

THE MENTOR 40

October 1982

Registered by Australia Post, Publication No NBH2159



THE MENTOR

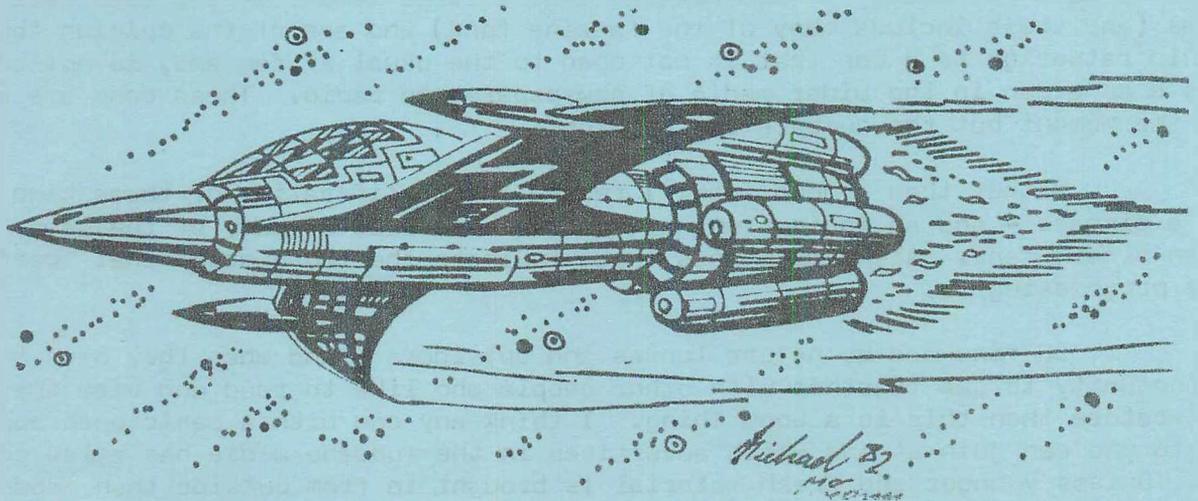
SCIENCE FICTION

OCTOBER 1982

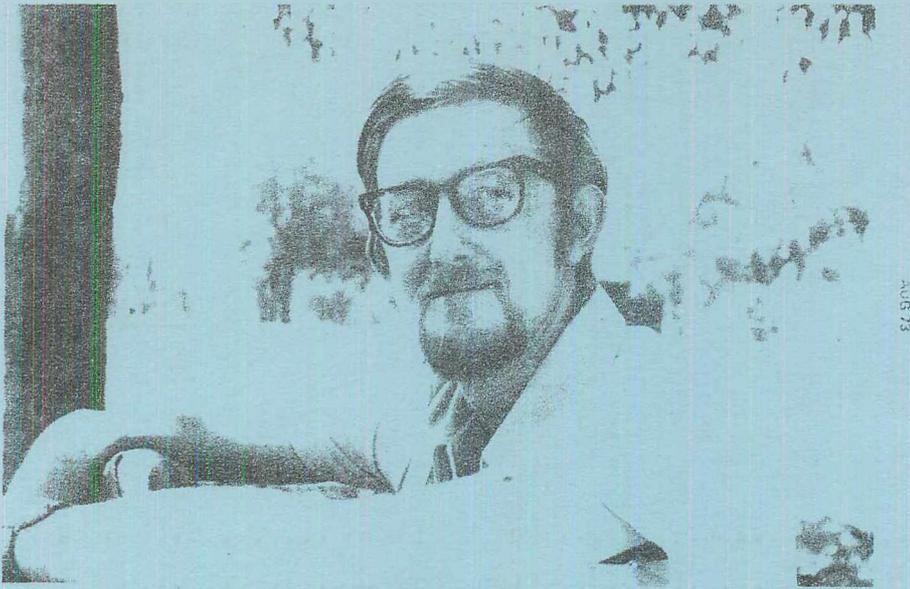
NUMBER 40

C O N T E N T S

RON'S ROOST	Ron L Clarke	page 2
SEEKER IN THE CRYSTAL MAZE	Diane Fox	" 3
COW POWER	John J Alderson	" 5
GRIMESISH GRUMBLINGS	A Bertram Chandler	" 8
S.F.A.	" 10
ALTERNATIVE GATE	Steve Sneyd	" 12
S.F. BOOKS RELEASED	Ron L Clarke	" 13
SPACED OUT	Mike McGann	" 15
THE R & R DEPT.....	" 17



THE MENTOR, ISSN 0727-8462, is edited by Ron L Clarke for R & S Publications, 6 Bellevue Road, Faulconbridge, NSW 2776, Australia. Published every second month, commencing February. Available for \$1 for sample issue or the usual. Covers and illo p.17 Kerrie Hanlon; Jackie Causgrove p.4; Mike McGann p.1,7; Julie Vaux p.11; John Playford p.20. Contents (C) 1982 by the Contributors.



RON'S

ROOST

THE CON GOERS.

Over the years there has been any number of sf conventions; the latest run of them commencing in 1968 in Melbourne and the latest being the 1982 Syncon. There has also been a great number of 'relaxacons' where the ~~sf~~ fan has gone to meet others of his intimate group and to get away from the mundane and also sf fans he does not know. I have noticed that a large number of the more well known fans (and these include many of the fanzine fans) who are of the opinion that they would rather go to a con that is not open to the usual sf fan and, is not advertised as a con in the wider media of newspapers and radio. These cons are small at the moment but the numbers are growing.

Rather than a good idea, I regard the proliferation of these kind of cons as a disease - and an indication of the clique-ishness of many of the newer (and even older) fans. Along with apas these indicate the ingrownness that certain fans are progressing to.

SF fans are by nature loners and outsiders - and when they have the opportunity to get together with other people who like to read and view the same literature then this is a Good Thing. I think any con with a basic open approach as to who can join it and which advertises in the mundane media has a lot going for it. Unless younger and fresh material is brought in from outside then fandom can only stagnate - as is shown by the arguments going on at the present time with regard to various circumstances surrounding the fanzine awards at cons. The attitude taken that only those fans who are 'in' at present should go to cons - be they 'relaxacons' or the wider programmed type - is a symptom of the underlying changes that certain people are trying to do to keep their own groups and attitudes and ideas and friends in power.

SEEKER IN THE CRYSTAL MAZE

BY DIANE FOX

Focus on a hand reaching towards a yellow wooden box. The hand is thin, dead-white as a fishbelly, with long thin large-knuckled fingers. On the ring finger is an ivory ring carved in the shape of a dragon that seems to writhe as the red light flickers. The hand lifts the square lid off the box, places it to the side, hovers indecisively over the box.

The contents of the box are polished stones, mainly agate and petrified wood. Still uncertainly, the fingers descend, touch a dark gold satiny stone, then reject it to consider a dull green stone with tiny golden flecks, which is in turn tossed down in favour of a rounded piece of grey-white translucent agate. A decision is made, the stone is lifted up and held, studied.

The agate seems an unprepossessing stone. It looks like frog spawn, a blob of organic jelly, and gives the illusion that it would be wet and lukewarm and slimy to the touch. The sides bulge slickly as if they would flow outwards under the pressure of their own weight. But the surface has the smooth coolness of glass and the self-sufficient hardness of stone.

Across the side of the agate is a white mark - a closer view shows this to be an opaque streak embedded within the jellylike pale grey translucence. The streak winds and twists, branches like a piece of white tree-coral, crosses the interior of the stone and reaches the surface of the other side. The white streak is a hollow tube running through the stone, and its interior is lined with crystals that glint where it opens to the surface. It is a tiny crystalline cave running back into the stone; if a human being could be reduced to antsize it would be possible to venture into the depths of this crystalline world....

And there is a tiny moving speck, barely visible in the crystal tunnel, something that looks like a black ant struggling over the gleaming knivesharp white edges. It is a man in black armour that makes him resemble some chitinous creature. His face is completely masked by a helmet with huge gleaming black glass eyepieces that further reduce his human shape and heighten the resemblance to some kind of insect predator stalking in this alien world of diffused white light and jagged angles. The hunter holds a drawn sword, gleaming black like his armour. In the uncanny light it is hard to tell whether or not momentary blue flames run along the blade when he raises it.

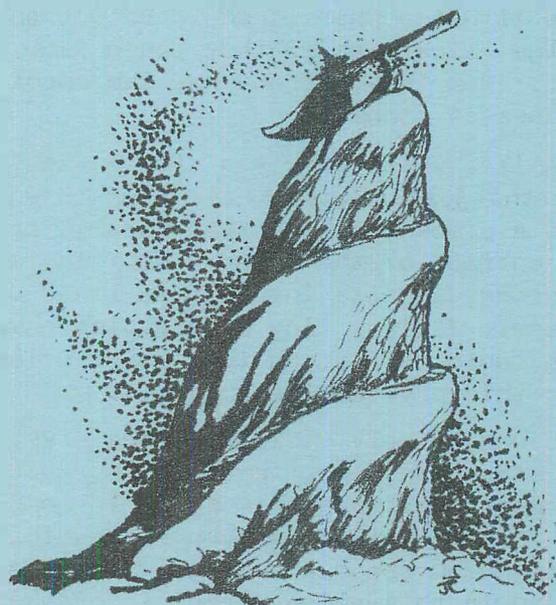
The black hunter has an enemy he must destroy, a pale creature that is at home in these icy caverns and which could be hiding behind any of the huge glittering crystals. He has developed a sharp instinct that warns him if the enemy is anywhere near, and this sense is vibrant now, his enemy is near, but

where? He feels that the enemy is moving away now, somehow escaping him, deceiving him once again. A wild rage flames through him, he smashes crystal with the sword. His enemy is gone. Again it has escaped. It seems to be taunting him.

Shaking with fury and despair, the hunter leans against the jagged wall of the cave. He cannot remember how he came to be here, he cannot remember anything of his life before this endless search for a mocking, elusive enemy. His armour is sustaining his life, and will continue to do so. That is what it was built for. He will search through these endless glittering vaults until the end of time.

His enemy looks at the tiny black-clad figure in grim satisfaction, and slowly places the grey agate back in the box, and puts on the lid.

- Diane Fox.



In 1985 it will be ten years since the 1975 Aussie World Convention. Melbourne is bidding for the 1985 Worldcon. Your support is needed. Support Melbourne '85!

WHEN HUMANKIND STARTS TO COLONIZE THE PLANETS OF OTHER STARS THEY WILL TAKE WITH THEM ONLY WHAT ARE ABSOLUTE NECESSITIES. IN THIS ISSUE'S COLUMN, JOHN ALDERSON TAKES A CLOSE LOOK AT A DOMESTIC ANIMAL THAT IS ALMOST CERTAIN TO GO ALONG WITH THOSE COLONISTS; AND PROVIDE THOSE NECESSITIES THAT ARE CERTAIN TO BE NEEDED IN A SPARSE AND SPARTAN EXISTENCE. - THE EDITOR.

JOHN J. ALDERSON :

COW POWER

In some parts of the world the cow is still used as the basis of power. For example in India it scavenges what food it can from usually inaccessible places (frequently the gardens of the rich) and yields to its owner cow dung for fuel, milk and butter for food, and at the end of its life, a carcass to be eaten and a skin to be turned into leather. Oh yes, cows are eaten in India and their hides turned to leather, and doubtless their bones, and everything else, is put to some good use. Besides all this they are also their owner's draft-animal and, when a Hindu loses his cow, he has little option but to join the millions of homeless unemployed in the cities.

Of course, efficient as this system really is, we can improve on it.

We start with some four hundred acres of land covered with grass. Well, grass waits for neither man nor beast. It goes to seed and then dies and rots. The obvious thing to do with grass is to turn it into silage, which is easily made and will last whilst we consider what to do next, or if we know what to do next, whilst we get the builders etc., to co-operate. Often builders don't co-operate though we beseech them humbly and with tears. But silage is made in a hole in the ground and as holes have to be made (well, usually: I have some for sale at my place as it's an old mining area), this means we have a pile of dirt over. Fortunately, under our property we have clay - if it were ordinary soil, brown coal, or gravel, etc. our scenerio would be different. One obvious thing to do with clay is to make bricks.

However, as everyone knows, there is a recession (this article could have been written anytime in the last 35 years, and regrettably probably anytime in the next 35 years), and bricks are a drug on the market. There are unemployed builders about and they are set to work making houses with these hand-made bricks. Tiles are added, being similiarly made from clay and needed to roof houses. To start with, the houses are for the sub-contractors who are working this property.

Having gotten rid, or getting rid of, the unsightly and otherwise useless heaps of clay, we return to the silage. As we are talking about cow power, this is where we introduce the cows. They are of course shedded for efficiency of operation. If we let them roam and eat at will there would be few or no

by-products and the carrying capacity of the land would fall drastically and I'd have to write Ron an article on the weather.

The first and most obvious thing about cows is that green stuff goes in one end and flows out the other end in an almost continuous stream. This stream of excretia is directed into a flow-through digester. This is simply made by digging a hole in the ground (more material for bricks) and allowing the manure to flow in one end and the effluent to flow out the other. The surface is covered with an interlocking roof of plastic 'lids' which float on the surface of the digester and collect the methane which is piped away to scrubbers and a gasometer. This methane supplies the heat and power for the entire farm.

The effluent from the digester, or at least some of it, together with the sludge, is poured into baled hay and this mess is used to grow worms. This part of the process produced worms and worm casts which command a very high price as fertilizer. What is not sold is returned to the grass.

The liquid effluent from the digester goes into a fish pond. Fish thrive on such fodder and these are then smoked in a kiln. Each of these operations is carried on by an operator who owns the operation only, a form of sub-contractor, and who is replaced if they are not efficient. It will be noted of course that all these operations are open-ended and a chain of people take and use the by-products of another industry. Thus the brick-maker uses the clay left by the silage-maker and the heat produced by the methane-producer. The fish-producer uses both the effluent of the methane producer and the worms of the worm-grower.

Cows also produce milk and beef, the latter when their useful life is over as a milk-producer. Milk is the basis of several industries - cream in its various forms, butter, cheese, butter-milk and whey. Skim-milk, butter-milk and whey can be the basis of a pig industry (the ramifications of which I explored some time ago) they being by-products of cream production, butter-making and cheese-making. Nor does this exhaust by any means the uses to which milk may be put.

In a dairy farm the size of this, a goodly number of cows will be pensioned off each year. These are always butchered. As everything from a cow is used except the moo, this gives a long line of industries, for example the skin produces leather, which can be made into many things. So can the horns and the hooves. Even the meat is capable of further refinement into small-goods and the bones into others. Naturally there are end products which may always have to be turned into compost and returned to the land, but ultimately the essentials which have been taken from the land must be returned.

Have we exhausted the by-products of the original farm? I would think not. Cows also produce methane, carbon dioxide and heat, and these three enable plants to thrive. These by-products of the cow-sheds can be utilised for hot-houses, preferably on top of the cowsheds and these again are the beginnings of a longish chain of industry. So, whilst on the subject of heat, let us consider the other sources of heat. The exhaust of the powerplant is an obvious one, rich in carbon dioxide and sufficient in itself to heat a hot-house and supply its carbon dioxide. Then we have the heat from the smoke-kiln for the fish. We also have the heat from the chimneys of the brick and tile kilns and the heat from the cooling bricks.

Well, you might say, surely that is all. But no. We have a continuous supply of liquor going into the fish ponds and when the fish have done with it, what then? The least we could do would be to irrigate the grass with it. The least we could do!

The fact is that a scheme of this size, on a mere 400 acres of grassland, produces so much wealth that it will support a series of experts including an economist or two who would be doing research into what new uses the various by-products can be put to. For that area of grass begins a series of open ended industries capable of further and further expansion. It should be noted that there are no waste-products. They are used by someone to produce a living. It should be further noted that each industry has an operator who owns only the operation itself. Undoubtedly in time this 400 acres could produce the energy to send a solar-powered rocket to the moon.

Certes gentles, all flesh is grass.

- John J. Alderson.



GRIMESISH GRUMBLINGS,

A. BERTRAM CHANDLER

"PET CORNS"

We all of us have our pet corns and woe betide anybody who tra ples upon them, espacially if we happen to be in a bad mood.

I was in a bad mood the morning that I went to the Mitchell Library to pick up the renewal of my membership card. Probably I was not the only person in Sydney in a bad mood that morning. It was during that period of power cuts. (As a matter of fact I could have been worse off. There was electricity for me to boil the Birko and make a mug of tea when I broke surface at the usual time. And, in the high-rise building in which I have my home unit, hot water, from a gas-fuelled calorifier, is one of the amenities so I was able to shower and shave. But I'm one of those old-fashioned bastards, maintaining that God created hens and pigs only so that Man could enjoy an eggs-and-bacon breakfast every morning. Insofar as breakfast cereals and the like are concerned I maintain that Ogden Nash said the last word; "It's a wise child that knows its own fodder.")

So I was in a bad mood when I went to the Mitchell Library. I'd waited and waited and waited for the power to come back on so that I could cook a civilised breakfast. Whilst waiting I'd checked my two electric torches. In the small pencil torch the batteries were almost dead. In the larger torch the batteries were not only dead but decomposed, filling the body of the thing with corrosive sludge. Finally I constructed a cold Dagwood. I'd just finished eating this when the power come back on.

The young lady behind the Enquiries Desk at the Library incurred my wrath by stomping hard on one of my pet corns with unerring accuracy.

"Do you have any identification?" she enquired. "A driver's license..."

I snarled, "I do not have a driver's license. Any criminal, drunk or illiterate fool can have a driver's license. I do happen to have in my note-case a fine collection of membership cards - Literary organisations, Learned Societies, &c. You can take your choice."

Perhaps I was unkind - but I am always annoyed by the way in which a driver's license is demanded as proof of identity. (If such documents carried their rightful holder's photograph they would have some validity, but until they do

they're worthless.) Apart from anything else I have long maintained that the internal combustion engine is the invention of the devil. (Just as I have long maintained that the Wright brothers were the wrong brothers.)

I'm not a male chauvinist pig - well, not so you'd notice - but it always seems to be young ladies who get on the wrong side of me by tromping on my pet corns. I must confess that I take a sort of perverted pleasure in elections - Commonwealth, State or Sydney City Council. If on any such occasion I were deprived of the opportunity to snarl I should feel very hard done by. Invariably the scenerio goes like this:

Chandler, having brushed aside all offers of How To Vote literature (he having made his mind up at least a week before the election) approaches the table where sits the young lady with the list of registered voters.

YL: Your name, sir?

ABC: Chandler.

YL: And your Christian names?

ABC: I don't have any Christian names. The correct usage is given names.

YL (blushing): Sorry, sir.

(So she bloody well should do)

It was, of course, yet another young lady who trampled on yet another pet corn recently. Unfortunately she was well out of range when I blew my top. The pet corn in question is one that I share with the vast majority of science fiction-eers, amateur and professional. Probably the only member of our tribe to whom it is not a pet corn is Forrest J. Ackerman. That unfortunate abbreviation, is, after all, his pet.

At the Norcon I was interviewed by the Auckland Herald. The interviewer was a beautifully groomed (too beautifully groomed) red-headed young lady who would have been more at home covering some snob social function than a science fiction convention. She had a tame photographer with her who must have taken at least twenty photographs - none of which was used. (Not that that worried me. If I want to know what I look like I've got a mirror.)

The interview, when it appeared in print, was headed: SCI FI AUTHOR SAYS LUCK PLAYED BIG PART...

SCI FI...

Grrr!

As for the "luck" - I wish that she'd quoted me properly.

She asked, "How did you get into science fiction, Captain Chandler?"

I replied, "I was lucky, I guess."

After that I did say that I'd been lucky enough to meet the right people at the right time and all the rest of it, and that was what she used.

SCI FI and SF...

Cast iron and wrought iron...

When I was a Paddingtonian I used to get very annoyed when people referred to Paddington's cast iron lace as wrought iron. Now that I no longer live in Paddington that corn is trodden on very rarely.

But driver's licenses, Christian instead of given names and SCI FI instead of SF will be my pet corns for as long as I'm on deck.

—oo0oo—

S.F.A.

FANZINES RECEIVED:

AUSTRALIAN - Nemesis 3 & 4 - Ausfa, S. Aust.
Thyme 15/17 - Andrew Brown & Irwin Hirsh, VIC.
The 'Ravin - Stephen Dedman, WA.
WAHF-Full 9 - Jack Herman. NSW.
Forerunner 2 - Shayne McCormack, NSW.
Forbidden Worlds - Robert Mapson, WA.
Q36I - Marc Ortlieb, SA.
WeberWemann: Wrevenge 7 - Jean Weber.
Pariah 2 - Gerald Smith, Vic.
Q362 - Marc Ortlieb, SA.
Agro 2 - Agro, NSW.
Rubarb '82/2 - John & Diane Fox.

OVERSEAS - Re Kong 6/7 - Bruno Baccelli, Italy.
Holier Than Thou 11,13 - Marty Cantor, USA.
'Dono - Chuck Connor, UK.
Yandro 255 - Robert Coulson, USA.
SFR - Dick Geis, USA.
ERG 78 - Terry Jeeves, UK.
Koinos Kosmos - Klaus Johansen, Denmark.
L'Altro Regno - Michele Martino, Italy.
Ennui - John Purcell, USA.
Noumenon 44/47 - Brian Thurogood, NZ.
Erg 80 - Terry Jeeves, UK.
Fanzine Fanatique 49 - Keith & Rosemary Walker, UK.
New Canadian Fandom 5 - Michael Hall, Canada.
Wallbanger 6 - Eve Harvey, UK.

ADDITIONAL SYDNEY SF/FANTASY BOOKSHOPS:

BONDI BOOK EXCHANGE - 233 Maroubra Bay Rd.,
(comix & fantasy) Maroobra
+
576 Oxford St.,
Bondi Junction.

MOVIE BOOKSHOP - 505 George St.,
Sydney. (inside Hoyts Centre).
Stocklists of movie memorabilia; large range of sf mags and books, TV & media tie-ins and mags, posters, albums, stills.

This page could really be called an extension of the editorial page - though not the editorial, for this issue. Over the last couple of issues of The Mentor I have been seemingly getting some response to my editorials - some fans have gained the impression that said editorials have been inflammatory. I don't quite see how - all I have done is to follow the type of editorials and articles of fellow fans such as Marc Ortlieb, Jean Weber and to a lesser extent Jack Herman. Marc did a good job on media fans and Jean on certain males and Jack on media fans and others. Just because I had a go at faanish fans they think that it is all too much. With the 'attack' on media fans Marc partook, he concentrated on certain characteristics - I did the same for faanish fans (as the point of this issue's editorial shows). No less a person as ~~William North Hughes~~ Eric Lindsay was heard to utter in my presence that he would rather be at cons with only the fans he knew and keep the newer sf readers out - and proceeded to organise the Medlow Bath relaxacons.

I'm not saying that this shouldn't happen - but not to the exclusion of other fans. Too late and the fan membership will fall and dry up - what if AussieCon had been aimed at only overseas fans and the then-active Australian fans pre 1975? Such an attitude is dangerous, and not a few of the currently active fans have this attitude.

A letter that does not appear in this issue's R & R Dept is from Gerald Smith:

"May I first join the line of correspondents who have expressed their admiration for Kerrie Hanlon's artwork. It truly is superb. As Jack says she is a find. We have been fortunate in recent years with the number of fan artists to have been found in this country,

Given my position within the Australian Taxation Office I can't say much about Ron's Roost this time around. However I can say that the idea of setting up fan pubbing as a business makes sense financially. Of course, it could be said that it is not really the fannish way to do things. It is clearly up to each fanned to make his or her own decision. I myself have given considerable thought to the ideas you have put forward. Whether Pariah Publications will be placed on a business footing is something still undecided however."

The point of the editorial, Gerald, was that if fans buy materials exempt sales tax under item 113, they are breaking the law unless it is for a business, and a business needs to be registered as a business name.

The fannish way to do things is as cheaply as possible - using any loopholds they can find. Though I myself think that any fan who takes his fannish doings off his Income Tax Return is asking for trouble.



ALTERNATIVE GATE

a quick spin through
the matter transmitter

out they come two by two
bits of each combined

the jay that stole the acorn has
spread oak leaves for wings

the cuckoo
egg rides

on the tiger's neck
Althea's

tits grow on
Diane's behind

god of course
who was the first

to try the new
machine

out far ahead
of all the rest

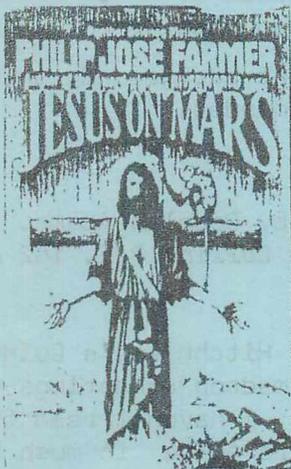
not two but
three in one

STEVE SNEYD

S.F. BOOKS RELEASED -

This issue's sf book releases are a little less than usual. We will be making an addition this issue - any books that the reviewer finds very good reading will have a *recommended* note at the end of the review. These will be the best books released in that time period. Worth buying.

* * *



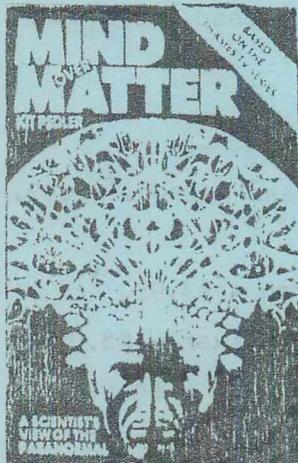
JESUS ON MARS by Philip Jose Farmer. Panther Science fiction - dist in Aust. by Granada Publishing Aust. P/L. 236 pp. A\$5.95. On sale now.

Set on Mars when the first expedition from earth lands to investigate the apparent remains of a gigantic spaceship - they find the remains of an early Jewish settlement underground and what appears to be the Messiah. The hero of the novel isn't sure at first if the being calling himself Jesus is actually the person he says he is. Or is he the Anti-Christ?

This novel is far and away from Farmer's usual ET adventures and is well worth the forking out of the maoney to buy it if you are a Farmer fan. It'll keep you reading to find out what happens next.

* * *

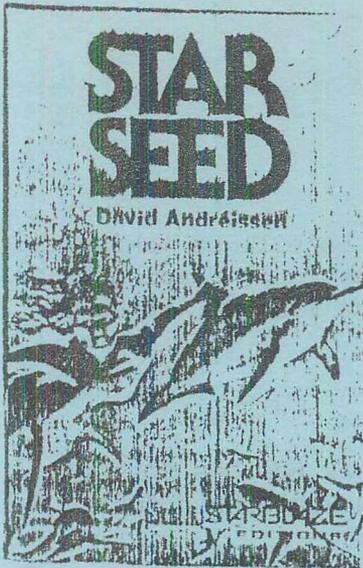
MIND OVER MATTER by Kit Pedler. Published by Granada. Dist. in Aust. by Granada Publishing Aust. P/L. 250 pp, A\$7.50. Illustrated. On sale now.



This is another of the books Granada is currently publishing on the Occult/Psi phenomenon. I reviewed two of the others in previous issues. This is another of the scientist's views - and is based on the Thames TV series.

Pedler goes into the subject with a more open mind than the one previously reviewed and it shows. Taking the subjects of telepathy, precognition and other paranormal events Pedler looks into the experiments concerning them now being carried on and relates many of the problems scientists running them face. If you are interested in this field this book is well worth getting.

* * *



STAR SEED by David Andreissen. Published by The Donning Company, 5659 Virginia Beach Blvd., Norfolk, Virginia, 23502, USA. US\$4.95. 180 pp. illustrated.13.7x21.3 cm. On sale now.

This novel, set in earth's seas in the near future, and employing a small set of humans and dolphins, is slow to start off, but once it sets its pace it is one of the best novels to come out this year.

The surface is dead - all surface life killed by a virus that no-one could stop. And now the life in the sea was threatened by a n old form of life with new added dimensions. This is the story of how the few remaining humans tried to cope with the prospect of their being the last dying remnants of the human race.

Well plotted and with excellent background, this is a contender for the Hugo. Recommended.

* * *

LIFE, THE UNIVERSE AND EVERYTHING by Douglas Adams. A Pan book, dist. in Aust by William Collins P/L. 162 pp. A\$3.95. On sale now.

This is the third book of the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy and continues the same madcap wanderings and adventures of the same characters. I haven't read the first two volumes, but this appears to be in much the same vein. It tells of the history of Krikkit and the awesome bobots that enforce its rule and attempt to bring back the rule of Krikkit to the Galaxy.

Typical English humour and well worth a read if you liked the original two volumes. I didn't think it all that original (some episodes of The Goodies came close to its humour) but an enjoyable read, never-the-less.

* * *

OTHER GRANADA RELEASES:

KING KOBOLD by Christopher Stasheff
OPUS -THE BEST OF ISAAC ASIMOV by Isaac Asimov. +\$6.95.

* * *

PENGUIN RELEASES:

+(To be reviewed next issue)

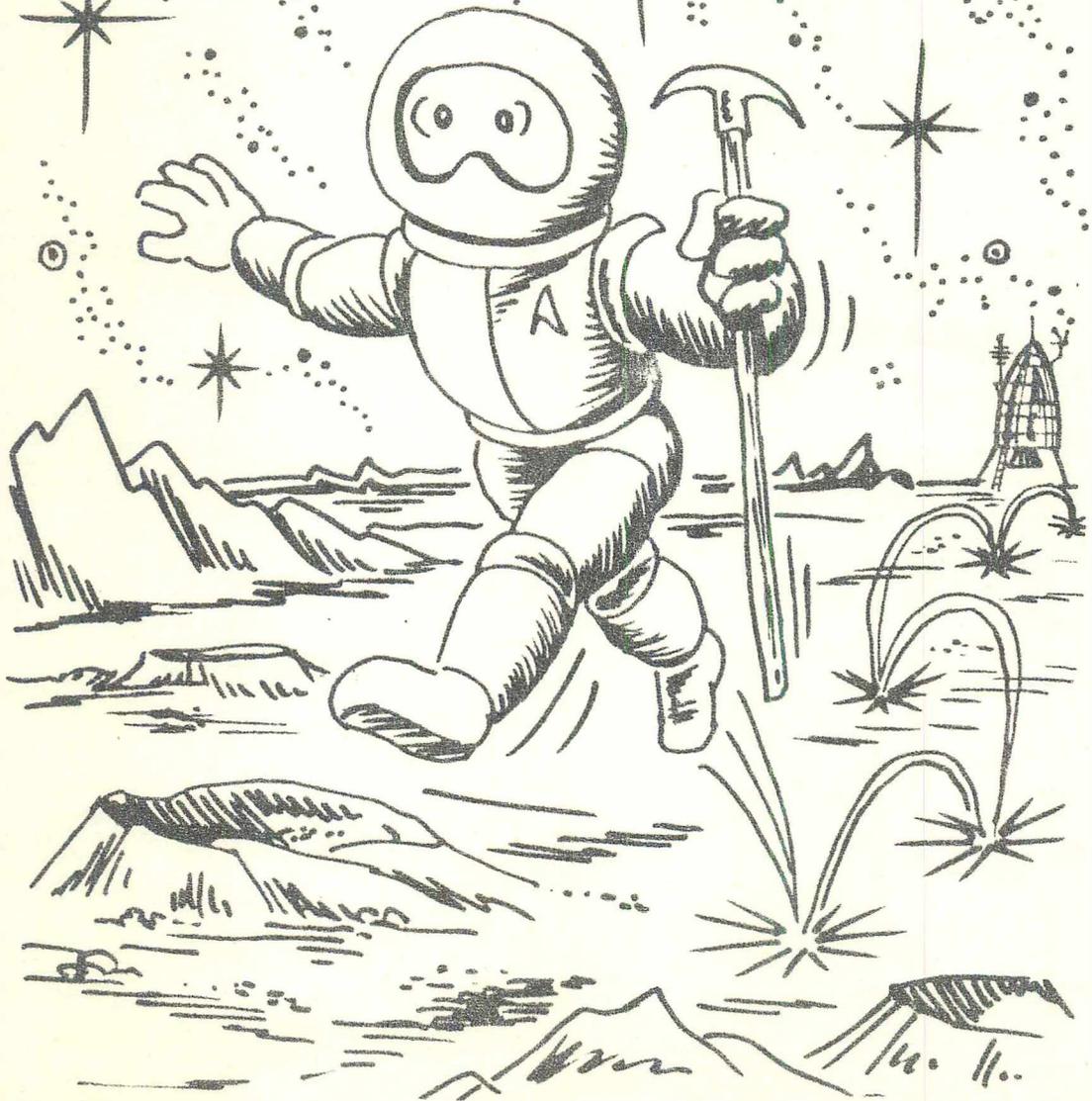
MAKE ROOM!MAKE ROOM! by Harry Harrison -- \$3.95. +
MIDNIGHT AT WELL OF SOULS by Jack L Chalker.- \$3.95 +
EXILES AT WELL OF SOULS by Jack L Chalker - \$4.95. +
QUEST FOR FIRE by J H Rosny-Aine. \$3.95 +
NIGHT OF LIGHT - price & author to be notified. +

* * *

PAN RELEASES

THE GOLDEN TORC by Julian May. \$4.95. +

SPACED OUT!... IS ZERO G THAT
PUTS THE SPRING IN YOUR WALK!



The R. & R. Dept.



Bruce Weston
10 Cartmell Way,
Balga,
W.A. 6061.

I am disappointed in not reading more science fiction in TM. In this issue of TM 39, you apparently spent more room for the R & R Department than science fiction. What about next time?

Quite an interesting autobiography of Burt Libe - intriguing events; leading him to the science fiction world. To me science fiction is still a strange world. I am coming to grips with my imagination and focusing on the real meaning of SF. The first time I was exposed to science fiction, and hearing about the world-wide fanzine organisation, was through my best friend, K.A. Bedford. It was about two years ago when I first set eyes on a borrowed fanzine. At that time SF only meant Dr Who, Star Trek, BattleStar Galactica and Star Wars.

However, with the imagination of mature SF writers, I came to realise that there is more to it. I hope with interesting enthusiasm, I will know and gain a better understanding of the real world of Science Fiction.

Julie Vaux
14 Zara St.,
Willoughby,
NSW 2068.

I loved Kerry Hanlon's back cover and I told her at the last Astrex meeting that I would love to see a colour version. And, a thank you to all the people who liked the portfolio. I promise to try to get better and better.

I don't quite get the point of Peter Lempert's story. Is it supposed to be New Wave?

Thoughts on Burt Libe's article - my favourite quote is "The classics are almost modern". The best of science fiction is, or becomes a classic because it has the qualities that appeal to all that make a person want to go back and read it again and again.

John Alderson's remark on musical instruments being easy to make struck me as misleading. True, it's easy to construct something that makes noise but something that creates harmony is a different matter all together. The greatest makers of music instruments had a feeling, were 'in tune' with the materials that they worked and could both feel and hear the way that vibrations are changed by solids. John's neighbour may have made a violin but did he have the gift that turns a construct of wood and resin and lacquer into a singing sculpture? Why does he think James Galway uses a silver flute? Because silver has a unique resonance that adds to the harmony. Many Baroque instruments are made of wood. Metal instruments came into extensive

use after the Industrial Revolution. The early 19th C. was also a time of revolution in the construction of musical instruments. A listener will tell you that the gap between 17th and 18th C. music is less than that between Mozart and Wagner. Baroque music is mellow and gracious because of the difference between wood and metal, between wooden recorder and steel flute.

The making of truly great musical instruments is most usually a work-shop situation. There appears to be a genetic factor involved as many of the greatest instrument makers were part of a family line. It must be a strong combination of dynasties of instrument makers seem to last longer than painting dynasties. The longest that I know of, where the gift was passed by father to son (not adopted heir) was the Brughel family where 4 generations were painters of repute.

My letter in TM 39 was written a fair while ago. In all due fairness to Q36 and Marc Ortlieb I state that I met Mr Ortlieb at this year's SYNCON and have actually seen a Q36 now. My stand is that of a heretic against the cult of the Sacred Mimeograph and Marc's position as a priest thereof. Idolatry is asinine. In my position as iconoclast I shocked Marc with a certain utterance of heresy.

R Mapson,
40 Second Ave.,
Kelmescott,
W. A. 6111.

I didn't enjoy The Empty City by Peter Lempert. Unfortunately this is because it's terribly similar to some of the juvenile stuff I used to write (and some people still consider I'm writing) and making objective criticisms thus becomes difficult. The work is flawed: most essentially by the lack of control over pace (or was this deliberate? If it was, it didn't succeed). Secondly, the prose style is, generally, very dry; you have to be a very good author to write well like that (I try, but don't always succeed myself - it's not easy). Mr Lempert seems to be getting into his stride in the final few paragraphs - those were the most intriguing archetypes presented. I suggest he read Kafka (especially the diaries), if he hasn't already, to find how one remarkably self-aware neurotic sought ways to express himself. Also Mr Lempert makes the cardinal sin of describing Wells as a bore. Blasphemy!

[No he doesn't - a character does.

That makes all the difference. - Ron.]

Something I find mildly annoying about The Mentor is the lack of contributor's addresses: after all that, I'd like to send Mr Lempert a copy of sodden worlds, and perhaps solicit a contribution for the nextish. Could you publish his address, or advise me privately? Or is Mr Lempert a pathological non-entity of no known abode?

[The publishing of contributor's addresses is a phenomenon of the last few years. I think it is an invasion of the contributor's privacy and is laziness on the part of the faneditor who so does it. Loccers know their addresses will be published - contributors know no such thing. They are entitled to peace in their time. Anyway, most of them appear in my lettercol time to time. If Peter wants to write to you - he now has your address. - Ron.]

On Bert Chandler's column: the only reviews of Quest For Fire that I've read have all been full of praise. Hmm, I can't be reading the same arty magazines.

On Burt Libe's column: personally I prefer the older films like Things To Come and King Kong (don't dare ask which one - I'm talking about the film, not the rip-off) and tele shows like Dr Who and the later episodes of Lost

In Space (asp, shock, horror). Never mind - variety is the spice of life. The column was interesting to read, however, probably because of its different view-point to my own.

You have some impressive staff artists (or at least, they seem to be becoming so) though Kerrie Hanlon's work has not yet matched up to the expectations of The Mentor 38's cover.

Richard J Faulder
c/- Dept. Agriculture,
Yanco,
NSW 2703

Umm, I make no pretense to have clearly understood what was going on in Peter Lempert's ... story. Is he from Western Australia?

Not having seen the film

I can't really comment on Bert Chandler's piece this. Having been born in 1951, I can't really remember when I first encountered science fiction. I add the year of my nativity because I consider it significant inasmuch as by the time I was reading, science fiction was sufficiently part of the culture in which I moved for me to be introduced to the genre simply as part of my literary heritage. Again, by the time I was reading in the genre it, or at least the covers of the books and magazines, had grown up considerably, and in addition good juveniles, especially those of Heinlein and Norton, were available in quantity, so that my image of the genre is a much more restrained one. This aside, I tend to disagree with some of the points Burt Libe makes. I would, for instance, disagree strongly that "most SF writers... use esoteric and allusory styles..." One of the chief points that literary critics make about SF is its lack of stylistic polish. I tend to agree, but without necessarily seeing it as a fault. Indeed, from the point of view of the mythical "average reader", this should be a positive point, enabling him to come to grips more easily with the plot and characters. Books, such as those by Kafka, Hesse, Lawrence, Joyce and so on are the sort of books which are recommended by scholars for study by their students, which many people would accept as qualifying them as "classics", but which don't seem to be overwhelmingly popular with "average readers". The need for an appropriate background and grasp of the jargon of both science and sf is a problem, but this is true of any genre which sets its stories in a background which is not part of the reader's everyday experience. The failure to entertain could partly be a reflection of the author's ability as a wordsmith, but also partly a reflection of the interests of the potential reader. Surely no genre should be expected to somehow appeal to every reader. For instance, I have no interest in historical novels, detective stories or soppy romances. Does this mean that the authors of stories in these genres have somehow failed. Of course not!

Mike McGann. didn't really make it clear what being "honked" means.

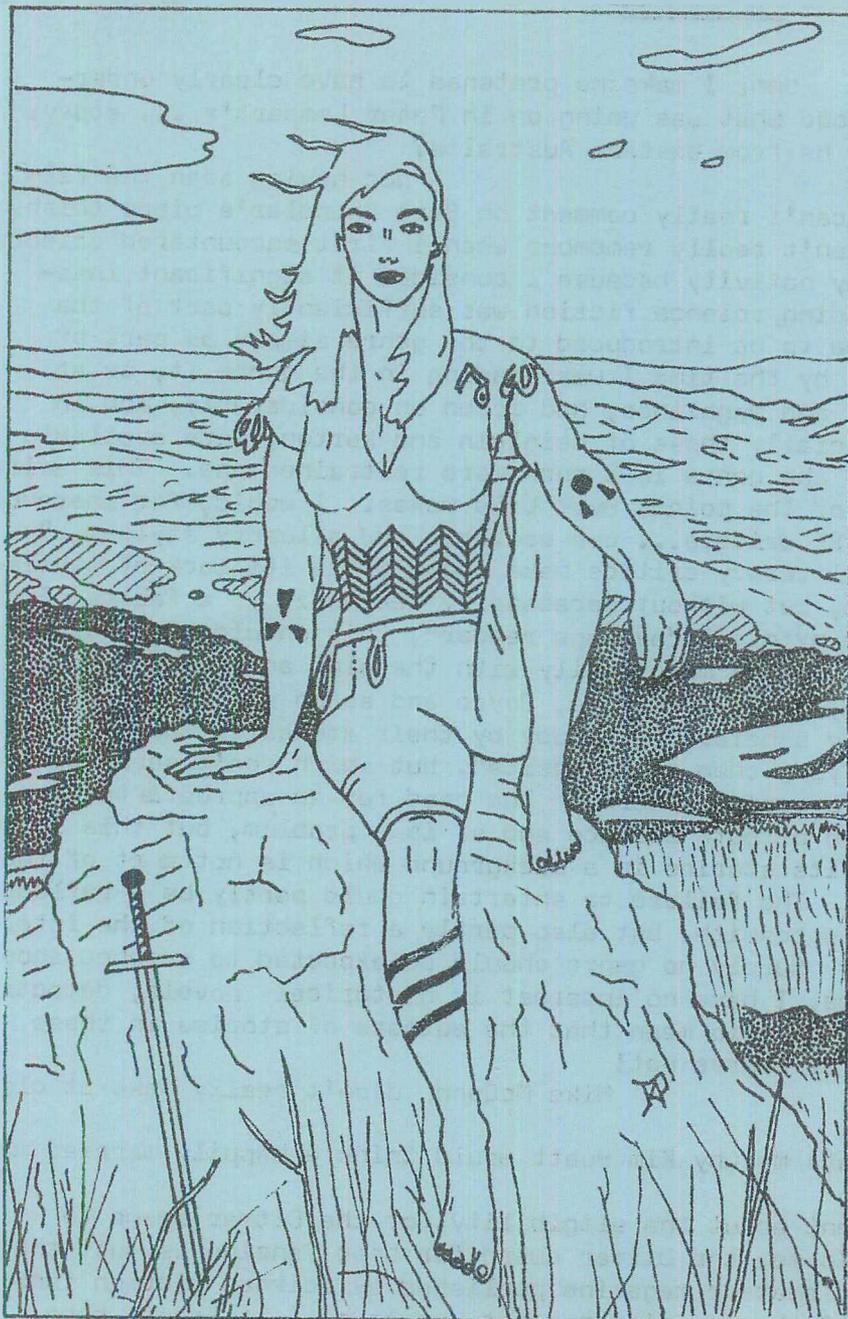
Beats me why Kim Huett would think a happily married man was a TWAGA member.

The argument about the eligibility for the Ditmar seems to have taken a strange turn. To me, the Ditmar award for best fanzine is just that - the award given to the best amateur magazine published by science fiction fans. The science fiction content of the magazine has not, up to now, at least, been an issue. For my part, I see nothing wrong with the present situation.

✓ Taking your definition, Richard, how can you tell if the fan is a science fiction fan? He/she might not have read any sfr for donkeys years. - Ron. ✓

I will defend myself against James Styles. As things stand, most of the resources of the human race

are expended looking after the excess human population. If this excess did not exist, not only would the lives of the individuals remaining be more pleasant, but there would be resources left over for pursuing "the big dreams", and a more relaxed atmosphere in which "new attitudes" could be acquired with less social



upheaval. (The point I was making in my original LoC was that the "article" on the "male contraceptive" gave a very one-sided view of the risks faced by women during its attempt to make the perfectly reasonable point that males are often blase about the risks and inconvenience they often blithely expect women to face - often as much for the men's sake as the women's.)

John Alderson fails to invalidate my argument about closed-cycle economies. Lairds, of Merchiston or otherwise, cannot exist in a closed-cycle economy. In such an economy all the populace are productive (other than the very young - those too old to be productive make excellent fertiliser), since nothing is, by definition, exported from the productive unit to such as a Laird, or a piper of Borrevaig. Needless to say, truly closed cycle economies would be an innovation in human history. A violin or a squeezebox would have been made with metal tools. In a truly closed-cycle economy there would be no artisans to make such tools. Stone tools only - bone would need to be returned to the

soil. If John Alderson is not talking about a closed-cycle economy, then let him say so.

I must congratulate your artists on their excellent work (Kerrie Hanlon and Michael Adamson are obviously new artists to watch).

Peter Kells
PO Box 1670,
Southport,
Qld. 4215.

I thought TM 39's back cover rather better than the front - whose multiple images seemed to detract from each other's effectiveness. However, the drawing does strive valiantly to illuminate Peter Lempert's nearly incomprehensible The Empty City. I initially suspected that the author was going to finish by telling us "it was all a dream". But, if so, he doesn't make this very clear. Paradoxically, though the tale defies understanding, it seems to hold a degree of interest!

Buck

Coulson's TM 39 LoC amused me vastly - apparently he assumes that I'm some sort of hypocrite who rails against the excesses of progress and technology whilst sycarbitically wallowing in their benefits. Not so. For his information, I had these benefits, but spurned them, for I did not like what they symbolized. Coulson employs the significant turn of phrase "regular contact with nature" - meaning thereby that nature is a "place one goes to". What a typically American and artificial concept! Nature, in fact, is everywhere; is everything. Albeit some parts are greener than others. But as for contact with nature - I am hardly ever out of it! (Incidentally, I suspect that Coulson's idea of 'nature' is radically different to mine. To me it is the untouched wilderness; to him, doubtless, the land fit only for ruthless exploitation).

I was (am still) a great admirer of Thoreau (a man whose philosophy would be anathema to Coulson and his ilk). And so I went to the mountains and the forest, and built my cabin, where I still live. And yes, I read by lamplight for two years, before the electricity was connected, But notwithstanding the difficulties, I would relinquish electricity tomorrow, should the authority switch to nuclear power. As for plugging - I am well acquainted with the absence of this luxury. Coulson raves on, mentioning pesticides. I think pesticides are a crime against nature. What would I do, if I saw insects eating my crops? I would do nothing, nothing! I would practise ahimsa. Let the insects eat. Then they will go. When you replant, avoid monoculture. Get off the chemical treadmill, and the balance of nature will restore itself - as do all natural systems, when left alone.

Julie Vaux

comments most trenchantly on Alderson's article. She says, "You have to know the whole and learn from its meaning". This is an important point, as picayune pundits (and intellectuals generally) are often prey to the thinking-fixation called reductionism. They refuse, or are incapable, of understanding that the whole is always something subtly more than the mere sum of its parts. Alderson, take note.

When it comes to artistic imagination, Richard Faulder must be a real stick-in-the-mud. He finds a horned and batwinged Pegasus "strange, not to say improbable". I dare say that if horses naturally possessed these attributes, he would then pronounce any depiction of the wingless, hornless variety equally strange and improbable! Faulder is wrong, to deny the unicorn, or any other fabulous beast. For I have journeyed upon fabulous seas, and beheld many wonders. I, for one, refuse to submit to the tyranny of desiccated intellectualism - of which Faulder, and those like him, are minions. I shall relate an anecdote:

... "Years ago, I voyaged aboard the barque Goldenspear, as it plied among the Island of Dream. I remember one twilight, as we passed an island called Elfingreen, when suddenly the shore grew dense with a herd of outlandish creatures. These, so a sailor told me, were a species of amphibious unicorn, with bodies covered in iridescent, fish-like scales, each tipped with a spot of bioluminescence. Gazing shorewards, we saw the breakers roiled by a thousand webbed hooves. Later, a marvellous constellation passed beneath the ship, and out to sea..."

I was proud to find that no less a fount

of omniscience than John J Alderson recognizes me as an authority, even to the extent of quoting my writings - surely an ultimate compliment.

Jean Weber
13 Myall St.,
O'Connor,
ACT 2601.

Lots of letters this time, but mostly not on subjects I care to get involved in at the moment (many I've already said my piece on before). Marc Ortlieb's definition of 'history' as "A written record of the past" depends really on the word 'record', I think. Much of what passes for 'history' (as she is taught in school, for example) is an interpretation of that written record, or a sample of it... and that's where distortions (if not outright lies) derive. By merely omitting certain facts, without necessarily falsifying any other facts, a very distorted picture of 'history' may be obtained. This is why 'women's studies', 'black studies' and so on have flourished in the past decade - people are trying to discover and publicize some of the material that's been left out of conventional summaries of 'history'. Of course the new findings may well be just as distorting - but in a different direction. In general, however, I tend to agree with Marc's approach.

Your editorial was most instructive, on tax exemptions for 'business' - you should have followed it up with an advertisement for shares in R & S Clarke's printing business. How is that going, by the way? I suppose it's about time I bought in to the business. I may find offset a preferable medium for WWW while I'm living in your area - convenient, inexpensive, and a lot less work than cranking that wretched Rex Rotary!

For those readers who don't know, a group of fans here got together and purchased an ABDICK tabletop offset printer, platemaker and fuser to run off fanzines. A loan from one of the fans helped. The lot came to about \$2200 including chemicals. To cover this cost we offered free use of the offset printing equipment for a share, said share being \$100. Once they paid their \$100 the only cost they were up for was for the paper (less than duplicating paper), ink (\$2 for ream double sided) and for running off their plates (25¢ each). Most of the fans who took up the offer are media fans as they consider that artwork comes in at least on a par with the printed word and duplicated artwork leaves much to be desired compared with offset.

At the present time we have 5 shares unsold out of the 22 we offered for sale. For people who aren't shareholders we print their work for $\frac{1}{2}$ the cost of Pink Panther printing (less paper cost). - Ron.]

Andy Andruschak
PO Box 606,
La Canada-Flintridge,
Ca 91011,
USA

Received The Mentor 38, and of course I was gripped by the story of the problems of the Australian astronomers. In fact, the topic has made the pages of all three weekly science magazines - New Scientist, Nature, and Science. All three likewise express concern about the future of Australian Radio Astronomy. In some respects the situation is like that at JPL and its well known planetary program. Both are world famous, both are tops in the field, and both have problems justifying new money. If anything, the Aussie radio boys have it harder than JPL. At least we can show the public some pretty pictures. That can be dimly understood by those to whom the term "Particles and Fields" mean nothing. Radio Astronomy isn't quite in that class. The results are far more esoteric to the man in the street.

Starlab is out of my field - that is the Goddard team at work. Still, it is to be hoped it can go thru. But do not forget how tight money is over here. Remember that even with a letter of agreement, NASA shafted the ESA over the International Solar Polar Mission. So even if the Australian Government did give the OK, there would still be a lot of worry about what the USA will do.

I wouldn't be surprised if what happened to the ESA is being cited in your parliament as a reason not to go ahead with Starlab - who can really trust NASA to carry out its commitments anymore?

Anyway, thanks for pubbing the article in Mentor. Hopefully it might rouse a few fans to do something, like write letters, for as was pointed out, Australia is one of the best sites for a telescope to examine the southern skies. And that wide open spaces have less radio noise pollution than most countries have.

Diane Fox Kerrie Hanlon's work is excellent, especially the alien mer-
PO Box 129, person in TM 39. The white-and-brown cover looks good with the
Lakemba, blue interior pages. So also is the media heroes design on the
NSW 2195 front cover.

Peter Lempert's The Empty City was a neat, tight little tale. At first it seemed rambling and self-indulgent - then I realised that this was characterization, the narrator's personality and stoned condition expressing itself. It seems somehow appropriate that he should consider Asimov, Wells and Verne as 'boring' - an amusing touch - and that he should feel that people envy his machine gun and affect to ignore it out of petty spite - a nice bit of paranoia. Jacky Causgrove's reaching hand is a good strong illustration.

Bertram Chandler's column, or rather article was as usual, amusing, intelligent and well written. I agree with what he says about the New Yorker book reviews - sometimes these are superbly apt, and at other times they are profoundly silly, with that turkeylike and fuckwitted stupidity that only an intellectual can achieve. When a stupid person goofs, he or she goofs ineptly; but the errors of a brilliant mind, couched in superbly expressive and memorable language achieve a classic 'lillies that fester and putresce.'

Burt Libe's Some Thoughts on Science Fiction - the points he makes are most thought-provoking and correct. I've found quite a lot of magazine SF somewhat boring too - I feel that I was lucky to encounter sf when I was too young to be put off by poor prose, but able to appreciate the ideas and images evoked.. Also encountered it through writers who made a direct appeal to the imagination. The 'overstress on violence and depravity' he mentions would seem to be a direct result of new wave writers being influenced by the themes as well as the style of French avant-garde experimental writing which is influenced by Surrealism which is influenced by the Marquis de Sade. (Not that the universe isn't violent and depraved anyway: so a violent and depraved literary style is at least one way of coming to terms with it.)

Mike O'Brien makes a good point about horror films. But what people somehow fail to realise (obvious though it is) that every new element in horror films was considered shocking, ghastly and even obscene in its own time. The Hammer Dracula and Frankstein were considered crude and overladen with blood and sex (towards the end they did degenerate into skin flicks): the original 1930's Frankenstein was considered so frightening that members of the audience might have heart attacks, etc. In 20 or 30 years time our present spatter flicks will be considered harmless and nostalgic. And that is a quite unpleasant thought.

John Alderson's comment on the MacCrimmons was fascinating - it underlines the fact that the great art of the past has been created in mostly non-technical environments. After all, there really wasn't any any technology until the end of the 18th Century. A great artist could create in any environment - or under really any setup save a totalitarian one (incidentally totalitarianism doesn't need technology though it is far more efficient with it.). What a great creative thinker or artist would need would be the moral support of his society and the company of various other creative people for encouragement. And this no technology can supply - although it can make access easier.

∟No present technology, Diane.
In the future there may be some, as yet, unforeseen form of technological achievement as yet undreamed of - such as TV or computers back in the 1st century AD. There are no absolutes. - Ron.∟

I don't think that P J Farmer wrote Many Coloured Land - this hasn't got anything to do with the style, but rather with the mood. P J Farmer is an antiromantic writer - and somehow I don't envisage him writing about elves, even if rationalised as aliens. Also I think P J Farmer would have put in a few detailed-yet-detached sex scenes. Also there is more 'lift', more mythologising in Many Coloured Land even though Farmer writes about superheroes and mythic figures, he tends to degalmourise them somehow.

∟I dunno - see Farmer's latest in the Review Section thish - Jesus On Mars - which is a totally different approach I have yet to see from farmer. - Ron.∟

In reply to Buck Coulson - a prostitute's intelligence need not be high. It need not be low either. Many prostitutes are teenagers who have been more or less forced into it by the impossibility of finding employment elsewhere. They would often have run away from home to except bashing, incest, etc., and would have no papers or references to help them get a job. A child which grew up in an environment where it was constantly being bashed or seeing other violence and vileness would have little chance of doing well at its studies, and hence would be lacking the documents necessary to convince any employer of its trustworthiness. (these certificates etc don't convince employers of a prospective employee's intelligence or education - they are really more a guarantee of a prospective employee's social status.). The ranks of prostitutes are filled by people who were destined by their family backgrounds for such a task - and the IQ, morals etc of the person was probably very little say in the matters. The current Depression would have a lot to do with it, too.

∟From what I have heard, before the current depressed climate, women were in the game because of the incredibly high pay (\$1000 per week) and some because they enjoyed the work - as against other work women were traditionally employed in - production work, etc. Of course at present about 3/5 of the prostitutes are on hard drugs, and need the high pay to keep up their ffixes. As for the future - I can see the day when the situation as portrayed in Soylent Green happens - people supplied with apartments when unemployment really starts to bite and the pressure of overpopulation and the growing problems in law enforcement create such situations in the countries with already large populations. I am glad I am living in Australia. - Ron.∟

Some of the WAHF this issue include Raymond L Clancy, Burt Libe, and Jennifer Buckley. Thish is being posted out early October to give me a breathing space - and to get all Susans zines out before the Arrival. Ruth Kentwell also.

Jack Herman
Box 272,
Wentworth Bldg.,
Sydney Uni.,
NSW 2006

Peter Lempert's vignette needs editing. For example, at the end of the second paragraph, the "correct" grammar is: "...there are... They!" Verb agreeing with subject in number, verb "to be" taking no object but rather subject before and after. Pedantic, maybe, but unedited script is irritating.

Burt Libe makes an interesting new columnist but I hope his ideas are better than the mathematics he demonstrates in listing his "three major problems".

Roger Waddington might not be aware that under the International copyright agreement, Australia is bound to take British publications in preference to US editions of the same book. English prices are, of course, higher than US ones - due to smaller market - and when added to importing costs, middleman charges and retailer's markup make for very high book costs. Australian editions come out as just about as expensive (because our market is even smaller than Britain's).

Your reply to Marc re fanzines nominated for Ditmars begs several questions. First, I concur that ASFN is not a fanzine but a professional publication (and so are The Cygnus Chronicler and, probably, Science Fiction). However, all other zines on that list are eligible. The category is "Best Australian Fanzine" - no mention is made of "SF" as part of the criterion. The range of fanzines eligible goes from fannish (Q36) to Sercon (SFC) to serious WWW) to fiction-based (Mentor) to clubzine (Data) to newszine (Thyme) - as long as the zine is primarily produced by fans and not to make money, and doesn't pay contributors. (By the way, what happened to Thyme, which was nominated?).

The point isn't the category, Jack, it's the name of the award - Aust. SF Achievement Award. - Ron./

Alderson's continued misuse of the English language amazes me. He wants to deny all history because some is dynastic or in other ways distorted. There is a whole discipline within history called "historiography" which deals with the comparison of historical records, attempting to compare them for accuracy and truth. We've eventually discovered that the Ramesid lies about KADESH are untrue by comparing them to contemporary Hittite and other records. Similar distortions are usually, eventually, uncovered. HISTORY is defined as the record of past events. Hence the time before written, surviving records is called PRE-HISTORY.

Mr Mapson's speculations as to Julian May's identity are slightly awry. She is listed in Tuck's Encyclopedia as an authoress who had a story or two in the early 50's Astounding and faded from the SF scene thereafter. She has apparently only just reemerged with the Pliesticene Age sagas. May writes much better than PJF anyway.

Kell's incredible assertion that "the less we know about the Universe the happier we will be"... is incredible. How any fan could really believe that is beyond me! I don't want to know everything but as much as possible about things around me.

In answer to your interpolation in my letter. I am used to the mundane press having misleading headlines but I expect better of fandom. My objection to bloc-nominations for Ditmars comes when fans deliberately go out of their way to nominate a particular zine or writer or to stack the ballot without knowing the field or nominating in other categories. The Yggdrassil nominations in 1979 came on one sheet saying, "We the undersigned nominate YGGDRASSIL." and was signed by 20+ people at an MUSFA meeting. How many of the DATA nominations know the fanzine field or nominated with any other intention than that of getting Data on the Ballot paper? Shayne thought it was a great joke on fandom!

APP Joseph Hanna-Rivero A410871
No.1 Technologist APP Course,
RAAF School Of Radio,
RAAF Base, Laverton, 3027
Vic.



I didn't really get to grips with Peter Lambert's story The Empty City mainly because of the way it was told. "I turn".. "I stand", I this and I that. It made the story quite monotonous. I did enjoy Bert Chandler's Grimesish Grumblings in which he commented on The Quest For Fire ; in my opinion one of the most important science fantasies to come here in a long time. The film did deserve an R rating (if only because of the sex scenes in it) but I felt the Australian censors should have done what was done by the British censor and that was, snip a few of the more explicit scenes in the film and release it with an AA rating (equivalent to our M).

Burt Libe's "Some Thoughts On Science Fiction" made interesting reading. I cannot agree more with his comment that generally SF does not entertain but rather concentrates on too much detail, much of which is boring and lacking in reader involvement. This may be the reason why fantasy is more popular than SF. Fantasy concentrates more on character development allowing the reader to identify with the story and thus suspend disbelief.

John J Alderson
Havelock,
Vic. 3465.

I have
a brother-in-
law who once
worked in

the Patents Office and his view of language-use is to draw the absolute least amount of information possible from a statement. So it surprises me that

people draw even more information from my statements than I ever put there, then object to that information, and invariably, so do I.

It was a pleasure to read Diane Fox's brief comment. She read and understood what I was trying to say. Before one can understand the demythification process they must understand the mythification process. It is obvious that Mapson, who accuses me of confusing folk legends

etc with myth, and Herman who says I don't make distinction between myth etc and history, Kells who cannot see even the logical framework and Ortlieb's muddled reaction are all hopelessly at sea, unable to even see the myth-making process at work. However, to Julie Vaux: I can assure you that I am not a thiest, nor have I any intention of destroying anything, let alone myth. Struth! There's myth enough gathered around myself and I am not so foolish either to believe or to destroy that 'glamour'... I use its original Celtic meaning.

I have always firmly refused to state any qualifications I have, pointing out that my work is my authority - so Mapson is out of luck. But I may say that my name does occur in the rear of the Journals of appropriate learned societies, secondly that I am an historian, not a mythologist and I have published work to my name and a chat with the Historical Societies of our various States will confirm my status. As to his further curiosity as to "how ancient" my sources must be before they pass from 'history' into 'myth'... why, myth is invariably both older and younger than history, and all history, even that so recent as to come over the 7 o'clock news has been preceded by the myth and the 'historical sources' interpreted to fit that myth. Unless this is understood then history is meaningless.

Naturally Herman is right that because a myth is traced back to a historical event it does not demonstrate the truth of the myth. This would be putting the cart before the horse with a vengeance. Like Ortlieb he makes the mistake of attributing to me his own use of "all" myths. Now if Marc had been more careful in reading my article he would not have used that "all" and saved himself a page or so of confusion. Perhaps too, if he used a dictionary definition of history (branch of knowledge dealing with past experience of mankind... or a narrative or chronicle) he would not have this hangup about it being "written". Now, it is difficult to understand just what Marc wants. One can draw an immense amount of historical information out of the Robin Hood 'myths' but it would not be the information that Marc would expect. He has a difficulty in understanding how the dross is saved from the truth... it is a matter of logic and fact. A mathematician, confronted with the statement that eight times nine equals 73 knows immediately that the statement is wrong, but he cannot prove its wrongness; it can only be demonstrated. History is in the same position.

Now I am not the first historian to try and push history back into the deeper past. In Zafiropulo's Mead and Wine this is done for Bronze Age Greece, and Heracles occurs in the chronological tables which the author uses to build into an historical framework. His birth is given as occurring in 1320 BC. I have the highest regard for Robert Graves but he was neither a mythologist nor a historian and confesses that he wrote as a poet - but he had a certain number of obsessions which colour his work. Now I certainly did not say, and it was most certainly not the basis of my assertion that Heracles and Prometheus were contemporary because Heracles released the latter.

I confess, if Ron printed it as I wrote it, to be guilty of a slovenly sentence about the patriarch. The time of the patriarches probably occupied two centuries or more so it would be difficult to write the story down within a century. Probably the Hebrew did keep a contemporary written record, but I did not mean that. I meant the final writing of the Book of Genesis took place at the end of that era, that is probably shortly after the death of the last, Israel. Now the legends should be obvious to anyone who reads the account and I could have given the references, but the reasoning behind the suggestion that those passages were legends rather than tradition would involve at least, several pages, and it was irrelevant. If Marc wants an article on the authorship of Genesis, well and good, but if I supplied the references

and proof to everything, even of that article, which someone queried, the article would start to rival The Golden Bough in length.

Of course, Marc is right in saying that my methods cannot reveal the truth, only what I think is the truth, but I live in the post-Einstein era and know that there is not an absolute truth. Now, I cannot for the life of me understand what Marc means by wanting to see "a little more concrete evidence for some form of interaction between the Australian Aborigines and the ancient Greeks before I was willing to accept John's theory that myth is universal." I don't even know what "John's theory that myth is universal" is all about. I am equally intrigued that my "opinions on women are going to colour" my theories, though I fancy Marc has some myth about my theories.

A Bertram Chandler
PO Box 980,
Potts Point,
NSW 2011

I thank Bruce Weston for his apology but assure him that I have long been of the opinion that a bad review is better than no review at all. And anybody who sets up shop as a public entertainer must expect brickbats as well as bouquets.

As a matter of fact I often write stinking letters myself when displeased by something that I have read or seen on TV. I do not post these at once, however. After a couple or three days I reread them and either tear them up or entrust them to the uncertain mercies of our postal service. Sometimes I get a reply, sometimes I don't. On three recent occasions when I didn't, the Long Loud Silence on the part of the recipient was obviously due to his/her/their guilty conscience... (One of these was to a local TV station whose asinine news reader referred to the ill fated Lusitania as an "American cruise liner...")

Jean Weber,
13 Myall St.,
O'Connor,
ACT 2601

I was reading your costing break-down of mimeo versus offset in Q36-2, and wondered how you handle lots of illos. I would assume that any page with an illo on it would have to have a master made for offset, because you can't put an illo on a direct-image master, unless it's drawn directly. In other words, I thought you can't do paste-up on a direct-image master. Is that right? Therefore if one used a lot of illos, one couldn't use many direct-image masters, but would have to have master made from the paste-up. Obviously at your prices this wouldn't increase the cost all that much, but I was wondering about techniques. I'm now so used to windowing illos to save the cost of electrostencils...

No. The prices I quoted Marc for that zine were the basis prices. Offset leaves mimeo for dead when you have good artwork to reproduce (for instance Kerrie Hanlon's pieces). An electro-static master costs about 23.5¢ each plus about 10-25¢ to run through the platemaker.

For any interested, we are quoting half the Pink Panther price to run offset if you don't have a \$100 share - less cost of paper. For instance PP quotes one side of white A4 at \$10.90. The paper cost is \$1.80. This gives the cost at \$9.10. A half of this is \$4.55 (plus postage), then add back the \$1.80 paper gives \$6.35.

Still way out in front. Of course it costs much less if you get the \$100 share and you put out 4 issues per year and we run off the covers. - Ron/

-- The latest news is that Susan and I have another daughter -- Eleanor.

