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LARRIKIN 9, FEBRUARY 1987, is edited and published by Irwin Hirsh (2/416 Dandenong Rd, Caulfield North, Victoria 3161, AUSTRALLA), and Perry Middlemiss (GPO Box 2708X, Melbourne, Victoria 3001, AUSTRALLA). This fanzine is available for written or drawn contributions, letters of comment, your fanzine in trade (one to each of us please) or \$1. Thanks go to Brad Foster (art, this page), ATom (art, last page), Marc Ortlieb (mailing tables), and Pam Wells (our British agent). All rights revert to contributors upon publication. We would like to congratulate the crew of Stars and Stripes for winning the America's Cup; we hope that no matter where the Cup goes in the future it doesn't return to Australia. We also congratulate Alain Mafort and Dominique Frieur on reports that they will be awarded the Legion of Honor. The French government must have a different interpretation of the word "honor" than that of English speaking people.

THIS SPACE FOR RENT

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IRWIN HIRSH FOR GUFF Throughout January people kept on asking me if I was feeling nervous, what with the GUFF voting deadline at the end of the month and all.

- Irwin -

"Actually," I would respond with a relaxed shrug of the shoulders, "we'd rather the voting deadline never came around."

"How's that," would come the quizzical reply.

"Four days after the deadline Wendy's holidays end, and at about the same time I'll be starting a new job. I've told Eve Harvey and Justin Ackroyd to hold off counting the votes for as long as possible; we figure that if the GUFF votes are never counted, Wendy and I don't have to worry about going back to work."

"I see, your own little time machine."

I have to admit that this relaxed attitude gave up in the last week of the month. The last day of voting was a Saturday, and I started anticipating the weekends arrival. Justin had told me he'll be ringing all candidates on Sunday afternoon, so I wasn't prepared for his phone call at 10 o'clock in the morning. Or rather, while I was prepared for the final result, Sunday morning is not the time to be fed the following figures:

	Valma Brown	Irwin Hirsh	Jean Weber	Tim Jones	No HOF	Larry Dunning	Roger Weddall	Others#
UK	18	25	12	2	-	2	-	-
Aust.	23	44	25	38	2	3	4	3
Total	41	69	37	40	2	5	4	3

After distribution of preferences

	2nd ballot	3rd	4th
Valma Brown	41	57	63
Irwin Hirsh	76	91	120
Jean Weber	39		
Tim Jones	43	46	

* Marc Ortlieb and Crocodile
Dundee each got one write-in
vote.

Total votes: 203, 59 in the UK,
144 in Australia.

Obviously there are all sorts of people to thank: my fellow candidates, certainly; my nominators, of course; and the 203 people who supported the fund with their votes - I'll try to do my best to live up to their expectations.

Now Wendy and I have to prepare for our trip. At this stage all we have is a basic outline and nothing like confirmed dates and flights. One, if not the only, good thing about the 10 month voting period (surely the longest in fan fund history) was that it gave us a long time in which to save a decent amount of money, for over and above that which GUFF gives us. So we will be away for 3 months. Wendy will be taking off 3rd term from her kindergarten, so we'll be leaving Australia sometime after the 26th of June and will be back home by the 5th of October. Depending on the ticket we buy we'll probably arrive in London, spend a few days getting over jetlag, and then go straight on to the continent. Travel around there for 6 or 7 weeks, arriving back in the UK just before Conspiracy. Go to the con, and then spend all of September travelling around the UK. I realise that this plan goes against the usual fan fund trip where the con is near the start of the trip, but that's the way Wendy's kinder terms pan out.

We can do with suggestions of what to do, see, and stay. Are there any times when we should avoid going to particular cities, where there is a large influx of people for a one-off event. And finally, I don't have a great many fannish contacts on continental Europe and would appreciate it if I could be put in touch with people who'd be willing to show us their city, etc. Thanks, as they say, in advance.

And I'm told that one little known duty of the GUFF delegate is to captain an Australian cricket team to play the English on the beach at Brighton. This traditional match dates back to one played during Season 79, which was declared a tie when it was discovered that no-one had kept score. For this second match in the series I feel it is important that we get in some practise, and I here-by call on the, err, youth of Australia to gather together in their respective cities for their practise sessions. For Melbourne readers I suggest that Faulkner Park, South Yarra be our venue. I know that I can do with the practise. The last time I put a bat in my hands I was at a friends place, where we used the drive-way as the pitch. I hardly ever managed to put bat to ball, and the few times I did I mostly hit simple fly catches. So meet me on Toorak Rd, just near Christ Church, at 2 o'clock on Sunday the 1st of March and we'll see how things go. This park has been selected due to its close proximity to some good bookshops, ice-cream parlours, and a video palace which still charges 20¢ a game.

THE FAREWELL CYCLE

- Craig Hilton -

I'm an intensely Logical man at heart, so I sometimes have great difficulty coming to terms with the more arbitrary inconsistencies of human behavior. Don't get me wrong - I don't expect life to be totally predictable, but whenever I see supposedly rational beings acting inconsistently in patterns that utterly defy logic, I simply feel a

driving urge to retreat, fortifying myself with a hefty dose of Douglas Adams.

Let me give you an example of one such illogicality. This ritual can be observed, like many others, at informal social gatherings, in this case at the time when some of the guests have decided to leave the proceedings and make their way home, often following a long exchange of Small Talk.

Now it may be tacitly accepted by everyone involved that this is an appropriate stage at which to end the evening. However, no one is willing to take the anti-social step of voicing this agreement outright without a weight of justification on his side. Accordingly, one of the guests will wait for an appropriate passing Subject Hiatus in the Small Talk and then, changing tone, tempo, sighing deeply, shifting position and slapping the couch (or more usually the person sitting alongside, as if to goad his or her slothful body into activity), will loudly announce some extraordinarily exaggerated reason for bowing out, such as "Well, it's getting on to midnight, and I've got my final exams starting at 6.30 tomorrow morning, and if I don't get any sleep tonight I'll probably fail and then my whole future career will go down the drain."

This may be all very well. But what happens next is not logical. Before the group has advanced 3 paces towards the door, (quite often they haven't even risen to their feet), the offending guest, maybe with a view to atonement, will attempt to round off the conversation by bringing up, curiously, a subject which turns out to be of more significance than anything which has gone before in the entire evening - for instance: "So I'll see you sooner or later, then. I'm moving to Iowa next week." Conversation immediately reignites with new vigour.

An average of 30 minutes later the guest will repeat the whole procedure - the change in speech, the sweeping movements, the slapping, etc. - and restate the urgency of the situation: "If I don't leave now I really will be dead on my feet tomorrow." Two steps nearer to the door and the cycle goes back into conversation mode: "So I'll drop that casserole dish off to you on Wednesday, then. Auntie Flo won't be needing it any more - not where she's gone." And the whole futile thing starts all over again.

By and by, we come back to the Earnest Excuse phase, followed by more shifting and slapping, a few more paces home and then, in turn, the Conversation Rescue phase. The cycle may repeat itself any number of times - 4 is a good average - and all the while during the semi-stationary transit to immunity across the border of the host's territory, the more irrefutable become the apologies, the more world-shattering the addenda and the more insistent the poking, prodding, coaxing, goading and cajoling of the blameless partner who, being paralytically tired by this stage, would quite happily walk straight out if given but half a chance.

It's actually close to 5.30am when the last little hop is made across the border, the mechanism of the Farewell Cycle is deconstructed and common-sense again prevails (at least until the exam at 6.30, followed by repentant, bleary-eyed packing for the long trip to Iowa.)

Now look, I don't expect these polite social games not to take place. The vagaries of interpersonal behavior are what make us human, and anyway, for my part, I just carry on chatting or reading away in some nook of the party until the completion of 4 cycles or 90 minutes, whichever is the shorter. It's easier and more efficient by far to catch the departure at this stage, or so I've found. In addition, I don't get slapped so much.

My principal gripe is this - if I, as a doctor, announced that I'd be with

you in a couple of minutes, and in fact I didn't show for at least a couple of hours (as sometimes happens but very rarely) you'd undoubtedly have words to say on the matter. So what's the difference between this and the lay person's series of excuses in departure which are no sooner uttered than wittingly fall flat on their faces? They're both statements formulated without due and proper regard for the truth (legal jargon for "lies".)

I just find it depressing, that's all, when clear communication between 2 people hinges upon one's decoding of the other's systematic transmission of ritualised social lies, rather than both of them just...well...saying what they mean. Wouldn't that be simply nice?

We'd like to apologise to Brad Foster because last issue we credited his page 16 illo to ATom. We had thought of crediting this issue's page 8 illo (by ATom) to Brad, just to even things out. But it simply ain't the truth, and 2 wrongs don't make a right, etc, etc.

THE PROBLEMS WITH CINEMAS

- Perry -

There's always something distinctly different about viewing a film in a cinema rather than on television. If you go to a good theatre with a wide screen, true high-fidelity sound and comfortable seats you will experience something that cannot be duplicated in the home. But it's not just the physical environment that set cinemas apart, it's also the people - those other members of the audience whose well- (or ill-) timed laughter, gasps and screams can make or break a film. When it works together properly it can add up to something quite memorable. So it is with some regret that over the past couple of years I have noticed a steady decline in audiences' behaviour and reactions.

It really all began with the introduction of beeper alarms on digital wrist watches. (I have never been able to figure out the purpose of wearing a watch which audibly assails you with the information that yet another hour of your life has drained away. And to wear such a watch to the cinema defies all logic - you either like the film and don't want to be reminded how long it has been running, or you hate it and don't need to be reminded.) When these watches were the new "in-thing" it was not uncommon to hear 5 or 6 of the bloody things sounding off each hour - all out of synch of course. So it was quite possible to be interrupted a half dozen times over a 5 minute period as the mating call of the electronic age sounded out in the dark. The most insidious part about the noise is that it continues just long enough to break your concentration without giving you enough ammunition to get up and complain. The Swiss have got a lot to answer for.

It is pleasing to note, however, that times may be changing in this department. Several live theatres now display signs requesting that all such alarms be switched off before the performance begins, and the move away from the bulky multi-function digital watches back to the good ol clockface bodes well for the future.

But these beeping interruptions are minor in comparison with the new very familiar conversation that seems to be going on around me whenever I venture out for a film. And again I think this is probably due to the introduction of VCRs which enable people to scream and yell at a film as much as they like in the privacy of their own homes. So it is no wonder

they carry on in a similar vein in public.

One of the weirdest episodes I can remember of this sort occurred a couple of years ago when a friend and I went to see "Amadeus" in Canberra. For the whole of the first half of the film I could hear this continual muttering coming from a bit further down our row but no matter how often I looked I couldn't catch the eye of the person involved. In fact, there were 3, 2 men and 1 woman all apparently middle-aged. The odd thing about it was that, in the dark, it appeared as if the woman was sitting between the 2 men who each had their heads on one of her shoulders. It was strange enough looking at it from side on but it must have looked very peculiar from behind. In any event the 2 of us had had enough by the interval and decided to take ourselves and our ice-creams to a few empty seats we had seen 5 or so rows closer to the screen. My friend had been sitting closer to the disturbance so I asked him what he thought was going on. It had taken him a while, he said, but he had finally figured that the woman was actually translating all the film's dialogue for the men who were leaning close to her to avoid disturbing the people around them. I think that was about the time that I decided that Canberra was too weird a city to remain in, though whether the above incident influenced me in any way I cannot say.

LETTERS FROM OUR MATES (issue 7) - compiled by Perry -

One of our most consistent, and favourite letter writers is Harry Warner, Jr. and Irwin and I always look forward to his comments each issue. So it was with a strange feeling of unease that we published the lettercolumn in issue 8 without being able to mention Harry's name. However, he made more than adequate amends in his next letter:

Today is my 64th birthday and a gloomy one it has been because of LARRIKIN. I am almost certain that I failed to write a loc on the sixth issue. Now the seventh is at hand and I must try to cope with the guilt and foreboding that result from my failure. To have lived 63 years and more than 40 weeks with a perfect record of writing a loc about each and every issue of LARRIKIN, and then to falter and fail with barely a month to go before extending this perfect response record to 64 full years, it's a terrible thing to try to live with. I can't even tell myself I'll compensate by writing a loc on every LARRIKIN that arrives in the next 64 years. Something might come up to prevent me from doing so and then there would be a broken promise to pile atop the already tottering edifice of human failings.

I must confess that I have suffered from a dilemma something like the one involved in Jewish football fans on their Sabbath. I told myself when I retired that I wasn't going to fall into the snare of wasting all my time on watching television, now that I no longer needed to go to the office. So I decided to shun daytime television, except when something of extraordinary significance was televised in the daytime hours like a baseball game. Then I acquired a VCR. Now I am struggling with the implications of taping a telecast during the daytime and watching it in the evening. Am I backsliding?

I wouldn't worry about it Harry. If you can survive the slings and arrows of outraged friends and relatives (the bane of any sports watcher) you'll get by. On the other hand, Jeanne Bowman points out that it's not just our nearest and dearest that give us a hard time.

There was a playing field north of Wollongong, just over a sand-dune from

the beach. Not much vegetation about, tallest structures were the goal posts. Good flat bit of coastal plain (though not as recent as Perth's.) At any rate, there was a game on as a storm came in. It began to rain and thunder, and one of the spectators was struck by lightning. Several weeks later, same place another game, another storm, another bolt from the sky and another person struck. One assault was fatal, the other not. Now if only I could correctly remember if it was the woman with the underwire bra or the guy with the can of beer who got up and walked away...

Jack Herman gets everything back into perspective with a typically straightforward statement of position.

It is good to see that a fanzine has finally devoted itself to the 2 most important areas of extra-marital activities: eating and sport. Since the demise of Steve Bieler's zine there hasn't been enough emphasis on these important and pressing activities. Cricket, footy and baseball are all matters that need constant airing and are an anodyne from the usual stuff of ennui and gossip.

And speaking of Jack (which a lot of people have been doing on the phone to me recently,) his fast food observations elicited sympathetic response from readers such as Chuck Connor.

Earlier this year (1986) I was in Adelaide (during the Grand Prix season,) and was horrified to see that the McDonalds was open 24 hours - and on a regular basis, not just for the racing crowd. The one major thing that drives me from junk food is that the base flavour is virtually non-existent, and then smothered with pickle, red sauce, white gloop, chopped deep-frozen onion, and bits of salad. Pizza Huts are certainly the more frequented (needs must when the Devil drives, mon dere) mainly because of their salad bars and the fact you can choose what junk you wish to infect your system with. There again, the one in Adelaide had a maximum time limit - they say they can get your order to your table in under 10 minutes or you get it for free. The thing I got was virtually petrified solid from being in some heater for Lord knows how long. Whatever, I much prefer something done properly on a good restaurant rather than a handful of fast food while watching a couple of kiddies trying to mutilate each other with plastic knives.

Pamela Boal is obviously more interested in the people who frequent fast food outlets, than the food itself; and who can blame her.

It's many a year since I sampled a railway station or bus depot waiting room but there one really does see life. A fantastic range of characters in their own right, rather than pale imitations of fiction. I seem to have the sort of face people talk at and once upon a yesteryear could guarantee that any journey would produce a rich crop of 'stranger than' stories. One very vivid image remains with me from a Bus Depot Cafe wait of over 30 years ago. A sweet little old lady popping any unattended crockery, cutlery and ashtray (complete with debris) into her voluminous shopping bag. She was safe in the knowledge that no British person would overcome their natural reserve in order to remonstrate with her and that the staff were too busy being indifferent to the queue of customers to see what she was up to, even if their counter had not been at the other end of the barnlike room. The old lady's clanking progress, when she eventually left, didn't attract so much as a single curious glance.

WAHF: Leanne Frahm; Mike Glicksohn; Richard Faulder; DUFF-winner, Lucy Huntzinger who says that "all the sporting talk leaves me feeling terribly ignorant and, well, afraid to come to Australia. I sort of picture a country full of burly fans muttering over goals and kicks and

statistics. Yipes! I feel so silly only knowing the inside scoop on fans. How in-groupish!" I wouldn't worry about it Lucy; it's only weirdos like Irwin, Justin, Jack and I that you have to look out for.; Pam Wells; Yvonne Rousseau; R Lorraine Tutihasi; Dave Collins who criticises newscasters who reveal the scores in an upcoming sports replay; Brian Earl Brown; Sue Thomason; Walt Willis; LynC who sent in another political interpretation of cricket wherein the batsmen represent the battling workers, fieldsmen are the real materialists after wealth (the ball), the spectators being the workers and, to top it all, the seagulls are the downtrodden minority; Peter Smith; Lynette Horne; Terry Frost; and Owen Whiteoak who took me to task over my almost total ignorance of botany. "Why should there be any pollen around when the wheat is in an 'advanced state of growth' a couple of weeks before harvest? The ears of wheat can't even begin to develop until fertilisation, so pollen should all have been used up or been eaten by insects months before harvest. Or does biology work differently down under? If so, your Family Planning clinics must be interesting places."

If there is a 'X' after your name on the mailing lable you are encouraged to write us a letter of comment on this issue. If you can't manage that, all there is left to say is "See ya".

THE END OF NOVA MOB AS WE KNOW IT

- Jenny Blackford -

wonderful years of hosting Nova Mob. We had come to understand John Foyster's previously incomprehensible gloe at foist(er)ing Nova off onto us. "How," we had said to ourselves in our youth and innocence 2 years ago, "how could Foyster bear to give up hosting the Mob? Oh, what joy to have the cream of Australia's sf luminaries dropping their pearls of wisdom in our humble living room every month!" Wiser now, we will soon hand the sacramental jar of coffee on to the next ~~sucker~~ keeper of the flame, Cathy Kerrigan, late of the police force. Sean McMullen, well-known ex-opera-singer, missed out on hosting Nova Mob for 1987, but consoled himself with becoming host to the 1986 Nova Mob Christmas Party.

The 1986 Nova Mob Christmas Party was for me a Truly Moving Experience. It marked for Russell and me the end of 2 ~~years~~

In view of the nostalgic value of the occasion, our small group (Russell Blackford, Lucy Sussex, Janeen Webb and I) dined at the Cafe Mondo before the party. The Cafe Mondo is an upmarket copy of the Danube, the holiest of Nova Mob haunts. When Nova was held at Foyster's, Anyone Who Was Anyone ate first at the Danube, with its twin attractions of the rudest waitresses in the Western World and superb creamed spinach. (Since Nova moved to our Port Melbourne abode, the custom of dining before Nova has been gradually and sadly eroded; the quite satisfactory Rose and Crown pub where Nova ate in '85 closed for renovations early in '86. When they had not re-opened after 6 months, we made discreet enquiries which revealed that the builder doing the job is the same one who has spent 2 years on relatively minor renovations to our house. The Rose and Crown is still closed.)

Sitting at the Cafe Mondo, only a few hundred feet from the Danube, I missed the Danube's subtle charms. For all its surface advantages over the Danube (nice chairs, polite waitresses, attractive pictures on the walls, almost no challenge in getting them to open the wine), the Cafe Mondo just doesn't have the Danube's atmosphere. And the food simply isn't as good.

Eventually, with bellies full of middle-European stodge, including the compulsory coleslaw (do Hungarians really eat coleslaw with everything?) we staggered off to the party, minus Lucy. Sadly, many of the most luminous of Melbourne's luminaries and sometime mobsters (Lucy, Damien Broderick, Lee Harding, John Foyster, Yvonne Rousseau, Carey Handfield...) had prior engagements that night (staying home to wash their hair, seeing a man about a dog...). The Fond Hope that the party might be graced by the presence of Bruce Gillespie was doomed by 2 Gillespiean characteristics - inveterate dislike of parties, and an inability verging on the pathological to penetrate more than 1 square mile from his Collingwood home. (Could this be a bizarre extended manifestation of agoraphobia?) Sean's Elwood home is on the Wrong Side of the Yarra (ie the side Bruce doesn't live on.) These conspicuous absences probably account for the sad lack of scandalous incidents to report here - no one was seduced, drunkenly abused, scathingly insulted, or even more than ever so slightly tipsy! Another party wasted, without Lucy to get falling-down-drunk. ("Foyster's lies again," cries Lucy in the background.) Debauchery, dancing and other youthful exuberances so inexplicably abhorred by the average Nova Mobster were further discouraged by the absence of loud music and dim lighting.

The Most Irrefutable Statement from the party was when George Turner, preferring his beer to my offered indifferent red wine, said: "I have no taste at all. Plonk either gets you shickered or it doesn't." He then smirked into his beer can, daring me to write it down. Roger Waddall was a good runner up for irrefutability: "It's the squishy bits in Heinlein I can't handle." Ick!!! Yuck!!!

Looking back on the party, however, my most vivid memory is a terribly poignant image: Mark Linnoman, mild-mannered Law Librarian and continuous, strenuous dieter of American origin and considerable bulk, sitting alone at a tiny table and chair of no conceivable purpose in the laundry, steadily munching through a salad, under a bare light bulb and a little hanging pot with a cactus in it.

The hosting of Nova Mob has now passed from us. Sic transit gloria mundi.

A toadstool?

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