

CHUNDER!

Number Six ... February 1973

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THE DENAZIFICATION OF THE WORLD SCIENCE
FICTION SOCIETY

Among the changes in the WSFS rules as printed in the 3rd Progress Report of this year's World Science Fiction Convention from the rules as printed in the Program Book of the 1972 World Science Fiction Convention is the removal of 2 sections (3.07 & 3.08) which established the North American Science Fiction Convention (NASFiC).

Under the rules operating until last year's convention, such an action by the Toronto committee is strictly legal.

There has been a predictably strong reaction to this action, particularly from those who looked forward to holding a NASFiC. It is worth while devoting some time and space to an informal discussion of events leading up to the 3rd TORCON PR.

The question of the relationship between the World Convention and a proposed NASFiC was discussed at some length at the 1970 convention in Heidelberg. A number of other interesting events occurred at the Heicon. One was a ruling by the Chairman of the business session that the matter of regional conventions (to wit, the Eurocon) was not a proper subject for discussion by the World Science Fiction Society. Another was the pointed non-ratification of some of the amendments passed at St. Louis in 1969. A third interesting event was the passage of a number of amendments to WSFS rules which were supposed to lead to the setting-up of a NASFiC.

It is strange, in retrospect, that no one (to my knowledge) pointed out the inconsistency in ruling out discussion of a European convention but not of a North American one. Of course, the NASFiC had been much discussed previously, whereas this does not seem to have been the case with the Eurocon.

On the face of it, the discussion of ratification or otherwise of previous amendments is even more strange. There is no provision for such activities in the printed rules, but it apparently was a long-established tradition.

The amendments to the WSFS rules designed to set up a NASFiC had, alas, not been constructed sufficiently carefully, with some unamended rules contradicting the NASFiC rules, as was admitted subsequently by Bruce Pelz in his SAPzine, SPELEOBEM, and is shown in the 1971 edition of Jerry Lapidus's THE LEGAL RULES.

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The Noreascon, held in Boston in 1971, clarified a number of these points.

Firstly, the inconsistencies with regard to the NASFiC were straightened out. Not at the business session, but sometime between the Heicon and the printing of the rules by the Noreascon committee. Perhaps Anthony Lewis, as Chairman of Noreascon, knows why, when and by whom the rules were 'adjusted'. In addition, at the business session, the NASFiC rules were further altered to the form shown in the L.A. Con Program Book.

Secondly, the tradition of 'ratification' was dealt a body blow by the passing of a new rule (currently 4.02) which runs: "Any proposal to amend the rules of the Society shall require for passage only a majority of all the votes cast on the question, except that a proposal to rescind any such action on the immediately previous business session shall require for passage three-quarters of the votes cast."

Whether this effectively destroys the tradition of ratification is a matter for debate: it deals with the majority required for an annulment of an earlier motion, while the tradition deals with the confirmation of an earlier motion.

The Noreascon also ratified a number of amendments from the Heicon.

No amendments from the Noreascon were ratified at the L.A. Con.

The 3rd Torcon PR includes the modified rules (modification as indicated in the first paragraph of this article) and also an opinion by Ken Smookler (13 December 1972) on 'procedural and constitutional problems relating to the World Science Fiction Society' which deals with the questions of minutes and - the NASFiC. The opinion on the NASFiC reproduces that on the Eurocon in 1970 - namely that such matters are 'beyond the powers of the Society'.

Thus the TORCON committee has three separate grounds for rejecting 3.07 & 3.08. (1) A legal opinion, which also has precedent. (2) The non-ratification of these amendments at Los Angeles in 1972. (3) The precedent of the Noreascon committee, who changed the rules to suit themselves.

However, I do not believe that any of these is appropriate to the task. As has been shown, rules are changed to suit the wishes of ephemeral groups. There is, however, a simple principle at stake.

This is that the site of a convention should be decided upon by those to whom the convention 'belongs'. The site for Australian national conventions is chosen by Australians, the site of Japanese conventions by Japanese, and so on for Germany, Britain, Sweden et cetera. Why should it be different for North American (read, let's face it, U.S. most of the time) conventions? Why should I, having no wish to be involved, have the internal disputes of North American fandom thrust down my gullet?

The truth is that, having appropriated the 'World' title to a regional convention and wishing to make the 'World' more genuine, North Americans are in the position of wanting to give their convention away and keep it too. Instead of recognising this contradiction, the attempt is made to paper it over with endless amendments, all of which will achieve nothing.

The only way out of this problem is, assuming Australia gets the 1975 Worldcon, for some group (any group) to up on its hind legs and announce at Toronto that in 1975 it will hold the 30th North American Science Fiction Convention. It is no one else's business: it can be decided upon at the Worldcon (but not as part of the business session) and if no one can agree blood will flow in the streets for a while. But thereafter North America will have its own convention and won't need to inflict its troubles on fandom in the rest of the world.

BRING-YOUR-OWN-CON and Q-CON REPORTS

Actually no one of those various fans who offered me reports on these events actually came good. This is not surprising, but it will help to cut the circulation of CHUNDER!

I was present for one day of the BYOCON, and can report that the sight of John Bangsund, Bruce Gillespie and Lee Harding playing cricket is worth travelling ~~11111/11111~~ eighty kilometres to see. Since almost everybody who saw them had to do at least that, I suppose things came out square.

On another day of the BYOCON, a oneshot of some sort was produced, and the more interesting maunderings of John Bangsund will be produced below.

Carey Handfield tells me that the QCON was pretty good.

And that's our exciting convention report section for this month. Actually John Bangsund tells me I might get something more from him for next month.

MUSICAL INTERLUDE

Alert readers, and even some of the others, will be aware that Australia is seeking, in a gentle way, a new national anthem. (They're going to nationalise everything else, so why not?) John Bangsund has written the following words, to be sung to a well-known traditional melody:

Australia, Australia,
You know we'll never fail yer.
We'll fight fer yer and die fer yer
Whene'er yer foes assail yer.
Our sunburnt land is green in spots;
There's gold in sand - and we've got lots!
We're big on Truth and Liberty:
AUSTRALIA IS THE PLACE FOR WE!

The rousing effort inspires the second CHUNDER! competition. Complete, in as many lines as are necessary, the following lines (also to be sung to the well-known traditional melody):

Australia's Flag is palest pink;
It's rather nicer, don't you think?

Competitors, actual or intending (especially Jack Wodhams) are asked to attempt to make their entries scan.

Paul Stevens was disappointed by the entries for his competition: let's not repeat that terrible performance.

MORE ROTTEN BANGSUND POEMS

A wake; for mourning in the bowel of Knight
Hath flung the yonnie what puts these bars to flight
And low the Haunter of the Yeast hath caught
These old-ones' tarette in a new soft light!

The earth doth like a snake renew
Her winter weeds outworn,
But as for him and me and you
We're at BYO-Con.

Bangsund, J.
Is on his way,
As this foul verse can but display.

Anderson, Paul,
Is incredibly tall,
But if you think hard enough he's just not there at all.

George Turner
Is a slow-burner,
Not at all your average crap out-turner.

The organizers
Aren't too good at this caper,
Which is why this con
Exists mainly on paper.

Harding, Lee:
q.v.

Mervyn R. Binns
Rarely sins,
But you'd think he did often from the way he grins.

Well, at least that tells you something of the BYOCON.

OUR MAN IN CAMERA (4)

There are times when I feel I could almost get to like my job. Hansard hibernates between Xmas and New Year, like all good government offices, and the boss said we might as well take three weeks leave in January, and that sounded pretty good to me. Then on 15th December he said we could get lost, and suddenly I had over five weeks leave.

Knowing Irene and Noel Kerr were coming to stay at my place while I was away, I rushed about making the furniture visible, throwing out several gross of empty flagons, washing the last three months' dishes and stuff like that, then went out and bought a car. A moment's silence, please, for the red beast. I still don't know what was wrong with it, but it sounded fatal. Maybe it just dropped its bundle when it acquired those effeminate ACT number-plates. Farewell, little red friend: you live on in my heart. (A much more satisfactory location than my garage.) The new car is a Renault 16TS, and since Foyster, J., has forbidden me to write an entire column about it, I will merely mention that it looks and feels good and is awful fast.

On Tuesday afternoon I pointed it at Melbourne, and thitherward we wended at a rapid pace, the white beast and me. Outside Yass I picked up a hitch-hiker. We chatted about this and that. I told him about what I understand to be the Russian system of hitch-hiking. Since cars are, after all, a valuable resource, drivers are encouraged to pick up hitch-hikers. The hiker is issued with coupons, and when he gets a lift he hands one to the driver. When the driver accumulates enough of these coupons.... "He gets a hitch-hiker all his own?" said my passenger. It was a good trip.

Wednesday night I arrived at the Degrares Tavern for a quiet, nostalgic repast with Diane, and found a mini-con in full swing. All those dear fannish faces, all that sparkling conversation and bonhomie I had left behind me when I went to Canberra ... As the evening wore on and the con adjourned to Harding's flat

I remembered why I had left all this behind. The four-day BYO-Con which (as I write) starts this afternoon is not the most charming prospect, but I shall endure it bravely, strengthened by the thought that I can leave it all behind me all over again on 9th January.

The only thing that puzzles me about this visit to Melbourne is that long-haired bloke in the iridescent shirt, who talked to me in a voice incredibly reminiscent of Bruce Gillespie's. Who is he? And, speaking of that nice young chap Gillespie, wherever did he get to?

I'm finding it a little difficult to write at the moment. Apart from having spent the last week in a kind of Anglican lethargy (and therefore having nothing to write about) there is the difficulty that I am seated at an alien typewriter in a room through which every few minutes there is a yelling stampede of children, at least two of them little aboriginal girls brought over from Norseman by the missionary lady next door; Walton's First Symphony is exploding around me; the TV is going in the next room; and I've had nothing but coffee to drink for over twelve hours. Through the window I have a superb view of the Burwood cemetery, a fine and private place. Think I might go for a stroll shortly and see if any do there embrace.

And now Bill Wright has phoned to ask if I'm going to BYO-Con, since it started this morning...

You know, what we really need is some kind of communications organization.
(John Bangsund)

OUR MAN IN OBSCURA (1)

On Boxing Day, 1972, fannish history was made (in an unassuming kind of way) with the commencement of the First Australian Bring-Your-Own Convention. This non-event had been carefully unplanned by Gillespie and Edmonds - to the extent that I was under the mistaken apprehension that the thing was to start on Tuesday afternoon. It started on Tuesday morning. I was supposed to be Non-Guest of Honour or something, and a few people had started wondering whether I'd had too much to eat the previous day (I think they said eat) by the time I arrived. Interstate attendees included Paul Anderson and Alan Sandercock, and there were a couple of people from Zambia (I think it was). I couldn't see Kevin Dillon anywhere.

I had brought a stencil for Bruce to run off - a cover for the BYOCon's Do-It-Yourself Programme & Memory Book. A lot of people typed pages for this immortal volume, which Bruce ran off and distributed on the spot. There was a lot of drinking going on (which fills me with alarm for the future of Australian fandom, of course), Bill Wright was trying to teach people some evial board game he had brought back from the fleshpots of Los Angeles or Hagerstown or somewhere, Paul Anderson was talking about Zambia, George Turner and I were talking about Dryden or someone, Harding was talking about practically everything (a born raconteur, Lee), and Mervyn was talking in rather uncomplimentary terms about the bloke who had just run into his car and near enough to wrecked it (a born loser, Mervyn, I sometimes think). Relieved that the bastard had run into Merv's Falcon and not my car, which was parked opposite, I had another glass or bottle or three, and next morning I woke up in Harding's living-room.

It didn't take Lee and Irene more than an hour or so to wake me up. I greeted them courteously, asked them for details of my conduct the previous night (for future reference), and suggested we go and pick up Leigh Edmonds

and drive to the Foyster Farm. Lee sort of looked at Irene with a funny look, and Irene looked back the same way, and Lee said, "We've been asking you for the last hour or so when do you intend to pick up Edmonds so we can go up to Foyster's Farm." I looked at Irene. "Would you like some coffee?" she said. A wonderful little lady, Irene. "Yes," I said. So I had my breakfast and we went to pick up Leigh. He threw a few cats out of the flat, checked that he had his sausages and his score of the Shostakovich quartets, and we were on our way.

At Woodend (or was it Diggers' Rest?) we stopped for some more breakfast, and I walked over the road afterwards to investigate the public facilities.* I emerged from same, and stood for a moment watching Leigh Edmonds walking slowly up and down the main street of Diggers' Rest (or was it Woodend?), his thigh-length hair gently flowing about him, silently conducting a Shostakovich quartet, and I felt quietly proud of him. Pimplly little Leigh, who not so many years ago had commenced a letter to me, "Dear Sir," who even more recently had been enmeshed with pop music and drugs and stuff, and I had exposed him to Mahler and Bach and Harding had exposed him to Haydn and Penderewski (or someone), and here he was: walking up and down the main street of a quiet little Victorian country town, humming Shostakovich to himself from the complete score. He's a lunatic, I thought to myself.

Foyster was trying to get the portable barbecue thing started in the barn, since it was a Total Fire Ban day. He was immaculately dressed, as usual, in orange shirt, purple tie and old-slouch-hat-with-the-side-turned-up - which latter he was using, somewhat ineffectively, to fan the barbecue alight. John Alderson solved the problem by pouring some of his home-bottled Mallee Root Dry Red 1972 onto the reluctant briquettes. In no time at all - scarcely more than two hours or so - we had a roaring barbecue which engulfed tall sausages at a single gulf, and someone handed around salad and stuff and it was a fabulous mess of good eating. Then we went and played cricket.

I have not played cricket since I was in theological college - indeed, there are some who would say I have never played cricket at all. In college I was always last to bat, and never ever bowled. My position was called drawback, if I remember correctly, or deep-way-out-long-stop. Something like that. What it meant was that I stood by the bank of the Gardiner Creek reading poetry, and when the ball came my way everyone yelled at me and I scrambled down into the creek to retrieve the ball. (I played the same position, more or less, in football, too.) In this game, on the Foysters' front lawn, we used a soft ball and everyone was allowed two chances. Someone bowled me out first ball, of course, before I could get my eye in, but under the second rule I was allowed to stay at the crease. (Maybe they made that rule up for me. I wonder about that, come to think of it.) After a while I started playing all kinds of fancy shots, hitting the ball in the process almost every time. I loved that part, but I hated running up and down between the wickets. I decided I'd had enough and started hitting catches. No-one caught them. One went into a pine tree, and it was a beautiful and memorable sight to see the cream of Melbourne fandom gathered in communion under that tree, hands upraised to catch my falling ball. It fell about three feet away from Tony Thomas's back, if I remember correctly. I was wearying. Sport is all very well in its place, on the TV and such, but to be involved intimately, as I was, was taking things a little too far. At last I succeeded in lobbing the ball straight up, someone caught it, and I retired gracefully to sleep off this unwonted exertion for an hour or two in the car.

*Diggers' Rest does not have 'public facilities'. I should not be at all surprised to learn that it doesn't have private facilities either. Woodend, on the other hand, is rather near the farm and doesn't have terribly prominent public facilities. I believe the mystery town to have actually been Gisborne, about halfway between Diggers' Rest and Woodend. This has been a public service announcement from the editor.

I have suggested to the Australia in 75 Committee (of which I understand - but apparently no-one else does - I am still a member) that in the event of our being successful we might organize a game of grid-iron on Foyster's front lawn, using the same rules. I feel that our American guests would appreciate this. A soft ball, of course, and two chances at the crease. But of course - I am forgetting - you folk in America use a different kind of bat, don't you. (Memo Robin and Leigh: Check with experts such as Harry Warner Jr on correct bat to use in grid-iron.)

Later in the day, Robin played some tapes of the LACon banquet. We listened to Bob Bloch, Fred Pohl, Juanita and Buck Coulson, Andy Porter and a whole stack of people we all know and love, and it was really great - except that they all, for some reason, seemed to have American accents. This disturbs me. I am sure Robin wasn't putting us on, so this must mean that American fans speak with the same kind of accent that we hear all the time on television. I am finding this difficult to comprehend. All these years I have believed, without thinking about it, that fans the world over speak with the same cultured kind of voices as Robin and Mervyn, Harding and Edmonds, Bill Wright and myself. Perhaps a few might affect a slightly outlandish (but loveable) lilt like Bob Smith's or Jack Wodhams's, but I never thought that some might have the same accent as Glenn Ford or Dick Nixon or Lesleigh Luttrell. Lesleigh Luttrell! Of course! Why didn't I realize it before? That's why Lesleigh didn't sound like a fan! The lady looked like a fan, of course, but sounded like an American. Even what she said seemed eminently fannish and sensible, but it sounded wrong somehow. Good Heavens! - now I think about it, Mike Horvat talked like that too, and Hank Davis and Ed Hamilton and Leigh Brackett and Bruce Townley and Ron Smith and Jack W Williamson and Jean Jordan and ... and ... that tone from Jim Blish! American fans talk American!

Pondering this, I missed the third day of the BYOCon - a party at Liz George and Peter House's place.

On the fourth day (my sweetheart said to me: four kangaroosters, three Foster's Lager, two knuckledusters, one whistling bunyip - and a wombat in a gum-tree) there was a party at Lee and Irene's flat. I arrived with a flagon of some muck or other and a boot-full of bricks. Lee had mentioned (often) his desire to build some bookcases out of Besser bricks and boards, and had insinuated (even more often) that the Renault had a large boot and I not a great deal to do in my spare time, so why don't we go to a brick shop and buy some Besser bricks? I was forced to steal some of the bricks I had left behind with my sister, and dutifully transported these to the Harding schloss. He didn't want to know about it. "Later," he said. So I sat down with Don Symons and Steve Solomon and Irene and John Litchen and Monica Correa, and listened, fascinated, as Don and John and Monica talked about Latin America. Don has travelled a great deal, and loves Latin America. John has probably travelled even more, and always seems to finish up in Mexico or Cuba or one of those places over there. And Monica ... Monica is the sister of Chile's foremost sf writer, Hugo Correa. I listened. I wish I'd had a tape recorder there.

That party was fantastic. Everyone was there, and anyone who turned up who didn't seem to be especially anyone became someone before the night was over. There was a delightful bloke talking to us at the table for quite a while (I should mention that I prefer talking at a table, and I didn't wander far from Harding's table all night), and eventually I found out that he was Roman Mazurak - one of my subscribers, bless him, but just a name until that night. I knew for sure that he was a subscriber when he said I'd never sent him anything.

Ah, a great night, and impossible to describe. Little incidents remain in the memory, along with a great big good feeling. Robin Johnson, in striped shirt,

shorts, shoes and socks, dribbling an empty McWilliam's flagon, as soccer players are wont to do when they have no ball. Dancing cheek-to-cheek with Irene while everybody else was stupidly square-dancing. (Well, maybe it wasn't square dancing, but it was awfully athletic and individual looking, and Irene is not a lady to be wasted like that.) After everyone had gone home or to bed there was still a little rough white remaining, and Robin, Roman, George Turner and I were the last to leave. I mentioned the bricks. The other three agreed to help me carry them in, and we did the job quickly and efficiently, given the circumstances. Lee and Irene's flat is upstairs, and we didn't feel like carrying all those heavy bricks up, so we placed them very carefully on the lower stairs in such a manner that we could close the door when we left - and anyone coming down stairs later in the morning would have to climb over them.

Roman said goodnight and walked off. George and Robin, who had possibly drunk more, got in the car. I dropped George off somewhere near where he lives, and drove round the corner to Robin's. He remarked that we hadn't had much chance to talk about Australia in 75 matters. I remarked that the night was young yet, and if he had some coffee I would gladly talk with him. So I followed Robin into his flat, and he went off to the kitchen to make coffee, and when he returned I was fast asleep in his chair.

(John Bangsund - originally appeared in Philgas 18)

THE EDITOR WRITES:

When John Bangsund offered to allow me to reprint the piece from Philgas, he specifically asked me not to print it before February 5. Or was it February 10? Problems like these can be serious. All I could remember was that I wasn't to print it before some day in February. To make sure, I decided to leave this edition of CHUNDER! until March. But then, March is a terrible month for producing fanzines - and of course, John could easily have meant March 5th. To be certain of not offending John, I will not publish CHUNDER! until after April 5 - which allows a reasonable margin of error. I've been doing some other stuff to fill in time, though. There was the forty page SFC 32, and I'm halfway through SFC 34 now. I have, as my fellow actors well know, been rehearsing my part in JOSEPH FAUST, SUPERFAN - a production which should have about as much impact in fandom as had WHY THE SKY IS BLUE by Ruppert Carlin (Amazing Stories, July 1949). Which reminds me: we could use some news.

TOP SECRET CONVENTION TO BE HELD IN MELBOURNE!

Although security has been tight, rumours still continue to abound that a 'science fiction convention' may be held in Melbourne at Easter. The alleged organizer, Paul Stevens, is tightlipped about the affair. 'Whmmm, mmmuhhh?' he remarked when recently questioned about the affair. 'We deny it,' chorussed Mervyn Binns and Lee Harding. A mysterious and anonymous poster has appeared, and at this early stage (April 5) it is too early to reject the idea completely that a Melbourne convention could be held in a couple of weeks. Next issue of CHUNDER!, to be published in May, will have full details of the location and program for the Eastercon.

GARY MASON WRITES!

Yes, Gary Mason wrote with details of the Adelaide Aussiecon. Unfortunately, due to a technical fault, this news appeared in NORSTRILIAN NEWS a month or two ago. But we'll give it a go next time, along with other exciting stuff from our man in the city of churches.

WORLDCON NEWS

Charles Crayne of Los Angeles has filed a bid to hold the 1975 World Science Fiction Convention in (yes!) Los Angeles with the TORCON Committee.