

Q36C

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PEPPERMINT FROG
PRESS

Available for trade, contribution,
LoC, art, a naughty in the bushes,
or at editorial whim.

ART

John Packer	Cover, pp 1,2,3,4,5, 6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13, 15,16,17,18,19,20, 21, (monotonous isn't it?) 22,23,24,25, 26,28,29,30,31,32,33, 34,35,36,37,38.
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issue.



AUSTRALIA IN '83

JULY 1980 (late)



ALICE
AND
DRUGS

A consideration.

(Reprinted from WHAT THE DORMOUSE SAID 6 with additional artwork by John Packer.)

by Marc Ortlieb

" I read ALICE IN WONDERLAND as a child, and it wasn't until later, after I had tried drugs, that I began to get into it. I like Lewis Carroll, because it was obvious he was into opium."

Grace Slick.

Grace Slick, who is responsible for the quotation above, believed in practising what she preached, and, using ALICE as a starting point, wrote the song WHITE RABBIT, a song which a lot of people would like to blame for the popularity of drugs in the psychedelic era. It provided a starting point for Tomas Fench's article LEWIS CARROLL - the first Acid head, which is reprinted in ASPECTS OF ALICE, edited by Robert Phillips. The song also provided the theme music for the film GO ASK ALICE, which did for the sixties drug scene what REEFER MADNESS did for the thirties. How seriously can we take the claim that Lewis Carroll was influenced by drugs?

To look at the man himself, the claim seems unlikely. Whilst drugs such as opium were far more common, and legal in Carroll's day than they are in ours, they do not really mesh with the facade presented by the Reverend Charles Dodgson. However, it must be admitted that there are several places in the

Alice books which do seem to suggest a rather different outlook on the world. Let us, for a start, examine ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND.

If one were looking for evidence of Carroll's acquaintance with drugs, one need stray no further than the opening poem which contains the following stanza-

*Alice! A childish story take,
And with a gentle hand
Lay it where Childhood's dreams are
twined*

*In Memory's mystic band,
Like pilgrim's withered wreath of
flowers*

Pluck'd in a far-off land.

Since pilgrims were wont to travel to the Middle East, and since that flower of the Middle East most prized by drug users is that of Cannabis sativa, which should be dried (*withered*) before use, early evidence supports the case. In the first chapter, we see how these flowers change Alice.

The chapter opens with Alice bored. She has tried peeking at her sister's book, but it doesn't have any pictures in it, and so is of no interest. She has thought of making a daisy-chain, but has yet to decide whether the pleasure of making it is worth the effort of getting up. Her state of mind is described as *sleepy and stupid*. Now, this sounds very similar to what users of marijuana report as one of the effects of that particular drug. People under the influence of marijuana seem to express a preference for lots of pictures, and are noted for their tendency to lie around doing nothing.

That Carroll is talking about a drug related experience becomes more obvious as the book continues. Drug users are well known for their ability to accept bizarre occurrences as perfectly normal. In such a way, Alice is able to accept the idea of a talking White Rabbit with a pocket watch. An excellent description of the user's recollection of drug induced experiences may be found in the following quotation.

" (when she thought it over afterwards, it occurred to her that she ought to have wondered at this, but at the time it all seemed quite natural);"

Another common behavioural pattern displayed by drug users is that of doing things on impulse without pausing to consider the consequences, and this is exactly what Alice does in following the White Rabbit into its hole without working out a way of getting out. (For that matter, the fact that she can fit into a rabbit hole doesn't seem to surprise her. Here we have the first example of the spacial distortion effects so beloved of drug users.)

Once in the hole, she starts to experience yet another common symptom of drug use, that of time distortion. She appears to be falling very slowly, and has plenty of time to get herself in circular chains of logic concerning the eating habits of bats and cats. In doing so, she clearly demonstrates a drug related phenomenon known as *"stoned logic"*.

Finally she comes down with a thump, but doesn't find herself damaged by her

short trip. This is something much stressed by the advocates of drug use. Users of the so called "soft drugs" often point out that using such drugs has no long term effects.

Alice is still interested in persuading the White Rabbit, and, in doing so, she makes her way into a hall full of doorways. The most interesting of these doorways, and indeed the only one for which she has a key, is far too small for her. Alice's mind has, however been expanded, and she is starting to think in a divergent manner. She is certain that there will be some way of getting into the room, and sure enough a little bottle appears on the table. It is labeled DRINK ME. Having first checked to ensure that the bottle isn't labeled "poison", Alice does so. (This scene is one of the few that transferred through to the film GO ASK ALICE, though, as might be expected, the bottle in this case is dangerous.)

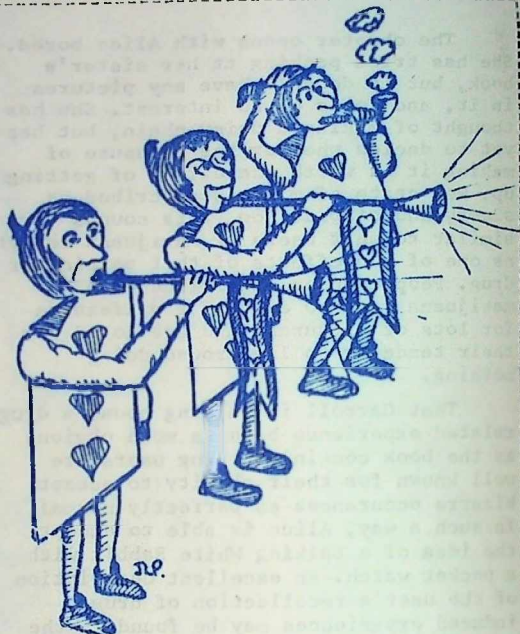
The liquid in the bottle has two effects in common with the psycho-active drugs. First it enhances Alice's sense of taste. It tastes like a mixture of



cherry tart, custard, pine-apple, roast turkey, toffy and hot buttered toast. In short, it gives Alice a bad case of what marijuana users term "the munchies". It also distorts Alice's spatial perception, to the point where she seems to shut up like a telescope. Again Alice's logic starts to take strange paths. She wonders what the flame of a candle looks like when the candle has been blown out. She also finds herself crying when she discovers that she has left the key to the door on the table where she can no longer reach it. Sudden changes of mood, and irrational fits of laughter and crying are yet more examples of drug induced behaviour. Her dilemma is solved when she comes across a cake on which the words EAT ME are marked out in currants. Determined to follow through her drug experience, Alice does so, and is rather disappointed to discover that nothing happens immediately. Compare this to the reaction of someone used to the immediate effect gained from smoking marijuana when faced by the slower action of a hashish cookie.

The cake soon has its desired effect though, and again Alice experiences sense distortion and uses wierd logic. She starts to see her feet as independant entities, and begins mentally composing letters to them. She encounters the White Rabbit who is shocked by her. She believes that it is her huge size which shocks the Rabbit, but to an outside observer, the Rabbit's behaviour is no real shock. First to the clear mind, it is only logical that a rabbit should be scared of a human. Secondly, considering the Rabbit as a symbol of middle class society, the encounter represents the average citizen's reaction when faced by someone obviously under the influence of illegal drugs.

The Rabbit drops his fan, and, with the opportunism characteristic of the drug user, Alice picks it up. The result of her action is that she shrinks down to six inches. Now, one possible interpretation of this is that contact with mundane reality has brought Alice down, however, an alternate interpretation becomes evident when one examines this scene in its original form in the manuscript of ALICE'S ADVENTURES UNDERGROUND. In that manuscript, the item dropped by



the White Rabbit is not a fan but a nose-gay, and Alice shrinks as a result of sniffing the flowers. Compare this with the decadent tendency of certain singers to snort cocaine out of roses during stage performances, and the picture becomes much clearer.

It is during this sequence that Alice loses her identity. She can't remember who she is, and she can't remember her lessons. She tries to recite a poem, and comes up with an interesting new verse. She forgets all the conventions of polite society, and offends those around her, by mentioning things that shouldn't be mentioned in mixed company. Her description of her cat's mouse and bird hunting ability is definitely taken amiss by the group she finds herself in. She is also still prone to fits of tears.

Having established the basic characteristics of Alice's trip in the first two chapters, Carroll goes on to concentrate on the visual aspects of the trip, without burdening us with further clinical detail. However, it is clearly shown that Alice is willing to try whatever is offered to her, even if

it isn't exactly offered. Thus, when sent into the White Rabbit's house to get his gloves, she tries the little bottle by his looking glass simply because she knows something interesting is sure to happen if she does.* She is not wrong, as this particular mixture makes her grow to the point that she is jammed in the room with one foot up the chimney (much to the delight of Freudian analysts of Alice). The Rabbit is disturbed to find Alice stuck in his house, and, after an abortive attempt to force her out by sending a lizard down the chimney, he decides that Alice needs to be stoned. A barrowful of pebbles is produced, and Alice is pelted. However, as the pebbles make their way into the room, they change into little cakes. Alice decides to eat one, having discovered one of the axioms of drug taking, i.e. that you get the sort of trip you expect to get. In this case, Alice expects to get smaller, as she can't get any larger, and she does indeed shrink.

It is now that the most overtly drug orientated scene in the Alice books takes place. Following a brief encounter with a dog, Alice meets a Caterpillar which is sitting on top of a mushroom and smoking a hookah. The Caterpillar proceeds to demonstrate some "stoned logic" of its own, and seems to have little concern for its future metamorphosis into a butterfly. (This puts one in mind of the young drug user who fails to grasp his eventual metamorphosis into Mr Suburbia.) The Caterpillar is rather

* I have the horrible feeling that Lewis Carroll intended this bottle to contain hare restorer.

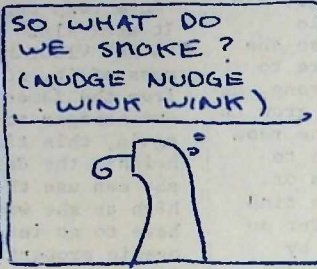
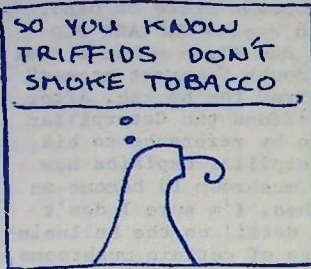
short tempered, or, as Alice puts it, "in a very unpleasant state of mind." It asks Alice to recite YOU ARE OLD FATHER WILLIAM, and Alice makes a real mess of it, no doubt "contact stoned" from the fumes from the hookah. After she manages to offend the Caterpillar again, this time by reference to his height, the Caterpillar explains how she can use the mushroom to become as high as she wishes. I'm sure I don't have to go into detail on the hallucinogenic properties of certain mushrooms. The hookah is itself a dead give-away, though I suppose it is possible to smoke tobacco in one. Indicative of the mind expanding properties of the combination is the Caterpillar's ability to read Alice's mind.

Alice tries one piece of mushroom, and finds herself shrinking rapidly. In an attempt to stave off her diminution, she tries a piece from the other side of the mushroom, and her neck elongates to the point that she is mistaken for a serpent by a pigeon who starts attacking her. This sounds very much like the classic "bad trip" to me. Alice is extremely disorientated, and starts thinking of the beautiful garden which started her sampling of the various solids and liquids. One can't help but think of the hapless drug addict thinking back to his/her first beautiful drug experiences.

However, Alice is in deep, and, when she comes upon a house, she again uses the mushroom to change her size. She finds that she has again taken a bad trip. This time she enters a madhouse where the cook flings pepper with

TRIFFIDS by John Packer.





delightful abandon, and a very Ugly Duchess is beating a baby. Alice rescues the baby, but her senses are so distorted that she sees it turn into a pig. Her mind has been expanded to the point that she can remark that, although the creature would have made a very ugly child, it makes rather a handsome pig.

There follows a conversation with a Cheshire Cat, which has the disconcerting habit of disappearing, leaving only its head. The logic is again suspect as logic often gets when one talks to a "head", however, it centres on that seminal question for all drug users, "Where are we going?" Since the answer is "It doesn't really matter", it makes no difference which way Alice goes, and she arrives at the Mad Hatter's Tea Party.

I think we can write off as sheer co-incidence the fact that tea became a euphemism for marijuana in the 1920s, but Alice has, once again, taken a bite of mushroom, and so we are once more subjected to strange flights of logic and a touch of time distortion. (At the tea party it has been six o'clock in the afternoon for several months.)

It is in this sequence that we first encounter the Dormouse, but, despite the song WHITE RABBIT, it does not say "Feed your head". Indeed, it does not say much of any sense. It does attempt to recite a strange story about three sisters who live at the bottom of a treacle well, thus returning us to Carroll's covert references to drugs. According to Martin Gardner's annotations in THE ANNOTATED ALICE, treacle originally referred to medicinal compounds

given for snake-bites, poisons and various diseases. Knowing that opium and hemp were common ingredients in such patent remedies adds a new dimension to the Dormouse's words. The Dormouse's recitation is marked by the way he sidetracks himself, and by his continual falling asleep, again common phenomena amongst indulgers in drugs.

Alice eventually leaves in disgust, and after yet another nibble on the magic mushroom she enters the beautiful garden she had seen earlier, only to find that it isn't as unspoilt as she had imagined. In particular, the Queen of Hearts has a down on heads, continually threatening to remove them. After a meeting with the Gryphon and the Mock Turtle, Alice becomes involved in the trial of the Knave of Hearts. The trial has every bit as much sense as your average drug trial. Alice is almost ejected from the court for being too high, but remains to be implicated by a poem which includes the lines

*I gave her one, they gave him two
You gave us three or more;
They all returned from him to you,
Though they were mine before.*

An excellent description of the complicated chain of deals involved in the marketing of drugs. Alice can take no more. Through an effort of will, she removes herself from the drug experience proclaiming the court to be a pack of cards. Thus she returns to the real world where all the conversations she thought she took part in resolve themselves as country sounds interpreted through a drug induced haze.

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THE BLACK HOLE

Reviewed by Paul Day.

Paul is the proprietor of Adelaide's BLACK NOLE BOOKSHOP on Chesser Street Adelaide. However, any similarities between his shop and the film herein reviewed...

Well kiddies, hold your breath. Walt Disney Productions have done it again. Boy have they done it! They've made a sci-fi epic.

After dabbling in fantasy for years with such mind boggling concepts as Flubber, Nerbie the bug, computers in tennis shoes, and others of a similarly bilious nature, you are about to go "Where no man has gone before". My guess is that you'll regret the trip.

NOTES ON THE CHARACTERS

The crew of the Palomino:-

Dr Alex Durant, astro-physicist and expedition leader, is played by Anthony Perkins with all the authority of a used Kleenex.

Dr Kate McCrae, astro-geophysicist (Would someone like to explain what the hell that means?) is played by Yvette Mimieux, an aging actress whose career peaked as Weena in THE TIME MACHINE.

Harry Booth, science journalist, is played by Ernest Borgnine, an actor rapidly losing the battle of the bulge. This celluloid extravaganza may prove the low point of his career.

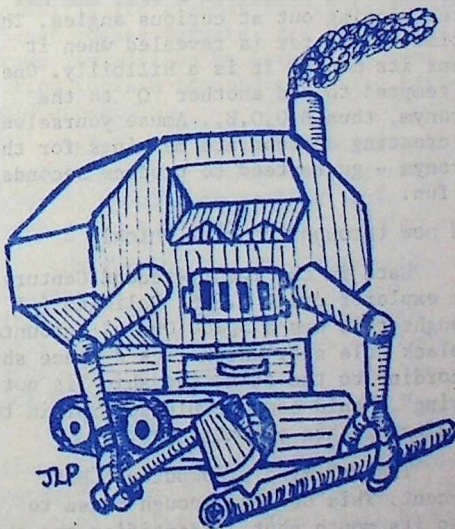
Dan Holland, the command pilot, is played by stoney faced Robert Forster, who, as you will see later, is something less than a terrific pilot.

Charles Peizer, the First Officer, is played by Joseph Bottoms. This part could have been deleted from what passes for a film script with no loss whatsoever.

Last, but not least, in Vincent, the character you've all been waiting for. His correct name is V.I.N. Cent., a crippled acronym for Vital Information Necessary, CENTralised, but we will call it Vincent for short. Why not? Everyone else in this epic does. An artless R2D2

rip-off, Vincent is a cute, and I mean CUTE, robot who, unlike his predecessor, can levitate by an unexplained method, assuming you can turn a blind eye to the wires which appear from time to time. It has several other interesting attributes. Its face consists of a plastic cylinder with a nice horizontal seam which runs right around its head. Its eyes consist of two recesses in the face which contain what appear to be painted eyes. It also possesses a metal cap which it can lower over its eyes if it is afraid, (How many scared robots have you met?) or raise, exposing a clear acrylic dome which presumably contains its electronic brain. Notwithstanding the stunning technical achievements of this creation, its distinctive feature is its voice. Lo and behold - Roddy McDowell has graduated from apes to robots, and in the character of Vincent reaches new heights of insuff-erability.

Spouting aphorisms, homilies and other useless bits of information, McDowell makes Vincent the most obnoxious little bastard to appear on the screen in years. Here we have the perfect candidate for electrocution or an acid bath. Naturally the crew, particularly McCrae,



who can establish "telepathic rapport" with the little jerk, nang on every condescending word it says.

The crew of the Cygnus:-

Dr Hans Reinhardt, as played by Maximillion Schell, seems to be the only actor who vaguely enjoys his role. Unfortunately the role of the mad evil scientist has many limitations, even for a competent actor.

Maximillian, the large evil robot, is Reinhardt's chief enforcer. Apparently it gets its kicks impaling the good guys on weapons which look like giant blender blades - a nasty piece of work.

The sentinel robots are man-sized minions of the good doctor who clean up after all the dirty doings. They look like plastic mummies who jerk when they move and goose-step a lot.

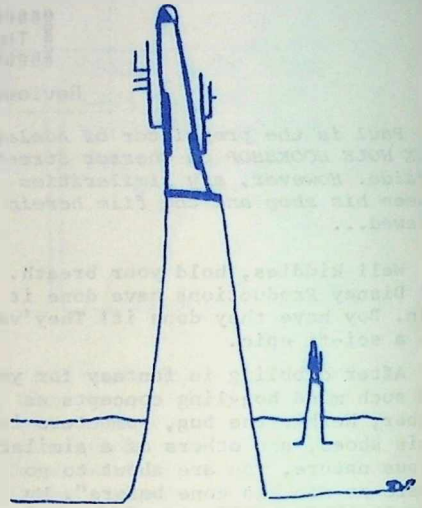
There are also several beings variously described by Reinhardt as robots or humanoids. (He can't seem to make up his mind what they are.) These are tall humanoid shapes in capes, whose faces are covered by domes of acrylic. How imaginative!

Yet again, last, but not least, is old B.O.B., pronounced Bob, an acronym which is never explained. An earlier model than Vincent, it looks as if it has been run over by a rogue neutron star. It is missing a leg, that is if the remaining appendage can be called a leg, and has wires hanging out at curious angles. The ultimate disaster is revealed when it opens its mouth. It is a hillbilly. One is tempted to add another "O" to the acronym, thus B.O.C.B.. Amuse yourselves by creating appropriate meanings for this acronym - guaranteed to produce seconds of fun.

And now through the plot thickly -

Late in the Twenty-second Century, the explorer craft U.S.S. Palimino (I thought this was a Space Opera) encounters a black hole near which lies a space ship. According to the film, the ship "is not moving". Would someone please explain the physics of this situation?

The Palimino's computer (Not Vincent. This one has enough sense to keep its mouth shut.) identifies the ship



as the Cygnus, lost twenty years before while commanded by Dr Hans Reinhardt. Since McCrae's father was on board when last seen, the plot is already getting sticky.

Receiving no response to his signals, Holland approaches the darkened Cygnus, circles the larger ship, and starts to fall into the black hole. How's that for master piloting?

As Palimino recovers we're permitted to hear the magnificent sound of rocketry in space. Fabulous! Palimino now approaches a Cygnus lit up like a Christmas tree, and docks at one end of the ship. By this time we have had our first good look at the fantastic black hole. It looks much as we would expect, with long arms of material spiralling into the unseen event horizon.

What I find disconcerting is seeing the gas spiral movement, which would not be visible to the naked eye anyway, as it proceeds in a series of jerky motions. One could produce a smoother spiral by filling a bathtub, adding some blue colouring, and pulling the plug. This, of course, reinforces the idea that the closest the writers have gotten to physics is to stand near a bottle of milk of magnesia. (1)

We also get a good look at the Cygnus which proves to be an ungainly non-functional, construction of crossed girders with a large phallic control tower at the end opposite the docking facilities.

As they enter the ship, the crew of the Palimino are disarmed by lasers. They board a car which carries them down a tunnel towards the control tower. There they are confronted by Dr Reinhardt who explains that, when the Cygnus became disabled, he ordered the crew to abandon ship. Here we also meet Maximillian.

Sequences follow in which we observe a robot funeral, and Vincent's defeat of Reinhardt's robot sentry named S.T.A.R. (Another undefined acronym) in a jazzed up shooting gallery sequence. There Vincent at last meets old Bob. Star, when defeated, literally blows a fuse out of frustration.

Then there is the episode in which the intrepid Dr Reinhardt, Nemo of the spaceways, entertains his guests in the mess hall. Some mess hall! Wood panelled walls; carpets; a cut crystal chandelier



and oil paintings on the wall. Here they are served by robot minions at a large table where the meal is eaten from china plates using silver cutlery - just your typical research vessel mess hall...

During the ensuing conversation, Reinhardt explains that, having discovered anti-gravity, he now intends to travel through the black hole to the beyond where time stands still - hence immortality.

The good guys are now, of course, convinced that the good doctor makes the mad hatter appear normal. Durand, however,

in the words of the late lamented Mr Spock, finds it all fascinating. Since this puts him partially in the camp of the bad guys, the code requires that he gets his. He does, but later.

Old Bob informs Holland that Reinhardt's humanoids are really the original crew, who have had *the treatment*. Since Durand has discovered the same thing on the bridge, Reinhardt chooses to eliminate him, and McCrae, who happens to be in the wrong place at the right time, is entrusted to the tender care of Maximillian so that she may receive the benefit of *the treatment*. Needless to say, she immediately telepaths Vincent, and Holland enarges to the rescue in the nick of time. Now disguised as humanoids, they proceed to blast their way through the hordes of robot sentries a la STAR WARS.

Elsewhere Booth has seen the light and borrows the Palimino to make his exit, thereby giving Reinhardt some badly needed target practice.

Now Cygnus is threatened by an asteroid storm, and the big, glowing, hot, round rocks are a sight to behold. The intrepid heroes flee towards the returned probe ship. The hull is breached while they are journeying through the hydroponic gardens, so they escape through a conveniently located hatch, totally ignoring the effect of the now huge pressure differential. Ain't science grand.

Next they run across Maximillian who whirls its blender blades menacingly. Vincent rushes forward, and literally screws Maximillian by using some sort of cutting tool in its abdomen. Exit Max, it would appear.

This is followed by a hair-breadth escape from a hot rock, which, reason suggests, should, in reality, have produced copious quantities of fried ham.

Meanwhile, one of the reactors collapses in the power centre, and Reinhardt becomes pinioned under the debris loosened by the explosion. The Cygnus now begins to fall towards the black hole.

Meanwhile, back at the probe, Holland discovers that it has been pre-programmed to go through the hole. Both ships then suffer what might well be termed the 2001 syndrome.

As if our intelligence has not been abused enough, we are now subjected to the final insult. We see Maximillian, miraculously restored, standing on a conical mound. Reinhardt's ka, soul, or whatever, drifts in from stage right and merges with the figure of the robot, who now glares menacingly. As the camera pans back, we see that Maximillian/Reinhardt is actually standing on the tip of a very sharp peak, surrounded by a burning landscape which is, indubitably, hell. Such are the wages of sin in Disneyland.

The scene then shifts to the goodies in the probe which is drifting towards what appears to be a solar eclipse, and, as they fade from view, we hear sighs of relief, because it is now obvious where they must be going - heaven. Thank god it is over.

I might add that this insipid piece of celluloid, which reputedly cost about fifteen million dollars to make, will undoubtedly show a profit, largely because it bears the Disney name, but one wonders how long this organisation which is already experiencing financial difficulties can continue to produce such tenth rate rubbish. Unfortunately the end is not in sight.

---o0o---

FOOTNOTE:-

- (1) Much as it pains me to agree with the people responsible for the "science" in the black hole, I feel that Paul is doing them an injustice here. The explanation for the jerky gas flow is perfectly in keeping with modern theories on black holes.

Anything which can be measured in discrete steps, or "jerks" as Paul puts it, is called quantized. This quantization has recently been applied to black holes by the brilliant theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking.

True, Hawking's work makes no mention of discontinuities in the gravitational attraction of black holes, but the writers, coming across the term Quantum Black Hole in the course of their research, no doubt extrapolated to achieve the effect of which Paul complains, and after all, science fiction counts extrapolation of scientific theories as one of its very corner stones.

- (2) This review, in a slightly different form, first appeared on the 5 MMM-FM programme SCIENCE FICTION - WORDS AND MUSIC.

---o0o---

SPECIAL BONUS

FANNISH MIS-SPELLING

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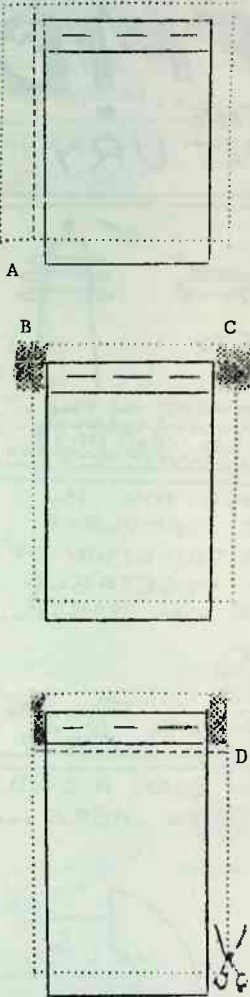
WITH A TRUFAN®

S.M.O.F. KIT

ON THE USE OF PLASTIC BAGS IN STENCIL PROPHYLAXIS

A lot of reproductive mistakes can be simply prevented now-a-days by the use of a strong hygenic plastic bag. While I have heard it claimed that there are more effective means of preventing the typeface becoming impregnated with wax, research has shown no better preventative for stencilly transmitted diseases.

To manufacture your own stencil prophylactic, it is recommended that you start with a pack of Embassy brand food bags, sized 305mm x 405mm, though if your stencil tends to be larger, a larger sized bag may be necessary. Then follow the steps described below.

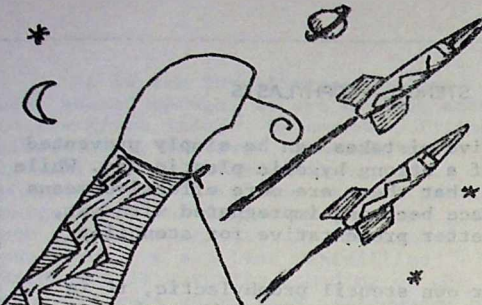


- (1) Gently insert the stencil into the plastic bag, ensuring that the edge of the stencil is aligned with the right hand edge of the bag.
- (2) Being careful to avoid cutting the stencil itself, trim the plastic bag along the dotted line A.
- (3) Take two pieces of magic tape, and place them at positions B & C. Fold the tape to secure the dorsal portion of the bag to the ventral portion.
- (4) Remove the stencil from the bag, and create an incision along the right hand seam of the bag, up to the bottom of the tape C.
- (5) Cut along the dotted line D, on the ventral portion of the bag only. Do not cut the dorsal portion of the bag.
- (6) This should leave you with a thin sheet of plastic with a pocket-like structure in one end. To use the stencil prophylactic, slip the head of the stencil into this pocket, with the remains of the plastic covering the wax surface of the stencil. Insert the protected stencil into your type writer. **CAUTION:-** These protectors are not guaranteed for multiple use. It is recommended that a new prophylactic be used for each stencil.

(Note:- Tape C is not strictly necessary, however, it provides invaluable friction when one attempts to insert the stencil. Should the stencil lack rigidity it might be advisable to place a stiff typing plate between the backing sheet and the carbon membrane.)

TRIFFIDS by John Packer

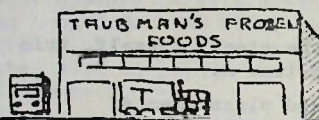




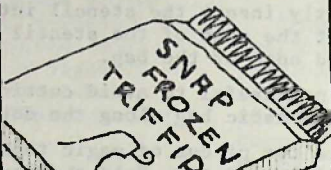
FLASH TRIFFID

IN THE
23RD CENTURY


YOU RECALL OUR HERO "FEL" INTO A FREEZER WHILE INVESTIGATING A REPORT OF CRUELTY TO VEGETABLES ---



AND WAS PRESERVED BY THE EXTREME COLD





TO AWAKE IN THE 23RD CENTURY...




TO FIND TRIFFIDKIND LOCKED IN MORTAL BATTLE WITH

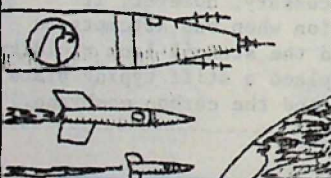
THE FIERCE, LATHSONE ALIEN INVADERS, THE SCHNOZZ ...



WHOSE AIM IS THE COMPLETE DESTRUCTION OF ALL VEGETABLE LIFE ON EARTH...



BUT HAVE BEEN HELD OFF BY EARTH'S GALLANT SPACE FLEET..



WHOSE VICTORY OVER THE SCHNOZZ ...



HAS BEEN AIDED BY OUR HERO ...




WHOSE ADAPTION OF AN OBSOLETE OFFSET PRESS



INTO A LETHAL DEATH RAY



EARNED HIM EARTH'S UNDYING GRATITUDE AND COMMAND OF HER DEFENCE FORCES. NOW READ ON...



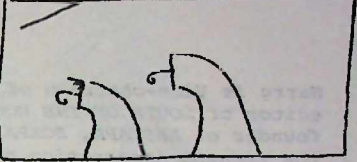
HAD ENOUGH YET, JANE??

FLASH AND HIS FRIEND DALE HAVE BEEN CAPTURED BY THE EVIL SCIENTIST DURANN DURANN WHILE HOLIDAYING IN THE TRU-CETI REGION...

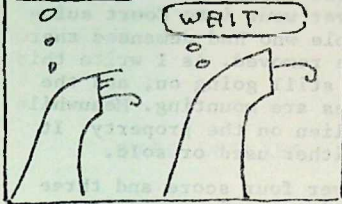


SO, EARTHLINGS, YOU SPY ON ME..

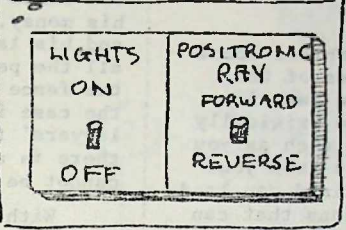
PREPARE THE GRATER AND AIM THE POSITRONIC RAY AT EARTH



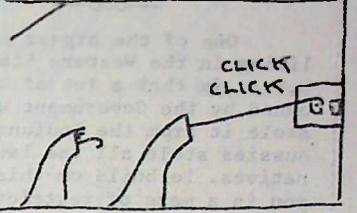
OH FLASH - WE'RE DOOMED!



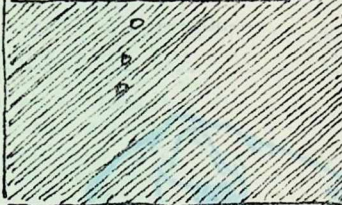
THAT CONTROL PANEL!



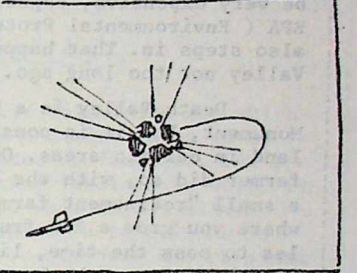
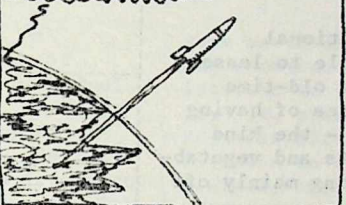
STOP THEM - DON'T LET THEM ESCAPE



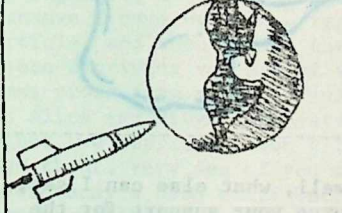
OUR SHIP IS DOWN THIS CORRIDOR



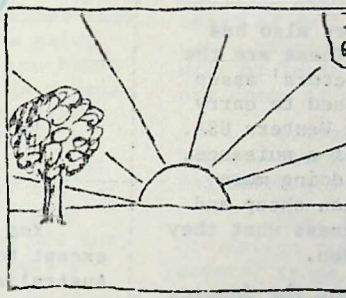
USE THE POSITRONIC RAY, FOOLS



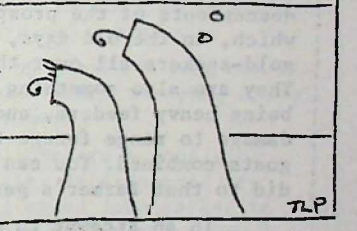
ONCE AGAIN,



EARTH HAS BEEN SAVED!



I HAVE THIS STRANGE FEELING OF DEJA-VU

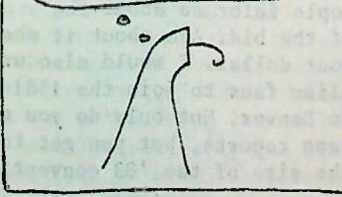


7LP

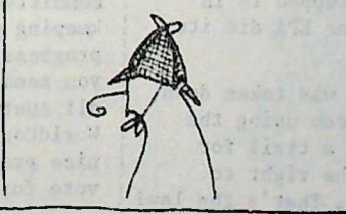
— COMING ATTRACTIONS —

MOBY SCHNOZZ

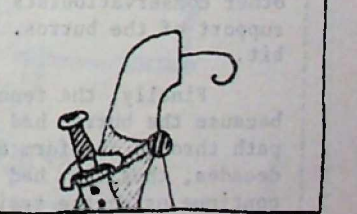
CALL ME ISHMAEL



THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK TRIFFID



TRIFF THE BARBARIAN



AN ELECTRIC FENCE STORY
by Harry Andruschak.

Harry is Vice-chairman of the NFFF, editor of *SOUTH OF THE MOON*, and founder of *LASFAPA*, *SCAPA FLOW* and of the present incarnation of *Shadow Fapa*, none of which, to my mind, excuses the following.

---oOo---

One of the bigger problems about living in the Western States of the U.S.A. is that a lot of the land is owned by the Government who originally stole it from the Indians, much as you Aussies stole all the lands from your natives. To build on this land can land you in a maze of restrictions that can be very expensive, especially if the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) also steps in. That happened in Death Valley not too long ago.

Death Valley is a National Monument, but it is possible to lease land in certain areas. One old-time farmer did so, with the idea of having a small "retirement farm" - the kind where you grow a few fruits and vegetables to pass the time, living mainly off your retirement checks.

However, Death Valley also has wild burros, or donkeys. These are the descendents of the prospectors' asses which, in the old days, used to carry gold-seekers all over the Western USA. They are also something of a nuisance, being heavy feeders, and doing more damage to range forage than sheep and goats combined. You can guess what they did to that farmer's garden.

In an attempt to stop the damage, the farmer put up an electric fence, and lawyers' eyes lit up for miles around. Sure enough, it started. First, a Court Injunction to dismantle the fence, followed by a counter-injunction, defending the fence. Sierra Club, and other conservationists stepped in in support of the burros. The EPA did its bit.

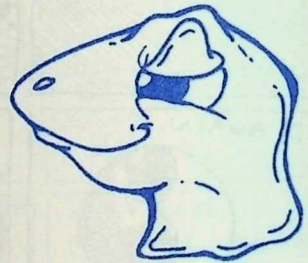
Finally, the fence was taken down, because the burros had been using the path through the farm as a trail for decades, thus they had the right to continue using the trail. That's the law!

" The Law is an Ass," you may mutter, and you may be right, but the fence came down.

Now came the matter of paying for the fence. The contractor who had put the fence in in the first place wanted his money. The farmer had none, so he and his lawyer went into Court suing all the people who had demanded that the fence be removed. As I write this, the case is still going on, and the lawyers' fees are mounting. Meanwhile, there is a lien on the property. It cannot be either used or sold.

With over four score and three lawyers working on the case, it has become very famous in fannish circles as ASS TRAIL LIEN 83.

---oOo---

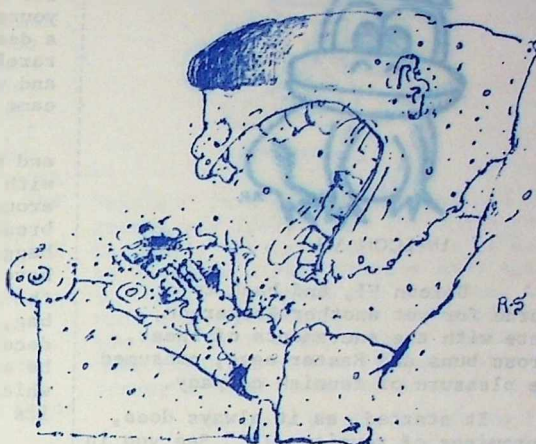


Yes, well, what else can I say, except to urge your support for the Australia in '83 bid. Donations can be sent to the A in '83 Bidding Committee P.O. Box A491 Sydney South N.S.W. 2000.

By donating at least a dollar, you become a "Friend of A in '83" which entitles you to a free drink at the convention if we win the bid. The committee is also issuing a bulletin keeping people informed about the progress of the bid. Ask about it when you send your dollar. I would also urge all Australian fans to join the 1981 WorldCon in Denver. Not only do you get nice progress reports, but you get to vote for the site of the '83 convention.

BACK
TO
THE
BOARD
AN
EDITORIAL

MARC ORTLIEB



I am determined not to apologise for the lateness of this issue. Indeed, I don't even feel like apologising for the fact that some of you will be getting your copies of Q36B with this issue. That, as the bard must have said at sometime, is irrelevant. What I will apologise for is the reprint material in this issue. I sometimes find belonging to a lot of apas is a pain, because I come up with a real you beaut article, and then put it through an apa those depriving you mob of some deathless prose from my pen. Thus the bit on Alice and drugs reappears here. The other two reprints I don't feel too bad about. Very few of you will have seen Mandy's APES contribution, and not many are likely to have heard Paul's review of THE BLACK HOLE.

Life at Melanto Avenue has gone through a number of changes, the most obvious being that Linda and I have parted. The break up was most amicable, however, it has led to a certain amount of reordering in my life style. (It also means that the place looks a lot more grotty. Having two people living in a house means that there is twice as much chance of someone being absolutely revolted by the state of the place. I am not noted for a low tolerance to mess.) Tneoretically the break-up should have left me with far more time for fanzine production, however, my parents

gave me their old television set which has resulted in a decided drop in my interest in producing fanzines. Let's face it, producing fanzines is work. It requires effort, whereas the effort involved in watching a television is minimal, once you discount the physical agony of turning the set on, and the angst of deciding on a channel. (I must get a remote control for the teev. That will at least divorce the procedure from any trace of physical exertion.)

Anyway, my thanks to all contributors. Particular thanx to John, Sheryl and Ralph for artwork.

What follows are a couple of convention reports. Intersperced are several frogs. I asked John Packer to draw me some frogs to fit the A-Con 8 title of FROGCON II. If I don't use them he'll kill me.



FROG FATALE



UNICON VI

Unicon VI, and back to Melbourne for yet another Eastercon, complete with the sacraments of bheer, hot cross buns and Easter eggs, consumed in the pleasure of fannish company.

It started, as it always does, with promises of reunions :- "See you in Melbourne" written as a postscript to every letter - people in Adelaide saying "See you at Eastercon" rather than "See you at the Hole on Friday" - that tension in the gut as Good Friday approaches - picking up marking and promising the kids you'll return it after the long weekend, knowing full well you'll be lucky if you can see straight over Easter, much less mark essays - besides, you'd feel such a hypocrit marking after contributing so many spelling errors and typos to the convention one shot.

But finally all that is out of the way, and you're on the plane, be it Thursday night or Friday morning. Twice now it's been Friday morning and hot cross buns with coffee for your ten thousand foot breakfast. You endure the stares of the other passengers as they glare at your greatcoat and unkempt hair (The taxi driver arrived while you were brushing it) and think: "What's that filthy character doing talking to that clean cut young couple", little realising that said clean cut pair are D&D fanatics and that the female of the pair carries a revealing costume with a carefully adjusted bodice, last worn by a gay actor.

Those who indulge their voyeuristic impulses and listen to the conversation are regaled with military natter, and even the hairy greatcoat joins in. Our hypothetical listener pictures the greatcoat picking the brains of the

decent couple prepratory to the revolution, little realising that the clean cut pair are the students, unstable and young, while the greatcoated freak is a decent tie-wearing teacher who only rarely indulges in certain substances and who wouldn't know a Marxist if one came up and bit him.

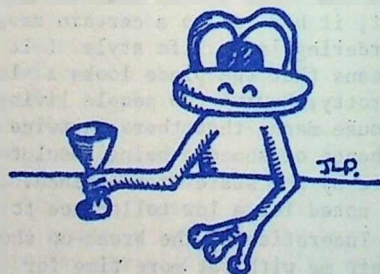
Finally the plane touches down, and the Easter ritual is continued with the plane's congregation gathered around the baggage carousel, each breathing a sigh of relief as their baggage comes out unscathed. The watchers have their opinions confirmed by seeing the greatcoat grabbing a battered little bag, while the clean-cut pair have a decent amount of luggage. (Several may be envious of the cute little device which allows the cute little device into its own trolley.)

Certain Melbourne citizens are less enthusiastic when said case takes up three quarters of the aisle on a tram going from the airport bus terminal down Swanston Street to the convention hotel. The great coat smiles in a disgustingly superior manner.

"Sigh, so much for literary device," he muttered, moving into the first person.

There's always a tremendous feeling of homecoming in arriving at a large convention. You almost expect someone to walk up and continue a conversation which got interrupted by Lee Harding during a room party at a previous convention. Sometimes they do.

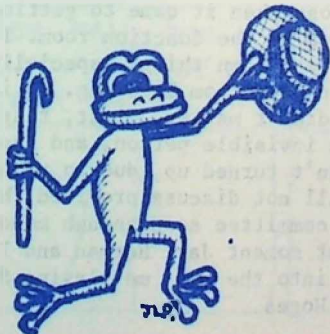
Walking into the Victoria Hotel I noticed two things almost immediately. One was the age of the hotel. The second was the fannish fauna clumped around the registration desk, the steps, the bar and down getting room bookings sorted out



Having spent ten minutes drinking in the atmosphere and exchanging brief hellos with more people than I can remember, I headed up to my room. I find the first encounters of a convention to be a heady experience, and I drink deep before going up to my room to sober up. It's a lot to take in all at once, and whilst I'm in this reverie of imagery, I might as well compare it to diving. You jump into the water, come up for a breath of air, and then head for the depths. The analogy doesn't stop there either, as, during the con, I saw many fen exhibiting the symptoms associated with nitrogen narcosis, or something similar, and I myself found that coming up from the depths of fannishness to the mundane shallows on the Tuesday morning left me feeling pain in all my joints. I'd be tempted to suggest that this was the bends, but I am assured that I was far more bent during the convention.

Anyway, my brief stay in the room enabled me to set my personality on convention mode, and I wandered down to indulge in the pleasantries, a proceedere which was slowed by the antiquity of the lifts. Yet another fannish tradition maintained.

Unfortunately switching my mind to convention mode also switches my memory to intermittent, and so I'm not quite sure where I ate lunch, though I have a feeling it was in one of the innumerable greasy joes that dotted Swanston street. I had made my customary mistake of not saving for the convention and so was running on minimal funds, a situation which was to prove embarrassing on a number of occasions. Having weighed down my stomach with what, if I remember correctly, was a pie which had been



FROGTOPUS

"heated" in a microwave oven (the crunchy centre was ice), I sat through Angus Caffrey's fan introduction. I'll never be nasty to a Paul Stevens show again, at least, not until the next one. Angus took the opportunity to sling off at the Star Trek fans, without really giving them right of reply. It was occasionally funny, but not that brilliant.

The rest of the afternoon I spent sitting up on the mezzanine which had been occupied by the registration desk and hordes of fans. I'm afraid that the panels on comics and serious sf didn't really interest me, and I didn't have enough money for the auction. It may have been at this time that I played 500 for the first time in ages. I spent quite a bit of the con playing cards, and getting to know a few people I hadn't really encountered before.

Dinner was at the pancake place which again seems to form an important part of Melbourne cons for me, only they had moved it, so somehow that wasn't quite the same. On this trip, we were accompanied by Simon Duncan who made rather a strange first impression by running along Spencer Street chasing cars. We didn't have a leash with us either. Anyway, the meal was eaten in typical fannish good humour, with a second shift arriving just as we were leaving. I got to natter to Julia Curtis and Roy Ferguson for a while. There was a very large W.A. contingent, excluding Bob Ogden, unfortunately. Julia was a lady of whom I'd heard, and meeting her was one of the nice parts of the con. She's a folkie, and since I have, at times, considered myself a fringe folkie, it was nice to meet another.

Friday evening was the great Herman/Ashby debate, not on the programme but ~~very~~ entertaining for all except

Jean Weber who was unfortunate enough to be sitting between Christine and Jack and who complained of ringing pains in her ears. Jack, you see, is a debating champion, and Christine has won her share of debates, along with being a lawyer. I'm not quite sure what started the debate, but it had something to do with the political significance of publishing fanzines. This had little to do with the way the debate continued, as both speakers are past masters of the art of re-defining the topic in their own interests. Every now and then both would need to draw breath at the same time, and so someone else would get a word or two in, but the debate was characterised by two voices and Jean cradling her ears in her hands.

Christine eventually beat a strategic withdrawal, but neither side could claim a decisive victory. The impromptu party then degenerated into a dirty story telling session, much as had occurred at Syncon after the masquerade, and I hereby apologise for all the lousey jokes I told. I trust that other miscreants will have the decency to do likewise.

At a later time I decided to seek out a party, but had no luck and so went to bed.

Saturday morning and afternoon were singularly undistinguished, so I must have spent most of that time either sleeping or playing bridge with Simon Duncan as partner. It turned out that this was his first con, and that he was a psychologist, which explained a lot. He was also a good bridge player. Some of the afternoon was spent with John McDouall, Warren & Margaret Nichols and Alan Brain planning the dragon panel. I had agreed to participate in this panel, but arriving at the con was rather shocked to learn that I was running the panel. We



NICARAGUAN INK-
SPITTING FROG.



PATAGONIAN
HAIRY FROG.

retired to the bar to prepare the panel. This was one of the hotel features most appreciated by attendees. The bar was open for the whole weekend, and it is rumoured that certain fen were not seen further from it than the nearest toilet.

As is customary, the preparation panel was far more fun than the panel itself. At some time during the proceedings a committee member came around flogging cheap banquet tickets. They had not sold enough, and were getting a little desperate. In a token protest against banquets I didn't buy one. I also turned down an invitation to the Banquet, to display my feelings about such elitism. Besides, I was too broke for either. I ended up sampling the culinary delights of yet another greasy joe. From what I can gather, the food at both was excellent. Sigh!

After this, I got ready for the masquerade. Since I hadn't fixed up a costume, I was forced to improvise, so I pulled my skivvy neck up over my head, put my purple hat on on top, and wore my greatcoat. As an invisible man it wasn't that crash hot, but what the hell. The problem arose when it came to getting from my room down to the function room. I couldn't see a damn thing, especially in the dim function room lighting. As it was, that didn't matter. First, there was already an invisible person, and secondly the MC hadn't turned up, due to reasons which I will not discuss provided the Unicorn VI committee send enough money. At the last moment Jack Herman and I were dragooned into the job, me playing Strop to Jack's Hoges.



FRURTLE

There was quite a variety of costumes, and quite a bit of confusion, and the parade was held up while names were gotten. Ones that stuck in my mind were John Breden's; Tony Power as Animal from the Muppets; Sally Underwood and Julia Curtis as BEM and BEM's mistress; Dave Ramsbottom as Bil the Galactic Hero (Though I thought his weapon was a little out of character, and when I called him "bow" he didn't bat an eyelid; Geoff Jagoe as an egg; Megan Dansie with the revealing costume mentioned earlier; and Sue McMillan as the invisible person. The stand out characters were Nick Stathopoulos and Lewis Gorely who performed a tremendous rendition of the film ALIEN. Unfortunately they were so concerned with the effect they wanted to achieve that they didn't even tell Jack and I what they were doing, so the whole masquerade was complicated by unscheduled appearances. Still, brilliant costume work, and they came out as easy winners.

The costume which most impressed me wasn't actually entered in the show, but was worn by one of the committee members, who asked me if I'd help him in his presentation. Since his costume was that of Alex from CLOCKWORK ORANGE, you'd think I would have had more sense, but I was carried away with my centre stage role and agreed. I feel my fall as he

threw me to the floor was most credible. However, I do wish he'd gone more easy when putting in the boot. It's a good thing that my stomach is so well padded.

Following the masquerade were assorted parties, and I started at one in Shayne McCormack's room, which was strictly non-smoking. One lady who passed through asked where the non-drinking party was. I hope she was joking, but somehow I don't think she was. When I offered to display the bruises I had received during the masquerade, no one was interested, but it did lead to people showing me how I should have fallen. This became an entry requirement for the party, but no one was injured.

From there, I went to a party in Eric Lindsay's room where Joe Maldeman was playing guitar. After five seconds pleading, I was persuaded to alternate with him so that he could get at his drink and I have to admit that Joe plays better pissed out of his brain than I can while stone cold sober. The fact that I wasn't sober at the time didn't help at all. However, I enjoyed the party, all the more so when I noticed Julia joining in on a Keith Roberts' song I'd picked up from a record. I've long wondered whether the Keith Roberts who recorded the album was the same as the Keith Roberts who wrote PAVANE. It turned out that it was.

Anyway, the terrible things I was doing to music reaped its reward, and we were politely asked to continue our party down on the function area. (A pleasant change from the behaviour of the staff at Unicon IV who had been most unpleasant.) There we found the tape going at full volume, and so spared all

TRIFFIDS by John Packer.



and sundry from further exposure to my voice. Certain substances were being consumed, but I was drunk enough to realise that exposure to deadly weed would go badly with me, so I declined. After a certain amount of silly dancing, I made my way back to my room and collapsed.

Sunday morning existed, strangely enough, and I was fit enough to join the trek to a local park where the Easter eggs had been hidden. There's nothing as cloying as Easter Eggs when you haven't got around to breakfast, and nothing as disheartening as watching youthful exhuberance as personified by David Evans scaling trees just on the offchance that some committee person has been foolhardy enough to place an Easter egg right at the top. I kept thinking of Tigger.

My luck maintained its usual mediocrity, and though I found a pocketful of eggs, I didn't get any with the raffle tickets on, and so had to content myself with munching them on my way back to the hotel. The organisers told us that we'd missed quite a few, which pleased me, because that meant that we'd left a breeding colony, should we wish to go Easter egg hunting there in future. (Mind you, I hope Melbourne doesn't get inundated with the mobile stage in the



Easter egg's life cycle, the Easter Bunny. I mean, introducing ordinary rabbits to Australia was bad enough...)

Sunday afternoon was time for panels, and despite what Jack Herman says in WAHF-FULL 4, I think our dragon panel acquitted itself reasonably, though, as I mentioned earlier, it was better in the bar when we were preparing it. I didn't stay for the future war panel, but was probably playing bridge on the mezanine, or playing mezanine on the bridge. I did go down for the Great Challenge, but found it a chaotic copy

of the Syncon '79 panel, and nowhere near as funny or well-organised. Once it's funny. I left my ping-pong balls with Cathy Circoستا and made my way up to the bar.



EXTREMELY RARE
CROCA FROG.

I missed Merv Binns' speech, but made it down for the panel on female protagonists. Though it resulted in quite a lot of discussion, and some good points were raised, the panel didn't really gell. I have a feeling that too many people were enjoying themselves to really get into serious panel discussions. Dinner was again at some unmentionable cafe.

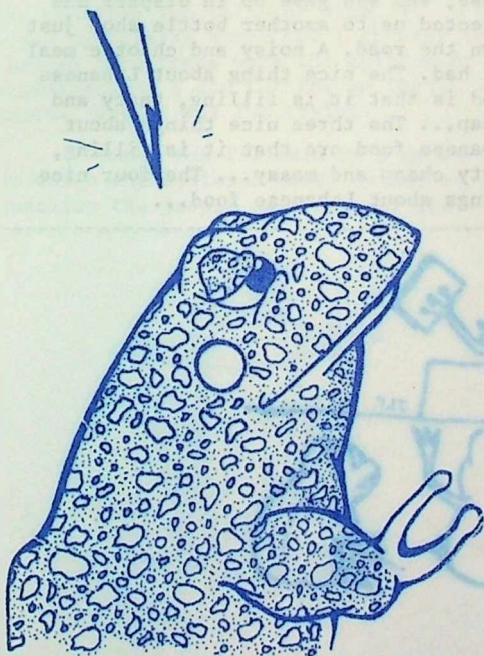
Gay Haldeman's segment was perhaps, my favourite programme item. She and Eric Lindsay took us into the world of American conventions, and it was a most enjoyable journey. Much of it was dng, and Gay warned us of terrible curses should we relay any of what was said to the states. Basically I guess the talk appealed to those of us who want to know the dirt on fen in the U.S.A.. Fun gossip.

The evening continued with a tea party in Roman Orszanski's room in which TeaCon I with GoH John Bangsund was announced. John gave a marvelous guest of honour speech, but a damper was thrown on the whole affair by the absence of a teapot, thus the absence of tea. Finally I gave up and wondered out in search of another party, but, having no luck whatsoever ended up down in the mezanine again. There was a subdued conversation going, the only high point of which was seeing Richard Faulder without his tie on. I gave the hotel a cursory once over, and, finding nothing else, went to bed.

The next morning was checking out time, and so I got a wake-up call

ordered. However, I get paranoid about hotel wake-up calls, and, not being in possession of a watch, woke up early anyway. I didn't realise quite how early I'd woken until after I'd packed, had a shower, checked out of my room, and had looked at the foyer clock. It was eight a.m.. My wake-up call had been for eight thirty. There was, of course, only one thing to do, but I restrained the impulse to break into tears, and set about finding breakfast. I ended up with a coffee in the hotel coffee shop, having passed over the idea of paying the \$3-50 fee for breakfast proper. I didn't think they'd appreciate that much small change. I shared a table with Roman, and we no doubt discussed my stupidity in getting up that early. I don't remember Roman explaining what he was doing up at such an ungodly hour.

For some reason, I took in part of the business session, but got bored and ended up in the bar with various people whose names I won't drop, but who indulged in a game of flashbulbs at two paces. Having exhausted the possibilities of that game, I ended up having lunch at the Canadian Steak House, with Eric, Justin Ackroyd and Keith Curtis who



introduced me to the joys of ordering eggs, chips and baked beans in a cafe. It was the best meal I had all convention with the exception of the meal I forgot to mention with Mandy Herriot, Terry Stroud, and Cathy Circosta. I can't quite remember when that was, but it was early in the convention.

Back at the convention, I listened in to the A in '83 panel, and then returned to the bar for goodbyes before setting out for the airport. There were dead dog parties scheduled, but none got underway before I left.

Tony Power offered me the Jabberwocky which he had constructed, and I couldn't resist, though I must finish paying him for it. The reason it rates a mention here is that it was far too delicate to pack, and so I had to carry it, both in the taxi on the way to the airport bus terminus, on the airport bus, and in the aeroplane itself. I went again with Megan and David, and I suppose the stares were even worse, as I was still wearing my greatcoat, and had, in addition, a purple hat and a little dragon in my hand. I didn't notice, as I was still on a fannish high, in no way diminished by the number of fans who were also at the airport, notably Robin Johnson, Roy Ferguson and John McDouall. I did, however, note one little girl who said "Why has the funny looking man with the purple hat got a dragon Mummy?" She would have been even more confused had I been carrying the triffid that Jane Taubman had made for John Packer, and which I was under threat of death to deliver.

I arrived home with fifty cents in pocket, and feeling absolutely miserable. As I said, when you've been deeply into fandom for a whole Easter weekend, it hurts to come up.

---oOo---



A-CON 8

A-Con 8 was, for me, a very different convention, largely because I was heavily involved in the organising of the thing. Indeed, I still tend to think of it as "my" convention. It didn't start that way. Originally Mandy Herriot and I had joint ownership, but due to all sorts of things, Mandy withdrew, leaving me holding the baby, so to speak. Like Alice, I sometimes got the impression that the baby was turning into a pig, but so it goes.

Anyway, I won't bore you with organisational details, other than to say that without the help of Allan Bray, John Packer, Mark Denbow, and all those people who were talked into helping on panels and the like, the convention would have been a disaster. As it was, comments I've heard to date suggest that most attendees enjoyed themselves.

The con site itself was quite pleasant, and I think we had the most cooperative hotel staff ever. They kept out of our way most of the time, and the only occasion on which this proved awkward was when Dave Halleday locked his keys in his room. Here Elaine Gillespie came to our aid, as it eventuated that her front door key fitted

the door. (The hotel staff all disappeared on the Sunday.)

The Highway Inn, our venue, was convenient to bus and tram, but from my point of view, it was even more convenient, being ten minutes walk from my house. (Not planned that way. It was actually Mandy who chose the venue, and handled the initial hotel liason.)

The con started, as most do, long before the scheduled starting time. Four Western Australians arrived on my doorstep on the Thursday evening, having driven across. I was able to spend more time talking to Roy and Julia, and met for the first time Joanna Masters and Richard. (I will eventually, learn what Richard's surname is, and how to spell it.)

Friday night saw a marked swelling in the eating crowd, and we wedged ourselves into the biggest table at the Jerusalem. It was a "grab as grab can" situation, in which the quick and the hungry was the order of the day. Allan Bray arrived late, and found himself ballanced precariously on the arm of a chair. Since the Jerusalem is a "bring your own", Roman and I were dispatched to get grog. We rather freaked out the bar girl at one pub with Roman's wine sense, and she gave up in dispair and directed us to another bottle shop just down the road. A noisy and chaotic meal was had. The nice thing about Lebanese food is that it is filling, tasty and cheap... The three nice things about Lebanese food are that it is filling, tasty cheap and messy... The four nice things about Lebanese food...

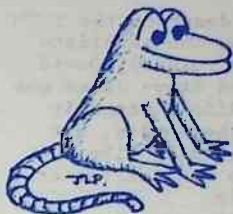


The convention itself didn't start until the Saturday morning, and Saturday saw Jonn, Allan and I setting up. (Actually, I didn't do much setting up. I spent most of my time pacing up and down. Whenever John saw me pacing in a useful direction, he'd put something that needed carrying in my arms, and trust me to put it down at the end of my track.)

The programme was a magnificent work of speculative fiction, and, by the time people had arrived, I'd already changed everything on the Saturday with the exception of the evening's films. We had the standard introduction from Chairentity Allan Bray, and then I waxed apologetic about changes in programme. This we followed with a panel on fandom which was at least in the right order, if not at the right time.

The idea was to get assorted people to espouse views on fandom that they would never in their wildest dreams support otherwise. Thus we had Bruce Gillespie describing the joys of being a rabid comics fan, Roman Orszanski dealing with the thrill LOST IN SPACE has given him, and Helen Swift speaking about the way established fandom is far too clique ridden, and putting forward the new wave fan point of view. I ended up talking about how I thought that fannish committees were the epitomy of organisation. I don't think we fooled anyone, but it was fun trying.

Lunch was followed by a panel in which the audience were invited to question the people up front. If the



RAT TAILED
FROG.

panelists could talk for three minutes on the topic suggested, the person who suggested the topic had to take a place on the panel. Just to keep everyone else in order, the originator of the original idea for the panel, Steve James, was on hand to order hecklers onto the panel.

It was during this panel that Mandy Herriot became obnoxious. She had been given permission to blow bubbles at the convention, by a Melbourne fan of dubious repute, and proceeded to distribute bubble blowing apparatus to people in the audience. The front table soon took on a slick soapy texture, and the drinking water became something more suited to washing up. She claims she was getting me back for naming her the convention's official guardian angel.

Bruce Gillespie then gave his guest of honour speech, which was followed by a panel on Australian sf and Australians in sf. It was almost all that remained of my original concept of the programme as a serious discussion of Australian sf.

The evening's films were ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND and YELLOW SUBMARINE, followed by an impromptu dance, of sorts. Allan Bray claims to have certain photographs of Paul Stokes which he is willing to release for a price. I eventually gave up and went home. I did notice that both the one shot typewriter and John's computer, which had been programmed for SPACE INVADERS were being extensively used. I doubt that anyone will be surprised that the high scorer on the SPACE INVADER game was Linda Smith.

I spent much of Sunday on the registration desk. The programme bore a slight resemblance to that printed in the programme book, and the second panel for the day, on science fiction music, was

recorded for later broadcast on the 5:00 PM Science Fiction show. The panelists for that one were Peter Toluzzi, David Hodson, and Rob Lock and Steve James who do the show on MEM. I didn't actually hear the programme on the Sunday, but from the recording it sounded like fun. Julia Curtis, who helps run the Faster Than Light Radio Show in Perth made some comments, and later went into the studio with Rob & Steve.

Again, I was on the desk for the auction, and the panel on terra-forming Australia. The latter, I gather, became very silly. Meanwhile I was chasing up masquerade entrants, and since there seemed to be no more than five, we cancelled it. I think that was the only deletion from Sunday's programme.

Paul Day's Trivia Quiz was tried, but the contestants found themselves wanting. To be specific, they found themselves wanting Paul's blood and his index book, not necessarily in that order. Peter Toluzzi is rumoured to be circulating a petition to have the sword re-defined as a common tool. As it was, his answer to the question gave his points a hammering.

This was followed by the simultaneous nervous breakdowns of John Packer and Mark Denbow as they presented what would have to be the most ambitious audio-visual production since Aussie-Con. Despite technical hitches, it was amazing, and promises to be even better once they get a couple of bits of equipment.

Since there was nothing else that could really follow the multi-vision, we showed AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT. I can't quite remember what happened after that, but I feel I sat around nattering for a while and then went home. The one shot was getting longer.

Monday morning found everyone rather hazed. We showed a few films, and then had a round table discussion on Australia in '83 without the table.

By the time that had finished, Allan Bray had arrived with the one shot. He'd spent all morning printing it, and all that was left to do was to print the last couple of sheets and collate. Once that was done, people sat around reading and commenting, while Peter tried to get information about the RatCon one shot

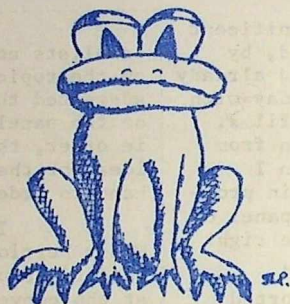
from Joanna Masters. The apathy party took a vote, and decided that there wasn't really much point in continuing the programme, so people spent the remainder of the con either watching the films Rick Taylor had kindly provided, or nattering. I trust that no one was excessively inconvenienced.

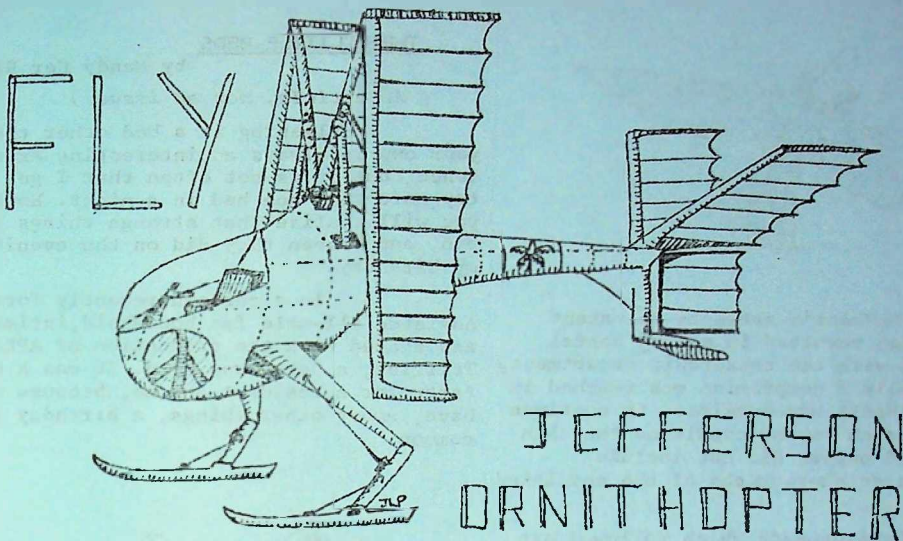
One of the many dead dog parties was held at my place, and various people dropped in from

time to time. I had four of the Western Australians staying, and Peter had booked in for the evening. Linda and Darryl provided pancake mix, and we proceeded to demolish the remains of the wine and beer Bruce and I had bought. By 2 a.m., I had swept all the people who were non-resident out, and we were just having a pre-collapse natter when John McPharlin and Paul Stokes arrived. Both had been sampling Scotch at K Mike Clark's place, and were rather the worse for wear. I fear I may have been a little abrupt in pouring a cup of coffee into them, and then directing them to the door. They haven't spoken to me since.

Anyway, Sue Schott decided to stay the night, and, being the consummate gentleman, I gave her my bed, and spent the night on the lounge floor, woken only once every half hour by the cat who decided that my rolling over in my sleep constituted evidence that I was awake, and would therefore open the door for him if he threw his weight against it often enough. (I gather Sue didn't do much better for sleep. Being one of your cold-blooded types, I tend to forget that some people like more than one blanket.)

And that was it, except for being woken by Bruce and Elaine at 9-30 a.m.





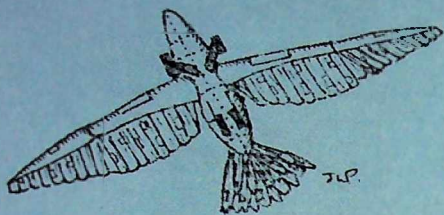
HORNITOPTER SEVEN

Edited and produced by someone who bears little or no resemblance to Leigh Edmonds for the third mailing of Q36, in the way of saying nyah!

WHAT'S GOING IN OUT IN OUT IN THE FACTORY: This is the tenth anniversary of the foundation of the Special Hornitopter Inovations Training School, and an occasion of many celebrations, thus it seems only fitting that we take the opportunity to review the history of Hornitopters.

No history of Hornitopters would be complete without mention of Sir Sidney Fudd, the discoverer of Fudd's Law :- *If you push something hard enough it will fall over.* It was this scientific breakthrough that led to Teslacle's Devient to Fudd's Law:- *It goes in. It must come out.* This Devient, wnen translated into more concrete terms became the Pushover, the direct ancestor of the Hornitopter. It was, however, at least fifty years before Scots engineer Angus McWhatt combined Teslacle's research with certain chapters of THE BALL OF KERRYMUIR to perfect the first Hornitopter.

McWhatt's original Hornitopter suffered from many bugs, amongst which was the continual failure of structural members to maintain rigidity. There were also embarrassing discolourations on the outer surface which were never really overcome until McWhatt hit upon the idea of covering the entire thing with a thin latex coating. This also solved problems encountered by the first test pilots of the Hornitopter, namely the tendency to develop unsightly bulges in the midrift.



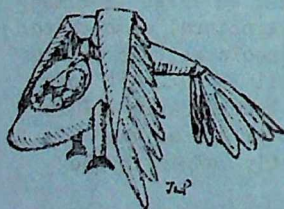
McWhatt's attempts to patent his design resulted in a long postal dialogue with the censorship department, but finally a compromise was reached in which McWhatt was permitted to continue his research on the condition that his published papers did not include diagrams or photographs of the completed device.

Developments which followed are sufficiently documented elsewhere, and require no further mention here. Suffice to say that the Hornitopter became a success, and journals devoted to overcoming the lack of rigidity problem are notably successful, saleswise.

Finally, ten years ago, the Special Hornitopter Innovations Training School was founded to carry on McWhatt's research and to milk some of the profits from this lucrative area of studies. We have yet to make any improvement on McWhatt's original model, but our continued studies have uncovered many new avenues of research.

---oOo---

The article that follows is somewhat dated, as Mandy left for Melbourne soon after completing it. The membership of the household in question has also changed.



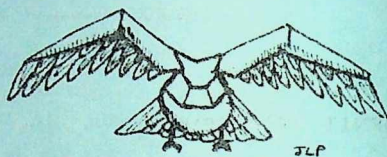
THREE LITTLE BEDS

by Mandy Her Riot

(An article, not an issue.)

Sleeping in a bed other than your own is always an interesting experience, but it is not often that I get to try more than one bed in a night. However, you will realise that strange things happen, and happen they did on the evening of my birthday.

In a certain recently formed Adelaide all-male fan household, intimately associated with the production of APES and Triffids, a party was held. It was a co-party for a resident and me, because we have, among other things, a birthday in common.



Late in the proceedings, bed seemed like a good idea. Now, one can learn a great deal about a person by sleeping in their bed; like realizing that a certain carefree batchelor is determined to stay unattached - why else a very comfortable single bed that squeaks. This is surely sufficient to deter all but the most determined woman, or man, but then, perhaps for most liasons he sleeps out.

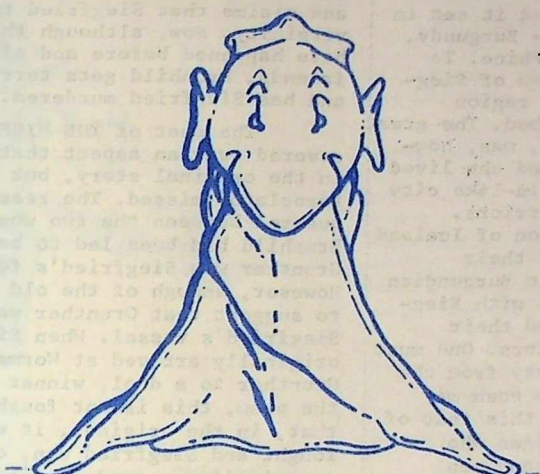
Early in the morning I decided that variety is the spice of life, and that I might as well start my 25th year with a bang. Consequently I moved beds.

This time I found a double mattress on the floor which didn't squeak- much more to my liking. The pillow was lumpy, but then, one doesn't really need a pillow does one?

I woke up much too late to try the third bed in the household, but, on third thoughts, although I don't really care in whose bed I sleep, it does pay to be a little discerning.

---oOo---

U-Beaut Publications.



THE EPIC OF WORMS

by John J.
Alderson

It's been a long time since John last graced the pages of one of my fanzines, and I must admit it took a little persuading to arrange this return, mainly in the form of me buying an hour of John's time at Easter Con '79. It's a good hour's worth.

---000---

In my last year at school, I received a prize, a book called WORLD FAMOUS BOOKS IN OUTLINE, which I diligently read. In those more spacious days I diligently read every book that came my way. I then proceeded to read in full the books which had been presented in outline, and I may say in passing that, if I were editing such a book today, I would definitely leave out many, such as Ainsworth's OLD SAINT PAULS, and Stowe's UNCLE TOM'S CABIN. In fact I would leave out most of the novels and add considerably to the other three sections, namely "Epics", "Tales and Allegories", and "Philosophy, Religion and Belles Lettres". Of course, all this is beside the point.

It has been a matter of frustration that for many years I could not get some of the non-fiction books, or should I say some of the non-novels outlined. I did, however, get to read THE LAY OF THE NIBELUNGS, or, to give it the name used in the Penguin Classics, THE NIBELUNGENLIED, and it is this book that I wish to mention.

If you wish to enjoy this book don't, whatever you do, read the Icelandic Sagas first. I did, and went straight on to the NIBELUNGENLIED. The thing was made worse by the translator saying, in no uncertain terms, that this

epic was second only to THE ILIAD. I have read a number that are far superior and I am afraid that the translator's belief in the importance of his own subject has lead him astray. However, that is by the way.

The sagas are savage, stark and realistic. They may have ghosts, and an occasional dragon (elsewhere, of course, not in Iceland), but the writer always has his feet on the ground, and that ground is part of a huge world. That's rather important. These Icelanders knew about the rest of the world, and their heroes roamed from Vinland (Somewhere in North America) to Turkey. Certainly sometimes their information is a little garbled, but they don't make real big boo-boos.

The Iceland of the sagas, which is contemporary with the writing of THE NIBELUNGENLIED, was a land of farmers, a turbulent male dominated society where women were formidable creatures untamed by man, and who held and farmed land on equal terms with the men. I mention this because part of THE NIBELUNGENLIED is set in Iceland. The true Iceland of that day was a land of farmers, with no castles, no cities, no towns, not even villages. The largest collection of human beings in one place would fit into one large long-house.

So my first disappointment with THE NIBELUNGENLIED was to find it set in a petty bourgeois community - Burgundy, the city being Worms on the Rhine. To them, the Netherlands, kingdom of Siegfried, was a shadowy distant region which the poet barely described. The great woman of the story, Brunhild, was, however, an Icelandic Amazon, and she lived in an immense fortified castle-like city with tens of thousands of warriors. (Actually the total population of Iceland about 30,000, did not exceed their number!) To win her hand, the Burgundian king, Grunther, sailed there with Siegfried, Hagan and Dancwart and their horses, but without any sailors. One must admit that Worms is a fair way from the sea, as is Vienna, where the poem may have been written. However, this feat of seamanship is bettered by Hagan who ferries an army of ten thousand men across a river in a one man ferry in one day.

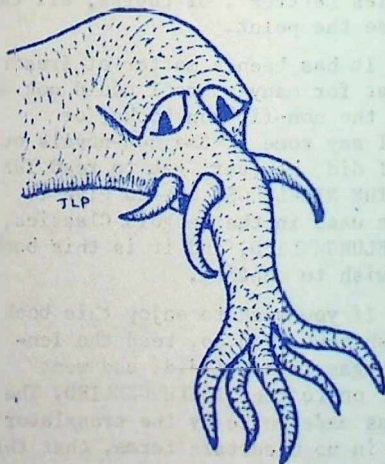
Grunther, with Siegfried's help, wins Brunhild's hand in an athletic competition during which Brunhild is led to believe that Siegfried is Grunther's vassal, whereas the poem makes them each independent kings. Grunther does not reveal the true situation to Brunhild.

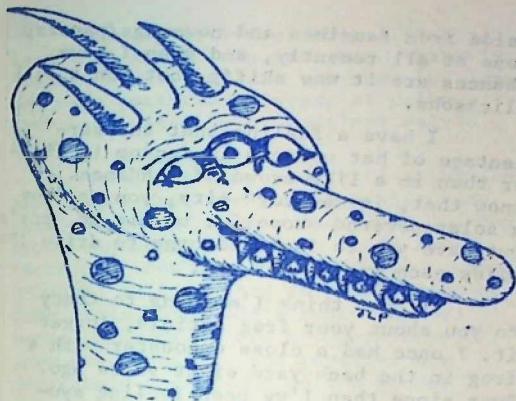
Another character who appears in the story is Attila, who is, at this time, living in Hungary, and who has destroyed the Burgundian army.

The older sources of the story are not too well assimilated by the poet, particularly in the episode that is central to the story. Brunhild, being suspicious of Siegfried's status, demands to know from her husband Grunther the truth of the matter, and refuses to let him consummate the marriage until he does tell her. He does not, and spends his wedding night tied up with her girdle and hanging from a peg on the wall! He obtains Siegfried's help to wrestle with the girl, on condition, of course, that Siegfried does not give Brunhild a friendly poke himself. Man of honour that he is, Siegfried lays the girl out flat ready for Grunther and leaves with Brunhold's ring and girdle. After losing her virginity, Brunhild loses her strength. (With Samson it was his hair. With me it was my youth.) Years later Brunhild quarrels with Siegfried's wife Kriemhild

and Kriemhild produces Brunhild's ring and claims that Siegfried took her virginity. Now, although this is said to have happened before and since between friends, Brunhild gets terribly upset and has Siegfried murdered.

The poet of THE NIBELUNGENLIED covered over an aspect that was apparent in the original story, but which the translator missed. The reason for the quarrel between the two women was that Brunhild had been led to believe that Grunther was Siegfried's feudal overlord. However, enough of the old story remains to suggest that Grunther was actually Siegfried's vassal. When Siegfried originally arrived at Worms he challenged Grunther to a duel, winner take all. In the poem, this is not fought, but it seems that, in the original, it was either fought and Siegfried won, or feudal superiority was ceded without a fight. There are many indications that Siegfried was the feudal superior. In the original version, Siegfried did take Brunhild's virginity. What is apparent, and what the poet glosses over, is that, as Grunther's overlord, Siegfried has the feudal right to take Brunhild's virginity... the very ancient right that feudal lords claimed, of spending the first night with every bride. The producing of tokens of Brunhild's virginity by Kriemhild crushes Brunhild, and, after the murder of Siegfried, she drops from the story. It is here that the poet started using an entirely different version of the heroic cycle,





that of Kriemhild's revenge. Originally this story dealt with the marriage of the Burgundian princess to Attila who had destroyed the Burgundian army. It tells of how she destroyed Attila in revenge.

However, what first tempted me to write this article was the discovery that Kriemhild and Attila had a son they called Ortlieb, and I thought I had at last found the founder of the Ortlieb clan, but alas, Hagan cut the boy's head off whilst he was still a child. Sorry Marc, but I'm still looking for your murkey origins.

---oOo---

Whilst I hate to spoil your efforts John, the name Ortlieb belongs to my family by adoption only. The original family name, on my father's side is Caine. Now, if I recall, there is some sort of Biblical connection there...

Getting back to the Siegfried story, the confusion over who took Brunhild's virginity was dealt with in a film I once saw, THE LONG SWIFT SWORD OF SIEGFRIED. While that film also made the mistake of having castles in Iceland, there was no doubt whatsoever that Siegfried took Brunhild's virginity. It was shown in graphic detail.

I have my doubts about the legitimacy of applying feudal traditions to what seem basically Norse myths.

AUSTRALIA IN '83

Following the panel at Unicon VI, various bits of information about the bid have been circulating.

The film seems to be getting there. According to Jack Herman in WAHF-FUL 4, the Sydney filming was fun. I'm not sure I like the idea of a seduction scene in a good wholesome bid like ours, but, considering that the film was partially shot in Sydney, I suppose it had to be there, to give the film some local flavour.

The Melbourne bit, according to Robin Johnson, includes footage of Antifan attempting to swim underwater in hat and cloak etc. I have a feeling that the end product should be hilarious.

After certain delays, the next A in '83 Balletin seems on its way. Send money to Peter Toluzzi 4/8 Ashley st Waverley N.S.W. 2024. Other moneys, donations etc may be sent to the A in '83 committee at Box A491 Sydney South 2000. The committee have asked for a \$10-00 donation from all Australian fans. Bidding for a Worldcon is not cheap, especially when the bidding has to be done in the U.S.A..

A hotel has been chosen for the bid, this being the Chevron Hotel in Potts Point, though Robin says it's as close as dammit to Kings Cross. These Sydney people take their Syn seriously.

Keith Curtis has won DUFF, and so will be going to NOREASCON, along with several other Australian fans, so if you're at Noreascon. look them up. I'm fairly sure they will be carrying an assortment of Aussie goodies. (There are some nice A in '83 t-shirts designed by Mike McGann which are being sold. For info on those, contact the committee.)

---oOo---

A in '83



LETTERATURE

Q 36 A

DAVID BRATMAN Of the titles (for Q36 A)
PO BOX 4651 I liked " The Mad Dan
BERKELEY Review" the best. I know
CA 94704 two Mad Dans and am very
U.S.A. familiar with the species.

(Sign! There are times when I feel I was a little hasty in discarding that title. Maybe after people have forgotten some of the tripe I wrote for MDR, I might revive the title.)

I cautiously venture to take slight issue with Marion Bradley. She says that writers write out of their own experience, and therefore it's unfair to criticise Anne McCaffrey's female characters for not being " strong and independent" enough. (Presumably McCaffrey doesn't know any strong and independent women). I've heard that one before: writers can only write of what they know. In that case, I would like very much for someone to tell me where on this world there are pernese dragons. I sure haven't seen any around lately.

Look: Writers do not write only out of their experience. They write out of their imagination, or there'd never be any science fiction or fantasy at all. Sometimes a writer may use personal knowledge or experience in a work, but that's only a sort of crutch. It's easier that way. (It's nothing to be objected to -- it's no crime that several Le Guin stories take place in Portland Oregon, for instance.) Use of experience should not be confused with use of imagination.

RON SALOMON Your " The Unknown
1014 CONCORD ST Shakespeare" was nice,
FRAMINGHAM but I couldn't appreciate
MASS 01701 it as much as I once
U.S.A. could have - too many
years out of school,
and I do not read Mr. S. for pleasure.
In fact I haven't gotten much reading.

aside from fanzines and newsmags/papers, done at all recently, and when I have, chances are it was skiffy, but don't tell Glicksohn.

I have a feeling that the percentage of hat wearers in fandom is higher than in a like crowd of mundanes. I know that, in New York city, you can buy a solar-powered propellor beanie at Macy's but have yet to feel the urge to drive 17 miles each way to get one.

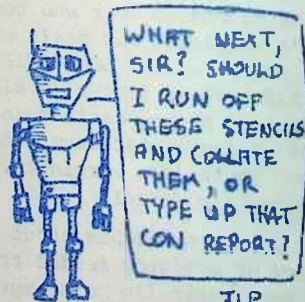
If you think I'm going to toady to you about your frog article, forget it. I once had a close encounter with a frog in the back yard eight years ago. Ever since then I've been feeling sympathetic towards flies, and Vincent Price

Really? Hmmn, must have a word with my mate Sigmund about that. How do you see flies? Do you prefer those that appear to be wearing girdles and garters?

DAVE WIXON I didn't know, of course,
BOX 8600 when the Skylab/Mpls in '73
MINNEAPOLIS flyer went out, that Aust-
MN155408 ralia was the target. Have
U.S.A. you had any comment from
the Perth people.

About your flyer, no. About Skylab yes, and none of it printable. I think the only person who took serious offence was Jack Herman who, in WAHF-FUL 4 has started a counter bid for '73. His bid is, according to page one, for MINIAPOLIS in 73. The way I see it, this is going to require time travel, in order to change the spelling of the name Minneapolis. If you want to stop him, now's the time.

FRANEDS DREAM #1



You may well feel that it's obvious that amphibians have been shabbily treated by sf, but are you aware of just how many potentially great sf writers have been eaten by crocodiles? Fair's fair...

Aha! Yet more foul anti-amphibian propaganda from the United States. In this case Dave's using the old "One bad apple can spoil the whole bunch babe" technique, but I'm afraid it won't wash, because, in his hurry to smear innocent amphibians, his made a basic factual error. Crocodiles are not amphibians, they are reptiles, and reptiles are definitely unpleasant on the whole. I mean, a lot of reptiles are poisonous, and several are vicious, whereas I know of only one poisonous amphibian, that being the Queensland cane toad, and even the nicest of families can have one skeleton in its closet.

Dave suggested I continue Macfan, including Dense-inane Castle. I'm almost tempted.

FANED'S DREAM #2



HARRY WARNER JR
423 SUMMIT AVE
HAGERSTOWN
MARYLAND 21740
U.S.A.

Your "The Unknown Shakespeare" tickled me, although I am not familiar enough with the Tempest to have the complete sensation of recognition that came from Macfan, whose source is an old and well known favourite. Even before I read your version, I used to wonder about the banquet scene in Macbeth because the sudden appearances of Banquo seem like such a clear premonition of the way Heinlein used to become suddenly visible as if by magic if his name was announced as a Hugo winner. There are some other possible fanciful and science fictional associations in Shakespeare. The very opening of Julius Caesar makes me wonder if it

FANED'S DREAM #3



is the real pioneer work about robots, instead of RUR which usually gets the credit. The "rude mechanicals" mentioned at the outset may even follow the three laws of robotics, because the killings in the play are performed by other characters who are obviously human. Then there's the mystery of the individual to whom the sonnets are addressed. Literary people have been fighting for decades over the question of whether it's a woman friend of the poet, or a youth with whom he had a homosexual relationship. Could it be that a prozine editor is the real person for whom they are meant?

Looking at the disgustingly ingratiating tone in the sonnets, I am wont to agree with your conclusion.

Jack Herman hunts for funny hats to wear, but I'm different. I buy conventional dress hats, the felt kind, and they turn into funny hats about the third or fourth time I wear them. I was reading just the other day some articles written by newspaper correspondents who covered the first Bayreuth festival of Wagner operas in 1876. A New York Tribune writer might have been talking about fandom in one paragraph:

"Never have I seen so many short-sighted people with long hair and loud hats gathered together in one place. Why is it that Art Work of the Future goes in company with spectacles, long hair and funny headgear?"

If you insist on buying conventional dress hats, you must expect some problems.

Since all knowledge is contained in fanzines, I'm forced to believe this Minneapolis in '73 disclaimer of Skylab responsibility. But I'm anxious to see if the committee is able to think up a convincing proof that the time travel sub-committee is blameless in the more recent phenomenon - the total disappearance of a newly launched satellite which was meant for telecasts. If anyone in Minneapolis starts to promise special closed circuit facilities to con-goers, or up-to-date reports on other cons being staged elsewhere in the same weekend in 1973, or anything else suspicious, it will take more than one press report for alibiing purposes...

DERRICK ASHBY I have developed a scale
PO BOX 175 of four in quality of
SOUTH MELBOURNE fanzine production, each
VICT 3205 being named for a faned
AUST. who epitomizes the stage
for me.

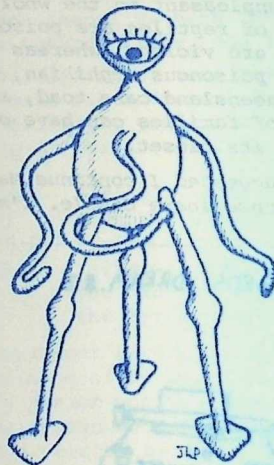
- (1) Bangsund (The artist)
- (2) Edmonds (The craftsman)
- (3) Ortlieb (The workmanlike)
- (4) Crud.

There are so many types of crud that it would be unkind to single any one kind out.

The difference between Banger and Leigh is in the approach each makes to the business. Both are technically good, very good in fact, but John treats mimeo reproduction as an artform. He pays attention to layout, for example, and probably agonizes over the right place to put an illo (when he uses them). To Leigh, I think, it's merely a way of duplicating the written word. The gap between his work and that of thousands of

other faneds lies, I think, in the thirteen years or so that he has been producing fanzines. (Mind you, looking at John Foyster, clearly in some cases thirteen years is not long enough.) Most people start out with crud, and quickly move into class (3). Those who never leave the crud stage don't really care what the finished product looks like. There are degrees in stage (3) as well.

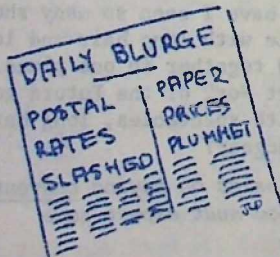
What makes a fanzine good has little to do with technical production though. The main thing isn't content either, but style. Some of the best

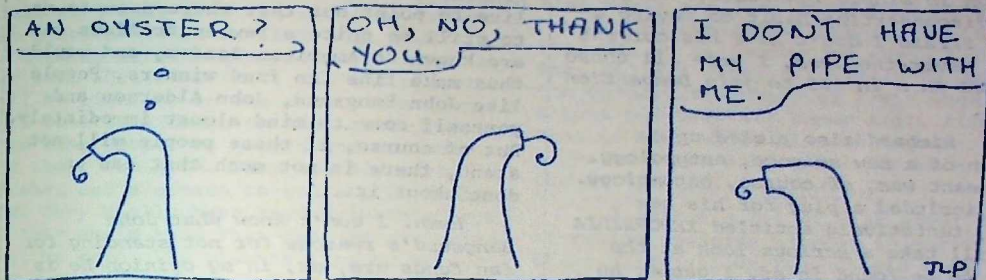


fanzines don't actually have much content to speak of. Leigh Edmonds puts a certain amount of effort into his 'zines. That same amount of effort put in by somebody else would probably produce something totally unmemorable. Leigh has style.

Derrick goes on to mention Capek's *WAR WITH THE NEWTS*, and then complains about *THE WHITE DRAGON*, and the way he finds that the dragon series does tend to drag on. (My pun, I'm afraid). He seems to find *THE WHITE DRAGON* lacking in structure. One of these days I'll write an article explaining how I think *THE WHITE DRAGON* acts to cap off the dragon novels. Not yet though. I've got a bit more thinking yet to do, and besides, there's the possibility of more dragon novels to come I gather.

FANED'S DREAM # 4





Q36 B

ANN NICHOLS
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Your PEPPERMINT FROG PRESS logo reminds me of a particularly obnoxious little boy my brother knew. He told me of an afternoon spent at this boy's house where the monster would use frogs instead of damsels for his toy train's tracks.

Yet more evidence of U.S. atrocities to frogs. I also recall an item on frog baseball in the National Lampoon. No wonder frogs are so ill thought of if kids are brainwashed into mistreating them.

One story of frog against man (The frogs win) is "The Pond" by Nigel Kneale in Lee Wright and Richard Sheehan's WAKE UP SCREAMING.

I read about the earth being round but appearing flat in early grade school. Next recess I stood on the playground and looked for myself. The world looked quite round to me, but then, I was living in the centre of an extinct volcano at the time.

Ann also sent a couple of triffid rhymes which I will pass on to John.

RICHARD FAULDER
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One can only wonder what horrors are in store for the future with all those little plastic pyramids being used by people futilely trying to sharpen their razor blades. Little do they know that suspended within them are millions of germs, harmless to us, but

deadly to our remote descendants (Well, other people's I don't intend to have any.) One quibble though. Dr Velocipede did not explain what causes the effect. Does he accept the popular theory that they function as focussing devices for mysterious Orgone Energy.

I haven't seen Manuel in a while, however, I feel perfectly safe in predicting that, if the Orgone Theory is the popular one, then he will disagree with it.

At first glance the article on firestone seems plausible, but there is one thing that bothers me. Not the chemistry - I doubt that mine's up to commenting on that - but the geology. Both rock phosphate and coal or oil are formed as the result of biological activity. On earth, the rock phosphate has been formed from fossilized bird droppings, so that, while its formation was fairly rapid, geologically speaking, the agents responsible for its formation were fairly late arrivals on the geological scene. Coal and oil were formed from swamp vegetation and marine organisms respectively, which existed at a much earlier point in geological time, but their formation took much longer. All of this isn't really an argument against the formation of firestone in the way Dr Blackburn suggests, but it does imply that, whatever Pern looks like, it is unlikely to be a geologically young planet.

Richard takes me to task for not providing an address for the Australian agent for Denvention, Carey Handfield.

The reason is simple ignorance. Carey has the disconcerting habit of moving a lot. I'm afraid I don't have his current address. Never-the-less, I urge all those interested in A in '83 to join Denvention a.s.a.p..

Richard also picked up my invention of a new science, entymology. What I meant was, of course, entomology. Richard included a plug for his new fanzine, tentatively entitled XENOPHILIA which will take a serious look at the biology to be found in sf. I gather he is looking for articles and artwork.

(May I also point out to faneds that Richard is an excellent loccer and well worth a sample of your fanzine.)

general thrust of his arguments. I'd like to point out that there seem to me to still be quite a few Australians who are known to American fandom, and would thus make fine fan fund winners. People like John Bangsund, John Alderson and yourself come to mind almost immediately. But of course, if these people will not stand, there is not much that can be done about it.

Hmmm. I don't know what John Bangsund's reasons for not standing for fan funds are, as, in my opinion he is the person most due for the trip overseas. My reasons are simple. I see the fan funds as providing the means for well established fans who are too poor to get over seas otherwise. This doesn't

TRIFFIDS by John Packer.



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I notice a "?" against one of the artists of the Chocolate Cake strip. I'm not sure, but I suspect that the artist in question is Randy Bathurst. I haven't

seen too much of Randy's work, but those three "Boxes" resemble what else I've seen of his.

This was confirmed by a PhoC (Phone-call of Comment) from Keith Curtis.

It's nice to know that you agree with Mike Glicksohn's comments on the fan funds. In recent months I've seen his views expressed in many fanzines, and his views don't seem to have won him many friends in-so-far as he has tended to question the validity of some recent candidates to be candidates. I have tended to think that he is wrong when discussing the validity of those particular candidates, but do agree with the

apply to me. John Alderson, has, of course, already stood for GUFF, and I hope he'll stand for the next Aussie Duff race as there is no one I'd rather see out of the country. I won't embarrass Irwin by quoting his reply to Jane Taubman's letter in the previous issue.

JOAN DICK
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There was a quiet giggle at "Secrets Of The Pyramids Revealed". Pyramid people are one of my soapbox items.

People who live in Pyramid houses have heads to match. To be serious for a moment though, I never watch the soap operas on afternoon t.v.. My one dread is that one day I will end up in a two bed ward in hospital along with a woman who watches the serials. That would be my idea of hell. Anyway, I do watch the Mike Walsh Show, and one day they had

a Queensland couple who live in a pyramid house well away from the coast to escape the seaborn disasters that will occur in 1982 when, according to John Gribbin, in his book JUPITER EFFECT, all the planets will be lined up on one side of the sun with drastic effects on the earth. People like that should be gagged and put away for their own good. They are disaster freaks, and a menace to society. I doubt that they really have read Gribbin's book or they would know that that is not quite what he says. The planets line up this way every 179 years, and we are still surviving on earth. At the closest approach, the outer planets will be lined up at 60' to one another. There is very much the same effect much more frequently when Venus and Mercury line up between the sun and the earth. See, I'm on my soapbox again, only this time I have bricks under it.

But Joan, you're a science fiction reader! You're supposed to believe in ufos and all that sort of stuff. I mean, everyone laughed at the scientists in the film WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE, but they were right.

DON BOYD (Don, by the way, sent PO BOX 19 this letter on Hollow SPIT JUNCTION Earth Society letterhead N.S.W. 2088 paper.) AUST.

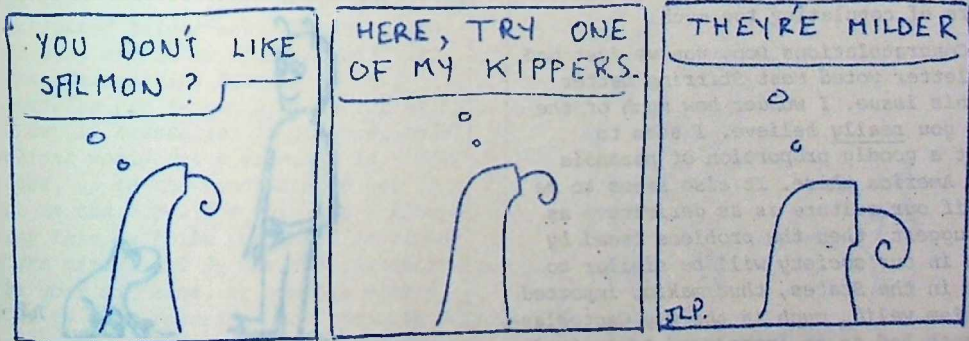
Really old bean, the inherent internal contradictions of Dave Blackburn's Flat Earth theories should be immediately apparent to all two-fisted fighters of do-badders. Denny Lien is skirting dangerously close to the truth -- I mean THE TRUTH -- when he says a

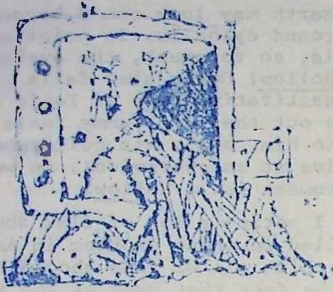
Flat Earth may look round because we have round eyeballs. In point of fact, that is, so to speak, the eyeball is... yes, Hollow! Denny also fails to make the quantitative leap of logic when he points out that his tummy feels firm and flat to him, while his colleagues perceive it as spheroidal. As we know, the stomach is... Hollow!

I notice a lot of flak about the so-called feminism problem in American SF. I think all Oz fans should keep in mind the fact that many of the things American culture flings up represent the essentially immature. America and Americans seem to be culturally immature, but the devastating power of the American media makes any fad seem like a world-wide TRUTH, ie hippism, drugs, Bob Dylan, Vietnam etc.. Whatever happened to all that schlock eh? To Aussies, what's happening in Timor is as morally umbrage-takeability-producing as the Yanks in Vietnam, but America is such a population giant lacking in subtlety or diplomatic skills that any country they try to impose their will on will end up like Vietnam. The British and Aussies in the Malaya Emergency made up, with local forces, about 400,000 men -- comparable to the number of Yanks in Vietnam, but we won that toss with minimal civilian death/napalm/torture, whereas the Yanks made a MESS -- and lost to boot.

As Aussies we should be careful adopting American ideas on feminism. The convict women who came out on the hulks were tough eggs, and I think the Aussie woman is accepted by men in a different manner to that in which the American

TRIFFIDS by John Packer





woman is accepted. American feminist ideas, on the face of it, seem as worthwhile as Labor/Union ideas on women here, but the mentality behind it is basically imperialist -- they want you to accept their culture, have it stuffed down your neck, and have your own culture wiped off the face of the earth.

I think we will have to wait fifteen years to look back on American feminism to see who the fakes are and who are the genuine achievers. SF as literature should be the record of a nation's attitudes towards the unknown and its own future e.g., in France SF is essentially a facet of protest. A researcher looking at Oz fanzines from a hundred years hence might find it worthy of note that hula-hoops/feminism et al have peak curves in lock-step with American fads and fallacies. Why don't Oz fanzines have peak curves about Aborigines, Timor, Antarctic rights and the need for higher birth rates and longer leisure hours? There could be nothing more stupid than ZPG and the assorted American idiots we've had visiting our shores for lectures to tell us of the dangers of copulating too much.

Congratulations Don, you've just had your letter voted Most Stirring Letter for this issue. I wonder how much of the above you really believe. I seem to detect a goodly proportion of paranoia about America there. It also seems to me that if our culture is as derivative as you suggest, then the problems faced by women in our society will be similar to those in the States, thus making imported feminism valid, much in the way Cactoblastis moth had to be introduced to control prickly pear.

JACK R HERMAN
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AUST

I would like to take umbrage at the remarks of Mike Glicksohn and the interpretation placed on them by you.

I do not feel that because we are running low on people whose names are well known overseas that we are, necessarily, running low on possible DUFF candidates. One of the problems of our isolation as a fan community is that, unless one is a publishing fan, or so loud that one gets into others' zines with some regularity, one's name remains unknown outside the inner group of AussieCon and apa fans.

But the very act of publishing is, itself, so expensive, especially when trying to hit overseas readers as well, that it is out of the reach of some, if not most fan, who find it better to waste their money on things like books, houses, stereos, cars, cats etc.

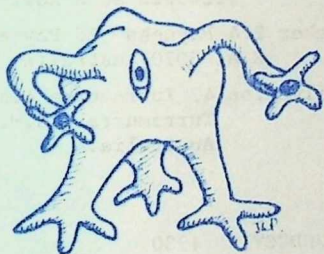
The problem in this country is not that we are running out of DUFF candidates, since there are a number of fan I can think of who do a lot of work in Aussie fandom for cons, A83, apas, clubs etc and who have never been to an Os con but that there are not enough fan here graduating from apa hacking, letter writing etc to editing their own zines or even getting articles published in others.

Perhaps fan funds should be able to work another way so that emphasis is taken off the need to be a pubbing fan. Anyone who is rich enough to do a zine and post it over to the States is, arguably rich enough to stop it, save the money involved, and pay his/her own way.



My point remains, however, that DUFF etc candidates should not necessarily be zine editors, and that other methods should be used to make sure that the voting fen know who the candidates are. Ken and Linda have produced a DUFF News-letter in the States, and are using it in an attempt to let the American fen know who these Aussies are. Also, perhaps the nominators of candidates should take on an increased responsibility in the race - helping promote 'their' candidate, letting others know about these people etc.. This is especially true if the candidate is a genuine 'charity' case.

The other things thish that caught my eye were the beginnings of the Triffid/Schnozz wars and the punful space story. Packer continues to turn out a continuously high standard of humour - the nursery strips being a new high - but I was really taken by Jane's shot and John's replies. More power to them both.



The nice thing about editing a letter-col is getting first shot. Sorry Jack, but I think that much of your letter qualifies as unmitigated balderdash. The intention of DUFF was, and in my opinion still is, to foster friendships between the U.S. and Australia. It is not a prize for being a nice guy in Australia. If it were, only Australians would get a vote. It is, therefore, up to the candidate to get support in the U.S.. The only way I know of doing this is to be published in zines which are circulated in the U.S., whether that be your own zine, or someone else's. To refer to your remarks about the cost of producing a fanzine, perhaps DUFF could be seen as a reward for those fans who

care enough about such cverseas contacts to put producing a fanzine above creature comforts like cats and stereos. I will grant you that those of us who can afford both shouldr't really be standing.

Naturally I have no objection to frequent contributors to overseas fanzines being nominated. That is a way of establishing contacts between Australia and the U.S.. It doesn't cost as much as putting out your own fanzines either. We could also do with a few good letterhacks, other than Eric Lindsay.

When it comes to the crunch though, the voters themselves make the decision and so all this natter doesn't really have any effect.

WAHF
Harry Andruschak, Sheryl Birkhead, Jean Weber, Roy Ferguson, Terry Garey, Greg Hills, Ralph Silverton, Peter Toluzzi, Rob McGough (Who contributed a lovely story which I will use in Q36 D), Julia Curtis, Joanna Masters, Leigh Edmonds, Bruce Gillespie, and no doubt others whom I've forgotten to list here.

This might also be the time to apologise for the non-appearance of THE WEST OF MINSTER'S LIBRARY 5. Real Soon Now.

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 || CONTRIBUTORS ||
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(My thanx to David Grigg who was
 responsible for suggesting plastic
 bags for stencil covers.)

A PEPPERMINT FROG PRESS PRODUCTION 1980

Triffids by John Packer.

