

PAROLE DALLA PIZZERIA

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Hi gang, here's "mad finder" back again with some spicy meatballs from the Friuli. ANZAPA 47 arrived just in time for me to read it before I sat down to the qwertyuiop¹ and hack out a fow(?) words. First: YES on the H.A.A. amendment. If we have 30 interested persons, let them participate. Now on to some personal events in my life that I'd like to share with you. I received word just a week or so too late to go into the DEC ish of the SE, which should be in your hands by now, that I have been named FGOH at the SF&F film festival in Milano. Oh wow or whatever one says. I'm super thrilled by it. I was there once the first weekend of the fest and it seemed to be going well that the theatre owner is thinking of extending the fest. I got to wander around the lobby in my con garb, which now includes a slouch hat I got somewhere (like Sydney) Also huckstered a Tolkien poster or two, but in general chatted with the organisers of the fest and any of the fen who could handle a bit of English or German (Sorry Catherine, but my knowledge of Italiano is very limited. However, I can say t'amo.) It was a real treat. I'll be going back on 3&4 January. There is a banquet (no way that I'm going to miss a banquet in Italy. I'm gaining kilos here.) Then there is an awards ceremony in the theatre that evening. The whole thing has me tickled pink. Hell, I even got asked to autograph something. I wasn't quite sure how to handle that at first. I'd never done this before. But damn, it's fun. Work is also giving me some extra fun. My boss left for 6 weeks in the States and left the place in my hot hands. I'm getting to rather enjoy being boss. I may tell him to stay in the States.

My letters to the various APO FPO's down-under came up blank. Apparently there are no slots for an Education officer. !! Oh well, there are other angles. I could look into teaching again. Is Chemistry a required subject? The two times that I taught in High Schools, it was required to graduate and the resistance from the subject soured me a bit. My experiences in teaching First Year college Chemistry were much more positive.

On to some ramblings on the mailing.

Mike O'Brian's account of his time with Tucker brought on smiles. The opportunity to meet him during the AUSSIECON trip was a highlight for me too. He is something else. I hope that he does get enough bricks for that fannish con hall.

Eric, the whole secret to looking youthful is carousing. I do it as much as possible. Look at Tucker. Heetoo has that sort of philosophy. I see no reason I should spend my time on serious matter like my job, when I can be doing something of no earthly importance, like sf cons and the unending roomparties, chatting up interesting persons until all the other silly souls are off to work, enjoying the companionship of interesting and stimulating women, skiing my fool head off when I get the chance and so on. Looking around I wonder how so many persons can't see the insanity of the way we live. Sure, plan for the future and remember that it can all go "POOF!!" tomorrow.

*****One of the things that always irked me about teaching is that I got to do a little of ti. All the booking, disciplining, cleaning up, I hardly got to teach.

Cara Catherine, after being owned by two beagles for many of the formative years, I can understand your feelings. They're neat. Speaking of the future, if you haven't seen it, I recommend Asimov's article in the October 1974 issue of F&SF: ON KEEN EYED PEERER INTO THE FUTURE. In it he presents his 3 laws of Futuristics. Most interesting reading.

Er, I must admit to getting stuck on word 58 as the 10th unknown. That gives me a total of 28,800 according to the rules. However, I'd hate to try and put them into sentences. I tried to be reasonably sure that I'd get the meaning, if I saw the word in a sentence. Interesting to see the tack that ten are different and more intelligent in some indetifiable way has arisen again. I'd need to see some hard facts before I'll buy that.

Randal: thanks for the kind words, I'll be boring the lot of you before I'm done. I also saw your mention of RETRODIALOGY. Damn it, while I didn't really expect to find it in my "Menster's New Calliate", I did expect to find it in my OED. No such luck. The best that I can guess it to be is a backwards dialogue, but that is not too clear. I must do a bit more searching on it. That is not THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE that you mean is it? Well if so, (I'm joking, but it is a rather neat way to use some rather coarse words) than take a aerial fornication at a perambulating pastry!

((Well, off to dinner with a very nice and rather insane Italian MD. She is splitting Italy one of these days and I may have given her the idea to go down-under. Which will give me all the more reason to come back for a visit)) More tomorrow morning.

Hi gang.. the dinner was excellent and the company likewise.

Christine: I hope that by the time this has seen the light of print, you are fully employed. Otherwise it can become difficult to coast. Best of luck with DUFF. I guess one of the dangers of going to a place like Australia is that you meet such nice people that when something like DUFF comes up, it leaves one in a dither. I mean, hell, I'd like to see the whole lot of you at MAC. Back to matter of schools, I feel that some of the major problems in schools are the parents. Everyone of whom has a genius for a child and must be passed so as to be able to go on to the University and get a PhD. I ran into this in Germany as well as in the States. (By Germany I mean German Students in a Gymnasium, where I taught for a year. Teaching in a foreign language is a real treat. Here I have this perfectly withering comeback to a wisecass kid and I can't translate it.) Of course the idiot teacher who believes that only HE is able to get an "A" and if the student does manage to do superior work (answering "his" questions that the teacher missed on his or her finals) and is given a "B", deserves to be shot. The Education Center here in Aviano has had a couple of them teaching here, With any luck they'll never be back. Now about my job in Australia, if I got one, it'd probably be in the education field, tho I wouldn't mind having a go at public relations. I also believe that there is a US travel service office in Sydney. I might try and get a letter off to them. Then again I was speaking with this Aussie in Kirchendorf, Austria a while back and he said that an American who agreed to teach in Australia got to skip paying taxes for the first 2 years and that someone with an MSc with a couple of year's experience could get as much as A\$800 a month for 12 months. Hell, I'd be clearing more than my

present job at that rate. Could any of you check into the truth or fiction of that? Jobs are tight in the US & it is not inconceivable that I could be Riffed, if no slot can be found for me in the US. At that point I'd very much consider trapsinf off to Australia for a couple of years, at least. I doubt that I'd be stuck underground in Pino Gap or North-West Cape. However, such a tour would be somewhat isolated and I could get, probably, free transportation back to civilization every 6 months or so. Just in time for conventions. I'm not sure what you mean about fandon leaving me in peace. I don't doubt that I could have you all drop by if you were in the area. I'd just have to be with you at all times. I'm not forbidden to have guests here, even from the Socialist lands. Hell, even I can't get anywhere near the really secure places. I have practically a zero security rating clearance, if any. All they did when I started working for the government was to check with the several national agencies (FBI, CIA, police in the cities that I'd lived in or at least these are the places they checked) to see if I was on anyone's shitlist. Apparently I wasn't.

****Let me backtrack and say that I didn't mean that if the US pulled out of Australia, then the Russians or the Chinese would move in (I also think that if we stay there, neither would they jump on Australia) I think what I was trying to say was that I don't like the style of life that I've seen and read about in what are called "Communist Countries" I fully realise that what I'm talking about is a totalitarian form of government. Hell, there were communist settlements in the US before Marx sat down to write. To me the style of life in Russia or Spain holds absolutely nothing for me. I guess one of the reasons that I mention Russia and not Spain is that Russia could blow me halfway to the moon, if some twit(s) decided to and all Spain could do is have a couple of American bases close down. Spain is no threat, while the Soviet bloc are. I personally don't care just how anyone lives, just as long as they don't dictate to me how I have to live. I'm not a "democrat" in the sense that ALL countries must be democracies. That is absurd. For most of the Third World, a guided form of socialism would suit them far better. The only problem is that in Third World countries all forms of government tend to degenerate into dictatorships. My Utopia would be an anarchy of sorts. Civilized persons DON'T need laws to tell them how to behave. Just when that will happen, is beyond me. Anarres has a certain appeal for me, but the spartan existence is a drawback. Oh well, you can't have everything.

DON A. Commenting on comments is a bit rough, but I'll just say that with this installment you should be able to get your teeth into something. I'll also, later, go more into the style of the con report. I'm glad to hear that the MPC is back talking to each other.

DEAR DREK, your name, as spelled, is a hugeous pun! Also you have to consider that the con took up 1/7th of my total trip. I also spent an unghodly amount of time in those flying machines, hence I intend to inflict some of the pain on you so that you can understand what it was like. BILL W. Arrgh, I'm a bit leary of commenting on Australian politics as I know so little about them (it). I must admit in being more aware of what goes on Down-under now that I've been there. Australia (the same goes for the European countries that I've lived in) is considerably more than just a name on a map, that island continent. However, I'm interested in reading what the natives (?) have to say about the situation. Yes, the world is

growing smaller, but it still isn't that small. The last four days back to Italy were a real blur. I more or less flew straight back to Italy from Auckland with a 15 hour layover in LA. I was sort of wrecked by the time I hit Aviano. Bill, your quotes and descriptions of events in Northern Queensland I've heard before, here in the States, only as concerns Blacks. While I don't really expect people to change just because the location is different, one could hope that someone, for once would read their history. My guess is that (a) the aborigines will be removed from the airfield (b) the town and port will be built (c) a good deal of ecological damage will be done both to nature and the aborigines (d) the government will make a lot of money (e) most of the good folk in Australia won't give a good damn about what happens to the aborigines and (f) the several companies will end up being the fall guys when things turn sour, if they do, which I sort of expect them to when someone starts to complain about the running of the waters, etc. The lot of the aborigines may be thrown in, but only as a sop to the bleeding heart liberals. I've seen it happen in the States. Australia, welcome to the club.

CAREY: you tale sounds a bit like fun. I may try caving one of those days myself. Yes, indeed, I've driven thru the mountains while the weather conditions rapidly changed. It can be more than beautiful, it can blow one's mind. I think that one of the reasons I enjoy skiing so much is the feeling I get standing on top of a mountain looking into tomorrow. DON F: Interesting to learn of how you got into fandom. Perhaps in another mailing I'll bare my soul and mention my roots. Your comments on the way the aborigines are treated (or not treated) parallel mine, but more on that later.....

Gad Zooks! I've run thru the mailing.

I'll ramble on a bit and then get back to my trip.

I hope some of you will consider submitting an article for the "new" SB. I gave the general outlines in the last issue. Would also like to see some art work, once I know just how I'm going to reproduce it. I noticed somewhere that a mere recitation of events is a bit boring. Yes, I agree. In fact looking over what I have put to paper reinforces my intention to do the report in a completely different style when I rewrite it. My intention here is to set much of what I'll recollect down on paper and then perhaps with some prodding from you as to what I had left out, rewrite the bloody thing. I now intend to try and write it as an after dinner chat I'm having with a bunch of friends. The sequence of events will be anything but chronological. I also hope it will be much more interesting to read. Yes, the con will be only one part and not the major part of the report. In terms of time it was only 4 of the 28 days that I spent on the road (and in the air). I'm enjoying the hell out of putting this down and remembering those glorious days. Even the one Alitalia flight I took was on time.

Most of you reading this went to AUSSIECON. Thus you are part of Aussiecon fandom. I've been in touch with the organisers of MAC and it looks that there will be an Aussiecon Fandom reunion Party at MAC. I've gotten some nice responses from several persons on this and maybe it will catch on. If all goes well, it will be held on the second, the first night of the convention. From the reported size of the con it may be the only way we can see each other. Now if we could only figure out a way to get meat pasties and Fosters beer over for the party... Maybe some of you have

a way that a list of everyone who attended Aussiecon could be generated. I remember working off a computer printout at the registration desk, but this obviously was not a complete list. Also computer printouts cost a bit of money and where this would come from, I don't know. So any good ideas?

AN UP-OVER GOES DOWN-UNDER (Part 3)

16th August: I made it up somehow in time to get the last part of the bidding session. One of the only things that struck me about the proceedings was that Ben Yalow, who was making the pitch for NYC, seemed to stress the negative aspects of coming to NYC. Actually I was a foregone conclusion as to who was going to win. I believe that Orlando had it wrapped up on the mail votes alone. I enjoyed the panel on the teaching of sf. Again I was struck by the well attended sessions. While there were several good items, the one that sticks out the most is the readings given by Bob Silverberg from his own works. From having tried to read aloud, I think that I have a feel for the difficulty of the task. Bob's performance was outstanding. I like his writing and tho it has tended to the melancholy, particularly of late, to hear him read was a great treat. I made it thru the day and managed to peel off my con garb and get into something more respectable (?) for the banquet. Amazing to the fanish mind, the food turned out to be rather decent. I and a charming lady, whose name fails me, were the non-Australians at the table. (I might note that it took a while for me to get to that table. I had signed up for one and then got pre-empted. I'm not quite sure of the reason, but it was a pain standing around waiting for someone from the committee to come around and straighten things out. One of the few snafus that I ran into). She was more than charming as I had thought for some reason that a bottle of wine was included in the banquet price and had neglected to take along any money to the banquet. She bailed me out and we were able to drink on. Then came the grand moment. John Bangsund stepped to the fore and as Toastmaster chatted to us and then announced the Awards. At one point in the solemn spectacle, a group of fen at some of the table in front rose up and started throwing stramers and singing. I believe it was a verse from Waltzing Matilda. Needless to say it delighted the audience. John maintained his professional aplomb throughout. The handing out of the Awards went smoothly. There were a few surprises and almost no hitches. I think that the one hitch was that the agents of the studio that produced YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN were in the audience and went up to the stage, but the Hugo was already accepted by Forry Ackerman. It was a big disappointment to us that Ursula LeGuin was not in the audience to accept her Hugo for THE DISPOSSED. It seems that she had succumbed to the dreaded Melbourne wog. After the banquet and the awards I started on a rather long night of room parties. This was probably the longest night at the convention. The parties were good and as they started to close, I believe that a couple of complaints from mundanes staying at the hotel helped in some of the cases a large group of us removed to the con.suite. There we continued on into the morning. Several events were discussed (a) find some bubble bath and go liberate the wading pool in the lobby. I believe that Jackie Simpson actually managed to find some bubble bath, but it was decided not to tempt fate and arrest by actually doing so. (I understand that the swimming pool in the Holiday Inn in Auckland was liberated however, I was off on another adventure at the time.

(B) Several fen decided to stay up and watch the sun rise. A small number did actually do so. In the midst of all this, our Good Shepard, Robin Johnson ordered up a large mass of chicken sandwiches and coffee. They were devoured and gone in a twinkling of an eye and the closing of a mouth. He was heard to mutter in a corner upon being asked how the con could afford it, "We're as far in debt now what's a few more dollars." Is there much difference between 3-5000 dollars?" Let's see, I believe it was that afternoon that I sat down with Dennis Stocks for a few quiet words, some of the first we were able to have, and just chat. He taped some of it and said he was going to use it in an article later. Thinking back over the con and the trip, I'm made all the more aware of how little time I really had to sit and just talk with the persons behind the names I know, prior to coming. I plan to come back just to do that, sit around and talk.

17th AUGUST 1975. With little sleep I got my bod out of bed and made it over to that little pancake place. Needless to say that is where I got my breakfast over the convention. I was also taken aback by the fact that this was the last day of the convention. Magawd, was it over so soon? I just got here. NO, I won't let it be over! Alas and alack, it was true, this was the last day. However, it proved to be a full one. ((Backtrack: If I have my dates right it was yesterday that I managed to track down the not so elusive Alan Dean Foster, who was attending Aussiecon on his Honeymoon! I wanted to tell him that I had enjoyed ICERIGGER, but that it was 50 pages too long and that he should have not allowed the end to degenerate into a "Perils of Pauline" situation. And damnit, just why was skau September wanted for the murder of 120 million persons on four worlds and who was the twit named Walter, who had an important last name. Anyway, Alan is a most interesting chap and we did have a nice chat. It turns out that he is interested in a type of comix that are printed in Italy and I promised to see what I could do about getting him some. He even offered, if the ghods willed it, to do an article for the "new" SB. I do hope so.))

The programme as usual proved to be interesting. I'm one of those weird one who actually likes to go to conventions with a programme worth going to. Finally the moment approached, it was time for the gavel from AUSSIECON to be turned over to the rep. from MAC and to close the con. As it turned out the MAC rep was the one and only Bob Tucker. He accepted the gavel and in the "spirit" of the con, drained the last of many bottles of Beam's Choice (I don't believe another bottle of the stuff could be found in a 50Km radius of Melbourne for months after the con), lifted his hand on high and lead a standing room only crowd in one last official sssmmmmoooooooooottthh! What a hell of a way to end a faantastic con. Over but not out, the festivities continued. I remember sitting in the Stocks' room and getting a few quiet words with them. I was going to come back to Brisbane after my trip to Aloce Springs and environs and we talked about that, my involment in Tolkien Fandom, SF, wargaming, the diplomacy game that I've been in for some 11 years, and lots more. I was pleased to find out that they would be on the Ballarat trip the next day. We finally broke off the talk and went upstairs for the meat pie and pasties party. We got up there to find a long line of starving fen. For some of the comments tht I heard concerning the things, we had to be starving to eat them. The party and talk here went on for several hours. I understand that Tucker autographed his and later sold it to support DUFF. I also understand that Mike

Glickson was auctioned off also to help raise money for DUFF. My only disappointment that evening was that I got my signals crossed and missed, of all things, a party to raise money for DUFF. Argh! Well, the day and the con came to an end. I managed to get a tad bit of sleep and thus was ready, I guess for -----

18th AUGUST 1975: I awoke to find that it was actually a bit cloudy out.

After some going around in circles, we gathered in the Lobby of the hotel and in one lumpy mess surged for the street. Screaming mundanes fled at our approach, no not really. We did manage to squeeze onto one of the older streetcars in Melbourne and head for the train station. Being in the middle of winter, I guess I should have expected it to be cold and raw and it was. Soon some 70+ fen were wandering around the train station. During the course of it all, Susan Wood managed to round up about 7 dozen daffodils and proceeded to hand them out. They were more or less wilted by the end of the day with the exception of Bob Tucker's. I believe that he picked his in Beam's Choice. Then we learned that the train, a special one at that was late. So more milling, the telling of bad jokes and the huddling together to beat the chill. Suddenly the cry went up "The Train is here!" Unfortunately for the Stocks', Evalyn Cloygh and Connie Mellott they didn't hear the call. It had something to do with the three women being in the loo and Dennis running to get them. They didn't make it. In some ways they were lucky. The train they later came up to Ballarat on was heated. It seems that the convention organisers had found the oldest rolling stocks that they had and used it for the trip. Actually the train was neat, but the cold that permeated to the bone didn't allow us to enjoy the trip to the fullest. Tho we did see occasional flashes of sun, this soon passed and the day darkled. Most of us took the chance to go to the back of the train and climb up into the seat which allowed us to view the scenery and backward direction. I did get a couple of shots of the countryside. It was interesting to watch the change in the countryside as we swung around Port Philip Bay over Geelong and thence to Ballarat. We arrived in Ballarat to find that the busses were there and we dashed for them and warmth. It was a quick trip thru Ballarat to the site of the old goldmining town of Sovereign Hill. It is in the process of being reconstructed to look as it did more than a century ago. I found it quite interesting and enjoyed wandering through the town peering at the books in the town library, buying some candy, peanut toffee, at Brown's Confectionary. (Still good, hasn't grown stale sitting around the place here. Weird, eating some candy bought 4¹/₂ months ago, is that all? and about 27000 Kms away) having lunch at the United States Hotel, the chinese temple (you guys imported the chinese too, hmmm) the foundry and the huge stamping mill, which should be in operation about now, seeing some persons panning for gold (damn, I knew I had forgotten to do something there) the good feeling of a whole bunch of neat people together in spite of the fell weather; it had started to rain by the time we had finished lunch, bought a mess of postcards to send folk. I think that I picked up about 150 postcards over the course of the trip. Finally we boarded the busses and took a tour of Ballarat. This was fascinating as we stopped in one of those museums run by a family, I believe. We were given a long explanation of all sorts of things, including why ceilings were made of linen, saw some uniforms from various wars and periods, learned a tad bit about the miners insurrection and more. Finally we headed back for the train station and the freezing train. We were not

disappointed. There it was in all its numbing alidity. I managed to be lucky enough to share the compartment with Judy Colman, who chatted me up and helped me pass the icy hours. During the course of the voyage back Robin Johnson and ? (O.K. who were you?) and I got onto the subject of air travel and since I had a question or two on my ticket, I took this opportunity to pick Robin's brain and he in turn could curse in amazement at the arrangements that has been made for me and the price. He felt that the travel agent must have had something with which to blackmail Air New Zealand and TAA in order to get the prices that I did. I wasn't complaining. Eventually we got back, tho we had to stop for about an hour in order to let 3 or 400 real trains go by. We got to Melbourne cold and wet. This time we got one of Melbourne's newest streetcars. Very modern and WARM! Got back to the hotel to find the Jackie Simpson had deposited luggage in the room as scheduled, but had left for parts unknown and would be returning sometime tomorrow to collect and depart. Well, I guess I was to be denied the chance to find out if Jackie snored. Slightly tired but not out I invited Judy to share some wine with me and continue the chat we had been having all day. But 1030 or 11 the lunch had disappeared and my stomach was telling me that I should please appease it with food. So Judy and I went over to the ever-ready Pancake House and munched a bit. I believe we joined a chap in teacher's training, who was in Melbourne for some other reason and did read some sf and was a bit put out at learning after it was over about the convention. Shortly thereafter I stowed Judy in a cab destined, I believe, for the Magic Pudding Club. Then to hit the hay and tomorrow was a big day... I was off to The Alice!

19th AUGUST 1975: It was cold and overcast as I got ready to kiss Melbourne good bye. I joined a couple of other fens in the Hotel restaurant for coffee while waiting for the bus. Soon we were on our way to the airport and again I noticed that the super highways in Australia bore the same shield design that the Interstate Highways bear in the US. Curiouser and curiouser. We were soon strapped in to our seats bound for Adelaide on the first leg of the flight. For some reason the steward looked a bit confused when I asked for my eggs scrambled. We got coffee and cookies. Humpf. At Adelaide many of us dashed off for some more postcards and then see we were airborne and on our way again. Soon what little clouds there were disappeared and the reddish-brown surface was seen and seen and seen. There wasn't anything else. Yep, we had come to the "red centre". We landed at The Alice in nice 28° weather... some change from the 5-10° of Melbourne. Off came the heavy clothes. We got trapped on the plane for a few minutes while another plane got its tail off the ground and then onto the bus for a ride into town. While waiting to get off, I got some shots of the surroundings. Under an absolutely clear blue sky you could see the land just recede off into the distance. Not a damn thing in sight. Only in one direction could you see a low range of weather-beaten hills. Wow! The trip into town was only about 10 minutes and soon we roared through Heavytree Gap in the MacDonnell Ranges on our way to the Oasis Motel. First things first, we unloaded our bags, sorted out the rooms (I got to room with Ken Konkell here)... we were also the only two who hadn't signed for regular 5-day tour. I believe Ken decided to make the trip to keep Genie DiModica company, as well as to see the sights. Genie at this time was worrying all of us as she had come down with some form of the Melbourne Crud and it was feared for a while that she wouldn't

be able to make it at all. This would have queered things a bit, as she was the trip leader for this section of the trip. However, she recovered sufficiently to go on the trip and improved as the days went on. We ended up in the restaurant of the Oasis. A couple of us had decided to catch lunch, I passed it up. However, I did spy a huge bottle of Galiano. I wandered over to the bar and said Wow, they make Harvy Wallbangers here. The sweet young thing, about 17, behind the bar said, "Harvy who?" Apparently she had never heard of the drink. There then followed a heated discussion on the relative proportions for the drink. Since no one was sure, we decided to go with one shot each of orange juice, Vodka and Galiano (I'm given to believe that this is not the correct proportions, but the effect was there). Unfortunately the Galiano did not float on the other two ingredients, which we Northern Hemispherians attributed to our being upside down. For some reason the bar lass was not as amused about that as we were. However, she had to admit that our concoction was not bad, as did the others who sipped it. The Harvy Wallbanger was later to become the official drink of the Rocon I Banquet a couple of days later. Shortly thereafter Ken and I went into town to try and arrange to get on the bus to go to Ayres Rock. I was also trying to get plane connections for Brisbane. Since my ticket was open, this was no problem in itself, however, I had intended to go to Brisbane via Cairns. I now wanted to go straight from Alice Springs to Brisbane. I found out that practically no one can get from Alice Springs to Brisbane. The planes just don't fly in that direction..I was to spend the next two hours in the TAA office getting everything sorted out. This was the only time that things threatened to get all screwed up royally, however, I was not going to let this hassle me. I intended to have fun and enjoy the trip. I wasn't going to let a little thing like air connections foul things up. Eventually I got my connections to Brisbane via Adelaide and Sydney. The only difficult thing was that the plane left Alice Springs at 0430. Aarrgggggh!!!

The sun had started to head for the horizon when I started to walk back to the motel. I wandered by the laundermat and obtained some soap with which I managed to make myself presentable in polite society. Only problem was that the clothes didn't dry completely and I wore a set of slightly damp underwear as we got on the bus for Ayres Rock the next day. Still dallying along I wandered in to the Centre for Aboriginal Artists and Craftsmen. There I proceeded to inspect all the goodies and started to imagine all sorts of crossed spears, shields etc on my walls back in Italy. I eventually thought better of it and settled on two boomerangs (one was for a friend) and several other little critters and scoop-like utensils. Then told them to send the lot to me. (It finally arrived early in December). I finally got back to the motel, cleaned up, washed my clothes and headed over to the Overlander Steakhouse. I was a little bit disappointed by the steak there, as it didn't live up to the billing that the place had. In anycase the 12 or so of us had a pleasant time. For some reason we didn't have a real party that night, perhaps we were all so bushed that all we wanted to do was to get a decent night's sleep. So we did.

20th AUGUST 1975: It was chilly and clear as we got up to greet the morn.

After a fair breakfast.. I had convinced the motel to open the kitchen a half-hour early so that we could eat, we awaited the shining steed that would take us over hill and thru dale to THE ROCK! Soon we were jouncing along the highway. It was a beautiful day and I was able to get some shots out of the bus. While the motion loused them up a bit,

I did get the various colour contrasts that so caught our eyes. The red earth, the silver-green grasses, the sporadic trees and the gaunt remains of trees that apparently had not survived the 14-year-drought that ran from '52 to '66, if my memory serves me correctly. The vastness almost felt as if it were closing in on us. Nothing, absolutely nothing. I had seen territory similar in the American South West, however, I also know that here one could go for 500 to 1000 kms and not turn up a real town. I was in the middle of nowhere. About an hour or so out of Alice we stopped at a trailer where sandwiches, coffee etc were sold. Sort of a Last Chance Snaks! Then on we plunged, further into the red clay wastes of the vast red centre. The scenery was unchanging yet never the same. I watched and enjoyed. I was sitting next to a lady from one of the other hotels in Alice and she asked if I minded sitting next to an old lady. I told her no, of course, and that while there are older ladies, there is no such thing as an old lady. She seemed to find this amusing. In another hour or so we turned off the paved road and after locking the gate behind us, preceeded down a dirt track. I think it was along this stretch of the trip that we saw those odd little round green objects along the side of the road. They are some kind of fruit that grows in this area. Supposedly they are inedible. I didn't try to eat one. Around noon we pulled into Wallara Ranch Chalet. Here about half of the bus got off to spend a week on what looked to me as the Australia equivalent of the Dude Ranch. We were treated to a lunch that not even Duncan Mines would tolerate. It was awful. Of those poor souls, if this was a sample of the food they were going to suffer thru. The bread and butter wasn't too bad tho and we lined our stomachs with that. I got to add some comments to the one-shot that was being written up as we went along. ((Aside: If any of you have seen this 'zine, please send me a copy. I never received one)) Then back in the bus. As we ploughed on, the bus driver offered a drink to the first person to spot Ayres Rock. Then as we crested a hill and curve we saw this big ahiry mesa. True to form, several persons let out cries and the bus driver chuckling said, "I got a couple again." It was Mt. Connor, not the Rock. We then stopped to allow us to take a few pictures and stretch our legs. It was impressive. Then a short run to Curtain Springs Homestead, where we got some gas and drinks. At the same time a truck filled with aborigines pulled in. One of the dogs that belonged to the Homestead went bananas barking and ran raound the truck. The owner upon retrieving the dog confided to some of us that he'd trained the dog to bark at aborigines. He left before some of us could tell him exactly what we thought of that sort of thing. While there were no "Whites Only" and "Blacks Only" I did get the feeling that something like this was in operation. When I was in AS, I got the feeling the aborigines and the whites totally ignored the existence of the other. Eerie. Then back in the bus for the last leg of the trip.

Suddenly, though the trees one could see a misshapen lump, a very big lump. This was our first glimpse of Ayres Rock. We drove around the lump a good ways from it. It IS impressive. We were hurriedly dumped at our respective motels and then back on the bus. We were to catch the Rock as the sun set. By the time we got to the picture-taking area, there must have been 20 buses there and ours was by no means the last. I squandered off half my roll of Ektachrome High Speed film on the rock while the sun set. The damn thing did change colours. I should note that I never doubted that it did. However, like my reaction to the leaning Tower of Pisa, to see it on

postcards is one thing, to climb it, noting the way that the rut in the steps weaves from side to side as one spirals up the Tower and then to look out over Pisa from this furschlugganna tower that leans enough so as to make you feel that you are falling off, is another. There are no guard rails on the Tower and there are also one or two nonrepeatable high dives from it each year. But I digress. It was an impressive sight. I clicked off one shot about every 1 or 2 minutes. An almost full moon was rising to one side of it. In a couple of the last shots that I got that night, a faint shadow of the rock could be seen to one side in the slightly dusty air. A truly impressive sight, but I've said that already. Finally we headed back to the motels, a shower and dinner. Nothing to write home about, but not bad, especially as I was starved. After dinner, Ken and I walked over to the other Motel where the rest of our party was staying. We sat around gabbing for a few hours and then turned in. It was bloody cold by this time. While it may have been 25-30° that afternoon, it was well on its way to zero by midnight. Ken moaned about freezing to death before morn. I merely curled up in a fetal position and fell asleep.

21st AUGUST 1975: Somewhere around 6:45 we were awoken by a pounding on the door. Then we remembered that we had asked one of the other guests to wake us as neighbor Ken nor I had an alarm clock. Bundling up as best we could, I shortly went back in for one of the wool blankets on my bed, we went out to greet the dawn and take pictures of the Rock being lit by the rising sun, along with several other idiots called tourists. Ghod damn, it was cold. By 7:15 we had all done the touristy thing and headed for the dining room. Unfortunately, we had another 15 minutes to wait and my caffeine-starved bod was going thru withdrawal symptoms. Even when we did get in, the fiends served other items first before coffee, Sadists ! After breakfast-I had the chance to hang out some still wet laundry and notice that much of the heating and power came from solar and wind sources. Which made sense, considering that the power lines would have to be strung some 500Kms from the nearest town of any size, which was Alice Springs. You know, with all that Outback, Australia should be one of the leaders in Solar and Wind Power sources. As to just where it stands, I'm not sure, except that one of the better, I think, wind power sources comes from Australia - the "Southern Cross" design windmill. Onward! The bus came around to collect us and we were off for a closeup look at Ayres Rock. It is not really a rock. It is a monolith. The biggest Rock is somewhere in Western Australia (The funny noise one now hears is the gnashing of Texan teeth). The bus driver takes us to the starting point for climbing the Rock. Yes, it is climbable. It is the first 2-300 metres that makes or breaks you, as it is mostly straight up. They have even put a single strand chain in order to help you up the climb. The climbing face is called "Webo" or tail. The climb itself is not too difficult. During the first part of the climb I stopped several times to let my heart slow down. Ghod was/am I ever out of shape and I couldn't even blame it on smoking. Finally the chain, which I didn't use going up or down (me strong man -- cough, cough!) ended. There was perhaps another 100 metres or so of climb, before one emerged on more or less the top. Oh I imagine that one climbs another 100 metres or so straight up, but this is spread over about a kilometre of trail, plainly marked by a dashed line of white paint. We are urged to follow this trail and not wander off. People who do, also tend to fall off the Rock. We were told, before we started that 4 or 5 persons had taken the long first step. One the

year before. The problem is that there is no real edge. The Rock just keeps curving and if not careful, you find yourself too far over the curve and you can't stop. Since the cairn at the top is some 348 metres above the plain and when you start to go, you are not too far from that height, you get to be moving pretty good, before you reach the bottom. I was one of 4, I believe, of our group that went up the Rock. The others were taken for a leisurely tour of the base of the Rock by the bus driver and told about the aborigine legends concerning it. As you might imagine, not everyone who started the climb, finished it. The driver cautioned us about this and mentioned rather casually, that no one would go up the Rock after them, if they got up there and froze. I remembered this later when I got to the point just above where the chain ended and passed a young girl, who was sitting on the slope refusing to budge up or down. She had apparently turned around and looked back at the slope that she had just climbed and that was that. Her friend was talking to her and calmed her down enough so that she, a little while later, inched her way back to the chain and climbed down. Well, over the top I went and followed the meandering white dotted road. While it was no longer a steep slope, it was a very convoluted surface. Up and down, up and down, each time, a little more up than down. The total path was a bit over 1600 metres in length. Some of the dips were 2-3 metres deep. At last I reached the cairn. It had taken me just under an hour to reach it. This was about average or a bit on the long side. I understand that an Olympic track star did the climb in some 12+ minutes. Baby, that's moving! The view from the top was delightful. I dutifully signed my name and address in the log attached to the cairn. I also took one of my 10 slide pan of the horizon for which Kodak loves me. The Olgas, some 32 Kms. off to the West, were very visible. I was really glad that I had made the climb. Then bidding adieu to the top I headed back. Skipping along the trail I came to a point where no one was visible, then lo and behold, there right in front of me jumped up a little terrier running hellbent for leather along the trail. It seemed to be having the time of its life. Its owner followed behind at a more human pace. About halfway down I joined a couple and their 4-year-old son. The little blighter had turned 4 the week before. His parents were very proud to note that he had made the climb on his own, with only help where his little size had caused problems. Yee gads. Got down to the bottom and sprawled at the bottom to relax and soak up some sun. It was beautiful: Sunny and warm. This is winter? (er in the summer it is not uncommon for the temperature to top 40° and 45° or 50° days are not unknown) Finally the bus showed up and we had a quick tour around the base of the rock, with the driver pointing out some of the more significant sections of the Rock. Practically each area of the Rock holds some significance for the aborigines. I got some nice shots of the Nfaltawadi or digging stick, now called the Kangaroo tail, another of the Kudjuk or Kundunda, which means Cut Throat and the Brain, a section of one side of the Rock which has a large expanse of surface which looks much like a cast made from a brain. It is really weird looking. We all wondered just how the rock surface could have been eaten away in such an unusual fashion. We headed back for lunch, after which I collected my now very dry laundry. Then onto the Olgas. While Ayres Rock is a big hairy lump of substance, all the same, the Olgas are domes of rock of roughly the same colour, but is made up of lots of stones cemented together by the type of sandstone that makes up Ayres Rock. We stopped about half-way there to take some more pictures. Did I mention that I took about 280 slides from start to finish? Also stopped to take some pics of some strange looking red flowers

just near the base of the Olgas. The bus pulled up and dropped us off in front of a hugeous split or gorge in the rocks. There were several other buses there too. Well, we all piled out and were told to come back in about two hours or so. In the meantime we could explore the area and the gorge. The many tourists wandered around going various distances into the gorge. Along with several others, I walked, climbed, crawled, snaked my way back into the gorge. Stopping along the way to climb up the side a ways, inspect rocks, generally acting like no self-respecting person would act unless he or she is a tourist far from home and enjoying the whole bloody thing emensely... which I was an all accounts. Finally got about a kilometre up the gorge and couldn't go any further. Like I said there was a small group of us, some from our bus and some from others cavorting thro the wilds of reddest Australia. During the way back I found a camera someone had left on a rock. It seemed like a fairly good camera, tho old. I gave it to one of the bus drivers and I hope the person got the camera back. That could really ruin a good time. Finally collected, we headed out to the area where we would have a bar-be-que and wait for the sun to set on the Olgas. We had hardly arrived when Ken Konkell discovered that he had left his jacket back at the gorge. He then loped off into the gathering gloom to return about an hour later with the jacket. However, he had to hurry up to catch up with us eaters, who were nearly done. Soon it was time to set up the old cameras and catch the changing of the colours. The Olgas went through much the same colour change as Ayres Rock. It was quite nice. After sunset we set about to getting everything together and getting back to the motels. THEN, lo and behold, up came the moon! It was a full moon and it rose just thru and above the central rock section of the Olgas. Everyone "Oooooood" and "Aaahhhhhhd". Springing quickly into action I aimed my trusty instamatic at the moon and held the shutter open. The camera moved. I then asked a chap if I could rest the camera on his car. He said yes and I ended up with quite a decent and interesting shot of a full moon balancing on the Olgas. Then into the bus and back to the motels. A quick dance under the shower and then over to one of the other motels, the Ayres Rock, I believe. There we were to see a slide show of Ayres Rock, the Olgas and some of the colours it can turn when under different meteorologic conditions. It was quite a show. One slide was of the first rain in 14 years. Yes, tho the area had had 37 inches of rain in '74 and 25 so far in '75, the area went from 1950 to 1964 with a total of less than 1/3" of rain. That, my lads and lassies, is a drought. The area "normally" gets about 7" of rain a year. One of our bus drivers mentioned the fear in the area of bush fires when the hot and dry season sot in during December to March. After the slide show I bought my I CLIMBED AYRES ROCK T-shirt and patch. The woman behind the bar and who also sold these invaluable items muttered that only fools and tourists climb Ayres Rock. I pointed out that usually they are one and the same person. Next Ken and I inspected the humble dwelling of our fellow travellers. We also got to see some of the feared MICE plague! Tho dang things were all over the place. I understand that they had attacked some of the belongings of our group. Several of the little kids in the motel were busily trying to capture some of the little critters. They didn't succeed, but did come close enough on several occasions to upset the mice. I was happy to see that no one started jumping on chairs and screaming. They, the mice, were treated as nuisances which they were. Still too high to go to sleep, several of us, Genie DiModica, Ken and, I think, Wally Gonsor, sat around in the bar/gift

shop and solved many of the outstanding problems of the world today. Then to some preliminary packing and lights out!

22nd AUGUST 1975: The day dawned cold and clear. A quick breakfast and then to wait for the bus to take us back to civilization. While waiting, Ken tried to put a call thru to the States to tell his boss that he would be a bit delayed, like a week. Interesting, there are no phones here. It would be a bit expensive to run lines out here for a couple of phones. Thus you ring Alice Springs on the wireless. The guy even cranked it a bit. It was something out of a movie, yet I was living it. I guess many of the things on this trip seemed unreal. You see things that we did and saw in the movies or read about then in books, and yet, there we were. Wow! Eventually the bus came. Only it was the wrong one. The rest of the group was on another bus. Ken and I found out later that Genie, trip leader and stouted fella, almost tried lying down in front of the bus to prevent it from leaving us. ("Don't go! You're leaving my children behind! Somebody STOP him!!!") Needless to say, Ken and I were a bit perturbed also. However the Ghods (and the Great Wombat) were with us and what and who should be there when our bus pulled into Curtain Springs truck stop, but the other bus and the rest of us. There then occurred some fast talking and even faster shifting of baggage to the other bus. Our penalty for not being in the inclusive tour, was to forgo eating at Wallara Ranch Chalet. Er, I made a comment a short while ago on the quality of the ~~food~~ food that they served there. So Ken & I would have to miss lunch, since the bus had food only for the original number of people. As it turned out, by squatting down on our haunches, holding our hands in front of us and barking, Ken & I managed to beg some food from the others. We also had to, along with the others go and fetch wood for the fires to heat the Billies (thank you Jim Landau for the reference).. just like in the song, for tea. After the dinner, we headed onward. One nice thing, was that we had stopped just at the point where the trail became a road again and it was surfaced. It felt smooth as Bean's Choice. One of the pluses on the ride back was meeting a lass from the Melbourne area who may have become (or been turned off) by the events of the next few hours. I think "entranced" was the result. She was Joanna Nicholson, who taught at Clyde School in Woodend. She did seem interested in the events that had brought the lot of us to Australia and the Red Centre. Since she was all alone and staying at the YWCA, we invited her to join us at the Rocon I Banquet to be held later that evening at the Alice Springs Hotel in "The Top of the Town" restaurant. It was all the way up on the second floor (third to Americans) We, of course, took the elevator, what else? To start things off I suggested to the 4 or 5 of us who had gotten there first, to have a drink and of course we got Harvey Wallbangers. Amazingly, after the incident in the Oasis and Joanna's "What's a Harvey Wallbanger?" the bar keeper made up several excellent concoctions. About the time we got ours, the rest of the banquet guests (some 14 or 15 in toto) arrived and ordered theirs. Everyone concurred that they were good, including Joanna, who shortly decided that she needed another one. We then swept into the dining room, drawing a few stares. I wonder why? The meal was good and the company superb. We nattered on for hours and ended up closing the place... which was all well and good as the talk had gotten a bit technical. Bon Yalow and about 4 others had gotten into a discussion on how to bolix up computers and make them do what the manufacturer said they couldn't. As well as some of the stunts that they had pulled and were planning to pull. All too soon the evening drew to a close.

Joanna seemed to have survived the Rocon I banquet and the exposure to 14 fen at one sitting. For me however, the evening had no real end. Wally Gonser was kind enough to let me crash on the couch in his room. As I had noted earlier, I had a plane to catch, that departed at 0430! Wally & I sat around and nattered for a while, read and then I even dozed off until about 3 o'clock on

23rd AUGUST 1975: when the nightporter rang me up and I headed off to the TAA office in downtown Alice Springs, where a bus would take me out to the airport. Also leaving from the Motel then was an elderly gentleman who was heading to civilization for a meeting. He was either a teacher and/or the principal at an aborigine school. We kept each other company on the cold walk from the motel. He had apparently taught in one of the major cities, but didn't like it and finally returned to the outback. When we got out to the airport, it was more crowded than one would expect at four in the morning. The plane from Darwin finally arrived and disgorged its load of sleepy footballers, who had arrived for a match later that weekend. Scrambling on the plane I found my seat and asked the Stew for scrambled eggs, bacon and toast; also reminded her that I liked extra cream and sugar in my coffee. She gave me a funny look and eventually brought the coffee and cookies you seem to get on all TAA flights. It was a quick flight down to Adelaide. We landed on a wet tarmac with the shards of the storm clouds hurrying away on stiff breezes. The just-rising sun gilding their edges. I had no sooner hurried thru the door than I heard my connecting flight being called. Once more into the chilly wind and onto a TAA special. This one bound for Sydney. Still a bit punchy from lack of sleep, I half dozed thru the flight. It was sunny and not at all chilly by the time I arrived in Sydney. Here I & my baggage had even less time before off I went my baggage stayed .. being not so fast afoot, to my ultimate destination: BRISBANE. I finally arrived about 1030 local time. I had also gotten my second wind and was raring to go. I soon located the friendly faces of Del & Dennis Stocks. After all trying to talk at the same time, we calmed down and waited for my bags which didn't show up. Luckily there was another plane from Sydney due in an hour, so we went and had a cup of coffee and they kindly let me natter on about my travels thru the Island Continent. Sure enough, on the next plane my missing baggage appeared and was missing no more. Before we left the airport, we went over to the special building where the "Southern Cross" was housed. The "Southern Cross" was (or should I say is) the aircraft that achieved the first aerial circumnavigation of the world with equatorial crossing by Sir Charles Kingsford Smith (after whom the airport is named) This flight was done in four hops lasting about 2+ years. (And we were complaining about 23 hours from LA to Sydney) The aircraft is a Ford Trimotor and its greatest claim to fame is the first trans-Pacific flight. When it was used to establish an air mail service to New Zealand all sorts of excitement ensued with the navigator wing walking carrying a suitcase of oil from one wing motor to the other that was overheating... all this umpteen thousands of feet above the Tasman Sea. Apparently the suitcase was the only container available for the transfer... I also believe they found a wrench in the tyres on another occasion.. Ah yes, those daring men in their flying machines. Then onward and upward. We drove to several points over the city to get a perspective of both the sprawling nature of the city as well as how it is located, nestling in the surrounding hills. If you get to Brisbane these two points are the Bartley's Hill Lookout and the Eildon Hill Reservoir and lookout. Since the day was very clear and the

sky almost cloudless, the views were most nice. The temperature was not bad either, around 20-22°. This is winter? We then headed back to THE STOCKS EMPIRE where I dropped my Stuff. Not to waste a beautiful day we jumped into the car and went to the centre of town where I could get some more postcards and be given an informal tour of the area. I don't think that the jumble of architectural styles was any greater here, for some reason, it made a deeper impression. The old and the new right beside each other. I compared it, and not in a denigrating sense either, to 1870, 1910 and 1975 styles in the US, particularly the South West. One particular aspect was most interesting. Many of the older homes were built on stumps (stilts, that is) and many of the new homes are built to look like they are. I believe this manner of home building is particular to Queensland. The reasons for this are many. During the rainy season your house is above any possible floodwaters except in the extreme cases, also you get a place to hang your laundry when it's wet outside; there's extra storage space under your home; a place for the kids to play when it's wet, and during the summer, the house is considerably cooler with the airspace underneath. Thus each home has a kind of uninclosed basement above ground, with the houses built about 2 metres off the ground. Another interesting and, to my eyes attractive aspect of Brisbane design was the large number of wrought iron railings on houses. This, too has a somewhat curious history to it. The original railings were brought over from England as ballast for the ships. Being practical, they were also used to decorate the houses. This became so popular, that the railings used as ballast no longer sufficed. Thus a new industry sprang up to meet the demands of home owners who wanted wrought iron railings. From the City Square in front of the City Hall, now dwarfed by the highrise office blocks (it was once the highest building in Brisbane) we took a short driving tour of the city, including a flyby of the Animal Research Institute where Dennis works in the Biochemistry Branch as a Toxicologist (watch him when he offers you coffee with a grin) Then to Lone Pine Sanctuary where we had a ball. I think Del & Dennis had a good time just watching me play the tourist. It is a delightful place just chuck full of all sorts of Australian animals that one could pet and hold. I had my photo taken holding a fuzzy (and very soft) koala and wearing a rather silly-looking grin from ear to ear. Then there was the duck-billed platypus which did its thing for us in its tank. The bill is very soft and pliable from the way it bent as the platypus slapped up the worms and things it casts off the bottom of the tank. Weird looking. The park is full of surprises. I was startled to see this here german shepherd come trotting around the corner with a koala riding high on its back, like a jockey in the home stretch. Apparently this combination is sent down to meet the tourists as they alight from the river craft (which is another way of getting to Lone Pine. Of course I had to feed the kangaroos. We bought some corn from the concession for this purpose and off we went. The roos are quite tame and friendly. It also tickles when they take the corn from your hand. I was surprised by the size of some of the joeys that still crawled back into their mother's pouch. My ghod, a couple of them looked like they stood 60cm tall. The joeys must also be very flexible. I have two delightful slides of joeys who had gone back to mother. After diving in head first and squirming all around, all that showed of one was about 30cm of leg sticking out of the pouch. In the other, the joey is calmly looking out at the world with about 20cm of leg showing over where its left shoulder should be. The look on the child watching all this is priceless. To all this add me gawking at Emus,

wombats (in the image of the Gheort Wombat, no doubt), wallabies, Tasmanian Devils (but no Elmer Fudd), all sorts of birds and more. The sun was lowering as we munched on an ice cream bar and headed back to the STOCKSade. By the way, I did learn that though the kangaroo is a vegetarian, he is not to be messed with, particularly the Big Red, which is reputed to reach over 2 metres in height. What they do, if you mess with them and they decide to take offensive action, is to grab you with their two foreclaws (does that make 8?), lean back balancing on their muscular tail and then gut you with their back feet... which have 3 very big, sharp nails on them. The biggest roos I saw had nails maybe 15cm long. These roos were small compared to the Big, bad Red. Just thought you'd might want to know that the roos don't box, but kick. On the way back we passed by the famous Albion Post Office where in (in)famous Box 235 is located. This is the point thru which all that fannish mail flows. We had time for a drink, a shower (aaahhh!), a change of clothes and a natter before we headed out for dinner. I also got to meet Vickie, Del & Dennis' charming daughter who was, amazingly enough very indifferent to sf fandom. Dinner turned out to be a real treat. My hobbit blood shows up in my love of food, especially good food. Living here in Italy is great for my taste buds and lousy for my waist. I told Del & Dennis that I was more than willing to sample any of the culinary delights that Brisbane had to offer except for Italian or German cuisine. We ended up with seafood. So off we went to Neptune's Kingdom. All I can say is that if you like seafood, and are near Brisbane, run, do not walk to the place. It was a belly bulging, knee-bending, tastebud tantalizing treat. We started off with a rice and either crabmeat or lobster mix. The main course was a mixed seafood platter, that, believe it or not, we couldn't finish and we tried... oh how we tried! When we came in, Del & Dennis mentioned to the maitre d' that they had a friend from the States with them and what did he suggest as a special treat. He suggested the seafood platter we had and to mention to the waitress that I was a special guest from far away. Then maybe the chef would include in the seafood platter Mudcrab. The waitress assured us that she had been notified and she'd be happy to see if the chef would include the mudcrab... which he did. The meat from the mudcrab's claw was about the size of my fist, but not quite so thick. It was delicious. One of the reasons that I mention what had happened is that if someone tried this in the States, and maybe I'm being too harsh, you'd get laughed out of the restaurant. But, by golly, the whole thing was treated seriously here. Oh yes, I suggested that we start the dinner off with a Harvey Wallbanger. This was a new drink to Del & Dennis. The bartender did his thing and we all enjoyed the liquid refreshment. To let the food settle, we strolled thru the ground floor of the building that the restaurant is in. This lower floor is a Home Builders' Display centre where household fixtures, furniture and other items to make your home the envy of the neighbourhood are on display. We had a long discussion on the best type of shower to install and bounced around on waterbeds. They are nice, as long as you're not prone to seasickness. By the time we finally got back home I was more than willing to call it a day! DAY!

24th AUGUST 1975: No ones to waste the sunlight, and there was plenty of it, we roused ourselves with reluctance fairly early, considering it was Sunday, about 8 I believe. We headed out along the Burce Highway or the North Coast Highway. The stretch of coast along here is called the Sunshine Coast. It extends north for about 80Kms. This day It surely lived

up to its name. It was a glorious day. The temperature hit 22-25° and barely a cloud in the sky. After driving north for a while we turned off the Highway at Landsborough and headed inland up into the Malanoy Ranges. I got some very nice shots of the coastal area as we climbed above the coastal plain. Over Malanoy and thru the countryside to Montville. There we stopped go go through a small pottery shop that had a widespread reputation and Del bought herself a small sugar bowl. Nearby was the De Lisle art gallery. This featured mainly artwork by Australian artists. For the next few kilometres I got to take a turn at the wheel. I happen to enjoy driving thru the countryside and was happy to have a turn at the wheel. We then stopped at the Flaxton Barn for a Devonshire Tea or, as I learned of it in England, a creamed tea. It is ever so yummy, but it has a googplex of calories in them. See, you take some scones, add some rich butter, preserves, whipped cream and assorted pieces of cake. I think you get the idea. Oh yes, include a cup or two of very good tea and you have a Devonshire Tea. Happily stuffed we got ready to hit the road. Before he did, however, we couldn't resist taking some slides of us sitting in the "stocks" that was out in front of the Miniature English Village that was next to the Flaxton Barn. The scene around us couldn't be more idyllic if it had been set up. Green rolling countryside, with sheep and cattle grazing, a brilliant sun in a clear sky. Wow! Damn, it did remind me of some of the places that I had seen in England. From there we headed for Mapleton where we came down off the Great Dividing Range (which runs the length of the East coast of Australia) and drove to Nambour. Just south of Nambour we explored the Giant Pineapple, wandered thru the shot at its feet, devoted to the perpetuation of the great giant pineapple. I forget if we bought any goodies to eat... we must have. It is amazing what one can do with pineapples. There is even a tiny train to take visitors on a tour of the plantation. It is wild to see hectares of pineapples. While I know that pineapples grow all over, I can't help but think of pineapples and Hawaii together. This area is also renown for its bananas and ginger. That's what we got. It really makes your mouth pucker up. Wow! Sugar coated or not. However it was good and I had never had ginger before. Dennis, who loves the stuff, was chopping on the stuff and making ecstatic noises. From this tasty interlude we headed south and east for the coast and the beaches on the Pacific at Maroochydore (Love these names!) The sands were almost empty, but the water was warm and looked inviting. I don't know anything about surfing, but the long continuous breakers seemed like a good thing. Of course, about 40-50Kms south of Brisbane there is a 30-40Km long stretch of coast that goes under the name of the Gold Coast and has as its main centre a town called Surfer's Paradise. So I guess this is not a bad place to try and hang ten. After coming down the coast for a while and enjoying the salt sea breezes, we headed inland again to a fire watch lookout over the Glasshouse Mountains. The name comes from Capt. Cook who named them in 1770 when he saw them from the sea. To him, they resembled the kilns or "glass houses" that produced glass products back in his home England. Hence the name. They are actually the central cores of long extinct volcanoes. The three main peaks of Beerwah, Tibrogargan and Coonarwin (Crookneck) are frequented by local rockclimbers. Dennis, an ex-rockclimber himself, explained and pointed out some of the routes. It was on Tibrogargan that he had smashed himself up in a fall of 70' or so and gave up the game to take up skydiving (!) Tibrogargan looks like a brooding ape from the main highway and Beerwah has an interesting curse. The local tribe of aborigines believed the Bunya spirit

spirit lived on top of the 1823' peak. Andrew Petrie (after whom the town of Petrie just south of here is named) was a timber-getter/settler/explorer in the area and climbed to the top to spy out fresh stands of Bunya Pines. Not many years later he contracted "sandy blight" - a very painful disease of the eyes prevalent in Queensland at that time and, helped along by the somewhat barbarous medical treatment of the day, was blind for the rest of his life.... fulfilling the original curse that anyone who climbed Beerwah would be blinded. Crookneck is a thin, crumbling spire and looks dangerous. Part of the mountain collapsed in 1883 during a considerable flood and left a knife-blade crack down one face. Dennis became quite carried away extolling the virtues of this route... ahem! I was glad to see the firewatch tower used wind power to generate their radios. From the hill top a sea of green pine trees spread 360° around us with the mountains rising from an almost perfectly flat plain. The whole area is under reforestation by the Australian Paper Manufacturers. Dennis told me there are problems when they spray the trees when the insecticide runs off into the North and South Pine Rivers which empty into the Ocean. Apparently the oyster industry at the mouth of these rivers is suffering since the oysters accumulate the chemicals and not excrete them. Thus the levels continually are on the increase.

We soon left the main road and plunged west over a dirt trail towards Kilroy. The road became progressively worse and we were glad to reach the town and the bitumen again. From here we drove south to reach Caboolture and finally Brisbane, with a stop to pick up a couple of pineapples for dinner. After freshening up and a good dinner at home this time, I was on the receiving end of a little slide show. Del & Dennis got out their slides of several trips. The guided tour included shots of Hill End, a ghost town near Bathurst with comparison photos of the town today compared with photos in the Mitchell Library taken of the town in the 1870's. Dennis spent some time here a few years previous skindiving in deep potholes in the Turon River which had been a rich source of alluvial gold. He and his two companions made enough selling their recovered gold to pay for the trip and have quite a tidy sum left over as profit. Oh there were slides of the areas around Brisbane that I hadn't time to see, mountains, bushwalks, etc.... Del showed me a book which I was able to find a few days later for a friend here in Italy who is interested in history. It is THE AUSTRALIANS by Robert Goodman (photography) & George Johnston (text), and is a pictorial survey of Australia and its inhabitants. This led to a discussion on speech idioms and Dennis laughingly offered to "knock me up" in the morning about 7 so we'd have time to have breakfast before I'd have to catch my plane for Sydney. Del told the story of her father (a retired horse trainer) who'd said much the same thing to a visiting American lady jockey (jockeyess?) with startling results. I said that I understood as I had heard of the saying even before I had moved to Europe and visited England. We then continued the discussion on differences in American versus Australian speech characteristics. There are some biggies and one could get into trouble, (Don't over ask a shiela if she is letting her hair grow into a shag cut. That is a naughty word.) So ended my two days in Brisbane and environs. I was getting sad, things were coming to an end far too soon. I didn't want it to end. This theme was repeated when we, the group flight members, gathered in Sydney.

25th AUGUST 1975: It was another nice day in Brisbane when I got "knocked up" about 7. The four of us were more or less seated at the same time for breakfast. Oh yes, the Dennis didn't remember it in his reminder

notes to me, but I did get a taste of that well-known Australian delicacy Vegemite. I remember it as salty soy sauce. It is apparently used as a spread. It is reputed to have all sorts of powers. It is thick, like a chocolate spread only black. On the ride out to the airport and in the lobby, we managed to get lots of words in. I reminded Dennis of his promise to write an article for the "new" version of my fanzine, THE SPANG BLAM. I also wondered if he was interested in standing for DUFF himself since he had been one of the Australian nominees for me. I had heard that he wasn't interested. Maybe it was the Worldcon or something, but he said that he would be interested. I told him then it was settled, he would be coming over in '78 or '79. PLUG: SEND STOCKS TO THE US IN THE '78 DUFF ELECTION!!

I waved goodbye and two more fantastic days were history. It's ending too soon! Time, slow down! Soon Kingsford Smith airport was beneath me. I hoped the airport bus and made for the AIR NEW ZEALAND office to try and confirm a flight from Auckland to Wellington. After some minor problems, I sort of got what I needed. Also picked up some new bills for my collecting friends at home. I also got some coins which I left with the Clarkes by accident. Eventually I found my way to the Hyatt House and left my bags there. I rang the Clarkes and told them that I had survived the wilds of Australia and was coming up to see them, as we had arranged before the convention. I caught the train and headed west. Found my way to the pub that Sue had told me to go to and waited for Ron. I had time for a quick Pepsi and chips before Ron pulled up. They had stayed at home, Ron had work to do and Sue was feeling under the weather, but Sue's brother, Chris, had gone with many of the motley crew of Americans plus a few of the local fen to the Blue Mountains and Katoomba. Thus we had a quiet afternoon chatting about what I had done and seen as well as what had gone on in the area. It seems that the Americans had been straggling into the area over the past week or so. Enough had been around to form the basis for a special Faulcon, held in the palatial mansion of Eric Lindsay. It must be palatial to have held the 40 fen that were rumoured to have stayed there for several days. Then again, fen have been known to double and triple up. That evening we went over to Eric's house and joined about 20-30 other fen having a good time drinking, chatting, kissing and doing all sorts of other fanish things. I took some very interesting photographs. It was good to see some of the others and hear of their travels hither and yon across much of Eastern Australia. I don't believe that anyone ventured into the friendly environs of Perth and the far West. Just wait until next time! Speaking of next time, I plonked down my A\$2:00 for a pre-supporting membership for the SYDNEY COVE IN '88 bid. It was No.56. A tad bit too late to get my name on the initial flyer run off by Eric, who is the man to contact. Right now the word factotum describes Eric. Everyone called it a night fairly early. Tomorrow we would be moving down to the Hyatt House for our last night, snuffle, sob, in Sydney and Australia. I was also feeling the coming effects of the Down-Under Crud. But cold or no cold, I was carrying on. I'd worry about it back in Italy.

26th AUGUST 1975: For a change the day dawned dismal and downcast. A light rain misted down. However, I was not going to let this dampen my spirits, any more than I was going to let the head cold stop me. After a quick breakfast, Chris, Sue's Brother, picked me up and off we went. Chris, who had led the expedition on the day before, was free and was more than happy to have another tourist to show around. So the two of us set off

for not only sightseeing, but the purchase of some very important items. Our first stop was for gas. Then some film, I was running low, some minor medical items to clear my head. Now for some of the important items that one can't forget: Gifts! There was the book, THE AUSTRALIANS. The next item was, for me, one of the most important things of the trip. We went and got me a genuine Aussie Slouch Hat! I had wanted one of those for years. And now, by Ghod, I was in Australia and I was going to get one or know the reason why. We swung by the Clarke's for a minute and picked up the rest of my stuff as we wouldn't be stopping back here later. We were going straight into the city. When we did, Chris soaked the top of the hat and gave it the creases that it had to have in order to look proper. Then off again to the Blue Mountains and Katoomba. The day had turned even worse by the time we got there. The temperature couldn't have been more than 5^o, there was a wind of 50-60 Kph and gusting and the rain felt like it may have had some sleet or snow in it. Yet for the rain, wind etc there was a certain romantic beauty of the scene. The land rises until you reach the Blue Mountains' crest. Then it just falls away in steep cliffs maybe 4-700 metres deep. Looking out over the valleys below and the other ridges and mountain ranges in the distance, one can easily imagine the frustration felt by the first settlers on the coast who were pressing inwards only to find an impenetrable barrier in front of them. I could see and feel some crusty old soul, standing on these ridges maybe 150 years ago with the rain and snow pelting down on him, cursing the gods that kept him from pushing over the mountains into the fertile lands beyond. Eventually they did find a way over and it was near where I stood. Amazingly, the same problem faced the settlers who exploded over the mountains to fill the lands beyond. They couldn't get back over the mountains to the north to the coast. So they pushed ever further north until Alan Cunningham found a way through the Great Dividing Range to the west of Brisbane. Some 700+ Kms north. It was quite beautiful, the view and, the weather not withstanding, well worth the trip. However, discretion is the better part of valour and Chris and I beat a quick retreat to the coffee/gift shop in the area. After I gathered some more post cards, Chris & I had some cappuccino. It wasn't bad and it was the first thing Italian that I had had since I left Italy 22 days before. I offered the girl 500 lire which was about equal to the cost of the two cups but she coolly declined, saying that she couldn't accept that kind of money. So I apid, using "real" money, in this case, Australian. From there we headed for Koala Park. I had already picked up some aborigine items in Alice Springs, now to get a Koala Bear. What with the horrid weather and the fact that I had already been to two other zoos, we just hit the gift shop at Koala Park. They had a hugeous selection and I went a bit bananas. I ended up getting about A\$70 worth of goodies. I now had gifts for many an occasion. Like with the other stuff I bought, I had them send it to me via mail. I received this also in December, in time to use as presents. I did keep one Koala Bear out. I had been warned by my boss's wife that if I didn't bring here a Koala Bear, I needn't come back. Now, while it was tempting to stay, I was going to use this as an excuse. From here we headed into Sydney. Oh yes, I'd like to note that Australia uses the exact sign to mark its "interstate" highways as does the US. Very interesting. Hmmm? We acquired L'Elver Gray somewhere along the way and on the way into Sydney he decided to pick up a slouch hat like mine. Without too much trouble we located a disposal store and soon had L'Elver outfitted with a hat. By the time we got back to the Hyatt House, most everyone had gathered there and lo and behold,

there must have been about 40 slouch hats in evidence. Some mad biologist had done a sloppy clone job on Mike Glickson's hat. Nevertheless, there is only one Mike Glickson and only one hat like his. Ours are some 9 years behind in developing character (By the beginning of '76 mine had picked up two conventions worth of experience and one film festival's worth of character under its brim) The evening soon became a madhouse of sorts. There was a room party in Robin Johnson's suite. It was a happy and sad thing. Everyone was high from their travels and the stories flowed like the wine, beer etc. in the suite. However, the pall of leaving hung over all of us. Everywhere snatches of words like: I'll be back.... of course I'll be here for '88....Where's Eric, so that I can register!....For most if not all of us, this trip was our one chance to come down-under. Now most of us were trying to figure out how to come back. I'd guess that 90% of the fen on the trip are planning to return in '88, if they possibly can. I just know that if I get a position on the west coast, I won't be able to refuse taking one of the special Qantas trips to Australia. I think it runs about \$900 for 10 days, hotel and car included. Of course I'd pick the weekend the Australian National Convention was being held. In addition to the general festivities, several of the Aussie fen who later ended up running for the '76 DUFF, were busy getting American nominators. It was most interesting. As it turned out 4 fen eventually made it to the ballot: JOHN ALDERSON, SHAYNE MCCORMACK, CHRISTINE MCGOWAN and PAUL "ANTI-FAN" STEVENS. Wretch-a-fretch! How does one choose between 4 fen that once you've met them, you want all four of them to come Up-Over to the '76 Worldcon. It just isn't fair. Now, if DUFF raises enough money, maybe each of them, could get some money. So after you buy this report, turn around and donate some money to the Fund! \$100 will be fine. Anything less and I get a contract out on you. Eventually, like all good things, the party ran down. We had to get up and out the next day for the airport. New Zealand, here we come, ready or not.

27th AUGUST 1975: Spent a lazy morning wandering around the complex of stores attached to the Hyatt House. Ended up buying a few more pins, clips etc. I sure did my part to help the Australian balance of payments. By the time we boarded the bus, the sky had clouded over. It seemed that, just like in the story books, even the elements seemed sad that we were leaving. I know that I was. When we got to the airport, Shayne McCormack managed to find about 70-80 daffodils and gave each of us one to remember Australia. I imagine that we were quite a sight in the plane. Several of the Aussies were apparently buying tickets and coming with us. I guess that they enjoyed our visit as much as we enjoyed visiting with them. I really hope that more than a few can make it to the Reunion Party at MAC and future ones. All too soon we were airborne. Once again we received our orange juice and a lecture on what to do should we crash at sea. It was dark and cold when we landed at Auckland. We were soon at the Travelodge Hotel. We were about to invade the bar when it closed. As a substitute, most of us invaded the restaurant. We used the lobby as a convenient place to hold a room party and chatted away on such things as the perfect fanzine and convention. The clocks soon showed midnight or later, but since we had picked up 2 hours in flying east, tiredness didn't appear for a while. Finally I headed up to my room for some sleep as I had to be at the airport by 0630 to catch my plane to Wellington. I had no sooner closed my eyes that there was a knock at the door: "Room service!" I staggered into some clothes and cracked the door. There was this lovely lass with a tray, two glasses and a bottle of champagne.

my head was a little foggy, but I knew enough to invite the lady in. She demurred, saying that she was only delivering the bottle etc. Pity, I thought, as she was nice. But then again she did have on a uniform of the Travelodge staff. By this time Stu Tait, who had the room next to me, Joan Serrano and a couple of others were in the hall, chuckling away at my confusion. They didn't know who had sent it, but thought that I shouldn't look a gift horse in the mouth and enjoy. Unfortunately, the lovely lass, yes I learned who sent it, who was my benefactor, declined to show. Things will be set to rights at MAC. Eh eh! The champaign eventually found its way into glasses in New Zealand. I eventually settled down for the rest of the night, which was fast passing.

28th AUGUST 1975: I staggered up at the ungodly hour of 0545. In the stygian gloom I gathered my belongings together and propped my way to the motel lobby and collapsed into the cab, which showed up on time. I reached the airport in plenty of time, more than plenty. I only had an open ticket and wasn't sure which of the 3 early morning flights I'd get on. Actually I got on the second which left third. Something to do with the crew. Auckland's airport is nothing special, but it did have a coffee shop so that I could get a transfusion of caffeine. I did chat with several of the other folk who were waiting for their plane. They were rather curious as to why I'd come down-under during the winter. When I'd mention the Worldcon, I'd get a funny look. Of course, the fact that I was actually from Italy croggled their minds even more. The weather was nothing special when we finally got airborne and it was even worse when I landed at Wellington. It was pissing down rain and the wind made the 3-5^o temperatures feel even worse. I rang Judy Reinken, who soon picked me up. In a jiffy I was in a warm house and sipping some tea with Judy and Don. Don and Judy are old friends from my Uni of Chicaho days back in the early '60s. Don is also the one who got me started on Tolkien, for which I'm very thankful. I was also greeted by their very suspicious dachshund. I've forgotten his name, but we agreed, eventually, on a mutual non-aggression pact. Don, by the way, teaches PoliSci at the University in Wellington. Judy works for the Dept of Welfare, I believe. In any case they sometimes confuse people who call for "Dr." Reinken. Apparently a woman with a PhD is still a bit rare in New Zealand. After a time during which we swapped some gossip, Judy suggested a tour of the local "jungle". Well, it is actually a park, but in the rain and gloom and the very unfamiliar vegetation, I guess a city boy like me, could be forgiven for letting his imagination run a bit wild. Except, for the ghill, it could have been a 1930's venusian forest with all the green and rain. It was also quite amusing to be getting a talk on the park and vegetation from Judy, including a story of how she and another friend got a bit lost one day hiking on the coast, and being told the fundamentals of Mah-Jongg from Don, who is a little potty over the game. We eventually called it a day and went back. A friend of the Reinken's came by for dinner and the inevitable Mah-Jongg game. I should mention here that I'm over doing the Mah-Jongg bit. I think that I had played it many, many years ago and I did enjoy the game quite a bit. The others had, of course, played it before and Donald is somewhat good at it. They were quite tolerant of my inexperience. We used the time to solve most of the world's problems and it was a pleasant evening. It was also the last unrushed evening I was to have for many a day. Their house was set up on a hillside and it gave a nice view of the residential area of Wellington. You couldn't see the downtown area from where we

were. The ocean also played peek-a-boo thru the clouds. It was quite a change from Australia. New Zealand is much newer geologically, and much more hilly and mountainous than Australia. Later I got a good look at the northern end of the Spouthern Alps. Oh yes, we did get to talking about Hobbits and the like. I gave them a copy of A TOLKIEN COMPASS which included 8 articles from two Tolkien conferences I had organised. They told me of the birthday party they had organised for Bilbo and Frodo, a couple of years back when they got a local baker to prepare "Mock Dragon's Tail". Being a bit late to have some, I did get some slides of the cake. It looked fantastic. I got hungry just looking at it. Don occasionally gives talks on one aspect of Tolkien or another at the university. Finally to bed and the last full night's sleep until I got back to Italy and that was still days off.

29th AUGUST 1976: We all got up with the rain and not too early. After a good breakfast we headed for the airport. Of course we made a slight detour thru Wellington for me to get some coins and bills for collectors back in Italy. By this time the sun was trying to come out and the day was beginning to really look nice. We caught our plane for Christchurch. We were going there for the commissioning ceremony of a friend of the Reinken's. The plane landed and we left everything and dashed for a cab. It was a windy day with the shards of the morning's rain storm still blowing away overhead. We splashed thru the puddles to the air base and arrived with about 15 minutes to spare. It was damn cold in the hanger where the ceremony was being held and everyone was given blankets. Hmmm, army blankets are army blankets the world over. The biggies were driven up in cars. They entered from one side and left thru the other. It was quite impressive. Swords and all that. Jolly good show! It was also the last commissioning ceremony to take place there. The base was being changed over to another function and pilots weren't going to be trained there anymore. After the ceremony was over, there was a rather nice cocktail party. The Reinkens thought it fun to introduce me as the American Air Force representative to the Royal New Zealand Air Force commissioning ceremony. I think it did a job to the head of several persons there, when I noted that I was living in Italy. It also left them a bit bewildered to learn that I had been in Australia for "What?" the 33rd SF Worldcon. I enjoyed every minute of it. Eventually we went back to the airport to claim our baggage and head for the motel. The motel was very nice and not quite like the ones I'm used to in the States. In the motel, as in the Reinken's house, the heating is done with electricity, which costs about 1/3rd what it does in the US. Perhaps the nicest thing is the icebox. Yep, there is an icebox in each room and in it are cream and milk for the coffee. This comes with the room, as does the paper I found outside my room the next morning. Man, was that coffee good tasting. I hadn't had anything since that morning and I had drawn seconds for the shower. I was sharing the room with a good friend of the fellow who had just gotten his wings. This chap had also put in a stint at Pine Gap in Australia. Well, we got roady and soon we were off to the restaurant for a rather big type dinner. We finally got our party together and after drinks we had a fair meal. The service left a bit to be desired. However, I shared a table with a very nice couple and it made the meal. From there we went back to the air base for the dance. It reminded me of a college hop, except that most of the men were in military uniforms. I managed to take my turns out on the dance floor; I had to work off some of the dinner and the goodies that had been set out for us. By far the most

interesting person I met was the wife of the leaving Base Commander. In addition to being a good dancer, she was most interesting to speak with. When I implied that I was her contemporary, she thanked me, but said that she was quite a bit older than 25. I then thanked her and noted I was 36 not 25. She was a bit flumoxed to learn that she was only 6 months older than me. In any case between the champaign (yummy!) the company, the music, it was a very pleasant evening. The Reinkens had called it quits earlier in the evening so I grabbed a lift back to the motel from someone else. I think it was the chap who got his wings the day before. You see it was about 330 in the morning. I took my leave from the nice people, but not before I said goodbye to the Commander and his lady. It was then my turn to be a tad bit surprised. She gave me a nice big goodbye kiss and he said that as long as I had her back by Sunday morning at 8 o'clock, I could keep her, for they were off on vacation then. I thanked him, but explained that I had to be in Wellington that evening to catch my plane to the States. Maybe some other time. (A bloody open-minded chap, him.)

30th AUGUST 1975: It seemed that no sooner than had I laid my head on the pillow, than it was time to rise and shine. I rose, but I was not in the best shape to shine. I really don't remember just when and where we had breakfast, but after scraping the ice off the car, we headed out. It was a beautiful day. Some clouds, chilly, but the air was really clear and the sun was out much more often than not. We headed to the coast and in the process drove thru some beautiful rolling countryside. Off to the West the snowy tops of the Southern Alps gleamed in the sun. The land, mostly void of people, was filled with sheep and cattle. Lambing had occurred not too far in the past. So I was treated to the sight of lots of little lambs with fleece as white as the two week old snow. (sorry about that fairy tale fans). However, I did note one interesting thing. Whenever a lamb was nursing, it's little tail was going a mile a minute. When it was just wandering around or munching on grass the tail didn't do a thing. Judy suggested that it was something inherent. She had noted that in the treatment of stroke victims, getting them upright had made a marked difference in their speed of recovery. In any case the lambs seemed to be enjoying themselves and that was the main thing. I also noted that cattle and sheep were both grazing on the same land. This was a puzzle. Every American lad and lassie knows about the dread battles between the sheepherder and the cattlemen in our "old West". John Wayne, Glen Ford and all that. Well, it seems that in the West the rainfall is not all that great, maybe 50cms a year, in the main grazing areas. This is not much more than the Alice Springs area gets. This means that there is not enough rain for the grass to grow fast enough to support both grazing animals. However, in the area we were going through, the rainfall was in the order of 150+cms per year and hence the grass regrew fast enough to support the feeding habits of both animals. No range wars here. After cutting through the hills we finally made the shore. It was quite a sight: mountains just off to the west and the South Pacific Ocean to the east. It was a scenic and restful drive up the coast. We had plenty of time and we stopped a couple of times to take in the sights. We stopped for lunch at a restaurant that had a rather wide mountain river emptying into the ocean and behind it, the upsweep of the snow-covered mountains sparkling in the snow next to it as our view from the window as we sat and munched on scampi. The afternoon wore on and I started to get a bit antsy. We were to catch a plane in Blenheim. There seemed to be two

different times listed on the time schedule. Since I had to make the flight out of Auckland that evening I was a bit nervous. If I missed the flight, then I'd miss my connection flights along the way and not get back to Italy on the 1st. .. which could cost me fifteen day's pay. Very complicated, but I knew that I had to make the flight. We got to Blenheim early and Don and Judy had time to look up someone they had met there the previous year. Finally we got out to the airport. It was locked up tighter than a drum. No one or anything seemed to be there. I gulped a few times and we sat down to wait, while we munched on fruit. I also took a couple of pictures of the signpost in front of the small wooden building that served as the waiting room, check-in room etc. It gave the various distances to important cities around the world. Rome was only 18,976 Kms distant (it was also the last slide I took on the trip, and in a way very fitting) That would be the shortest route also. Needless to say I wasn't going back by the shortest route. Finally about half an hour before the plane was to leave, other folk started to arrive and I relaxed a bit. The guy in charge of the place showed up about ten minutes later and ten minutes after that the plane, a Fokker Friendship propjob. I had flown in these before in Europe. Tight inside, but nice little planes. We soon got stowed away and were winging our way across the straits between the South and North Islands. My baggage was checked straight through to Auckland and after collecting Don and Judy's, we headed for the lounge for a couple of drinks and to wait for my plane to Auckland. I also picked up some clean and fresh bills for friends and another handful of postcards. Finally my plane was called and I bided adieu to the Reinkens for another couple (?) of years. I had come a wee bit early, it seems. The following week they were throwing a big party. They were getting their New Zealand citizenship and were planning a big bash to celebrate. After boarding, we all sat and sat. It seems that the crew had to come from another plane and it was late. About this time I started to have visions of landing in Auckland just after my plane left for the States. When I enquired about when we were leaving to the steward, I received a lecture on leaving in plenty of time to catch planes. And if I missed my connection that was my fault. He really knew how to win friends and influence people for the NZ National Airways Corp or NAC, for short. However, my incipient fears were soon put to rest and the plane trundled off to Auckland. I no sooner hit the passenger lounge than I was in the midst of this swarm of slouch hats. I had found our group. I was caught up in a swirl of questions and discussions of what and where everyone had gone. I also found time to go and fetch my baggage. It did arrive and I could leave - a bit overweight. I think I generally managed to get by carrying about 25 kilos. Apparently for 5 kilos, the airport officials weren't going to make a big fuss. The bi. thing at the airport was the foulup by Air New Zealand. It made a boo-boo and overbooked the flight back to the States. So there are about 20 or 30 of us who were bumped from the flight on Saturday night. After getting all my shit together I joined the mob and damn near a mob it was, at the Air New Zealand desk. The bloke behind the desk didn't seem to have the faintest idea of how to copo with some 60 irate passengers. Not only that, but the folk who were nonsmokers had little or no chance of getting in the nonsmoking section of the plane. If they could even get on the plane at all. I was supposed to have a confirmed seat on the flight out. After about half an hour or so, I finally got to the front of the line and sure enough I got my seat. However, I was put in the smoking section even though I had requested the nonsmoking section. I was just happy to be on the plane. Interestingly enough there was

a Pan-Am flight out about the same time, which was half empty. I do believe that some of our group ended up on that plane. Of course, if you had the time, ANZ would be putting you up in a nice hotel, feeding you and picking up the bill. I only wished, at the time, that I could have stayed another day although I was very happy to have made the flight that I did. So with many tearful goodbyes, the Saturday departure group made it way to the waiting room on the other side of the customs gate. We were all a bit down. The once-in-a-lifetime trip was coming to an end and much too soon. We bucked up with the thought that in LA we could prolong the fun with NASFiC. We were soon into the air and being told how to get out of the plane in case we had to ditch and given our glass of orange juice to prevent scurvy or something like that. I was lucky enough to have the charming Evalyn Clough on my right. We chatted away on what we had done and seen while in NZ. We weren't airborne too long before we were treated to the good food of ANZ. This was followed by the movie, THE GREAT WALDO PEPPER. It was quite good. I finally got to see it a second time here in Aviano at the end of January. It brought back neat memories. At first Evalyn and I tried to share my earphones, but she later decided that it was too inconvenient and broke down and rented a pair. That renting of earphones is a real ripoff. \$2:50 a set. There ought to be a law against such exploitation. Write your congressman or representative! God only knows what the second movie was. I've forgotten. I do think I got some sleep, but nothing special. However, this state was to continue for another couple of days.

30th AUGUST 1975: (Yes, I know that that is what I put for the previous day, but don't forget we crossed the International Dateline. So we were repeating Saturday. It evened out. We had lost 10th August so we gained 30th August) Oh yes, as we crossed the Equator, we got another packet of goodies from ANZ, which included a certificate about crossing it. I think that on the trip to Australia, someone collected signatures on his. Jolly good fun. The rising sun found us landing in Honolulu. We were back in the US! Nothing much is going on at the airport at 6 am on a Saturday, any airport. So after staggering around I wandered back to await reboarding. In the process I ran into a lovely New Zealand lass, Wendy Adams by name, off to London where she taught school. She had been back visiting the old homestead. We had a nice chat about London, teaching and even sf. Since I'd be in London in November I suggested that she let me know where she would be and I'd ring her up when I got there on my way to NOVACON. As it turned out we got together in October when I was in England on business. With much luck it turned out I was in London during the first week of the month and so we got together at the One Tun on the night London fandom gathers there. She enjoyed the evening and who knows, perhaps a new fan was born that evening. The rest of the flight into LA International went quickly. We landed around 4pm, some 4 hours before we had taken off in Auckland. Customs wasn't too bad and soon we gathered trying to figure out just where everyone was going. A goodly number of us were heading to the Marriott where NASFiC was going on. So we hoped the Hotel bus, I had called and soon we were there and checked in. I had found that my ID was good for a room at about half price. I could get a double or single for \$20. Oh what the hell, I was still on vacation. I, like the others, headed for our rooms and hot soap and water. Refreshed I was about to head for the pool, when I got a call from a friend from Italy, who had now moved back to California, Momi Bader. She does some very nice artwork. The year she spent at the Uni of Firenze didn't hurt her at all. We both belong to the Society for Creative Anachronism and she had gotten my name just before she

left for Italy, where we became good friends. It was good to see her again and we wandered downstairs, where she introduced me to several Society folk who were at the con. I then headed for the pool for some swimming. It was a bit chilly and I ended up relaxing in the small pool with hot water. A couple of the others who had come back from Australia were there too. Also got into a conversation "auf Deutsch" with a couple who were in LA on business. They were from the Essen area, if I remember correctly. It blew their minds to get into a chat in German in LA. After that I changed clothes and went to dinner. I think that all of us from the Aussiecon trip who were staying at the hotel ate together. I wandered down to the far end of the masquerade. Some of the costumes were quite something else. My Male Chauvannist Pig instincts were heightened by the costumes worn (?) by Angelique Trouvers and her friend Kris. One was a mermaid and the other a Centaur (or is it a Centauress?) Later at a room party, Angelique pulled out her scrap (?) book, which contained pictures and sketches of costumes that she has designed. Most of them were for herself, but several were for other fan, both male and female. Most nice. The night, instead of being one where I might get some rest, turned out to be one where I ended up getting about 30 minutes sleep, and I'm not too sure just why I even got that. First just wandering around saying hi to the few American fan that I knew, meeting some of the fan who went to Aussiecon, but did not go on the group flight. I got a small rise out of Bob Silverberg with my goatee. It was basically the same as his, tho I hadn't been patterning it after his. I had planned it long before I went to Aussiecon. We also swapped Wombat jokes (A wombat is a small animal that eats, roots and leaves!) Also met Charlie Brown after some 7 years. I also showed Fuzzy Pink Niven the picture of me in my costume for the Aussiecon masquerade. She really did chuckle. Around that time I also ran into Elst Weinstein, with whom I had been corresponding. It is damn nice to put a face with the names. I had this happen in Australia and now again here. One of the things we discussed was the problems in getting anything done in Mexico or Italy. Both have an attitude of putting off things until the next fiscal year. This is not to say that they may not have something by this attitude, except that when one is raised in a more hurried atmosphere, the cultural shock is rather great. Off once again on my wanderings. Who next would I meet? I was soon stopped by someone from the group flight to tell me that there was a "Julie" looking for me. I cheered up a bit and started off in search of Ms Julie Ellery. I had met her at EUROCON I in 1972 at Trieste. We had written to each other and had spoken on the phone, when I had been in LA earlier on the 8th, but it would be good to see her again after all these years. She was in the process of photographing a rather nice looking "Catwoman". The Catwoman had only time to finish the head and a bit more of the costume. She planned to have it all finished for the next Worldcon. It was impressive as it was. Julie and I hugged and started to natter away. This was only for a short while as she had to help the Catwoman out of her costume, however we were going to get together later. I returned to the large room which served as a central meeting area. It also had a bar. I ran into Joan Serrano and Genie DiModica there. We compared NASFiC to Aussiecon and Aussiecon was far and away the better convention, tho granted we had only seen a couple of hours of NASFiC. When we took our leave it was forever, or at least until MAC (I think that the worst part of the trip was saying Auf Wiedersehen or ciao. In the very short time that the group was together, many very nice friendships were formed. I'm very much looking forward to the reunion party at MAC and future Worldcons.) I found my way to

the Catwoman's room. Also bringing along a bucket which we filled with ice. Soon we headed to a room party, which lasted until the wee small hours of the morning, too wee, as I was to get up at 0630. It was in Keith Kato's room. It started out as a closed party; but since it seemed to be the best one going, it soon got far beyond that. One reason besides some very interesting people there was Keith's very HOT CHILI. It melted plastic at 10 metres. All and sundry were warned about the strength of the chili. Ellison's comment on it was that it was quite good, and that his stomach was in fine shape to take the chili, as it had survived his mother's cooking, which he implied was not the best. But weren't all Jewish mothers supposed to cook well? Or did that all just know how to give one heartburn? Oh well, now my mother's cooking ... To me the room party was the best thing at NASFiC. Tho it was a bit crowded at times, I got to chat with a varied assortment of fen and pros that made the tight fit worth while.. I had just finished Paul Anderson's FIRE TIME. I had some questions about the spatial configuration of the trinary system. Considering the circumstances, I got my questions answered. A good deal of the time was spent looking thru the scrap and pattern book of Angelique Trouvere. Her fashion sketches are fantastic. Many of the designs are for Star Trek attire. She commented on the fact that several are really impossible to wear. It takes a lot of glue, scotch tape and little movement to keep everything in place (One of the treats that I'm looking forward to at iAC is her costume) The costumes also ended up as starting points for some varied discussions. Much later when the steam started to run out of the party, I got together with Julie for a quiet chat. Between her travels, work with media and the use of media in sf and then my travels and conventions in Europe, job etc we worked thru many an hour. I only realized later that I got only half an hour sleep, and I wonder why I even tried to get that. So the fifteen hour layover in LA was anything but reviving.

31st AUGUST 1975: by 0700 I managed to have found my way down to the restaurant and some much needed coffee. I was a bit worried. There was a dense fog outside, While the idea of being stuck in LA appealed to me, I also knew that I had to get back. Collapsed on a chair in the waiting room I noticed the sun eat its way thru the fog and it was fairly nice by take off time. I dozed off immediately, but awake to munch on some TWA breakfast. I believe I then managed to stay awake until New York. I had about 90 minutes to change planes. I did manage to get a few phone calls off. I said my last farewells to my folks. I had also called them upon returning to LA. For me it is a novelty to be able to pick up a phone and dial them straight away. You have no idea of how good Ma Bell is until you have to deal with European and military phone systems. Then on to a 707 for the return flight to Italy. It really seemed that the service and equipment was going downhill as I headed east. All in all, I have to give Air New Zealand a top rating for the various flights that I ended up on, and there were lots. I got some sleep on the flight over. The day was now moving a double time. The four hour flight from LA to NY, which left 9am local time got me to NY at 5pm local time. The 7 hour flight from NY to Milano took up 13 hours by the clock brought me into Milano at 8am in the morning of 1st September. I had a two hour wait in which I phoned Karel Thole. He is the Dutch artist who is living in Milano and is going to win a Hugo one of these days! Nominate and Vote for him! He had been at AUSSIECON but not on the group flight. I think that I beat him out for the longest distance traveled to get to AUSSIECON. Of course I cheated a bit, by going via the US. I estimate the distance at about 27,000 km one way. It might be

more. That's a fair piece of going. Now came the biggest surprise of the trip. The Alitalia flight from Milano to Venezia left and arrived ON TIME!. It had never happened before or since. The ghods were smiling down on me that day. It was a warm and sunny day in Venezia and Joyce and Dave Olson were there smiling to greet me. I gave her the stuffed Koala Bear, that she told me to bring back or else and got a hug. I was back after the most faantastic trip I had ever taken. Oh well, there is SYDNEY COVE IN '88! See you there*****

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I guess that sort of winds up the report. I'd like to hear your comments on it. I'm sending this out as a postmailing in the hope you will respond before the June mailing. I hope to make the final product a bit more feeling to go with the facts. If I've forgotten anything or have made too many mistakes, drop me a line, don't wait for the regular mailing. The retype probably won't be done for a while yet. I've since decided not to redo it as I indicated earlier as an after dinner discussion. I simply haven't the time. Assuming that I'm here long enough, I'll be offsetting this. I'd like to have some illos from some of you out there. I won't promise anything, as I keep changing my mind on what I want to do with this. If you want the illos returned, please indicate this. // Plan to show a selection of the slides that I took on the trip at MANCON. I'll be setting out a hat for donations to DUFF. I'll also be having a duel with the chairman of the con. It seems that I referred to MANCON as FILTHYCON (there are no showers in the rooms, it is a student dorm) and this upset him. So I accepted his challenge, thus I had the right to choose the weapons. They will be custard or cream pies. THE BATTLE OF THE CENTURY: FILTHY FINVER vrs PURE PRESFORD! Proceeds to TAFF & DUFF. We plan to hold the duel just prior to the masquerade. Hmmmnn, there are many professional souls, in their mundane life, in this APA. I have a couple of friends that might be interested in going Down*Under. One is a PhD in German, who is in need of a teaching position at a University. The other is the Italian MD that I mentioned earlier. When she called the Aussie embassy in Roma, they told her that she would have to have a hospital in Australia sponsor her move. She just passed her licensing exams in Italy, so is fully qualified. Wants to go into G-I tract surgery as a specialty. She has gotten a very fast and open reply from the NZ embassy. So soon I may have another good reason to go Down Under. Unless there is a need for college administrators, I'm afraid that I won't be coming. I'm sort of into Adult education. My degrees are a bit disparate: BS in Physical Chemistry in '64 and an M Ed in College Administration in '69. Any university need a Dean of Students? Looks like I'm running out of paper. Just think, Next time, I'll be just rambling away on various topics, not the trip. Oh yes, one of the fcn that really made the trip for me was meeting Wilson Bob Tucker. Wow! I'm not sure that he will let me/us (I've spoken to several fcn about this) do it, but I've written to him and asked if I could get a fund going to send him to England for an Eastercon. If he says yes, any and all help that you can give to this programme/project will be very welcome.// Dropped a line to a distributor of Foster's Lager in the US. Asked if they would donate some 30-60 cans of Foster's beer to the Aussiecon Fandom Reunion Party. Remind Eric Lindsay to run IL VONBATO thru ANZAPA.

Basta per oggi!

Ciao & teggeddizzi!

jan. 21.2.76