have done in the past. Several contributors were featured in the second half of the year explaining to all and sundry just why it is that they have decided to give fanzines the flick and settle down to good-old debauchery. It is a shame that these writers considered it necessary to lambast fandom's established mediums by utilising them to make their points (and thereby totally destroying their own arguments by the way), and even more distressing that they are now unable to wallow in the sheer decadence that is the prevailing way of life in Australian fandom. It is hoped that these correspondents will eventually find their way back to the fold and be seen at future conventions lying facedown in the urinals as all good fans are wont to do from time to time.

Peter Mason stepped back out of retirement, and Irving Washington increased his level of activity when they joined the seemingly never ending parade of trendy fans who can only produce a fanzine in the company of another consenting adult. The one redeeming feature of their publication, Yobbo, was that it was more regular than prunes, coming out 44 times in the year but with only a quarter of a page an issue (I think it's called a colophon). Bigger things are expected

from these two if they can only move on from the "never-mind-the-quality-feel-the-width" style of fanzine publishing.

While Mason and Washington worked only as a duo, the mind boggles at what possessed five (count them, five) seemingly respectable Melbourne fans to even contemplate the prospect of throwing all caution to the wind and entering a fannish menage a cinq. The product of this almost unholy association was the ultra-sercon fanzine FARS (Fantastic Analysis of Real-beaut Scifi) which was designed to be a sequel to the Joe Powell fanzine of the same name from the 60s and 70s. As might be expected from the ranks of such as Jack Linchpin, Alice Weald, Janine Russell, and Bertrand and Jane Broadsheet, the contents of this pint-sized magazine attempted to give readers the impression that reviewing science fiction was a worthwhile and rewarding pastime and not something to be taken lightly. Though how this will occur when they publish articles with titles like "The Role of the Colon in Scifi Review Titles" is hard to imagine.

The real fanzine catalyst of the year, however, was The Capital; a publication from Canberra fans Johnny Winter and Yvonne Teacher. This newszine cum genzine cum personalzine limped through the year towards an early death due to the editors' non-fannish workload and continuing ill-health (fannish and non-fannish). But catalysts don't do a lot themselves they just make other interesting things happen around them and this is precisely the situation that occurred when, in an incredible coincidence in mid-year (within a couple of hours of each other actually), two separate parody/criticism fanzines were published using The Capital as the source of their attentions. A group of Western Australian fans set about Winter, Teacher and their fanzine with real venom by producing Fuckin' Capital - a series of hack and maim articles which left one wondering what the whole point of the exercise was. On the other hand, The Crock was a direct parody of the original even going as far as using the same layout and article structure. This last production was published anonymously with the only point of conjecture being the identities of the perpetrators. In the resultant witch-hunt just about every fanzine fan in Oz had the finger pointed at them to little or no effect and the year drew to a close without anyone stepping forward to claim responsibility. With the revised DRACHMAS to be handed out at DEADCON, this fanzine could quite possibly pick up an award or two, and it will be interesting to see who steps out into the spotlight after the envelope is opened.

All in all, 1986 was a very uneven year for Oz fandom; some highs but generally characterised by a feeling of flatness. It will definitely not be remembered as one of the Golden Years though neither will it be forgotten. The prospects for 1987 don't look a helluva lot brighter, but with the continuing DRACHMA battle and two conventions being held within a week of each other at the end of April it is generally expected that the amount of fannish "fear and loathing" will continue its J-curve rise to oblivion.

A FAN FUND A DAY Going out with the Australian copies of this issue are copies of the current Taff ballot, as happened last issue. Please support this worthy fund, even if you won't be at Conspiracy and thus have a chance to meet the winner. If you are going to ask me who to vote for, don't. It is an extremely strong field and I'm having a devil of a time working out who I'm going to vote for. All

five candidates are worthy and after much consideration I've worked out that I'll be voting for either Glicksohn, Gomoll, or Litchman. By the way, has anyone out there got a three-sided coin they can lend me.

LETTERS FROM OUR MATES (issue 6) - compiled by Irwin -

WALT WILLIS: Many thanks for Larrikin 6. It's getting better all the time. Of course you know where that leads. You'll just have to publish an occasional dull issue to keep down rising expectations. I know some fans who are much experienced in that field.

Charmed by Harry Warner's theory about the freeway wood fragments. Is it I wonder possible to reconcile his theory with that of Sally Beasley and conclude we are being invaded by furniture from an alternative universe? Not the main force so far of course - just splinter groups.

SALLY BEASLEY: The bit about your grandmother's flat, and nostalgia, reminded me of the house in which my grandmother in Leicester used to live. Since my parents moved around a lot during my childhood (up until I was 16 I'd never lived more than two years in one place) it was one of the few stable places around - and magical, to a small child. One of those old two-storey Victorian places with a cellar and attic; servants' quarters around the side (over which the attic was) and a huge garden. It's difficult to convey the sense of mystery that I felt about some of the nooks and crannies of the house and garden, when I was small; as I grew older, of course, I learnt my way around more. The little bit of walled garden between the front and back became simply that, not something that might have come from "the Secret Garden"; the den became merely a storage place for toys and old books instead of a surprising place from which almost anything to enchant a child's attention might emerge; and the cellar was no longer a place in which anything might be encountered, but a store for bottled fruit and old furniture. The commode chair in the upstairs bathroom ceased to be a fascinating piece of furniture and became simply mundane, a necessity for my grandfather in the last years of his life. I don't really remember my grandfather - he died when I was 6 - but I remember my grandmother, who died in August of this year ((1986)). She had to move out of the house last year, after a mild coronary, and I felt such a sense of loss that for a while I was seriously considering whether it might be possible for me, or for a consortium of her grandchildren, to buy it. The price, unfortunately, was prohibitive, despite my Australian cousin Simon's interest in the idea. It had been the only stable place in his childhood too.

My grandmother was a very strong person. She was born in 1897 and seemed likely, when last I saw her in 1984, to live comfortably past her 90th birthday. In fact, we planned to travel to Britain for the celebration next year. Now we will be going to Conspiracy instead; I wish it were otherwise. She only gave up tennis in her late 70s when she could find no partners anywhere near her own age, and remained mentally alert and flexible to the end. When I saw her last, she remarked how different it was from her youth, that her grandsons took pride in their culinary abilities (young men now expected to be able to cook). She would have liked to have been born later, I think, in some ways - she hated cooking and found that

no longer having to produce meals was quite a compensation for my grandfather's death. And she played a mean game of croquet, beating Dave without any problems when they met in 1982.

STEWART JACKSON: Ah yes, the fascination of watching the young learn, the capacity to learn. I have always been amazed at the ability to learn and retain information and learning. Of course, in a child it becomes more apparent, so it is easier to watch, and explore with the child. Those days of learning the alphabet and learning to read are indelibly printed in my memory. The slow process of learning the order of the letters and what they meant, and the sudden understanding of written language. I don't remember the actual moment, but rather the feeling of success, achievement and wonderment. It is like a magnesium flare, the brilliance of that discovery, and the fascination remains with me today.

Rather like Tony Peacey's walk through wet bush in winter. I always found it ever so quiet, hidden in little patches of solitude amongst the hill suburbs. I wonder if Tony has ever seen the city's three or four main skyscrapers rising out of morning fog on a winter's morn, from the hills. The skyscrapers can appear to burn like towers of fire, and parts of the mist seem to turn to gold. That is fantastic. It really does look like a city in the clouds, and that you could walk out from the hills, across the doughy mist to it. The sight is special but I've seen many morning travellers miss it, too busy pondering their own problems and ignoring the world (sometimes, they are just trying to stay a little warmer on a draughty bus!).

RICHARD FAULDER: Tony Peacey is fortunate to have such an attractive area of bushland so close to home. To the east of here the land gradually rolls up into usually fairly dried-out hills, the nearest ones formed of ancient wind-blown sands, while to the west the land becomes ever flatter and the trees disappear, until there is nothing but saltbush and grassland. Kangaroos are seen, but usually only as broken corpses by the sides of the road. Flocks of galahs are often seen, but they are birds for which familiarity can only inspire contempt. Small birds, such as zebra finches, can be heard occasionally, but they are rarely seen, since they must feel like strangers amidst the exotic trees of the orchards. All that aside, the comment by Tony which most caught my attention was the one that "wilderness is barren without humanity, and humanity diminished without wilderness". I could not but think that many of the more vocal environmentalists would concede the second half of the statement, but not the first, not realising that without an articulate observer wilderness has neither beauty nor majesty, but merely is. Perhaps this is a more accurate interpretation of the Biblical injunction to "subdue" the earth, rather than the crude modern interpretation that it is a command to cover the land with wheatfields, uranium mines and parking lots from coast to coast.

YVONNE ROUSSEAU: John Foyster wishes that research into Artificial Stupidity (AS) would produce a 'Morning-After' abortifacient pill for use by people wanting to "flush away the dross" of stupidities conceived and then "thrust out into an unwanted world" by Nova Mobsters. But clearly his metaphor demands a Baby Farmer or a Spartan hillside; the abortifacient is the Foysterish writhing and groaning, which produces such misgivings that many conceptions are silently aborted and never reach the unwanted world's attention. If they do, it is too late for abortifacients. Perhaps John is

confusing (doubtless, in parody of Nova Mob stupidity) the AI of Artificial Intelligence with that of Artificial Insemination and Allied Implantation. Perhaps he believes that a stupidity is thrust forth as an embryo (multiplied, paradoxically by embryo-division techniques), and that the embryo gets implanted inside their aptly named Pia Mater of every listener's brain. If so, aggrieved Nova Mobsters might argue that nurture as much as nature determines what this kind of embryo grows into.

WE ALSO HEARD FROM: Richard Brandt, with a newspaper clipping about a guy who designs and builds large models for Lego's touring exhibitions; Lucy Sussex; Michael Hailstone; Chuck Connor, who was part of the British Navy which went to Sydney for our Navy's 75th celebrations - you know, the sight Michelle Hallett didn't like; Martyn Taylor, who provides a worthy dissection of the Australian cricket team, and unlike many of the British newspaper scribes doesn't gush all over the English cricket team; Jeanne Bowman; Mike Glicksohn, who liked Wendy's interlineations and asks, "Has she ever stopped to ask herself why there's only one monopolies investigation committee?"; and Cath Ortlieb, who also liked Wendy's comments, and adds: "In reply to Larry Dunning's odds on who wrote The Motional (Larrikin 6) - HOW DARE YOU ADD MY NAME TO THE LIST!!! I can understand Marc being suspected (though I assure you he didn't do it) but the only publishing I do is in ANZAPA. I am not a co-editor etc of Tigger. I realize I'm considered 'guilty by association' but to imagine that I'd produce, or even help produce, a magazine like that would be like seeing Marc on a hockey field playing in goals!!!"

THE PARTY LINE

- Larry Dunning -

So far as I know the unique facilities of the Party line are as yet, peculiar to Perth. Now the (un)lucky residents of Australia's other capital cities may wonder what they're missing. The idea of up to ten people all talking on the same telephone line at the same time might sound bizarre, and it is.

I first came across the service when a friend gave me the number to ring. I put the number away for several days and then when I was feeling really down, I discovered it in my pocket. Sneaking into the front office at 5:15. I borrowed an unused line and tentatively dialled in. The prerecorded voice cut in: "Thank you for calling Party line, a new service for people who like to talk to others, calls are metered every 90 seconds, you are entering the party line", and you are dropped into the line "of your choice".

So what gems of wisdom did I first hear? "G'day" / "Hullo" / "Is Marlene there?" / "Does anyone know about 69?" followed by a ~~discussion of what it was?~~ "They all sounded very young and the talk was mostly sexually orientated. After a while I hung up.

Now the beauty of this is you don't have to talk, you can sit back and eavesdrop. As you don't know anyone there, you'll never hear ill of yourself. A typical sequence might go like this:

"Hullo" / "Hullo" / "Who's there?" / "Hey!" / "I want your blood." / "Are there any girls out there?" / "Hello" / "Hi"
- Silence -
"Are there any girls out there?"
"Yes" / "What?" / "Shit, why?" / "Come over here and find out."
"What's your name?"

"Noelene" / "Frank" / "What's it to you?"
"How old are you Noelene?" / "Any others?" / "Get fucked"
"Sixteen" / "She's old enough" / "I'm twenty"
"What d'you do?" / "Any dings there?"
"Go to school ... " / "Who's a ding?" / "Yeah, so what?"
- Suddenly the line is jammed by someone who is playing AC/DC into their receiver -

As I later found out there are four party lines - teenagers, young adults, housewives and shift workers. You'll find kids on all of them, they phone up when their parents are out. You'll find bored workers and telephonists and maybe even housewives; anyone who's bored. It's the ultimate copout, egoboo or voyeuristic exercise. The blend is fascinating, especially when you hear a series of exchanges over a period of time. People switch channels too and talks go through phases - "Anyone got a joke?" is a good start.

A popular joke is radio jamming, playing heavy metal music to jam all people on the line. Once I phoned in only to discover I was the only one on the line. When this happens you get prerecorded music. It doesn't happen too often though because there is always someone who wants to talk. The big taboo however is to give out your real telephone number over the phone, you never know who might be listening!

So why does it exist? Because it's totally open. I've often wondered what would happen if you asked all your friends to phone the lines at the same time. Would you know? Telecom makes a mint out of the service so I can't see it being stopped. You're never alone at the end of a phone.

FANDOM INC In the 22th issue of Marc Ortlieb's Tigger Perry has an article in which he calls for more and analytical fanzine reviews. He'd done a survey on the reviews we'd received on Larrikin and found the result to be somewhat lacking. We'd had 19 lines from 4 reviews, and when you consider that 4 lines from the total would be our address and availability information, Perry and I aren't left with much opinion to chew over. (Strangely, Perry missed out on listing a review Marc gave us in Tigger 20. So be it.) In considering Perry's comments we see much value in introducing this column to the pages of our fanzine.

Having already mentioned it I figure a look at Tigger would be appropriate. The first time I heard that Marc was going to change Tigger from an Aussiecon Two newsletter into his genzine I quite liked the news. (Despite a few public comments which may have indicated otherwise, I liked Q36. I would never have given it the three Ditmars it won, but I particularly appreciated the fanzine because it gave us great slabs of Marc's writing.) "Tigger will be much like Q36, which was much like Ariel, which was much like..." Marc told me. In fact, this statement can't be taken as a true reflection of what Tigger is like. With Marc's earlier fanzines you can see the continual evolution towards Q36 becoming a Big Fancy Genzine. Tigger doesn't continue that trend, and while there is no reason why it should, it seems that Marc has retained some old habits which don't quite work in his fanzine.

For example, let's look at the layout for the article by Christine Ashby in issue 22. The article takes up a page and a half of actual

typing and Marc has made use of an illo and 'white' space to expand it a fit across a two page spread. The illo is a minor sketch by Bill Rotsler, only about 8cm by 6cm. Surrounding it is a large amount of 'white' space, which is greater than the typing on the page.

Then there is the heading for Ali Kayn's article. Into the middle of a Sheryl Birkhead illo Marc has neatly typed the title of the article, then, many centimetres below, comes the author's by-line. Not up there near the title where we would expect it, but separated from the title by more white space, and just above the article.

It seems to me that Marc is unwilling to expend the effort required to make his layouts work. Had he thought about it I think he would've found that those two articles are badly laid out. The large amount of space surrounding small illos unbalances the page, making it look like the typing is being squeezed off the edges. I've always felt that a page of neat typing is a better layout than one in which the illo is badly positioned or proportioned. A bad layout doesn't make the writing inviting to read, and can adversely affect your enjoyment of the article.

As for the written aspect of Tigger: I rather enjoy what it is Marc is able to put together, but I've often come a bit disappointed. There is an incredible variation in quality from one issue to the next. This comes from Marc's unwillingness to go out and solicit the particular articles to fit in with what he wants to do with his fanzines. Rather he is happy to just wait for what turns up in the letterbox, or looking at articles that already exist in another form - letters turned into articles and transcripts of talks, etc. It is not that I think anything is totally wrong with this approach (I've published material gained in such a way, and I really like Craig Hilton's "How Doctors Evolved" in Tigger 19 and Marc's "The Role of Chocolate Mousse in Science Fiction" in Tigger 21) but it is an approach that relies too much on luck and not enough on the editor's own wits, and gives the impression that the editor just wants to publish and it doesn't matter what. I continue to believe that the extra effort involved in soliciting particular articles can only result in a greater sense of creative fulfillment, a better fanzine and, subsequently, a greater level of feedback from one's readers.

Stampede is the ninth in Owen Whiteoak's series of fanzines, which change title from issue to issue, and I like it. A lot. Aside from the brief letter-column Owen has written the whole of this fanzine, and in it he continues on from the previous issue with What He Did On His Holidays. Tales of touring around the country are related, chats with his fannish friends are recounted, etc. All in a nice, breezy style. Owen displays a good sense when it comes to editing his material, makes good use of conversation, and times his jokes well. The end result is eighteen pages of very fine, personable writing. And like I said, I like it.

There are quite a few good things about Fuck the Tories, but for some reason the main things that struck me when I finished reading the issue were negative. A relatively minor negative was to wish that whoever wrote the editorial comments in the letter-column put her/his name on them. I think it was Leigh Edmonds writing but it would have been nice to know for sure. Cuts down on confusion, both when reading the letter-column and when responding to it. Or, perhaps the Editorial Five agree totally with the comments and the

way they are stated. The major negative was to wonder about the presence Terry Hughes has in the fanzine. All he has contributed to the three issues so far is the article which introduced the first. And if, as I believe is the case with this fanzine, the outside contributions were solicited by the editor(s) who live on the same continent as the contributor, the lack of any North American contributors (writers) indicates that perhaps Terry hasn't been putting in his share of the work. I find this disappointing as fanzines aren't produced by nameless people but are produced by people who we, in some way, know. And I, for one, think it is important that the more personal element of fanzines requires a bit more presence than Terry has been displaying in Fuck the Tories. Or, perhaps I'm just disappointed because Terry is one of my two favourite writers of the Editorial Five (the other being Judith Hanna). Oh yes, another minor negative is that the Australian edition of the fanzine was stapled with staples that couldn't stand the strain of its 26 pages. I'm not the first person to ponder that after 600+ fanzines you'd think Leigh, at least, would know how to put a fanzine together.

Godzilla's Dental Floss 1 is a collection of a fair amount of the artwork which Tom Cardy has produced since 1983, when he last published a fanzine and is a solid collection. Most of the work herein was originally submitted to non-fannish publications, and it is interesting to see how Tom's style has evolved. He still retains that childish, likeable feel, which provides a nice ironic tone and counterpoint to the message of the individual pieces, but there are many spots where Tom has successfully attempted to break away from his natural, cartoony style. The package is rounded out by context setting Publication Notes and is well worth looking at.

Fanzines reviewed:

Tigger is from Marc Ortlieb, PO Box 215, Forest Hill, Victoria 3131, and is available for the usual (Letter-of-Comment, contribution, or trade) or \$2.50.

Stampede is from Owen Whiteoak, Top Flat (left), 112 Polwarth Gardens, Edinburgh EH11 1LH, UK. No availability mentioned.

Fuck the Tories is from Leigh Edmonds and Valma Brown, PO Box 433, Civic Square, ACT 2608; Terry Hughes, 6205 Wilson Blvd., #102, Falls Church, VA 22044, USA; and Joseph Nicholas and Judith Hanna, 22 Denigh St., Pimlico, London SW1V 2ER, UK, and is available for the usual (trade copies to all 3 editorial addressed).

Godzilla's Dental Floss is from Tom Cardy, PO Box 27-274, Wellington, New Zealand. No availability mentioned.

TREASURY FOLLIES

- Wendy Hirsh -

Most of you will know that I am a kindergarten teacher. I work in what is known as a Council Kindergarten. While my wages are paid by the Department of Community Services and the kinder is owned and maintained by the local city council, the real day to day running is done by a committee of parents. For instance they are the ones who hired me and provide the funds for any materials I need in my job.

There are twelve members of the committee which is elected at the Annual General Meeting. Because people who don't have children at the kinder aren't terribly interested in the goings-on, we usually have more new members than old. In my three years there we've had the same President, on the one hand, but each year we've had a new Treasurer and Secretary. We begin each year wondering just how capable these new people will be and in 1986 we hit the jackpot: a Secretary who can't type and a Treasurer who can't add. We overcame the first problem by simply appointing a typist, but just lending the second lady a calculator wasn't enough.

Lina Di Tocco came to us with great credentials - she'd worked in a bank. I can only assume that it was as the cleaner.

Our first involvement with Lina was at the April committee meeting. With past Treasurers we'd come to expect a report of all the previous month's incoming and outgoing money, together with an up-to-date balance of account. When Lina was asked to give her report she stood up and said, "for this month we're in the red. Overall we're in the black, but this month we're in the red."

That was it - no figures mentioned. Nothing. For all we knew "in the black" could've meant we had \$20 left in the account. We were all so bemused by this new style of report that we just sat there flabbergasted. None of us thought to ask how much money we actually had.

We thought that maybe she was just suffering from first night jitters, but we were soon to discover otherwise. One Saturday morning in early March I relieved for one of the other teachers. Our relief work wages are also paid by the department, usually in six weeks, when the paper work has gone through. When the six weeks were up and I didn't have the wages I began to complain. The kinder has a wages account which is used to pay for the cleaners and relief staff who don't work in the centre. These wages are then reimbursed by the dept., again usually in six weeks, and the President suggested to Lina that I be paid out of this account. On the last day of term I arrived home a happy lady. I was on holidays and had at last received the wages I was owed. About six weeks later a cheque arrived, addressed to Lina but made out to me. "Oh", thought Lina, "We've already paid Wendy for this," and she sent the cheque back rather than deposit it in the wages account. I understand that we're still waiting to receive that cheque back. After all, bureaucrats aren't used to people who stuff up worse than they do.

And speaking of the wages account, a previous committee had decided that in order to gain a higher bank interest they should place it and the general account into one bank account. They still, however, have to be treated as two separate accounts, with the government ~~subsidy money separate from the money raised through annual fees and~~ general fundraising. By the June meeting Lina still didn't understand this concept so the President, the other two teachers and I sat down and tried to explain it to her. We told her that she had to keep two accounts and the two balances had to add up to the one bank account balance. She responded with a blank look on her face. We tried again. We thought we were getting somewhere when she complained that she'd have to go out and buy another exercise book.

A few nights later Irwin was writing a letter to Dave Langford telling him of the state of the Australian Ansible accounts. Flicking through the bank book of our personal account, Irwin noted

down any entry which had the word "Ansible" against it. "Hey", I said, "I should get Lina over to watch this."

For me the very last straw with this woman was one Wednesday in July. It being payday I raced to the letter-box only to find that I'd been docked two days' pay. I was furious, what Had I done? Immediately I rang the dept. and after half a dozen "Hold the line, please" I was finally transferred to the right place. Why, I wanted to know, was I docked two days' pay?

The lady looked up my files, came back and said, "Your treasurer, Lina Di Tocco, put you down as taking two days leave without pay."

"When?" I shrieked.

"On the 23rd and 24th of June."

"I was sick."

"Oh, well, you've probably run out of sick days."

I asked her to check just how many sick days I had left. She returned to the phone, sort of ahemmed and said, "You've still got 42 sick days up your sleeve."

"Well, why have I been docked two days' pay."

She told me I should've sent in a medical certificate, then stopped short when she realised that she had a letter from my doctor on the file. "I'm terribly sorry, Mrs. Hirsh, we'll get right on to it."

It took quite a few more of these phone calls and finally a letter from the secretary (you know, that one that can't type), for me to be reimbursed this pay. What had happened was that two other staff members had taken leave without pay at around the same time that I had been sick, and Lina must've thought it was easiest to just fill in the one form for all three of us. And besides, I was sick on the 12th and 13th.

That wasn't all that was happening, at the same time things were going on that didn't directly affect me. Finally, the President decided that that was it. Lina had to go or we'd all be in the red. She spoke to Lina about her running of things and suggested that she step down from her position. Lina wouldn't let anyone know she got the sack, so she resigned. At the next meeting our Secretary read out the letter of resignation (she can't type but at least she can read).

While Lina remains a committee member I am not greatly involved with her. I still have one fear, though. Dandenong is an area of many young children and we haven't the resources to offer them all full-time kinder. Our system works whereby there are two full-time and one part-time groups. When a child leaves a full-time group, another moves up from the part-time group according to a predetermined waiting list. In October Christian joined my group in just this way. Out of interest I had a look at the list to see who was going to move up next. The name I saw filled me with horror - it was Michela Di Tocco. For the rest of the year I lived in the fear that one of my children would leave.

THE CURRY THAT ATE CLEVELAND

- John McPharlin -

This is the story of a curry that was not a failure, although I may be the only participant who thinks so. You see, I like 'em hot. So

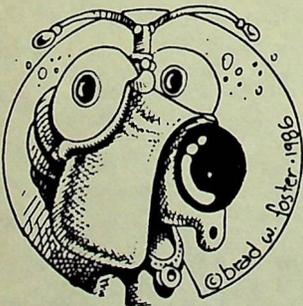
does Perry. In fact, he probably likes them hotter than I do. Certainly, he exhibits the effects of a hot curry (or chilli) a lot less than I do. He has sampled my curries on occasion and even when I think that it is a real ring roaster, he will patiently work his way through it and, just maybe, acknowledge that it has a bit of a bite to it.

So, one day I set out to make a super hot curry; a real Middlemiss molester. As youse probably know, curry should be cooked about two days before it is to be eaten. While it will be fairly good on launch day, if you let it sit and fester in the fridge for 48 hours, it will really reach its peak. This curry was therefore constructed on a Sunday arvo in Canberra, before I knew about the "Sunday" programme or "State of the Arts" (which the bloody ABC has now cancelled), for an anticipated dinner on Tuesday night. In fact, I found that I'd made more than I'd intended (I always get myself into trouble converting pounds into kilograms), so I invited some other friends over for the following Saturday, expecting it to have largely burnt itself out by then (yes Virginia, curries do burn themselves out if you let them stand for too long).

Well, bugger me senseless if Middlemiss didn't suddenly turn out to be unavailable until Saturday. It further happened that Saturday was going to be unsuitable for Stephanie and Neil as well so, out of sheer desperation, I simply swapped them over. I quote the streaker's defence: "it seemed like a good idea at the time". It turned out that Stephanie and Neil are not great fans of hot food, so it was unfortunate that they got the King Kong of curries - it was like trying to eat a sauna. Although four of us sat down to dinner, I was the only one able to finish my serving, nearly drowning in my own sweat as I did so. Being the chef, I was more than a little embarrassed, even more so when I had to hand out towels to the others.

Needless to say, by the time Perry got a taste on Saturday, the curry had burned itself out completely - a well rounded spicy taste, but no fire at all. I'll get you one day Middlemiss ...

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