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Dedicated to bludgers all - may we increase our numbers. AUSTRALIA IN '75!

BRG

DOWNTOWN

Good things happen to me sometimes; over the Christmas holidays, and the May and August school vacations. The last holidays (August 21 - September 6) started oddly enough. I had told everybody that I would not come down til the Sunday morning. I had a car ride lined up, and several matters to arrange before I left Ararat. We finished the term with a School Picnic, and arrived home at 2pm. At 3pm I poked my nose out the door and saw that the neighbours were preparing to leave. "Are you going to Melbourne?" The answer was yes; I had an hour to pack and no way of telling my parents that I was on the way. We set off, rolled into Melton about 7pm, and rang "home". No answer. On any other night this would not be serious; but this was the first time I had been home since my parents had moved to East Preston. I had never been to East Preston in my life, and did not have a key if I could get there. I knew my parents would be out for some of the night, and so did not worry too much. I was dropped in the middle of Melbourne, together with a case, two bags and a sports coat, on a warm night. I struggled down to the Melbourne Science Fiction Club, not even knowing whether anybody would be there.

Everybody was there - John Bangsund, John Foyster, Merv Binns and other notables. Later there turned up people I had not seen for months, like Bernie Bernhouse. The film was IF.. and I would have seen it all again if I had not been worried

about getting home. I rang about 9.0'clock, and still no answer. Ran back from the Elizabeth Street Post Office to the club, saw the first hour of IF, ran back to Elizabeth St post office at 10 pm, still no answer, ran back and saw nearly all the rest of IF, rang at 10.45, and finally made contact. The first ring, my parents had been out; the second, the phone had not been put through from the bank part of the premises (of the East Preston State Savings Bank); the third, my parents had gone upstairs to bed and could not get down before I stopped ringing. Such is life in the Gillespie household. I interrupted IF again, grabbed my bags, said hello to Leigh Edmonds in passing, wandered around looking for a taxi for half an hour, and made it "home" at 10 past 12 on the Saturday morning.

The premises at East Preston are my sort of house. We had one at Bacchus Marsh for awhile, until it was pulled down. Built in 1928, it contains the bank itself, the lounge room, and the kitchen downstairs, and four bedrooms and a sitting room upstairs. There's a balcony out the front but I did not venture out into the carbon monoxide. My room has a concrete floor and solid plaster walls, and is the best insulated room I've ever been in. It's large, and has windows on two sides. Working up there, I feel very much like that man in the high castle. The room is nearly soundproof when the solid wooden door is shut. Perfect working conditions; but I did little work during that fortnight and I'm up here at the moment. Contained within solid brick and plaster walls, the record player would sound great here as well.

Saturday morning I walked out the door and caught a tram, which was an improvement on the train service between Bacchus Marsh and Melbourne. The tram takes me nearly to McGills door, which is convenient. There were \$16 worth of books waiting for me at the Club, including books by Leiber, Jose Farmer, Aldiss, and others. Leigh Edmonds finally appeared, as did John Bangsund, of all people. I had not met him in the Club for a long time. Leigh and I saw MASH in the afternoon, which is fun, but nearly as enjoyable as it was supposed to be. The acoustics in the Esquire did not help it much, as much of the most important cracks come from the background. MASH had its visual moments: the elongated absurd figures of the soldiers were made to look like Mike Gilbert spacemen by the director as they ambled and tottered around a very run-down Army camp. There was also the photographed tableau of the Last Supper, and other odd things. At heart, it was just another "good guys together" American comedy, and as such, it is no more interesting than BUTCH CASSIDY AND THE SUNDANCE KID, which was most uninteresting.

On Saturday night, I decided that David Penman was the fan I had least met during the last few years, so I rang him up. Was I going out? No? Around he came, not looking all that much different from when I met him last, at the 1969 Convention. David's been to Western Australia, and held some odd jobs since he left school, but he mainly discussed literature and science fiction. Our views differ greatly, so it was an interesting discussion. One of David's remarks hit home; when introduced, he said "But I've never heard about your parents in your fanzines". Pangs of guilt crossed my mind, but not for too long. It's just that I never have room to discuss personal matters in S F COMMENTARY, although my parents still get some credits in MR. It just made me wonder which of the varieties of rubbish I turn out people want to read in my fanzines.

I'm still not keeping a diary, so the rest of the fortnight does not come in order. The film I saw that I really enjoyed was... you guessed it... WOODSTOCK. Three hours non-stop is just this side of exhaustion, I must admit, but it was worth it. More than anything else, this is a masterpiece of filmcraft, with every technique learned by American film men during the last twenty years, used in a film without calling attention to themselves. Split-screen technique was necessary in places

Because WOODSTOCK was filmed originally in 16 mm film. I'm not sure how they stretched the 16 mm image over the 70 mm screen and still made it look tolerable, but it does. There are a few fuzzy long shots, but the rest of the film looks good. WOODSTOCK is not a "documentary" at all, but a celebration, and reviewers have mainly disagreed about the worth of the celebrated. The film takes scrupulous care to present the pop stars in the best way possible, exposing them to close ups, odd angles, and other devices which belie the supposed "falseness" of the acts of these groups. The Who is one group, for instance, who were not greeted well in Australia when they came here, but the film demonstrates the group's effectiveness without using any ^{tricks} ~~tricks~~. The Sly and the Family Stone act is the best in the film because the film crew show that they recognize the elements that made Woodstock a success. Blue and white lights convert the lead singer into an African god, complete with cape and halo and most other tools of the religious trade. The reviewers have charged that the "young viewers" (not including the reviewers themselves) were defrauded. On the contrary, the viewers were shown a wide variety of Woodstock happenings in such a way as they could make up their minds about its authenticity if they liked. For instance, it rained heavily on the first day of the Festival. The film-maker shows some of the crowd sliding in the mud, others trying to shelter themselves. The film shows the great strain placed on all the resources of the festival. Now most of the audience will say to themselves that "it was all worthwhile anyway", but I had the chance to say that it wasn't worth the trouble. Most of the audience would say: "Wasn't Sly and the Family Stone a great act?" But I could say: "All right, Wadleigh has recognized the religious fervour of this happening. What do I say to that?"

I'm still not sure. Government politicians like to talk about the resemblance between these events and Hitler's youth campaigns, and I can see this myself. But the point that the film-makers made overtly was that the main difference between Woodstock and a Hitler youth campaign was that nobody was telling anybody to march along, or bash Jews (or policemen, as the case may be) or go to war. The kids were enjoined not to do these things, not to become Black Panthers, or Birchers, or whatever, but ignore the people who want to push other people around. So I favour the "healthy release of inhibitions" theory about pop music, just because that was the way it affected me. I tapped my feet, forgot everything else, and just enjoyed the whole thing. But, then, I've already been balloted out of National Service. (In case anybody thinks I have not talked about the film at all, let me say that Crosby, Stills and Nash, and Sly and the Family Stone were perhaps the best acts; that the 3-record album has little to do with the film - even when it uses tracks from the film the sound is not nearly as good as on the film; that the censors have treated it badly, leaving obvious gaps and blooming out every swear word quite obviously; that you should see it, even if you are over twenty five).

David Grigg called one morning, and he whinged about his troubles, and I whinged about mine. The main advantage he has is not being tied to the Education Department. He invited me to another meeting of the Melbourne University Science Fiction Association, which, as I have described in the Mailing Comments, did not turn out as expected. Learn to play cards before you attend the next meeting of MUSFA, Lee.

I met Rick Brewster again, although we rarely stay out of contact for more than a few months at a time. He's turned up briefly at several of our Conventions, and has met Lee Harding and Tom Newlyn, at least. He's just gained a new job as Training Officer with the Department of the Army, and I've still to hear about progress in this job. All I know is that this is one public service job where people actually work. At any rate, we went to see MAGNIFICENT MEN IN THEIR FLYING MACHINES one night, and it is still quite enjoyable. I had forgotten how many good lines there are; especially from Terry Thomas and Eric Sykes. The walking-

on-the-water stunt by Gert Frobe is still the best in the film. One night we went down to Rick's girlfriend's flat in St Kilda, had tea and listened to records. I hadn't realized before how much girlfriends do for their boyfriends, no matter how casual or serious the relationship. Maureen (that's Rick's girlfriend) had been to town, bought a huge amount of stuff, struggled home, and was still willing to cook a meal because Rick had invited me. Rick's brother has assembled a huge and costly hi fi set, so we listened to CARMINA BURANA at full volume for the rest of the night. Another night I went down to Prahran, and heard Brahms' SYMPHONY No 1 as it should sound, as well as the best John Mayall record I've heard. Indeed, I spent most of the holidays hearing hi fi sets which sound much better than mine, and records I wish I had.

I did some work during the holidays. I always do. Leigh Edmonds had told me to have an article ready for RATAPLAN 6, which was to be ready for the night of the Melbourne Science Fiction Club (as it was then called). With some of the cobwebs blown away by enjoyable films and good company, my mind rose to the challenge and churned out the MONOLOGUE FOR LAW-ABIDING CITIZEN AND LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER in one morning. It's comforting to know I can write all those words when I have to, even though the opportunity rarely arises these days. During the second week of the holidays, I read MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE again, and wrote the much less successful speech for the night of the 4th. But apart from that, I did as little as possible and thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

During the second week I stayed a few days with an Aunt and Uncle who have provided me almost with a second home during the last eight years or so. When my family moved from Syndal, in the suburbs, to Melton, in the country, I stayed on at Oakleigh High School until the end of fourth form. That was in 1962. Since then I've stayed with my Auntie Linda and Uncle Fred many times during holidays, especially when at University. As a result my family and I have kept many of our old friendships in Oakleigh intact, although friendships in other places have lapsed. I like Murrumbena too: it satisfies my feeling for comfort. It's quiet, suburban, and you can still walk around the streets after 8pm. It typifies Melbourne, and the uncomplicated quality that Melbourne possesses in place of Sydney's dash. But the flats are going up, the population becoming denser, and probably becoming younger. Ferntree Gully is now "the suburbs" and flat-land stretches many miles out from the city centre. I don't know whether to be pleased or not; it would certainly take something drastic to change Murrumbena fundamentally.

When I went into the Club on the first Wednesday night, I met David Boutland and talked about some of the very different views we have about science fiction. David says that the best way to begin writing is to write for "the box", as the competition is not yet too fierce, and the work itself does not make the demands on the writer that (for instance) hack science fiction writing does. Perhaps he was trying to recruit me; I don't know. I've never seen an episode of BELLBIRD, so I doubt whether I am temperamentally suited to television writing. At any rate, David offered to show me over the Channel 2 studios while BELLBIRD was being made. The videotape episodes for a week are made in about a day and a half at the Ripponlea studios, and all the indoor sets are lined up along the walls of one large studio. The crew move along from set to set in turn. The quality of the operation that I noticed immediately was its factory-like competence. I don't mean that to sound derogatory. Channel 2 is built, as David observed, like "a ship": low ceilings, small ship-shape rooms, with huge studios hidden behind small doors. The atmosphere is hushed, and most people except me looked briskly efficient. There is nothing make-shift about the present studios as all the equipment looks as if it were installed recently. The ABC markets a product, and

does it efficiently as possible. I saw no sign of the lackadaisical atmosphere that Lee Harding described in his COSMOLOGICAL EYEWASH article for an early ASFR. We stayed around the BELLBIRD set for about 1½ hours, perhaps hypnotized by the precision of the routine. Actors are fully rehearsed before they step onto the set. They seem to be holding ordinary conversations which just happen to take place under a boom microphone. The bar-keeper and his wife have a yarn over the bar to some of the customers; the local "footy star" comes in, the actors give him as enthusiastic a welcome as they would offer any Saturday night in the Ararat Hotel. The local drunk boozes in a corner; a very convincing portrayal. But they do this three or four times while the director upstairs changes cameras and positions of the actors, speaking "via" the floor manager. The floor manager looks no older than I am; when we looked in at the control room, everybody looked under thirty. The cameramen look as if they are under twenty. I don't know what I expected, but not this. Finally, everything is ready for this scene, the floor manager holds up his clapper-board, and the segment is videotaped. (This takes about half a minute at the most. That makes it about twenty minutes preparation on the floor for each half minute shot). A brief consultation, the floor managers swap over, and the crew moves to the next set, and so on til all the interiors are finished. We went upstairs and saw the whole process from the director's booth, filled with glinting lights, dials and screens, as well as the director, script girl, technical director and assistant, and lighting director and assistant. The atmosphere was - er - electric. I met one of the "stars" of BELLBIRD, Anne Pendlebury, and saw Terry Norris and Terry McDermott working, as well as some others I did not recognize. I also met the Executive Producer, Jim Daneman, who has a whole section of Channel 2 for the BELLBIRD offices.

It's hard to evaluate a setup like this, especially I've never seen the endproduct. The financial investment is enormous; now I see more clearly why the ABC watch the ratings surveys as closely as do the commercial stations. But I still wish a situation occurred where the same money could be spent on better programs, where the same writing, acting and technical resources could come together towards more enriching ends. All those resources are certainly there.

Even that afternoon was not quite the highlight of my fortnight's holiday. As I've mentioned several times in the Mailing Comments, the second meeting of what was then called the Melbourne Science Fiction Society took place at John Bangsund's on the last Friday of my holidays. Actually it was the main reason why I stayed in Melbourne for the full two weeks. Otherwise I would have returned to Ararat to write fanzines after the first week of the holidays, and so missed out on the trip to Channel 2. A full report of the meeting appears in LOCUS 63, so I don't really have to report on everything. John's new flat is the best one he's had, except perhaps for the Redan Street place. I arrived late, breathless, and feeling lousy. I had been to see Hitchcock's TOPAZ and it finished at 10 to 8, although I was supposed to turn up at 8. I didn't feel like going anywhere, let alone giving a brilliant speech in front of most of Melbourne fandom. I had to speak to a wall, as people were spread between two rooms, and there was never a chance of a round table discussion. The meeting broke into three or four groups, but it sounded as if they did talk about science fiction. Most people had read at least one Philip Dick novel, so that helped immensely. I met Rob Gerrard for the first time in 2½ years, and he gave me the best run for my money, including the point that genre fiction is different from both pop lit and serious literature, and that I should not have linked together the first two in my talk. Who else was there? Many members of both the Melbourne and Monash Universities' S F Clubs, including an Andrew Edquist whom I wanted to see. The two Penman brothers came along, enjoyed themselves, and took me home afterwards. George Turner made his first appearance at a fannish gathering for quite some time. Everybody enjoyed the party. Thanks John. A good end to a good holiday.

PROMISES PROMISES

It may have been this time last year that I promised to print my article on the poems of Andrew Marvell. Since then articles by John Foyster (on Sappho) and Alex Robb (on Roethke) have appeared in ANZAPA, and I am a little covered. In the last Mailing, John Foyster mentioned that the articles Alex and I did sounded a bit like essays. Alex's may have been an essay; my NOSTROMO piece certainly was. The Marvell piece, which I will definitely include next time (and was planning to include this time, except that it is now September 23, and Gary wants this by October 1) was written in 1967 for English III, inspired by a train of thought of one of the best teachers I've known, Peter Steele, of Melbourne University. Before the essay topics came out, I was determined to "do" Marvell's poems in depth whatever the topic. But I was faced by a question that read:

"Irony losing itself in equivocation, delicacy losing itself in fastidiousness - those who prize Marvell's achievement must still find some such verdict haunting them." Show with reference to several poems how true you think this to be.

Have you much idea what that means? I didn't then, and still don't, but presumably somebody (probably Peter Steele) had great fun setting the question. The answer I wrote is a great snow job which points out that I-don't-know-what-the-questioner-is-talking-about,-but-here's-my-view-of-Marvell-anyway. Surprisingly, this approach worked, and I received the best notice I've ever received for anything I've written:

This is an admirable piece of work: vigorous, economical, live in its proportions, and consistently sensitive. You accommodate the question intelligently - and quite legitimately - to your main concern with Marvell, and delineate and develop that concern illuminatingly as you go. I'm left wondering a bit whether your sense of the poetry, various as it is, couldn't accommodate the terms offered in the question, though. "Irony" is always a somewhat slippery term, but does seem uniquely apt as a way of characterising a habit of mind both penetrating and reserved, an inclination to remain sitting in judgement on whatever evidence is offered; and I wonder whether even if the Marvellian concern is as you say with "essence", the deployment of that concern might not be habitually ironic. Especially when the "essence" in question is the essence of a relationship between "the mind" and "the world". But this is something of a quibble on a fine performance.

The new Golden Age will have arrived when s f editors start to give criticisms like that! You can see, for instance, why I compared Marvell jokingly with Dick; what better way of describing his work, or that of Aldiss, than as "both penetrating and reserved"? With Marvell, the ironies are far more subtle, and other aspects of his poetry can be felt more strongly. But at least you know the genesis of the piece. In the meantime I will take another look at Marvell's poetry and try to rethink some of the points I raised three years ago. Maybe I will discover that I have/completely new view of it.

KEEPING THE CUSTOMER SATISFIED

Six lines is not much to talk about Simon and Garfunkel. But I have been asked about BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATER. It contains mainly lines like "I will comfort you" and "Celia, you're breaking my heart" and "I've got nothing to do today but smile" and similar cliches. THE BOXER is the only song that shows Paul Simon writing well, and the tunes and arrangements for most songs are maudlin compared with earlier albums. It's comfort-plus Paul Simon, keeping the customers satisfied

LETTERS

JOHN GIBSON

2 BARINGA ST
BLAXLAND
N S W

(July 11, 1970)

At one time you asked me why I moved up to the country. One of the reasons is that it is cheaper to live in the country, and as well, I like the countryside, even if I don't like the local yokels.

The other reason, I suppose, is because I am a "simple-lifer"; that is, I don't like technological civilization very much, and I can't stand cities. For instance, technological civilization hasn't produced very much good art - that is, not in comparison with smaller, barbaric communities like the ancient Greeks and Elizabethan England. These places produced flowerings of art which were fantastic for the size of the population.

We complain that there are very few - scarcely any - good Australian playwrights and authors, and only a scattering of poets, like A D Hope and Judith Wright, but they are people who hardly get any space in the mass media. You would think, for example, that they might have poetry readings on television, or something like this. I once remember hearing a reading from de Maupassant in the very early days of television on the ABC. I thought this was magnificent, but they haven't continued it. The ABC goes down the drain importing FBI and THE NEW PEOPLE and junk like this, along with a very few good things.

I don't know what it is about technological civilization that encourages mediocrity, but certainly barbarians (the people that Campbell is always ranting against - and I have a different definition from Campbell, anyway) produce more art than modern people do.

Take the ancient Greeks (of Athens, at least) where the population is thought to be about 60,000 people, few of whom could be called totally free to indulge

between wants and needs, and in general I am pretty happy, with few complaints.

You don't really want to hear about PHOENIX FIVE, do you? I mean - it is so bad... Strangely enough, I have seen only one episode of the thing. It came on in Sydney at a time when we were playing and for various reasons I have not been able to get near a tv set while down in Melbourne. Now, in the past two weeks I have finally found time and opportunity, but the COMMONWEALTH GAMES REPORTS have pre-empted it.

But could you really use an article on the making of the series? It is really very boring. There may seem to be glamour and excitement associated with television, but it quickly loses any of that once you're associated with it. There are long deadly periods of waiting while cameras, lights, microphones, etc, are adjusted, there are continuous rehearsals, and such terrible lines to learn. Anyway, I was not very closely involved in it. I had few lines, few movements and in some episodes I did not appear. This was all right, as I was under contract, and therefore was paid for doing nothing. I suppose I averaged two full days work per week, usually half days, so the whole thing was a colossal bludge for me. No one in the series cared much about it, and it was obvious from the start how bad it was going to be; and if the scripts seem illiterate and obscure now, you should have seen the originals, before we rewrote them! The one episode I saw was so dreadful that I was squirming with embarrassment for insisting on viewing it. Unfortunately I think it must have been the worst one we made as I have heard quite favorable reports of some - as a children's show. Paul Stevens tape-recorded an interview with me a couple of weeks back, an edited version of which should appear in a forthcoming edition of THE SOMERSET GAZETTE.

Have you seen the Australian newspaper/magazine REVOLUTION? It covers the Rock-youth scene, but intelligently, and would be the closest thing to an underground paper in this insular country. The third issue is now out (monthly) but ran into distribution trouble over its use of Certain Words and its reprinting of Martin Sharp's GAS LASH - the thing which really started the ongoing battle against censorship in a big way. Number 3 contains articles on Mick Jagger, Traffic, Eric Clapton, WOODSTOCK, The Cream, Taj Mahal, Johnny Winter, Underground Radio in America, Martin Sharp, the German pop scene, Microbiotics, Marion Henderson, Buckminster Fuller, Ravi Shankar and "Repressive Pseudo-Revolution" as well as detailed film, book and record reviews, letters, news, etc.

I would like to give the magazine publicity because it is the only publication of its type in Australia and, while still finding its feet, it is still the most promising thing since OZ first appeared. Unfortunately it is now not generally available in Victoria but subscriptions are \$4.80 (12 issues) from 27 Drummond St., Carlton, 3053. They also have reprint rights from ROLLING STONE and Underground press agencies in America. It is probably the fact that some form of repression or censorship is aimed at it that has put me right on its side. It is a good thing and deserves to succeed as it fills a need in Australia.

***brg** Always glad to advertize another fanzine. I must confess that I saw it, saw the price (40 cents) and put it down again. I don't pay that much for pop news, and I didn't know it contained anything else.

My own uninteresting observations on the public media are contained elsewhere in this issue.

I'll answer all the kind answers to my "pore Gillespie" whinge at the end of this letter column. I'm glad somebody (i.e. Stuart) is settled in something moderately interesting. More later. *

are Prousts! Bare notes are useless, except to oneself, as you point out - they are springboards for personal reminiscences. You may have experiences, meet people, have conversations, etc, which will be of interest to a very close circle but fandom here is too diversified to tolerate that sort of trivia. Of course, some clever bods can make anything enjoyable with the use of sarcasm, irony or just humorous writing, but not all of us have these talents.

An author may wish his soul-searching, confession and self-revelation to be generally read, and may be a sufficiently skilful writer to do this. Norman Mailer seems to be the best example of success in this direction. MIAMI AND THE SEIGE OF CHICAGO and ARMIES OF THE NIGHT are very personal accounts, containing more about Mailer than the actual events they ostensibly report; and while they are easy enough to dismiss as pure ego on display, they are brilliantly written and fascinating reading. But again, how many of us are Mailers?

I would think that the best use of a diary for fanzine purposes would be as a take-off point, as a stimulation. Notes of events, happenings, readings or thoughts which start your mind ticking over and lead to general thoughts arising from these things. This can lead almost anywhere (as witness this letter in which I have meandered all over the place, without any intention or plan for doing so.) Perhaps that is what a fanzine diary consists of; I would not know as I am ignorant of the contents of apazines.

John Gibson is not alone when it comes to his peculiarity: he reads. One is not necessarily a communist for following this esoteric, deviant and obviously subversive pursuit. One is either branded with the accuser's personal bogey, or just classified as a nut. Being fairly asocial, disliking small talk, cant, social role-playing, and seldom attending parties, being a non-joiner, and generally preferring my own company, I am sometimes asked what I do with my time. "I read and think" is my general reply, and the variety of curious, amazed, unbelieving and blank looks, is interesting to behold, if somewhat predictable by now. The main reaction is bewilderment and a shake of the head.

I see no way out of your occupational dilemma except to write and write until you are selling enough to get out. This is easy to say when you have discovered some direction and follow it. I only hope you can break out, Bruce, and soon. I know what it's like (I think).

(July 27, 1970)

Funny that you should mention Philip Adams (in your last letter) and the search for a stimulating, satisfying job. That is my idea of a perfect occupation: being a regular columnist of some sort, with freedom to be light, serious, polemical, satirical, and whatever else, whenever you like. Go into journalism perhaps? I never used to like Philip Adams when he was mainly a t v critic, as I thought he was mostly nasty for the sake of being nasty, but now I think he may have been trying to stir some life into the local scene. Anyway, I am very fond of the ADAMS APPLE columns in THE AUSTRALIAN.

My recent success? Doing well? That is debatable. I have been scraping by over the last couple of years, not doing anything spectacular, but doing enough to keep me in reading matter, if not save much. This acting business is too uncertain. I could wait six months after this play finishes before getting any regular work. I earn good money when I'm working, but I am always afraid to commit myself to buying anything (transport, a good stereo system, etc) for fear that I may need to live off savings for some months. Still, there is a difference

between wants and needs, and in general I am pretty happy, with few complaints.

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HARRY WARNER JR

423 SUMMIT AVE
HAGERSTOWN
MARYLAND 21740
U S A

(July 19, 1970)

The article about pianos doesn't seem as bad as I'd feared. It hops about too much and if I were doing a second draft I'd disjoint it, then reconstruct it in a more logical manner, tossing into the wastebasket whatever pieces were left over after I'd finished. But it's not about

fan history, at least, and that's the biggest advantage a lot of readers might find it possesses. Incidentally, after it appeared in FAPA I was told by one member that music publishers rarely use now the old method of engraving music by punching things into soft metal one by one. But I still believe that the handwritten music publications are obvious as such and a trifle more difficult to be read at sight. Meanwhile, one key on my piano no longer produces a tone at all and I still haven't had a tuner-repairman see if anything can be done for the entire mechanism.

I keep a diary of sorts. The purpose is to have in a convenient place all the basic facts and exact dates that might later prove useful. So I use the five-year diary format, which, if it isn't popular in Australia, is a well-bound volume which provides four lines for each day for a half-decade, into which you can cram eight lines by writing very small. I've settled a few arguments and reached a decision or two by reference to this diary, but I've also felt that it keeps me from starting a more thorough journal, one in which I could note everything that I might want to remember for future writing projects. Your own diary essay is quite similar to the personal analysis material that used to run through almost every FAPA publication until something inexplicable caused all members suddenly to draw down the shades over the more intimate phases of their lives. My own life may be at a time of decision quite similar to your own recent difficulties, but in my case a decision will be more permanent, considering the difference in our ages. One suggestion: remember the remarkable survival qualities of fanzines. Don't publish anything you might regret a quarter-century later if your wife or children ran across a copy in someone else's collection.

***brg** Well, my parents read the present efforts at times, so sometimes I am not quite as blunt as I might be. That should account for the (very mythical) wife and children.

The ANZAPA reaction to your article was not all I had hoped for. I reprinted it because I found it a beautiful collection of reminiscences, odd bits of information, and testimonies to the pleasure given by music. A civilized piece of writing: a rare event in fandom (except in Australian fandom, of course).

*

PAUL ANDERSON

21 MULGA ROAD
HAWTHORNDENE
S A 5051

(July 19, 1970)

Looking back over MR 2, I'm afraid that I must disagree strongly with your selection of BUG JACK BARRON as one of the ten best novels for the year! To my mind Spinrad manages to combine most of the faults of both the Old and New Wave styles of writing.

I still have not progressed very far with George Turner's list. Although I did read Franz Kafka's short novel METAMORPHOSIS, first published in 1933. In the hands of Truffaut this could become a rather horrifying film. The actual horror

of the transformation of the hero into a giant insect is kept submerged while Kafka describes the emotions of Gregor's immediate family. The true horror of the story is their eventual indifference towards him.

I have just started buying some more classical records again, after recovering from Easter. Unfortunately I do not get much of a chance to play them since the stereogram is in the same room as the tv. I am not over-enthused by Mozart after getting the Nonesuch record of his Symphony No 40 and the Symphony in D Major. I also bought Dvorak's 7th in D Minor (Op. 70) which is quite good but by no means as good as the NEW WORLD Symphony. My latest purchase was Mahler's 9th from the World Record Club label. I got it second hand for \$3. I had the shop play part of the symphony for me, and I was struck by the similarity of one passage in it to the GAYANEH BALLET SUITE movement featured in 2001.

***brg** I think I said before that the Mahler 9th (Barbirolli - WRC) is about the best record I've bought in the last twelve months. I should point out that I have bought very little in that time compared with the previous twelve months, but even so... The last movement is a far grander sweep of music than the Adagio from GAYANEH, but I see your point. About the second best record I've bought during the same period of time is the music from ZABRISKIE POINT. You get a far better deal on it, than you do on the WOODSTOCK soundtrack, which Leigh Edmonds played for me. On the former album, music played briefly as soundtrack in the film is played in full, and there are slightly longer versions of the best pieces in the film. I've just bought the double-record set, THE BEATLES, and enjoy it very much. The best track is BLACKBIRD.

Thanks for mentioning Kafka. I heard his CONVERSATIONS WITH A DOG on the ABC several months ago, and said to myself: "That's the way to write short stories". The MONOLOGUE in RATAPLAN 6 is at least partially inspired by the Kafka piece. Presumably I will have a very short career as a writer if I try to model any more stories that way. *

PERRY A CHAPDELAINÉ

(July 29, 1970)

ROUTE 4, BOX 137
FRANKLIN
TENNESSEE 37064
U S A

Your fanzines get me most distressed and depressed. I can't read them without realizing how far your studies have progressed in Literature compared to mine. Literary allusions and references, which you and your writers throw about like a handful of pebbles in the water, casually,

carelessly, leave me unearched. It's a high-brow fanzine, probably mailed primarily to a low-brow bunch. Right?

Still, I feel in the mood for fatherly advice tonight.... Good literature is the thing, if you like it. And much of it I do like. Sometimes, as Samuel Delany has shown, good literature can fit the tastes of both low and high browed, and do so better than any other form.

But God made all sorts of people, including the hack writer. Too often I've seen the very knowledgeable swing slick, wet words at the poorer writer, and it reminds me all too often of Cyrano de Bergerac taking out after the bumbling Englishman. Some of my best writer friends are hacks; and some of my best writer friends are among the best writers in the nation. I like the works of both of them, and try to understand what both are attempting to communicate. I guess, then, I have to

say that I also like your fanzine. It is professionally oriented, and far above the cut of most.

So that kind of leads to a reflection on you and your abilities. You want to write. OK. So write. There are damn few writers in this country who can write full time, as you wish, because of over-riding problems of money, and family. Most of what is written comes from part-timers. Perhaps only ten per cent of writers make their living at it full-time, and you want to be among them. Fine, I say. You will be.

But I sense from your METAPHYSICAL REVIEW 3, which I just got yesterday, that you want two things, really: (1) You want to go at it full time NOW, (2) You want the time to write material which fits your high standard of writing.

I'm sure, had you simply wanted to hack it, you'd be writing every spare minute, tired or no, school classes or no - and you wouldn't be too concerned about quality. Robert Silverberg, for example, has my hat off. He was shrewd enough to recognize that he would need to write and write and write, until he got enough money to be independent of hacking, and could finally concentrate on the kind of writing he really likes. Dean Koontz is trying to produce about 24 novels a year now, following in Silverberg's footsteps. What difference, if 40,000 or 50,000 dollars at year's end also meets with his being called a hack. Eventually, he knows, he'll also be doing his own thing. Incidentally, Dean and his wife claim to be from a hippie commune and left it only because of the need for privacy while writing. So, though you may also be of the NOW generation, I'd sort of say they are a wee bit nower.

So the question is not so much the time and teaching restraints which are placed upon you as it is your desire to do your kind of writing to match your extremely high standards. And that does take time, and peace, of sorts.

I suppose there's no sense in suggesting that you infiltrate your lessons with literature and writing things that interest you? Or is this frowned upon at your level? Some levels are high enough, and the instructor independent enough, so the course is anything the teacher wishes it to be for the moment. Then, of course, there is the Dean Koontz lesson (as related in SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW 31). When he taught STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND to his literature class, the parents and administrators were horrified. Dean quit in the middle of the school year. Is there any little clause you can use so your authorities, too, will be dissatisfied with you, and pay off your debt themselves? If not, well, three years is really not long. And by God, if you really want to be a writer, like Harlan Ellison, come hell or high water ((that's a hack cliché, by the way!)), marriage or army, you'll be one!

***brg** Stirring words indeed! I'm tempted to answer now, but will wait until some other opinions are recorded.

I find the image of myself as a "high brow" just a bit amusing. Maybe it's the fact that Foyster and Bangsund live only 100 miles away, but I always feel so wretchedly ignorant. And when I receive letters from Professors of Computer Instruction and people like that, I creep further into my boots. The trouble is that I still rely heavily on attitudes and material I learned while at University, and try to forget what an inadequate education that was. I know very well the kind of material I should have read, and haven't, and the superficiality with which I approached the material I did in English courses. Really well-read people like Foyster and Rottensteiber don't write fiction, I notice. *

DAVID PIPER

(August 8, 1970)

7 CRANLEY DRIVE
RUISLIP
MIDDLESEX HA4 6BZ
ENGLAND (change of address)

I've got an 'orrible feeling that this will turn out incomprehensible (and not only due to my handwriting)... but... METREV 3:

No false modesty here (as you will no doubt agree after reading ((I assume you read 'em!)) my interminable letters) but whilst I would be the first to agree that in relative terms (such terms being relative to you and Foyster and practically everybody!) I'm an intellectual pygmy and like to think that it's not lack of intelligence but an inability to apply my intelligence to anything really worthwhile. I think, therefore, that my life since leaving school has followed the course it has due to this inability. My Mum and Dad weren't particularly well off and I left school at 16½ to go to work and earn some money. That's not meant to be a plea for sympathy or a "bleeding heart" type cry - it's just as it was! The only thing I've ever really wanted to do was to be an artist (and don't know if I have sufficient talent - and probably will never find out now) but... (shrug!)... I never went to Art School... so...! At about 18 or 19 years old I really do believe I came to terms with myself. You could say it was a "cop-out" on my part and I suppose in some respects you'd be right. I decided that basically with respect to position, employment, finance and job-satisfaction I was, and would remain a failure. The result is that I am. At 31 years of age I'm doing a job which bores me stiff, requires 10% of my intellectual potential, which pays £1835 a year and sometimes the prospect of doing this sort of clerical work for the next 34 years sometimes gets me a little depressed, but not so much as you might expect. And occasionally, especially after having a few pints, I get maudlin and mutter that "I'm ----- well worth something ----- better than this!" But, I dunno... am I?

My point is, Bruce, and in case you haven't realized, this chain of thought was sparked by your diary bit and scattered comments in METREV 3. I can be happy doing such a job and with such prospects, a job that doesn't really bear thinking about, without deep soul searching, etc, and "what am I doing here?" etc. I think that as the years pile up it's a case of getting resigned to it all and I think that if you worry about something too much it tends to get too blown-up in your own mind, like something you say or think about in the wee small hours which looks ridiculous in the cold hard light of day. Human relationships are the thing. My Mum and Dad are both now dead and I grieve for them but I have a lovely wife and two darling little daughters and kind people like you who send me interesting things through the post... and.. I'm not too badly off. And neither are you. Things could be worse.

On a slightly lighter note - that chat about music sparked this thought: do you like Chicago? You don't? Well, I do. The first double album is tremendous.

***brg** Again, I'll leave your main points til later. But I'm glad that letters like yours settled the point I wondered about in the diary article, i.e. private ramblings do strike a chord in other people's minds, even though the ramblings themselves are not especially well-written. It reminds me of a Regional Conference of Technical School teachers I went to recently, where we gained bits and pieces about teaching methods, but this was not the main value of the conference. We all discovered that there were people worse off than ourselves, people who had wormed their way out of impossible situations imposed on them by bureaucracy, administrators and students alike. But I think my point still holds true that things could always be better than they are now... much better. :: Have heard little of Chicago, but like their version of I'M A MAN. *

BUCK COULSON

(August 23, 1970)

ROUTE 3
HARTFORD CITY
INDIANA 47348
U S A

The least I can do, after you sent me a fanzine that I don't have to review, is write you some comments on it. (I refer, of course, to METAPHYSICAL REVIEW 3).

Why do people have to remain clerks or teachers or journalists when all they want to do is write? Because the maintenance of civilization requires clerks and teachers and journalists and does not require one more freelance writer. (I know; that was a rhetorical question, but I answered it anyway.) Well, you got my diary, or as much of it as I consider anyone's business (and which I subsequently remember to publish) in the YANDRO editorials. Dull life, isn't it?

I suppose I've been rather lucky with parents. When I got old enough to use the family car I was told that I'd been brought up to know right from wrong and since it was not too late to give me any further advice, the only rule was to not wake anyone when I came in. When I was dating a Negro girl (they weren't "blacks" then) the only comment from my conservative Republican parents was an expressed hope - not a demand - that I wouldn't go so far as to marry her, due to various complications in our society, which was much more racist than it is today. Fandom? Okay; it was my affair; my choice of recreation might be odd, but it was mine. (All this time I was living at home, I might add.) So while I can sympathise with fans who have non-understanding parents, it's hard to really know what it's like.

***brg** I protest. I merely said that my parents bucked at my proposal for quitting at the particular time I wanted to. I've always imposed more restrictions on myself than my parents ever have, for reasons it would take too long to relate. My parents and I "misunderstand" each other probably no more than most people separated by about twenty-five years - but that is usually a wide gap. In this sense I am appalled that I so rarely "understand" my third and fourth formers, even though it was only a few years ago that I was that age myself. *

At the same time, I was brought up in a family with a very strict regard for one's word; if one promises to do something, one does it, or makes his best effort to do it. Never mind that you didn't understand what it involved when you made the promise; you said it, now you damned well do it. Which, I suppose, is why (a) I can't support SFWA's boycott of publishers who don't pay a second time for rights the authors sold a long time ago, and (b) I object to suddenly changing the Hugos from a "World Convention" award to a "European Language" award as soon as there seems any risk that someone outside the US might win one. The bargain was made; now it should be lived up to.

(You said you did agree to teach for three years, eh?)

Why should Harry Warner's "interests and ego demand" that he feel "outraged" at comics and comics fans? Disinterested, possibly, or amused at their occasional pretensions and shallowness, but outraged? Ree-dickle-dockle. I don't like "comics fans" in general any more than I like science fiction fans in the mass, and I have no interest whatsoever in comic books. But there are certain individuals I like, and some of them are comics fans, some stf fans, some STAR TREK fans, and a few are not fans of anything much. Yes, there is a reason why comic books cannot evolve into something important, and that reason is the Comics Code,

which prohibits any attempt at really "adult" comics. As long as the Code is in effect, they can be nothing more than juvenile entertainment. (They could become good juvenile entertainment, but they won't be a new art form.)

Brief comment on classical music; I don't think I've ever heard an Australian fan comment on Antill's CORROBOREE. I'm not much on classical music, but I do enjoy that one. (I come up with these odd unrelated bits that I like; the above, and PEER GYNT, and Webern's SIX PIECES FOR ORCHESTRA, Opus 6. They don't fit together.)

Actually all fanzine editors don't like money. Some of the stupid clods won't even take money for their fanzines; they insist on letters of comment instead. I of course, have better sense - and a tighter budget.

***brg** Well, MR will never bankrupt me, and I did get a high percentage of letters out of the forty extras I sent.

Here's what I plan to do. I hope I can save enough money over the time I must still serve on the bond, to start writing full-time at the end of 1971. Both David Boutland (alias David Rome, of PARKY fame) and Brian Aldiss (or HAND-REARED BOY fame) advise against this course of action. Brian mentions that he spent ten years book-selling before he became a full-time writer. David says that he is trying to re-learn how to write a science fiction story. At the same time, I cannot imagine myself staying in teaching a minute longer than I need to, and I don't feel like starting a whole new career without making an attempt at fiction. Whether things will work out this way, I don't know. I would not need to spend as much money again as I spent over the last holidays, but it is difficult not to spend a lot in Melbourne, and easy not to spend money up here.

Now back to the letters. I suspect journalism; not because it would not be interesting, but because I suspect it is as full of non-writing writers and non-painting painters as is teaching. Writers used to write columns in order to buy time to write novels, but I feel the other way. What I would like to write most are reviews and criticism, but most of the people now writing columns are people who have already made a name in fiction. I wish there was a market for a commercial version of S F COMMENTARY: a magazine which could pay for people like Rottensteiner and Foyster to do criticism, and which could pay me to spend most of my time on it. But that's an old pipe-dream. To get back to your point: Philip Adams has only reached the pinnacle of a column in THE AUSTRALIAN after many years of making films and doing other things. Column-writing should not be a pinnacle, but in Australia it is one for a writer. Colin Bennett was a journalist who liked films, not a film expert hired for an expert job.

Thanks, Perry, for your advice. Part of the reason someone wants to be a writer surely, is because it is an occupation whose practitioners he admires, and whose standards he would like to make his own. I've never cared a jot for footballers or racing car drivers, but have always been fascinated by the perils and pleasures of that particular career of "writing". So I could never consciously become a hack, although my first two efforts probably look amateurish to an observer. The main problem with s f writers is that their sights are set much too low, and part of the reason I would like to write full-time is the chance to study half-time. We may never get a Kafka in s f, but we should have writers who've read him. Thanks for the encouragement, everybody. I still HATE teaching, but you've helped me to survive.

GOSH WOWSER

the mailing comments

Back to the JUNE MAILING, believe it or not.

CAREY HANDFIELD

MOPC 1

I very much enjoyed those poems, Carey. Congratulate John Gough for me, and beg him for some more. What about some Carey Handfield originals, however? Some of them can be classed as "undergraduate" with predictable sentimental lines like "Do you know, love,/How lonely I am?", but the haiku "Here ten stories high/A fly outside on the glass/Sits warming his feet" is superb. What about telling us more about the poet?

SHAYNE McCORMACK

TERRAN TIMES 2

I hope you didn't get too swelled a head from all those compliments for TERRAN TIMES. Surprisingly (considering the interests of the editors) I found most of the magazine interesting. :: Any more news about the Leo Harding fan club? Harding seems to be hiding from his many fans at the moment, and spilling out the good oil. I've heard no more news about the novel he sold - but they usually take a year from sale to bookstand appearance. :: The book of FAHRENHEIT 451 must be good if it's better than the film. Very few films have captured the "fairy tales for adults" atmosphere of s f so well, all the way from that bright red fire engine to the book learners in the snow; it's not where our society is going, but is that kind of desperate-goodies, simple-society situation that you find in Sheckley's or Pohl's stories. Many of the scripts for OUT OF THE UNKNOWN captured the same - how can I put it? - serious absurdity of science fiction, where it takes your greatest effort to suspend your disbelief in the characters, but you sympathize with them anyway. And Truffaut's sense of colour!

ALEX ROBB

THEODORE ROETHKE ISSUE

Your poetry issue didn't make a great impression on me, because you did not print enough of the poetry you were discussing. I had not heard of him, and therefore would have liked some introduction to him as a figure in the whole of

American literature. I'll come back to your piece when I've read the poems.

I don't find your practice of reprinting other people's views on pop lyric writers very enlightening. Perhaps opinions on more important matters, or reprints of good fan articles you may have read. Besides, I don't quite see why you went back to SERGEANT PEPPERS, since most of the songs there weren't very good, and both the Beatles and everybody else have written and done better things since then. Many of the songs on the double-record THE BEATLES are much better than any on SERGEANT PEPPERS, for instance. The point is, that if you are going to talk about these lyrics, then I'm more interested in what you have to say than what all those Macquarie Uni bods have to say. See elsewhere (I hope) for my comments on BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATER.

KEVIN DILLON

PERFORMANCE
ZORRI ANZAPA

I suppose I shouldn't approve such complete, unannotated reprinting of non-Dillon material, but I found some of the reviews interesting anyway. The reviewer over-reacted to EASY RIDER, but I share his fascination with it. I found it very unassuming, even though it was putting

over a "line". The final scene completes the nonchalance: casually we live, and casually we die. The killers of all types are upset by casualness, easy living, and all that. As in WOODSTOCK, I admired the characters, but would not want to join them. It might hurt.

STEPHEN CAMPBELL

ARMAGEDDON 4

Love those stories with "black engulfing doom" in them. But at least that's no worse than most of the stories in the sf magazines. A real mystery is contained in Darryl Lindquist: i.e. can we ever make him write another word? He's not

the hardest working person I've ever met. :: Those drawings do come out badly, don't they? But that's the best we can do without photostencils.

LEIGH EDMONDS

SUGAR TOOTH 2

I wonder if you won the EGOBOO POLL this time, Leigh? It must be a close race between you and... well, I will take a guess at Noel Kerr, John Ryan and Bob Smith. A good year's work from all of them. :: I'm sorry, Leigh - no amount

of persuasion could make me like watching football. Perhaps I don't have good conditions, for I watch it as goal umpire for house matches at Ararat Technical School. There was the "Grand Final" the other day, between the top two houses (out of four). Because the school currently has no oval, the game was played over a mile from the school. After the kids had taken a quarter of an hour to straggle down to the oval, they seemed to take another twenty minutes to change.

They finally started to play at 2.30. Ball up, but it quickly went to ground, and did not stray far from the centre during the first quarter. (And I mean "quarter"; each one was a quarter hour long). Whenever it came near the goal, the football leapt about in the wind and had great fun landing on the wrong side of the goal post. The kids ambled around in the goal square mud, but otherwise did little of any interest. Meanwhile the noble goal umpire leant against the behind post, chased 19th and 20th men away from the mud, and protected only by a sports coat, tried to keep warm for the hour. Finally one of the teams beat the other team by a point and it was all over. The teams then ambled back to wherever they came from and I went home and fell asleep. The sports master, who sat ~~was~~ in his car to watch, quite enjoyed the close game. Don't you think, Leigh, that tv football will seem even tamer after that experience?

You give me a good excuse to list all my records, but since many of them are the same as yours, I don't think it would be worth the effort. The records of yours that you would never find on my shelf, even if I could afford them, include all those Beatles albums, Country Joe and the Fish, the Hollies, MPD Limited, and most of that Tchaikowsky. Otherwise, our tastes coincide very nicely. I'd rather do my science fiction Favourites list, but I don't think I have room this issue. Lee Harding, it is rumoured, has discovered rock music. (Just thought other people might find that interesting, or nauseating, as the case may be).

ROBIN JOHNSON

THE BUTTERFLY MIND 3

The Johnson Plan for Sydney interested me, but I suppose you have that same sinking feeling that I get whenever I think of a smart idea to improve our cities. Since our government does not seem interested in doing anything but that which it must do, or lose votes, there seems little hope that it will ever do anything imaginative. All the government plans for Melbourne that I've heard so far represent the interests of this or that bureaucracy, with the most powerful lobby the Tramways Board. My parents' new home is the State Savings Bank, East Preston, about seven or eight miles from the city centre - but even in Plenty Road, Preston, well into the suburbs, the traffic is chaotic during peak time and for some time afterwards. Since Victorians worship the automobile, there seems no hope for direct solutions, such as bans on cars in the central city area. And Sir Henry almost has a hate affair with the Railways, who should be his most important ally. So much for a state run by a farmer. Et tu, Sydney?

We have the R certificate. Where to now? :: Rumour has it (i.e. I cannot remember magazine or date of publication) that SATYRICON only had two minutes cut from it; other sources suggest to my mind that this was because nobody could understand what's going on. That figures. :: Agree with you about HAND-REARED BOY. The most delightful thing about the book is the air of naive innocence with which Aldiss invests his character. He is a rather normal dolt who... well, borrow the book from me sometime.

BOB SMITH

THRU THE PORTHOLE 3

CRY OF THE NAMELESS, now CRY, has just died again, and the last issue featured the first half of a beautiful Convention-cum-Travel Report by Terry Carr. The ones I've received have been odd mixtures of different styles from the three different co-editors, so perhaps it did not have the drive to keep it going. :: Apart from saying that, all I can say is that anybody who has attended those conventions makes me insanely jealous. All I need is \$800 and a dose of LSD, and, next year....

JOHN BANGSUND

CROG! 7

It gives me an obscure nasty delight that John Bangsund and I managed to depress David Grigg so much. It shows we must be doing something right. :: I'm never sure whether to believe John when he says that he will gaffiate. By now I've seen and read PHILOSOPHICAL GAS, distributed at the second meeting of the Nova Mob, and I've heard faint rumours of a SCYTHROP 22. And I've seen Johns Bangsund and Foyster speaking to each other, so things can't be too bad. Wish I'd met Mike Horvat that weekend, but seem to recall that I went to Harding's, or some other outlandish place. I've had a letter from him, and he promises to visit us again as soon as possible.

DAVID GRIGG

SLITHY TOVE 2

I have to read all that again? It's almost like having Gary Woodman around again, although David does write better than Gary. :: Have not seen ALICE'S RESTAURANT. I think it finished before the holidays. :: I don't have to tell

David that the last time I visited the Melbourne University S F Association, most people sat around and played cards and didn't talk about s f once. Almost like the Melbourne S F Club all over again. However there was one bloke who wanted to know what EINSTEIN INTERSECTION was all about. Since I haven't read it, I sat there, looked wise, and said that if he came to the next meeting of the Melbourne Science Fiction Society (now called the Nova Mob) he could ask John Foyster. I saw the inquirer at the meeting, but didn't see him talking to Foyster. My one claim to fame is that I managed to persuade the Melbourne Uni mob to come to one meeting of the Nova Mob. Presumably they were so shocked by people talking about s f (and being interrupted by door bells and Gary Woodman) that they will never appear again. Or maybe they will come to meetings of the Nova Mob but never appear at another meeting of MUSFA. :: Did you go to the second moratorium, and could you compare it with the first? Ararat, of course, had neither, although Form 4a would have liked half a day off. I gather that the great mistake of the first moratorium was to succeed - hence, the harassment at the second. NORSTRILIAN COMMENTS apart, I don't see that the Government was impressed by either. But they let out Ross from prison. A light, a light!

-- --

AUGUST MAILING

JOHN BANGSUND

CROG! 8

I've heard different, truncated versions of the Bangsund breakup, and I wasn't allowed to say a thing. Nobody else is saying much either, so we must just mourn and wonder. Fandom takes a heavy toll, it seems - Charlie and Marsha Brown

parted in October 1969, and one magazine made similar reports about the Fishers. I am duly warned, although I don't really need much warning. :: I'm glad someone has a decent hifi set, as mine gives me stomach ulcers each time I play it. I can't work out whether the stylus is worn, or there are valves failing or transformers trembling or speakers fractured, or whether the stereo becomes an amplifier for all my other neuroses. Either way it buzzes and hisses and trembles at the most unexpected times. It plays Rolling Stones records faultlessly, every time.

MIKE HORVAT

CONCENTRIC COSMIC CIRCLE

and the concrete jungle of California (well, that was his last address). :: To compare fandom with religious sects is perhaps unfair to both sides of the equation. Perhaps you could describe us as an irreverent religious sect, something like a mediaeval Catholic monastery. :: You've reminded me again to read ALL OUR YESTERDAYS. It's still sitting there beside IN SEARCH OF WONDER, THE ISSUE AT HAND and THE NEW SF, and they are all unread, like half the other books in the bookcase. But the other half of the books are read, so I don't mind too much. :: You still don't make it clear precisely how the army "broke all the old moulds" of your life. I can't imagine anything drawing me away from the "quiet, withdrawn life" or making me like it if it did. That's part of the problem with this teaching business; it has shaken, but not changed me. But we're glad that your now wanderlust has sent you to Australia. :: You make me jealous with your tales of your book collection. If I ever return to History seriously, I will probably do turn-of-the-century American politics, as I've already assembled a fair amount of material on the subject. But I would still like to spend some months among your volumes. :: Perhaps the Army's benevolence is its most dangerous characteristic - it must have the womb-to-tomb consistency of a Japanese industrial complex. Solipsist, like a Heinlein novel.

SHAYNE McCORMACK

BLOOD AND GUTS

"I was far more interested in the Concordance than Gary": Melbournites understand the feeling, Shayne. Unfortunately we have to be interested in Gary, since he controls our Fates and Destinies. :: I'm interested in your comment that at the convention you were "surrounded by people who like to talk about science fiction". I remember hearing a group talking about Isaac Asimov and Robert Heinlein. This was the time when I had twelve Ditmar ballot forms returned and I was trying to find someone who had read something published in 1969. I heard John Foyster and Lee Harding talking about science fiction on the Saturday afternoon, but apart from that there weren't many people talking about the Good Stuff. Writers talking about their own sf...yes, they were there. Fans talking about other fans were everywhere, and fans talking about writers, and there may even have been writers talking about fans. But the only time I've heard people talking for more than five minutes ^{at} a time about science fiction, was at the meeting of the Nova Mob recently. (Not counting the several hours I spent talking to David Boutland about s f at a club meeting.) A novel experience. But I know what you mean; it's good to be surrounded by people who might talk about s f if you ever got around to the subject. :: Gillespie's Cliche of the Month: Music is pattern. If you like the pattern, feel the beat or whatever, you like the music. If you don't hear the pattern, you don't like the music. Any more profound questions you would like answered?

BOB SMITH

THRU THE PORTHOLE 4
SORE KARA 1

Surely you only write about those faraway places to make us jealous, Bob. Although I'm not really jealous of anybody who must gain his experience through the army. The bus travellers have gone the next

most uncomfortable way, but I suppose they enjoyed parts of the experience, I recall that Hal Porter was delighted by Japan straight after the war (but if you have just conquered a place, I suppose it has its merits) but repelled by the country when he went back recently. Have you and Lynn any plans to see the country again soon, or will you leave that to the mythical time most people think of as their "retirement"? :: The Japanese films I have seen have been among my favorites (WOMAN IN THE DUNES, UGETSU, GATE OF HELL) but would like to see some of the rest. I've missed THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN and SEVEN SAMURAI, unfortunately. Perhaps... at a Sydney Convention? I have some favourite cinemas however, especially the Plaza Theatre in Oakleigh, which has now been turned into squash courts. There were two cinemas in Oakleigh then, the Plaza and the Paramount. (The Paramount now shows Greek or Italian films.) Both held afternoon matinees every Saturday, and both were packed out, even for a few years after television came. Saturday after Saturday we rolled up to swap comics, watch the serials and watch the main film. At interval the films from the Plaza would be rushed down to the Paramount, and vice versa. I always preferred the Plaza because they ran the serials first, and the main film afterwards, but at the other place the second half came as an anticlimax. I cannot remember many of the films I saw then. The only one that really shook me was a flick called DRUMS OF THE DEEP SOUTH, which starred Cornel Wilde or Audie Murphy, or somebody like that. Its chief impact was its unhappy ending: a bunch of Southerners, stationed on a table top mountain to fire cannon shells at a nearby railway line, are finally blown off the mountaintop by powder placed in a passage inside the mountain. At the end of the film comes a very realistic model of a mountain having its entire top blown off, taking the hero and heroine with it. :: Apart from this, most of the "good" films were shown only at night time, and the greatest privilege given me during my childhood was the chance to see a film at night and stay up all the way to 11 pm! It didn't happen very often. 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA was the first film I saw this way, and this had an enormous impact upon me. For months I could think of nothing but atomic submarines and squids and other things of a science fictional nature. I remember seeing DAM BUSTERS, REACH FOR THE SKY and GENEVIEVE in this way. The last film we saw before the Plaza became Squash Courts was the revival of Chaplin's THE GREAT DICTATOR (in 1958, I think, so that wasn't long after the beginnings of television), and this is one film somebody could revive again very successfully. But Bob, I don't remember very much about the theatre itself, except that I used to swap about 60 comics every Saturday and read the things all weekend, annoying everybody no end. The first time I saw a projection box was last year, when the local theatre manager (named George Turner) showed some of our mob over. :: My three favourite Melbourne cinemas are the Embassy, the Rapallo, and the Capital, not because of the films they show, but because I can move very close to the screen, or see very well, without craning my neck. The Rapallo has a continuous slope of seats, rising from the floor to the ceiling steeply so that everybody can see well. It's a pity Greater Union show all their lousy films there.

I don't really see why MR is not personal enough: it's like saying that I'm not "personal" enough. MR reflects what I am interested in, except for science fiction. I like reading articles about Literature, so I print articles about Literature. I enjoy anything Harry Warner writes, so I reprint one of Harry's best articles for the many people who have not seen HORIZONS. There's not enough reminiscent material, perhaps, but I rarely reminisce about my childhood anyway. It's only your comments about cinemas that set me off here: I hadn't thought about the old Plaza for a long time. I just prefer thematic comments to scattered comments, that's all. Besides, you will become very sick of "personalized" (sanforized and transistorized) Gillespie after awhile, so be grateful for MR 3. :: Like Foyster, I just cannot see anything Peaceful or defensible about the Saigon government, but the Viet Cong are no better. Leave 'em to it.

DAVID GRIGG

SLITHEY TOVE 3

My manuscripts are not having much more luck than yours. I sent the original ms of one story to Aldiss, who has been diplomatically silent about its quality and has not sent it back. The carbon is still with Lee Harding, so far as I know. He was going to give me an intro to John Carnell, no less, but Lee has not written to Carnell recently. The second story went to Dolany's QUARK anthology and was rejected. (My first rejection slip.) In the meantime I had sent the carbon to Lee to send on to Carnell; now Lee has both the carbon and the original. Meanwhile the typescript of the first Aldiss article (in SFC 10) came back from NEW WORLDS where I sent it not very hopefully. Langdon Jones wrote a nice note (and even said they had sent it out to "several readers") but rejected it. Needless to say, I have a theory that the two stories I've written form the sort of fiction that Jakobbson is buying for GALAXY and IF, but I cannot be sure. One thing is certain; they will never sell to VISION, as I had hoped. Keep trying, David; perhaps if we collaborated on a story we could score a rejection slip each. :: Don't follow in Gary Woodman's footsteps, whatever you do.

LEIGH EDMONDS

SUGAR TOOTH 3

It was all marvellous, Leigh, and I cannot hope to comment on all that. If I ever meet any lost salesmen, I will warn them never to come near Balaclava. Your lists are mainly useless, but at least remind us how far F&SF has fallen since its first Australian edition. Clarke, Asimov and Bester in the second issue; Charles Dickens and Agatha Christie in the first! And what's their staple diet now? Sterling Lanier and Sonya Dorman. :: Am very curious to know why you think Charlie Brown shouldn't have won TAFF. Even when I'm not looking at my bank account, he still sounds like a great guy to me. Besides, I had never heard of Elliot Shorter before the TAFF ballot, and, except for the TAFF report itself, I doubt whether I will hear from him again. :: Thanks for all those mailing comments. My father did not keep a diary, but I suspect that if he had, it might have sounded a lot like your father's during the war. If the pollution issue becomes a political issue, then perhaps governments may spend the kind of cash and appoint the kind of people needed for the job. The trick is to convince governments that the voters are interested in these proposals, and this has happened in USA. I think the Mayor of St Kilda probably still holds more support in Victoria than does Prince Charles on this issue.

LEE HARDING

SERENDIPITY TIMES 1

When I lauded your entry into ANZAPA, Lee, I half-expected material along the lines of the fannish articles in ASFR. But it looks as if Lee Harding has changed nearly as much as John Bangsund has, and there is a completely different air about this material. I can't pin down that feeling exactly - an optimistic uncertainty, perhaps, compared with buoyancy of CANTO ONE and the early ASFR material. But the way you tell it now, you weren't so up when you sounded up (in 1964) so maybe you're now up when you sound down. Undizzied by that hogwash, may you return to some of your earlier fannish verve and favour us with more of those kind of articles. Meanwhile, the financial troubles of an s f writer don't fill me with much hope, but they provide interesting reading. I hope you discover That Particular Direction among all the false assigns.

PETER HOUSE
NECRONOMICON

There is little anyone can add to your description of MUMMY'S SHROUD: that sounds like the ending to end all endings. But it actually made it through the censors?? :: One of the most surprising recent defendants of censorship was

visiting Education guru, David Holbrook. His line was that Australians should think themselves lucky to be defended by our ever-loving government (those were not his exact words) from the perils of pornography that has swept over the rest of the world. Pornography affects the minds of children, he said, and seeing that he has done a huge amount of research on the way children's minds work, I would be more willing to listen to Holbrook than to most other people. But he trotted out the same tired old arguments and lumped together all the material banned by the censors as "pornography". It is possible, of course, that he thinks our Government protects us from girlie magazines, which it doesn't, and allows the sale of books like CANDY and TROPIC OF CANCER and HAND-REARED BOY, which it doesn't. At any rate, it looks as if a man's qualifications, even in Literature and Psychology, make little difference to a man's prejudices on issues like censorship. And fighters of censorship are no less suspect, I suppose.

JOHN BREDEN
BRIDE OF THE WIND 1

welcome, John Breden. You only took two years to join ANZAPA, but you're here at last. :: One great regret of my recent holiday was that I never did return to FANTASIA, as I should have done. Lee Harding said that the Embassy did not

help it much, as they put the interval in the wrong place - in the middle of one of the sequences, no less. Perhaps this was corrected later. Maybe somebody will wake up one day and return the images to their correct width. The fat dinosaurs are annoying, and so are eggy suns and the elongated lines in the TOCCATA AND FUGUE sequence. :: ZABRISKIE POINT is great, I agree, and I still don't feel like reviewing it, even after seeing it twice. I liked most the silences, the references to games, and the elaborate Ballard-like rituals acted out in both city and desert, the irony of beauty-in-destruction, and the music. It's a completely metaphorical film, but the metaphors do not point in one direction only. I'm just not sure where the point of intersection of the axes is.

NOEL KERR
SWEET NOTHINGS 8

SOMERSET GAZETTE probably needs to be smaller if you are going to produce it very regularly. The size-change in S F COMMENTARY, for instance, has made me far more willing and able to turn it out every month, while 45 pages was a drag,

even every six weeks or so. The only problem now is that I have so many reviews on hand that I may need to run at least another large issue, as well as the EM/JOE reprint issue. :: "Corrupt our younger members?" You haven't been to our (or any other) school, Noel. Most kids would see the joke in those cuttings twice as fast as you would, and laugh twice as loudly. :: I hope your new "business" is booming. I've heard about even cheaper electrostencils, but I think I will continue to use yours. All depends how the first one turns out - the cover for SFC 16.

DARYL LINDQUIST
COVER

The best cover for an Australian fanzine since the cover for SOMERSET GAZETTE 2? But what about joining ANZAPA?