EARTHQUAKE :

A Cataclysmic Journal of Terrifying Potential published by Bill Wright

for the Members of ANZAPA and others April 1977

In Australia, there are two schools of thought about Earthquakes.

One school holds that they don't happen here

The other holds that they do happen but we don't like them.

UPHEAVAL

Now that St. Kilda has become respectable, most of Melbourne fandom seem to have moved to Fitzroy where there is a seething mixture of ethnic, racial and cultural contradictions resulting in the highest suicide and murder rate in the Commonwealth. This situation is about to change.

The seeds of the Quiet Revolution (.. thank you, Susan ..) have germinated in this fertile ground, and it won't be long before Fitzroy becomes a busy and purposeful community of fans in a dead suburban wasteland of mundania.

*F*I* A* W * O * L *

COMETS

Ever since the Kohutec fiasco the subject of comets has fascinated me. (You will remember that the comet Kohutec was supposed to create fiery manifestations in the night sky way back in 1973 -- but, since Chairman Mao's Time Had Not Yet Come, it turned out to be a fizzer).

Most comets have a mass of about 1,000,000,000,000,000,000 grams, which as everybody knows is one ten billionth of the mass of the Earth. The mass is distributed in a loose swarm of separate particles accompanied by dust and gas and moving in highly complicated three dimensional curves according to the gravitational influences of the Sun and the planets. About half a dozen comets turn up in the sky each year, but it is only once or twice a century that they are bright enough to be seen with the naked eye. Comet tails are streamers of ionized particles drawn after the comet by gravitational attraction but forced away by pressure of the Sun's rays.

The most famous comet in history is the Fiery Salamander which appeared in the year 1000 when the end of the world was supposed to take place. Many a serf of those days was saved from a life of sin and debauchery through the agency of the comet, and was recalled to his duty and repentance. Our most regular cometary visitor has been Halley's Comet which last appeared in 1910. In those halcyon pre-WW1 days, an enthusiastic young lady from New Jersey declared her intention of following Halley's Comet "wheresoever it went." The counsel of prudent friends failed to deter her, and she was retired to temporary seclusion in an asylum for her own good.

COMETS (cont.)

Comets have excited the wonder and superstition of mankind since the dawn of recorded history. Aristotle maintained that comets are exhalations from the Earth to the upper atmosphere. Shakespeare wrote of "Comets imparting Change of Times and States. The Complaynt of Scotlande, 1549, says of comets:

"Ther occuris haistily eftir them grit myscheif."

Johnathan Swift observed that "Old men and comets have been reverenced for the same reason -- their long beards and their pretences to fortell future events."

It is significant in these modern times that even nearby comets have failed to manifest themselves. Could it be that comets are, in fact, intelligent clouds of gas, and are deliberately avoiding close—up scutiny by space craft from Earth? Or maybe Nature is outraged at the presumption of Man in daring to treat the heavens as his back yard and has substituted Earthquakes for comets to force his attention back where it belongs.

Now for some MAILING COMMENTS on ANZAPA 54 of Feb. 1977

Short, I'm afraid. Leigh Edmonds has been talking about producing a 1000-page fanzine for quite a while. This is like giving a 3-hour speech -- unless it is well planned people are going to switch off after the first few pages. The thing needs to be copiously illustrated and interspersed with gems of pellucid prose, mainly in the form of liners (Leigh's good at that). Carey Handfield says that he is to raise the \$4000 or so required to get the project off the ground. Carey, it's hard to raise \$1000 without going into debt. And people have developed a resistance to being squeezed too much. Also, there is the danger that, on completion of this mamouth undertaking, both Leigh and Carey will be suffused with a sense of deja vu and finality. "What more is there to do ?" they will say; "We have achieved the ultimate, and no more is either necessary or desirable." Thus, out of overweaning folly and conceit, two illustrious stars in the firmament of Australian fandom will wither and go out. Such must not be allowed to happen. Handfield must be distracted at all costs - even by the horrible expedient of finding him a job. Edmonds is beyond redemption, being caught up in the vortex of inner fandom where literary passions are inflamed and the Will is broken on the rack of endless fanzine production.

Chatles Korbas, the Idiot? not really. Malice disguised as friendship is hard to detect. One can only hope that such a fellow will afford some amusement to his erstwhile acquaintances by falling under a bus.

Keith Taylor, the Author! The Saga of Tybalt is an epic that will live in my memory until this afternoon. Now that you mention it, I did notice a certain amount of restlessness in the audience when I cited the Lensmen series as the precursor of feminism in science fiction. Monoclave was a good convention, in that it provided me with an uninstructed audience to whom my exposition of the Holy Words must have seemed like a revelation. But you, Sir, are beyond redemption, having been corrupted by the evil of Literacy. Go, therefore, and skulk in the SFWA kennel where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, and taint no more the innocence of fans with your heretical opinions.

Leigh Edmonds now seems to be thoroughly suburbanized, even to the extent of criticising the slothfulness of local firemen. I Do Not Support The FAAn Award. The only Awards which should result from fanzine publishing (except, of course, the Fanzine Hugo) are mailing comments and letters of comment.