



Goodbye, Gunny!

brg No. 23, April 1999, is a magazine written and published by Bruce Gillespie, 59 Keele Street, Collingwood, Victoria 3066 (phone & fax (03) 9419-4797; Email: gandc@mira.net) for ANZAPA and a Few Select Others.

Cover: Ian Gunn. He drew this in February 1997 as a fiftieth birthday card for me. It shows his interpretation of our living room. He gave me permission to use it as an *SFC* cover. Much better to use it to say goodbye to Gunny.

NO ONE SHOULD WEAR BLACK: THE FUNERAL OF IAN GUNN

This piece also appeared in *Crifanac* and the Ian Gunn Tribute Edition of *Ethel the Aardvark*. It's what I wrote on the day of Gunny's funeral. Elaine has tidied up some of the prose and several of the inaccuracies, and added some comments.

Today, Monday 16 November, at 2.15 p.m., under a clear sky and in bright spring sunlight, more than 200 friends and family of Ian Gunn gathered to celebrate his life and work. We worked hard at celebrating the fun and delight and friendship that this extraordinary man gave to us all, but somehow the sadness kept breaking through.

Jan Tully is a friend of Ian and Karen's. I had met her at one of Gunny's birthday celebrations. She's the same age as me, looks twenty years younger, and is the mother of Beky Tully, one of the most active members of the Melbourne SF Club and also a good friend of Ian and Karen's. Jan is also a civil celebrant. During the week she had sent out an email to all the people likely to attend the funeral, telling them to dress brightly and bring photos and other memorabilia of Ian's life. Ian had specified that no one was to wear black, and that he wanted a celebration, not a funeral. When we arrived with Geoff Roderick (partner of Roger Weddall, who died nearly six years ago), we found balloons covering the front of the chapel, display panels being put up, and rock music being played: it was Ian's choice of pop music of his generation. The whole form and tone of the funeral/celebration had been decided by Ian shortly before he died.

People who arrived in suits and ties were a bit put out, but soon got into the swing of things. At all times Jan Tully kept control of proceedings and kept calm, despite her own closeness to Ian and Karen. She introduced friends of Ian and asked them to speak. A whole lot of SF convention stories I'd never heard were told. These also included some stories of his activities in the Scouts. Ian's parents did not tell Ian stories, and did not appear to take much part in the ceremony, but it was obvious from various comments that Jan made that everything had been worked out with them as well as with Karen. One of their neighbours stood up and said he remembered Ian as a child splashing in their wading pool. Emails from overseas were read. At the end, various people spontaneously told their Gunny stories. Lots of laughter, lots of memories.

It was a bit more difficult later at the committal service at the Springvale Crematorium. Jan was still in control, but she must have found the whole afternoon very hard. There's something awfully final about that coffin sinking from sight as the last words are said. He really was gone at last. We really hadn't believed it was possible until then. I still don't believe it, but I've now seen the photos taken at his and Karen's wedding, on his second-last day, and I realise it's an awful long time since he's been well.

Some people not only have massive amounts of talent but also the wit and wisdom and sense of humour to share those talents with everybody. Gunny's gone, but if he had always known that he would die at the age of forty of cancer, I doubt if he would have led his life any differently.

A few more notes about Gunny

Sorry I don't have any photos of Ian Gunn. Probably you have more pictures of him than I have. He was doing fine at Basicon, in August 1997, which he and Karen organised during his first bout of chemotherapy. He was very chirpy, of course, during the Victory Dinner in early January. At that stage he had been pronounced clear of cancer. He had no body hair and he was still having trouble holding a pen steady in order to draw cartoons.

A few weeks later the symptoms returned. That news would have finished me; I would have just curled up some-

where, and put up the surrender sign. But not Gunny. He remained good at Doing Things. From then until his death he edited quite a few issues of *Ethel the Aardvark* (the magazine of the Melbourne SF Club) and other fanzines, finished several art projects, wrote lots, kept in contact over the Internet, planned the Fan Lounge for Aussiecon III, etc. He was always cheerful. He was heard to make jokes during his wedding to Karen, which took place at Box Hill Hospital the day before he died. He leaves behind a giant space in our lives.

TOO MUCH OF NOTHING

At the end of November, one of my more reliable 1998 clients assured me that there was no work around for freelance editors. One week later the same client sent me a 150,000-word manuscript on diskette, and an hour later I received the scrappy bits and pieces of a project which another client wanted turned around instantly. (If ever a publisher says to you, 'There's tons of work around', be very afraid.)

I finished one job over a weekend, and for the other job I had to set a world record for editing on disk. Surely this could not last. I thought the paying work would run out quickly, and I could catch up on everything fannish during January. Nope. Just for today I'm ignoring all current paying jobs, and feeling intensely but pleasantly guilty. So what do I have to say to a breathlessly waiting ANZAPA?

Gunny's death and funeral occupied a vast psychic space during the last part of 1998. Then, within a day or so of each other, **Vince Clarke** and **John Millard** died. **Walt Willis** has suffered a stroke that might prevent him ever communicating with us again. **Buck Coulson** has died, and **John Bangsund** has been seriously ill.

I didn't know much about Vince, except what I could guess from Rob Hansen's postings on Timebinders about visiting him during his last months. Recent tributes have shown me the importance Vince had for British fandom. He seems to have been the ultimate fan, a great inspiration to those who came along after him. I hear that tributes and a mini-biography will appear in a British fanzine somewhere soon.

John Millard was the Chair of Torcon II, the only overseas world convention I've attended. On the last day of August 1973 I arrived in Toronto to find that I could not occupy my room at the Royal York until the next day. John Millard, large, dependable, affable, gave me a bed that night in his own room (which was gigantic; it was the official Con suite), and nodded at me every time we met in the corridors of the Royal York. Capable and unflappable, he moved among a team of sturdy Canadians, all of whom seemed large, capable and unflappable. With 3000 attendees, Torcon was the largest worldcon to that date, but it ran very smoothly. I exchanged letters with John for awhile after the convention, then fell out of touch. He wrote to me in the early eighties, and said that his main interest was now things Antarctic. I looked out for some of the items he mentioned he wanted, but couldn't find them. We fell out of touch again, but I wish I'd had his address in recent years. I keep meeting people who've spent time on Antarctic bases, or are very interested in the subject.

Walt Willis is one of the three fannish ghods (Willis, Tucker and Warner). After Walt suffered a stroke recently, Madeleine got in touch with British fans to tell them that Walt has not recovered enough to read fanzines or write letters. I suspect that we have said goodbye to him, but can't yet say goodbye.

Buck Coulson has been an anchor of American fandom all the time I've been in fandom. His combination of geniality, unsentimentality and unwillingness to yield a point to anyone on any subject made him an attractive writer, especially when he was trying to be annoying. With Juanita, his

wife, he published *Yandro* for many years. I caught only the last few years of its publication, and not every issue during that time. The liveliest sections of *Yandro* were the fanzine and book reviews. Buck read a vast amount, and he often pointed out odd books that I would have missed otherwise. His reviews of *SF Commentary* always brought a few enquiries or subscriptions, even if Buck had been rude about a particular issue. Buck always claimed that *Yandro* was really Juanita's fanzine. After she stopped publishing it, Buck continued to write letters of comment to editors, such as me, who sent him fanzines. His letters often contained news of midwestern fans with whom I'd lost touch. With Gene DeWeese, Buck also wrote some fiction. Buck remained so relentlessly cheerful in his letters that we in Australia did not realise how ill he had become in recent years. American fans, it seems, were not too surprised when he died.

John Bangsund? At the time of writing, I'm not sure how ill he is. He suffered massive pulmonary oedema when he was admitted to Geelong Hospital early in the morning of 4 March. John has been very ill, and all we can do at the moment is send best wishes, and buy items from Irwin Hirsh's Great Bangsund Fanzine Auction.

1998 was hardly the pick-me-up that Elaine and I had hoped for after the disastrous 1997. The Liberal-National Party Coalition winning the federal election did not cheer us up. They won despite promising to bring in a GST (Goods and Services Tax). How could Australian voters do this to themselves? (Because the bastards spent \$20 million on their advertising campaign, of course.) Since books are untaxed under the current system, all I can look forward to is the wiping out of the Australian publishing industry, such as it is. This falling axe is just over a year in the future, and might not mean much if I'm already workless by then. I don't mind the thought of retirement, but I would prefer a funded retirement to an unfunded retirement.

My mother turned eighty in June 1998, and seems pretty cheerful. My sister Robin and brother-in-law John, who live in Queensland, have split up, not far short of their thirtieth wedding anniversary.

Friends drop in, and we even visit a few people. Elaine gardens. I read books and watch films. Elaine, a Maths/Science editor, has continuous work.

Most ANZAPAns have asked about Elaine's health after I wrote that she has been suffering continuous headaches. She has had a brain scan, which showed nothing unusual. Her headaches appear to be a form of migraine, without the nausea. Tests showed that she also has an under-active thyroid, which has deprived her of energy and ability to concentrate. The doctor is currently trying to find the right level of medication for the condition, but already Elaine says she is feeling much more sprightly.

Two double issues of *Metaphysical Review* appeared in 1998, which is something of a miracle. I kept in touch with fandom through apas and letters, and have found lots of new friends through the Internet, which we installed just over a year ago. I realise that I should apply to apa writing the same daily routine that I apply to email, but that doesn't seem to be the way of paper fanac.

It was a very odd year for reading. I volunteered to read

Nearly thirty years ago today . . .



Astonish your friends. Show them a pic from the **Melbourne Easter Convention, 1971** (photographer: Gary Hoff). You might recognise the man on the left, Lee Harding. Hasn't changed much. And that's obviously George Turner on the right. But who can that be in the middle? See the next page of this fanzine for a clue.

lots and lots of Young Adult novels for the Aurealis Awards (Australia's jury awards for SF and fantasy). None of them reaches the standard I had hoped for in Young Adult fiction, but few of them are unreadable, and most are entertaining. (See below for the special report.)

I read lots of Joanna Russ, and have written and delivered my paper on her work. The discussion produced so many stray thoughts and useful directions that I need to rewrite the paper before publishing it.

I've had a good year for watching films, but that's mainly because Dick Jenssen has lent me a number of videos, and has shown Bill Wright, Elaine and me several films on DVD at his place. We've also seen some good films at Race Mathews' monthly gathering. My favourite for the year, though, I saw at the Lumiere Cinema: Kurosawa's *Rashomon*, which I had never seen before. I'll write about it if and when I have time.

Most peculiar film of 1998 was Jim Jarmusch's *The Year of the Horse*. Filmed in Super-8 and other grainy, out-of-focus formats, it is a rock documentary based on the perambulations of Neil Young and Crazy Horse, mainly in Europe, during 1996. The sound on the performances is good (although the film shares few songs with the *Year of the Horse* double CD from last year). For much of the film, I found it quite hard to see what was going on, although I was wearing my new glasses. There are interviews with Neil, the members of Crazy Horse, Neil's father Scott Young, Elliot Roberts and a few other members of the entourage. They are trying to tell us what a great, unified band this is. This isn't true. Neil Young is no team player, as evidenced from his inability to finish tours with Crosby, Stills and Nash, and he's often deserted Crazy Horse for years at a time.

In one sequence, the road manager tells us that they are all *old*; even the equipment and guitars are *old*. The last half of the film includes a melancholy roll call of all the Crazy Horse members and hangers-on who have bitten the dust during the last thirty years. Neil Young looks nearly as old as his father, who seems spry by comparison. It's been a hard life on the road. Startling are the clips from tours as recent as those of 1986, in which Neil retains some of the sweet-hippie-boy good looks that one remembers from the early photographs. More startling is the final sequence: an impassioned 'Tonight's the Night', in which Neil and the guys nearly blow all the amps, followed by the beginning of the 1996 footage of 'Like a Hurricane', only to cut to a late

1970s clip showing an impossibly youthful Young powering through the same song in the same way.

I suspect this film is not aimed at the Neil Young fans, but it's hard to tell at whom it is aimed. Jim Jarmusch relishes the prospect of a late-1990s apocalypse. The film shows that, although Neil and Crazy Horse have never played better, something in them must break soon; nobody can live long by living like this. But when they go, what's left? This is a bleak, bleak film; irritating often; but a must-see. I just wish *Rust Never Sleeps* was available on video so that I could sit down to watch a real Neil Young concert.

The inevitable comparison is with the two Rolling Stones concert videos I bought within the last year, the brilliant *Voodoo Lounge* and less-brilliant *Bridges to Babylon*. Mick Jagger, if not the other Stones, seems never to have heard the word 'old'. There are moments in both films in which you could put a bag over Jagger's head and suspect that you were watching a fifteen-year-old skipping around that gigantic stage. No talk of *old* here; this is the American dream of *forever*. Even Keef, the friendly skeleton, is starting to play well again, with a return-to-form version of 'Gimme Shelter' on the *Bridges to Babylon* video.

Best CD of 1998? In the early 1970s a brilliant singer-songwriter named Loudon Wainwright III began to record a series of weird, funny, tasteless albums that made other people's funny albums seem a bit lifeless. A bit later Kate and Anna McGarrigle began to record a series of albums, mainly filled with quaint or delightful French-Canadian folk tunes, but also featuring some of the world's most heartbreaking ballads (especially their versions of their own songs 'Heart Like a Wheel' and 'Talk to Me of Mendocino'). Loudon was married to Anna while he was recording his first few albums. Some of his songs were about the new baby, Rufus. The lyrics on Loudon's albums became bitter. The lyrics on the McGarrigles' albums stayed sad. Loudon and Anna had broken up. There were songs about Martha, their second child. Loudon wrote songs about ringing his daughter from London. For twenty years I've relished every Wainwright album and every McGarrigles album. A few years ago a team of Dutch film-makers made a documentary about Loudon. They show him verbally sparring with Rufus, now in his twenties, playing piano and singing rather well. Last year Rufus's first album appeared. Then at the end of the year came *The McGarrigle Family Hour*. Old bitternesses disappeared, at least while everybody was in the studio.

Nearly twenty years ago . . .



Believe it or not . . . Bruce Gillespie and Elaine Cochrane on their wedding day, 3 March 1979.



Even more unbelievable . . . the same people, nearly twenty years later. (Photos taken by Jeanette Gillespie.)

Anna, Kate, Loudon, Rufus, Martha, Jane McGarrigle (the third sister), Chaim Tannenbaum (a fine banjo player who has appeared on most Wainwright and McGarrigle albums during the last twenty years), and Anna's daughter all sing on a variety of ringing singalong songs. All of them appear

on only one song, Irving Berlin's 'What'll I Do?', a song of surpassingly sad beauty that encompasses thirty years of family ups and downs in two and a half minutes. As the liner notes say, this was the Thanksgiving Dinner song that they could never gather around the Thanksgiving table to sing.

BOOKS BOOKS BOOKS

AUREALIS AWARD ENTRANTS 1998

My first list here is of the books I couldn't write about during 1998, i.e. the entrants for the Young Adults section of the 1998 Aurealis Award.

The award was begun four years ago by the editors of Melbourne's *Aurealis* magazine to provide Australia's first jury prize system for excellence in SF, fantasy and horror writing. Categories are Science Fiction, Fantasy, Young Adults, and Horror. Usually there are two awards in each category: Novel and Short Fiction. Heroic administrator during 1998 has been Peter McNamara, working by email from Adelaide to coordinate the four sets of judges and persuade publishers to send books to the correct set of judges.

In the Young Adults section, the other judges were Rosaleen Love and Sean Williams. Sean wasn't able to travel from Adelaide for the awards ceremony of 26 February, and Rosaleen dobbed me in to give the presentation speech for our category. Not for us the black-tie ceremony of the Arthur Clarke Awards. Not much money in evidence — only two publishers put money into the Aurealis Awards. All the catering was done by Justin Ackroyd at Slow Glass Books, Swanston Walk, Melbourne. In turn, Slow Glass sold a lot of books to people who turned up for the awards ceremony. No black tie, either. It was 25°C that afternoon, and the palatial premises of Slow Glass Books don't run to air-conditioning.

Nobody wanted long speeches, so nobody provided them. The idea was to read out the nominees; make a few remarks about the difficulty/ease of arriving at a winner; make the award; and allow the winner or the winner's representative to look suitably astonished/overcome.

Hence I threw away almost all of my speech (original version below).

The other winners were: **SF Novel:** *The Centurion's Empire*, by Sean McMullen (Tor); **SF Short Story:** 'The Truth About Weena' by David J. Lake (*Dreaming Down Under*); **Fantasy Novel:** *A Dark Winter* by Dave Luckett (Omnibus) and *Five Angels* by Jane Routley (Avon); **Fantasy Short Story:** 'A Walk-on Part in the War' by Stephen Dedman (*Dreaming Down Under*); **Horror Short Story:** 'A Positive' by Kaaron Warren (*Bloodsongs* No. 10); **Conveners' Award:** *Rabbits* by Shaun Tan (Lothian).

Here's the speech that I didn't quite give:

'For many years now, Children's and Young Adults' Fiction has been the Australian general publishing category with the least prejudice against science fiction, fantasy and horror. Such books often feature in the winners and runners-up of the Australian Children's Book Award. As a result, to read an Australian Young Adults' SF or Fantasy book is pretty much a guarantee of quality.

'We did not award the Short Fiction category this year

because there simply weren't enough stories to choose from. There was only one anthology specifically devoted to the field, and we saw only a few other notable stories. We felt that if we could not provide a strong short list, we would not give a winner. In 1999, perhaps, the short story field will again be very strong in this area.

'Thanks to the hard work of Peter McNamara, the publishers were persuaded to send us virtually all their Young Adults titles for the year. Only one or two books were boring. Many were funny, and an even greater number had strong story lines. The standard of characterisation varied somewhat, according to authors' interests. Among the SF titles, we noticed an emphasis on the doings of mad scientists. We're not sure what this says about the current status of science in Australia.

'We found only one general fault, and it puzzled us. We noticed that many writers can maintain a strong story line for the first three quarters of a novel, then allow too much to happen too fast at the end. The resulting confusion often spoils an otherwise fine novel.

'The short-listed nominees for the Aurealis Award for Young Adults Fiction, Novel, for 1998, were:

- *Horsehead Boy* by Rory Barnes (HarperCollins)
- *Singing the Dogstar Blues* by Alison Goodman (HarperCollins)
- *Killing Darcy* by Melissa Lucashenko (University of Queensland Press)
- *A Dark Winter* by Dave Luckett (Omnibus Books)
- *The Night is for Hunting* by John Marsden (Pan Macmillan)

'*Horsehead Boy* is the best example of a group of funny books about mad scientists. It tells of a boy who wakes up to find himself as a disembodied head in a vat. The result is an effective mixture of social comedy and speculative SF.

'In *Killing Darcy* Melissa Lucashenko shows a special gift for writing about very strong, even startling characters. Although she is best known for writing about being Aboriginal in Australia, she also knows how to write very spooky fantasy scenes.

'*A Dark Winter* overrode the judges' prejudices against heroic fantasy. It is the most original, realistic, vivid and amusing example of the heroic fantasy genre to appear for years. When overseas readers discover Dave Luckett, there'll be no stopping him.

'*The Night is for Hunting* posed a real problem. Is it science fiction or not? Yes, it is, for it continues Marsden's series of books about the near-future invasion of Australia by an unnamed Asian country. But no it isn't, for its real theme is the implacable power of the Australian bush. All we can do is recommend it to a wide range of readers.

‘And the winner is Alison Goodman’s *Singing the Dogstar Blues*, a wonderful mixture of humour, SF ideas, sense of place (Melbourne in the middle of next century) and vivid action. *Singing the Dogstar Blues* is Alison Goodman’s first published novel.’

Alison received her award, thanked her partner, her publisher, Lucy Sussex, and several other people, then left the podium looking dazed.

‘Thanks again to Rosaleen Love and Sean Williams, who agreed with me most of the time, and Peter McNamara and the publishers who made the judging of 1998’s awards a pleasurable and instructive task.’

Here are my comments on individual books. I’ve left out a few that, although published as novels, were actually short stories in book form. The ratings are:

** Books highly recommended.

* Books recommended.

☹ Books about which I have severe doubts.

* **SWEETWATER NIGHT by Alison Stewart (Hodder Signature 0-7336-0570-2; 1998; 170 pp.)**

The publishers seem to think this has a horror/supernatural element merely because it has some suspense towards its end. Teenagers put themselves through a sort of trial when they return to Sweetwater Forest, where horrible things have happened.

** **KILLING DARCY by Melissa Lucashenko (University of Queensland Press 0-7022-3041-3; 1998; 230 pp.)**

Despite her surname, Melissa Lucashenko is an Aboriginal writer who is quickly building a strong reputation as a fine novelist. Of all the authors I read for the Aurealis Award, she has the greatest ability to create strong, ferocious characters that come to life in front of you. Darcy Mango has a chip on his shoulder, which is not helped by being forced to work for a White farming family. However, the members of the family are down on their luck, so reluctantly he forms a friendship with them. He also discovers an old house hidden in the bush, and in it a camera that takes pictures of the past. Lucashenko writes an urgent tale that combines realism and some elegant science-fiction effects.

** **COLD IRON by Sophie Masson (Hodder 0-7336-0583-4; 1998; 185 pp.)**

‘When the penniless Tattercoats is included in an invitation to the Earl of Malmsey’s grand ball, the servant-girl Malkin and Pug the gooseherd are determined that she will attend and claim the inheritance denied her since birth.’ Thus the blurb; and yes, the book could just have easily have been written by a British writer, and perhaps it’s already been published overseas. Masson has a lively, light style, and her group of characters (who form a family of pilgrims) make pleasant company for the reader. When Masson tries to play games with metaphysical mirrors at the end, she loses me as a reader. The social comedy of the first half of the book is more convincing than the Great Revelations at the end.

* **THE LYREBIRD’S TAIL by Sue Robinson (Lothian 0-85091-883-9; 1998; 158 pp.)**

Not even eligible for the Award. Solid but mundane tale of teenagers helping dad to regain his inheritance, which is a piece of land in the bush, before it can be

stolen by legal bandits.

* **FANTASTIC WORLDS edited by Paul Collins (HarperCollins Moonstone 0-7322-5878-2; 1998; 316 pp.)**

A short-story collection with some strong stories and too many duds. Three of the stories were sort of all right: Sean McMullen’s ‘Chronicler’, Jane Routley’s ‘City of Whirlwinds’ and Garth Nix’s ‘From the Lighthouse’. But the only story with real power is Cherry Wilder ‘Old Noon’s Tale’, which is a longer version of a story that was first published in 1990 (and therefore wasn’t eligible for the Aurealis Award for Best YA Story, which we didn’t award anyway).

** **A DARK WINTER: THE TENEBRAN TRILOGY, BOOK ONE by Dave Lockett (Omnibus 1-86291-368-4; 1998; 328 pp.)**

I groaned when I began this book. Not another bloody heroic fantasy! I was soon won over. Lockett has written one of the few original and entertaining books in the genre. He uses simple means to go where no other fantasy writer dares to go: strong, realistic, often funny sentences; clear delineation of characters, from the most humble to the most headstrong; and in the final battle scenes, hair-raising and original variations on the Huge Threat From Over The Horizon. Yes, there will be a sequel. Despite that, this is one of the few contenders that had an effective ending.

* **PIGGY IN THE MIDDLE by Catherine Jinks (Penguin 0-14-038586-X; 1998; 238 pp.)**

One of several mad-scientist novels sent to us. This, like many other contenders, begins well but finally disappears up its own infundibulum of hectic action scenes. Jinks’s style is attractive, combining humour and suspense (the strangest and jolliest character is the sixteen-year-old genius who is cloning people-like pigs) but somehow she doesn’t have enough puff to keep this little craft going.

* **RED CITY by Sophie Masson (Moonstone 0-7322-5916-9; 1998; 200 pp.)**

Masson’s style is always enjoyable to read, but in *Red City* she is so busy being mysterious and magical that the story disappears up its own enchanted castles and islands. I suspect Masson has been just too ambitious too early in her career, but her next few books will be worth seeking out.

** **VIBES: JIGSAW by Christine Harris (Hodder 0-7336-0884-1; 1998; 136 pp.)**

** **VIBES: SHADOWS by Christine Harris (Hodder 0-7336-0885-X; 1998; 138 pp.)**

** **VIBES: MASKS by Christine Harris (Hodder 0-7336-0886-8; 1998; 136 pp.)**

** **VIBES: SUSPICION by Christine Harris (Hodder 0-7336-0887-6; 1998; 138 pp.)**

Hodder snookered itself by issuing these books as a series of novellas instead of as one novel. Although each piece is intriguing, the four sections don’t quite add up. If they had, a complete *Vibes* novel would have been hard to beat. After she wakes up in a hospital bed, Brittany Cooke cannot remember anything about her earlier life. She cannot even remember the people who claim to be her parents. Very weird things begin to happen to her. She seems to have a double, a malevolent person intent on upsetting her attempts to live a normal suburban life. Put the four books together, and they have quite a neat paranoid SF plot. Split them apart, and the story keeps restarting instead of flowing

from one section to another. The strength of *Vibes* is its sharp critique of modern suburban living as seen through the eyes of an ultra-aware teenager. Funny, perceptive and memorable; ruined by a bad marketing move.

* **FERAL by Kerry Greenwood**

(Hodder 0-7336-0888-4; 1998; 220 pp.)

Feral is just one of the many Aurealis YA entrants that begins brilliantly, but falls apart at the end. Like most of the other authors in the competition, Greenwood paces the first half of the book well. Her characters, living on the outskirts of an almost completely destroyed Melbourne, gather forces in order to defeat the despotic regime. They are interesting characters, this far-future Melbourne is well observed, and everything is going well until the book collapses at the end under the weight of its own busyness. A pity, for it's rather nice seeing the Melbourne Casino (converted by Kerry Greenwood into a fortress of the far-future tyrants) being destroyed.

* **THE HOUSE OF MANY ROOMS (THE DOORWAYS TRILOGY, BOOK ONE) by Michael Pryor**
(Hodder 0-7336-0926-0; 1998; 222 pp.)

I've read some very funny work by Michael Pryor, but there isn't much humour here. Instead, he gives us what is becoming one of the tired ideas in SF, characters who are propelled through 'doorways' from one alternative Earth to another. Their pursuers never give up; there is no ending but merely the necessity for a sequel. Pryor can do a lot better than this.

** **SINGING THE DOGSTAR BLUES**
by Alison Goodman

(HarperCollins Voyager 0-7322-5967-3; 1998; 200 pp.)

The winnah! I've already written a long review of this book for *Australian Book Review*, pointing out that *Singing the Dogstar Blues* combines the realism of a well-imagined near-future Melbourne, the transcendent experience of time travel and the disturbing experience of trying to get along with visiting aliens, and the sharpest humour shown by any current Australian SF writer.

* **HORSEHEAD BOY by Rory Barnes**

(Angus & Robertson 0-207-19663-X; 1998; 170 pp.)

One of the judges thought this book was very funny, but as with so many other contenders, all I remember is a book that begins well but collapses towards the end. Spud Wilson dies, but a team of mad scientists revive his brain in a vat to use for their own nefarious purposes. Rory Barnes tells a story well, but I don't think he had quite enough story to fill this novel.

☞ **TRANSLATIONS IN CELADON by Sally Odgers**

(HarperCollins Voyager 0-7322-5908-8; 1998; 269 pp.)

The title just about says it all. This is pretentious, and dull, and self-important. I couldn't get past page 70.

** **MAMA'S BABIES by Gary Crew**

(Lothian 0-85091-827-8; 1998; 159 pp.)

Gary Crew has a reputation as one of the finest Australian writers for children and young adults, and this book shows why he deserves that reputation. Unfortunately, it has no fantasy or SF element, and the only 'horror' quality is in the very realistic nature of the discoveries that Sarah makes during her years of living with 'Mama Pratchett' in New South Wales during the 1890s. The recreation of the period and the strong, sensible, caring personality of the story-teller are the strengths of the book, since the reader easily guesses the big surprise at the end.

** **THE NIGHT IS FOR HUNTING by John Marsden**
(Macmillan 0-7329-0944-9; 1998; 252 pp.)

As a panel, we had problems with this book. At one level, it is the best-written book we read: it shows a lean writing style; exciting, even startling adventures; memorable characters and situations. It is also science fiction by genre: it is the seventh in the series of books Marsden is writing about a group of teenagers who are trying to survive after an unnamed Asian country invades Australia. But it is not primarily science fiction: it is one of those near-future novels that tell of events the writer believes really could happen quite soon. Marsden's purpose is to show Australian teenagers that they should not take anything for granted, especially lives that are luxurious compared to those led by people in much of the rest of the world. He shows that, if the worst should come to the worst, the people who would survive best are those who have greatest knowledge of the Australian bush. *The Night Is for Hunting* is actually a hymn to the paradoxical nature of the Australian bushland, which I have never seen described better (except, of course, by Patrick White). It hides the survivors from the invaders, but is equally unforgiving to the main characters, who are trying to escort a group of feral city kids to safety. This is very superior adventure fiction.

** **FAT BOY SAVES WORLD by Ian Bone**
(Lothian 0-85091-938-X; 1998; 208 pp.)

Wonderful title. Not a bad book. Lots of comedy and high melodrama about a family in which one child refuses to speak and another refuses to get on with anybody. But it turns out to be psychological fiction, à la Robert Cormier, with no SF or fantasy elements.

* **WALKING TO BABYLON by Kate Orman**
(Virgin 0-426-20521-9; 1998; 256 pp.)

Apart from *Singing the Dogstar Blues*, this is the only interstellar SF book submitted to the panel. Most of our writers hug their native soil all too firmly, but Orman likes to skylark around in time and space. The trouble is that she is so determined to be 'bright' and 'entertaining' that I remember few events past those of the first few pages. I recall that this book was well plotted, but I cannot remember anything about that plot.

OTHER BOOKS READ SINCE 31 AUGUST 1998

** **EXTRA(ORDINARY) PEOPLE by Joanna Russ**
(St Martin's Press 0-312-27806-3; 1984; 161 pp.)

'Souls' and 'The Mystery of the Young Gentleman' are the two powerful stories in this collection. 'Souls' is

about the abbess from the future who has never quite warmed to her job of protecting nuns from marauding Vikings. The relationship between the abbess and her young charge is very effective; in some of the later

scenes Russ gives some clues about the time-travelling army who appear in many of her stories and novels. Are they lesbians, neuters or hermaphrodites? I'm still not sure after reading 'The Mystery of the Young Gentleman', but I'm not as puzzled as the seafaring nineteenth-century gentleman who finds himself falling in love with one of them. Russ applies all her seductive powers to showing what seduction is all about. The other stories are unsatisfactory, but they provide new clues about the culture of the time travellers (or are they merely dimension travellers?).

** **THE TWO OF THEM** by Joanna Russ
(Berkley 0-425-04106-9; 1978; 181 pp.)

A very strange set-up here. Two of Russ's time/dimension travellers observe a culture that seems to be enclosed within a small moon, which itself seems to be in a time-satellite cut off from the rest of the universe. When one of the time travellers abducts a girl from the very restricted, Muslim-based culture, it's not quite clear by what method of travel they reach her home culture. And is this the Earth from which the travellers set out? The human relations here are vivid, but it would take a reader much cleverer than me to sort out the nature of the SF trappings.

** **O CANADA: AN AMERICAN'S NOTES ON CANADIAN CULTURE** by Edmund Wilson
(Rupert Hart-Davis; 1967; 245 pp.)

I'd always wanted to read *O Canada*, but found it only after Tony Thomas told me where to look. It's an odd book, which concentrates on Canada's culture and literature immediately before and after World War II, in particular French Canada, an enclosed, paranoid world about which I knew nothing. It's unlikely I'll ever read the authors Wilson talks about, but I'd like to read more Canadian history, very little of which is available in Australia.

** **A SIGHT FOR SORE EYES** by Ruth Rendell
(Hutchinson 0-09-1800625; 1998; 352 pp.)

This is a strange book, even for non-Wexford Ruth Rendell. In a role that Jude Law should play on film, the main character starts with a chip on his shoulder, and Rendell lets that chip get bigger and bigger. Give a lonely psychotic enough rope to hang himself, and he'll do it. What will surprise even the addicted Rendell reader is the ingenuity of the hanging process.

** **LUMINOUS** by Greg Egan
(Millennium 1-85798-552-4; 1998; 352 pp.)

Greg Egan has achieved an evenness of texture and consistency of accomplishment in these stories that makes it difficult to remember them separately. They so nearly add up to one Eganworld that it's hard to differentiate between their viewpoints. I've given four stars to most of them, and particularly liked 'Transition Dreams', 'Silver Fire', 'Chaff' and 'The Planck Dive'.

** **THE EXTREMES** by Christopher Priest
(Simon & Schuster 0-684-81632-6; 393 pp.)

Until the night I visited Slow Glass for the Aurealis Awards, I thought I would miss out on my own copy of *The Extremes*. Alan Stewart received a hardback review copy from the local distributor five months ago. Thanks, Alan, for lending it to me. The problem seems to be that most local distributors are now not importing hardback fiction from British publishers. They are importing the large softcovers instead. But *The Extremes* appeared only in hardcover. So what did the distribu-

tor do? As far as I can tell, failed to import the book until Slow Glass put in a large enough order. Almost certainly their copies are the only ones to reach Australia.

So we nearly missed out on the latest book by Chris Priest, surely a major English author by any standards. In *The Extremes* he's doing something new and interesting. There is, as overseas reviewers have noted, an unusual amount of violence in this novel, but that's hardly the point. Is this real or virtual violence? We are told that the main character lives in a world that is very like our own, but it is an alternative world. Virtual reality stations have become as available as computer games arcades are in our own world. At which point does the main character's world separate from something we might call 'reality' and entirely enter a virtual world? My guess is that this occurs in the first few pages, but I will never know. There is no solid ground here. The shifting ground achieves its own reality through Priest's admirable prose. Or is there just a bit too much slippage? Compared to *The Prestige*, which was exactly the right length, *The Extremes* feels too long for its material. But maybe I'll feel differently when I've read it again.

** **DREAMING DOWN UNDER**
edited by Jack Dann and Janeen Webb
(HarperCollins Voyager 0-7322-5917-7; 1998; 556 pp.)

This is the Big Australian Short Story Collection for 1998, and maybe for a few years to come. I've read better Australian original fiction anthologies, some from as many as twenty years ago, but *Dreaming Down Under* is welcome for showing us what our writers are doing right now. I'm recommending it because, although it contains many disappointing stories, it also has some very enjoyable pieces, such as Isobelle Carmody's 'The Man Who Lost His Shadow', a dark tale set in Prague; George Turner's 'And Now Doth Time Waste Me', which was unfinished when Turner died, but even without an ending is a vigorous speculative yarn; Russell Blackford's 'The Soldier in the Machine', which continues his gladiatorial interests into the twentieth century; David J. Lake's Aurealis Award-winning 'The Truth About Weena', which nicely gives a theory for Wells's *The Time Machine* and pulls the plug on many well-loved notions of time travel; Jane Routley's 'To Avalon', which shows that not all Australian tourists to England are as gullible as we look; Sean McMullen's 'Queen of Soulmates', an apocalyptic fantasy with a spectacular ending; and Simon Brown's nicely malignant 'With Clouds at Our Feet'. And much more besides. No sign of an American release yet.

*** **LES MISÉRABLES** by Victor Hugo
(Collins Classics; 1862; 1372 pp.)

No, I didn't read it in French, although Elaine did so a few years ago. This 1950s translation seems complete, and it's not too awkward. This is the first time I've read *Les Misérables* since 1960 or 1961, when I was either thirteen or fourteen, but I was astonished at how many scenes had remained clearly in my memory. Or perhaps that's because I have heard this book read on radio and seen the wonderful 1933 French film. I've avoided the musical so far. Hugo's method is more breathtaking for its ambition than for its execution, particularly in the second half. For every episode, he first takes the eagle's-eye view, then the bird's-eye view, then the viewpoint of the interested observer on the

ground . . . then gets back to his characters, whose next adventures we are waiting for. Hugo's overwhelming structure is meant to give the sense that every character represents an ingredient of Greater France, and, later, of mighty Paris. But the characters have their own absolute qualities; they would be even more vivid if not quite so surrounded by the World According to Hugo. The relationship between the trio formed by Valjean, Javert and the Thénardiens gives the essential energy to the book; but also vital is Hugo's ability to write outrageously successful scenes of crazy melodrama and breathless suspense. I plan not to leave it another forty years before rereading *Les Misérables*.

** **NOT THE ONLY PLANET: SCIENCE FICTION TRAVEL STORIES** edited by **Damien Broderick** (Lonely Planet 0-86442-582-1; 1998; 250 pp.)

To judge from his record over the last twenty-five years or so, Damien Broderick is by far Australia's most accomplished anthologist. Asked by Lonely Planet, the publisher of travel books, to produce an SF anthology about travel, he sought out some very enjoyable stories, including some I had never read. The star of the anthology is Gene Wolfe's 'Seven American Nights', seemingly written by a very unreliable observer. He takes drugs every night, he believes unlikely tales told by the natives, and the America he visits seems to have little to do with the America we know from other fiction. What is really going on? There must be a wealth of critical literature expended on this story. The travellers of Brian Aldiss's 'The Difficulties Involved in Photographing Nix Olympica' are both unreliable travellers and unreliable observers, burdened by their own presuppositions yet won over by the majesty of Mars's vast mountain, which they attempt to climb. With his vivid mixture of poetic and factual detail, Aldiss actually places the reader on the surface of Mars. All the other stories in this collection are interesting, especially John Varley's 'In the Bowl', which shows that when we get to suburban Venus it is likely to be a very strange tourist trap.

* **THE CRUCIBLE OF CONSCIOUSNESS** by **Zoltan Torey**

(Oxford University Press 19-55087-6; 1999; 273 pp.)

I copy-edited this book, but I cannot say with certainty whether it is merely an interesting side comment on the whole consciousness-mind-artificial intelligence debate, or a very important book right at the centre of the debate. Let people with expertise in the field take up Torey's challenges. I became frustrated because the author defines his main terms according to other terms which he has also defined in a very technical way. To the extent that I could sort out the concepts from the arcane language in which they are expressed, it seemed to me that Torey's argument is convincing.

** **THE RESURRECTION MAN** by **Sean Williams** (HarperCollins Voyager 0-7322-5903-7; 1998; 609 pp.)

I recommend this novel by Sean Williams, although I think it is at least 200 pages too long. A future detective thriller, *The Resurrection Man's* best pages are vitiated by many other pages of boring explanations and investigations. In a world of matter transportation, the problem is not the technology but the regulation of it. Foolproof systems fail, and a criminal captures women at the moment they transfer from one booth to another. One woman arrives at her destination; her

momentary 'double' is captured and murdered. The main character is persuaded that the criminal is a similarly generated double of himself. Complications unwind. Not so long ago, the publisher would have demanded this be cut to 200 pages; is it possible that publishers now demand extra thickness?

** **THE FABULOUS ENGLISHMAN** by **Robert McCrum** (Houghton Mifflin 0-395-37776-5; 1984; 274 pp.)

I should be prejudiced against the writings of the man who, as the new Publisher at Faber & Faber, ended George Turner's British career. But McCrum is such an all-round winning writer, a cross between Brian Aldiss and Graham Greene, that I have to say this one of the most exciting, amusing and moving thrillers I've read for a long time. The first-person narrator is not the story-teller. He writes the novel on behalf of the real story-teller, himself a writer who can no longer write anything but advertising copy. Trapped within his own inadequacies, the main character corresponds for many years with a man in Prague. When finally he takes the journey to Prague, long after the events of 1968 which made him obsessed about Czechoslovakia, the main character discovers a bizarre situation. However, the people in Prague who regard him as the 'fabulous Englishman' have long accepted their peculiar fate, which hits him all at once.

** **THE TWINKLING OF AN EYE: MY LIFE AS AN ENGLISHMAN** by **Brian Aldiss** (Little Brown 0-316-64706-3; 1998; 484 pp.)

When finally this book arrived from Britain, I was intrigued to find out how much it would differ from both *Bury My Heart at W. H. Smith's*, Brian's literary memoir from a few years ago, and various memoirs he's published during the last decade. Here he tells both less, and more: less about the worst of his schooldays, but much more about his army days; still not much about his first marriage, which ended in isolation and *Hothouse* and *Greybeard*, but more than perhaps he meant to say about the unsuspected (by me) dark days of the 1980s, when life seemed sterile and Brian and Margaret's marriage was under threat. Margaret died just after Brian had written the book, which is a panegyric to her and both families of children. What fun it has been to be a writer! is the main feeling of the book — but at least here Brian is willing to admit that it hasn't been all fun.

** **ZONES** by **Damien Broderick** and **Rory Barnes** (HarperCollins Moonstone 0-7322-5760-3; 1997; 224 pp.)

What if *Zones* had been released during 1998 rather than 1997? Alison Goodman would have been fighting for that first place in the Aurealis Award for Young Adults. This is the best book by Damien Broderick I've read, though I have to consider that Rory Barnes might have been responsible for the clever insights about the lives of teenagers. Jenny receives weird phone calls, from someone who asks her to believe he's calling from the past. While she's deciding whether or not to get involved in time communication, she's trying to survive her parents' separation and the developing relationship between her best friend and the egghead son of her mother's new boyfriend. Lots of humour here, and vivid characters and action. I thought *Zones* was going to lose its point at the end. Instead it comes up with a very satisfactory piece of time twisting.

THE BEST SUNSETS IN TEXAS: The mailing comments

MAILING No. 184, OCTOBER 1998

Roger Sims: A DIFFERENT KIND OF ANZAPAZINE

Always nice to read some fannish history, ROGER, especially from somebody who's been around for awhile. You mention the difference between 'convention' (worldcon) and 'conference' (all other conventions). That distinction seems to have disappeared in the late 1930s or early 1940s. That resembles the situation in Australia in the 1960s — the national convention would be the only convention for the year throughout the continent. Which were the first American 'conferences' to change their names to 'conventions'?

Leanne Frahm: FROG OF FROG HALL No. 6

Good on Kerry Jr. Since I come from a Baptist-like background (Churches of Christ), I realise how totally disgusted most of them were when he insisted that they serve alcohol at the wedding. No such luck at our wedding, although only one of Elaine's brothers-in-law (since divorced from Elaine's sister) was impolite enough to mention the alcohol drought. Having wedded among in-laws, we partied with fans and friends, thanks to Sally Yeoland and John Bangsund. Elaine and I made up for lost alcohol time.

Ah! leeches. Great phobia story. I feel about dogs much the way you feel about leeches. But I've never met leeches sniffing the air for blood, so I guess I wouldn't like them much either.

Keith Curtis pens *poetry* these days? The mind boggles. Somehow I don't think we'll recognise each other if/when he turns up at Aussiecon.

John Cargher was very bitter when the ABC dropped *Music for Pleasure* a couple of years ago. He retains *Singers of Renown*, but for a long time it was placed at a time when I and most Melburnians are unlikely to listen: 6 a.m. Sundays. Currently it's also on at 4 p.m. Saturdays. The same ABC retained Dr A. E. Floyd's music program (the predecessor of *Music for Pleasure*) at prime time on Sunday nights until Dr Floyd was ninety-one and could barely speak into a microphone. John Cargher has written that it's not so much the money that matters, but his need to keep working to fend off loneliness now that his wife has died. Cargher's programs have always been popular. The ABC could easily have transferred both programs to ABC-FM, but didn't.

Yes, I've given up on Patricia Cornwell, mainly because her plots are no longer realistic, but merely paranoid-fanciful.

Karen Johnson: ANZAPANS ONLY No. 1 OUT OF THE KAJE No. 2

As someone who is more frightened by threats to my eyesight than any other possible threat, I felt a tendril of horror when I read your words 'possible glaucoma'. There are effective treatments for glaucoma these days, I'm told, so insist on the best from your doctor.

I have to use Word from time to time, but I never get used to it. For me there are too many bugs and oddities in

each version. Also, I've never discovered how to insert and manipulate illustrations correctly in Word documents. Instead, I process all my words in good old WordStar, then import the WordStar file into Ventura. I have access to both Quark XPress and Pagemaker, but both seem very awkward programs compared with Ventura. But if you're used to Quark or Pagemaker, learning Ventura would send you stark raving nuts.

When you've been collecting fanzines for 31 years, as I have, you find that almost none of them fit on shelves. Tops of cupboards, bottoms of cupboards, boxes under tables . . . they fit almost anywhere but on shelves.

'Gafia' is a fannish word that has changed its meaning over the years to the opposite of its original meaning. Originally it meant to 'get away from it all' by joining fandom. Since the 1940s fandom has become such a strenuous activity that the weary fan 'gets away from it all' by escaping to the mundane world.

Another Doc Smith fan! Merciful heavens. Bill will have you on the board of a re-formed COMORG if you're not careful.

I have no intention of touching Windows 98. Sounds like the ultimate Microsoft disaster product, especially as they finally got Windows 95 pretty much right with the second upgrade.

On to the *Kaje*, rapidly becoming Australia's Leading Edge Fanzine. Aren't you glad? Such a satisfying way of going broke!

More stuff about collecting. Visit our place sometime to see what 50 years of collecting looks like! You'll run home screaming and throw out every collection of everything.

I'd forgotten the ABC's National Poetry Day. This shows that I don't appreciate poetry as I should. I haven't tried to write a poem since I was fourteen. Occasionally I read a book of poetry. I don't attend poetry readings, because poets are often the worst readers of their own work. I wish our best actors would recite new poems instead of the poets. If I need to write something (as you describe in your poem 'Dreams') I choose the essay form or, very occasionally, the short story form. But I don't like my own short stories, so I haven't written any for many years. But you're not alone. Poetry readings are very popular, and show that there is a much greater thirst for poetry than is registered by sales of books of the stuff. (Nobody is willing to say that books of poetry probably don't sell because with all that blank space they usually look like poor value for money.)

Please keep writing poetry and writing about it. I wonder where we could find a list of the Top 100 (or whatever) Poems as chosen by ABC readers?

Thanks for the excellent diary of the Victorian Gas Crisis. We only made do because people offered help. Our vet lent us a small electric kettle. Otherwise I would have had two weeks without a decent cup of coffee! A few days later, Margaret, Elaine's sister, lent us a much larger electric

kettle. We found in a cupboard the electric frying pan, which we haven't used for years. Most nights Elaine used it to cook variations on a magnificent pilaf-style casserole. The only real discomfort was taking a cold shower: a necessary evil, not recommended to anybody with heart disease.

The partner of Elaine's contact person at one of the publishers is the co-owner of an Indian restaurant in Fitzroy. At first the owners hoped to stay open, but could offer only a small range of dishes. The restaurant had to close for most of the Gas Crisis. On the first night of reopening, Elaine and I ate there. We discovered that it is the best Indian restaurant we've ever visited. Keep it in mind. Chishti's in Johnston Street, Fitzroy, just near Nicholson Street.

Jean Weber: JEANZINE No. 119

All my work is boring, and the best rate I can get is \$40 an hour — laughably low to some members of ANZAPA, and laughably high to others. As you say, it would be nice to get a whole lot of work at \$US40 an hour.

That's the trouble with choosing an idyllic spot like Airlie Beach — the resort developers discover it at the same time. I trust that giant rock surrendered to the jack hammers before you went mad.

Eric Lindsay: KINGDOM OF THE BLAND

Okay, I said I would never envy anyone again, until I read about your retirement pad at Airlie Beach. Of course, it took a heart attack to change your lifestyle . . .

In her contribution, Jean seemed to think your new eating regime was pretty hard to take. Sounds okay to me. Elaine and I eat healthy foods at meals, but because we're working at home we tend to eat snacks as well. I should eat fruit instead of sweet things, but often don't.

I've solved the World Wide Web problem — I almost never go surfing. I answer the email messages as they come in, and that's that. I was so pleased by the response to my giant paper aeroplane, *Metaphysical Review*, that I've put off learning how to write Web pages. The trouble with Web pages is that you can't aim them at the right people, or even be sure that *anybody* sees them.

Thanks for your information about the warning signs of a heart attack. I do occasionally get that tightness around the chest and abdomen, but I can always stop the pain by getting a click out of my backbone.

Lee split up with Irene at the end of 1997. He suffered the heart attack at the end of February 1998, and was fortunate to lob in at the Monash Medical Centre, where the heart people knew what was happening and shoved a stent up his aorta. He's been feeling fine since.

Thanks also for the superb condensed guide to writing a Web page. I'll use that as an anchor when I start reading *Writing Web Pages for Dummies*.

You're just a bit above half my weight. No wonder nobody could believe that Eric Lindsay would be the one to suffer a heart attack. I'm more like James Allen's size, which is why I worry about this possibility/probability/certainty.

Jeanne Mealy: LAND OF 10,000 LOONS

Your mention of Jane Routley reminds that almost everybody in Australian fandom above a certain age, plus quite a few pro writers, have been members of ANZAPA over the years. Many, such as Lee Harding, Justin Ackroyd and Carey Handfield, have stayed only a few mailings and written very little while they've been here. An amazing number of overseas fans have been members, again often for short periods.

John D. Berry was a member for quite awhile, if you consider that his stays were always short. Joseph Nicholas and Judith Hanna were our longest-serving overseas members, except for your noble self. I trust that you will get to Aussiecon III, and I'll finally get to meet you.

You don't say whether or not Garrison Keillor was starring in *How to Talk Minnesotan*. Can't imagine a show with that name without him.

Sounds as if you had a good summer; I wish I could say the same about ours, but Elaine and I have been flooded with so much work that we haven't done much, even on the milder days. (Most days during January and February were too warm for vigorous exercise.) I try to walk as often as possible. If I walk to Carlton, a pleasant couple of miles' walk from here, I tend to return carrying CDs or books. That's an expensive way to exercise.

Lucy Schmeidler: OZ SF FAN

Welcome, Lucy. We must stop meeting at strange fannish rendezvous, such as Eidolist. At least you're not so much of an 'Australian SF fan' as Weller. She took things too far: she was a rabid fan of Australian Rules football, which can be seen on American cable TV. (A pity about having to use the past tense. None of us can raise her, although we've tried. We fear that she's suffered some major illness, but we cannot even get information from her family about why she has disappeared.)

Thanks for your interest in things Australian, especially our SF writers, who aren't doing too badly at the moment. It's a pity that Peter McNamara cannot afford to keep Aphelion Books going. But we at Norstrilia Books know how he feels. Mac has gone one further than we did — it seems that he has closed the business altogether, and is not even selling back stock.

Terry Frost missed out on New York by exploring it alone. It helps to be guided by a dedicated film fan, as I was in 1973. A pity I can't track down Barry Gillam, who was my guide then. Moshe Feder sent me an address for him; I sent a letter a few months ago; no reply. It was Barry who ensured that New York remains my favourite place in the world after Melbourne. (Toronto was marvellous, too, but I wouldn't want to be there in winter.) One day I might get to look at London (a) in summer, and (b) with a cluey fannish guide. Although I wandered in London for nearly three weeks, I feel that I missed out on most of its best features.

Michael O'Brien: MODULE

I rarely remember the plots of books, although of course the plot has to be told convincingly to keep one turning the pages. Usually the plot is merely *mechanism*; necessary to keep the machine working, but uninteresting otherwise. I disagree about Agatha Christie: I do like the company of her antiquated characters, especially Poirot and Miss Marple, and the world they inhabit. But I agree that in Agatha Christie I've found some of the few truly memorable plots in fiction. That's because they are not plots; they are bits of theatre. If you are fooled by the bit of business in one corner of the room, you really remember the revelation of the real bit of business going on in the other corner of the room. The best Christie plots are much more clever than that. In *The Mirror Crack'd*, for instance, the plot convinces us that somebody is trying to kill Character I and mistakenly kills Character II, whereas the point of the business is that Character I wanted to kill Character II all along, and had to make the murder look accidental. Christie specialises in Escher-like reversals of viewpoint.

Michael Green: REALITY MODULE No. 6

I find nothing new in your essay 'Invaginated Shadow Mind', but I'm interested that you can offer such sophisticated accounts of your own dreams. I wrote down a lot of my major dreams in the early eighties, and still have those notebooks. However, I often found it very difficult to offer even the most cursory of 'explanations' for the dreams. Most of them were experiences too deeply felt to be explained. Some of the Big Dreams remain as mysterious to me today as when I wrote them down, despite the fact that I ran a competition in *TMR* hoping some of my readers might be able to untangle the dreams for me. (For other dreams, of course, the everyday meanings are startlingly clear.)

Thanks very much for 'A Little Family History'.

I'm jealous. I've never had a flying dream or an out-of-body projection. I hate mundanity, yet all my experience is mundane and my abilities mediocre. I escape into larger mental spheres only by listening to great music or reading wonderful books.

I can't see any point in directed dreaming. The whole point of dreaming is raising the theatre curtain of the conscious and allowing the unconscious to spring into action behind the curtain. Directed dreaming is leaving the curtain down.

Sally Yeoland: LE CHAT PARTI No. 37

There seems to be a special tribe of people called 'bosses within organisations'. Only people from this tribe are permitted to become bosses. The essential characteristics of members of this tribe are (a) almost complete inability to deal with non-boss people; (b) almost complete lack of knowledge about the jobs over which they have supervision. The 'Paul' you describe on Page 1 sounds like a typical member of the boss tribe. Brian, my boss at Macmillan, was not of the 'boss tribe'. I don't know how he slipped through the net. He has great people skills and a wide knowledge of the skills he was supervising. But he retired.

Your other news is no longer news to us, but I still find it very pleasant to read all the details again, in fine prose. Good to hear about the congenial new job.

Bill Wright: INTERSTELLAR RAMJET SCOOP

Stefan's thoughts on the Great Gas Crisis are inspired. I felt as if I needed that MICA paramedic every time I had a cold shower.

Thanks for responding to my agonised pleas for slightly more illuminating thoughts about E. E. Smith. Craig Engler's article is illuminating, and explains why Dick Jenssen was taking so much trouble to order (and having so much trouble ordering) the new editions of the 'Lensmen' books.

Dick said he has a copy of *The Whole Wide World*, but we haven't seen it yet. There's a wonderful sentence in Roger Ebert's review: 'Then he is betrayed, not because she left him, but because she abandoned their vision — a vision that had him promising her he could deliver the best sunsets in Texas right on order, as if he were God'. For thirty years I've been trying to write such a sentence.

Pavement Rage? I feel it every day. My shopping jeep is faster than your shopping jeep, so get yours out of the way.

Stefan should also do in-depth examinations of Cat Rage, Looming Towers of Unanswered Mail Rage, and As-Yet-Unread Books Rage.

'The Chase for Skase'. Stefan is correct: if Skasey had stayed in Australia and faced the music, he would have been

put in jail for twenty years, released after one year, and be well on his way to the next borrowed million by now. What's he got out of holing up in Majorca? Emphysema; and years and years of the company of Pixie.

If ever I feel stupid enough to consider buying a car, I will reread Stefan's article. That should cure the stupidity.

I usually won't read stuff pulled off the Net. I like my Bill Wright pure . . .

This doesn't happen until Page 16's Mailing Comments.

I don't believe you when you say 'it was hard to go back to work' after your leave. You're a workaholic of a special sort: you're not so much addicted to hard work as addicted to being at work. You're going to have to wean yourself off work before you retire officially. Some people, like me, could never stand the thought of being at work. Now no workplace would let me in the door.

You say you lost all your files when the firm converted from Windows 3.1 to 95. Don't you back up all the day's information files every day?

Barry Jones once described an MP's lifestyle: everything is done for you. Long-term pollies who retire have great trouble buying groceries at a supermarket. They don't believe the prices they see there. They think milk still costs 10 cents a bottle, an oversight which is reflected in the fanciful idiocy of their GST proposal.

Kevin Dillon's main roles at conventions during the late 1960s were washing dishes and bidding for books. He took both roles very seriously. Woe betide anybody else who tried to wash the coffee cups or outbid Kevin Dillon. Kevin worked as a newspaper proofreader and didn't seem to have a large income. He must have saved every penny throughout the year so that he could descend on luckless convention auctioneers.

Why do you always get facts wrong, Bill? John Foyster does not have a university position in Malaysia. He is working as a contractor to the education authority there, and he travels back and forth between Malaysia and Adelaide, with occasional stopovers in Melbourne.

Isn't it wonderful to know that, whatever else changes in life, we will always have John Foyster to point out our little faults to us? (As if we didn't know them already.) Thanks for approving the use of the Truly Amazing Ancient Fan Photo that appears on or near this page.

I'm so pleased to find out that 'after age 33 it is OK to be too tired to do anything'. I remember feeling that way long before I was 33, and the feeling only increases with age.

David and Sue Grigg: MEGATHERIUMS FOR BREAKFAST No. 17

Iceland is the European country I would *most* like to visit. However, I have no intention of learning Icelandic sagas before visiting there. From everything I've heard, Italy should also be on the must list, although I'm too old and tired to learn Italian.

Thanks for the review of Transparent Language Software language-learning CD-ROMs. Perhaps using one of them would help me to return to French and finally learn to read it fluently.

Marc Ortlieb: MY PINK HALF OF THE DRAINPIPE No. 6

3.5-inch floppy disks are proving to be more unstable than 5.25-inch floppies. When we bought the Zip drives, my great project was to transfer all the vital data on 3.5-inch floppies onto Zip disks, but I haven't even started. As I write, valuable programs (such as \$1800 worth of Quark XPress) is probably disappearing into nothingness.



The Ponderosa, Kyneton, 1974. **The Great Fannish Football Match.** John Foyster orders Bill Wright to centre half forward, or off the field. Extreme right, foreground, is Ken Ford. Behind him is Leigh Edmonds. Photographer: unknown.

You talk about the Good Old Days of Duplicating Fandom, and how people used to describe how they ungucked typewriter keys and how gently they squeezed their duplicating ink tubes, and other sensuous stuff. But *Ted White is still writing about this* . . . and on the Internet, too! On Memoryhole, the merest hint of nostalgia about hand-stippled stencils brings a three-page response from Ted how he prepared silk-screen stencils, and the exact angle at which one had to hold the stylus in order to draw on them. It's not even as if we can buy the stencils any more, let alone learn

to draw on them.

From time to time I've wondered how you picked up that unlikely-sounding surname of 'Ortlieb'. Thanks for the explanation.

Cath Ortlieb: YOU REALLY KNOW YOU'RE HOME WHEN YOU FIND A WOMBAT IN YOUR BED

Nice to know that even really computer-literate people such as schoolkids have trouble finding basic historical information on the Net.

MAILING No. 185, DECEMBER 1998

THE MIGHT WURLITZER 185

Nice cover. The worst of it is that Gunny is his own best obituarist. See my own cover this time. We are surrounded by his self-made memorials.

Jean Weber: JEANZINE No. 120

But (to echo something I wrote to Bill) don't you save to disk every half-day the latest version of whatever you're working on? Not that I can sound too self-righteous on this matter. During the penultimate failure of my hard disk, I realised that that was what must be happening. I thought I had saved everything, but I did not save all my fonts. Result: irrecoverable loss of Slimbach Book, which nobody seems to be able to supply me. Lots of people have it on their Macs, but nobody has it on a PC. And Corel has not released it.

Eric Lindsay: KINGDOM OF THE BLAND

If I had a year's free time, I might get around to 'squashing' the collection in the ways you describe. But then I think of the months of work it would take to reread thirty years of magazines in order to rip out the articles I would want to keep! And it would take another few weeks to transfer the CDs from plastic boxes to paper sleeves. There are also the months that would be spent sitting reading all the amazing stuff that I had completely forgotten I had, but which would suddenly appear from the shelves. I'd rather spend those months publishing some more fanzines.

'I'm not very fit' because 'I can't run any great distance' . . . I've never been able to run more than a hundred yards without feeling as if I'm dying of asphyxiation. Fitness is not something I miss in middle age, as I've never experi-

enced it.

Collingwood sounds much quieter than Airlie Beach. Move to the inner suburbs if you want to get away from it all (except when dotty Phil from down Keele Street decides to let off fireworks at midnight, of course).

Lyn McConchie: FAN'ATIC No. 66

'Tiger and the Tile' is a great cat story. One more for the International Cat Writers' Association. Our cats haven't taken up writing yet (not even Violet, who understands English). When they do, we'll sign them up for the Association.

Nobody seems to *want* GST except the ghodawful politicians. It seems inescapable here after the last federal election.

Leanne Frahm: FROG OF FROG HALL

The bimonthly ANZAPA blessing by the The Sainted Ortlieb is not completely an event without excitement. The night that Marc hands them out is the one compulsory Friday Night Myers Cafe Night. Members of ANZAPA have been observed spending the rest of the hour reading their mailing instead of indulging in fabulous fannish banter. In Bill Wright's case, he's usually reading his own contribution.

Gulp . . . am I the only person who wishes you'd asked ANZAPAns whether or not we'd like to preserve those ANZAPA mailings in an archive somewhere? Not that any of us has room to store them, but . . . every fanzine is sacred, Leanne. (Giant tear falls down giant Gillespie cheek.)

'The wrist thingie'. Ouch. From time to time I've had pain in both my thumbs, as well as the wrist. Fortunately my chiropractor and masseur between them are good at getting rid of such aches and pains. The best way of avoiding carpal tunnel syndrome, however, is variety of work. If I'm nobbled by a job that demands I write all the time, I can be denobbled (or double nobbled) by doing a job that demands I type all the time. Freelance editing: the high road to self-torture.

I liked the story of Len's demise. Nice to know that even one's aged relatives were randy.

If you can't get an award-winning short story out of that wedding, Leanne, you've lost your touch. The next *Dimboola*.

Diaries from when I was fourteen years old? I still have them. The only things interesting are the hit parades for 1961, which I collected obsessively, and which I still regard as priceless historical treasures. That's because there was no national Top 40 pop chart until well into the 1970s. Glenn A. Baker, who was collecting hit parades at the same time in Sydney, today quotes Sydney (pffft!) hit parades when giving 'historical' accounts of what was happening in Australian pop music in 1961. Thanks to my old old diaries, I know better; I know The Truth. Unfortunately, nobody ever asks my opinion. What has Glenn A. Baker got that I don't have, apart from a well-thumbed stack of Sydney hit parades?

Colour printing is not as cheap as I'd like, but it's less expensive than I expected. I usually do fifty copies of an apazine. To print the fifty colour covers at 360 dpi on the Epson takes most of one colour cartridge, which is about \$50. Fifty covers photocopied in colour at our local Snap dealer would be well over \$100. But the same fifty covers produced on the black-and-white laser printer probably still cost about \$30. Obviously it would be cheaper to do black-and-white cartoons, but that's not what Ditmar (Dick

Jenssen) is up to. He's into full-page baroque. And he's willing to supply covers to any fan editor who wants to publish them.

I usually write at 500 words an hour, absolute maximum. But when I sat down to write about George, I knew exactly what to say, just as if I'd been writing a letter to someone, and I wrote 3000 words in a couple of hours. I think I'll just keep writing about George; much easier than writing about anybody else, and it helps to fill fanzines.

Nobody's mentioned a memorial *dinner* for George. The whole of Aussiecon will be a memorial for George. The Convention Book will have three articles about him, including yet another part of the Turner Legend from me. I'm scheduled to deliver two talks on GT during the convention program. I wouldn't be surprised to see George is sitting there, every day, in the front row, taking mental notes and refuting us at the end of each speech and panel. How can a little obstacle like death keep George away?

Australian SF was pretty exciting in the late seventies and early eighties, but it wasn't much supported by cash. Today the major publishers are interested in Australian SF and fantasy writers, which is the real change from the Norstrilia Press/Cory & Collins period.

Terry Morris: HOLD THAT TIGER

To live near the Pink Lady factory! Don't mention the possibility. It's bad enough living near the Jasper shop, which sells us Lindt chocolates. Nice to see such words from a true Tim Tam taster. Tim Tams sell so fast at the local service station (mainly to Elaine and me) that they stay fresh. I agree that today's Tim Tams go stale much faster that they once did. Also, there used to be two more to the packet in the golden days of Tim Tam munching at Johnston Street.

When Nicky Taylor arrived in Melbourne, fresh from Zimbabwe, she was fooled by us into thinking that beer and Tim Tams was a national dish, like Vegemite on toast.

'How do you decide on silly movies' for a silly movie night? Ask Terry Frost to provide the program from his personal stock of cult movies.

I've just thought of a way in which a person could support the Anti-Football League and also be a football fan: support South Melbourne. On Monday morning, talk about how well South did at the weekend. Ask people how they rate South's chance for the VFL Final Four this year. Wear rosettes of South's colours in your buttonhole. Stuff like this. *Annoy* the footy fans.

Karen Johnson:

ANZAPANS ONLY: BUMPER CHRISTMAS ISSUE

Great stuff, even if I can't share your interest in Christmas. Elaine and I dread it more each year. However, it gives me one of my few chances to visit my mother, who lives at Rosebud. My sister Jeanette drives me there. Elaine visits her elderly aunt in Altona. When my mother still drove the car long distances, she visited us for Christmas dinner a few times, but it looks as if this won't happen again. Of greater regret is the fact that my mother's side of the family, the Triplets, don't have family gatherings these days. They did this every December during the 1980s.

Peacocks do make a horrible noise, especially if you don't know what's making the noise. When we were at Johnston Street twenty years ago, somebody on Smith Street owned a peacock, which was kept on a back balcony. It made weird noises at weird times. It fascinated Solomon, our senior cat. We'd call from our back balcony for him to come

to breakfast. Way off in the distance we could see him bounding from one roof to another. He usually ran from the direction of the peacock's back balcony.

I haven't used a graphics tablet yet. If you're using the mouse under Windows 95, it's easy to change it to a left-handed mouse by altering the Windows control.

Your news about discarding old Heinlein juveniles is so distressing that I don't know how to react. The second half of Heinlein's career might have been crap, but I'd like to think that the juveniles and the early stories are always available in a *library* to be discovered by each new generation. What are libraries *for* these days? Just shows how valuable the Melbourne SF Club Library is.

Lucy Schmeidler: OZ SF FAN

Since you keep popping up in Eidolist from time to time, I assume that your face healed okay and nothing too serious has happened since.

Since I suffer from (or am freed by) permanent writer's block of the fiction- and poetry-writing type, I can read your piece with a bit of distance and even some complacency. But what would it be like to suffer from fannish writer's block? That's looking into the chasm, isn't it? It's never happened, except when I've been disgusted with life itself. What would give me fannish writer's block would be the offer of money to write for fanzines. My mind would suffer from the same gluggish inertia that afflicts each time I sit down to edit a boring manuscript. But when editing boring manuscripts, I'm forever dreaming up wonderful fanzine articles that I will write when I get the time.

Sometimes I attend the pro writer panels at conventions, but usually I use conventions as a way of meeting people I wouldn't otherwise meet and put faces to well-known names. The ideal convention is a long low-key, cosy party. That works if I can see the damn name cards, which I can't without wearing my glasses. So if I stare a bit too closely before saying: 'Hi, Lucy!', please excuse me.

Amazing to hear from someone who's only been aware of George Turner since 1992. I met George when he was 51, and I am now 52. That was in December 1967. He influenced me more by the strength of his critical writing than his fiction, but until I can find the time to publish the best of George's critical writing, many people will remain ignorant of his best work.

I still haven't done the Norstrilia Press catalogue, because it keeps changing. Stocks of some books have run out. Justin Ackroyd has stocks at Slow Glass Books of some NP books.

Gerald Smith and Womble: A RAMBLING CHRISTMAS

Don't tell me about hard disk failure. I suffered from two of them in eight months. The first upgrade was a dud that lasted longer than most duds. Fortunately the brilliant Richard Hryckiewicz saved the Gillespie machine, but it still took me two days each time to reinstall all my programs. The story of *your* disk reinstallation nightmare experience sounds familiar.

Don't go off coffee cold turkey. The only time I tried this, I vomited constantly until I reached the doctor, who gave me an anti-nausea injection. The second time I tried to give up coffee, I slowly dropped the number of cups of coffee per day until I stopped altogether. But life without coffee (or rather, the hourly coffee break) was so bleak that after three weeks I returned to drinking coffee. That's my absolute addiction.

Thanks, Womble, for the story of why you are called

Womble. That's the first time I've heard the story.

You must be kidding, Gerald, when you try to 'explain' GST. None of us is any the wiser. All I think about is the approaching mountain of paperwork! The horror!

I still think drinking the squeezed juice of the humble lemon is a much better cure-all than echinacea or any of those strange thingies you find in the health foods shop.

'Left' still has a specific meaning to me: political actions that tend towards equality of wealth, privilege and opportunity between all citizens of a country or area. The most desirable country is that with the least difference in wealth between its richest and poorest citizens. A country is only as wealthy as its poorest person.

Which means John Howard must be pretty dumb to be as complacent as he seems to be. (Best quote I've seen on the Internet: 'John Howard must love Aboriginal people, because being in love means never having to say you're sorry.')

If you have more than one cat, it's usually more because of accident than design. Or more because of cats' design than yours.

'Have you ever seen a cat do a 180-degree turn in mid air and move back the way they came?' Yes. Solomon could do it, but he's long dead. Monty was just as agile, but he's also long since dead. Perhaps non-agile (or not-too-ambitious) cats last longest.

When Marc Ortlieb wanted Elaine to write a piece about me for the Aussiecon Convention Book, he asked her to write on 'Bruce and Cats'. When you read that piece, it will have to be my reply to 'A Tale of Two Cats', which reminded us of every cat who's ever owned us. Thanks, Gerald.

These days Carey Handfield installs MYOB in people's offices, so he's even busier than I am.

When Robin Johnson first appeared in fandom in the late sixties, he was famous for being able to — all at the same time — type stencils, watch TV, listen to the radio, monitor the recording of a cassette, read a book, and conduct a conversation. Witnesses say they have seen him doing this, but had trouble understanding the conversation.

The problem with Word at our house is that Elaine prepares her fanzine for the garden apa on her machine, then prints it through my machine on my laser printer. She's gone to a lot of trouble to make sure that set-up on each machine is the same, but her fanzine often comes out quite differently on my machine, and she often has to check every line on my screen before printing.

The Greens and the Democrats (less so, since they caved into Howard in the Senate during 1997) are often the only parties to say anything sensible at all. The Senate figures show that a lot of people are cynical about the motives and methods of both major parties. Let's give 'em a real shock, with 33 per cent to each of the Coalition, Labor, and Other Parties in the next Senate election. Even the Reps might yield some interesting results if that division occurred there.

Your Books Read: *Guardian Angel* made me a Paretzky fan, until I found that most of her other books used the same formula. *Tunnel Vision* is much less interesting. *Dogsbody* is a Diana Wynne Jones book that I don't own. Must do something about that. And *Distress* is my favourite Greg Egan novel so far, but I haven't read *Diaspora* yet.

I haven't seen any of the TV shows you mention.

Alan Stewart: YTTERBIUM No. 40

Of your immensely long book list (about the number of books I read in a year) I've read only *Permutation City*, Chris Priest's *The Extremes* (thanks for lending it to me; my copy

finally reached me via Slow Glass Books); and Greg Egan's *Luminous*.

Of your truly vast TV and Video list, I've seen *Total Recall*, *Six Degrees of Separation* and *The Navigator*. I liked *Total Recall* better than most people did, was totally bowled over by *The Navigator* when I saw it, and remember *Six Degrees of Separation* with some fondness, although I found it gabby and irritating to watch. Donald Sutherland is always worth watching.

Bill Wright: INTERSTELLAR RAMJET SCOOP

Yet another fabulous Ditmar cover. I particularly like 'The Moment after Nightfall'.

Thank you for all the extra material on E. E. Smith, especially that luvverly full-page Virgil Finlay illo, the publication of which almost certainly breaks copyright. But be daring, Bill. What's a little copying in the night among friends? At least Stableford doesn't take Smith too seriously.

Also appreciated that reference to *SF Commentary*, the source of all knowledge, if you're one of the two or three people who have complete a set. 'Childish mode of thought where wishes are everything.' I suspect I'm still in that mode. Perhaps I should write all my infantile wishes into a novel and make my fortune.

You ask me what I think of E. E. Smith, based on Stableford's description? Smith was obviously a raving fascist loony! And Adolf Hitler might well have been a closet E. E. Smith fan who worked out how to make all his secret infantile wishes come true.

It's odd that you, Bill, don't go into the aspect of Smith that does tie in with later SF: his concept of zooming through star systems, with galaxies colliding. The Stapledon biography hints that Smith's work, wild and woolly as it was, influenced Stapledon. Of course, by the time all these bigger-than-bigger concepts had been milled through the Stapledon mind, they came out very differently. But there must have been SF fans in the thirties who made the connection between these two writers.

Why doesn't Stefan submit his pieces to newspapers? Nobody in the *The Age* wrote anything half as good as about the Gas Crisis.

I've seen the 'Real Men' piece before, Bill. I don't believe you wrote it. I suspect you downloaded it from the Internet. Naughty Bill.

But at last we stop ploughing through all that stuff by Other Folks and get to the heart of the fanzine, indeed, the heart of the apa: the Glorious Bill Wright Mailing Comments.

I agree with Leanne: why don't you convert *IRS* into a genzine? As it happens, Karen Johnson is the first person for years to remind the rest of world fandom that there are any Australian up-and-coming fanzine editors. Many overseas fans would welcome *IRS* as a fresh new Aussie zine.

When Elaine first mentioned that style of knitting, I thought she was saying 'ferile knitting'. I had a vision of savage knitters lurking on trams, skewering unwary travellers just as they thought they had escaped the syringe bandits.

You admit that you would be able to retire on two-thirds of final salary for life. Yet you do not put in your retirement notice! No wonder we cannot understand you, Bill. When I retire, I will go out on zero per cent of my final 'salary', plus the piddling amount I have in the National Mutual superannuation account.

Why haven't you invited us to Sam's Boat Shed yet, Bill? Elaine and I like discovering new restaurants.

Why doesn't your company simply un-network its computers? Then everybody could get on with their jobs in peace.

I know I've asked you this before, Bill, but why was Lindsay Thompson made Premier of this State? You'll remember that Dickie Hamer (sorry, Sir Rupert Hamer) was pushed out by his own colleagues, despite the fact that as Premier he could have kept the Liberals in power forever. Thompson, the greyest and least interesting of men, was pushed to the front. The Liberals lost soon after, and Labor was in power for thirteen years. My guess is that the Liberal hot shots, already centred around Kennett, expected Labor to last only one term. Thank ghod they were wrong. At least we had a few good years under Cain.

I've never noticed the Scots Presbyterian element in you, Bill.

Thanks for the introduction to David Brin. Makes me sure I've done the right thing by reading every George Turner SF novel and missing every David Brin novel.

All I expected in the first place, Bill, was a nice clear description of what E. E. Smith was up to. That's why I was surprised that you didn't cover the essentials of his work in the first piece you wrote. Nothing lit-critical about *that*, surely?

Sally Yeoland: LES CHATS PARTI No. 37

Until his unfortunate recent heart turn, John seemed to have fallen on his feet by finding the place in Fyansford. Very comfortable indeed, especially as such a place would cost \$300-\$400 a week anywhere in Melbourne.

I love the idea of gurgling Grieg. But why use screen savers anyway? I don't. I just turn off the computer when I'm not using it. Since I have other ways of listening to music, I also turn off the computer speakers most of the time. If I really needed to listen to CDs through the computer, I would buy a much better sound card than I have at the moment.

I've seen James Patterson in book shops, but not Christopher Reich or Nancy van Rosenberg. I don't seem to be reading many mystery or suspense novels at the moment; it's a phase I was going through a few years ago, and will probably return to.

I love our shopping jeep, because without it I would destroy my back all over again each time I do the shopping. After a visit to Safeway, the jeep becomes almost too heavy to push until I reach the corner of Johnston Street and Smith Street. After that, it's downhill all the way. Watch me and the jeep go, go, go.

Much as I would like to claim credit for the covers of **brg** No. 22, I cannot do so. The credit is all Dick Jensen's. He just keeps improving his graphics all the time. All Bill and I do is print them.

Whatever John might think of fandom, fandom still thinks highly of him. On the Timebinders poll of late last year, John was picked as one of the Top 20 Fan Writers of All Time. In a recent Memoryhole poll, *ASFR* was picked as one of the Top Ten Fanzines of the Sixties. Lots of concern out there as people heard about John's recent illness. They'd just like him to say 'Hi!' every now and again. Irwin, John Foyster or I would repost any messages he would like to send to Timebinders and Memoryhole, and ever-reliable Gary Farber would relay messages to the rest of Internet fandom.

Richard Hryckiewicz: ANYTHING BUT AVERAGE No. 21

I can't see how we could ever move again, or why we would

want to, but thanks for the tip about the ease of house-searching on the Internet. Also, I'll keep in mind that tip about finding tram and train timetables.

You make me almost want to take up photography. There's nothing really stopping me except inertia. My main impetus is a desire to build up a photo library of fan faces. I don't even have a photograph of a bearded Ian Gunn, for instance.

Terry Frost: MIMIZINE FLASHBACK

'Haven't we been living in interesting times lately?' I surprised myself the other day by thinking the same thing. The nineties have turned into a nightmare, but at least they've proved to be an interesting nightmare. By contrast, long stretches of the eighties just slipped past me, and out of memory. Bad times might be bad, but at least they etch themselves into the memory.

Thanks for the tip on video-borrowing, if ever I get around to it. Right now, I have four unwatched films, taped from TV. Somewhere in the back of the cupboard is Bertolucci's *1900*, all six hours of it, taped from SBS about two years ago. I've never had the six hours to watch it. Or even two lots of three hours. (But I did watch the very short four and a half hours of *Gettysburg* last year, so I'll keep that copy of *1900*, just in case I ever fall sick on a day when Elaine's out of the house for six hours.)

Thanks for the LA trip report. I didn't ever get to LA, but after watching *Paris Texas* and *LA Confidential* I feel I have some idea of what it's like. Maybe, maybe not. Nothing I'd seen in films prepared me for what New York was actually like. Love that so-true comment: '[While travelling] the sensory input is about three times what it normally would be.'

You've given me an idea for a story. I get to Los Angeles. I ring you cab driver friend John on that number you've given. And then . . .

When will the Trip Report be published, Terry? I'm waiting.

Michael Green: REALITY MODULE No. 7

Why settle for a new printhead or a second-hand laser printer, when a new inkjet printer costs about \$400, and has the capacity to run graphics-filled pages?

Busy life for you: lots of new things happening. Glad you enjoyed Nova Mob. It's getting better every meeting, with lots of new people turning up. I've just realised that I didn't let you know that we've changed venue for the before-meeting dinner. Until something better comes along in Brunswick, we're going to the Satay Inn, 250 Swanston Walk, City, 6 p.m. sharp, and catching the 7.31 train to Anstey from Parliament Station. This routine is better than putting up with Alasya's food any longer.

It sounds as if you actually apply organisational abilities to publishing your apazine! I just type like hell, and hope I finish in time. Then I hope Elaine has the time to proofread the results and I can grab a day to do the final corrections on screen. And I usually need another day to print, collate and staple it. Which makes me realise that my chances of making the April mailing are actually quite small. Write on! write on!

Damien Broderick wrote somewhere at some length about the amazingly odd and entertaining experience of appearing on the same panel as Colin Wilson. I can't remember where. You'll have to ask Damien if he still has a copy.

The terms used by the TA people sound just like Freud's

id, ego and superego. The popular new psych groups rarely say anything new: they just invent a newer brand of coloured paper in which to wrap old ideas.

Your essay on 'Dream Magic' had me scratching my head, for the reasons I've already stated. If you push your dreams around, how can your unconscious send previously unglimped information back to you?

Dark City. Now you're talking. That film is made of almost non-stop dream images. Who cares about the plot or characters?

I don't need to collect cats. Elaine does that for me. Ours are (in order of seniority) Oscar, Theodore, Sophie, Polly and Violet. You can read all about them in the Aussiecon Program Book. Can't say I've ever been tempted to collect elephants, whether living or models.

Thanks for your description of Amiga DLLs. Anything has to be better than the PC system, which chucks operating information into both Windows\System and the system directory of the program itself, but hides the most important instructions deep inside the Registry. And nobody dares fiddle with the Windows 95/98 Registry. It's almost impossible to uninstall a program totally from Windows 95, and very difficult to copy the C: drive.

You are so right about hoping somebody will come up with a 'lean mean fast word processor package'. I would have expected some such program to pop up on those CDs that are pasted to the front of the computer magazines, but all the great programming nerds seem to have given up on programs that would be useful. As you say, we don't want gimmicky stuff for Web pages; we want fast, well-printed word processing. Program silliness has reached the point where the two most complex programs of the early nineties, Ventura 4 and Quark XPress 3, are now more stable than, a tenth the size of, and much more useful as word-processing packages than either Word or WordPerfect! (Recent programs, such as Corel Ventura 8 and Word 97 suffer from endless bloat, and always on the point of falling over or doing weird things at unexpected times.)

David and Sue Grigg:

MEGATHERIUMS FOR BREAKFAST No. 18

I've now visited three large and salubrious houses within a short distance of each other in south-west Preston: Sally Yeoland's, Paul Voerman's and Fiona McHugh's, and as from last Sunday, the residence of Sarah Endacott and her partner, who are also on the Gilbert Road tram, but one stop past Murray Road. Not quite Kew, I agree, but it's an area that still has large houses on large blocks. Damien Broderick has just moved to Coburg, into a large house with leadlighting in every window. Very roomy, large garden.

But by the time you return from your overseas trip, all the fabulous affordable houses in Melbourne might have been sold.

Usual apologies for not having been in touch. For months I've been fending off social invitations, often unsuccessfully, and failing to get in touch with the people we'd really like to see. However, Elaine and I often get to the Friday night gatherings at Myer's Cafe, then go on somewhere else to eat. You're welcome to join us any time.

John Newman: PING!

George Turner liked to think he frightened people, which was true for people who didn't know him. His most disconcerting personality trait, as Andy Dunwoodie said at George's funeral, was his need to be contrary, his need to disagree with everybody else in any group of people in order

to spark off a discussion. The trouble is that this contrariness often stopped discussion, not started it. You couldn't argue with him because you weren't quite sure of the position with which you were arguing.

You, like Lucy Schmeidler, also want an up-to-date Norstrilia Press catalogue. Not so easy to do. Name one of our books and I'll see whether I can find a copy of it for you.

Cath Ortlieb: YOU REALLY KNOW YOU'RE HOME WHEN YOU FIND A WOMBAT IN YOUR BED No. 60

Thanks very much for your splendid evocation of the effect Gunny has had on us all. Your memoir goes very well with Tim Harris's, which has appeared in *Thyme* and elsewhere.

Jeanne Mealy: LAND OF 10,000 LOONS

I like almost any film better than *Gone With the Wind*. The only time I tried to watch it, about thirty years ago, I walked out after the first half. A year or so ago, I caught the last ten minutes when it was shown on TV. Sure enough, the dialogue was as klutzy as the dialogue of the first half. I have much fonder memories of the book, which I read last when I was sixteen.

The Australian accent must come as a shock to Americans, since no American actor has ever been able to reproduce it on screen. Not that many have tried. Authentic Aussie accents used to turn up occasionally in British movies, because at any time during the fifties or sixties Britain had umpteen unemployed Australian actors lurking in bedsits all around London.

Don't congratulate *me* on these covers. Congratulate Ditmar (Dick Jenssen). The 'cliffs' are constructed by Bryce 3D based on the underlying shape of a fractal. Add water and sky; then drop in the little sailing ship. The secret is in the love of experimentation and artistic eye, which Dick has, but I don't.

Terminator II The essence of the film is in its strongest image: the woman, the children playing in the park, the atomic fire storm. We are responsible for the future of all the world's children; if the full impact of this insight ever fully hit us, we might all behave quite differently. What if we took responsibility for the future, and didn't leave the control of its direction to the relentless march of progress or technology or the whims of arms manufacturers or big corporations? Everything springs from that essential image: the triangle of the mother attempting to cry out to her child, but the playground is empty. Instead the film shows us a woman attempting to protect her child, and hence protect the future of the world. It's the child who tames the android sent to protect him, even forcing him to become semi-human. The child becomes the most important figure in the film. But without the help of one of the two androids, he is no match for the super-android, the non-human technology that has a totally destructive force of its own. But

that same technology is invented by a pleasant scientist who lives in a pleasant suburb with his wife and children until one day his whole world is blasted apart by the mother of the child his invention might yet destroy . . . Everything goes around in circles in the film, circles of responsibility and attempts to evade responsibility. I suspect *Terminator II* is a much bigger and better film than even James Cameron ever realised. The two *Terminator* films are his real claim to fame — because they are so well made; and because they have an epic power and poetic resonance that I find in very few late twentieth-century films. The explosions are good, too.

Sorry about that rave. What films have you enjoyed recently, Jeanne?

One track from the Pat Boone heavy metal album was played on Melbourne radio. Once. That was enough. The CD wasn't released here. If I should order an import copy from Readings, I might never be allowed back in the shop.

That news about you being fired with two hours' notice hit me quite hard. Usually in Australia there is a union attached to any particular job. Unions have not been too effective in recent years, but at least they can raise a stink about unfair treatment of individual employees. And, I believe, Australia still has unfair dismissal federal laws, despite the abortive efforts of one particular Federal politician to get rid of them. I'll have to read February's *10,000 Loons* to find out how your job situation turned out.

Joyce Scrivner: INTERMITTENT WANDERING: BUCONEER

Thanks for the trip report. I hope I have slightly more luck getting to Aussiecon than you had getting to Baltimore. But in September, Melbourne's tram service will be 'privatised' by Shithead and the Usual Crew, so I'll probably have to walk from here to Spencer Street. We can all pray that we don't have any of the hotel-booking problems that plagued Bucconeer.

You get to see Gary Hoff more often we do. The last time I saw him was in 1978 at Unicon IV. If you see him again soon, ask him to get in touch. Maybe he'll turn up at Aussiecon — but will he recognise me, or I him?

Loved the story of the guide dog and the bouncing ball. The bloke who slept on the floor should have won a special award for endurance during convention-going.

Thanks for mentioning the names of all those people I'd like to catch up with, although they probably won't be at Aussiecon.

Marc Ortlieb: BAH HUMBUGGERY

As I write this, it's three months after Christmas, but until yesterday the weather was just as muggy and oppressive as it was on Christmas morning. Loved that article, Marc, but I don't want to think about Christmas more than once a year.

MAILING No. 186, FEBRUARY 1999

Lyn McConchie: FAN'ATIC No. 67

Now you have a title for your next book: 'My Life as a Friendly Ghost'.

Have lots of New Zealanders met Alan Jackson (director of the new *Lord of the Rings*)? Is he the sort of person who hung around in cafes for years before he became famous? I'm thinking of Geoff Wright, who was film reviewer for *The*

Melbourne Times when I met him in 1990. He was known for a few well-received short films. He's a very amusing short bloke, the sort of person you want to yarn to at a party, especially if you know nobody else. Geoff's big success was *Romper Stomper*, his first feature film. At least, it had plenty of notoriety. I don't know how many people went to see it. There was another film later, and it bombed. Can't even

remember it. The next thing I heard about Geoffrey Wright, Australian director, was that he has been hired to make *The Sparrow*, based on my favourite novel of 1998! Gorbliney. It's a wonder *The Melbourne Times* hasn't made this a cover feature.

Linnette Horne has had the longest run of bad luck of anybody I've met. (I've met unluckier people, such as Ian and Roger, but at least they didn't spend most of their lives dodging bad luck.) Linnette shouldn't have any trouble gathering material for an autobiography, or a few dozen novels.

That idea of introducing mountain lions to the backblocks of New Zealand (or Australia) is so sick and stupid that it's wonder nobody has done it yet.

Jean Weber: JEANZINE No. 121

If ever I travel overseas again, it will have to be by Business Class. Which means I probably won't ever travel overseas again.

Eric Lindsay: KINGDOM OF THE BLAND

Some American mail must be travelling surface mail, because several recent US fanzines have taken three months to get here. Bill Bowers' *Outworlds 70* went airmail to John and Yvonne in Adelaide, but took months to reach me. Lawrence Person sent the latest *Nova Express* surface mail, and sure enough, that's how it's travelling. (Bill and Lawrence are supposed to be the fans most thirsty for Hugo nominations.)

Karen Johnson: ANZAPANS ONLY No. 3 OUT OF THE KAJE No. 3

Couldn't help be amused to hear your version of Every Australian Girl's Dream. I didn't realise that any Australian girl still dreamed such dreams. Maybe I've been around fans too long, but it seems to me that lady fans dream to a different drummer (to mix a metaphor). The first woman with whom I really fell in love was an American whose aim to get her PhD by the time she was 24. She didn't, but she's still employed as a physical anthropologist at an American university. The lady I went to America to meet was working towards a PhD in Mathematics, which she achieved a few years later. Our friend Claudia wanted to be an astronomer, until she discovered that a person needs a very good PhD before being allowed to train as an astronomer. Elaine wanted to be an industrial chemist, and in the 1970s didn't want to get married. For her trouble, she wound up with a dummy like me.

Put 'rich, intelligent and good-looking men' in one box and 'the sort of person you'd want to spend your life with' in another box. No resemblance between the boxes.

I'll leave somebody else to explain the Worldcon rotation plan. If you ask some SMOF (secret master of fandom) about this subject at the beginning of Aussiecon, you might just escape from listening to the explanation by the time of the business session.

I'm not sure why monthly mailings work for Acnestis, whereas I'm sure they wouldn't for ANZAPA. Every apa has its nach'rl rhythm.

Finding that you're allergic to beef is really uncomfortable if you love eating beef tartare. Elaine has to rely on taste memories of great nights at Enri's (specialist steak-and-garlic restaurant in Richmond).

Now that all word-processing programs resemble all the desktop publishing programs, it seems reasonable to use a DTP program the way one does a WP program, i.e. feed text

straight into it. In the old days (i.e. up to the mid-nineties) DTP programs ran way behind one's typing speed, so you had to pre-prepare text elsewhere.

If 'romantic' means 'searching for the unattainable' (which is the best definition I've heard), Diana Wynne Jones's 'The True State of Affairs' fits the description. Perhaps the prince was worth all that longing, or perhaps he was just another callous cad. The lady will never know. How romantic!

If you're reading lots of Diana Wynne Jones, why not give a talk to the Nova Mob on her work? (And if not, why not attend the Nova Mob anyway?) I was going to put myself down to do a talk about DWJ this year, but I need about two years to do all the reading. A yummy reading banquet, if I can find the time.

You've joined FAPA! You're a senior fan already, without ever having to go through the excruciating process of neofandom. If I thought I had the time to contribute to FAPA, I'd get back there like a shot. I was in FAPA for ten years, and left because felt I wasn't contributing properly. (Faced by 500-page mailings, I gave up the effort to write mailing comments.)

Buy the best VCR you can afford. Expensive VCRs record and play back true stereo sound, and I suspect the heads of the expensive ones last much longer than those of the cheapies.

Yes, if you wanted to rent a flat, you couldn't find a place better than where John Bangsund lives now. Its total floor and wall space is larger than our house's.

To *Kaje 3*:

Thanks for your brilliant tribute to Gunny. There was a month or so during which Ian and Karen could really expect that the cancer had been beaten. Except that nobody can claim freedom from cancer until after several years free from symptoms.

I don't think your standover campaign on Gunny's Fan Hugo would have worked. There are too many overseas fans who haven't seen his work, despite the fact that he sent drawings all over the place. If overseas voters haven't seen Gunny's work, they won't give him second preferences. That lack of second preferences makes it very difficult for non-American Hugo nominees to win. I suspect the same thing will happen this year. The main thing is that all eligible Australians vote for the Hugos, even if they've never voted before, and make sure they vote for Gunny.

Thanks also for Mark and Claire's article, which tells as much about what fandom is all about as it does about Gunny himself.

If you keep mentioning people like Elizabeth Billinger and Steve Jeffery (NB the spelling), as well as Mark and Claire, I'll keep thinking I'm in Acnestis, not ANZAPA. It's hard to account for the amount that these British fans accomplish in any spare minute: Acnestis contributions; contributions to *Banana Wings* or *Snufkin's Bum* or *Vector* or *Matrix*; taking responsibility for various functions of the BSFA; reading scads of novels as members of the Arthur Clarke Award committee. And that's only the bits of fanac I've head about. I work till 2 a.m. sometimes, but I can still only manage to publish Acnestis, ANZAPA, a very occasional genzine, and the newsletter for the local Neighbourhood Watch group.

'Excess Baggage' is a superb piece of fan writing. I don't know what to reply, since I've always had great trouble with the 'Desert Island Discs' type of questionnaire. I would want to take everything to Mars! If I had to sum up my life, it's in two collections of items, my complete set of the first series

of *Australian Science Fiction Review*, and my complete set of *SF Commentary/The Metaphysical Review*. One represents where the real me started, in 1966, at the age of nineteen; and the other contains the story of my life since then. I would also want an album of some essential photographs: not a particular photograph, but a series from the whole extent of my life. I can't think of any special objects apart from these, apart from my first Ditmar Award, received at Syncon I, August 1972.

Your Item No. 6 reminds of an object I'd love to have: a large photograph of early-winter mist floating across Lake Catani, perhaps the most magical sight I recall from walking around the fabulous Mount Buffalo plateau.

After I reach the end of your article, which is the finest piece of Australian fan writing for some years, I discover that I don't want to travel to Mars at all. When I remember places like Mount Buffalo and the Great Ocean Road, I don't want to leave good old Earth, no matter what ghastly things humans are doing to it. Especially I don't want to leave my favourite place, my chair at my table in my room, surrounded by computer, books, CDs and often a cat or two.

Strange how we have similar backgrounds, although I'm 24 years older than you. *The Highwayman* was made into a film, believe it or not. In the 1950s, when I saw the film at the Saturday afternoon matinee at the Plaza Theatre in Oakleigh, it contained the essence of romanticism: great adventure, goodies versus baddies, glorious Technicolor, and a doomed love affair. I'm not sure why, at the age of eleven, I was gobsmacked by films about doomed love affairs. The film followed the story of the poem, bits of which were read as a voice-over. This gave me an appreciation of the rhythm of the poem. I spent years trying to find another poem that would give me the same compelling enjoyment. (I didn't come across 'The Man from Snowy River' until several years later.) *The Highwayman* (1951, directed by Lesley Selander, and starring Charles Coburn and Wanda Hendrix) probably played on TV during the sixties, but has long since disappeared from all human memory (except mine).

Compiling a useful and entertaining 'Fannish Glossary' after only a year or so in fannish fandom is not a bad achievement. Annotations to your glossary:

- **Ditmar Awards** should add somewhere 'named after Dr Martin Ditmar Jenssen, usually called Dick Jenssen, when they were established in 1968'.
- Not so much an annotation as an observation: the division between 'media fans' and 'lit fans' seems to exist only in Australia.
- Add two other categories: **Convention fans** as opposed to **Fanzine fans** (i.e. people who are too busy attending conventions to ever write or publish anything); and **Fannish fans** as opposed to all the rest.
- Origins of **Fanzine**. You've made a wrong assumption here. **Fanzine** is not an ecumenical term. The correct definition is 'an amateur magazine produced by science fiction fans, for science fiction fans, but is not necessarily about science fiction'. The term was invented by science fiction fans in the 1930s, and used exclusively by them until the 1960s, when first comics fans and then rock music fans appropriated the term.

To help you complete your guide, I must find you a copy of the famous *Fancyclopedia*, which has been issued in at least three editions, with a fourth edition on the way. My copy does not leave the house, and it's not easy to photocopy, since the most recent edition was printed on darkish paper designed to look like twiltone. (When you get to **D** you'll

include **Duplicator**, I presume, or **Mimeo** under **M**, or **Roneo** under **R** or **Gestetner** under **G**? And such ancient fannish terms as **Twiltone** and **Typo** (invented by fans, but now part of the English language) and **Hectograph** and **Slipsheeting**, and . . . these terms are almost too sacred to contemplate. The holy stigmata of fanzine publishing.

Thanks for the book reviews, but I was distressed by your failure to appreciate the magnificence of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Somehow it encompasses the whole human enterprise and predicament, or at least that part of it springing up in South America, as shown by the intertwined adventures of the members of one family. It hurtles along at a great pace, and is impossible to put down. The characters with the interchangeable names are meant to be confusing: they are all parts of a few central people who bestride the centuries. Try it again in a few years, and suddenly you'll see how it works and why it seemed such a treasure when it was first released in English in the early 1970s.

Richard Hryckiewicz: ANYTHING BUT AVERAGE No. 22

Say it softly under the breath at least twice a day, Gillespie: 'We will never move house. We will never move house.' If that's not enough, remember all the moving tales that have appeared in ANZAPA, especially this one.

Michael Green: REALITY MODULE No. 8

The most recent versions of WordPerfect itself do not have filters for WP 4.1 and 4.2. Word 6 does not import WordPerfect 4.2 files, but if you have a copy of Word 2 for Windows, it has filters for both WordPerfect 4.1 and 4.2. I keep Word 2 on the computer as well as all later versions of Word. Word 2 has a filter for WordStar 6 for DOS, but Word 6 doesn't. But add Word 2's WordStar filter to the Windows system, then copy it to Word 6's filters subdirectory. Suddenly you find you have a WordStar 6 filter available for Words 6 and 7. This fact possibly doesn't excite anybody but me.

The easiest way to convert the more 'primitive' files is to use the last pre-Corel version of Ventura (4.1). Bring in a file as WordStar, and save as WordPerfect 5.1 or Word 2 or any of the others that were popular at the time.

Apart from writing those two paragraphs, I can only say that I agree with everything you say. Already my files of all the books I desk-topped for Macmillan are useless. Their current production people couldn't care less that I conscientiously saved every file of every book I did for them. It's much cheaper for Macmillan, when doing new editions, to scan everything, then add corrections.

Better be careful with your plan for Democratic Humanism, Michael. In 1968 a teenager turned up at the Easter convention. He was the secretary of the Melbourne Grammar Science Fiction Society. He was articulate and intense, but never bothered much about fandom thereafter, except to write some so-so reviews for *SF Commentary* during 1970 and 1971. In 1971 he told me that had worked out a grand plan for the total improvement of human life. When he described it to me, I smiled politely and hoped to god that he would forget his plan as soon as possible. Thirty years later, the same young man, then known as David Penman, turned up all around the suburbs of the nation as Jim Penman, bearded proprietor of Jim's Mowing (now rapidly becoming Jim's Everything Else). In an interview with Terry Lane a few years ago, he confessed that the real reason he liked being rich is that it enabled him to publish books about his grand plan for the total improvement of human life. It's exactly the same plan that he had invented before

he turned twenty and confided to me in 1971.

So be careful, Michael, be very careful, or you might yet turn into the proprietor of a vast nationwide gardening enterprise.

David Cummer: EVERYDAY PRACTICAL DESPERATION No. 3
I hope you have/have had a much smoother house move than Richard did.

Linden Hills sounds like inner-suburban Carlton, plus a lake. Carlton would have a full-scale lake too, if the original plans for the Exhibition Gardens had been followed. The Exhibition Building now has a cross between a pond and a lake on its south side, and extensive gardens to both its north and south. At 72 Carlton Street, where I lived until the beginning of 1977, my front window looked out over the Carlton Gardens. Sigh.

Until I read your contribution, I didn't realise how many aspects of Australian life are unfamiliar to Americans:

- VCE: Victorian Certificate of Education, i.e. Year 12 end-of-secondary-school certificate.
- Surely Americans have some equivalent of Weet Bix, Vitabrits or Granose (all much the same product)? They're pressed wheat, which disintegrate deliciously when they are placed in a bowl and milk is poured over them.
- How to explain a lamington? Here is Elaine's description: 'It's a sponge cake covered with a thin layer of soft chocolate icing and rolled in desiccated coconut, with or without raspberry jam inside'.
- To apply for most jobs in Australia, you need to give the names of three referees, i.e. people who can be rung up by the people offering the job in order to vouch for your honesty, professional competence, or ability to pay your bills.
- Surely some American homes have leadlight windows — i.e. panes of coloured glass held in place by strips of lead — a sort of domestic stained-glass window?
- ABC = Australian Broadcasting Corporation, i.e. the federally funded national broadcaster.
- SBS = Special Broadcasting Service, which is so unusual that it's difficult to describe. It arose in 1977 after the Fraser Coalition Government closed down radio 3ZZ in Melbourne. 3ZZ represented many ethnic groups, which ran it as a cooperative, although funding and technical facilities were supplied by the ABC. The Fraser Government discovered that some of its presenters were making 'political statements' during their segments. As a sop to the many large ethnic groups in Australia, Fraser set up SBS, which in most ways was more radical than its predecessor. Its radio service broadcasts segments in a vast number of languages throughout the week. Its TV service features many films with subtitles. SBS TV is a more eclectic, often far more interesting TV service than the ABC's, which relies mainly on British programs in prime time. Between them, ABC and SBS present quite a few documentaries that otherwise would never be seen.
- ACT = Australian Capital Territory, i.e. the bit of New South Wales carved out to give a home to Canberra, the national capital.
- Stephen Baxter's sequel to *The Time Machine* and almost every other book Wells wrote, plus a grand tribute to Stapledon, is *The Time Ships*. It might be 600 pages long, but it's a romp.
- We have compulsory voting throughout Australia, which means that the actual turnout is usually above

90 per cent. But not much above. People who fail to turn up at a booth on polling day are usually content to pay their fines.

Marc Ortlieb: MY PINK HALF OF THE DRAINPIPE No. 7

Best line of the three mailings: 'I bumped into Renaldo and his two human sidekicks, Phil and Frances . . . I asked them what they were doing about FFANZ and they said waiting for Donna, an activity that has as much future as that of Vladimir and Estragon.'

Many of us discovered mysteries during the 1970s and 1980s because we found that writers of mysteries are much better at character, setting and atmosphere than most SF writers. Some of my favourite mystery writers, such as Josephine Tey and Dorothy Sayers, seem uninterested in plot. With others, such as Agatha Christie, the plots of individual books are memorable because their working out depends on the story's setting and atmosphere, i.e. the stage set-up.

All the Timebinders people clumped over to Memory-hole, where the postings are as numerous but the enlightenment factor is higher. You're right; it's probably better not to get hooked in the first place. (Besides, I presume you have to deal with the loonies who post to the Aussiecon list.)

I have *Science: Good, Bad and Bogus*, but had hoped that Gardner might some day update the *Fads and Fallacies* entries. He must be very distressed at the success some of those *Fads and Fallacies* have had since 1954, when it was first published.

Perhaps I'm exaggerating the 'raging' that any fans did during the seventies. The odd thing is that the MUSFA people, many of whom didn't drink alcohol, seemed the drunkest of the lot. I can remember some very surrealistic parties at various Carlton addresses in the seventies. The fact that none of us can afford a Carlton address in the nineties might help to explain the lack of wild parties. Or it could be because most of those people have disappeared from fandom or have various combinations of children trailing behind them. Wait till *les enfants* Ortlieb, Handfield, Ackroyd, Middlemiss, McMullen, Newell, Herriot-Ware, etc. start raging!

Gunny's Teaspoon Awards are a direct descendant of the Golden Caterpillars. I read somewhere that Leigh Edmonds (recalling the Golden Caterpillars) suggested the idea of the Teaspoons to Ian when he was visiting Western Australia. Surely Danny Heap can be leaned on to keep the Teaspoons going?

I have the vaguest memory of saying hello once to Linda Lounsbury at Aussiecon II. For the next year or so I kept hearing about famous fans who had been there but whom I missed altogether. I did feel it was a plot of some kind, hatched by Carey Handfield. (It was Carey who tied me to the Norstrilia Press table while he swanned around. Luckily Kitty Vigo, she who has disappeared completely, volunteered to take over the NP table for long periods during Aussiecon II, or I would have missed everything.)

Michael Hailstone is still publishing occasionally, but he seems to have chopped most Australian fans from his mailing list.

In a rather stumble-footed way, Canada has had to take the responsibility of saying sorry — in their case, to three different groups, the Inuit (Eskimos), Native Americans (Indians) and a whole province of disgruntled French. Various recent Canadian governments have actually tried to get on with the job of balancing the needs and claims of various groups. It's Howard's attempt to wish away the

problem and his ignorance of the views of anybody but himself and his cronies that are so irritating.

Ron Clarke published a photo in *The Mentor* of the current Futurian group, and I'm pretty sure Blair Ramage was there somewhere, looking much the same as I remember him from twenty years ago. He must have deteriorated at a much slower rate than I have.

If you're running a series of pieces on Alice sequels for FAPA, surely it takes just a push of a button to reprint them here in ANZAPA? Or are they already scheduled to appear in a fanzine I'm likely to see? Or are you going to retell the lot as a Nova Mob super session?

If Ian Gunn had had the time, his work would have been discovered by one of the daily newspapers. (That assumes that he wasn't already submitting folios of cartoons to newspapers and magazines.) Many of the cartoons he drew for the Macmillan Phys. Ed and Maths textbooks could just as easily have been used in non-specialist publications.

Okay, show off, you bastard ('How I Partied'). When will you really pull out the stops and get back to publishing a genzine?

Lucy Cohen Schmeidler: OZ SF FAN

I'm told that Jonathan Strahan and his new bride are having the greatest possible problem with their new marriage, i.e. finding a way to live on the same continent. This is not a problem that a marriage counsellor could fix, since it's the fault of heavy-handed immigration authorities. We'll have to put up signs all over Aussiecon: 'Don't get into serious inter-Pacific relationships, people, because if Immigration (US or Australian) has its way, you might never see each other again.'

I've always been led to believe that a 'flat' equals an 'apartment'. But there's a new generation of upmarket people who want an 'apartment' in the city or inner suburbs, not a 'flat'. I presume estate agents have some idea of the difference.

Sally Yeoland: LES CHATS PARTI No. 38

We saw little of you during the Christmas period, so while reading your Christmas Report *right now* I suddenly realised that you now have a CD player, and that you might be a candidate to take spare CDs off my hands. (Since Paul Collins stopped buying CDs for his Tragically Hip second-hand shop, I have no way of unloading surplus CDs. However, any CD for which I can't find a space on my shelves is usually equally uninteresting to most people I know.)

John's piece suggests the title for the autobiography he could probably publish right now if he put all his fanzines in one folder and chopped out the bits by other people. The title? *You had to be there at the time*. Fortunately for some of us, we were.

That secondhand shop in Flinders Lane was Berry's. Elaine and Frank had already discovered it before I met them. There Frank bought any number of books he couldn't read (because they were in French or German or Hungarian or whatever; and he bought them because they were old and leather bound and cost 5 cents each), and Elaine found any number of . . . I can't remember exactly what she bought at Berry's, but they must have been cheap and odd or they never would have been there in the first place. When you visited Berry's, you were met by the very nice, but rather diffident Mr Berry, who gave the impression that he would much rather hoard all this amazing junk than sell it to anybody. His mother, Mrs Berry, lurked in the background, but I can't remember her actually selling

anything to anybody. I wonder what happened to all that stuff when Berry's closed down?

It sounds as if you're treating your neighbour Russell more sensibly than other people would. There's nothing more galling than being taken for granted, and it sounds as if he started taking your sympathy for granted almost from the moment you moved in.

Oh no! Not Amway! We've already told you our Amway horror stories, including encounters with two couples who didn't want to know us anymore after we refused to become Amway suckers.

Since you left Timebinders, it has imploded under the weight of its own noise (affectionately known as Gary Farber). Greg Pickersgill set up a rival listserv named Memoryhole, and vowed to keep its subscribers on the topic. He doesn't always succeed, but he's willing to squash people if they start bitching at each other on trivial subjects. Therefore the ratio of information to noise on Memoryhole is much greater than it was in Timebinders, and the daily message download is more manageable. But, sucker that I am, I've stayed on Timebinders, which has recently begun to revive, and I download from Eidolist (set up by the editors of Western Australia's *Eidolon*), although I find that a collection of writers (a quarrel of writers?) talking to each other tends to sound a lot dumber than any group of fans talking to each other. Damien Broderick and a few others save the situation, but most days I can almost hear from Collingwood the sound of Damien spluttering over his computer in Coburg as he gazes in disbelief at some of the crap from Eidolist.

Eidolist has its strengths — it had a good discussion about Kubrick's work when he died, and I've been able to use it to gain some knowledge of the way in which *Eidolon* started, and the kind of people who have been involved in running it over the years.

Bill Wright: INTERSTELLAR RAMJET SCOOP

Gladys Gardner's letter from the Methodist Centre for the Aged, Newtown, is the funniest document I've read in some years. I nearly suffered from a serious laugh attack while reading this article. Death by laughter! The way to go!

Page 4 was pretty good as well. This is the Bill Wright of old. A pity that you didn't write these items.

But you did get the year wrong, Bill. It was 1962, not 1957. Nobody had heard of the twist in 1957.

What can I say about Stefan's contributions except that they are superb as usual. What dark dirty secrets will he reveal about the Easter bilby?

Surely I've read the Darwin Awards somewhere else already? Stealing from the Internet again, Bill?

There's only one problem with sharing a suite with the Cincinnati Fan Group. With the exception of Mark Linneman, most of them have as many years on us as we have on the rest of Australian fandom. But, as Linneman says of CFG, 'Where else can I sit in a room with fifteen people and find that I am the only person who has not been a Fan Guest of Honour at a world convention?'

Maybe the easiest way to order a Lyn McConchie book is on amazon.com.

I'm glad you don't tell your salacious stories over the dinner table, Bill. Spluttered tabouli can be inconvenient to the other diners and very embarrassing to oneself.

I always knew that self-employed persons, such as Elaine and me, can never earn as much as employed persons. It's good to have a mathematical equation to help us prove this to miserly publishers.

Jeanne Mealy: LAND OF 10,000 LOONS

I'm pleased to see that you did land another job, although it took a month or so. In 1998 I had several months without work at various times throughout the year, which taught us that this household definitely needs two incomes.

If we didn't vote in this year's ANZAPApoll, maybe we've lost interest in polls. Nobody's losing interest in ANZAPA itself, to judge from the level of activity in recent mailings. Why not quietly let the poll disappear?

I must get hold of a copy of *Charles Ford Never Mentioned Wombats*. Neither Buck Coulson nor Gene DeWeese has ever visited Australia, so they based their 'research' for the

book (which, I'm told, takes place at Aussicon I) on what they were told by Bob Tucker and Rusty Hevelin. Must be a very strange account of Australian life.

I suspect the tea break has been banished from corporate life in Australia, although it might lurk in crannies of the public service. When I was at Publications Branch of the Education Department in the early 1970s (when such a branch existed), we stuck firmly to quarter-hour tea breaks, night and morning, plus a one-hour lunch break. If only somebody could have sent a time message down the line: 'Enjoy every moment of this way of working. You won't believe what's coming up next!'

Favourite Books Read for the First Time During 1998

- 1 *The Sparrow* (Mary Doria Russell). First published 1996. Edition read: Black Swan. 506 pp.
- 2 *The Chimney Sweeper's Boy* (Barbara Vine). 1998. Viking. 343 pp.
- 3 *The Blood Kiss* (Dennis Etchison). 1988. Scream/Press. 216 pp.
- 4 *The Hidden Side of the Moon* (Joanna Russ). 1987. St Martin's. 229 pp.
- 5 *The Zanzibar Cat* (Joanna Russ). 1983. Arkham House. 244 pp.
- 6 *Hotel Paradise* (Martha Grimes). 1996. Knopf. 348 pp.
- 7 *Minor Arcana* (Diana Wynne Jones). 1996. Vista. 287 pp.
- 8 *Extra(ordinary) People* (Joanna Russ). 1984. St Martin's. 161 pp.
- 9 *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* (John Berendt). 1994. Vintage. 388 pp.
- 10 *The Penguin Book of Modern Fantasy by Women* (ed. Susan Williams and Richard Glyn Jones). 1995. Viking. 560 pp.
- 11 *A Sight for Sore Eyes* (Ruth Rendell). 1998. Hutchinson. 352 pp.
- 12 *Children of God* (Mary Doria Russell). 1998. Villard. 438 pp.
- 13 *The Eighth Stage of Fandom* (Robert Bloch). 1962. Wildside. 208 pp.
- 14 *The Extremes* (Christopher Priest). 1998. Simon & Schuster. 393 pp.
- 15 *Doctor Fischer of Geneva or The Bomb Party* (Graham Greene). 1980. Simon & Schuster. 156 pp.
- 16 *The Sunken Road* (Garry Disher). 1996. Allen & Unwin. 214 pp.
- 17 *We Who Are About To . . .* (Joanna Russ). 1977. Dell. 170 pp.
- 18 *The Two of Them* (Joanna Russ). 1978. Berkley. 181 pp.
- 19 *Luminous* (Greg Egan). 1998. Millennium. 295 pp.
- 20 *The Female Man* (Joanna Russ). 1975. Bantam. 214 pp.

Favourite Films 1998

- 1 *Rashomon* (directed by Akira Kurosawa) 1950
- 2 *It's Always Fair Weather* (reconstructed) (Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen) 1955
- 3 *Designing Woman* (Vincente Minelli) 1957
- 4 *Tous Les Matins du Monde* (Alain Corneau) 1992
- 5 *The Right Stuff* (Philip Kaufman) 1983
- 6 *L.A. Confidential* (Curtis Hanson) 1997
- 7 *Dark City* (Alex Provas) 1998
- 8 *La Jétée* (Chris Marker) 1962

- 9 *Searching for Bobby Fischer* (Steven Zaillian) 1993
- 10 *The Sound Barrier* (David Lean) 1952
- 11 *Men in Black* (Barry Sonnenfeld) 1997
- 12 *The Thief of Baghdad* (Raoul Walsh) 1924
- 13 *Q&A* (Sidney Lumet) 1990
- 14 *Wild at Heart* (David Lynch) 1990
- 15 *The Naked Kiss* (Samuel Fuller) 1964
- 16 *Shock Corridor* (Samuel Fuller) 1963
- 17 *Clueless* (Amy Heckerling) 1995
- 18 *Gattaca* (Andrew Niccol) 1998
- 19 *The Remains of the Day* (James Ivory) 1995
- 20 *The Clairvoyant* (Maurice Elvey) 1935

Favourite Short Stories 1998

- 1 'The Old Man' (Daphne du Maurier) read in *The Penguin Book of Modern Fantasy by Women*
- 2 'The True State of Affairs' (Diana Wynne Jones) *Minor Arcana*
- 3 'Deadspace' (Dennis Etchison) *The Blood Kiss*
- 4 'The Olympic Runner' (Dennis Etchison) *The Blood Kiss*
- 5 'The Dirty Little Girl' (Joanna Russ) *The Hidden Side of the Moon*
- 6 'Nightside' (Joyce Carol Oates) *The Penguin Book of Modern Fantasy by Women*
- 7 'The Woman in Black' (Dennis Etchison) *The Blood Kiss*
- 8 'A Nice, Shady Place' (Dennis Etchison) *The Blood Kiss*
- 9 'The Extraordinary Voyages of Amelie Bertrand' (Joanna Russ) *The Zanzibar Cat*
- 10 'The Man Who Lost His Shadow' (Isobelle Carmody) *Dreaming Down Under*
- 11 'The New Men' (Joanna Russ) *The Zanzibar Cat*
- 12 'How Dorothy Kept Away the Spring' (Joanna Russ) *The Hidden Side of the Moon*
- 13 'Corruption' (Joanna Russ) *The Zanzibar Cat*
- 14 'My Boat' (Joanna Russ) *The Zanzibar Cat*
- 15 'And Now Doth Time Waste Me' (George Turner) *Dreaming Down Under*
- 16 'The Soft Wall' (Dennis Etchison) *The Blood Kiss*
- 17 'Elf Hill' (Joanna Russ) *The Hidden Side of the Moon*
- 18 'Visiting Day' (Joanna Russ) *The Hidden Side of the Moon*
- 19 'Nor Custom Stale' (Joanna Russ) *The Hidden Side of the Moon*
- 20 'Murder 1986' (P. D. James) *The Penguin Book of Modern Fantasy by Women*

Some Russ stories, such as 'Souls' and 'The Second Inquisition', are missing because I read them when they first appeared.

— Bruce Gillespie, 3 April 1999