

SPACED OUT!



THE MENTOR

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This issue is (c) COPYRIGHT by, the contributors. The Vol Molesworth piece is (c) copyright Laura Molesworth. If there is no Editorial this issue, its because I tried to fit too much into not enough pages.

This page is being typed on the nineteenth of October, 1980. The results of the Federal Election say the Liberals are in, with a greatly reduced majority.

This magazine is registered as a publication - Category B.

AUSTRALIA IN '83!

This has been an R & S publication.

ANALOGUE'S END.

BY MICHAEL NEWTON.

Once there was a man. Or a pebble on the beach. But a pebble with a face. The others could not see it, for no other had one ; but, if they had, they would have torn him apart. The rest of him lived in the same way as the others, but the face was alone, looking across a vast desert of pebbles, and up at the sky.

The sky was so very blue, up for ever. Thus has he led to believe in the existence of something beyond the beach. If he went through the sky, the others could not see him, let alone stop him. So, one day the pebble left the beach.

The little dodge'em car flitted along easily within the extra-dimension through which its universe was being bent. In the tiny quarter-metre screen, Kurt watched the worlds of this, his own universe, flashing by, an infinitesimal distance away, yet unreachable by normal means. He watched, waiting. Maybe seconds, maybe centuries, but time passed. Or then again, maybe it didn't.

In the screen he saw a little green planet of great oceans and scarce islands. He made adjustments to the circuitry, the current in the complex windings of the insulated coil began to flow at right angles to its precious course, add the little vehicle slipped quietly back into its own universe.

It looked much the same as any crowded city on his own planet. He had read a sign, "NEU JAK, '90's POPULATION QUOTA: 9.82 Million", or the equivalent, in a selection of strange symbols. He marvelled at his ability in a language used by a people of whose existence he had never known.

Not people by the general definition either. Covered in a well-scrubbed, shiny hide, as tough as leather, their heads were topped with magnificent and beautifully kept manes. They each had two arms and two legs, but each had four digits, each of which could oppose any of the other three, or they could oppose one another in pairs. Each finger was long and flat, terminating in a velvet pad approaching the spherical. He quickly came to forget these differences, and somehow they failed to notice his, treating him simply as another in the crowd. He had greater knowledge of the additional dimension than any other man alive, yet still its effects were beyond his comprehension.

He found his way into a library. Coming upon a section labelled

"newspapers", he picked up a plastic cassette, and pressed a tiny button in the upper right hand corner. The front page was projected from the inside onto the opaque front-piece of the cassette.

He found news of a new discovery dating their civilisation at four-and-a-half millenia. He also found lists of revised population quotas for the cities of this crowded world, concluding with an apparently standard warning of the horrors awaiting anyone procreating illegally. It seemed unfair that a world just as advanced as his should suffer such an acute land shortage. He read of two great island nations, at war on and over a tiny speck of land just inside the equivalent of the Antarctic Circle.

Over the centuries, the inhabitants of the island had built up a culture based on survival. Within their insulated subterranean dwellings they grew tiny plants of a type that required little light. Outside, they hunted birds and seal-like animals. But now the ravages of war had ripped open their long-burrows and they had to freeze, or join one of the armies, not really caring which, to rip open more long-burrows, and kill those of their own people who had, by chance, joined the other army.

His hopes disappointed, he returned to the shade under the branches of the elm, where his little vehicle had gone unnoticed. He reversed the connections on three small black and red wires and wrapped another wire firmly around the terminal of a small six volt wet acid battery. The current had reversed direction within the spinning coil, and the little car slipped out and back into the other dimension with only a pop as the air rushed to fill the gap its absence had created.

Within his tiny world of unreality, Kurt leaned back, taking his eyes off the screen for a while. He looked up, and for the first time he noticed that he was in fact in an entirely new universe.

He came to a planet, green, on the third orbit around a small sun. Gently he came down onto this, in the same place as his home, but in an entirely new universe.

The little car was quite inconspicuous here. He threw a rubber sheet over it, and leaving it with the others awaiting repairs at the edge of the rink, stepped out into the main fair-ground.

There were a great many little side shows and mechanised attractions. But, like so many others, it was the big top toward which he was drawn, although for different reasons. In fact it was the big poster outside it, advertising it, which he walked closer to see.

'THE GREATEST SHOW ON URRTH' it announced in metre-high lettering. He laughed gently to himself. A man beside him looked up too, and said, "I suppose it is pretty funny when you think about it. Just about every two cent show on the face of the urrth calls itself that." Kurt nodded amicably, having a great deal of difficulty in stopping himself from laughing aloud in the man's face.

As he calmed down he noticed that this world was indeed almost identical to his own, excepting a discrepancy in time. Looking around - technology, dress, everything in fact, seemed to point to the turn of the century period.

His hopes of finding what he was seeking in a place so like his home in any period were not great, but still he wanted to be sure before he left. So he wandered the grounds, searching. He did not know exactly what it was he sought now, any more than he knew what he was ultimately looking for in the worlds he visited.

But there, quite near the entrance to the grounds, was a newsstand. As he walked towards it, someone dropped a large silver coin marked TEN near his feet. He picked it up, but when he looked up, the man who had dropped it was gone. Just as well, for he would need something to buy a paper with.

He picked up a likely looking broadsheet. "How much?" he asked.

The man behind the stand looked at him quizzically. "Ten," he said, as if the statement were axiomatic. Kurt handed him the coin, and, leaning on the side of the stand, began reading. Thus he didn't notice the even stranger look the vendor gave him when he saw the coin.

"Your change," he said. Kurt took the handful and pocketed it, thanking him. Apparently the two 'tens' had been in units of different values. He was only thankful that their magnitudes had not been the other way around.

His worst fears were confirmed. Wars in foreign places. Propagandist editorial extolling the virtues of war. Pathological murderer loose in the streets. Crime on the increase. Newspaper joined other litter on the ground & Kurt headed for the dodge-'ems.

He walked around to his little car and grasped the rubber sheet covering it. "And just what do you think you're doing there?" Kurt turned around.

"I'm here to fix the car," said Kurt to the giant behind him.

"I've heard nothing of any repairman. And where are your tools, anyway?"

Kurt threw back the rubber sheet and pulled out a screw-driver. "Will that do for a start?" he asked.

"Mm-hmm. Well, just to be sure I thikk I'll just stand here and watch you work for a while."

Kurt shrugged his shoulders and climbed in. He fiddled a few wires, adjusted a few knobs, and made a firm connection to the battery. The motors that spun the coil on its apparently erratic course began to hum gently.

The attendant almost suffered a nervous breakdown as the car disappeared with no more pop than the cork from a second rate bottle of wine.

Kurt decided to take a look at whatever was on the other side of his home cosmos, a decision he would come to regret.

He found himself in a far stranger place than he had ever experienced. This entire universe seemed to be filled to overflowing with an unbearable brilliance. The simple instruments of his vehicle all registered at maximum. His mind was assailed with vague, unintelligible moaning sounds, as though from countless damned souls. The place where his own planet would have been was conspicuously empty of all matter.

He drifted toward a planet, utterly uninhabitable, under normal circumstances, by any life. Every part of its surface was covered in neatly tessellating hexagonal prisms, each only a metre or so across. And within each was a man, or at least a body. Each body was kept alive, though inoperable, for only thus could the brain be preserved, and its thoughts released, immortal, into the surrounding universe. He was not the first to wonder whether such a place could be heaven or hell.

Then the moanings came to him again, and he knew them to be the futile attempts at communication made by thoughts without being. He came to the conclusion that much of the supernatural activity on his own world was merely caused by fugitives from this unimaginably crowded existence, searching for 'lebensraum'.

He came to see, then, that this could never be any sort of heaven. Great fear, and even terror, came upon him, so he hastily reversed the current in the coil and left that place.

Fearing the direction from which he had just come, he decided to continue through the strata of universes in the direction which had led him to Urrth.

As he passed the countless planets in the position of his own, he watched the Middle Ages, the Roman Empire, the Kingdom of Egypt and man himself all fade out of existence. He saw the dinosaurs shake the earth, the first lungfish crawl onto the land the the tribobites glide the ocean floors. He watched as the crust of the earth was formed. He saw a time when the whole universe was swirling gas. He came to a world of darkness, where all matter was consolidated into a few super-dense spheres, scattered around the edges of understanding.

For a long time he had ploughed forward carelessly and ferociously. He looked at the tiny dial which represented his 'velocity'. The indicator was slammed against the side of its casing. He had a nauseous feeling that it had reached that stage a long time ago.

Frantically he cut down the positions on many of the variable resistors and capacitors. With no effect. In utter panic he grabbed the insulated wire connecting to the battery and yanked it off. With no effect. He glanced behind and saw that he was being propelled upward on a rising tide of - something. Or nothing. In fact it was merely that aura of suspense which occurs in anticipation of some great catastrophe.

Inside a warehouse, inside hundreds of cabinets, the microscopic links forged between protein, carbon and water molecules were dissolved, and the virtually undetectable currents running within them were halted as the circuits were broken. Thus the analogue ended.

All the known universes became invisible in the tremendous brightness as they were converted into unbelievable quantities of energy, across the entire electro-magnetic spectrum, from the infra-radio waves, whose wavelengths were greater than a solar system, to the ultra-gamma waves, hardly longer than an average isotope of oxygen. The energy was radiated out of

that reality, until there was nothing left, not even the reality itself.

Kurt found himself standing in a small room, just in front of a seriously imploded video screen. Across the room a diminutive man sat on a chair. Though his head was down, Kurt could see the expression on his face.

Suddenly he looked up, the light of inspiration in his eyes. "Of course," he exclaimed, "I think, therefore I exist!" Then he seemed to notice Kurt for the first time.

"Welcome," he said, "to the world of my dimension."

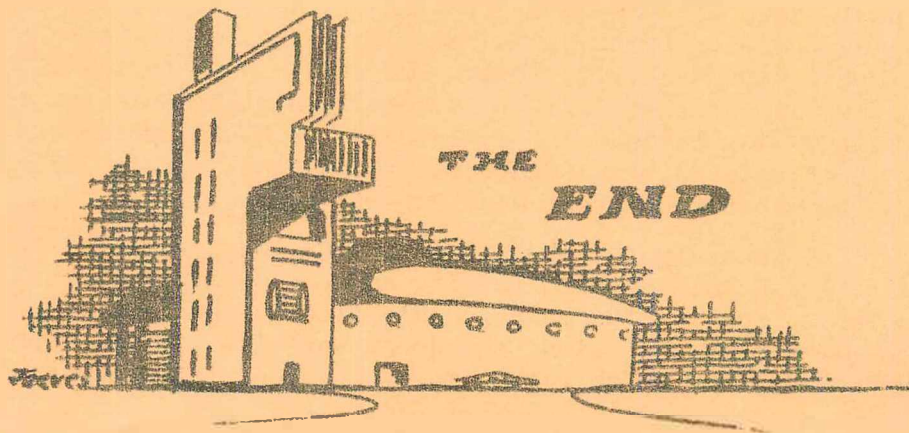
The great vault was solid stone. It appeared utterly useless, and was fast becoming so. Within it, the links between the molecules and the currents they carried were rapidly dissolving. A greater analogue was coming to a close.

All the great cities of Earth, all the planets man had seen, all the stars he had wondered at, all disappeared soundlessly in a blinding flash, which faded, revealing - nothing.

Kurt and the man who had just spoken to him found themselves in a great hall. The wall behind them was utterly ruined. Across the room, high above them, seated on a great throne, was a - Being.

He looked up. His face shone more wondrously than all the stars. He shook His head and laughed gently at the thought of men who would play God. Then He seemed to notice them for the first time.

"Welcome," He said with a smile, "to the world beyond dimension."



REFLECTIONS ON A HIGHLY PERSONAL
SENSE OF WONDER -

It is many things to many fans, or individuals, and this is probably the best way to examine how we feel about it: through the mind of the individual. In this case, of course, the mind of good ol' Smudger Smith.

To qualify for that touch of SOW the particular "moment" has to have quite a few things going for it, and for me it has to be lasting: the feeling has to survive the years, one's altering personality and changing attitudes, the haze that time, the great analgesic, brings, and so on. Even the time of day, the weather can, in my opinion, influence one's SOW!

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sensitive soul will find that "sense of wonder" in many things, not necessarily science fictional, of course.

As far as I am concerned a certain "poverty of the mind" is essential to really appreciate those moments that can be called "sense of wonder". This is, somehow, slightly different from the more materialistic "sense of values" - that is, to be denied something causes you to appreciate it all the more if and when you do obtain it, etc.

I believe that "atmospheric" conditions can be "just right" and that one can stop and sniff the day and remember quite clearly another time and place linked with that "sense of wonder".

All the links will be quite strong, and a moment of a particular day will remind me of the first time I discovered, for example, the paperback edition of Sturgoen's More Than Human on a balmy day in Kure, Japan, in 1953, and how I found a quiet spot in a bar to sip a Tom Collins and loose myself with Sturgoen's characters... and this led to deep and lasting thoughts on the "gestalt" and communication for me.

The "mundane" can often have its "sense of wonder" moments also - the sight of a particular schoolboy at a particular time and place can remind me of an extremely small Smudger Smith loosing himself in the world and books of a character called "William" - a small urchin who had perhaps slightly more than his share of mundane adventures that this particular ten year-old.

"William" - to the best of my knowledge - never wandered through a Saturday Morning Market, heading for the magazine swap kiosk, clutching a tatty BRE of Super Science Stories, yet would you believe I was reminded of this one day because some boy mentioned ferrets, and I remembered that that magazine swap kiosk was quite close to the ferrett cages - equally fascinating to a small boy, with those terrifying tales of ferrett teeth meeting and never letting go... sigh.

Possibly this "sense of wonder" is more difficult to experience and identify in this day and age, because almost everything is "bigger and better"?

I immediately link my first experience with the movie Frankenstein or the Flash Gordon serial with a particular cinema, time and "spirit of place" - and wistful memories of threepenny choc ices and the sheer mad spending of a mars bar...! (But also touched by this kind of magic are memories of going to see Top Hat with my mother in the 1930's - so figure that out!)

I remember receiving my first American "jiffy bag" and nestling inside was a new copy of Don Day's Index to the SF Magazines: 1926- 1950. "Gee," I thought back then in 1954, "that's a handy way to mail something..." Ho hum.

As the war drew to a close in 1945 I was discovering amateur radio, and that "sense of wonder" was found in the fascinating radio catalogues from the U.S. I would send for. By the late 1940's a book with a different magic had taken over Smudger's imagination, and how do you describe your first feelings about Chesley Bonestell paintings?

And what a mixture of amusement and wonder on receiving one's first U.S. Doubleday SF Book Club selection, as one rifles the untrimmed edges! McIntosh's One In 300, as I recall...

No, this is not a nostalgic "I remember" trip, but an attempt to define what "sense of wonder" means to me.

Nowadays one falls over science fiction: its a poor bookshop or newsagency that hasn't got some mags or paperbacks, at times it almost seems to dominate the cinema screen; there is little restriction in obtaining overseas editions, the newspaper reviewer even occasionally write something intelligent about sf, there is (or was) Star Trek and UFO on the glass tit, and... yes, sf is everywhere ... hard for a "sense of wonder" to survive, maybe.

But when there wasn't much of it around - ah, then it was different! Can you imagine never having seen a copy of Astounding (sorry, Analog), the full, complete, luvly chunky (well, it was) good ol' ASF? Aw, c'mon now, you really think about that...

It was 28 years ago this year that an Australian Army Signalman opened up his locker and exposed my eyes to an almost complete year's subscription to ASF (if I remember rightly he had a relative in the States). What a feast! (I was allowed to borrow one issue at a time). It was about that time I tried my hand at writing science fiction, with a short story entitled Maelstrom that obviously showed the influence not of ASTounding but imitated somewhat sloppily the pulpy pages of Planet and Super Science Stories.

- Bob Smith.

—ooo0ooo—



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GRIMESISH GRUMBERLINGS

A COLUMN BY A. BERTRAM CHANDLER.

At the moment Grimes is on Long Service Leave. Thanks to an Australian Literature Board Grant I am able to do the research necessary for either the Australian science fiction novel or, some might say, yet another Ned Kelly book. It will be one of those What If efforts. What if Thomas Curnow had not flagged down the special train south of Glenrowan... What if the train had been derailed, as planned by Kelly, north of Glenrowan and the police party massacred.. What if savage reprisals by the authorities had sparked off an insurrection... And so on, and so on.

The Australian War of Independence, if it had happened, could no more have succeeded without outside help than the American War of Independence. (It can be argued that the decisive action of the American Revolution was the Battle of the Chesapeake Capes, the participants being the British and French navies.). So, in my rewritten history of Australia, the rebels will receive aid - arms, volunteers and money, from the U.S.A. Ned Kelly - who, in real life, was something of a military innovator - will be able to make intelligent use of the weaponry that, even in 1880, was available but considered too fantastic by the military establishments.

* At an early stage of the Kelly Project I decided that the use of air power by the rebels would be decisive. My first intention was to launch Dr. Bland's "atmoship" into Australian skies. Dr. Bland was one of those inventive nineteenth century physicians, deported to Australia for the crime of murder (he had killed a man in a duel) who designed a dirigible airship powered by a steam engine. He found no backers for his enterprise. But, I decided, the Bland Airship had never been built. At about the same time, in the U.S.A., another inventive physician had designed, built and successfully flown his "aereon". This was Dr. Solomon Andrews. His dirigible was engineless. It was, in effect, a lighter-than-air glider. With positive buoyancy it glided upwards, with negative buoyancy it glided downwards. Dumping ballast and valving hydrogen as required it flew in a series of swoops. In it, with companions, Dr. Andrews made a spectacular flight over New York. It seems incredible that neither military nor commercial interests were prepared to give support to the inventor. (As a matter of fact Abraham Lincoln did offer his encouragement - and then he was assassinated.)

So, when in Washington in April this year, I decided to find out all that I could about the Andrews Airship and also about Professor Lowe's mobile hydrogen gas generator, an ingenious device that was used for the inflation of the Union Army's observation balloons during the War of the

Rebellion. (After many years I'd trained myself to say "the War Between the States" rather than "the American Civil War"; I discovered, in Washington, that the fratricidal conflict has acquired yet a third name...)

The Lighter Than Air Gallery of NASM is very small, but it contains some good models of the U.S. Navy's airships, the Zeppelin-type dirigibles as well as the big blimps. There is the mock-up of Hindenburg's control car (this was used in the Hindenburg film) and, hard by it, a TV screen giving viewers a non-stop moving picture of the great airship's last moments. But there was nothing on Andrews and nothing on Lowe.

I had been able to obtain access to NASM's library and one of the research assistants was willing to help me. But he had never heard of Andrews and I gained the impression that he thought that I was wasting both his and my time. Nonetheless he provided me with big, thick aeronautical files covering the Civil War period. I found quite a lot on Lowe, including sketches and even photographs of his hydrogen gas generator - but even then I was unable to discover just how the thing worked.

But there was absolutely nothing on Andrews.

Finally a retired U.S. Air Force colonel, who was in the library doing research of his own, got into the act. He suggested that we try the records of aeronautical patents for the period. A book was found for me. I leafed through it, reluctantly ignoring all the marvellous devices that could never have gotten off the ground without anti-gravity - and then I found it. The patent taken out by Andrews after his "Aereon" had successfully flown. At last the research assistant evinced enthusiasm. He hurried away to Xerox the patent for me. He returned, crestfallen, to admit to me that three pages were missing.

He went then to make a search among the files. He returned with a very thick folder. I opened it - and found that its contents concerned Salomon Andree, the Swedish balloonist who tried to reach the North Pole by air...

The research assistant was very apologetic. He said, "It's obvious, sir, that you know more about Andrews than we do. If you'll send us Xeroxes of your material we'll try to find the missing pages of the patent for you..."

I now have all the necessary information - and NASM have Xeroxes of the material already in my possession. I hope that when I am next in Washington I shall find that Dr. Solomon Andrews has at last found representation in the National Air & Space Museum.

It was suggested that National Archives might have the information that I needed on Professor Lowe's device. Obtaining access to their files was a little more difficult than at the National Air & Space Museum, requiring production of Passport and all the rest of it. Finally, however, I was able to tell a charming young lady what I wanted and to ask her for assistance in finding it. And then I was esconced in the National Archives reading room with a box of correspondence relating to the Union Army's Balloon Corps. There were plenty of letters to and from Professor Lowe - but most of these were on such vexed topics as pay and allowances. Fortunately the young lady had attached to the box a note suggesting that I might find what I wanted in the National Archives Library, in a book entitled AERONAUTICS IN THE UNION AND CONFEDERATE ARMIES DURING THE WAR OF THE REBELLION.

The librarian was quite incredulous when I showed her this. She must have been confusing AERONAUTICS with ASTRONAUTICS. Finally, much to her (and my) surprise she was able to find the book for me. And much to my surprise I found therein the complete specifications for the gas generator. Essentially it was a lead-lined wooden tank on wheels. There were shelves inside the tank on which iron filings were spread. Undiluted sulphuric acid was poured in, and water, after which hydrogen gas came out. It was bubbled first through a lime solution to remove acid impurities and then through a cooling water tank. A large observation balloon could be fully inflated in three hours.

On another day I was doing research on the various military fire-arms that would have been available in 1880. The Smithsonian's Curator of Weapons was very helpful. He told me of Francis Bannerman who, shortly after the conclusion of the War Between The States, bought up all the surplus weaponry, both Union and Confederate. He is said to have armed both sides in just about every South American revolution during the late Nineteenth Century. He didn't worry about rights or wrongs - all that he insisted on was cash on the nail.

I was privileged to handle one of Bannerman's big, thick catalogues, over a hundred years old. I'd have sold my soul for a Time Machine, unlimited credit and an enormous shopping bag.

One result of my Washington researches is that America will play a far greater part in the Australian War of Independence than I had originally intended.

But - as Ned Kelly said on another occasion - "Such is life."

-----THE END-----

* It is interesting to note that although Dr. Bland first designed his dirigible - and made working models of it - in 1851, his final attempt to gain support for the project was made in 1866, shortly after Dr. Andrews' successful flight over New York. Paraphrasing Charles Fort - It just wasn't airship time!

- A. Bertram Chandler.

S U P P O R T A U S T R A L I A I N 1 9 8 3 - G O S O U T H !

MENTOR'S REVIEWS -

DIANE SOUTHGATE.

The Sword and the Satchel by Elizabeth Boyer. Paperback, Del Rey Fantasy, priced \$3.50. Distributors in Australia: Tudor Distributors.

This was a fairly typical heroic fantasy of the quest variety, and seems very much in the pattern originally set by the popularity of Lord of the Rings. The resemblance is heightened by the lavish use of Norse Mythology - evil Wizards, trolls, Dark Elves, Barrow Wights, and even the Midgard Serpent. The plot is the typical quest one - hero must foil nasty Dark Lord who is trying to take over the world. Hero is usually helped by grouchy loveable wizard and brave beautiful independent Princess, and hindered by a grotesque Gollum-ish creature.

Given the fairly basic plot, however, there were a few pleasant surprises as the book progressed, and the excellent writing and sense of vitality in the story made it a very worthwhile read.

The hero boasts the unlikely name of Kilgore, which immediately makes one remember Kurt Vonnegut's eccentric SF writer; he is somewhat eccentric, at least by the standards of his placid mundane homeland of Shieldbroad. Kilgore is the son of the local chieftain, but is far more interested in old legends of heroes and wizards than in the ledgers and lawsuits that his future duties involve. When an obviously magic sword, engraved with prophetic runes, is found stuck in the great oak that forms part of the wall of the local Council Hall Kilgore is delighted, and appoints himself the sword's guardian until the hero arrives who can draw it forth. Little does he realise that he is the destined sword-wielder.

There has been a growing sense of unease throughout the land - to the North there have been unnaturally long winters, crop failures, and reports of strange monsters. A strange blight seems to be slowly moving South, and talk of uncanny happenings and wars of supernatural forces has become more than an idle tale.

Into this stressful situation come two wizards, one good, one evil. The good one is Skanderbeg, Wizard of Fire and Light, somewhat crotchety and at times prone to klutz a spell. The evil wizard is a small ratty thieving wretch called Warth, who is as intent on making off with the silverware and salted ham as he is on stealing the magic sword. By the time matters have settled down, Kilgore has inadvertently drawn forth the sword and has become involved in the destined quest, to slay Surt, Lord of Darkness and cause of the dreaded blight.

Skanderbeg and Kilgore set forth, armed with the runesword and a satchel of spells (hence the title). They are continually beset by menaces and crafty tricksters, the biggest nuisance of the latter being the hopeful Warth, who is the Gollum of the tale.

SPACEMAN

BY BETSI ASHTON.

The cold loneliness of Space
Is all around,
As I, encapsuled,
Hurtle through the emptiness
Where is no sound
The sheer nothingness
Presses on my mind
With a force that's heavier
Than any weight of matter;
And the black-velvet pin-cushion void -
Sprinkled and pricked
With diamond-headed pins -
Fills my brain with an enormity
of fear;
Yet, fascinated, it would appear
That I need but to reach out
To touch each star -
(So near,
And yet, so far....)

This absolute aloneness,
This smothering of myself
Within the womb of Eternity,
Is almost overwhelming - - -

Time is,
Or is not:
Tell me,
Was it ever there,
Or will it be, again? -

Almost, I wish that I
Could cease to be!
Yet, a thought touches
My thought --
Fly on,
Journeyman of Space;
First of your race
To rend the fabric
Of Space/Time.
Your brothers wait for you
Beyond invisible horizons,
Under skies
Of other worlds.
We are aware
That you are on your way -
Space-man,
- re-born!

VI.

In the first quarter of 1953 the Futurian Society of Sydney was largely occupied with the implementation of the recommendations of the Futurian Court of Inquiry. The library recovered from the Australian Fantasy Foundation had to be protected and preserved both legally and physically. The Societys' Constitution had to be amended in various ways to make certain it would always exercise control over the library, and the physical tasks of collecting it, cataloguing it, determining who were and who were not borrowers, and putting it back into operation, had to be carried out. Finally, at Meeting no. 187 (23 March 1953) Les. Raethel was elected Librarian, and with the assistance of Martin and the co-operation of Haddon, the library was put into operation at the Thursday Night social meetings in April.

Concurrent with this, planning had been proceeding for the Second Australian Convention, to be held over the weekend May 1-2-3. Once again circulars were inserted in an issue of Astounding, and publicity was obtained in several U.S. and British magazines. Considerable publicity was also provided by Australian fan magazines.

As a result, 84 people attended the Convention. These included delegates from Queensland, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, and Tasmania, and from country areas in N.S.W., including Katoomba, Newcastle, and Woolongong. The Convention began with a cocktail party at Chiswick Gardens, Woollahra, on the Friday night, May 1. This was attended by about 38 people and proved a very enjoyable social evening. On Saturday morning a preliminary rally was held at the Sydney Bridge Club, and in the afternoon the Convention proper got underway at the G.U.O.O.F. Hall in Castlereagh St. Here souvenir booklets, copies of S.F. News, Vertical Horizons, and Ugh were distributed, and exhibits shown by A.S.F.S., the North Shore Futurian Society, and Futurian Press. Master of Ceremonies for the afternoon was FSS Director Ken Martin. Messages were received from Tom Cockcroft, Eric Russell, Frank Bryning and Harry Brunen.

Speakers were Vol Molesworth ('Science Fiction as a Development of Modern Literature'), R.D. Nicholson ('The Historical Development of Science Fiction'), P. Glick and G.R. Meyer ('Science in Science Fiction') and G.B. Stone ('Fandom').

Afternoon tea was provided by the Vertical Horizons Group, headed by Miss Simmons.

On Saturday night, a programme of films was screened by Don Lawson.

On Sunday morning, an auction of some 200 books and magazines was conducted by Don Lawson.

The formal business session was held on Sunday afternoon. A professional stenographer, Miss Woodlands, was hired to take down reports and motions. Reports were delivered on A.S.F.S. (Stone), FSS (Molesworth), N.S.F.S. (Veney), Melbourne (Crozier), Brisbane (Veney), Adelaide (Mrs Moyes)

the FSS Library and the Thursday Night meetings (Raethel), Vertical Horizons (Miss Simmons), Forerunner (Nicholson) and Auctions and Films (Lawson). There was also a report on 'Operation Fantast', an international commercial venture, by David Cohen, about which more will be said later.

During the business session, three motions were carried unanimously:

- (1) That a collection of Australian professional and amateur science fiction publications be despatched to the next US Convention;
- (2) That a Third Convention be held in Sydney in 1954; and
- (3) that one person be appointed by the F.S.S. to organise the Convention.

On Sunday night, a further programme of films was screened by Don Lawson.

On the whole, the Convention was a considerable success. It had accomplished its main aim, to bring together fans from all over Australia, and to report to them what each section was doing. It was, however, marred by two factors: very bad weather, and some lack of organisation.

It had been decided to hold the cocktail party on the Friday night



Rosemary
Simmons

Norma
Williams

Laura
Molesworth

Norma
Hemmings

at Woollahra Golf Club, and 42 tickets had been sold at one guinea each. At the last minute, it was discovered that the booking had not been made, and the venue was hastily transferred to the Chiswick Gardens, at a financial loss. The opening arrangements on both Saturday and Sunday mornings had also been unsatisfactory.

Reporting on the Convention in a Melbourne fan magazine, Veney wrote: "The morning session on Saturday was a very dismal affair. Apparently all the work had been left to Arthur Haddon, and when he failed to make an appearance the whole Convention came to a halt."

The matter was discussed at Meeting no.189 of the Futurian Society, held on May 4. The Liaison Officer (Haddon) said he had had great difficulty in communicating with the other members of the Convention organising Committee. He claimed that the Woollahra Golf Club had been booked in January, that its

manager had said no cash deposit was necessary to confirm the booking, and that the manager had subsequently cancelled the booking despite his promise.

'Communication' is a relation involving two parties, and Haddon's complaint that committee members failed to get in touch with him, was also invoked by some of the committee themselves who claimed Haddon had failed to get in touch with them. It should be remembered that Haddon had been the last Librarian of the Foundation, and that during and after its dissolution, he had been personally antagonistic to several Sydney fans. What ever the reasons, there had obviously been breakdown of communication among the people given responsibility for organising the Convention, with the results which Veney and others hostile to the Futurian Society criticised.

To avoid a recurrence of this, the Society at its 190th meeting (25 May '53) appointed Walter Judd as Organiser of the 1954 Convention, with power to co-opt his own committee. He was also required to submit regular progress reports to the Society. It was decided that the Third Australian Convention should be held over the Easter Weekend in 1954.

In discussing the financial outcome of the Convention just held, the question was raised of the £15 which had been advanced by the Thursday Night 'group fund' towards Convention expenses. Should this be repaid? Molesworth pointed out that the Futurian Society had organised the Thursday Night meetings and both Conventions, and if any of those had been a financial failure the Society would have had to foot the bill. Raethel said he regarded himself as custodian of the Thursday Night takings and he did not regard the Futurian Society as being entitled to access to the money.

At the following meeting, however, (no.191, 22 June '53) Raethel said he had studied the minutes of the Society, and now acknowledged it as the rightful owner of any money in the Thursday Night Fund. The meeting decided the fund should be kept in a separate account administered by Raethel.

Throughout the year, Thursday Night meetings had been held at the Sydney Bridge Club, the average attendance being 31, with a maximum of 46 on May 21. It was seen that if such numbers continued to attend, larger premises would have to be found. At the same time, the Futurian Society proper was notified that it would no longer rent the G.U.O.O.F. board-room for meetings, as the space was required by the owners. It was decided to look for new premises in which both the formal Society meetings and the informal Thursday Night gatherings could be held.

At the 192nd meeting of the Society (28 July '53) the following were elected:

Director:	C. M. Molesworth
Vice-Director:	P Burke
Treasurer:	L. Raethel
Secretary:	D. Lawson
Asst. Sec:	Miss R. Simmons

The Director appointed B. Finch public relations officer, L. Raethel manager of the Thursday Night social gatherings, and re-affirmed the appointment of W. Judd as Convention organiser.

Meanwhile, the search for premises had gone on, and an offer had been received from a Darlinghurst tailor, Mr. Neil Eady, to make available an attractive clubroom on Monday and Thursday nights and all day Saturday, for six guineas per week. At a special meeting (no.196) held on October 19 it was unanimously decided by the 18 present to accept this offer.

The new clubroom at McIlwraith's Chambers, Taylor Square, was officially opened on Thursday, December 3, with an attendance of 43. The premises contained a lock-up section for the library, a kitchenette, noticeboards on the walls, and a number of tables and chairs. It was gaily painted and modernly furnished.

At the last meeting of the year (no 199, held on 23 December '53) Raethel resigned from his positions as Librarian and Clubroom Manager because of lack of time. Mrs. Molesworth was elected Librarian and G. Stone Clubroom Manager.

During the year the Society's ranks had been reduced by the untimely death of Mrs. Christine Davidson, and the resignation of Arthur Haddon. As against this, the election to membership of Mrs. L. Molesworth, Miss L. Giles, and Messrs. W. Judd, B. Finch, D. Lawson, J. Earls and A. South had increased membership to 24.

Membership in Australasian Science Fiction Society climbed steadily throughout 1953. At the end of 1952, Graham Stone had written off the deficit



Brian Finch

Norma Hemming

Dave Cohen
Graham Stone

Don Lawson

resulting from running the organisation largely out of his own pocket, apart from thenominal 5/- per annum subscritpion. In March, 1953, this was increased to 10/- per year, which entitled members to receive, post free, copies of Rex Meyer's S F Review, Futurian Society News, and Vertical Horizons, as well as A.S.F.S. circulars and newsletters. By the end of 1953, membership had risen to 150, with members in A.E.T., six States, and New Zealand.

Over the weekend, August 8-9, the First Interstate S.F. Conference had been held at Albury. It was attended by six Sydney and five Melbourne fans, with Albury fan Joyn O'Shaughnessy as host. This conference was very successful because of the enthusiasm of those attendeng. Reports were given on various activities in Sydney and Melbourne, and suggestions made for the 1954 Convention.

Activity in Melbourne grew steadily throughout 1953. The Melbourne Science Fiction Group, with McCubbin as Chairman enrolled 58 members, of whom about 15 turned up each week to the Thursday Night getherings at the Oddfellows' Hall, where the library was open for borrowing, auctions were

held and films were shown. Mervyn Binns, Dick Jennsen, Race Mathews, Leo Harding and Ian Crozier formed Amateur Fantasy Publications of Australia (AFPA) and by pooling their resources, purchased a duplicator and supplies. The group's newsletter, which had been produced irregularly by McCubben, was taken over, completely remodelled and produced by Ian Crozier under the title of Etherline.

Etherline appeared in a roneod folded foolscap format, beginning with 12 pages and growing to 22, fortnightly for the rest of the year. Containing news, reviews, articles, and occasionally fiction and verse, Etherline was the best roneo publication ever produced by an Australian fan. It was also the longest-lived, bringing out its 100th issue 5½ years later.

Harding and Jennsen produced Perhaps, a roneod 4to journal, the first issue (February) containing 28 pages, the second (May) 48 pages, featuring mainly science fiction. Race Mathews produced Bacchanalia, identical in format to Perhaps, but devoted to fantasy. The first issue (April) contained 30 pages. Appearing on alternate months, the two magazines were intended to be complimentary. Leo Harding produced a roneod 4to publication entitled Wastebasket, with the editorial slogan: "We print what others throw out". Bruce Heron and Kevin Wheelahan produced another roneo 4to-sized journal, Question-Mark, bringing the total of AFPA magazines to five.

During August, discussions were held to place all AFPA publications on a regular schedule, to avoid overlapping of material and publications dates. The outcome was that AFPA was reconstituted, with Binns, Wheelahan and Crozier full members, McLelland and Heron associate members. AFPA would continue to publish Etherline and Question Mark, the other publications reverting to the care of their editors.

As the year drew to a close, the steady growth of activities indicated that a larger clubroom and a permanent home for the library was needed. Binns suggested that his garage could be converted for this use. It was decided to advertise in the newspapers for suitable premises.

In Adelaide, strictly informal meetings were held every second Sunday at the home of Mrs. Joyce, with an average of 10 fans attending. The library grew during 1953 to 620 items.

In Brisbane, the pattern of fan growth was the same as it had been in Sydney and Melbourne. On Saturday, February 14, a meeting of twelve fans was held at the home of Frank Bryning, including Ted Butt on a visit from Newcastle. The group decided to meet regularly each Thursday Night at a coffee lounge in Queen St. A library was started, and Veney began publishing Ugh, an irregular 4to roneo magazine of news and comment.

In Canberra, however, activity was begun on formal lines. On November 8, the Futurian Society of Canberra held its first meeting, with five members joining. Geoffrey R. Bennett was elected Director, and Peter Jones Secretary-Treasurer. The meeting decided to adopt the constitution of the FSS.

In Sydney, Nicholson had produced the second issue of Forerunner. The cost of the semi-professional magazine, however, was making its mark: although still excellently prepared, the second issue contained only 44 pages, as against 80 in the first issue. Between January and June, 1953, Graham Stone published Science Fiction News on a monthly basis. This was a four page newspaper, printed by photolithography; the first fanzine to present good photographic illustrations. The seventh issue did not appear until 1954.

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The R. E. R. Dept.

Bob Smith
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NSW 2001.

Strange how I have trouble getting past "Ron's Roost" every ish, and its probably because I have always liked more flavour of the Editor in fanzines. Interesting how your science fiction reading spans quite a few periods: the de Camp, Dick and Dye shot me back down the years....

You know, Ron, I think your sense of wonder is beginning to slip - I mean the rather matter-of-fact manner in which you mention the old prozines you'd discovered. Do you realise that once upon a time the Tru-fan would have spent at least a couple of pages in his fanzine sharing his finding with the fellow faaans Out There, by lovingly describing and perhaps serconly analysing the contests? The ironic thing about this is that the anthologies you compare those prozines with don't have anything new in 'em. When I read a sf story in an anthology, collection, or whatever they call it, the anthology itself fades and is replaced by the prozine I remember the story from and everything I associated with that particular prozine: the time, the place, the smell of the pulp, the illustrations, the columes, the advertising... and so on. Do you realise there are sf fans who will never know the atmosphere and prozine vehicle that created most of the stories they read in anthologies?

Actually, the first prozine I saw was a remaindered ASTOUNDING in about 1956. I bought it (instead of lollies) and didn't realise there were such things on sale at newsagents until about 1961! When I started Collecting. - Ron.]

I know that I am an Old Fan And Tired and have a tendency to immerse myself in sf nostalgia possibly to an irritating extent, but what has happened to science fiction in recent years worries and almost alienates me at times. You may (or may not) be surprised to learn that I personally can not get enthusiastic about STAR WARS or any of its "sequels"; I find that just as I can roar with laughter at the old sf movies of the 1950's with their, in most caess, clumsy attempts to "cash in" on the UFO and sf publicity of the times, but I am also laughing, somewhat cynically, at the much more sophisticated "cashing in" that has gone on in recent years. All of a sudden I find myself surrounded by ghoddam science fiction "experts"!!

Its easy to sit on my front porch in the Campbelltown Sunday morning pastoral pleasantry, reading Sue's story of an extremely nasty future and smiling in a typical human "it can't touch me" fashion and its also easy to dismiss the story as another readable variation on, for example Logan's Run. A little too far in the future, or a little too close for comfort? Methinks some of that "conditioning" is taking place with Homo Sap a trifle earlier than Sue's story depicts. (No doubt you'll have overseas readers wanting to know what and where are Gong, Lucas, and doubtless even Canberra.)

Diane Southgate's poem was appreciated. "Escape" seems flawed to me because I don't quite understand why Smiggins didn't know his prison was in space.

Round about now in Australian Fan History you should be broadening the Australian Fannish view by inviting non-Sydney fans to contribute their remembrances of "activities

in other States": perhaps Harding, Foyster, Merv binns, etc. Jeez, even I remember Vals' Coffee Lounge. To broaden the field of Australian Fan History may even help the neo fans regain that true faanish feeling and attitude, which, it seems to me, is hardly alive anymore. With all due respect to those NSW pioneers of science fiction fandom the History gives very few moments of true Fandom, and one almost searches in vain for the "sense of wonder" that discovering sf and fellow fans brought. All very sercon. It was almost a shock to come across the name of that dear old fanzine Slant amongst the grim records!

[There is more coverage on Interstate fandom in this and the last two parts, as they got into gear and Sydney slackened off. -Ron]

Eric B Lindsay
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Faulconbridge,
NSW 2776.

The electrostencil of Shayne worked out really well - I was surprised, although considering that you have managed like electrostencils in the past, I probably should not have been. Diane Southgate does funnier poems than most fanwriters, whose work is usually more serious - and worse.

I did read the stories without finding much on which to comment. David Marriott's idea has been used before (cover story in an Old Analog), and thus I was able to predict the end on the first page.

I remain interested in the fan history - wish you would do a complete version in one binding for future fan historians. I was amused to read of the meeting, the "sf weekend", at the Wentworth Falls Hotel. Perhaps a fan pilgrimage from the next Medvention could be in order?

[Actually, that cover on TM 27 was a photocopy, though it did look like an electrostencil. As for the fan history in one binding - see page i5. - Ron.]

Jan Howard Finder
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U.S.A.

In regard to John Alderson's piece (in TM 25), while not overwhelming the reader with needless prose, it may be that the reader doesn't have the same access to information as the writer. To use one of John's examples while I have been to Australia and have even had the pleasure of experiencing the Ghreat Outback, it wouldn't be obvious to me that Crooked Mick has to be sitting under a tree. A couple of days in the outback doesn't give you a complete background on life styles. Tho I must admit I did drink some tea prepared in a billy and it was in an area very near a tree. But this was the first and so far only chance I've had to try billy brewed tea in the outback. Some setting of the scene is not all that bad. And as with other things, what is clear in the mind of the teller may be totally turbid to the reader or hearer.

I find it a bit sad that magic seems to be talked about only or mostly in relation with Christianity. Not being a Christian, I wonder how it might be treated, if the Christian aspect was totally removed. Probably a lot more rationally. Probably a lot more interestingly, too. I find only the boring need an excuse to engage in sex. (Nearly said enjoy, but that I doubt. Probably they get enjoyment from imposing their desires on others, not from the sexual part of it.)

I survived the Ghreat con of 1980: NOREASCON. The attendance was just under 6000. Much too big for me, but I did get to see a few of the folk that I wanted to for more than a brief wave. The initial reviews of The Anti-Fan Strikes Back were very positive. I've had a ball showing the original Aussiefan movie and now I can show the two of them back to back. We sneak previewed the film in the Baltimore in '83 suite. I lost count how many times we showed the films over the weekend.

I'm convinced that Australia has a vrry good chance of walking away with all the marbles. However, Australia must win it on their own as far as the balloting goes. We must have a very large voter turnout for DENVENTION. Please ask all your readers to join DENVENTION, so that they can vote in teh site selection balloting. I realise that \$15 is not cheap and that is only the beginning, as it will probably cost an additional \$7.50 to vote and another \$7.50 to become an attending member. However the alternative is to go to Bltimore in '83 or start the whole thing over again for 1985 or some other year. Do get Sue to mobilize the Trekkers to join. This needs the combined help of all segments of fandom in Australia. Needless to say a strong helping hand from the Kiwis is needed.

I personally think that it will take 500 votes from Downunder to win the bid. Any help that you and Sue can give is very much appreciated.

I've been mailing out flyers to several cons to which I won't be able to go for their freebie tables. If Marilyn Pride can get over here for Denver, she will find that she is very well known. Her flyer with the attack of the Giant Mechanical Emus is all over fandom. I printed up 10,000 and will do another batch of 10,000 very soon. I can see right now about 7,000 flyers and there are cons to which I have added to my list.

John Playford
16 Ellerslie St.,
Kensington Gardens,
Adelaide, S.A. 5068.

On my fanzine analysis scale (from 0 to 10) you have rated 7+. Your contents are admirably wide-ranging (lacking only reviews) and I applaud your inclusion of short shories. Type-setting is neat, although the lack of paragraph indention in the first story is somewhat unsettling and typos (aargh!) do occur (don't they always?).

"Ron's Roost" - usual blurb. There's not a decent John Campbellsque scathing SF-type editorial among the lot of you!

Contact - a nice story, a nice idea. Leave it in the oven some more and iron out the flow (maybe make the ending a little more decisive and explain whether just Australia or the whole world (?) has been affected and why, although this may strain your ingenuity, I grant you.) Short story criticism is a dangerous thing to dish out. Any real writer knows in the bottom of his/her heart that his/her story is good, and only he/she can (if he/she submits to the trauma of prozine rejection) increase the maturity of his/her style. But a nice idea (and we all thought it was an alien system at first!).

[Sue's story is, hopefully, the beginning of a series, which is why the ending is open-ended.
- Ron.]

Balroq - all ye Tolkien lovers (not fanatics, spare me those) rejoice.
Escape . Ha de har har. And I thought it was buried miles underground! Rather similar (actually almost exactly) to the idea in one of the X-Men comics

(around issue 100, maybe 99?).

Australian Fan History . Being a newcomer to "fandom" (in the narrow sense of the word) this is all bullshit to me. What originality - "the Futurians"! Still, I have a soft spot in my heart for SF freaks (I should, I'm one), and especially for organisations that have the strength and numbers to meet fortnightly (sigh).

"Letters" - I agree with Marc about Prattlestar G. My thesis is that there are "simple" stories/films and "complicated" ones. You can be a good "simple" writer or a bad "simple" writer. BG is simply and purely effluent on the sea of intelligence. Something like Dr Who, which is equally aimed at children (though it has its bad points) is much better in the line of "simple" programmes.

Richard Faulder
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Yanco, NSW 2703.

Don't know why, but for some reason Contact just didn't work for me. To some extent it wasn't entirely original, with a reminder of Silverberg's The World Inside. The wordsmithing is more than competent, the characters having some depth - guess I find it difficult to suspend my disbelief in a world in which ecological disasters have been allowed to run to their illogical end.



D & D pomes I don't find entertaining.

On the other hand, I definitely liked Escape. Lovely ending. Not exactly a twist, and probably not entirely unexpected, but nevertheless very nicely done.

The highlight for me this was the history of Aussiefandom. Not much to say about it (although I did like seeing the first record of the inimitable Kevin Dillon), but I read it with great interest, nevertheless.

That's about it with locs for this. Missives were also received from Harry Andruschak, Allan Bray, Michael McGann, Andrew Darlington and Grant Stone, about this zine and other matte s.

The cover is from the frontpiece of a series of cartoons by Michael McGann with the 'Spaced Out' theme. I tossed up whether to include them in one issue or to spread them through several (well, nine...). My miserly nature got the better of me - with an additional 9 pages I would be well over the weight limit for acceptable postage rates (to me) for overseas copies. So you'll be seeing them for the next eight issues.

I hope to be putting them together in one package, though, after I have run them through TM. Which should be about June 1982 (or September 1981 if I go monthly - sheesh.). -Ron.

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