

Thyme = 20

appears every four weeks (get out your lunar calendars) and is produced by Roger Weddall, of 106 Rathdowne Street, Carlton, 3053, AUSTRALIA. (telephone: 03 - 347 1624) Subscription rates are as follows... AUSTRALIA: 10 issues for \$4; OVERSEAS (AIRMAIL): 6 issues for A\$5, or local equivalents. European agent: Joseph Nicholas, 22 Denbigh Street, Pimlico, London, SW1V 2ER, UK. North American agents: Patrick and Teresa Nielsen Hayden, 4337 15th Avenue NE, #411, Seattle, WA 98105, USA. 'Thyme' is also available for news, or as a trade. An "X" after your name indicates that this could be your last issue, unless you.... DO SOMETHING. Registered by Australia Post - publication # VBH2825.

LIFE, THE UNIVERSE AND EVERYTHING: DOUGLAS ADAMS DOWN UNDER

Douglas Adams, author of *The Hitch-hiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, was brought out recently to help publicise the appearance of his new book in the series: *Life, the Universe and Everything*.

The three-week whirlwind tour of Australia and New Zealand took in most of the major cities but although Mr Adams was much in demand as a person to be interviewed by the papers and radio, as far as *Thyme* was able to discover he made only one public appearance while in Australia, at the Melbourne University Union Theatre.

An excellent speaker, he read from the three books in the series, currently available in Pan paperback, and answered questions from the audience. Afterwards I was able to obtain a short interview with Mr Adams, and what follows is an intermingled, edited text of both the interview and the talk he gave....

Appropriately enough, the very first question he was asked during the talk was about the *Ultimate Answer*:

DA: ...let me explain about the number 42. But for those of you who don't know, let me explain the background to this bit of the story.... In the first book a super computer called Deep Thought is constructed to calculate the Answer to the Ultimate Question of Life, the Universe and Everything, and it spends 7½ million years calculating this and eventually comes up with an Answer, and it says that the Answer to the Ultimate Question of Life, the Universe and Everything is 42... now, this has caused a certain amount of comment.

A guy once came and asked me whether or not the number 42 was a reference to the ancient Tibetan mystics, because apparently the ancient Tibetan mystics believed the number 42 signified Life; and I just had to say to him that it was a joke, and he at this point seemed a little affronted, whether or not on his own behalf or on behalf of Tibetan mystics I don't know... and he was so upset by this, I thought I'd better do something to mollify him, because I wouldn't want him to think I was a totally frivolous person, so I said I actually had thought about this a lot; it was a joke but I had researched carefully into this joke, and the research I did indicated that 42 was the funniest of the two-figure numbers.

Well, he was a little mollified by this, but seriously there is a point as to why I chose the number 42, apart from it being the funny number we now all know and recognize it to be, and it's this. Having decided that there was going to be a joke which was that the answer to the Ultimate Question of Life, the Universe and Everything was going to be a number, that is the joke; now what was the number going to be? Now normally, if you're writing a comedy skit or some-

thing, that requires it be a number, a lot of people would say "17 and 3/8", or something like that, but in fact if I'd said 17 and 3/8, that would be just a sort of weak joke, in the middle of what I hoped was a strong joke, which was that the answer was going to be a number, and if that were going to be a strong joke, then it had to be the most ordinary number I could think of. Now, obviously, it wasn't going to be 17 & 3/8, it wasn't even going to be 17 because that is a prime number, so that's a strange number as is every other prime number... I mean 23, or 27 - they're primes, and primes were out... um, even odd numbers; well I know that there are as many odd numbers as even numbers... (laughter from audience) well, there's something about them; you know... (from the audience: "They're odd.")

So I thought, "it's got to be the most unremarkable number; it has to be divisible by two, it even has to be divisible by six, and by seven; it has to be a number you can take home and introduce to your family...."

So that was how and why it was 42. It sounds a silly reason but in fact it isn't an entirely silly reason, it's only slightly a silly reason; in fact what I said to the guy was completely wrong - in fact I was trying to find the least funny of the two-figure numbers, because if it was even a slightly funny number then it would've undermined the joke. That at least was my theory....

From the time of the original conception for the radio series - lying drunk in a field in Innsbruck, as a hitch-hiker, contemplating the stars above - the first series took a good year and a half to get together, when it was first broadcast in March, '78. Douglas Adams hasn't looked back since. Three books, two records and a television series later, the juggernaut shows no signs of stopping, or even slowing down. The obvious question: is there going to be a fourth book?

DA: Let me put it this way: after the second book, I swore that I wouldn't write a third; after the third book, I'm swearing that I won't write a fourth; but I haven't started work on it yet.

Will the third book be serialised?

DA: There are no plans at the moment. Each book so far has been on radio; it's been on television - this is the first one which I've just done as a book; I don't want to have to go back and fill in all the blanks again like I did for the 2nd one - it becomes a little like doing crosswords. The next major project so far as I am concerned is doing the feature film, which is going to take about the next two years, and it's going to be jolly good, and jolly exciting.

Is it actually in production now? One hears frequently about wonderful films - especially of films - that are "going to be made" which somehow never manage to materialize for one reason or another - Dune being a good, recent example of this.

DA: Well let me put it this way: the negotiations are almost finally complete - they're talking about the number of air tickets I can have back to England, and things like that; I start work on the script on the 1st of February.

So you will have some control over the end product?

DA; I will be fairly centrally involved.

Great. Speaking of scripts, you were involved for a while with the Dr Who series, as a writer and script editor, but the Hitch-hiker's Guide doesn't seem to owe much to anything, certainly not Dr Who....

DA: There was a period I was working with Dr Who the same time as I was working on the radio series; I thought they'd cross-fertilize each other but they didn't, they were completely separate.

You effectively put just about every cliché in sf on its head - have you read a lot of sf?

DA: No well I haven't actually. I'm beginning to read a bit at the moment because people keep asking me that question or asking me questions about sci-fi so I'm beginning to think I ought to. I've read some of the obvious ones - Clarke, and Asimov - but the trouble is, to be honest, that I find with a lot of science fiction

(continued on page 13)

and the last stragglers brought the number of attendees up to 25. In between showers, the foolhardy among us played hockey or threw frisbees. The sensible stayed in the barn by the pot-bellied stove. Chief recreation for them was talking to 9-month-old Kathryn Grigg, who astounded all and sundry by displaying three teeth, and insisting on standing up at every opportunity that offered (and some that didn't).

A Caulfield Cup sweep was run by yours truly, raising \$9.00 at 50c a ticket. First prize was a FANAC! game, while 2nd and 3rd got \$1.00 each. Winner was Stephen Solomon, 2nd and 3rd were Justin Ackroyd and Sue Grigg. The race was listened to on a rather good portable radio provided by Bob Toth. I was relieved that I hadn't after all stopped at Kyneton to have a bet on the race, because Carringbush could only manage fourth.

Several persons then adjourned to a Melbourne in '85 meeting and while they were away, most of the other attendees went home (a cowardly lot as ever I saw!). \$105 was raised for the bid's coffers. A most successful function.

Derrick Ashby

Speaking of functions,

OLYMPICON III

is yet another in the series of Games Days being held to raise money for the bid, and this one will be held at Derrick & Christine Ashby's place,

4 Harold Street, Middle Park (South-central Melbourne),

on Sunday, the 5th of December, 1982.

Entry is the usual \$2.50, and games will be available to play, at the usual rate of \$1.00/hr, or part thereof. Computer games will be 20c a go.

Things will begin to get underway around 1:00 pm, and afternoon tea will be available for some exorbitant cost.

Speaking of games and the like, don't forget FANAC!

They're playing it in Armadale; they're playing it in Birmingham. Who said that Hugos can't be bought? Buy a copy of FANAC! and find out how to win one. Only \$10, postage included (or pick up a copy at any con at the Melbourne in '85 huckster table). Also in the \$10 range are the limited-edition M in '85 t-shirts, sizes tiny to hugeous.

If you just want to find out about the bid (latest details; ways to help), at the moment it's best either to live in Melbourne, or keep on reading *Thyme*.

If you live in Melbourne, and would like to speak to members of the committee then the best thing to do would be to attend one of the Games Days (eg. Olympicon III), or turn up to the meetings of the Nova Mob, where many of the committee are wont to show their faces. Of course, you can try writing letters if you live elsewhere, although it would perhaps be better to contact the bid agents scattered around Australia, whose names appear below, or one of the overseas agents scattered around the world. All ideas, suggestions et cetera are welcome.

MELBOURNE IN '85 - BID AGENTS

Melbourne: GPO Box 22530, Melbourne, 3000

Sydney: Peter Toluzzi, PO Box N143, Australia Square, 2000 (to be confirmed)

Adelaide: Marc Ortlieb, PO Box 46, Marden 5070

Perth: Sally Beasley, 21 Gold Street, South Fremantle, 6162

New Zealand: (tsk tsk - there ain't one yet, slack, eh?)

U.K.: Joseph Nicholas, 22 Denbigh Street, Pimlico, London, SW1V 2ER

Scandinavia: Anders Bellis, Vanadievägen 13, S-11346 Stockholm

FRG: Waldemar Kuning, Herzogspitalstr. 5, D-8000, München 2

Netherlands: Annemarie van Ewyck, p/a Witte van der Laan 21, NL-2291, Wateringen

Belgium: Andre De Ruycke, Eendenplastraat 64, B-9050, Evergen

France: Pascal Thomas, 11bis rue Vasco de Gama, F-75015, Paris

USA: Joyce Scrivner, 2732 14th Avenue South Lower, Minneapolis, MN 55404

Jan Howard FINDER, PO Box 428 Latham, New York, NY 12110

Meanwhile, in Europe (of all places), there have apparently appeared several flyers advertising "Sydney Cove in '88". First of all, it should be made absolutely clear that this is a hoax.

Originally, not long after the '75 Worldcon, held in Melbourne, Australia, suggestions were floated about the possibility of Australia bidding for another Worldcon at some future date. Independently, people in both Sydney and Adelaide (thousands of kilometres distant, practically) thought they'd try for the '88 Worldcon - the Sydney bid was (first I heard of it, when it was still more a joke than anything) called 'Sydney Cove in '88'. Then Adelaide switched to '83, then the two bids combined to go for '83, which rather quickly became basically a Sydney bid which, as we all know, failed.

Now, while not wishing to detract from the efforts of the current bid committee, it has been remarked upon that their job has been made considerably more easy by the groundwork of support that was laid by the '83 bid.

While Thyme has not been unable to uncover the identity of the person or people responsible for the hoax "Sydney Cove in '88" flyers, it is reputed to be the work of someone in Sydney, disgruntled at the fact that the success of the Melbourne bid for the '85 Worldcon will be made so easy by the hard work of the (Sydney) '83 bid. The truth of the matter is impossible to determine. However, if it was meant as a joke, it's not a very good one: Yugoslavia is bidding for the right to hold the Worldcon in '88, and while it seems clear to me that these flyers could do the current Aussie bid no real harm, it could certainly damage the credibility of the Yugoslav bid.

On a happier, somewhat more obvious note, it should be noted that Anti-fan is back. Paul Stevens has resigned from the 'Melbourne in '85' committee, for unspecified reasons, and has begun to solicit material which will explain why Melbourne should not win the bid. Is Paul really shut off with the bid, or is it just that he couldn't be bothered? Or is it a cynical move by the '85 committee to keep Australian interest in the bid running hot? Paul is not saying, but I suspect that it is just a bit of innocent, obvious fun.

On an even happier note, it is reported in Anvil 23 that the Birmingham Science Fiction Club has officially decided that it supports MELBOURNE IN '85. (Birmingham USA, that is - don't know what the fen in Birmingham, England have to say to that. Hopefully they support the bid unofficially.)



MAFF - FINAL BALLOT FORM (1982) NOW AVAILABLE

The idea of MAFF - as originally proposed by Marc Ortlieb - was to collect enough money together to pay to have the most unpopular Australian fan flown to the Mid-Atlantic and unceremoniously dumped there, hopefully to drown. Who the most unwanted Australian fan (and therefore the winner of MAFF) was was to be decided in a general vote taken after people had had time to nominate the fan or fans of their choice; those few lucky people with the most nominations would then be placed on the final ballot, and each of them would be asked to explain why they should not be sent. All monies raised, left over after flight expenses, were to go to DUFF, GUFF, TUFF or MELBOURNE IN '85.

MAFF was a success enough nominations rolled in to show that this was both an idea whose time had clearly come, and a rather clever way of raising some money for those worthy funds. Only one thing stood in MAFF's way - Marc Ortlieb.

Marc, you see, is altogether too genial a chap to be running a competition that holds anyone up to ridicule, even in the nicest possible way, for the best possible reasons, and it is my sad duty to inform readers that the final ballot for MAFF has been rigged.

On the rather flimsy pretext that it would "not be nice" to include someone on the ballot who themselves has not nominated anyone else, the person with easily the largest nominations (whose surname begins with L, and ends with onergan) is not listed on the final ballot.

Okay, you say to yourself: Marc's just too nice for ~~Voter~~ his own good; but cop this: guess who received the second-largest number of nominations, and whose name also does not appear on the final ballot? Yes; none other than old sugar-tooth himself - M.A.O.

So is MAFF really a joke after all, or should we get out the tar and feathers? None of the three (out of a total of 5) candidates I have spoken to seemed too happy about the idea of them winning the poll....

Happily, there is a solution. On the ballot form (pages 6a, 6b) the option is given to voters to write in a name (or names) of their own choosing. The logical thing to do seems either to a) completely ignore the names already on the ballot, and treat it totally as a write-in vote; or b) write-in vote for the misguided perpetrator of this grand, fannish scheme; Marc Ortlieb.

Now, how's that for a sense of humour?

(more) FAN FUND NEWS

I) AMERICANS ABROAD: TAFF & DUFF

The four candidates for TAFF this year are Grant Canfield, Larry Canedy, Sweden Carol & Taral Wayne.

Meanwhile, those standing for the chance to make it Down Under next year now definitely include Alexis Gilliland, as well as Charlotte Proctor, Jerry Kaufman and Jan Howard Finder.

Concerning DUFF, Peter Toluzzi, Australian Administrator, is currently compiling a DUFF Newsletter which should be ready about four weeks from now and which will be included in the next Thyme and available freely at conventions or from Peter himself. In it will be the platforms of the four official candidates, and other such news as the Administrator sees fit to include - watch for it.

II) VENIT, VIDI, VICIT: DUFF WINNER RETURNS

Toluzzi Le Trek (sometimes referred to as Peter Toluzzi) returned, as earlier mentioned, to Australia on the 26th of October from his six-week tour of the States. While in America, Le Trek was seen in a score of different cities, met hundreds of different people and generally took to American fandom like a fish takes to water. American fandom also apparently took to him equally well.

DUFF candidate Charlotte Proctor reports there was a round of parties and eating gatherings in Birmingham, Alabama, to celebrate his visit. Charlotte also reports that, during his visit, one of her cats died a violent death under the house, but she doesn't think that Peter had anything to do with it. A one-shot, *The Bi-Continental One-Shot*, was produced at one of the parties, and in it Peter remarks on the excellent qualities of Henry McKenna Sour Mash Bourbon.

Other, just-as-interesting stories and rumours are circulating about his visit to America but, whether it's true or not that Peter was dragged by three beautiful Minneapolis femmes into the shower after a massage session, and managed to stay in there for half an hour, or not, Peter certainly seems to have had a great time, and made a good impression on the Yanks.

The best news, however, for us stay-behind types (or is that just poor types?), apart from the fact that the led is back, is that he will be giving an audio-visual trip report, comprising of some of the 350-odd slides he took while overseas, as well as a few tapes of music/talk, at more than just the one convention.

He will definitely be doing the show at both Circulation II and Swanson 8, but quite possibly also FUNCON and Adventon 4.

P.T. wishes to make it clearly known that this audio-visual presentation is something he is doing in addition to a written trip report, and not in place of a written one, which he claims will be out "possibly by Easter; definitely by Syncon '83; the middle of next year."

Meanwhile, look for caches of jelly beans to give added flavour to convention auctions. Peter brought back about 3kilos of 'gourmet' jelly beans from America, for that express purpose. They come in over 25 flavours, as opposed to just "sugar" here.

JUSTIN ACKROYD I, Justin Ackroyd, have been called upon to give reasons as to why I should not be hurled from an aircraft flying above the middle of the Atlantic. My arguments follow.

- 1) I would get wet. While I may bear some outward resemblance to a whale, this is in fact deceptive. Not only do I dislike long term wallowing in cold water, but I am a poor swimmer, and would drown much too quickly to give the hordes of spectators in hired helicopters any amusement whatsoever.
- 2) I couldn't play any more hockey. Even if I were miraculously rescued by Atlanteans, it is unlikely that they would require a hockey goalie. Hockey was developed by the Mongols in the 13th Century, and there is no record of this barbaric sport having reached the Atlantean civilization.
- 3) The third point is that I am the biggest MAFF nominee. It would be much cheaper to freight one of the smaller and presumably lighter nominees.

In summing up, I appeal to your sense of fun and your stinginess, and ask that I not receive your vote for this rather questionable honour which I probably wouldn't appreciate anyway.

TERRY FROST There's enough bashing of the workers in Australia these days, so why not vote for Peter Toluzzi (refugee, Duff winner and dope fiend); Jack Herman (short, balding, weak-chinned); Paul Stevens (scruffy, weird and never seen outside Melbourne); or Justin Ackroyd (wouldn't know that a tram was up him until the bell rang at Collins Street). Of the whole bunch, I'm the handsomest, straightest looking and least bourgeois individual, and beside that I'm an expatriate Sydneysider! Any woman who can prove she voted for other people can expect preferential treatment in my social calendar. (Howcum Ortlieb wasn't nominated, I wanna know!)

JACK HERMAN Jack R Herman deserves to be the MAFF winner: he has done almost everything wrong. Admittedly he is the only faned on the final ballot and that is an indication of his litany of errors - no other faned, that most inoffensive of breeds, would qualify for the dishonour. While he should have been chained to his typer turning out his readable, if stolid, fanzines, Herman has been doing naughty things like organising clubs, running cons, editing apae, reading Sf and having a full social life. He is obviously a disgrace to the fine name of faned and should, therefore, be cast into the watery receptacle clad only in concrete booties - Issued by the Australian Fanarchist Party (Marxist-Leninist).

PAUL J STEVENS My dear friends, it was with beating heart and bated breath that I read of my nomination for the Mid-Atlantic Fan Fund. I am touched (obviously) and deeply moved by your sentiments and will therefore be arranging for each and every one of you to be visited by my representative and given a lasting memento of my regard for you.

Of course I must decline this nomination on the grounds of the environmental dangers and point out that it would be unwise to deposit the other nominees in this area as well. Mr Toluzzi would never notice the difference. Mr Herman would only molest the fish and Mr Ackroyd would never go without his books. The number he possesses would constitute a grave danger to shipping. Of Mr Frost I am not sure as this depends on his upcoming comital hearings.

No doubt the Mid-Atlantic Fan Fund is a worthy idea if followed through logically, but who wants to wipe out two thirds of fandom? Now, a fund to buy bheer and brandy for me at the next national convention.....

PETER TOLUZZI WHY I SHOULD NOT BE DROPPED IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ATLANTIC
by Peter Toluzzi (age 75½)

- 1) The resultant tidal wave would wipe out - Los Angeles Fandom.
- 2) A fish bit me once, and it died later. Therefore it follows logically that dropping me in the middle of the Atlantic would be ecologically unsound, as it would kill all the fish, and thus produce widespread famine - maybe even wipe out Los Angeles fandom.

3) I'm the biggest nosybody in Australian fandom. Now, this may sound like a good reason for the Big Splash, but consider: next time you're scheduling a party, how would you know if anyone else had anything scheduled for that night? How else will you find out details of who's doing what to whom in Perth? And what's happening? What are you going to do next time your phone number list needs updating?

4) Speaking of telephones, TELECOM would nuke you if you sank their best customer!

5) If you drown me now, I'll never have a chance to publish my trip report, and thus embarrass Christine Ashby, Paul Stevens, Ken Fletcher and Linda Lounsbury, Keith Curtis, and Joyce Scrivner.

6) Without LeTrek to protect fandom, the League for Fannish Decency would reign supreme, and TWAGAdom would be strictly enforced upon you all. Now, this may not worry those of you who are card-carrying members, but how do you like the prospects of a life-long sentence?

7) Nessus would never forgive you.

MAFF FINAL BALLOT FORM 1982 *****

Preamble: Refer to the bottom half of page 5, which explains all about MAFF.

Exercise your democratic option and VOTE FOR MARC ORTLIEB, the bloke who started all this in the first place. Okay, so Paul's platform is goody-goody, and Terry's makes him out to be even more objectionable than he really is. I'm a strong believer in poetic justice, and as the fellow who set the slanging match going in the first place, MARC ORTLIEB is the obvious one to be the first person ever to win the vote. A good, solid block of twenty votes would do it, no worries. Marc, of course, is probably one of the few people around who could easily laugh the whole thing off! Ignore the others, vote MARC

Voting: This will follow the "Australian Preferential" system. In order to vote you must send, along with your ballot form, a money order made out either to THE MELBOURNE IN '85 BIDDING COMMITTEE; DUEE; TAEF; or GUFF. If you wish your name published in a list of those who voted, then enclose \$1-00 n.o.. If you wish to retain your privacy, enclose a money order for \$2-00. The interim administrator will consider offers from candidates wishing to know who voted for them....

Please number the candidates from 1-6 in order of preference, i.e. your top preference should be numbered one, your second preference number two, etc.

Deadline: Votes should reach the MAFF Interim Administrator no later than 27/5/83

Eligibility: Anyone who sends money is eligible to vote, but only once. If you wish to brag about who knows you though, there is a space on the voting form for this.

Presentation: The winner will be presented with a concrete slipper, and an elaborately forged ticket to an unspecified destination in the Mid-Atlantic at Syncon '83, the 1983 Australian National Convention.

.....
VOTING FORM

MAFF 1982-83

Name..... Address.....

I would like to see the following, in order of preference, dumped in the Mid Atlantic

- JUSTIN ACKROYD
- TERRY PROST
- JACK HERMAN
- PAUL J STEVENS
- PETER TOLUZZI

I'd just like to take this opportunity to say that KNOWS ME.

SIGNATURE.....

Send to Marc A Ortlieb; P.O. Box 46; Marden S.A. 5070 AUSTRALIA by 27/5/83

(Write in name)

Reproduction of this form is encouraged, provided that you don't change the words. (I should like to make it clear that this form is identical to the one printed by Marc, save in one respect: the 'Preamble' section, which is my own advice to voters, not Marc's.)

iii) GUFF - STILL NO SIGN OF LIFE

It was reported in the last issue of *Thyme* that British GUFF administrator Joe Nicholas would be making discrete enquiries regarding the possibility of some Britfan making the trip to Australia next year, in place of an Aussie making it over there.

However, meeting with no immediate success, worthy Joseph has now gone and effectively placed a Help Wanted: One Brit to Travel ad in the pages of *Ansible* (the British newszine, run by Dave Langford). Whether anyone will respond to this public invitation remains to be seen (methinks not, somehow); until then Joe is still looking for stones to turn over, in case some British recluse that really does want to make the trip can be found. If not, it seems that GUFF will have to be shelved for this year; the next thing to do would be to issue the call, in 1983, for Australian fans to nominate for the trip to Britain in '84. More news as/if it comes to hand....

iv) FFANZ - THEY'RE OFF AND RACING

In (happy) contrast to the GUFF situation, the Fan Fund of Australia & New Zealand is barely a month old and already at least two candidates have been found to stand for the trip, next year, to Syncon '83. Their names are Tom Cardy and Nigel Rowe and they come from Dunedin and Auckland, respectively (reports Frank Macskasy).

If you are interested either in standing for FFANZ, nominating someone else or simply want to find out more about the technical details of the business, contact one of the two administrators:

NEW ZEALAND: Sue Dickie, PO Box 1401, Wellington

AUSTRALIA: John Newman, PO Box 4, Thornbury, Victoria 3071

Nominations for FFANZ will close on the last day of 1982; nomination forms are available from the administrators, and once filled out must be accompanied by a fee of \$10. (So that's how they're going to pay for the trip.) As a general rule, the conditions regarding anything concerning FFANZ are much the same as for DUFF or GUFF.



SPEAKING OF NEW ZEALAND...

Most people have heard of Brian Thorogood and *Noumenon*, the magazine he edits, but in the past little else has been heard of the 'land of the long white cloud', although that might be about to change. Fandom in New Zealand is alive and well and up to all sorts of things these days. This extremely short article is intended to give a brief overview of what's going on over there, and how things work.

First of all, there is NASF - the New Zealand National Association for Science Fiction. This is a blanket-organization that works much in the same way as does, for example, the Sydney SF Foundation or, to a lesser extent, MUSFA in Melbourne.

While NASF is a national body, with nationally elected officers, which produces a magazine, and is basically there as a "reference point" for the whole of New Zealand fandom, it is less an organized, single body than a collection of different branches, who more or less act as they see fit. The Wellington branch, for example, which is perhaps the most active, has regular meetings that people attend to watch films at, play games at, and in general meet one another. Other branches may be more or less active, depending on the wishes of the membership.

NASF is also responsible for the running of the NatCon each year (Windycon, etc), and therefore might be seen as a general coordinating body. There are other clubs which exist entirely outside of the NASF (the Upper Kutt SF&F Club being the best example of this), however, so it's not as though NASF has a monopoly on the scene, although things might eventually end up that way. There is a reasonable degree of communication between the various centres of fan activity, although it's not every day that someone from Dunedin turns up unannounced in Auckland (or Christchurch, for that matter): as might be expected with a smaller country (eg. Britain) distances of >100 km seem a larger obstacle than they do in Australia.

So much for a general description of fannish activity along organised lines. I should admit here that what information I have presented here is based not on my actual experience, but from having talked with New Zealand fans, and with people who have been

over there. Later issues of *Thyme* will hopefully see Kiwis putting their own case.

To sum up, then:

NASF was formed by Michael Cleary & Frank Macskasy Jr in 1976, in Wellington, where the organisation is still effectively based (contact: PO Box 6655, Te Aro, Wellington); it currently has 102 members, with membership branches in Wellington, Dunedin, Auckland and (sometimes) Christchurch (it keeps folding, re-opening) although members are spread throughout the islands. There also exist other, independent sf clubs and social groups, although fandom in New Zealand is extremely open and not split into millions of little cliques that keep to themselves. Each year there is a Natcon (next one Windycon, in Wellington). Apart from that, one gets the impression that the people in New Zealand are a reasonably active lot, socially, with get-togethers and parties and so on much as one would expect of fanish groups anywhere.

Meetings:

WELLINGTON: the third Sunday of every month. Featuring videos, wargames, debates.

Place: WEA rooms, 154 the Terrace, Wellington

: "Dominion Nights", a monthly "pub night".

Place: the regulars meet in the Pyramid bar upstairs at the

Dominion Hotel, Tory Street, Wellington

: "Royal Sunday": If you've nothing to do of a Sunday Afternoon, drop

around to Sue, Trish & Michelle's place, (Balmoral, the Royal

Residence) at 11 Balmoral Terrace, Newtown, Wellington.

DUNEDIN: every second Monday, 7:30pm, 84 Albany Street, Dunedin - a general meeting

that can include such activities as "alien make-up" workshops, the

eating of large quantities of chocolate cake, and such fun activities.

UPPER HUTT SF & F CLUB: the first Tuesday of every month, at the public library,

in the evenings. (Upper Hutt's about 20-30 km north of Auckland).

Publications:

WARP: an NASF zine containing NASF branch meetings information, as well as a mixture of reviews of books and films, as well as a letter column. Out bimonthly.

NOUMENON: produced by Brian Thorogood, of 40 Korora Road, Oneroa, Waiheke Is., Hauraki Gulf. Reviews & news - good stuff.

Other useful addresses:

NASF Auckland branch: 108 Arthur Street, Onehunga, Auckland 6.

NASF Dunedin: PO Box 5516, Dunedin.

WARP magazine: 34 Lincoln Street, Ponsonby, Auckland.

WINDYCON (the next National SF Con): PO Box 11400, Wellington.



LET THEM EAT HUGOS...

Locus, source of much unintentional humour, reports that at the Business Session of the recent Worldcon, a motion was passed (I'll say) to create yet another Hugo category: the 'semi-prozine'. A 'semi-prozine' is, of course, "Any generally available non-professional publication devoted to science fiction or fantasy which has published at least four (4) issues, at least one (1) of which appeared in the previous calendar year, and which meets at least two (2) of the following criteria: (1) had an average press run of at least one-thousand (1,000) copies per issue, (2) paid it's contributors and/or staff in other than copies of the publication, (3) provided at least half the income of any one person, (4) had at least fifteen percent (15%) of its total space occupied by advertising, or (5) announced itself to be a semi-prozine." In other words, People have decided to give Locus a permanent Hugo so that someone else can win a Hugo too - Isn't that nice of them? Actually, this motion has to be ratified at the next WorldCon before becoming law, no hum.

AUTHORS! RUN OUT OF IDEAS?

Also from Locus, an ad on its back page: 'PLANETS DESIGNED, orbits calculated, stars modelled for SF writers by professional astrophysicist. Rate Negotiable. Dr S. Simon, Physics Dept., Guilford College, Greensboro NC 27410.'



AVAILABLE AT LAST!

S F COMMENTARY
REPRINT EDITION:
FIRST YEAR 1969

S F Commentary Nos. 1-8

Edited by Bruce Gillespie

BRUCE GILLESPIE, publisher
GPO Box 5195AA, Melbourne, Victoria 3001, Australia. (Phone: (03) 419 4797.)
ISBN 0 949587 00 1

The first issue of S F COMMENTARY appeared officially in January 1969, and eight issues were published during 1969. Since then the magazine has had its ups and downs. Its ups have included 4 Ditmar (Australian Achievement) Awards, and 3 nominations for the Hugo (World SF Achievement) Award.

Despite its high reputation throughout the world as a leading magazine of reviews and criticism of science fiction and fantasy, S F COMMENTARY has always had a small print run. So small, indeed, that no copies of the first eight issues have been available for sale since the end of 1969.

S F COMMENTARY REPRINT EDITION: FIRST YEAR 1969 offers the first eight issues in a handy, re-typeset, printed version. Only 200 copies have been printed of this new edition, so you will need to hurry to make sure of your copy.

The new edition contains an complete Index. The entire edition amounts to more than 200,000 words, including articles and letters from such leading Australian and overseas contributors as Stanislaw Lem, Brian Aldiss, Philip Dick, George Turner, Lee Harding, John Foyster, John Bangsund, John Brunner, Samuel Delany, etc, etc.

Copies will be available only from the publisher. Fill in your form now, and send it and your cheque to the address given below:

S F COMMENTARY REPRINT EDITION: FIRST YEAR 1969

Please send my copy immediately.

I enclose a cheque/international money order/bank draft for
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* Mark cheques 'Bruce Gillespie' and send them to:
GPO BOX 5195AA, MELBOURNE, VICTORIA 3001, AUSTRALIA.

SF COMMENTARY: REPRINT EDITION FINALLY AVAILABLE!

If 1969 weren't one of the golden years of fandom, it must have come pretty close. *SF Commentary Reprint Edition: First Year 1969* is an effective time capsule - a record of those years when Australian fandom was a whole lot smaller, more tightly knit and, dare I say it, with more of an interest in sf - or was that just Bruce?

It is in part a fine collection of critical writings, as well as a record that gives some of the feel of what things were like back then - including a photo section: see John Foyster without his beard; John Bangsund at his best; Bruce himself back in the days when he looked like Cary Grant (well, a little).

It has taken the best part of two and a half years for Bruce to reset the first eight issues of *SF Commentary*, basically all his spare time and some that wasn't, but looking at the finished product, I'd have to say it was worth the effort: it's a handsome piece of work, and worth both the trouble Bruce went to, and the money you should pay out for a copy.

The obvious question, now that this *First Year Volume* has come out, is: will there be a volume to follow, of *SFC's* second year? There are not many copies of these issues floating around, either - which was the reason in the first place for Bruce going to all the trouble he has, at a friend's suggestion.

Well, Bruce says that once/if enough money comes in to pay for the publication of the *First Year 1969*, any further money will go straight either into getting out new issues of *SF Commentary* or, depending on the response to this first volume, go towards a *Second Year*. So it all depends on what you think, or rather do with your money, and what you say. In any case, only 200 copies of the reprint have been done up, each of them individually numbered. So order yours today, while you can.

Meanwhile, Bruce, as one-third of *Norstrilia Press*, has also been busy on a new production, just out now, by name of *Lavington Pugh* by Jay Bland.

Described by the publisher as 'the funniest Australian novel you'll ever read', it's available now in trade paperback edition for only \$6.95.

Jay Bland is a South Australian script writer & actor turned novelist, who has won an *Awie* Award for 'Best Unproduced Script' (Yippee..). Seriously, folks, *Norstrilia Press* is a worthwhile institution that has been doing a pretty good job of getting sf published in Australia where otherwise it might not have been, and as such deserves your support.

You may have heard about their most recent previous novel - a book by Gerald Mornana, entitled *The Plains*. Well, they haven't exactly hit a financial goldmine with that one - yet - but it sure has been receiving the critical accolades and, last Saturday, it was announced that it was on the short list for the *Age* 'Book of the Year' award.

It's quite an achievement for *Norstrilia Press* (Bruce Gillespie, Carey Sandfield & Robe Cerrand - all well-known sf fans in Australia) to have the book selected for the short list - *Norstrilia Press* is one of the country's smallest presses. Other fiction nominations for the award are: *Items From the Late News* - Thea Astley; *Sister Kata* - Jean Bedford; *Just Relations* - Rodney Hall; and *Fly Away Peter* - David Malouf. To win the award, *The Plains* must also beat six non-fiction books; the results will be announced on the 27th of November, in the *Age* (Australia's most literate daily newspaper).

And, speaking of literary awards, in case anyone has had their head stuck in the sand for the last few weeks, you might like to know that Thomas Kenneally, an Australian author now living in London, finally won the Booker Prize, for *Schindler's Ark*.

CHANCES OF ADDRESS

Speaking of having one's head stuck in the sand, it must be a good month and a half since the Nielsen Haydens moved, but apparently people are still sending mail to their old address: please note it is Patrick & Teresa Nielsen Hayden, 4337 15th Avenue NE #411, Seattle, WA 98105, USA.

Another American change of address: Lee Smoile to 3903 Green Mount Street, Baltimore MD 21218. Another American address, while not actually a change as such, is one that is unknown to most Australians (and Americans also?) - that of DUFF candidate, Charlotte Proctor, of 8325 7th Avenue S., Birmingham AL 35206, USA.

In Melbourne, Asms & Karen have moved yet again, this time to 1/214 Napier Street, Fitzroy, 3065. Talking of comings and goings, it might be noted that Chris Johnston, artist to Melbourne fandom, has just returned from a short trip to Europe where he spent much time in galleries and ~~places~~ saw lots of local sights. And, talking of comings and goings, Terry Frost will be moving at some stage soon from Thornbury, where he and John Newman were sharing a house. After reading his MAFF platform, one can only wonder if he is planning on winning MAFF, and maybe moving to the Azores. They don't understand English there, and so Terry might be safe. Terry, in any event, is not saying where he'll be moving to just yet, but when he does we'll ~~know/you/let/you~~ let you know.

Meanwhile, in Sydney a few people have been moving around. Karen "dombie" Warnock has moved to 20 Rosebury Street, Balmain 2041. A housewarming party was held there weekend before last with about 30-40 Sydney fandom in attendance. Jack Herman & Cathy are now at 180 Forrest Road, Ansellffe 2205, and Peter Toluzzi, fresh back from overseas, is now at 33 Mount Street, Coogee 2034. However, it should be noted that Cathy & Jack, and Peter, both have Post Office boxes for mail, and don't really wish to have mail sent to their home addresses.

All these rich people - Chris Johnston, Peter Toluzzi - now it's Joy Window. Joy, currently of 127 Livingston Rd Marrickville 2204, arrived back from a three-month-long trip to Ireland and America on Thursday, last week. Members of Hocus Focus can once again breathe a sigh of relief - and stop sending any material to be printed to me. However, Joy and Gordon Lingard are the both of them planning on moving from Livingston Rd soon, so stay tuned for word of where they are moving to. Their departure may mean that this is where Jean Weber will be bedding down a few nights of the week. Jean, who as reported in the last issue of Thyme will be moving soon so Sydney environs, is looking for somewhere to stay overnight a couple of nights during the week. As reported, she is moving to Sydney and will be sharing a house with Eric Lidsay, up in Faulconbridge, but what with working in the city, Jean doesn't want to have to spend all those hours travelling on the train each day to and fro, and is quietly looking for a place to stay - possibly one of the Sydney Uni. colleges. Pending final arrangements, and in any case for all overseas mail, all mail should go, after the 10th of December, to % CSIRO, Box 333 Wentworth Building, University of Sydney 2006. Note that her old PO Box with the CSIRO in Canberra is still also good for mail, indefinitely.

More movements from Marrickville/Sydney. Erik Harding, originally from WA, has just now returned to Perth, but also taken Jane Taubman with him. They are staying, for the moment, at Julia & Roy Ferguson's place. Also in Perth, the newly-married Barbara Delahanty and Geoff Jagger are settled in at Flat 2, 63 Fairway, Nedlands 6009.

Back to Sydney for a moment: Shayne McCormack has moved back to her parents' place in Bass Hill, but of course is contactable at Galaxy Bookshop in the city, or for mail via PO Box A491, Sydney South 2000.

CONVENTION UPDATE

LAST NOTICE - CIRCULATION !!

Dates: 26th - 28th November
 Venue: Hotel Ainslie, Canberra ACT
 Theme: Transportation
 Rates: Supporting \$5, Attending \$15 until 19th November, then \$20.
 Hacksters: the committee needs to know if you'll be needing space by the 19th of November, and costs are \$5/table/day.

With the final PR comes a map of how to get there, and final - but 'very subject to change' - programme details. To get there, basically head for the centre of the city, then turn left 90° (approx) along Ainslie Avenue - it's about 2km out.

Basically a relaxation, Circulation promises to be one of the most pleasant cons of the year. Peter Toluzzi's audio-visual DUFF report should be pretty good - but why am I preaching to the converted - if you haven't already joined do so immediately

Mail: Circulation II, PO Box 544, Civic Square, 2608 ACT,
or phone Jean Weber (062) 47 5814 (h) or (062) 43 3266 (w), or Sandra or Leigh Hyde on (052) 85 1260 (h).

FAULCON 40

(Jean Weber's "Life Begins At 40" party)

Dates: 25th - 27th February, 1983

Venue: to be announced; probably in the Faulconbridge (Blue Mountains) area.

Contact: Jean Weber, 13 Myall Street, O' Connor 2601 ACT (after the 10th of Dec., % CSIRO, Box 333 Wentworth Building, Sydney University, 2006)

Originally just going to be a party for Jean, the idea grew to the point that Jean thought it might be a better idea to hire out a hotel somewhere and make a proper relaxation out of it. It will all be much in the tradition of the 'Medventions', although that hotel itself has now raised its prices too much for it to be used. There will be no programme as such, but probably some computer games, and whatever the hotel has to offer - a pool; whatever. Should be good - stay tuned for details.

SMOFFCON 2

Dates: Australia Day weekend, 1983

Venue: apologies, apologies - we wuz wrong to definitely state that Trinity College will be the venue, although everyone seems to think that this will probably be at that University college, where it was held last year. If not, it will probably be held at one of the nearby colleges, but stay tuned for more details....

Rates: \$5, and all monies raised (if any) go to... (think you can guess?) M in '85.

CoH: George Turner.

FUNCON - VENUE DETAILS

The committee has finally (one would hope) sorted out hotel details - the con will be held at the Queen's Lodge, St.Kilda.

Dates: 1st - 4th April, 1983

Rates: Before Circulation II: Supporting \$3, Attending \$10

After Circulation II: Supporting \$5, Attending \$15

Room rates: Double (no information on whether other room sizes are available): \$45 per night, and the committee which is handling all bookings, requires a deposit of at least \$20 by mid-Feb, '83.

Programme? Well, I'm not sure; latest news is that the committee was planning a competition to correctly guess the number of shots fired during Star Wars, but now that it's been shown on tv and some people have videos of it, they're reconsidering this idea (and they're calling it Funcon?)

Mail: Funcon, PO Box 4, Thornbury, 3071, VIC

FANTASTICON II

Dates: 1st - 4th April, 1983

Venue: Town House Hotel, Swanston Street, Melbourne, VIC

Times: each day, 9am - 12am (ie. 15hrs/day)

Mail: Fantasticon, %Joseph Italiano, 27 Percy Street, Mitcham, 3132

Rates: not fixed as yet; approximately \$12 - \$15 for the whole thing.

Basically this is a gaming con, pretty much as was the first Fantasticon, held earlier this year. There will, as this year, be several tournaments held, with MONEY prizes for the winners. Tournaments include D&D, a miniatures tournament, and a board-game tournament, in which it sounds as though you'll be able to play at the game of your choice, although surely there's more to it than that.

Anyway, there will also be a Masquerade organised, and a programme of films. In fact, it sounds as though these two Melbourne cons will be different only by a) the number of games played at each, and b) the number of 'fans' at each. It'll be interesting to see what the combined figures for attendance are....

EUREKACON - ADDRESS CORRECTION

The address to which to send Eurekacon correspondence is the same as for Snoffcon:
PO Box 175, South Melbourne, 3205

CONSTELLATION - THE 41st WORLD SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION

Dates: 1st - 5th September, 1983
 Rates: Currently Supporting \$10, Attending \$30.

This is the convention you should join even if you're not going over to America for it, just as a Supporting member, so you can vote for the Melbourne in '85 bid. If you are going though, do let Carey Handfield know. Carey is the Australian Agent for the bid, and can be reached by writing to him % PO Box 91, Carlton 3053.

WORLDCON YUGOSLAVIA!

Not strictly a convention (yet), it is in fact a bid to hold the 1988 WorldCon in Yugoslavia, much the same in intent as the Melbourne in '85 bid for the Worldcon.

Initially announced at the British Eastercon, "Worldcon Yugoslavia" is the provisional title of the bid. Already there is a British agent (Gerry M. Webb) and they're currently looking for overseas (especially American) agents for the bid. Anyone interested in contacting the bid's organisers should write to:

Worldcon Yugoslavia, % Sfera, Ivaničeva 41A, 41000 Zagreb, Yugoslavia
 (information supplied by Shards of Babel)

WHAT'S ON...

In Melbourne, all this week (8th - 14th of November) is 'Space Week '82', presented by the 'Space Association'. The Space Association is a group of like-minded people banded together to support the idea of space flight, space research, and so on, much as say might the 'L5' Society be described.

Officially opened on the Monday by Charles F. Morris, of CFEMA/Arianespace, there is an exhibit being displayed all week between the hours of 9 to 5, Monday to Saturday (12 to 4, Sunday) at the TAA building, 50 Franklin Street, Melbourne, in the city, consisting of video displays and models.

As part of Space Week '82 a competition for Secondary Schools will be launched at 12 on the Saturday, the 13th of November (hmm, the day I'm going parachuting...), and on Monday the 15th, at 7:00 pm in the Lyric Theatre, Redmond Barry Building, Melbourne University, a Public Lecture will be given by the Shadow Minister for Science and Technology, Mr Barry O. Jones M.H.R., with some help from the Astronautical Society.

All these events are free and open to the public, and for any further information please ring 44 6473 after hours.

Also in Melbourne, on the 26th of November, at the Khan Mongolian Restaurant, 295 Exhibition Street, city, the MUSFA End-of-Year Bistro Evening will be held. These are always great occasions which turn into some sort of knock-down irresistible-force party and, if for some reason you can't make it to Circulation II then this is the other place to be in Australia on the Friday, 26th of November.

The thing starts at around 7:30pm, and hardly ever finishes.... Come one, come all - you don't even have to be members of MUSFA.

Meanwhile, there have been other, unofficial restaurant expeditions - always to Enri's, a small place in Richmond whose owner-chef believes in garlic and generally good food the way most people believe in paydays. Groups of 12 - 16 people have been organizing themselves to go every so often. It would be a great evening out for anyone visiting the city, the only trouble being that this is a very popular restaurant and one must accordingly book at least a month in advance for large parties. Well, we've been having fun. (continued on page 14)

LATER THAN LATE BULLETIN: Mervyn Binns, editor of ASFN, is having a bit of trouble finding time to put the thing together: can anyone help with the typing? if so ring 663 1777.

(LIFE, THE UNIVERSE AND EVERYTHING - continued from page 2)

the trouble is that I don't get beyond page 25 'cause I don't like the writing.

One thing that sets the *Guide* obviously apart from most other sf is the fact that it is primarily meant to be heard instead of read. As a third book in a series, one might expect *Life, the Universe and Everything* to lack some of the spontaneity of the first one or two, but while I found sections of the book to be rather ordinary, when read aloud by Douglas Adams some of those self-same sections came astonishingly to life. He is obviously most at home with the spoken, as opposed to written, word.

So then: a movie out in maybe two-to-three years' time. Meanwhile, there is the six-part television serialization of the first radio series to see. Already long gone to air in Britain, it has just begun showing in parts of America (originally scheduled for the fourth of November), and will be on the ABC in Australia as of the 12th of January, early next year - that is, you'll have to wait until then, unless you have access to one of the various smuggled-in video cassettes of the thing, that are doing the rounds.

Back to the talk: people had many questions to ask about the characters in the series. Questions such as: "Where did you get the name 'Slartibartfast'?"

DA: Yeah, well, the thing was that I thought that Slartibartfast - the character was going to be this very nice, dignified old man, who was going to be a little bit sad about something, and I thought, "What's he going to be sad about?" and I thought, "one of the things he might be sad about is probably going to be his name. I am going to give this man a name about which he has every right to be sorry.

So I wanted to find the rudest word you could possibly broadcast... and I started with a series of words that you couldn't broadcast... I started off with: "Fartyfuckballs", and just sort of modulated it, little bit by little bit, until there was something that had the same sort of flavour, but which was actually broadcastable.

I have a little sister... she was about ten when I was writing this, and she looked over my shoulder at one point when I was at home and I had the script, and she looked at it and said, "You can't possibly broadcast that word on the radio, can you?" So I knew I'd got it.

Later on, I asked Douglas Adams about the numerous spinoffs from the series that had been seen - badges, t-shirts, even a record, a single by Marvin the Paranoid Android.

DA: Yes, that was Steven's idea - Steven Wall, who does the voice of Marvin - and I gave him a little bit of help; I basically had to give it my blessing... it was something he wanted to do, and it would have been churlish of me to stand in their way-and-also-they-offered-to-give-me-a-part-of-the-royalties.

Right, well there is that - what with the books, the movie, the tv series - you must have done quite well out of the whole thing; are you happy enough to be working full-time on this and related projects (the third book, the fourth book), or is it time for you to move onto something new?

DA: Well yes I was going to finish it about there if it hadn't been for this movie, so now I'm going to have to stay on the same rails for longer - but I'm doing other things at the moment. I'm working on a book which I've nearly finished which is a fairly slight book but I think it's going to - I think it's very funny; people who have seen what I've done so far like it a lot. I'm writing it in collaboration with a friend of mine called John Lloyd who's the inventor and co-producer of a show called *Not The Nine O'Clock News*. This book is called *The Meaning of Liff* - it's a small town somewhere in the North - and it's all about what that means and what other English place names mean... like Shewburyness, which is the vague, uncomfortable feeling you get from sitting on a chair which is warmed from somebody else's bottom.

I'm also writing a 5,000-word profile of Paul McCartney for *Playboy* magazine - so I have what you call "gainful employment".

And a lot of readers, many of whom are as dedicated to the series as any disciple of

