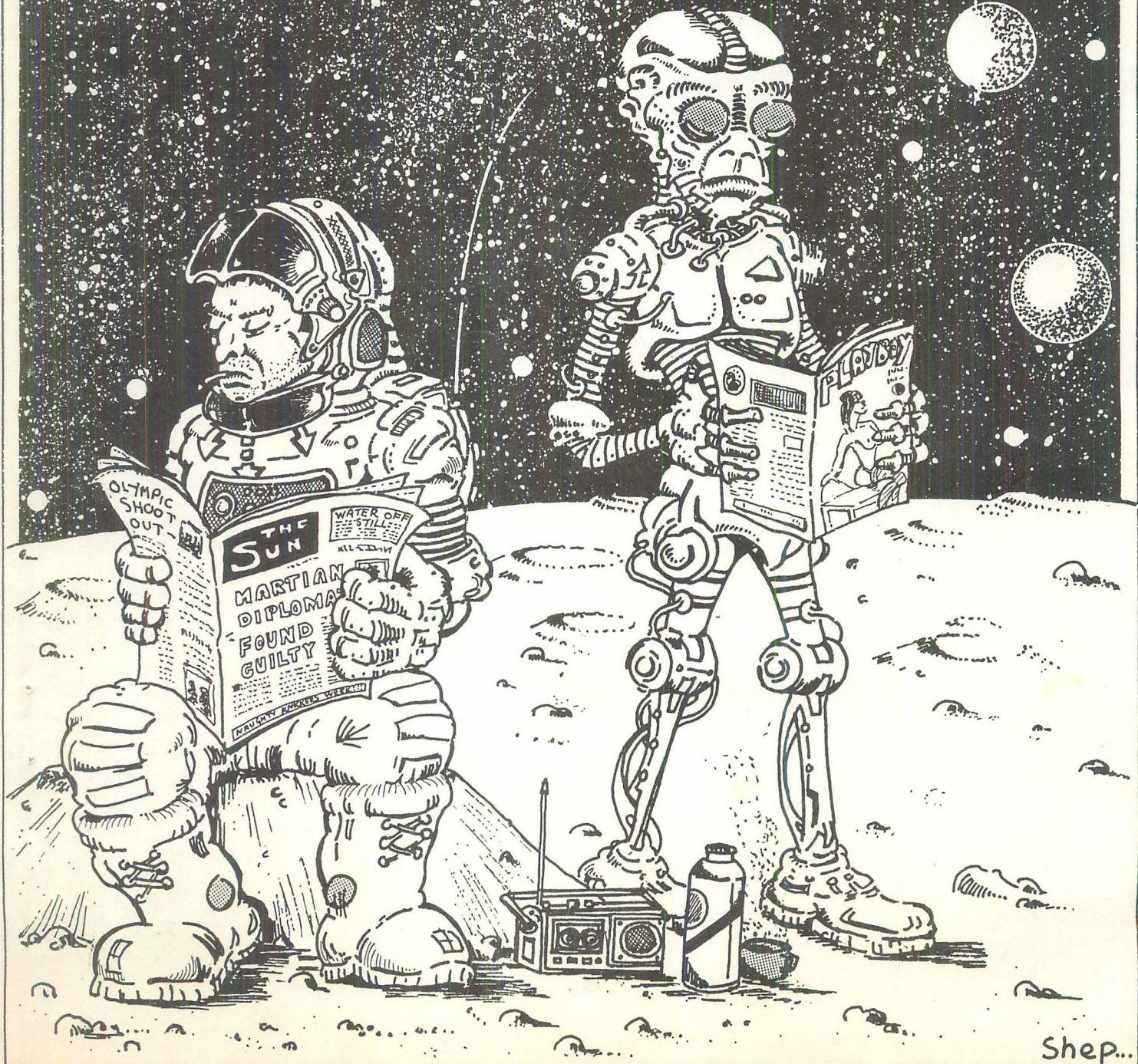


SIKANDER



Shep...

sikander

.....
SIKANDER, a fanzine of general interest, is edited and published by Irwin Hirsh at his new home: 2/416 Dandenong Rd, Caulfield North, Victoria 3161, AUSTRALIA. This issue is dated August, 1985, and is the tenth issue. Sikander is available for written and drawn contributions, a letter of comment, your fanzine in trade, Old Fanzines, or \$3. This fanzine encourages your contribution to fanzine fandom, in general, and to this fanzine, in particular. Further, this fanzine encourages your support of DUFF, GUFF, TAFF, and FANZZ. \$2 of every copy of this issue sold will be donated to these 4 fan funds. You betcha.

Our motto: We Sometimes Close.

.....

CAPRICE

Irwin (Ed)

The oddest things amuse different people. One of the things that amuse me is the "Why you got this fanzine" sections of some of the fanzines I receive in trade. I publish a fanzine which is available for trade, and so do a fair number of you. And somewhere in there a little energy transfer occurs, the Post Office does its work, and we're reading each other's fanzines. And yet, people find it necessary to explain what it is that I did to get their fanzine, in a style which resembles that of a mathematics teacher explaining a point of simple mathematical theory to the students of a high school remedial mathematics class.

But then I realise that, of late, the gap between issues of my fanzine is quite large, and perhaps I'm being reminded that I do, in fact, publish a fanzine and that it is about time I did something further for fanzine fandom. Apart from writing 2 or 3 locs in the meantime the last thing I did for fanzine fandom was the last issue of this fanzine - just a mere seventeen months ago. I trust your contribution to fanzine fandom has been better.

QUOTE CARDS It was restarted with ATom's efficiency. When preparing for the last issue I decided I would like to have some of the articles illustrated, and sent copies of some of the articles to a number of artists. Marc Ortlieb's article I sent to ATom, who responded post haste to my request. I imagine Arthur received my letter on a Friday, and on the next Monday took the trip to the Post

Office to send a package to me. Something like that, anyway.

I certainly felt guilty when, quite a few months later, I airmailed a copy of SIKANDER #9 and 9.5 to ATom, together with the originals of the illos and a letter of thanks. Arthur was quite pleased with the way I had presented his illos, and wrote to me saying so. He also congratulated me for the overall layout of the issues, and included a few more illos for my use.

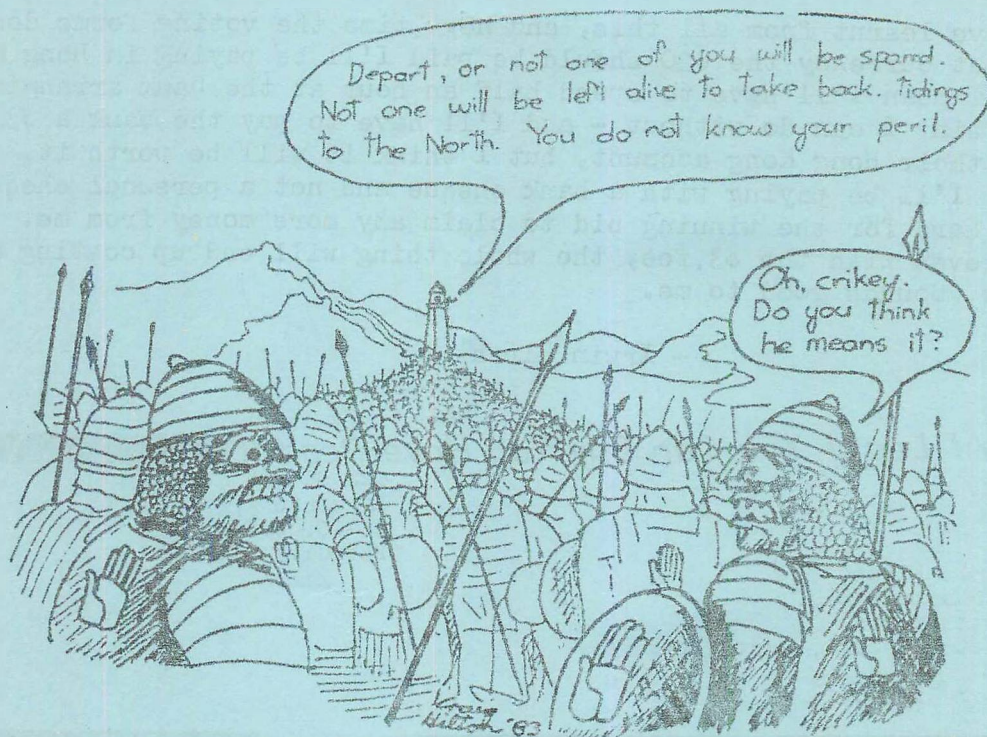
And at the bottom of the envelope there were some "KTF Quotecards", produced by Terry Hill and his mates of Kent TruFandom. These are small pieces of cardboard, about 3 cm x 5 cm, on which are typed a small lino-type remark. After finding amusement in some of the remarks it dawned on me that what I was holding was something that had become extinct about a quarter of a century ago. But at this point I'll let Harry Warner, Jr take up the story (from his history of '50s fandom A WEALTH OF FABLE):

Quotecards were fandom's answer to the short snorter currency which United States forces popularized during World War II. Soldiers had collected names on dollar bills. Fans, who on the average were richer in ideas and poorer in greenbacks, invented quotecards for names to be written on. Normally they were small rectangles of paper or thin cardboard, containing a brief, bright, typed or duplicated remark from a fannish or mundane source. They circulated by hand or by correspondence from one fan to another, picking up another autograph each time they changed hands. The fan who wrote his name into the last empty space was expected to mail the quote-card back to the person who had started it on its travels.

This quote comes from a chapter titled "The Fathers of Invention", in which Harry described the origins of terms like FIAWOL and FIJAGH, Trufan and Fakefan, and fannish items like Postsarcads. Some of what Harry describes are still in use, some not. Quotecards, as I've said, have not been much in use. Until now. The idea of the cards being passed along a traceable path is something that appeals to me, as a souvenir of a time and line in fandom. I don't know why Arthur didn't sign the cards he passed on to me, but I've signed them and will be randomly sending them out with this issue. If you get one please pass it on via your next piece of fannish mail.

THINGS THAT PISS ME OFF (A title borrowed from Jack Herman.) I've been a supporting member of all Worldcons from Seacon 79 on. I can't really say why as Worldcon publications, the greatest tangible benefit of being a supporting member, are not really of great interest, as they are designed to meet the needs of the attending member.

The other rights of the supporting member are a mixed bag. I've sometimes nominated and voted in the Hugos but I'm largely not interested in them and don't miss it when I don't nominate or vote. The



Worldcon Selection Site voting I am interested in and it has always been by voting that I've got my supporting membership. A couple of times I've strongly supported and voted for specific Worldcon bids, but usually it is a vote for what I see as the best bid, and with a sense of doing something that is important.

Some months ago the LACon 2 committee sent me the voting form for the 86 Site Selection, which I filled in and sent off with a cheque for \$20. This would have been in July and I expected that the next I'd hear about this would be when the winning bid sent me an acknowledgement that I am a supporting member of the 1986 Worldcon. I was, however, wrong on this assumption. Instead the first I heard was in early September, when I received notice from the bank that my cheque for \$20 had been cashed in Los Angeles for the Australian equivalent of 20 U.S. dollars, ie \$23.89. This would have been okay except that the voting form did not say in what currency the \$20 should be paid, and as far as I'm concerned I've been ripped off. I'm being charged \$23.89 for something which really should have cost me \$20 and I'm pissed off. If the voting form had said the voting fee was "US\$20" this would be different, and if this is what the voting organisers and bidding committees meant they should have said it. Just because Los Angeles, in which city the voting took place, and Atlanta, New York, and Philadelphia, the bidding cities, are all in the United States I don't think it reasonable to interpret the symbol "\$" to mean "US\$" in a World organisation. It is this sort of action that goes a long way towards adding truth to statements that the World Science Fiction Convention is only let out of USA on sufferance of US fandom.

Anyway, I've learnt from all this, and next time the voting forms don't mention what currency the \$20 should be paid I'll be paying in Hong Kong \$. It will mean I'll have to spend half an hour at the bank arranging it - something I can do without - and I'll have to pay the bank a \$3 fee for using their Hong Kong account, but I think it will be worth it. For one thing, I'll be paying with a bank cheque and not a personal cheque, making it hard for the winning bid to claim any more money from me. Also, and even with the \$3 fee, the whole thing will end up costing me about A\$7. Sounds good to me.

- Irwin Hirsh

At Least You Can Say You Have Read It

423 Summit Avenue,
Bagerstown, Maryland,
21740, U.S.A.
February 13, 1980.

Irwin Hirsh,
279 Dorian Road,
South Yarra,
Victoria 3141, Australia.

Dear Irwin:

letters

Mike Glicksohn
508 Windermere Ave
Toronto
Ontario M6S 3L6
CANADA

It's somehow appropriate that as I enjoy the first couple of days of my summer holidays after 13 years as a high school teacher I'm reading about your trials and tribulations in attempting to join the ranks of those of us in the ed biz. I hope you're successful because,

as I've often said, I can't imagine a better way to earn a living, assuming one has to go out and work at all. Your stories of life as a would-be teacher are far more entertaining than anything I could dredge up from 14 years ago. We had no pinball or video machines to distract us and I didn't even discover that there was a student lounge until about the last month of the one year course I was taking. Just as well, though: I was able to concentrate on assignments and practice teaching instead of coffee and bridge and consequently had my choice of several teaching jobs when the year was done.

The game you call "Cubiod" is known as "Q-Bert" over here. Unfortunately it doesn't seem to be all that popular and there aren't many around. I say unfortunately because it's one of the few video games I can play for more than 20 seconds without having to reach for another quarter. I can sympathize with your exasperation with visiting high school students though. Whenever I go to a downtown pinball arcade invariably the experts are all teenagers who must have skipped a lot of classes to get as good as they are. As a teacher I should be worried

about that but I figure they'd probably be poor students anyway and perhaps the skills they learn this way will help them more than anything I could show them about the quadratic formula.

There is something about this issue that makes me more aware than usual of the fact that Australia is a foreign country. What, for example, is 3RRR? of VFL? or Princes Park? Perhaps you should provide a glossary for overseas readers so we don't feel totally out of things. For that matter, who's John Foyster?

Enjoyable slice-of-life piece from Marc but little one can say about it. I've met him, so I enjoyed reading it. To a total stranger, it may have had little appeal. The one thing I was amused to note was the apparently universal nature of staff meetings at schools. I rarely pay much attention to what's going on (years of experience have taught me when to recognize an important debate) and use the time to mark tests, do lessons or struggle with the London Sunday Times cryptic crosswords. That's why it always annoys me when I get elected staff meeting chairman because then I have to at least pretend I'm hearing everything that's going on.

When the harsh realities of the world outside science fiction intrude into fandom it can be a rude awakening. Such was the result of reading John Alderson's article on surviving the drought. I'd read about the drought, of course, but newspaper stories, no matter how well written, just don't give immediacy to stories taking place halfway around the world. When someone I've actually talked to and drunk with puts down the effects he's suffered personally, suddenly I'm forced to realize that there are a lot more important things than rising postal rates in many of our lives. I hope John has recovered by the time Aussiecon Two arrives and can attend and bring his delightful if rough-edged version of Australian hospitality to the people lucky enough to be there.

Eric Mayer's article is easily the highlight of the issue and perpetuates his reputation as one of the great unsung writers of contemporary fandom. As fascinating and important as Ted White's epic contribution was, it's writing like this piece by Eric that will best stand the test of time and have the greatest chance of being reprinted somewhere down the line. It has nothing to do with sf or even sf fandom, of course, but its universal appeal is obvious and the fact that Eric is a superb stylist simply adds to the impact of the piece. Eric has written about something we've all experienced and done so in a way that makes me envious that I couldn't have handled it that well. If/when they call for nominations for the best fanwriting of 1984, this article is an absolute must for a nomination.

Unlike Eric, I had little contact with elderly relatives and I've often regretted that greatly. I left England at the age of 11 with one grandparent dead before I was capable of remembering him. The other 3 all died shortly after we left, so I never knew them at a time when I might have benefitted from talking to them about the past and about our

family past. A great loss, and perhaps that's one reason I was so impressed with Eric's reminiscences. From all reports my paternal grandfather was quite a character, too: hobnobbed with both high society and the London underworld, made and lost several fortunes and generally led a life that I'd have been fascinated to hear about by the time I was 15 or 16. Regretfully, I never had that opportunity and I'll never be able to write a piece like Eric's. I'm glad he had that opportunity and chose to share it with us though and I hope that someday he gets the recognition he deserves.

Skel's letter was a remarkable piece of work. I'm a longtime admirer of Paul's fanwriting ability but he excels himself with this loc. The imagery is splendid, the writing crisp and accurate and the comments insightful. Congratulations on starting off the issue with such a tour de force.

Eve Harvey should realize that winning an award can have exactly the opposite effect to that she describes. The satisfaction of knowing you've reached the pinnacle coupled with the need to at least match if not exceed the quality of previous issues can often result in the demise of the award-winner. Not that I speak from experience, understand: I'd folded my fanzine before it got its award.

I also think that Eve slightly missed the point of some of Ted's comments: to me it was fairly evident that he was reviewing a certain type of fanzine that happened to be found in Australia. He wasn't talking about comic fanzines or media fanzines or other fringe publications, rather he was addressing the subject of your basic science fiction fanzine, be it fannish or otherwise and he went on to discuss his thoughts about what that sort of publication should/could be. From what I know of Ted, he'd be the first to admit to quality in a publication that he didn't happen to like but that wasn't what the article was about.

I disagree with Joy Hibbert on some points, agree on others. Her comments on fanart don't make much sense to me. I happen to think Bill Rotsler is possibly one of the few authentically Major Talents (I was tempted to type "genii" but people react badly to such terms) that fandom has produced (or who has chosen to showcase his work within fandom, take your pick) but that doesn't make his fanart the only good fanart around. As for female fan artists, Alicia Austin is one of the 2 or 3 most respected fanartists of all time. Currently ones sees great acceptance of and recognition for the work of Joan Hanke-Woods and Victoria Poyser, both eminently female the last time I met them. Sure there are more male artists than female but there are 6 times as many male fans as females so what would Joy expect? It's talent, not sex, that accounts for the popularity (or lack of it) that artists enjoy. On the other hand, Joy is most correct in observing that anyone with a shred of human dignity would be appalled by the concept of rape. So why did she state, previously, that it's important to constantly reconsider matters such as the motivations of rapists "for each new group of people

to become feminists"? The intimation would appear to be that only feminists care about such matters. Now unless Joy is using the word "feminist" as a synonym for "humanist", I suggest she is guilty of blatant sexism... Tsk, tsk.

((I'd explain 3RRR and VFL to you, but I always thought that, in fan-history terms, it doesn't matter if the content of an interlineation doesn't connect with the reader's sphere of understanding. Also, Mike, I was going to rap you on the knuckles for not knowing anything of the fan achievements of John Foyster, but then I remembered that he is a member of that exclusive club, The Forgotten People of Fandom: Past Worldcon Chairpeople. // I think Joy Hibbert has already answered you, on your last point - she did say "group of people".))

Terry Carr
11037 Broadway Terrace
Oakland
CA 94611, USA

SIKANDER keeps getting better and better; with #9 (and #9.5), I think it's reached a level where not even RATAPLAN is necessarily a better fanzine. You've kept your always-neat typed format and added a lot of very good artwork this time, with ATom taking top honors of course but Brad Foster and Jeanne Gomoll contributing very nice stuff too. In fact, the production now strikes me as so nearly ideal that the great prevalence of typos actually comes as something of a shock. Considering your evident care for the physical aspects of your fanzine, I'm surprised you don't proofread the stencils and correct those errors - such an effort would be, as you say of other pre-duplication aspects of fanpublishing, comparatively quite easy, and it would certainly remove a lot of wincing from the experience of reading SIKANDER.

The written contents seem to me to have continued their upward trend, too; evidently your thoughtful efforts at soliciting articles from particular writers rather than just trusting the luck of the draw is paying off. Eric Mayer's "Aunt Bird" strikes me as easily the best piece in #9; it's very well conceived, interesting, moving, and certainly nicely written... one of Eric's best pieces, in fact, and that that's saying something.

But the rest of the material is quite readable too. I suspect your editorial is a fine piece... I say "suspect" because so much of it is non-translucent to most people from outside Australia that I can't be dead certain. But even to such as me it sums up a period of your life very well, and I admire the nonlinear, mosaic style of composition: one that few fanwriters try, and that's not surprising, because it's not easy to bring off; you do it quite well, though. And it's good to see you giving yourself more room in your own fanzine.

The best of the rest seems to be Marc Ortlieb's article about a typical day in his life. Not a great piece, really, but interesting and, again, the structure is well conceived. While I can see why Marc was a bit embarrassed at receiving so much acclaim for his fanac - he does have

his limitations - I can also see why he got that acclaim. Give him a few years of normal improvement and he could well turn into another Bangsund - which is to say, the best.

The Letter Column Supplement is interesting not just because you had Ted White's incendiary article last issue but also because you chose well the letters to publish. Among the selection here, I find it interesting mainly that all the non-Aussies seem to agree with Ted that Australian fanzines are seldom among their favorites. I also find it interesting to see that the Aussie response seems to be that they're not directing their fanac to overseas fans but only to their countrymen. In that connection, I notice that you and Leigh Edmonds and Leanne Frahm don't think too much of Oz fanzines either. If that's the case, I can only wonder what John Foyster might have to say: he's nobody's fool, and he can be biting in his comments. If he got the last issue and (according to the WAHP listing) didn't comment, then I suspect it must have been because he didn't want to be unnecessarily nasty, and kept his silence trusting others to comment for him.

In general, I found the responses to Ted's article to be rather nitpickish when they disagreed with him. (I definitely include my own letter in this judgement.) There seems to be a strain of defensiveness in many of these letters, which I find interesting particularly because during my visit to Australia 5 years ago I discovered the "cultural cringe", the automatic notion of most Australian fans that their contributions to the field (of sf, but also of fandom) were second-rate simply because they were Australian and therefore they were out on the edge of civilization, unable to keep up with new developments. I thought that was a silly notion at the time, and I still do: the slowness of international mail may keep you a few months behind the rest of the English-speaking world, and sf books may get to you a year or more late after they're published in England and shipped to Australia, but so what? During the glory days of Oz fanpublishing, I didn't notice any Australians feeling they were severely handicapped by being temporally behind the rest of us; on the contrary, writers like Foyster, Bangsund, and Turner made their criticisms from the standpoint of pure intelligence, which isn't affected by the comparatively small temporal lag in Australia. But those people, except in AUSTRALIAN SF NEWS, seldom contribute anymore to the international sf/fan world. That situation was true even when I visited Australia, but I hadn't quite come to realize that at the time.

I think now that the "cultural cringe" applies to current Oz fanzines and fanwriters in the sense that the present Oz fanwriters, having forgotten or more likely never seen the contributions of their forebears, are gathering together defensively and telling everyone else, "We're talking to each other about our own world; if you don't like it, too bad". That would be fine with me if the products that came were up to snuff; but they aren't. Shape up, Australia; you've got a worldcon to put on in a couple of years.

That 1985 Worldcon is going to be interesting, I think. When you last did a worldcon, in 1975, you still had the remnants of the fandom that could challenge any fandom anywhere, but do you have it now? I think maybe not... but hang in there, gang, and by 1985 or certainly after that, you'll come back to prominence in the world fan-scene. And then we may cringe a bit.

Michael Hailstone
PO Box 193
Woden
NSW 2606

Whatever Ted said doesn't matter greatly to me; what I find rather sadly amusing is the reaction to it. While an Australian can criticize Australia and Australians and get away with at least being ignored, as soon as a foreigner makes such criticism, why there's a national outcry. This reminds me a little of the comment made by some Japanese about Australia back in 1976 or 1977: that our industry was inefficient and we were a lot of slackers always on strike. From a Japanese viewpoint this comment was of course quite fair and true. What annoyed the hell out of me was the way my toadying fellow-countrymen and women were going around saying: Isn't it dreadful that they should think that of us in Japan?

The reason why there's so much outrage and indignation when a foreigner like Ted White makes some damning criticism of something Australian, lies in the old cultural cringe: because a foreigner has said it, it must be true, because all foreigners know better than we hicks do, they are all much wiser and sophisticated. I don't know why you deliberately solicited his comments; no doubt it's interesting to get an outsider's view, but I have this nasty suspicion that it's part of the cringing obsession with trying to measure up to "overseas stabards".

((No. It isn't. Ted's article is the first in a series of articles looking at Australian fanzines. Each article is to be written by a different person, in the hope of gathering together differing viewpoints and opinions. And some will be Aussies. // And besides, I don't regard non-Aussies who are sent our fanzines as "outsiders".))

Ian Covell
2 Copgrove Close
Berwick Hills
Middlesbrough
Cleveland TS3 7BP
U.K.

Reading Marc Ortlieb's essay I was struck by the thought that life is what we do when we're not working. Come to think of it, life is what we do when we're not doing anything else. Living is being squeezed into the spaces between activity. I'm sure you know what I mean. Hope so, because I can't explain it...

I wonder what amusement can be derived - sic Alderson - from the note that the UK is going through a drought at the moment? This sceptred isle needs only about a fortnight of sun to dry up all its reservoirs (most of them; one has sunk so low, you can now see the village it drowned to come into existence), and we've had the fortnight of sun, so now we've got drought regulations in force - fines of up to £400 for

using water 'wrongly'. Probably imprisonment if this government gains any more power...

Then comes Eric Mayer. Love his and Kathy's mag, and he's just as good here. I keep telling him he could write fiction with only slight adjustments, but he has obviously decided to leave such endeavours until later in life. We lose so much and so many to time, people and things. I've worked in a place where many old people came, and it was at a time when time-binding, the idea of The Past had become fascinating ("There was a world beforeme!"), so I talked to them about their lives. I can remember the frissons of astonishment; one woman was born in the 1880s, many in the 1890s. The youngsters were born in this century! I remember their soft voices talking about their first meetings with cars, with planes, gods, even the radio. Man on the Moon? Supersonic flight? High-rise blocks? Motorways? Movies? Records? In less than their lifetime, life itself has become impossibly complex, incredibly dependent on unseen forces and anonymous people. There hadn't been any world wars, but the American Civil War was only a few years gone, neither women nor blacks had the vote... That's on this side of the world, what was happening in Australia...

Diane Fox
PO Box 1194
North Sydney
NSW 2060

Terry Carr's comment about work anecdotes was most apt. I consider my job rather dull, yet there are plenty of odd, amusing, startling, and even somewhat SFnal things that have happened here. One time the ashes of someone's cremated relative was sent to the Department through the post. Even the tiresome task of opening mail (which is part of my job) has its rewards. One time an application for a study grant was sent in on a heart shaped piece of paper with a multitude of affectionate terms and alas, no return address whatsoever. Another time someone informed us that she had recently been divorced, on a small piece of fancy note paper on the top of which amidst birds and flowers were the words "I will cheerfully give thanks unto the Lord" or some similarly phrased religious sentiment, banal enough in itself but strikingly apt in context.

Shep Kirkbride
42 Green Lane
Carlisle
Cumbria CA2 7QA
U.K.

Your obvious addiction with video games gave me a few shivers. It's not so long ago that I was completely hooked on the damned things. It was only when I realised I was going to the pub and spending more money on them than alcohol that I snapped back to reality. Who said no good ever comes of the demon-drink. Gave me back my perspective it did. Give 'em up before it's too late Irwin, your doomed I tell ya!

Everyone, at sometime in their past, must have fond memories of an eccentric relative, but to bring them back to the surface as clear as Eric Mayer did with his "Aunt Bird" is quite an accomplishment. His obvious affection for Bird was evident in the way his article just rolled along uncaring of an audience. As if it was more for himself than anyone else. It was an honour that he should let us share those fond memories.

My own memories are of an aged uncle who lived with us for a while through my early schooldays in the '50s. He was to me, totally loveable, and took me everywhere with him. It was, through him that I was introduced to the wonder of cinema science fiction, and hence my involvement with fandom today... But on reflection, I can see that he was a bit of an eccentric to our neighbours. He was of very slight stature and always wore a large, flat, cloth cap and laced-up hob-nail boots, polished to perfection. His mode of dress only served to emphasise his lack of height. I often used to hear him referred to as that "strange, but friendly little man". As he was taller than me, I never quite understood why adults called him little. He was also known as 'Little Bob Do' (as in 'who') although his real name was Robert Slack. He was also respectfully religious and went to church twice every Sunday. Morning and night. I was the 'ear' to all his secrets, and always sworn to secrecy for fear of him being ridiculed by the adults.

As this was close on 30 years ago, and he died in the early '60s, I must finish by telling you of an incident a few years ago while I was working a late shift. I was talking to a cleaner, who wasn't really paying much attention. In fact, seemed a bit uneasy. On enquiring what was the matter, she said she was a bit upset because they had been fooling around with an ouji board. Naturally my inquisitive nature got the better of me and I had to have a go with the other cleaners who were still at the board. On sitting in the circle I got an immediate response when it was apparent that 'someone' had a message for me.

I decided to go along with it as I was convinced it was some sort of revenge trick by the girls for my flirting antics. As soon as I asked who it was that had the message for me the board hurriedly spelt out 'LAAL BOB DO'. That was enough for me. As I had moved quite a while ago from the town I was born and raised in, and no-one knew about my uncle, I was naturally shaken. Also, LAAL is broad Cumbrian dialect for LITTLE.

No-one could have known about my uncle as my memories have always been cherished but very private. I finally put it down to me own mind playing tricks on me... but I have never tried to find out what that message was.

The funny thing is, it hasn't lessened the memory of my strange little uncle. Indeed, if anything, it has strengthened his memory, affectionately.

My heart goes out to John Alderson. It doesn't always hold true that the other man's grass is always greener does it? I never thought I could enjoy an article on sheep farming, but I did. I look forward to seeing more by John Alderson.

 MIKE GLICKSOHN FOR DUFF

David Bratman
PO Box 662
Los Altos
CA 94022, USA

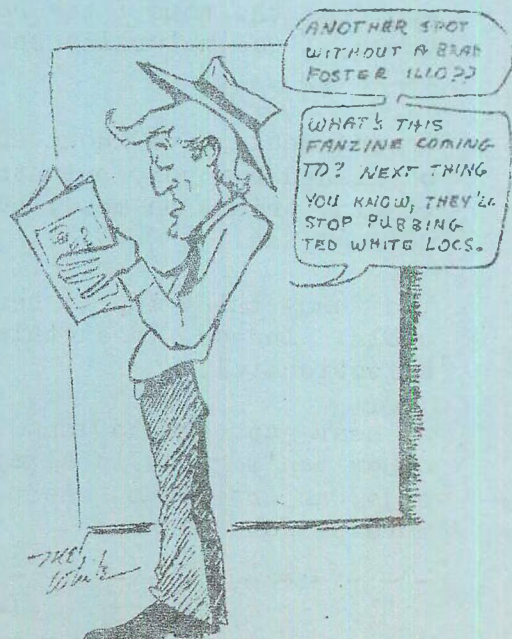
Since my address is a CoA according to the principle (doubtless inspired by Murphy's Law) enunciated in your editorial in SIKANDER #9, this letter should arrive just after you've sent out another issue.

Well, I can't help it. Not any more than I can help the people who, after standing stock-still for several minutes, will suddenly decide to move backwards just as I'm passing behind them. Nor any more than they can help me passing them just as they decide to step backwards. (This particular phenomenon has been happening to me so often lately that I can predict it. Why won't folks look before they walk?)

I enjoyed reading John Alderson's discussion of the finer points of drought. That a heavy rainfall on parched land doesn't do much good is obvious enough - it just runs off wherever excess water goes, as I recall - but it still needs pointing out. (Particularly to the gods, who seem by such shenanigans to be saying, "You want rain? OK, here, have some!") That there is a connection, however long and complex, between drought and rabbits eating up plant roots is, however, more ingenuous. There are people called "ecologists" who are paid to think up oddities like this.

There was a very famous drought here in California in the mid-70s, which spawned many dreary jokes about water conservation (which may be worse than rabbits), and a few years later I did some research on the connection between lack-of-rainfall (drought in the raw, you might say) and the public perception of drought, by the simple expedient of reading newspaper headlines and watching for the scare stories to begin. Our water supply here, it turned out, is good for about a year, because it took that long for the public press to notice that the rain wasn't falling any more. The second year, both the newspaper stories and the rainless days were on full blast. The third year, the rain started falling again - and that put a quick end to the public drought.

Apropos of the middle line on page 31, the latest collection of Pat Oliphaunt's editorial cartoons contains the artist's comments on some of them, and for one, a 1984-ish dig at President Reagan, the comment was that Ray Bradbury had written in to the paper and called this cartoon "stupid". Mr. Oliphaunt replies that Mr. Bradbury ought to stick to science fiction. I wonder what brought this on.



Harry Warner, Jr
423 Summit Ave
Hagerstown
MD 21740, USA

One of the few virtues I can claim in fandom is that I haven't caused any CoA troubles for fanzine editors since 1957.

I've never studied to become a teacher so I could sit back and marvel vicariously at the circumstances involved in your college experiences. You did a very skillful and effective job of juxtaposing the arcade gamemanship with your learning experiences. Some years ago, while I was scanning microfilms of local newspapers for some other purpose, I happened upon a curious article. It contained all the questions and problems which prospective teachers in the local school system were required to answer in order to obtain a teaching certificate. At the time (the final years of the 19th century or the 20th, I believe) this test was the only requirement for anyone who wanted to get a teaching job in local schools. It apparently didn't matter how the prospective teacher had acquired his knowledge or what other qualifications he might have had. And those extra exam items were very tough. They were mostly math, history, and basic chemistry and physics, as I remember them. I doubt if the typical person who graduates from college with teaching credentials today would get more than half of the answers right (and there were no multiple choice questions which might be answered correctly by guessing). Apparently school authorities thought at the time that the overwhelming qualification for a teacher was the ability to have in the head all the knowledge that was to be taught in classrooms, so the teacher wouldn't waste time or lose prestige by looking up facts in books in the presence of students.

Marc Ortlieb's article served as a neat counterpoint to your own material. Long ago I put into FAPA an article of just this sort. I don't know if anyone else was particularly interested in it, but it had the virtue of preserving for my own curiosity in the future much information about a typical day of reporting, after I'd forgotten with the passing of time and changing of duties just how things were at that time. I'm sure Marc will re-read his article and will marvel greatly at the things contained in it, shortly after the 21st century arrives and the way he lived in 1983 or 1984 has faded from memory.

John Alderson's contribution made wonderful reading. He has been concentrating so intently on theoretical and controversial topics for fanzines in recent years that I'd almost forgotten how entertaining he can be when he treats of personal experiences.

I'm sure most of us have had the basic experience Eric Mayer describes, that of finding older relatives becoming different, more interesting persons as the years pass and we grow more aware of their entire lives and personalities. Even at my exceptionally advanced age, I'm still making an occasional discovery about previous generations of my family. Just recently, for instance, I learned that I'm related to Florenz Ziegfeld, the famous Broadway producer. One of my cousins had a husband whose half-sister was Billie Burke, the movie star, and she was married for a time to Flo; I'd heard rumors of some such connection for a long

while but that cousin's granddaughter tracked down the family tree and told me about just how it was. Then there was the day not long ago when I was rummaging through a collection of very old monthly bulletins of the local chamber of commerce and was startled to find my father's name listed as editor of the first 2 or 3 issues. He'd never mentioned it to me.

In the letter column, one small matter struck me, the frequent references to grammer. Apparently some fans are confusing this word with grammar, when it really means the woman who married your grampa.

Eric Mayer
1771 Ridge Rd East
Rochester
NY 14622, USA

The presentation of "Aunt Bird" is excellent. Jeanne's drawing is superb. The first thing I thought when I opened SIKANDER to that page was "Wow. Great. This is neat". Jeanne captures so many aspects of the story in that little space - really gets the spirit of the thing. The portrait is not far off what my aunt looked like and I wonder how Jeanne knew what kind of shoes she wore? I've had some great luck in illos done for some recent pieces and its one of the great pleasures of fandom, seeing someone elses visual interpretation of something you wrote. The story grows another appendage, so to say, without your lifting a finger. Your choice of Jeanne was rather brilliant. The subject matter is not exactly the sort of thing one finds fans drawing about. I can't offhand think of anyone who could've illustrated it and I'm amazed you thought of Jeanne.

Both covers, incidently, are very fine. The AToms look like they were supposed to be covers. Too often the pictures on covers look like pictures stuck onto covers rather than designed for them.

Graham Ashley
86 St. James Rd
Mitcham
Surrey, CR4 2DB
U.K.

Many thanks for the copy of SIKANDER #9. Interesting, no mammoth Ted White article this time, so the rest of the stuff becomes stunningly unmemorable. I've been looking at the titles on your contents page, but without actually looking inside for the life of me I can't remember what the hell any of them are about. Ah yes, "Situation Normal", that was quite amusing and "Aunt Bird", that took me 3 attempts to get beyond the first paragraph and even then I wasn't quite sure what it was all meant to be about.

Strangely enough, whilst flicking through my pile of mouldering old fanzines recently, I discovered a copy of SIKANDER #7. Shit! I didn't even know that I had one; worse still, I couldn't remember a thing about the contents. Perhaps I never even read it! Who knows?

The point is that despite the fact I disagreed with almost everything White said in "Lost in Oz" at least it kicked up the shit; at least it made people react, as is evinced by your large letter column this time. As far as I can tell, without the White factor SIKANDER lacks any real

bite. Sure, some of the articles are neatly written and amusing, but these qualities don't make an interesting and (above all) stimulating fanzine on their own.

I ALSO HEARD FROM: John Alderson, Harry Andruschak, Steve Green, Joy Hibbert, Jim Meadows, Joseph Nicholas, Alex Stewart, Arthur Thomson, Roger Weddala, and Lucy Zinkiewicz.

 Have a cigarette if you want to be good at cricket.

MOUNTAIN TENSION John Berry

It was lunch time when we reached Clifton Bay, overlooked by a cloud-covered Table Mountain. We queued at a clean cafe for hamburgers and coffee, and sat on seats on the grass verge overlooking the bluest of blue seas. Seagulls appeared and surrounded us, one or two braver ones edging close to us, and we threw crusts at them, which they adroitly caught on the wing. After the seagulls had finished our lunch we crossed the grass onto the firm white sand. The sun was unchallenged in a clear sky, but not many bathers were sporting themselves, although prominent amongst them was a tall blonde girl, leaping about in the encroaching waves. She wore a green bikini, but the upper part of her ensemble was under considerable physical stress due to her superb figure.

In deference to my wife's presence, I whispered out of the corner of my mouth to our friend Skippy, alerting him to the cavortations of this superb specimen of Afrikkans womanhood.

Swiftly he whipped on his dark glasses and smoothly moved forward to the edge of the brine. "I'm looking for the rare banded version of the Conus Titianus shell," he shouted hoarsely, and suddenly a wave engulfed him to his waist.

There is a close phonetic resemblance between some Afrikkans and English words, and I'm sure that in his frustration, Skippy catalogued his expletives bi-lingually - all the words sounded much the same. It was unfortunate that Skippy's razor-creased trousers were soaked - he really was smartly dressed prior to the misfortune - only my extreme modesty caused me not to comment on the remarkable coincidence that 2 men in Cape Town could be so superbly attired.

Skippy demonstrated his supple physical reactions by attempting to sprint out of the sea. His arms and legs were moving like well-oiled

pistons, but he wasn't moving very fast. Luckily, the receding tide released him, and he stood on the form stand, red-faced with embarrassment.

Admittedly it was unsporting of me to guffaw so ostentatiously, but it was extremely humorous. My finely-honed instincts alerted me to the possibility of also becoming similarly engulfed, so I shot a swift glance behind me, but the outgoing tide was 50 yards away.

I was torn between ogling the girl or watching Skippy's post-soaking reaction, and elected to continue laughing at Skippy, who was holding up his blue trousers and running up and down the beach.

During my tour of South Africa I encountered many phenomenon, but it is my duty to report that top of my list just has to be the fantastic speed of the tidal waters at Clifton Beach. I have found that with increasing age I have become somewhat more tolerant of frustrations and crises, consequently I accepted my sudden immersion up to my trouser belt with a studied philosophical bravura. Instead of attempting to leave the water as swiftly as possible, as Skippy had done, I relaxed in its warm omnipotence.

We both ran along the beach, holding our trousers up, looking for vagrant breathes of wind to dry our clothing. My wife was engulfed as well, but hers was a studied performance, sans high-heels, dress pulled above her knees, admirably controlling her pursed lips, oblivious to our expressive vocabulary.

* * * * *

The warm air from the South Atlantic speedily evaporated the salt water on our clothing, and we returned to Skippy's car for the short drive to the cable station.

Table Mountain was now in a virginal state, minus the low cloud which frequently raped it. My wife was extremely apprehensive at the prospect of travelling in the small cabin to the top of the mountain, especially when we were packed into the cabin in one homogenous mass of humanity and the ascent commenced. She closed her eyes tightly and through compressed lips mumbled that she didn't want to be disturbed until we reached the summit... if we ever do.

One or two other passengers also seemed to be in states of initial shock, but personally I found it to be a sensational experience. I passed a few witty observations to Skippy that the overhead wire seemed rusty, and he winked and confirmed that the scheduled overhaul of the equipment was 5 years overdue. This made us a few friends. The ascent took several moments, and naturally we judged the halfway mark when the descending cabin passed us at a rather fast pace. After this we seemed to ascend at a rather more acute angle, and even the pseudo-witty comments, such as "where's the vomit bag?", ceased to be proffered as we

lurched the last few yards and clanged to a halt.

We staggered out onto rock at the Upper Station... one or two passengers crossed themselves... my wife came out of her self-imposed trance with an icy smile. Skippy sought a nearby seat... his face was green; he opened his shirt collar and took off his tie... he grimaced at my superbly witty quip regarding the possibility of his giving us a technicolour yawn.

The restaurant was an obvious target... there was a delicate background noise of cups clattering in saucers as visitors sought solace in cups of tea.

We walked around the rocky surface, and peered over wooden rails at vantage points below us. Skippy glumly pointed out Clifton Beach, a pale arc of sand seeming to protect the residential area from the rows of waves approaching it without thoughts of surrender.

We caught the 4.30pm descent. I obtained a place at the front of the cabin overlooking the descent; it was an ethereal experience to use my imagination just a little and eliminate myself entirely from physical realities of the cabin and its 20 sweating passengers... to seem to float down on my own volition. It was strange to see the thick cables and trace them downwards until they disappeared, seemingly heading away from the lower station. I glanced at my wife maintaining her pretence that this just wasn't happening. Skippy wasn't as nonchalant as when we were ascending.

A few interesting facts gleaned from the back of the tattered ticket: the cableway was opened on 4th October 1929, the cable is 4 000 feet long and carries the cabin at a speed of 9.4.mph. The Upper Station is at an altitude of 3 500 feet. No serious injury has ever occurred on the cableway.

This was an experience...

- John Berry

 Anyone for Trivial Pursuit?

HEY! YOU! Got some fanzines you don't want? Ye ed. is interested in obtaining copies of the following Old Australian Fanzines:

AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW (John Bangsund) # 3,7,8,14-18,20

SCYTHROP (John Bangsund) #21,24,28

SF COMMENTARY (Bruce Gillespie) #1,2,5,9,11,14,41/42

RATAPLAN (Leigh Edmonds) #1,4,6

BOYS OWN FANZINE (Leigh Edmonds and John Foyster) 1 and 2

Please contact ye ed. if you are interested in selling these.

CREATIVITY, CORFLU, AND BUSINESS SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT

Terry Floyd

I've been doing temporary clerical work for something like 10 months now, and initially found it quite a pleasant change from trying to make a living as I'd been used to doing. It was nice to make so much money - a good deal more than I'd ever drawn before from jobs that had been much more demanding of my concentration and coordination - and yet be able to sit down while working. In addition, clerical work (ie typing, filing, collating, stapling, stuffing and addressing envelopes, etc) was in many ways very much like fanac, and this too had some appeal for me.

Soon, however, the charm of getting paid for doing non-fannish "fanac" wore thin. I developed what might best be termed a "bad attitude". I grew tired of having to correct the most atrocious grammar,

spelling, and punctuation mistakes I'd seen since high school being made by middle managers, the lowest of whom took home 3 times the salary I was making. In addition, the environment of the offices where I've worked is uncomfortably conservative, almost stiflingly so. I'd held several jobs in the past which required me to wear some sort of uniform, but never have I had to purchase my own before, and certainly not at a cost of more than \$100. Working in an office in San Francisco (or any city, I suppose) does not allow one the privilege of dressing for comfort - one must look "nice". I never used to have to wear a necktie except on those rare occasions when I'd attend some wedding or funeral, so the idea of wearing one every day to work lost its novelty very quickly. Besides, my wardrobe of "work clothes" was and still is extremely limited. Most of the people working in these offices tended to dress much "nicer" than I did. They also made more money.

Many conventions of the office atmosphere would have struck me as quite hilarious if they hadn't been so pathetic or so casually accepted as "normal". Take a stroll down to the end of the International Syndications office of the Wells Fargo Bank and you can sniff enough expensive perfumes and colognes to make you want to open a window for a breath of fresh diesel exhaust. One operations manager moonlights in the daytime as the office Avon Lady and services this healthy market with her complete line of cosmetics and beauty aids. Another manager at the east end of the office plays a small clock-radio tuned all day to San Francisco's highest rated muzak station. Perhaps because of her standing in the bank's heirarchy, or perhaps because the people sitting near her desk don't mind working in the environment of an elevator, no one voices any objection to the noise. Then again, perhaps it's because she turns up the volume every day at 11.00am to listen to the audio portion of ALL MY CHILDREN, a popular soap opera.

Each female employee's coffee cup is individually personalized, not

merely with such suggestive ceramic slogans as "Too Hot to Handle", "Black Ambition" or their own names, but also by the red smears of lip impressions as distinctive in their hues as fingerprints. The male employees, for some reason, always end up using strofoam cups. This is to say nothing of the wretched grind of coffee common to the coffee break room, of which the less said the better.

Despite the enormous strides women have made in the business world in recent years, it still seems that only the male employees are allowed to wear pants to work. The boss has to be able to see those legs, you know. And while sexism doesn't exactly bare its ugly teeth with so many women in the office, it cannot help grinning lecherously at them on those occasions when they might have forgotten their role in this game. Although I paid little attention to it, 2 of our co-workers had for some time been a hot item of clerical pool gossip. One day, when answering the telephone took up more time than figuring the monthly payroll, a secretary sitting nearby put her caller on hold to consult with me. "Mr. Lehr left with Dora 2 hours ago and said he'd be out for the afternoon. Should I tell Saenger he's at a business luncheon?"

By far the most irritating facet of the office environment, however, was the tremendous waste of fannish resources I witnessed. Cases and cases of reams and reams of paper are tossed off daily by the Pacific Telephone Company, which demands that all documents be filed in triplicate; moreover, any revision of a letter or report also requires 3 copies as well as the destruction of any previous versions. PacTel had initiated a small scale recycling program, but this was woefully inadequate in view of the volumes of paper destroyed each day. It made me sick to my stomach. I envisioned whole swaths of California's majestic forests ravaged by the phone company, leaving acres and acres of barren, lifeless wasteland sacrificed to thoughtless inefficiency. I could not stand idle and watch this tragedy. I vowed that those trees would not have died in vain and it didn't take me long to size up the situation to determine how to turn it to my advantage.

PacTel had leased Xerox 8200 photoduplicators for each floor of the building and due to the redundant nature of company policy, they were constantly in use. Needless to say, this resulted in some extreme wear and tear on the machines. I once saw a frustrated manager slam down the cover of one of them as though it were some '65 Plymouth Valiant rather than a delicate state-of-the-art instrument costing as much as a new car. Treatment of this sort was not at all unusual; I saw them kicked and abused beyond any reasonable limit and wasn't the least bit surprised at their frequent breakdowns. "After all," the office manager explained to me, "that's what maintenance contracts are for."

I knew, though, that they would be nice to me if I were nice to them. I learned how to treat them gently, how to load paper correctly, how to clear jams when they do occur, and how to keep my copies from emerging damaged or illegible. Eventually, I was designated as one of the 2 Key Operators for the machine on my floor. Given the ability to get into

the guts of the device, it wasn't unusual for me to spend quite a bit of time among paper and duplicator whenever my services were required.

I took shameless advantage of this unsupervised access to the xerox room, duping anything I felt could be of use to me. My apazines showed a marked improvement in visual flair and I ran off a stack of personalized stationary the likes of which few of my correspondents had seen before. I made copies of Berke Breathed comic strips and ran off dozens of Austin in '85 NASFiC flyers. And when the CORFLU committee ran out of copies of THE TWILTONE ZONE, our fanzine/progress report, I made more, courtesy of the phone company.

When the dwindling budget of the committee dictated a streamlined print run for TZ #2 and forced us to limit distribution to paid CORFLU members only, I once again ran off some "pseudo-twiltone" ZONES and sent them out to fans who I thought might be interested in coming to our convention, or at least supporting it. I gave little thought to the possibility of offending the ultrafaannish by sending them xeroxed twiltone, assuming that, under the circumstances, they ought to feel damned lucky to get the zine at all. Fortunately, none of them complained. Then again, very few of them bothered to respond in any fashion.

We'd discovered with TZ #1 that all the good vibes generated by news of CORFLU didn't necessarily mean that people were going to fall all over themselves to join. Our initial print run of 250 soon swelled to 800 after we tossed copies to everyone and his/her dog at Westercon and franked it through 5 or 6 apas. All that paper and postage, however, generated scarcely 35 memberships, 8 of which were the committee members themselves.

How did CORFLU get started, anyway? The official story, as I heard it, credits an excessive number of margaritas consumed one night last spring at Carlo's & Pancho's on Geary St. Elisheva Barsabe, Allyn Cadogan, and Lucy Huntzinger did the consuming. Shay and Allyn had for some months been tossing around the idea of organizing a fanzine convention, but had given it no serious thought. Since I wasn't present at this pivotal meeting, I can only speculate how the conversation turned to this topic, but Lucy was later quoted as having slurred something like, "Somebody'd havta be crazy to wanna throw a convention". Were that the only requisite for running a con, these 3 seemed over-qualified, and thus did the notion solidify into a vague plan of action.

The idea wasn't anything new - fans in Detroit used to hold similar cons called Autoclaves in the mid-70s and the Britfans had already announced their own Mexican - but what with the present sad state of conventions, a new one completely divorced from media influence (and even the sf mainstream) ought to be welcomed with enthusiasm. The focus would be on fanzines and fanhistory; the "programming" would be kept loose and informal, coordinated ideally by the attendees themselves. The intended result would be, we hoped, a regular gathering of fanzine publishers,

writers, artists and readers in a relaxed environment, and if the notion caught on, we'd never have to run it again.

From the outset, it was resolved that COREFLU would be ultrafannish - so fannish in fact, that the GoH would be chosen by a random drawing among the membership; so fannish that any fan who didn't request a specific badge number would be assigned 42; so fannish that we calculated our membership rate down to the penny (\$24.31) to break even with an estimated attendance of 200; so fannish that the members would have to collate their own program books. As delightful as this might sound, being fannish to such an extent had drawbacks as well. We all displayed a tendency to slack off on occasion (that's faaaaannish), but that was only to be expected because of all the energy that was needed to get the con off the ground.

By the time I was asked to get involved in all this, they'd already tracked down the only hotel in the Bay Area that had facilities open on a weekend in the next 5 years. Unfortunately, it was not the sort of low-class dice one would choose for a small relaxacon. Like any convention hotel, the Claremont Resort had several features which particularly suited it to our needs (not the least of which was the fact that it was available) and unlike many convention hotels, it was physically attractive, even beautiful. But like all convention hotels, it posed some problems as well.

In its favor, the Claremont was located in nearby Berkeley, greatly simplifying things for a committee that lived in San Francisco. The staff was experienced with science fiction conventions, having hosted several in the glorious past including the '68 Worldcon and the '31 Nebula Awards. Granted that COREFLU wasn't going to be anything like those, this at least gave us confidence that they wouldn't be too perplexed by anything we might try.

On the other hand, the Claremont is expensive. It's a luxury hotel; the carhops wear tuxedos and the doormen are dressed like generals. Although the convention space rental wasn't that much more than the hotels I'd dealt with in Texas as liaison for ArmadilloCon, the single room rate, even with the convention discount, was \$76/night - prohibitive for a fan on a budget and out of the question for anyone travelling a great distance.

Despite COREFLU's structure as a relaxacon, we let the hotel persuade us into arranging the obligatory banquet. Depending on the con, a food function can be either a blessing or a curse, but because they're so financially lucrative for the hotel, the sales director will almost always bend over backwards to get a committee to schedule one (some hotels even require it in the contract). A food function can be advantageous to a con when the hotel is willing to give a break on the room rental, and the Claremont offered us their Horizon Room on Sunday of the con at no charge under the condition, of course, that we sold at least 125 \$11.50/plate chicken crepe dinners, the cheapest item on the

menu. By including the banquet price in our membership fee, we'd save money on our function space and be able to present our OGhu fanzine "achievement" awards in an appropriately preposterous setting. This would work out fine provided that (a) we could get 125 fanzine fans to come to Berkeley and (b) the price on the dinners would remain stable. The banquet, you see, was considered by the hotel as a separate function, and was under the jurisdiction of the catering department rather than convention sales; therefore, the price was a verbal quotation not stated in the contract and was, furthermore, subject to change. Guess what the catering department did to us 3 months before the con.

At the time this came down on us, we had generated all of 55 full memberships and 3 supporting. For any other con, that many pre-paid members would almost guarantee success (the first ArmadilloCon broke even with a mere 18 pre-paid badges), but CORFLU was to be no ordinary con. We had by now revised our budget to reflect an estimated attendance of 125, rather than the earlier 200.

Other factors were working against us as well. The last weekend in January was also the date of ConFusion, a well-established fannish con in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Normally, this wouldn't bother us much since we're so far away, but ConFusion is a fannish con frequently attended by fanzine fans, the same folks we wanted to come to CORFLU, and East Coast fans would be far more likely to travel to Michigan for a con rather than all the way to the West Coast. Bound by the hotel contract to that weekend, though, there was very little to be done about this problem.

It had been pointed out to me that no one on the committee had published anything more than apazines and letter substitutes in more than 3 years. Perhaps that's why so much effort went into THE TWILITONE ZONE. There was some debate about how "balanced" TZ should be between a fanzine and a con PR, but this was pretty much settled by the postage rates, which allowed us 10 pages per issue. Once space for the essential Progress Report info had been designated, the remaining pages were left for fannish nonsense and LoCs. The task of creating a genuine fanzine that would also serve as a convention progress report was just what we all needed to throw ourselves back into fan-pubbing. Between TZ#1 and #4 (the program book) Allyn published another issue of GENRE PLAT, the first one fandom had seen in 3 years; Allyn, Shay and Brian Earl Brown published THE WHOLE FANZINE CATALOGUE; and Lucy published THE NEWFANGLED EPICRITIC and RUDE BITCH (with Avedon Carol). For a bunch of fans who hadn't exactly been what one could call "active" for a while, CORFLU seemed to give all of us severe cases of fanpubbing fever.

Just days before she was to leave for Constellation, Lucy forfeited a ticket to a Grateful Dead concert to stay up all night with me typing pages for TZ#2 so we could take copies to the Worldcon. When we finally stopped around 10:00am the next morning, we'd assembled all but the last 2 pages. There was yet a week before I was to leave for Baltimore, so it was decided that I'd deliver the pages to Allyn & Shay for mimeoing

with instructions on how the final pages were to be laid out.

But the night before my own departure, all we managed to get printed were 50 CORFLU buttons and a one-page flyer for the fanzine room's freebie table. After all the energy spent on that zine, I thought again about what Lucy had said concerning fans who run cons. I began, even, to question my own motivations for being a fan.

Why?

Fandom had come along at a time in my life when it was needed most. I can't imagine what my life today might have been like if I hadn't discovered fanzines while in high school. When I first started getting zines in the mail, began corresponding with strangers who lived in exotic places, and started seeing my LoCs printed, it was all so much fun that I didn't think too much about my reasons for doing it. I was making friends with personalities rather than people and fans seemed so much more interesting than the friends I knew in the town where I grew up. Those others were all so (*gag*) mundane.

I yearned to meet these fascinating people and made the most of every con I could attend. I envied the fans in the Midwest who seemed able to drive to at least one con a month, sometimes more. At that time, I'd attended only a few conventions, and knew most fans only through the mailbox. The concept of seeing other fans on a regular basis was alien and exciting, so when I moved to Austin, Texas to go to college, I sank easily into the local fandom. As the years have slipped past, I've watched fandom grow and change. I've discovered multitudes of regional fandoms, sub-fandoms and fringe fandoms but, the more I learned about fans, the less fascinating they became. I'd worked on a bidding committee for a major con and witnessed how petty and small-minded fans could be when operating in a businesslike (ie mundane) environment rather than a faannish one. In many respects, fans were not a whole lot different than other people. In the course of normal events, I'd met fans whom I didn't particularly like. Will Rogers was an Okie, of course, not a Texan.

When I moved to San Francisco, I didn't know anyone except the local fans. Once here, fandom developed into so much a part of everyday existence that I took it for granted.

Throughout all this, my own fanzine fanac has fluctuated from apahacking to fafia, but not much more. What business, I wondered, did I have being on the CORFLU committee?

My miniscule budget got me to Baltimore by way of a Greyhound bus, but the trip had so many highs and lows for me that I felt I'd ridden on the back of a frog. Thanks to Melbourne's sweeping victory for the '85 Worldcon, Austin won its bid for the corresponding NASTIC, a project for which I was in part to blame. While there, Lucy and I slapped together a zine for WOOF which we called THE TRILTONE ZONE #1.98 (silly numbers

had by now become our standard procedure), but lacking any copies of TZ#2 to show off, Worldcon netted CORFLU only 2 memberships, though we did sell more than 35 buttons. While a number of members were bubbly with enthusiasm for CORFLU, the response from fandom at large was a tremendous disappointment to me, but how much of this was due to my own shortcoming as a "publicity coordinator" and how much was mere apathy on the part of fanzine fandom as a whole, I can't honestly say. I tried as hard as I could.

After I said good-bye to Lucy in Baltimore, I didn't see her again for several months. Like me, she had travelled across the continent more on good looks than cash, but didn't have enough left after ConStellation to get back to San Francisco. She made it as far as Falls Church, Virginia, crashed at Ted White's World Pong Headquarters, and found herself a job doing - of all things - temporary clerical work to make enough money to return home. During her stay in Virginia, she continued to work for CORFLU as our ambassador to the East Coast (and England, and Canada, and any other place not on our mailing list). In her absence, her official post as publications coordinator was filled by L. Jim Kennedy who while living among fans had, like me, drifted away from fanzine fandom since publishing his last ish years ago.

Each week as CORFLU edged closer, memberships trickled into the Haight Street PO Box like raindrops through an old tin roof - just enough to give you cold feet, but nothing like the flood we needed. Interest and inquiries would have to pick up very rapidly for us to realistically expect 125 fans to join our con. We kept in touch with the Claremont, which would periodically illuminate our knowledge of hotel policy by clarifying certain conditions not spelled out explicitly in the contract - like how the banquet price we'd been quoted (yes, even after the increase) did not include the state sales tax or the 17% gratuity they were going to charge. So the banquet, which we'd originally budgeted as \$11.50 of the \$24.31 membership fee, was now going to cost us more than \$15 for each plate.

After a careful scrutiny of our budget, it was revised once again and we began to discuss how much money each of us could afford to lose on this crazy venture. In a worst case scenario, we'd each end up having to shell out \$175. This would be hard on all of us, especially since everyone had rent due on February 1, 3 days after CORFLU.

Obviously, we were suffering from a severe lack of manpower. Although we'd each adopted some sort of official title, responsibilities overlapped to such an extent that any given task fell to whomever could make time for it in their schedule. Everyone did damned near everything. In this respect, CORFLU was no different than any other con in which I'd gotten my hands dirty. There were a handful of local fans who saved our collective ass by contributing their time and talents as uncredited "shadow" members of the committee, but there was always much more work to be done than there were people to do it.

The core of the committee also had lives of their own to lead. Soon after I returned from Baltimore, Chairperson Allyn Cadogan and Secretary-Treasurer Karl Mosgofian quit their jobs at Computerland, married each other, and started their own company, Asta Computer Services. I myself, had taken on another short term job in addition to my temporary clerical work, which left me with little enough time for sleep, much less keeping pace with CORFLU. This isn't really as foolish as it sounds, since the second job was an assistant editor position on a low budget feature film - exactly the kind of work I'd been seeking before I started temying - but that's another story altogether.

Once th business was off the ground, CORFLU meetings were moved to the Asta offices so the committee could stay warm. 368 Second Avenue, where most of the committee lived, had two mimeographs and an electrostenciller, but no central heating. Asta, on the other hand, had word processing equipment, photo-duplicators, and everything else the technologically sophisticated fan might need for pubbing an ish, as well as a fireplace and a beautiful view of the Bridge Theatre across the street which was at that time showing the re-release of Hitchcock's VERTIGO.

Upon Lucy's triumphant return to San Francisco in December, after having conquered the East Coast, Canada, and Britian with her vibrant personality, she moved into the vacant room at the rear of my flat in Folsom Street. During her hiatus, she'd proven to be far more effective at drumming up interest in CORFLU than I had and, thanks to her efforts, a number of fans from the frozen coast, including Ted White and Stu Shiffman, had joined the con and were planning to come to Berkeley.

By this time, things had begun to look better for us; we now had about 75 paid memberships and maybe 20 more people who had promised to show up at the door. Fans were coming from all over the place to attend CORFLU - Canada, France, Washington, Massachusetts, and Texas would each be represented if all of our paid and promised members showed up. We weren't likely to fill our 30-room hotel block, which would have saved us about \$300, but there was always a slim chance that the Cavalry would come through at the last minute.

Day by day as CORFLU drew nearer, it commanded more and more of my attention. A week before the con, we painstakingly started production work on the 50 page program book, TWILITONE ZONE #4. One by one, we snapped membership buttons together with Shay's Badge-a-minute machine. Lucy Huntzinger, Jim Khennedy, Dan Kresh and myself made our connection and scored the main ingredient for our magic CORFLU Guest of Honor brownies.

But would fmz fans turn out in droves for the faannish event of the year? Would the committee end up washing dishes in the Claremont's kitchen to meet our debt on the Oghu Awards banquet? Would the Claremont confiscate our mimeo in the event CORFLU couldn't pay its bill? Would the fledgling Asta Computer Services have any better chance

for success than CORFLU? Would Shay, Jim, Karl and Allyn be evicted from the house that had for several years served as a base of operations for the Norfolk Peoples' Cooperative Small Press? Would Terry and Lucy be thrown out of their home as well?

Well, I still feel like I don't know whether it has been worth all the trouble, or how many of us survived the ordeal. Conventions; who needs them?

- Terry Floyd

 The noted publishing giant John Bangsund just arrived. Onlookers were heard to remark who, except that they did it in inverted commas, seeing as how ANZAPA members are notably literate and all that sort of great stuff. - John Rowley, ANZAPACon One-shot, Oct 78

CAPRICE, TOO Irwin, again

FROM CUTTING ROOM FLOOR TO CUTTING ROOM FLOOR The note on the notice board in the Media Building didn't offer much information: "A football club requires a video editor. 10 hours a week. See Max for further details". I walked around to the office of Max Robinson, Head of the Media Studies Department and found that Jeff, a 3rd year student, was there on the same mission as I. Max bought out the letter that he had received and read out the relevant details on the position and gave us the contact, Steve Gough, and phone number. But it was the Carlton Football Club letterhead that really caught my eye.

Both Jeff and I raced to the bank of telephones in the library foyer, and rang the club only to find that Steve Gough, the Team Manager, was not in. We both left messages that we were inquiring about the position, and sat down to chat. Jeff suggested that I should leave this job for him. I inquired as to why I should be so generous. "A 10 hour a week job will suit me perfectly during my last year of college, while for you it will be 10 hours on top of a full-time job." I replied as to how I didn't expect to have much full-time work during the coming year. "And besides," I added, "I'm already closer than you in getting this job: I am a member of the Carlton Football Club."

On the train home that afternoon I started to rehearse what I would say to Steve Gough when I ring him again. I had to figure out what to tell him about the college course and my editing experience, what sort of questions to ask, and how to make sure he is aware that I'm a supporter of the club. It is on this last point that my head started to spin.

Carlton is the most successful club in the Victorian Football League,

the strongest Australian Rules Football competition in the country... in the world. The VFL commands an annual attendance of over 3 million, and the direct telecast of its Grand Final is among the highest rating shows of each tv year. I've been supporting Carlton all my life, during which time they have won 6 premierships, to go from being fourth on the all-time premiership winners table to first. The first game I attended was in 1965, when I was only 5, and despite my young age I was already an avid fan of "footy" and Carlton. I had already felt a football at school, and before that, at kindergarten, and even though my technic wasn't good I knew how to kick a ball. In supporting Carlton I was following on from my father. He had lived in the suburb of Carlton for his first 2 decades of life in Australia and started supporting the local side just in time to see them win their sixth premiership, and in his teenage years played with one of their underaged teams. I imagine he regreted taking me along to that first game of mine; I can't see how a 5 year old would be able to sit still and concentrate on a 2 hour game, - and it was 3 years before I went to my second "footy" match.

Since then my football education has gone through various stages of development. When 9 I began to watch the whole game; when 12 I started to develop an appreciation for tactics and team-work in the game and was able to evaluate the performances of individual players; and I developed a strong critical eye for the game when I was 15 - no longer was it a matter of if-we-won-we-played-well and if-we-lost-we-played-horribly. The most significant development was when I was 18, and I started to want to watch games in comfort. This basically meant watching the game from an old, uncomfortable, wooden, grandstand seat, rather than standing for the duration of the game. For the years 1978-81 this meant seeing only a few matches a year: those at the Melbourne Cricket Ground and VFL Park, Melbourne's only fully (or near-fully) seated stadia. This put me out of the pattern of going to the "footy" every Saturday in winter, so that by 1981 I only saw one home-and-away match. At the start of the 1982 season I bought a season reserved seat for Carlton's home matches. This added to the cost of my seeing a football match, but on balance I'd say it has been worth it. Of course, it helps that Carlton is a successful team. And, somehow, it doesn't seem to matter that the VFL is a power-hungry organisation, or that through it Australian Rules commands media attention well out of proportion than that which should be given. To see Carlton play well is a thing of beauty, and I appreciate the chance to be able to lose myself in it for a couple of hours every Saturday afternoon.

I used to dream about actually being part of this thing of beauty, but the simple fact was that I never would. At school I was never one of the consistently outstanding football players and it didn't take me long to realise that the total extent of my involvement with VFL football would be as a spectator on the outer. And yet, here I was trying to get a position with the club, and be on the inside.

The next morning I made another phone call to Steve Gough, and found out all about the position. Basically, the club wanted someone to put together video tapes to help motivate the players into a winning frame

of mind. The club gets a copy of their matches on video tape, and my job would be to go through them and select the passages of play to be used in the completed tapes. When I have enough material I go to a small video house and use a video-editing suite for assembling the tapes for David Parkin, the team's coach, to use. In the past Parkin and Gough were the people who have put together these tapes, but they were doing this in addition to their normal duties, and because they didn't have a great understanding of the editing process they were very slow in compiling these tapes. Steve related to me the story of how many times he was still working on a tape at 2.00am in the morning of the match for which it was to be used.

There was a slight catch in having this position: it was honorary and not fully paid. An honourarium of \$1 000 per annum was to be paid, plus benefits such as free admission to all of Carlton's matches. This really meant that the position was suited for a supporter of the club. I dropped into the conversation that I was a Carlton supporter. It was soon after this that the conversation started to die down. It was a few days later that I found out I had the position, which I readily accepted.

All this happened in the last weeks of my life at college. And on the last day of my college life I found myself up at the Nottingham Hotel partaking in the traditional end-of-year-booze-up. All of us final-years were engaging in tales of what we intended to do with the rest of our lives. It didn't surprise me that most of the Media Studies students had little intention of making use of their soon-to-be-gained Bachelor of Education degrees. Like me, most had found or developed a strong interest in some aspect of media production work. We sat there and discussed strategies for gaining some form of employment and why we didn't wish to teach.

For me it was partly a reaction to the way my teaching practise went (see last issue), but more than that it was mainly because I was tired of being in the school situation. Since the age of 4 going to school is all I'd been doing. First as a student at a primary and then high school, followed by the time at college, where I was being trained to go back into a high school. Long before I started out on my teaching practise I decided to try something else when I finish at college. My 45 days of teaching had convinced me that I had made the right decision; I was sick of being in a student/teacher situation and wanted something new. Fortunately the something was there from when I started at college, as I'd chosen to do Media Studies with the intention of using my experiences to get employment in the film industry. Which brought me up to the Nottingham Hotel discussing how I intended to go about it.

I told everyone about the position at Carlton, how I got it, and what it involved. Everyone who I spoke to, except Jeff, congratulated me on my success. For Jeff it wasn't a case of competitiveness that caused his feelings, but that he felt it was ridiculous to be taking on a position that wouldn't earn me a wage. He told me that he turned off the job when he calculated that the honourarium came to about \$2 an hour, and he couldn't see why I wanted to prostitute myself for that. But the way I

saw it, it was more a case of my paying for experience. Or, as Max Robinson put it: "VFL is big business, and everyone knows that. Stay there for a while, and it should open a lot of doors for you, as the club would only retain someone who is good".

A week or two later, after an end of college year rest, I started at Carlton and set about getting myself a job. With the help of the Careers Advisor at college I constructed my resume and covering letter and placed it on a word processor at a typing service. I don't know how the situation is in other countries, but there are very few full-time positions in the film and tv industry in Australia. Most people who earn money in the industry work on a freelance basis, and for someone starting out it is very hard. It is made especially hard by the attractive nature of the business, which places me as one of many trying to get into the industry. My plan was to send my letter out to the various production houses and follow it up with a telephone or personal call a few days later. And keep on following it up and on a regular basis; trying to show that I was serious about getting a job and had an understanding of what is involved in starting out in the industry.

A fair number of responses to my inquiries were of the "Your letter will be kept on file, and we will contact you for an interview when a suitable position becomes vacant" type. Just a polite, lengthy alternative to "Don't call us, we'll call you". I became determined not to let this deter me, as I could appreciate the situation in which such statements are made. I was once chatting to a High School Careers Advisor about the vocational expectations of the school's students. About 50% express a strong interest in getting into film and tv production. Having made a film or animation or video at school, and enjoyed the process, it is something they would like to follow up into a career. They perceive their Super 8 film or VHS video as a qualification to getting a position in the media industries, and send out uninvited job applications to whoever they can think of. The Careers Advisor I spoke to doubted that 1% of high school students had any real idea of what is involved in working in the media industries. The industry had done a great job of painting the picture of the behind the scenes people as having as fantastic job as those in front of the camera. I often think of this as being the Big(gest) Lie of what is presented by the Media Industries, for that is what they are: Industries. And as with other industries, things wouldn't happen if it wasn't for a willingness to work at it.

And into all this I walk in. A graduate from a teachers college. I'm a step up from the high school student. I mean, I've used 16mm and U-matic, haven't I? Far better than the hobby formats of Super 8 and VHS, for sure. But it still means nothing in the employment sweepstakes. Never mind that I'm quite proud of one of my films and that a video-clip I made for the group "Kids in the Kitchen" helped them get a recording contract, the fact still remains that all I'd worked in were situations where the deadlines were in a few weeks and not yesterday. In the situation of sending out unsolicited job applications, in an area where there are a lot of experienced unemployed

people, the polite "Thank you, but..." note is all the personell manager has time for. Like I said, I decided not to let these put me off, particularly as I think that what is intended is a weeding out of those who don't have that strong understanding of the industry.

For six months I went full-time looking for work: on the phone, visiting people, looking for a way in. After I'd approached all the bigger companies I started the rounds on the smaller companies, and it was here that I started to find people willing to give me their time. The impression I got from these conversations was that these people remembered when they started out, and didn't mind sharing their experiences. The one overlying theme that came through was one of "Keep pushing. One good break, and if you are good you'll find it easier from there."

I was picking up the odd video jobs. The video house where I edit for Carlton would occasionally ask me to work for them. They specialise in producing in-house low-band (non-broadcast quality) videos for industrial use, and trade show staging that use audio visual presentations. For this company I worked on such things as a video announcing a new vacuum cleaner to the manufacturers' salespeople, video-taping part of a training seminar for a computer company, and the set-up of any number of a-v presentations. About 15 days work over a period of 6 months.

In addition to this I could be regarded as the one Australian who denied the Aussie Womans Hockey Team a medal at the '84 Olympics. Early in the year a tournament was held in Melbourne to provide the Australian, New Zealand, USA, and Canada teams with some pre-Olympic competition. One morning I received a call from one of the tournaments organisers, who is also a Physical Education lecturer at my old college, offering me the job of video-taping all 8 matches for the Canadian team. After the last match I wished the head coach success in getting the silver in LA. When Canada beat Australia in the 3rd round at LA it was Australia's 1st loss and Canada's 1st win. Had Australia won the match they would have won the silver medal. In the end Australia lost the bronze medal when they were defeated by USA in a penalty play-off after a tie for 3rd spot.

None of this added up to much, and I still had to make a living. So I registered with the Education Department, making myself available as an Emergency Teacher, acting as a replacement for those teachers who are sick, and otherwise putting my B.Ed. to some use. It took a while for the paper work to come through. Quite a while, in fact, that I had to start working at my father's factory.

My father is a clothing manufacture and I'd always said I would never go into his business. It was a sad day when I walked into the factory for the first time as an employee. The older employees who have known me for years would stop and ask me what brought this on, while those who hadn't seen me before, but noticed the family resemblance, would ask my father or I if I was to be their next boss. On my first day such a

question is quite a shock, even if I had intentions of staying in the business. I could only smile and politely say "I don't know".

My first 2 days there had nothing going for them. I stood at a table and folded garments. The sheer tedium of this job almost had me out of my mind, especially as around me were people whose jobs required particular skills. Fortunately on my third day I was sent up to the cutting room, to cover for my cousin Anthony, who was away sick. From that day on I found myself working on cutting room duties.

Mostly I assisted Amando laying the material on the 60 metre long tables. We'd load a roll of material on a machine which would be driven up and down the table, each time unrolling the material, until the table had 100-200 layers neatly piled on it's top. A stencil would be put on top of this, which the cutters would use to cut out the various sections of the garment (sleeve, front, etc). These would then be bundled and sent down to the sewing-machine room. There a typical bundle would be mysteriously converted into about 20 garments of the same size and colour.

In my time there I developed some nice muscles (those rolls of material are heavy) and had a better time than I ever expected I would. Until I started working in the cutting room I'd never really been aware about what went on in it, and it is quite different from the factory that I'd known from my childhood visits. Here it wasn't so crowded or so loud. 20 people worked in a space which downstairs would be occupied by 50 or more people. And while downstairs every one of those 50 people would be working at a machine, here there were only 3 machines used full-time. The resulting near-lack of working noise meant that I could talk to my co-workers or whistle to the song on the radio. 2 days of working in the cutting room had broken down the stereotype I had built up over 23 years - a stereotype which had been supported by those first 2 days when I was folding garments. Here I was, in my father's factory, working in an environment where I felt comfortable. I decided that should I ever find that I'm working permanently at the factory the cutting room was where I hoped to be attached.

I was working at the factory only on a casual basis, while still looking for full-time film work, working for that video house, or as an Emergency Teacher (ET) - once the paper work came through. I didn't enjoy ETing, but then I never expected to. The simple fact of the matter is that the ET usually walks into the classroom without any lesson plan, a vague idea of the topics the class are covering, and close to no idea of the school's routine. The general rule is that any students who are that way inclined will take advantage of an ET's situation to defy authority, and alienate the rest of the class from any chance they have of completing any work. Even at its best ETing is nowhere near as satisfying as full-time teaching - I walked out of . . . classes which went well knowing that were I the students' normal teacher far more would have been accomplished.

Between the factory and ETing I was only working 3 or 4 days a week, and was using the other day or 2 for looking for the work I wanted. Then, one day in July, 1984, I was offered a 4 week job as an assistant editor on a documentary series about bushfires. It was the break I'd spent 9 months looking for. And with this job went the possibility of further work, as the assistant on a tv mini series called THE DUNERA BOYS. Ted Msson, the editor, offered me the job as a trial - I do well on the doco and the mini series is mine.

From my first days at college I've been fascinated with the editing stage of film production. It is something that makes good use of what I call "the mathematical mind"; the physical act of cutting requires the use of precise, logical, methodical steps, quite aside from the creativity involved. More than that, in the year or more that it takes to produce a feature film, there is not much chance to see the film evolve from one day to the next. At the end of a days work all the camera crew have to show for their efforts are a few rolls of exposed but undeveloped film. While, during the first cut stage, an editor starts the day with 30 minutes of distinct wide-shots and close-ups and transforms them into a 2 minute scene. An editor and assistant can take 3 weeks to edit what a production crew of 30 took 6 weeks to film.

The first film I made at college was designed so that I could learn a lot about editing. Knowing that I knew close to nothing about producing, directing, or editing, and doubting that I could do an effective job at all I deliberately made a film which didn't involve complex production or direction (one actor, one location, and simple shots, requiring the smallest of crews) but would require precise editing. The end result, a 5 minute visual gag, is something of which I am quite proud, though I wish I had managed to have completed a better sound mix. It is also the one film I'll never feel comfortable watching, the direct result of having used it to develop the discipline for editing and a technique of editing. I went back and forth through the film so many times, agonising over every splice, that it was only near the end of the cut that I developed a confidence about what I was doing.

It is now just on 11 months since Ted offered me that first job, and I'm now working on my third production with him. It is a feature film, WILLS AND BURKE - THE UNTOLD STORY. On this production I'd received a promotion of duties from those I had on THE DUNERA BOYS. My official title is First Assistant Editor, with all the necessary hack work being done by the Second Assistant Editor. My job here involved a considerable amount of actual cutting. Unfortunately, in a few weeks the film editing will be over and I'll be out of work.

What happens then is anyone's guess. I will have some strong credits, making it easy to get further work, and I'll be able to ET till I find that further work. And I hope I do get more film work. I've enjoyed the past 11 months, despite the long hours, and what I view as the occasional unfair demand from the producers; though, I can't say I enjoy



the lack of permanency in the industry. In my job I've certainly appreciated the chance to increase my knowledge about editing. It is said that a car driver doesn't begin to learn about driving until after the driving test has been passed. In my case, with the film component of my college course this thought more than holds true. I continue to be amazed that we were never shown how to 'sync the rushes' (the term for putting a day's sound and film in synchronisation). Rather we were left to our own devices, and once someone sat at the Steenbeck editing machine to sync his rushes, the rest of us followed. As I discovered when I began to work for Ted this process is slow and unreliable for making sure that everything is in sync. It also meant that for a fair amount of time the Steenbecks weren't available to be used as they are meant: editing films.

And should the bottom fall out of the film industry, and I find it hard to gain more work I'd feel quite comfortable about moving into full-time teaching or into my father's factory. I know that in both I would find a satisfying niche and there are aspects of the working conditions which would make up for having to give up on film. There was a time when I couldn't imagine not working in the film industry.

And on a final note, I did finally gain evidence that some of the "don't call us, we'll call you" people weren't kidding when they said they keep all resumes and regularly compare them to their vacant positions. One day, after I'd been offered the first job with Ted, I had a phone call from the personal manager of Crawford Productions, Australia's biggest producer of tv drama series. They were about to go into production of a family show THE HENDERSON KIDS and required someone to be on the set to tutor the school-aged stars. It was nice to have a personal manager offer congratulations on having successfully gained a job while their offer is turned down.

- Irwin Hirsh

Artists were too happy, so God invented film. - Sidney Meyers

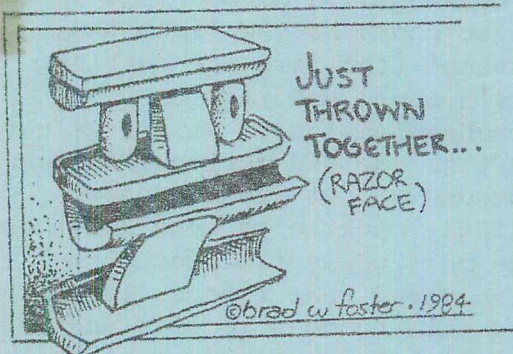
=====

SIKANDER TEN August 1985

=====

Edited and published by:
Irwin Hirsh
2/416 Dandenong Rd
Caulfield North
Victoria 3161
AUSTRALIA

=====



CONTENTS

Caprice	
by Irwin Hirsh.....	3
At Least You Can Say	
You Have Read It	
by the readers.....	6
Mountain Tension	
by John Berry.....	17
Creativity, Corflu and	
Business Systems Management	
by Terry Floyd.....	20
Caprice, Too	
by Irwin Hirsh.....	28
Art Credits	
Shep Kirkbride.....	Cover
Craig Hilton.....	5
Mel White.....	14
Arthur Thomson (ATom).....	35
Brad Foster.....	36

Contents COPYRIGHT (c) 1985 by Irwin Hirsh. All rights revert to the original writer or artist upon publication.

=====

DAVE LOCKE #4
6828 ALPINE AVE
CINCINNATI
OHIO 45236
USA.

PRINTED MATTER

If undeliverable please
return to:

Irwin Hirsh
2/416 Dandenong Rd
Caulfield North
Victoria 3161
AUSTRALIA

Note
CoA