FANEW SLETTER NINETY-FOUR

Edited and produced by Leigh Edmonds, PO Box 103, Brunswick, Victoria 3056. Subscription: 20 issues for \$4.40. The number after your name and address tells you when your subscription expires, a Big Red *A* says that it has. AMERICAN AGENT: Hank & Lesleigh Luttrell, 525 W. Main, Madison, WI 53703. Subscription: 35¢ per copy.

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18/1/78

STRINECON: Although we carried a flyer for this convention last issue, the people organising the event believe that we have short memories and have given me the latter to print. They probably also think that people like to know what the programme is going to be.

STRINECON: Melbourne's Australia Day Weekend Annual Relaxacon, 27th to 30th January, 1978. Mannix College, Wellington Road, Clayton (opposite Monash University). Membership fees: \$7.00 until the con and \$8 at the door.

Living IN; \$15 bed and breakfast or \$22.50 all meals included. (All rooms are single.) Postal Address: PO Box 91, Carlton, Victoria.

STRINECON is

Australias first relaxacon. It carries on the tradition laid down by Monaclave last year. We hope we can establish a permanent date for the Australia Day Weekend for a relaxacon in Melbourne.

PROGRAMME: Friday: Setting UP. The Committee for the Feeding of the 5000 and all the rest of the stuff that makes a convention happen. At night a film preview.

Saturday: 10.00am - Registration opens - so does the Feeding of the 5000. 12 noon - Lunch. 1.00pm - Opening hosted by Don Ashby. Meeting the Special Guest John Alderson. Programme Changes and News and Notes. 2.00pm - David Grigg hosts a panel on why he wouldn't let Yuri Celler near his cutlery. 3.30pm - Traditional Trivia Quiz with special emphasis on Fandom. 6.00pm - Tea. 7.30pm - The Amazing StrineCon Show - Don Ashby brings you; (a) The John Alderson Guest Speech, (b) The DUFF candidates - would you buy a used airline ticket from these people? (c) Some lucky fan is honoured in "Joe Phan this is your life" (d) and lots more. 11.00pm - Films

Sunday: 10.00am - DUFF Auction. 11.00am - Mark Lawrence and Friends give a neofans guide to Fandom. 12 noon - Lunch. 1.00pm + Leigh Edmonds and Friends honour poor old Somerset Place with a panel on the History of Fandom. 3.00pm - "How Do You Rate As A Diplomat?" Don Ashby's new simulation game which revolves around the setting up of a world government. 6.00pm - tea. 7.30pm - DUFF Art Show. During the course of the convention each member will have had the chance to enter the art show. The best works will be auctioned for DUFF. A special prize will be awarded to "the best" (the one that makes the most money for DUFF). 8.30pm - The "Do-It-Yourself Ad-Hoc Masquerade", make your own costume on the spot. 9.00pm - The Amazing StrineCon Party. 12.00 - Filmz.

Monday: 10.00am - Mini Business
Session - what about next year? 11.00am - Round table tak on DUFF
administration. 12noon - DUFF Auction continued.

OTHER THINGS: If you want to sell stuff to unsuspecting fans, tables will be available in the Annex.

There will also be tables for SUFF voting, UNICON and SEACON memberships and the Bambil SF Club membership drive - join the most elderly SF club in Australia.

FEEDING OF THE 5000: This or relation will be there again selling the usual goodies at silly prices. All proceeds to DUFF and the ASFF. Gentlemen are earnestly requested to bring a plate (with food on it) to sell for the abovementioned worthy cuases.

Although the STRINECON committee do not make it clear in their publicity, it should be made plain that this is not really a Science Fiction but a convention for SF Fans. The distinction

may be a slight one but it is a very important one. There are no items on the programme which relate to sf and the only item which may be of interest to the sf reader is the one that David Grigg will be running. However, if you are interested in sf fandom and recall last years Monaclave with some fondness you will probably find this convention amusing.

AWARDS: As promised in FNS 93, this issue we are sending out the 1978

Australian SF Achievement Awards nominations forms. Please note
that Nominations close on 1st February 1st so that you don't have much time to
send in your nominations.

Another award, newly invented by the STRINECON committee, is the TERRA AUSTRALIS AWARD. It will be unveiled at that convention. The award is for services to Fandom. There will be two categories in the awards - (a) A Retrospective Award and (b) A Current Award. The former is to be kept by the lucky winner while the latter is handed on each year. Nominations close for this award on the Monday Morning of STRINECON and you will find a nomination form for this award somewhere with this issue.

FAN FUNDS: Like awards in Australia, fan funds in Australia have taken a dramatic upsurge in numbers and there will soon be two if them. The competition to DUFF will be supplied by GUFF. However GUFF will be a once only fund which will take an Australian fan of high standing to be the Australian representative at SEACON, the World SF Convention which will be held in Britain in 1979. The previous WorldCon in Britain took place, if my feeble memory is correct, in 1965, so it has been a long wait. In that time the field of science fiction and science fiction fandom in Australia has grown to full flower and what better way of marking an important WorldCon than by sending our own representative.

The Australian Administrator of the Fund will be Leigh Edmonds, PO Box 103, Brunswick, Vict 3056 (that's me!) and the British Administrator will be Dave Langford, 22 Northumberland Avenue, Reading, Berks, RG2 7PW, UK. Unofficial travel organiser will be Robin Johnson. Of course he has been organising DUFF winners trips for them since the year dot but we thought we'd make it unofficial anyhow.

Because Britain is a high-class country GUFF is going to be a classy fan fund. We hope to attract the cream of Australian fandom into standing because only the BEST is good enough for the Old Country. Anyhow, people wishing to stand will have to be fans in good standing who have been active since atleast BOFCON. To stand for GUFF they will have to furnish to the Australian Administrator the signed nominations of five fans of similar standing (three Australains and two British), a platform of approximately one hundred words supporting their nomination, a promise that they will attend SEACON (barring acts of god) if they should win, and a bond of ten dollars. The Australian Administrator must have all the right bits of paper with the right words and signiatures in his hands by 5.00pm on Good Friday 1978 if fans wishing to be nominated are infact nominated.

wishing for more information can write to me at the above address. GUFF already has Ten Pounds in the coffers, thanks to the activities of Christopher Priest who auctioned off the boomerang and hat which he collected in Australia last year during his trip here. This can only be described as an auspicious beginning.

FANZINES: SOUTH OF HARAS, EAST OR RHUN 10, edited by Jon Noble, 26 Lucinda Avenue, Springwood, NSW 2777/no publishing information that I can see easily/22pp. The majority of the contents of this issue are a piece of fiction about a foiled by accident Dalek invasion of Earth and lots of letters. I found the letters a lot more interesting. Even though Jon concentrates on Tolkien and Dr Who there are the occasional comments about neither which are nice. The last two and a bit pages are two line listings or the fanzines that Jon has received since his pervious issue - either it's been a long time since then or he has a busy mailbox. Oh yes, and he's gone offset (a very popular habit these days) It's okay but the reproduction isn't perfect.

THE STEVENS CONFIDENTIAL FILE

At 3.00am on Thursday 29th December 1977 a bit of Melbourne's fannish history went up in flames. The old Melbourne SF Club burnt down in a fire that we had been expecting for years. Of course we had moved out of it a short time before Mervyn Binns opened Space Age Books, which was eight years back, so we were not all that upset. But it was history gone up in flames.

If you had never visited the old premises at 19 Somerset Place then you will be hard put to visualise the nostalgia we old SF fans view the smoking ruins. The old club was not beautiful by any standards unless you happen to dig the squalor of the middle ages: Women have been known to visit the old clubrooms and run screaming, but we loved it - rats and all. Oh yes, we had rats! Big fat, grey rats, who would leer at us in passing and dare us to single combat. Every so often the owners would bring in the exterminators and then the sneaky rodents would manage to expire in places where they would stink up the area without being found straight away. One rat managed to expire on top of the lift and its corpse went up and down with us for three weeks or more before I thought to look down the lift shaft.

The lift was a source of great joy to us all. It was water driven, one of the few water driven lifts remaining in the whole city and, until it was cut off, the only way to ascend to the clubrooms. When it was cut off it took us several weeks to hack a path from the ground floor to the second floor through the partitions and old magazines that abounded in that old building. We loved that lift. There was no back or front, just top, bottom and sides and you put your hand through a hole in one side and grasped a rope and yanked. The harder you yanked the faster you descended, though that never worked going up. There were only two speeds going up - slow and very slow. Going down you either hurtled downwards and stopped very suddenly or you wafted down like a snowflake on a gentle breeze. We usually tried to emulate the Kamikaze, though you always checked to see if anyone was leaning on the front or back wall before descending or you would have a very tall thin club member. We were heartbroken when the lift went and always viewed the stairs as something of a sissy invention. Later on the lift shaft became a storebin for old cartons and newspapers and it was probably there that the fire started. We were all paranoid about smoking and all new clubmembers thought us a little mad about the indiscriminate use and disposal of matches and old cigarettes. If the place had caught on fire when we were there we would very likely not have escaped because the place was a deathtrap.

I first saw the 19 Somerset Place clubrooms in 1962 or thereabouts just before the SF revival in Melbourne. It was dark and about 7.30pm and there was this dead-end lane and three people sitting on a doorstep. They were the Melbourne SF Club. Merv was at the pictures (a ritual he has since discontinued) and everybody was waiting for him to return. He was the only one with a key. Much later I was trusted with a key also and would come and go as I liked, but generally it was Merv who opened and closed the club. Meetings were every Wednesday night and later switched to a Friday night (this was before out Friday night late shopping). Once a month we changed hats and became the Melbourne Fantasy Filmgroup and ran 16mm sf or fantasy films and supper. Supper was usually a Merv Binns extravaganza and well liked. Mervyn Barret ran the film group and when he left I took over until it died the death several years ago. We were ambitious in the club and finally installed two 35mm projectors and ran an all-night show of horror films. It was this that led to our quitting when one of our members, an employee of a local theatre chain reported us to his bosses and they reported us to the local council who closed us down in a week flat. It was the fastest the Melbourne council has ever been known to move. I think it had something to do with the amount of money the theatre chain paid out in rates.

We ran the first Australian SF Convention in eight years in the Somerset Place clubrooms in 1966 and two years later yet another convention. These events together with John Bangsund's Australian SF Review bought about the Melbourne,

and indeed the Australian SF revival that culminated in the 1975 Worldcon which was held just up the road at the Southern Cross. It was in 1966 at the convention that Lee Harding stuck John Bangsund with ASFR. It was at that convention that I met the editor of this scurrilous rag and stuck up a friendship that has lasted until this present day.

All the greats of Australian SF fandom have been inside the Somerset Place clubrooms. John Baxter, John Brosnan, John Foyster, John Bangsund, Lee Harding, Bob Smith, Gary Mason, Shayne McCormack, Kevin Dillon, Leigh Edmonds, Peter House, Peter Darling, Robin Johnson, Bernie Bernhouse, Damien Broderick, Ron Graham, Ron Clarke and many others. We all attended for a time and played table tennis, cards and borrowed from the extensive library. We painted the place atleast twice in my memory and swept the place every week. It was grotty, and dirty and it had rats, but it was home to many of us and we will all miss it.

DUFF AUCTION: From Keith Curtiss, PO Box J 175, Brickfield Hill, NSW 2000, we have a Preliminary DUFF Auction List. It is for a postal auction so send your bids to Keith. I'm not sure what the closing date for bids is but perhaps we'll publish that information in an issue or two. The items for sale are:

- #1 DeCamp DIVIDE AND RULE/Lancer 1964 pb, very good condition. minimum bid \$2.00
- #2 DeCamp & Pratt WALL OF SERPENTS/this is a xerox copy of a rare

 Avalon 1960 edition. Note this is

 not a bound book but loose pages

 and sale is subject to approval by

 DeCamp. No Reserve
- #3 Patricia Wrightson THE NARGUN AND THE STARS/Hutchinson 1974 (originally 1973) fine copy (dealers stamp inside front cover) inscribed by author to DUFF. Minimum bid \$5.00
- #4 Farmer THE CELESTIAL BLUEPRINT and Other Stories coupled with CACHE
 FROM OUTER SPACE/Ace Double F-165,
 1962. G-VG copy. Minimum bid \$1.50

PERSONAL PARS: On Sunday 5th February Peter Darling and Elizabeth Foyster will be getting married. The event will be taking place on the farm up near Kyneton and will be basically a family ocassion. We are sure that readers of this rag will wish Peter and Elizabeth the best of luck and happiness in the future.

Although there will be no official honeymoon, two weeks after the wedding Peter, Elizabeth and Jillian will be leaving Australia for a three month holiday in Britain and Europe. Lucky people!

REVIEW: THE WEEPING SKY by Lee Harding/Cassell 1977/\$4.95

First, we must state

quite clearly that THE WEEPING SKY is a masterpiece, which in our science fictional world of noble but failed experiments is a rare achievement. It is a novel precisely and surely imagined, well structured and beautifully written.

Clarity is the difficult tool Mr Harding has grasped and mastered: clarity in seeing his characters, clarity in seeing their environment, clarity in developing the lucid plot, and clarity in the writing of it all. It is such a clear novel that virtually any scene can be recalled, three dimensionally as it were, to mind. Such is the precision of expression, the intensity of impression.

The novel is set in an alternate world's middle ages in which a Scientist and his apprentice have ventured to examine a new phenomenon, carelessly and superstitiously called miraculous by the local monks: a mysterious, transparent wall across a valley, which 'weeps' water, thus slowly forming a lake.

The impact of this mysterious wall on the lives of those nearby and those who venture to see it is related with Ballardian authority, but with a sense of life lacking in Ballard. Keith Roberst' Pavane may be remembered by readers as a novel of another alternative medieval reconstruction. Where that admirable book irritated, however, because of a fundamental confusion as to what Roberts was really trying to achieve, which led to erratic pacing and a tendency to obscurity, The Weeping Sky glides smoothly on, navigating such shoals because of the surety and strength of its construction. The book is true to itself. The other writer we feel we should mention is James Blish, whose Dr Mirabilis is another attempt at medieval reconstruction.

We mention these three writers, Messers Ballard, Roberts and Blish - so different, perhaps even antipathetic, to each other, yet each a serious artist - because Mr Harding appears to have brought off a successful fusion of various of their qualities: Ballard's visualisation and intensity, but adding a sense of warmth; Robert's example of a youthful protagonist in an alternative history (Pavane has a similar 'feel' to The Weeping Sky), but with a surer sense of purpose and better balance; and Blish's intellectual rigour, but without the pedagogy.

There is no point in retelling the plot or describing the various characters and their interactions. All of that is handled too well by Mr Harding. What we shall say is that Mr Harding has aroused in us anew, as if it had (Rob Gerrand - December 1977) never disappeared, a sense of wonder

LOCUS 205, 206 & 207, edited and Produced by Charlie FOREIGN FANZINES: Brown, PO Box 3938, San Francisco, CA 94119, USA/

12 issues for \$18.00 airmail or \$9.00 seamail/monthly/20pp, 20pp & 16pp. The Newspaper of the SF Field which covers most of the interesting happenings in SF. Issue 205 announces the launching of a new magazine and the folding of another, has notes on people, media, markets, awards and various other things. Issue 206 notes the death of Tom Reamy, the 1977 World Fantasy Award winners, more markets, and lots more interesting stuff and a page of pictures of various sf personalities. Issue 207 tells us that STAR WARS has broken all sorts of boxoffice records and that the sequel is aimed to be released in January 1980. Lots more notes on interesting things and of course there are book reviews, Algis Budrys writing about writing, convention listings, contents listings and lots of ads which are sometimes also useful. This is the only place you get to find out what's going on in the field. MAD SCIENTIST

DIGEST 3, Brian Earl Brown, 55521 Elder Road, Mishawaka, Indiana 46544, USA/ available for the usual or, in desperation, 75¢/irregular?/46pp. A jolly enough fanzine, I liked it anyhow. Most memorable by far is the contribution by Avedon Carol, "Who Cures Medicine?" which is a short description of work in a Free Clinic. The main thrust is that the paramedical people go to all the trouble, do all the work (well, almost) while the doctors feel themselves above it and sign forms as their part of the business. It does not seem like a good arrangement. There are some other lighter articles and, again, a letter column which is the usual mixture. Very enjoyable reading.

THE SPANISH INQUISITION 10, Jerry Kaufman & Susan Tompkins, a current address for Jerry Kaufman is 606 15th St. E, Seattle, WA 98112, USA/ no longer available/60pp. My first issue of this fanzine, so far as I remember, and it's also the last one that will be published. Just my luck! This fanzine got nominated for a HUGO last year and also one of the FAAN awards which it also happened to win. Generally speaking people seem to think that this is a good fanzine and I do too. Although there are no really well known people contributing to the issue they are all good solid writers with more than necessary ability. There is a deal of funny stuff and Mae Strelkov contributes a very nice piece in her usual style. The reproduction is also of the highest order and the letters aren't too bad either.

SCINTILLATION 13,

edited by Carl Bennett, PO Box 8502, Portland, Oregon 97207, USA/\$3.50 for

four issues or a sample copy for \$1.50/quarterly/56pp. This is a very nicely produced offset printed sadle stapled US-quarto publication in the same vein as LOCUS, ALGOL and SF REVIEW. It calls itself "The Magazine of SF People" and from that you may guess that this fanzine is directed at the sf reader more than the fan. There is a picture of the robots from THAT FILM on the cover so it is not surprising to see that a few pages of the contents are given over to that topic. There is an article on Nuclear Energy & SF, a biography of Philip Jose Farmer, a column by Ted White who is once again doing his usual stuff with his usual flair, a sort of review column by Doug Barbour and then some other reviews. Actually the only bit I enjoyed was the Ted White column - I wouldn't actually say that it was enjoyable but if you've got a taste for the way Ted does things this is a standard portion. On the other hand, I'm sure that most people will find most of this issue of some interest.

by Moshe Feder, 142-34 Booth Memorial Ave, Flushing, NY 11355, USA/available for the usual or you can buy one issue for \$1.00/irregular?/67pp. Yhis is like the fanzines I used to get in the mail when I was a little neofan. Although the covers may be offset the interiors are done momeo on good old twilltone and the contents are nice and fannish. David Emerson contributes a fine article on the Walt Disney animated films which which makes me want to go out and see some of them again, contributions from Hank Davis and Stu Shiffman which are pretty good and lots and lots of letters which are well put together and nice to read. Even the editorial is good, just the right tone for the rest of the fanzine. And right at the front is a commentary on the death of Barry Smotroff who used to be co-editor of this fanzine. It's actually more a commentary on how death effects fandom than anything else and as such is well considered.

CHECKPOINT 85, edited by Peter Roberts, 38 Oakland Drive, Dawlish, Devon, UK/available for most of the usual or seven issues for \$1 (Australian or New Zealand money/monthly/4pp. This is a British version of FANEW SLETTER, only it is more entertainingly written. The gap in time between this issue and the previous one was caused by Peter winning TAFF and spending a month or two in the US (lucky devil). Now he is back with his nose pressed to the grindstone and this issue catches up on the past two months. There's a couple of convention reports, lots of changes of address and personal notes. The next issue isn't due urtil three days ago and it will be bigger, maybe even eight or ten pages. One looks forward to such things.

INSTANT MESSAGE 214, 219 - 227, produced by the New England SF Association, PO Box G, MIT Branch Post Office, Cambridge, Mass 02139, USA/for members of NESFA/twice monthly/112pp. Although this is very limited in its interest usually, only people who are members of NESFA and live in the Boston area are going to find all of it useful, there are all sorts of odd snippets of information hidden away in odd corners. There are also many different sorts of flyers for all sorts of stfnal things. Not exactly a newszine, but still newsy.

KARAS 32, 33 & 34, edited and produced by Linda Bushyager, 1614 Evans Avenue, Prospect Park, Pa 19076, USA/12pp, 12pp and 22pp. KARASS is another fanzine that is folding, there will be another couple of issues after these ones and that will be it. KARASS has generally carried all the American fannish news (as opposed to the sf news in LOCUS), and with its demise there is going to be a huge gap left in the news sources and the fields they cover.

FANZINE FANTASTIQUE 27, edited by Keith & Rosemary Walker, 2 Daisy Bank, Quernmore Road, Lancaster, Lancs, England/4 issues for \$1.00 or the usual/10pp. Eight of these pages are fanzine reviews, Keith says that he has covered all the fanzines he's received up to the end of July last year. There are a lot of them. Australian fanzines reviewed are GEGENSCHEIN 29, MINADOR 1 & 2, ORNITHOPTER and SF COMMENTARY 51 - not much of a showing in all the other fanzines. The production of this issue isn'e too hot but then Keith apologises for that in advance. Even so it does make some of the reviews difficult to read, and if you're interested in seeing what is being done these days this is about the best place to find out

17th NATIONAL AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION - UNICON IV Melbourne, Australia, Easter 24th - 27th March, 1978

RULES OF ELIGIBILITY - ANNUAL SCIENCE FICTION ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Nominations are accepted on the form on the reverse up to February 1st, see overleaf for address. Give your membership number for A-Con 7, the 1977 National Australian Science Fiction Convention, or for UNICON IV. List up to five nominations in each DITMAR category, and for the William J. Atheling Award.

DITMAR - AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION: The abundance in recent years of science fiction both published in Australia and written by Australians has demonstrated the need for more than a single, competitive award for excellence in Australian sceince fiction.

Recipients of this non-competitive award shall be chosen by an independent jury or panel of judges. Members of the panel are to be selected by the convention committee, working in close conjunction with the Australian Science Fiction Foundation. The award shall be bestowed upon Australian works of science fiction or fantasy deemed by the panel to be worthy of such an award, and hence in any one year there may be more than one award recipient or no award given. Although this is a panel award, nominations are called for to bring attention to novels or shorter works that may otherwise escape the notice of the panel.

DITMAR - BEST INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE FICTION: A science fiction or fantasy work of unspecified length

appearing for the first time in 1977. A story, one it has appeared in an English language version, is eligible only in the first year of English publication. Publication date, or cover date in the case of a dated magazine, takes precedence over copyright date. A serial takes its date from the date on the last installment. Individual stories appearing as a series are aligible only as individual stories. As is the case with all other DITMAR awards except for the panel award for Australian Science Fiction, this award is to be presented to a single winner, to be determined by the popular vote of the convention membership.

DITMAR - BEST AUSTRALIAN AMATEUR PUBLICATION: This category embraces all fanzines, magazines,

newssheets of weekly or other frequency, periodicals and other publications produced by any individual, club or organisation within Australia during 1977. Voting procedure shall be as for Best International Science Fiction.

The WILLIAM J. ATHELING AWARD: This is an award for criticism of science fiction, and nay piece of critical review published in 1977. Rules as for Best International SF Award.

IT has been suggested that during 1977 there has been much work of merit done by several people and science-fiction-oriented bodies, and that an award for 'Contribution to Australian Science Fiction' might be appropriate. If sufficient write-in response follows, the idea shall be considered further. Comment is welcome.

REPRODUCTION OF THIS SHEET FOR WIDER DISTROBUTION IS ENCOURAGED BY UNICON IV

| 1978 ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS NOMINATION BLA | |
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| Voting for the awards will be on ballots issue Progress Report 3, to be mailed February 8th, will have to be received by March 20th, 1978. system shall be used, and up to five nominees each category. | and all final voting ballots The optional preferentail |
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| Parkville, 3052 Victoria | (Make all cheques payable to UNICON) |
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TERRA AUSTRALIS AWARDS

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(Nominations to be sent to STRINECON, PO Box 91, Carlton, Victoria, to arrive by Friday 27th Febuary, or to be handed in at the convention.)

SENDER:

Leigh Edmonds PO Box 103 Brunswick Vict 3056 AUSTRALIA

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