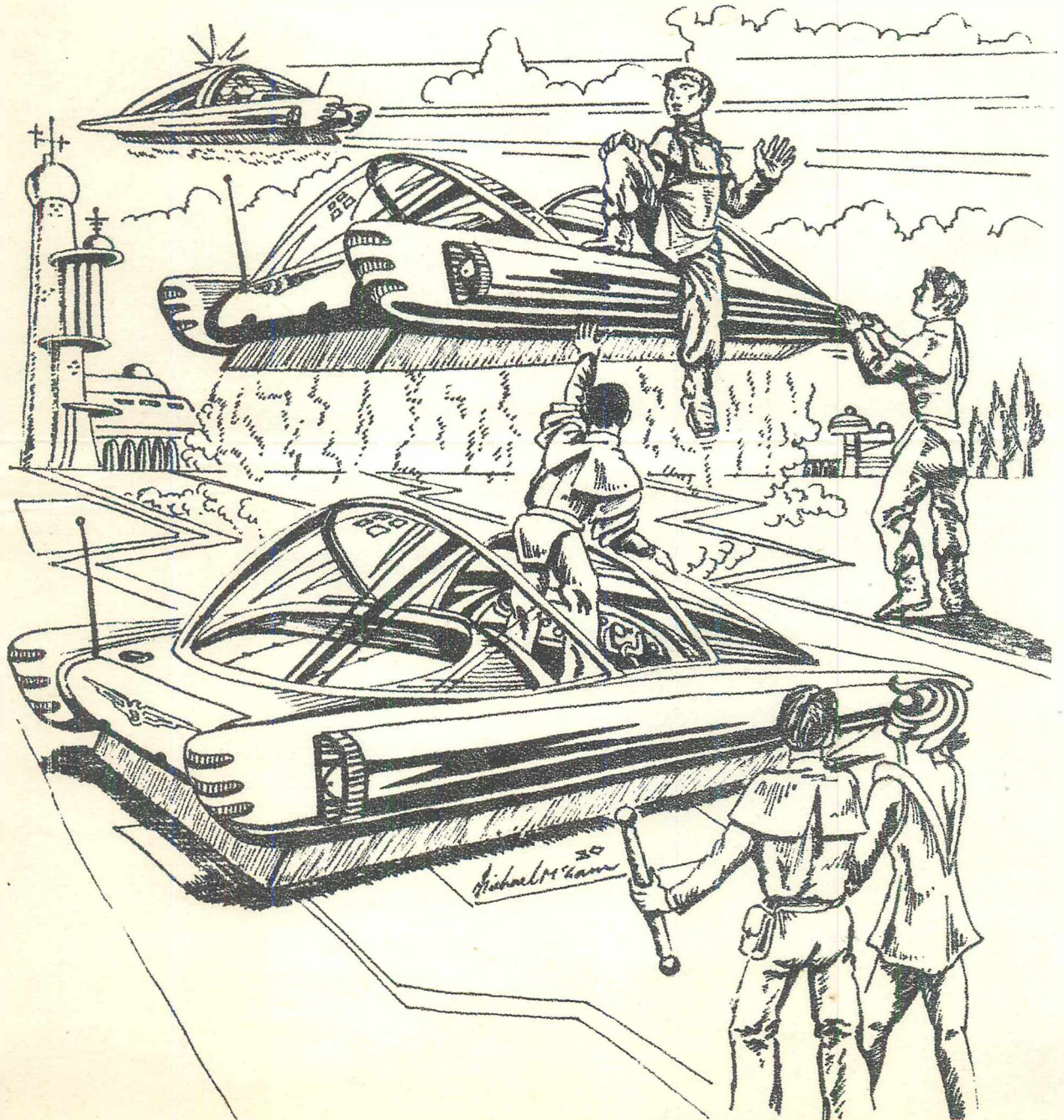


# THE MENTOR

34

OCTOBER 2, '81.





# THE MENTOR

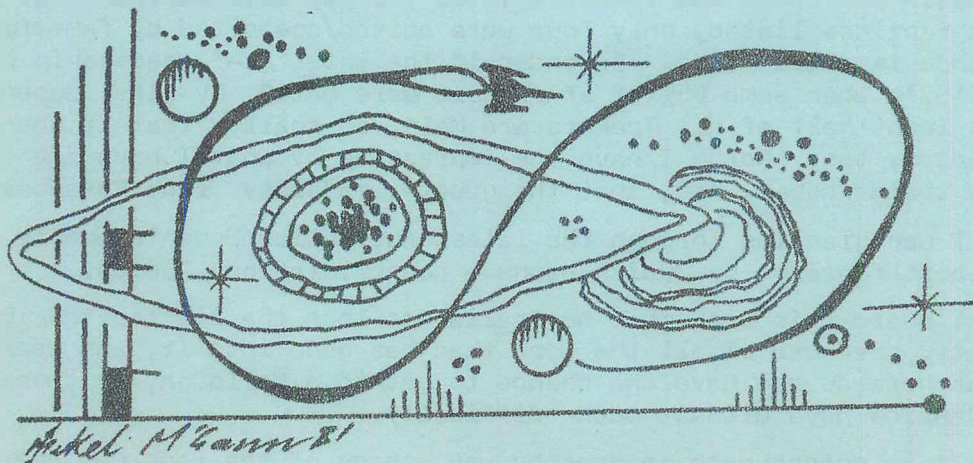
SCIENCE FICTION

October-2 1981

Number 34

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# RON'S ROOST.

It struck me, whilst writing up the Contents page for this issue of The Mentor; just how few female writers there are in s-f fanzines in Australia. In fact, I can't think of one who writes generally for more than one fanzine and is continuously published. There are two femmefan editors - Jean Weber and Shayne McCormack - but I'm talking about article writers. I started looking into it a little more, with back issues of TM, and found that about the only femmefan I regularly published back a few years ago was Christine McGowan (well, two articles); though what I considered to be the best article (in the way of response) was written by Sheila Suttie (on virginity) back in TM 18 - the locs on that kept on coming in for over a year.

Take this issue of TM. The three columnists are male, as is the article writer. Ha! you say, Ron! Clarke is a chauvinist. What if I tell you that I publish everything I receive in the way of fiction and articles? (At least I have up to now - it's been Amazing that they have all been what I wanted and were well written). In fact after each issue is on stencil I usually have no backlog of articles, fiction etc - I end up with nothing left, which I have at the moment, in the way of articles, fiction or poetry.

Another interesting thing is that the three columnists are over 50 and two are ex-fanzine publishers and one a professional writer. Just where are all the femmefan writers? Or aren't there any? Well, I know that Trek fandom has several, and I suppose most of the others are in the Apas. It is just too bad, I think, that they don't think they have the professionalism to have themselves published in the wider distributed fanzines (both genzine and faanzine).

As the distribution of this zine becomes wider I have been contacted by more fans who are willing to write locs, and in the future, I hope, contribute. It is of interest that two of the artists I have come across were female. The latest, though, is male, so I suppose it kind of evens out in the creative side in that area. For those who received TM 33 you may have noticed that of the 23 Australian fanzines listed, only four were edited/co-edited by femmefans, so the imbalance is still there. I wonder if the total s-f readership has changed since the '50's when some 85% of sf readers were male? My wife, Susan, tells me that at least half of all Trekers are male, so really, that is the optimum for sf readers, too, though I have the impression by what I have seen females reading on trains/buses, etc, that the greater majority read Romances.

I was glancing through the latest Australian Women's Weekly and I came across a short fantasy by Judith Hanna - congratulations, Judith.

I heard this week that Australia has lost the bid for the 1983 WorldCon. It is a pity, because of all the work that has gone into it, and because most of the fans here do not have the chance to get to a WorldCon, as those living in North America have without much difficulty.

It is unfortunate in another way - many of the fans who commenced the groundwork for the 1975 bid in Australia weren't around in that year; I can see the same thing happening in any future bids for Australia. It is very noticeable, that when fans hang on over the years for, say, six years, then even if they do defiate, they come back into fandom at a later date.

# WHERE HAS ALL THE SCIENCE FICTION GONE?

BY TERRY JEEVES.

I strongly suspect that science fiction is rapidly becoming a defunct art-form. Like the dinosaur, it has outlived its usefulness, and is about to disappear in decay. Certainly, it has mutated over the years, and must continue to do so or vanish into the limbo of the mainstream. The current branch of the family tree bears little relationship to the original seedling planted out by Gernsback, but in case you weren't around then, let's make a quick recapitulation.

Everybody knows ('everybody' ..? well, nearly everybody) that the early pulp fiction was short on story, but long in wind. It was almost an axiom that ten words were better than one (and paid more). The science content was generally elementary, since the authors knew little science anyway. It was usually inserted into the story with all the finesse of a kick in the teeth. Herewith a mythical smidgin for your memory bank - 'Professor Eidelsod indicated an intricately marked dial on the Emmittoscope. A large pointer stood at the figure 4. "That shows that the noxious emissions come from the fourth planet. If we count outwards from the Sun, we first pass Mercury, then Venus before coming to Earth in the third orbit. Mars occupies the fourth place. The others are...."' You know the style. Guaranteed to send you up the wall (or into the fourth dimension), To handle the large number of planets, plus their attendant moonlets, asteroids and other impedimenta the authors dreamed up hundreds of plots, mostly all the same. The sf plot Mark 1 involved a scientist (usually mad), his beautiful daughter, (innocent and bird-brained) whose sole function was to wander off and get into some scraps from which the third character would rescue her. The latter chap was a clean-cut, all-American college boy who never kicked the villain when he was down. In a field which prided itself on free-thinking, there were more taboo topics than at a witch-doctor's wing-ding. Sex was a no-no, as were religion, swear words, toilets; and in certain places, the theory of evolution. All in all, the infant science fiction was a neatly-balanced ecology, and stagnating nicely.

Then came the 'Campbell Era'. He insisted on more plausible stories, better science and a move away from the old pot-boiler. The first results of this were to encourage technicians and scientists to write. Their stories had a more integrated science content, plus a greater variation of plot ideas. With the advent of World War 2 and an escalation of research work, the readership... and the authors became even more technically oriented and the 'science' in s-f really began to justify its inclusion. The Golden Age, as many dubbed it, was upon us. Write down your list of twenty 'best' stories ever, and the chances are that nearly all of 'em come from this period. Chronologically, I'd place it as running from around 1938 to 1952 -- a period of some fourteen years. Sadly, the years which followed it don't seem to have had the same impact. Instead, they have formed a transition stage of buffer state as Phase 2 (The Campbell/Golden Era) sinks beneath the waves and mutation three moves out from the wings. (I love mixing my metaphors in the interest of vivid world imagery).

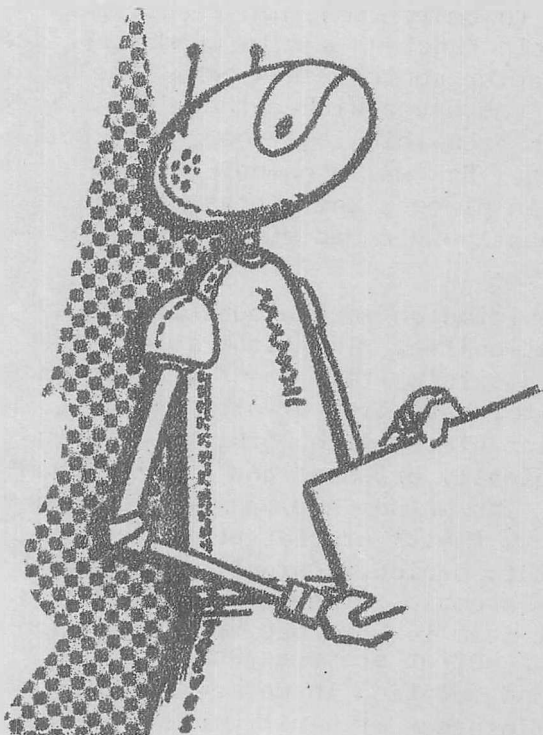
It has often been pointed out that scientific advance is not linear, but exponential. In plain language, each year sees considerably more progress than in several of its predecessors. I will not enter into the argument here, of whether or not this is good or bad. Apart from the fact that we are overtaking the speculations of the s-f writers faster than they can dream them up; there is the more ominous fact that our 'knowledge mountain' is growing faster than we can handle it. No longer can even a Vogtian 'Nexialist' hope to keep abreast of all the expanding frontiers. As Isaac Asimov pointed out some time ago, even the practising research scientist cannot keep up with all the developments in his field. Campbell recognised this problem even earlier when he commented on the fact that we could have had CRT TV (as distinct from Nipkow disc) in the 1900's had the then existing CRT been pinched from its laboratory status and shoved into the radio field - let alone extend it by original work. Despite all this, the growth curve is still exponential and shows no sign of levelling off.

This highlights the dilemma of the would-be writer of 'science' fiction. He doesn't know enough modern science to write it into his stories. The textbooks are too abstruse for him to 'bone up' from, and even if he happens to be a scientist writing in his own field, the chances are that his readership just haven't the background to understand what he is on about. Could YOU follow an up-dated George O. Smith yarn, wherein LEDs, Microprocessors, integrated circuits and FET's were slung around indiscriminately? ... and they are very much old hat nowadays even though the transistor (the component, NOT the midjet radio) only came out of Bell Labs in 1948. Nope, the sad fact is that science has outstripped science-fiction.

This state of affairs has nudged the field into its current mutation. Writers have surrendered and converted (or tried to) the 'science' into 'speculation'. Word pattern and involuted (and incomprehensible) rantings are thrust upon us. Only the idiot fails to recognise the 'Emperor's New Clothes', they are invisible to all but the high-born. Naturally, no one likes to admit to being a cloddy, so the hoax is perpetuated. Not all speculative stories are in this category I hasten to add -- but the trend is there. Authors are drifting to a field where they can disport happily without putting their foot in the clockwork. There is an

increasing stream of 'heroic' and 'adult' fantasy, (this used to be called 'the fairy story'... 'fairy' having a different meaning in the old days). More and more heroic barbarians swing their swords in the tiny confines of a spaceship cabin as they fare between the stars in search of plunder (are you there, Poul Anderson?). Pocketbook publishers bring out more and more 'thud and blunder' stories which would have wowed us back in the thirties.. and significantly enough, seem to wow the younger generation who are just encountering s-f for the first time... maybe the Phoenix will rise again from its own ashes for a new cycle... but I doubt it.

Another possibility is that the field will fragment. The good stuff will be assimilated into the vast body of the mainstream, and the crud will shrivel into a tight little lump which chews its own cud over and over again. Of course, we might get some skilled writer who can not only tell a quantum from a quasar, but



I doubt it. The old original s-f gained much from the fact that one could read it, understand its postulates and follow the extrapolations... "H'm that's a fascinating thought - I just wonder if..."

Gone alas, is that sense of wonder. We have had three stages of s-f. Tottering infancy, a lusty middle age, and a sobersided old age. Is the dotage now upon us? Sadly, I fear it is.

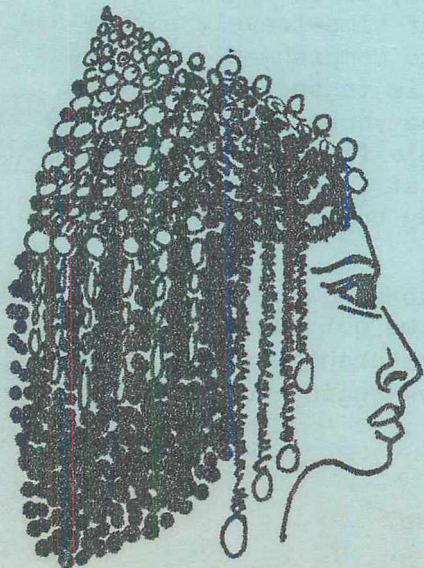
- Terry Jeeves.

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## POETRY AND THE MOON

In the jewelled chasm of eternal night  
Dianas chariot in splendour flies  
Raining silvery, Elysian light  
From black and ancient and abyssal skies.  
Over hushed towns, and herds of sleeping kine,  
That magic flood pours through the dark cloud's rift  
Thence through dreaming poets' windows to shine,  
With genius, or madness, as its gift.

: Peter A Kells.



# REFLECTIONS OF A FRINGE FAN II

BY BOB SMITH

My wife glared at me across the breakfast table. "Why can't you read a newspaper like any ordinary mundane mortal?" Fifteen pound of blue and white Persian curled in her lap seemed to burp in agreement. She - my wife, that is - continued: "The mundane happenings of the outside world are not good enough for you, it seems. You have to loose yourself in the grotty pages of a fanzine, and - " she peered at the front page " - for Ghod's Sake, it doesn't even have the decency to be a recent fanzine! It's.... it's twenty years old!" A blue Persian basking in the morning sun raised its massive mane and remarked to its companion, a white Persian: "The Mistress misses the point. It's one of his own fanzines..." The white Persian snuffled through its stubby nose in agreement, and replied: "Who can figure these humans, such complicated lives they lead..."

Ah, yes, complicated lives, indeed. I felt no great desire to defend myself from this charming breakfast scene (other than filing the disloyal remarks from the cats for future withholding of goodies), for I could forgive easily and reasonably graciously. Did I not have a Cosmic Mind, a Fine Mind, a Slannish Mind, even? Was it not evident that some vast, terrible Power was influencing me?

You're dead right it was.

We are of course surrounded by umpteen forms of time-travel, some of which we take for granted, others probably not so obvious. Old books, old movies, old photographs, old memories. Why, even the Universe, if we bother to look at it, that is, shows us the Ultimate Enormous example of time-travel, and we are aware that we are gazing at more Pasts than we care to comprehend, (the last part of this mind-croggling philosophical meandering is tossed in to remind science fiction fans that you are never too old or too young to ask this kind of question within the pages of your or somebody else's fanzine. "What's It All about, Alfie...?"). But much closer to home a couple of fannish reminders had sent me back down the insignificant number of years by cosmic reckoning, but fairly influential in the life of Homo Sap....

On one of those rare occasions when I was reading somebody else's old fanzine a simple phrase reminded me of the enjoyment we got out of Fandom back in the late 1950's. The older members of Mentor's readership will, I'm sure, immediately recognise the phrase, and a little memory-jogging does no harm, do it? Remember:

"WHO SAWED COURTNEY'S BOATS?"

How many variations on that can you think up?

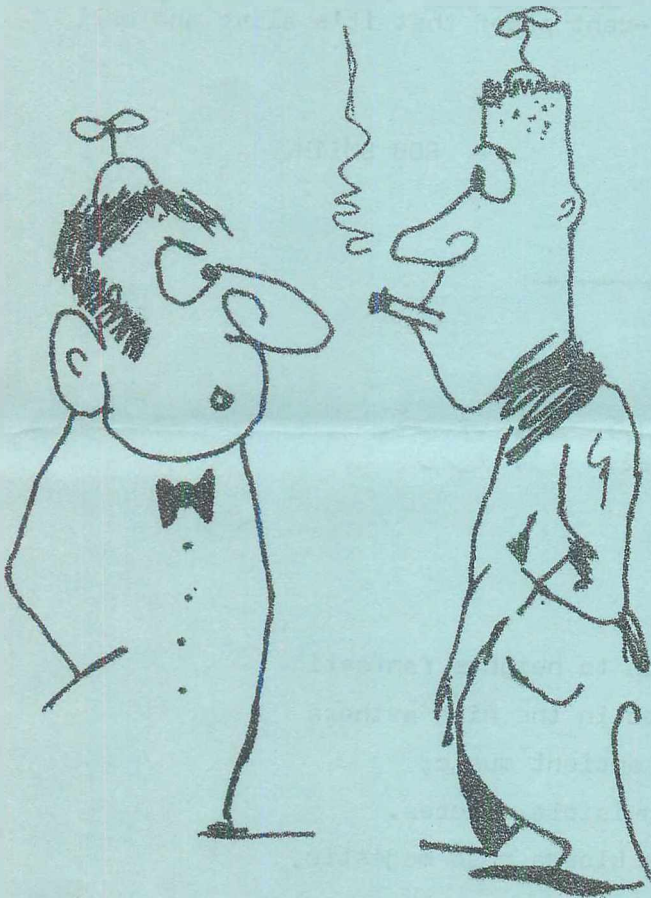
"WHO THAWED COURTNEY'S MOATS?"

Tsk, younger fans, don't snigger. An important factor in the Fandom of Then was the mental agility/ability to have fun with words. It had nothing to do with impressing your fellow fans with your knowledge of the English Language, and indeed your fellow fans could be quick to slap down such breaches of the fannish ethic.

Another exercise a little closer to things sfnal was:

"THE LAST MAN ON EARTH SAT ALONE IN HIS ROOM....  
THERE WAS A KNOCK ON THE DOOR..."

The other reminder bounced me from 1980 back to 1960, then via 1970 back again...



In the late 1950's there was an atmosphere that was decidedly "fannish" gradually coming together in Australia. It was due, to keep it simple, to the communication between perhaps no more than a handful of fans with an original common interest in science fiction. It was Fandom in the sense that a great appreciation of fun was the spark, and in the strict theory of what Fandom is, it probably didn't last long. It was influenced by what was happening in and coming out of American, British, Canadian and New Zealand Fandom of that time, and it meant, amongst other things, that one of the more special moments for me was receiving my copy of Dick Eney's FANCYCLOPEDIA II.

It's a little difficult to explain to a fan of the 1980's, so I ain't gonna try. Sufficient to say that it is 186 pages of highly entertaining information on Fandom, and its difficult now for me to fathom out just why I let it outa my clutches ten years after I had obtained it. But I did....

In a burst of generosity and the promise of much egoboo I offered my copy of FANCYCLOPEDIA II to the 1970 Syncon auction. I vaguely recall standing up in that hall at Epping and flogging all kinds of goodies, enjoying myself immensely. Syncon was great fun, and in a fit of near hysteria I threw myself into "Syncon II in '72" and came in contact with some very nice people. And then I faded into the shady realms of GAFIA...

Another ten years vanishes down the hall of time, and then all of a sudden I re-discover who has my copy of FANCY II, a contact is re-established, and in a magnificent fannish gesture this fan (who bears the unlikely name of Leigh Edmonds) photocopies all 186 pages plus covers and sends it to me in a satisfyingly fat envelope that kinda reminded me of the fat fanzines we received from the U.S. fans back in 1959 - the fullness of a full circle, indeed.

What, I can almost hear the impatient neofans muttering, is the point of all this Smith rambling?

Well, I guess I could imitate the boy whose brother had just asked if there was going to be any apple core left, with: "There ain't a going to be any point..." But I will not do that, because it would probably confuse the well conditioned sf fan of the 1980's, fairly happily adjusted to packaged deal sf via his books, magazines and film. (Pardon me for a moment whilst I shove the more cynical part of me firmly into an escape-proof box).

The point, the common link, that I believe should hold all Fandoms from whenever and wherever, together is that Fandom is Fun! Now, I don't mean stupid fun, or vulgar fun, or even a surfeit of fun, but a Sense of Fun. that, in my experience, cuts through and across most international fannish boundaries.

I don't see a great deal of that Sense of Fun around anymore, and indeed would welcome some one-hundred-per-cent proof that it's alive and well and devouring Cleveland - or some place.

- BOB SMITH.

—oo0oo—

## VISIONS OF SLEEPING GODS...

Vast masonries reared up to heights fantastic  
Where fireflies cavorted in the high aethers  
Spiralling madly to an ancient music;  
Empyrean-rhythmed of invisible spheres.  
Titan walls of luminous blooms rose majestic,  
And far in a mist-veiled distance bulked endless onyx tiers  
Shading those opiate fields of oblivion  
Where the Gods sleep and dream through timeless celestial years.

-- Peter A. Kells .

—00000—

# GRIMESISH GRUMBERLINGS,

A COLUMN BY A. BERTRAM CHANDLER.

## THE DEATH OF A THOUSAND CUTS

As far as I'm concerned, most advertising is proof of Newton's Third Law of Motion. To every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. This is especially true insofar as the advertising of Reader's Digest goods and services is concerned. For some, probably horribly snobbish, reason I have never liked that magazine. On the rare occasions that a copy falls into my hands I see how highly I score in "It Pays To Test Your Word Power" - almost invariably 20/20 - and then cast the thing aside unread. A Reader's Digest Condensed Book I have long regarded as being fit only for the semi-literate. If a Book's worth reading it should be read as written by the Author.

Very often, in the few years prior to my retirement from the sea, I used to have as my chief officer a young man who was an even worse intellectual snob than myself. Frequently, at meal times, we would talk on literary matters while, all too obviously, the other officers at table would be wondering, What the hell are those two bastards yapping about?

The ship in which we were both serving was a frequent visitor to Port Kembla. The representative of the Missions to Seamen would call on board with bundles of magazines, which he would leave in the Chief officer's cabin. Somehow most of this reading matter would always consist of copies of The Reader's Digest. Before passing these on young Steve would tear out all the various order forms. One evening I looked into his room to see him about some ship's business or other and caught him at it.

"You aren't going to order any of that rubbish, surely," I demanded.

"No, sir," he replied. "But I'm going to post all these forms just so The Reader's Digest gets stuck for the cost of the postage."

"Steve," I told him, "you're doing it all wrong. I'll show you how it should be done..."

And so we filled all the forms in...

Each and every Reader's Digest merchandising department has a different P.O. Box Number. We would order a set of Condensed Books, using a made-up name

and, as the address, the Box Number of the Record Album department. And so on, and so on. We enjoyed the work. There was only one fly in the ointment. We had no way of ever discovering the effects of this sabotage on The Reader's Digest computerised mailing department. We imagined individual computers, all under the same roof, sending each other bills.

And so on, and so on.

Quite some time later I was travelling from New York to San Francisco by train. It was a very pleasant journey. About half a dozen of us used to meet over meals and in the club car. Although we were strangers, we all had friends in common. One of my fellow travellers was a Reader's Digest editor. I thought that he might be able to answer the question that had been nagging me over the years. I told him the story of the order forms - carefully editing out my own part in the sabotage - finishing up by saying that even to this day he (my one-time second in command) was wondering just what did happen.

"I wouldn't know," was the terse reply.

I could sense that he suspected that I had been much more than a mere looker-on and I already knew, from past experience, that The Reader's Digest engenders in its employees a worshipful attitude towards itself.

And it does, too, in its readers. Or its Faithful Readers....

Not so long ago I told the above story to a friend, one of the managers in the Union Steam Ship Company's Sydney office. I thought that he would be amused. He was not. He was shocked.

"But you were being dishonest, Captain," he told me.

"How so?" I countered.

"And you must have caused a lot of inconvenience..."

"That," I said, "was the object of the exercise."

But it is not only The Reader's Digest that is guilty of condensing books.

A long time ago the first of the Rim Worlds novels, The Rim Of Space (my title was To Run The Rim) was published in hard cover by Avalon. Very shortly thereafter it was published, in paperback, by Ace. In those days Ace had a limit of 40,000 words. The book was episodic, so Ace merely excised one chapter without any effect upon continuity. Unluckily the artist responsible for the Ace cover read the book in hard cover before doing his pretty painting. And, of course, he just had to illustrate the hacked-out chapter.

Quite recently Robert Hale, in London, decided to publish Star Loot, but complained that the book, as already published by Daw Books, was too long. They wanted me to do the cutting but (I said) I was too busy. So they wielded the blunt meat axe.

Last week I received the proof, for correction.

My advice to anybody who wants to read Star Loot is to do so in the Daw edition. I looked in vain for passages of which I had been rather proud. Gone altogether was Grimes' reunion with his parents and his historical novelist father's learned discourse on the legal aspects of piracy and privateering. The Green Hornet was still among the characters but the utterly abnoxious nature of the wench was not established. Frankie Delamere's titled, El Doradan cousin didn't make an appearance. The Baroness Michelle d'Estang was very briefly on deck but did not enjoy her long-deferred one night of love with Grimes. Most of Magda's fortune-telling sessions using the I Ching technique were missing.

A long novel is written as such, with all its parts interdependent. Once anybody starts to abridge it the entire structure begins to fall apart. It is as though a master sculptor were commissioned to produce a statue of a naked lady (after all the remarks in the correspondence columns of The Mentor about my obsession with unclad wenches I thought that it was time that I dragged one in, by the hair, kicking and screaming) and came up with something a little better than merely competent. It is/<sup>as</sup>though the purchaser, deciding that the statue was too heavy, went to work with a hammer and chisel.

The nipples aren't really needed... Off with 'em...

And what about those buttocks? Nobody'll see 'em from the front...

And what about a few centimetres off the hips?

Now, put her on the scales, boys...

Still a few grams too heavy?

Not to worry. Her nose is too long, anyhow...

After my Star Loot experience I applaud my good sense in never, ever, having read a Reader's Digest Condensed Book.

- A Bertram Chandler.

—oo0oo—



# S. F. A. - THE ALTERNATIVE.

## S-F SPECIALIST BOOKSHOPS IN AUSTRALIA:

New South Wales - Galaxy Bookshop  
106 Bathurst St.,  
Sydney.

South Australia - Standard Books                      The Black Hole  
136 Rundall Mall,                      11 Chesser St.,  
Adelaide.                      Adelaide.

Victoria - Space Age Books  
305-307 Swanson St.,  
Melbourne.

\*\* An update on the above shops and any others for these and other States would be appreciated.

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## FANZINES RECEIVED:

Australian:      Positron + No.7 - Gary Rawlings (NSW)  
Thyme 4 - Andrew Brown & Irwin Hirsh (Vic)  
The Ravin' v2 no.4 - Stephen Dedman (WA)  
Rhubarb 1981/3 - John & Diane Fox (NSW)  
WAHF-FULL 6 - Jack Herman (NSW)

Overseas:      Arena SF - Geoff Rippington (UK)  
Fanzine Directory 3 (1977) - Allan Beatty (USA)  
Fourth Foreign Fanzine - Roelof Goudriaan (Holland)  
Love Makes The World Go Awry - Fran Skene (Canada)  
Intermediate Vector Bosons 3 - Harry Andruschek (USA)  
Fanzine Fanatique - Keith & Rosemary Walker (UK)  
Noumenon 42/43 - Brian Thurogood (NZ)  
Erg 75 - Terry Jeeves (UK)

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## SPECULATIVE FICTION: THE AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT

- Eric B Lindsay.

Instead of leaping up before dawn to go to the conference on Speculative Fiction: The Australian Context held in Canberra on 18-19 July, I stayed in bed and grumped a lot. I could see it all. Trendy academics waffling on about character in H.G. Wells' scientific romances, with the most up to date author covered being George Orwell. As for science fiction, well, after all, that is

a genre, and hardly worth considering.

However, I had paid for a membership, so eventually I drove down in time for session no.3, after lunch, with George Turner on Australian SF 1950-80. Now, in truth, George said very little I didn't know, but he said it with such style and organisation that it sounded fresh and was interesting. To my surprise, George even mentioned fandom, without feeling called upon to remark unfavourably on it. Afternoon tea over, we listened to Bruce Gillespie, not as accomplished a speaker as George, but again obviously well prepared, and somewhat more personal in some of his remarks. As the longest standing continuous publisher of sf criticism in Australia, Bruce is in an excellent position to comment on sf here, and overseas. One last joint session, with George Turner, Van Ikin & others, on the Place of Australian SF in the Global Context came up with several interesting remarks on recent books from Australian authors, many of which have sold well both here and overseas, without an excessive reliance upon being the sf equivalent of Skippy.

Jean Weber ran the fannish party at her place that evening, turning into a pumpkin about midnight. I drove several people back to the University where we were staying, and a much more subdued party continued in Karen Warnock's room. I was very interested to hear Prof. Norman Talbot remark that there was more discussion of sf at the party than was usual at academic parties on the same topic. There was more than is usual at fan parties also. I suspect that the discipline of preparing for a convention, rather than just attending, has a beneficial effect upon fans at least. Certainly this was a more serious convention than most, but unlike most fannish sercon conventions, it was also interesting. I very much hope that fan conventions arrange to have more attendees from the academic world as speakers and participants, for it will certainly assist sf in general.

The Publishers panel, with Wynne Whitford representing Cary & Collins of Void, Pat Wolley, the live wire of the Wild and Wolley team best known for the Ron Cobb books, and now into distributing for smaller publishers, Jackie Yowell representing the traditional publisher Penguin, and Carey Handfield of Norstrilia Press. This was another excellent add informative panel, giving a good background to publishing problems here. I was a bit disappointed, during the question and answer session after, to find that some publishers still cling to the skirts of UK publishers, and are unhappy about the import of cheaper US books to the point of trying to ban them via the discredited UK Traditional Market copyright agreements.

A booksigning at Dalton's, with wine and cheese, and local authors George Turner, Damien Broderick, David Grigg, Wynne Whitford, Lee Harding among those autographing the books. Finally, the author's panel, with all of the above, on how they felt about writing and publishing.

In short, an excellently organised conference, one of very few where I have actually attended, and enjoyed, the panels, and an eye opener to the advantages of having academic participation at more traditional fannish conventions.

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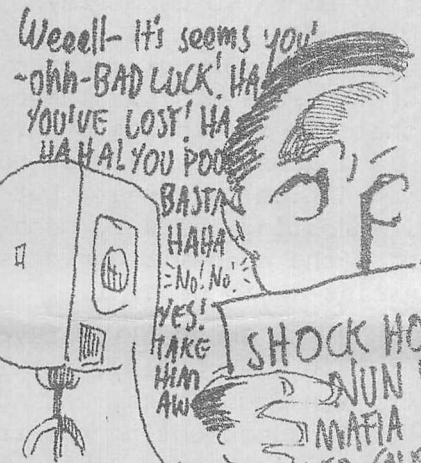
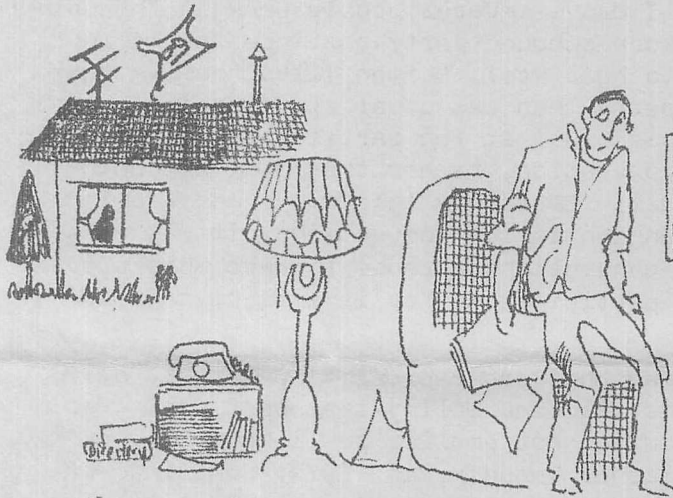
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Bruce Dempson - an ordinary man with an ordinary job, returns home after an ordinary day to his ordinary house in an ordinary town and his ordinary wife to have an ordinary night with ordinary T.V.

**BUT** - Tonight - the extraordinary - or something not quite ordinary at all - will shatter his ordinary existence - taking him one step beyond the outer limits of his twilight zone .... and all that ominous sounding narration ....



SHOCK HOR  
NUN IN  
MAFIA  
UFO CONSP

BLZZZ

Space - the  
final frontier  
-Dah Dah Cuda Dude  
Dah - DE DAH - Deo Poo



VOYAGES TO SEEK  
CIVILIZ  
GO WHERE?

Teeeee-zus  
K-ris!  
Bloody Spaceship  
Rubbish! WHEW!  
HAS -

gotta get a remote one  
of these

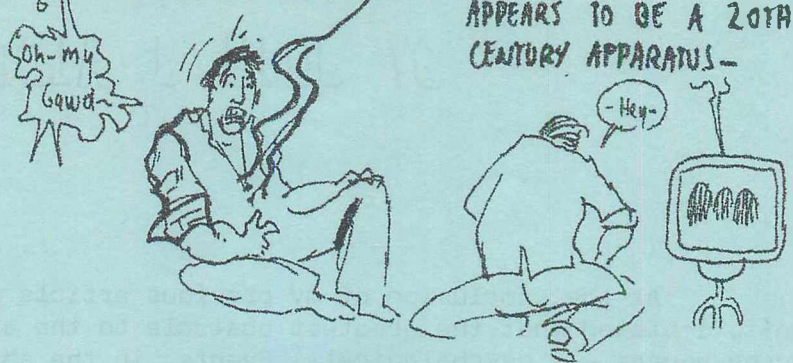
MISTER SPOCK  
WHERE ARE  
GOOD LORD  
JIM! LOOK!





GOOD SHOOTING, SPOCK!  
- IT APPEARS ONLY STUNNED,  
CAPTAIN -  
- GOOD - NOW, WHAT'S  
HAPPENED TO US?

- IT APPEARS THAT SOMEHOW  
WE ARE TRAPPED IN AN  
ALIEN COMMUNICATION DEVICE  
- WHAT TYPE? -  
- Hmmm - FASCINATING. IT  
APPEARS TO BE A 20TH  
CENTURY APPARATUS -

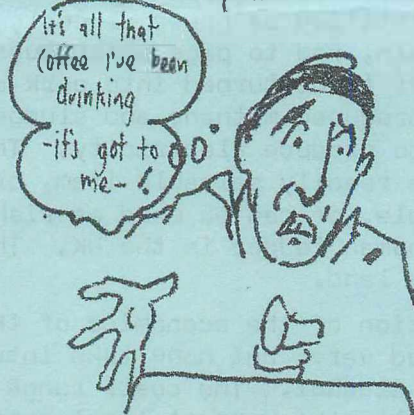


- IT'S MOVING AGAIN, JIM!  
- SPOCK, BONES - KEEP  
YOUR PHASERS ON IT - I'LL  
TRY TO COMMUNICATE WITH  
IT...

- YOUR - T.V. -? IS THAT  
WHAT YOU CALL THIS  
... ENVIRONMENT  
- A T.V. is a 20th century  
communication device,  
Captain -

- OUR - SIGNALS - WE MUST HAVE  
SOMEHOW - MUST HAVE ENTERED  
SOME TIME TEMPORAL WARP  
VORTEX WHILE WE WERE TRANS  
PORTING -

- well, it certainly sounds implausible  
enough, Jim - so it must have  
happened -

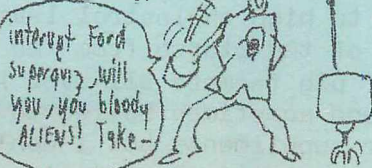


The lamp! - We'll try our  
communications  
- Pip-QUEEK!! - Scotty -  
- Aye Cap'n - what happened  
to yeh? - I canna -

Can you get our coordinates  
- Aye, Cap'n - that I can -  
- Then beam us up, Scotty -  
- They may be a bit of inter-  
ference, Cap'n - but we can  
do it -

Commander Adama -  
There's a man here who  
says he's from EARTH -

(Bruce?)  
(Bruce?)  
Has Ford  
Superquizz  
started yet?



About time - we've been  
running long enough...

# A REFIT ON THE ENERGY CRISIS

BY JOHN J ALDERSON.

At the conclusion of my previous article on the energy crisis which isn't, I stated that the greatest obstacle to the acceptance of an alternate energy source was psychological. Events, in the shape of letters to the editor, (and to the writer) have borne this out. Hence the system I outlined was one which was not only feasible, but for the most part, is in use. That it is not the best system is quite apparent to myself but I did not want to burst anyone's credibility ceiling, and this latter is the sort of thing which can easily happen to those who airily believe that our problems will be solved when we shift our filthy industries to outer space.

First, a short recapulation of the system I outlined. Wheat was crushed, boiled by steam to turn the starch to dextrose which was then fermented. The alcohol was then fractional distilled as power alcohol, the residue, being now more highly concentrated protein, fed to pigs which turned it to pork and pig-manure. The pigs were sold off to be turned into pork or bacon and the manure turned into a digester which produced methane and sludge and effluent. The methane was used either as a fuel or to produce electricity. The sludge and effluent was turned into compost which is a readily saleable item, or used to breed earthworms. The earthworms are also saleable, or can be used as fish/poultry/pig food, and indeed are now being used as human fodder in the UK. The remaining worm-casts are saleable or can go back on the land.

Now a short examination of the economics of this. Estimates of the cost of power alcohol by this method vary, but none take into account the use of the residue in the costing of the alcohol. The costs range between 31 and 36 cents per litre, that is slightly below the current local cost of petrol. OK, it is now economic to produce power alcohol from wheat, but apart from using cane sugar it would be the most expensive material commonly available to use. A lot of readers missed my obvious reason for using wheat, that I knew its economics. So do hundreds of farmers. It is sufficient that the alcohol side of the operation pays its way.

The boiling of the wheat hydrolizes the starch into dextrose and either of these is simply converted into energy or fat by the pig, and as modern pigs aren't very energetic it gets turned into fat, plus certain other substances, these, when eaten by humans lead to high cholesterol levels etc. etc., a point I hardly need labour. The removal of the starch from the wheat results in a better, more wholesome meat. Hundreds of pig farmers all over Australia grow pigs on a diet of wheat, usually crushed, and sometimes boiled to hydrolize the starch. Naturally the pigs also get other suppliments but I don't want to complicate the subject; after all, I hope I am not writing a treatise on pig-farming. But I

did earn my bread pig-farming for many years, and I do know its economics, and pig-farmers are at present amongst the better-off of Australian farmers. This part of the operation obviously pays.

The number of pigs needed to keep a family in comfort would mean turning off about ten per week. The methane from the manure produced by this number, according to various authorities (see Spargo, for instance) will provide power for eight or nine families. There is no question about large methane digesters working, they do. The question arises about little ones such as one may rig up on a two man toilet, but that's got nothing to do with this. Obviously, as the only raw material is pig manure, and if the electrical current is charged for at current rates the digester and generator will pay for themselves in two or three years and the entire system, including pig sties etc. could be put in for the usual charge for connecting a property to the grid - \$15,000. It could not help but be an economic success.

I haven't concrete figures on either how much compost would be produced, or the price of other raw materials needed, that is sawdust or straw or such like vegetable matter, but when turned into worms and worm casts, both of which sell for at least five dollars per kilo, this end of the operation certainly pays, and is indeed a reasonable industry in its own right at the present time.

The operation is going to require a full time wheat-grower, or grower of some sort of pig/alcohol fodder. The distillery side may not be a full time job for someone else but would probably be the basis of one. The pig-farmer is full time. The methane digester could possibly be worked also by the distillery man. But the composting could be a full time job, and so would the worms. In other words, five families were supported full time and earning good incomes. After they have their share of power alcohol, pork, power, etc., there will still be a surplus. Allowing for all the worm-casts to be returned to the wheat-growers land, the system still contributes to society at large, some power alcohol, a large amount of pork, power for three families and a great quantity of worms, or if a fish-farmer is added to the system, a large amount of fish.

Of course some minerals leave the system, of course it is not self-contained; but it is a sustainable system - it would work for thousands of years if not for ever and the land being used would become ever richer and richer. For those interested, the ash loss from the wheat land would be about one hundredweight per year. However, as one of the supplements fed the pigs is limestone, this would probably be all replaced.

Now to update the system: The pig is not naturally a grain eating animal, their natural diet being acorns and apples, the latter being used in Australia. Whilst wheat may yield 1200 pounds per acre, carob beans yield between 10,000 and 20,000 pounds per acre, honey locust yields 8750 lbs/acre, potatoes 6,000 lbs/acre, Jerusalem artichoke 20,000 lbs/acre, and most of the nut trees yield slightly higher than wheat, say 1,600 lbs/acre. Peanuts and all the coarse grains give higher yields than wheat and newer plants such as the buffalo gourd have very large yields. All yield power alcohol as well as pig fodder.

Now take the methane digester. It can be superseded by direct anaerobic composting, yielding methane and a great quantity of heat... probably sufficient to fractionally distil the alcohol mixture, heat the pigsties in winter, and if the compost heat is close enough, one's house. Of course it doesn't smell and it has to be a sealed unit. These 'slow fires' burn for about three months and are hot enough to heat a hot-water service, a greenhouse, brooder, swimming pool, and do a lot of cooking. The end product is compost as with the digester.

Any of these systems can use a whole variety of primary food products to produce the alcohol and pig food. On the other hand any form of animal manure will produce methane. It is theoretically possible to use purely vegetable products for digesting into methane, but there appears to be still practical difficulties.

On the other hand it is possible to ferment a whole range of strange vegetable substances (eg. sawdust) directly into alcohol and this is of great interest because there are always vegetable products which are of little value even as animal food. The use of direct sugar producing plants such as the jaggery palm is vastly more efficient than, say, sugar cane or beet, or at least so I have been informed by the author of a forthcoming book on the palm.

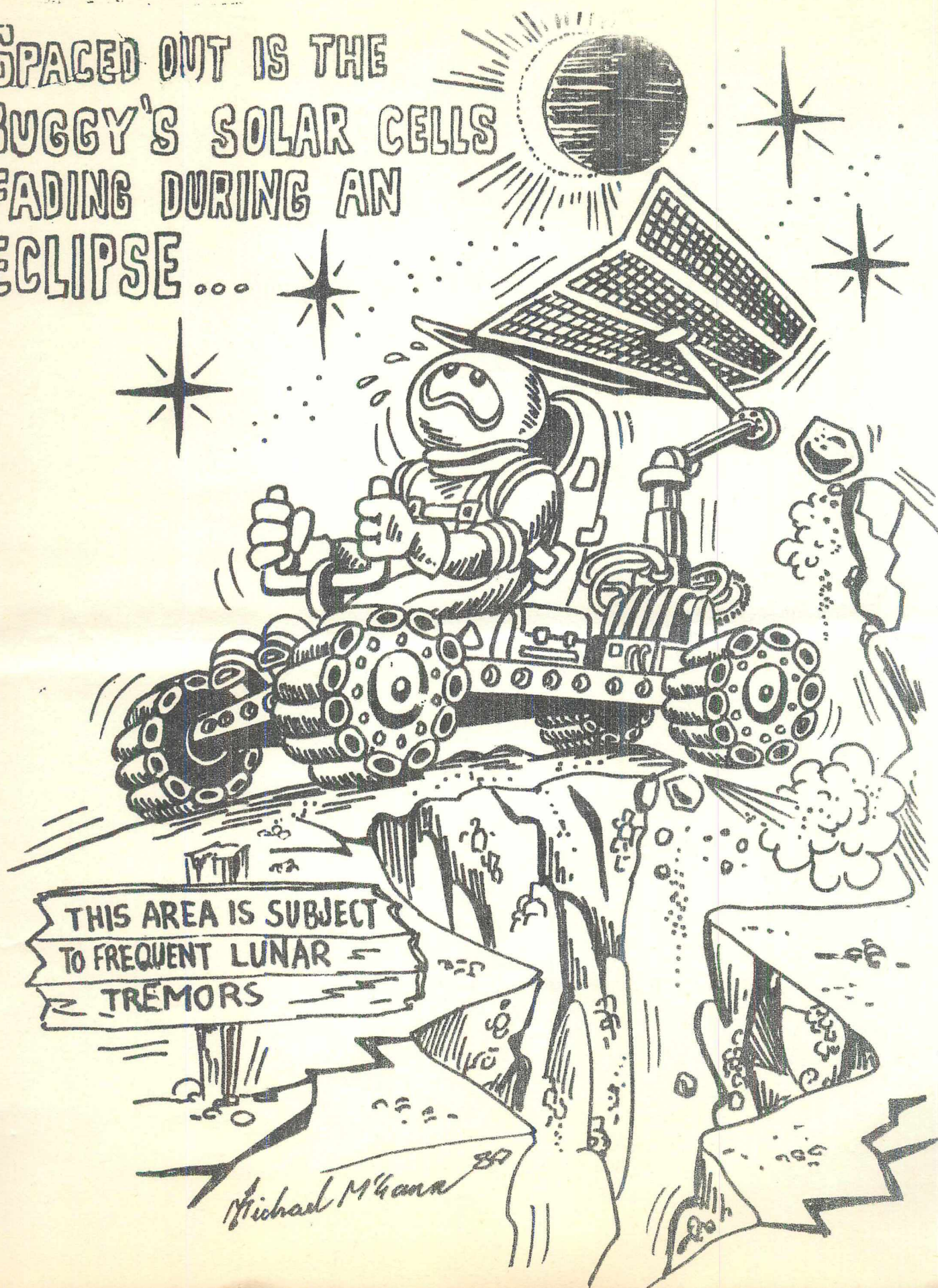
Some ill-informed criticism has been levelled at the use of meat for food, as when the grain used to grow that meat could have been used directly by the human. This is a simplistic action. Most animals are not habitually fed grain, and then when there are, usually not the grain used for human consumption. The bulk of a grain is not eaten by humans, except in the form of wholemeal. The bran and pollard, the hull, etc., go into animal food, and but for the animal, would be wasted. Most animals, however, graze on a form of fodder unused by humanity directly. All this is by the way. It just happens to be impossible to have any sort of an eco-cycle without animals. Even the primitive form of wheat farming used in Australia would not go many seasons if the stubble was not grazed by sheep and if that land was not spelled in grass after every couple of crops, and that grass eaten by animals. It would be folly not to harvest those animals. Our farming practices desperately need more different species of animal put into the eco-cycle - birds in particular to supply much needed phosphates.

Be careful, gentle reader, when you lift a leaf. It may easily hide a critic.

- John J Alderson.



SPACED OUT IS THE  
BUGGY'S SOLAR CELLS  
FADING DURING AN  
ECLIPSE...





# The R. E. R. Dept.

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It's curious to see the implication in Bob Smith's comments that Star Wars was the first of a deliberate "cash-ing-in" on SF. At least that's what I took him to be saying. Well, SW may have been the first to cash-in big on sf, and there's no doubt that it set the trend once it had proved one could make big bucks on the genre, but... Star Wars was turned down by a number of studios before Lucas found one willing to back it to what was a rather limited budget compared to what is usually spent on movies. It was not expected to be a big commercial success, quite likely even by Lucas, who just wanted to put an sf pulp onto the big screen in glorious living color. Of course, now you can read all sorts of rot about how he is the Homer of our times and other such nonsense, and of course he, and many others, are capitalizing like crazy.

Well, I may have simplified things somewhat, but I for one am delighted to have a reasonable selection of sf/fantasy to choose from on tv and in the movies. Buck Rogers was the best sf that tv has offered in some time and was usually fun to watch (& has been cancelled of course)... Flash Gordon was a marvelously camp and entertaining film - more recently we went to Dragon-slayer, which while it wasn't as good as it might have been, had enough really fine moments to make it well worth seeing... then this past weekend we went to see Raiders Of The Lost Ark, which is pure pulp adventure fantasy (don't be fooled into thinking otherwise because it's set in Hitler's time), translated onto the big screen with great panache and really super special effects. When I put my money down to go to a movie, I only feel exploited when the movie's bad, dull, poorly made and/or disappointing, but not when I get two hours worth of great entertainment (I don't ask for much more than that from a movie any more). I'm not deriding commercialization or exploitation but am certainly willing to take advantage of it for my own purposes/enjoyment.

The Spaced Out series by Michael McGann has been enjoyed, as are your editorials when long enough to be considered as such. Daughter Talda was particularly enjoying the fan history (though there have certainly been no names in it that she would be familiar with, so this surprised me; well, 13-year-olds are constantly surprising their parents, I suppose). In issues well past, Diane Southgate's Balrog was fun, and Chandler's words for Susan were thoughtful, personal and appreciated.

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Out Of The Greenhouse had a pleasant flavor of an older school of science fiction writing. The nostalgia which it exuded in this manner was good enough to overpower any deficiencies it may suffer with respect to originality and scientific probability. In fact, it isn't hard to imagine this story transformed into a full-length novel by one of those British science fiction writers who love to deal with planetary calamity themes. I imagine it will cause some readers to think of On The Beach, but I've not read the novel of that title and I've seen only a few minutes of its film version, just enough to know that it's also about three people surviving in Australia on a more or less depopulated planet.

I'm not wise enough in scientific matters to risk specific criticisms of how the space cloud's effects on earth are calculated by the author or what the cloud's passing through the solar system would do to the cloud itself. But I don't think I would feel much confidence in the ability of any underground shelter to retain a habitable temperature for months or years after the frigid weather clamped down on the entire planet.

Still, even if a catastrophe like this doesn't freeze up earth in the space of a few weeks, there's every reason to believe another ice age will arrive eventually, and I wonder if civilization would survive even the beginnings of a new ice age. Long before glaciers began to cover major cities, I suspect the change in climate would result in food famines causing tens of millions to die, governments toppling from destruction of national economies, wars big and small springing up over the increased demand for fuels, and the majority of the world's population turning to criminal careers in their efforts to find food and shelter after fleeing the chilling parts of the globe toward the tropic areas. So maybe a quick deep freeze like the one in Michael Hailstone's story would be more merciful than the gradual glaciation that may be only a few centuries in the future.

I know some elderly people in Hagerstown who would dispute John Alderson's belief that forced righthandedness for naturally lefthanded individuals does no harm. It hasn't been many decades since most parents around here forced conformity on children, and I've been told that schools continued the insistence on righthandedness begun in the home. Nowadays there seems to be some tendency to make life easier for left-handed people. A few good cameras have been designed to make operation less difficult for left-handers, for instance, with a shutter and release device on both sides, although I know of none that can be purchased with the viewfinder placed where it can be easily used by the left eye.

Buck Couldon's remarks on Trekdom remind me of the fact that Star Trek for the last few months has been totally absent from television listings in the local edition of TV Guide, which covers all stations in Maryland, all those in Washington, D.C., and several in nearby Virginia and Pennsylvania. So several million persons in the populous Baltimore-Washington population cluster haven't been able to watch the series for the first time since Star Trek was releasing new episodes weekly on the network. If ST is also fading from the airwaves in other metropolitan areas, I wonder how long the subfandom will be able to thrive on a diet of only printed Star Trek things on the newsstands, an occasional movie, and the predictions of new television episodes at some unspecified future time?

I think that the hard core fans will remain, Harry. It has been six years since ST has been shown on Sydney TV - and there are still ST fans - my wife is one - and clubs. And only last week local Channel 7 began to show the series again, with I imagine, a good response in letters. - Ron.

John Gregor's letter inspired me to look at the Fanzine Index. I was surprised to find that his pioneering fanzine is apparently over-looked in this publication, which is usually reliable about the earliest fanzines, although it misses a lot of the publications which appeared closer to its date of compilation. It lists three different Science Fiction Reviews, none of which is apparently the first Australian fanzine.

As I said in reply to John's letter, SFR is mentioned in the Molesworth History. - Ron.

A Bertram Chandler,  
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Potts Point,  
NSW 2011.

The correspondence in The Mentor is quite amusing.  
Where do all those letter writers get the idea from that  
I have a thing about naked ladies?

Talking of naked ladies -

I saw something, this year, at Granite Bay that impressed even me as being odd. I was quietly reading one of the novels that I was supposed to be judging for the PEN/Peter Stuyvesant Literary Competition when, out of the corner of my eye, I saw four young people come down to the beach. There was a man, wearing shorts, two girls in beach wraps and the third wench in a frilly bathing costume that was really more of a play suit. She was the only one who did not immediately strip. She went into the sea for a swim, in her hampering clothing. I sneeringly thought, Not one of us.

She came out of the water, removed her wet costume and went clambering, bare-arse naked, over the rocks to find a smooth one on which to sunbathe. And, to judge by the absence of a "phantom bikini", she was a practising nudist.

Since I've mentioned PEN I'll write a few words about their Golden Jubilee Banquet and two day Symposium. At the banquet I was pleased to learn that the majority of the Short List judges saw eye to eye with me regarding which novel should get the \$1,000 prize. It was Blanche d'Alpuget's Turtle Beach. During the Symposium I was pressganged on to two panels, the second one, on the second afternoon, being on Translation. It was a well-balanced panel, with equal numbers of writers and translators and of men and women.

Some time later this year I am supposed to give a talk to PEN on Science Fiction. I shall sort of harp on the fact that International PEN's second president was a science fiction writer - no less a person than H.G. Wells. (Who remembers Wells' mainstream novels?)

Neville J. Angove  
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ACT 2601.

Peter Kells' style reminds me very much of Rob Franklin (from S.A.), and for a moment I thought they were one and the same. On the other hand, Gay Williams' comment on Joseph Nicholas creates in my mind an impression of Nicholas that is totally inconsistent with that created by Napalm In

The Morning - now I regret not attending the con, where I would have been able to form my own impressions, accurate or otherwise. And the only comment I can make about Bert Chandler is that the events of the last year or so will make completing his bibliography even more difficult.

I have never met anyone (apart from Malcolm Fraser, and then I really haven't met him) with the same penchant for distorting the 'facts' as John Alderson, or with the same limited vision as he. His comment that 'farmers leaving their harvesters out in the rain' is not relevant to energy usage typifies the complete lack of understanding on his behalf of the total energy use network. A harvester left in the elements for 11 months of the year will, for a start, not work as efficiently as one that has been cared for correctly (and so will waste energy). More importantly, it will need to be replaced that much sooner (and the figures from the distributors show that Australian farmers replace such items of major equipment much more often than the average). Just how many megajoules of energy does John think it takes to turn iron ore into a combine harvester - energy that is wasted because of the farmer's incompetence?

John makes similar monumental errors in all of his energy conservation bullshit: the steel used for his methane converter probably

takes more energy to manufacture than what the converter would supply in its entire useful life. In fact, all his alternatives to the present centralized system, while being monetarily more economical for many farmers, actually demand a far higher energy usage in the long run (John conveniently forgets the energy

used to manufacture all this plant, for a start, and the need for a centralised society to provide the maintenance facilities - or has John discovered how to manufacture a rectifier out of superphosphate and baling wire?)

But John thinks he is right because it will work for him - provided he has the rest of modern society to provide the technological infrastructure, and provided that he doesn't have to pay the real energy cost of his energy-saving devices! And that is John's real thesis - the energy wastage of modern, centralised society, a problem he mistakenly believes that his half-baked, misinformed, dimwitted diatribes will solve. I knew farmers were paranoid, but Malcolm was, up to now, the only one I believed to be a megalomaniac!

As for the rest of the crap about wheat growing, I still stand by the NSW Wheat-growers Federation who collectively argue that John's 'arguments' on that subject are at best misinformed, because they only apply in a very limited sense, in very restricted circumstances. At worst they have the same value as his comment that the UNFAO doesn't know anything about food and agriculture!

Ralph Silverton  
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Turramurra,  
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Peter A  
Kells'  
story  
reminded  
me very

much of Die Andre Seite (The

other side), the only novel produced by the German artist Alfred Kubin. Something he would probably find to his taste.

As for Lilian Forbin's poem - wasn't it just -er- a little bit purple? "The starry sea's in tranquil sleep." and

"In velvet oceans dark and deep." Rib-tickling, in fact. The humour, I hope, was intentional.

Peter A Kells' grasp of metre astounds me - he should definitely work on his talent - say, for about 10 to 50,000 years? His poem reminded me very much of The Celibate Prince and its predecessor which appeared in Wah-full issues 4 and 5.

The general pitch is aimless void... unobscene, uncerebral and hollow in the veins. On the other hand, I haven't read the previous issues. Michael Hailstone sounds like the greatest thing since crushed nuts, if I can take your correspondents on their word. Nonetheless, the format is very uninspiring.

I wish you had expanded on some of those points concerning the Ditmar nomination scheme. I think you were saying that there was something Rotten in Denmark - but this wasn't entirely clear.

Though John Alderson's thesis was certainly enlightening, I'm not much interested in where the word 'car' comes from. Etymology strikes me as being an intensely specialist preoccupation and therefore, rather dull to the uninquisitive, even those, such as I, who are trying to grasp a variety of foreign languages.

The Advention report was very interesting - great photos (read: ironic). I especially liked that photograph of the sheep in the paddock - breathtaking.

To misquote Peter Kells in a note to one of his poems - the sheep were a metaphoric allusion to the unimaginative mass of ~~the~~ humanity. - Ron.

Bob & Lyn Smith  
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TM 32: Kim Huett of course has a point worth considering in this day and age of sf, fantasy and fast-moving actual space happenings - that we sf fans particularly do need to 'go mad sometime' to keep matters firmly in perspective and liven up the fanzines. I shouldn't have to come out of comfortable GAFIA and do it....

From the fannish point of view I must be going round the twist, because I'm having difficulty reconciling actifan/trufan Marc Ortlieb (after all, anyone who listens to Bob Bloch at a convention must be a trufan...) with his lack of familiarity with Atom's illos! I have admired Rotsler's work for years, and one of my treasured possessions in another timewarp was his The Tattooed Dragon. But... what I really meant, I guess, was: where are the trufan cartoonists of today?

Harry Warner: Ah, but it used to be my experience that fans didn't waffle on about fandom all the time. At least this was my observation at club meetings and the infrequent conventions I attended. (As you can see from the History that appeared in this fanzine, club politics could quite often dominate the scene). Even worse than sf or fan dominated conversation was the extremely limited subject range I encountered in various Sergeant Messes for twenty odd years.

Phew, Michael Black's letter left me with a ringing in the ears and a shaky groping for summat strong to drink. That is serconism at its woefulness, and I suggest a savage injection of that 'controlled insanity' mentioned elsewhere would do him the world of good.

Hmm. Peter Kells reads like a refugee from Arkham House. One could argue that there is very little "taste, discrimination and sensitivity" in much that crowds the shelves today, that science fiction and fantasy are not alone in that respect, but there

are gems to be found, however I doubt we want them all to scan like HPL, CAS or REH. It appears to me that the younger generations have enough problems understanding or communicating a reasonable quality of English.

Leigh Edmonds:

Well, Sergeant Smith was no Career Sergeant Zim but my platoons and I seemed to get along fairly amicably. What surprised me was the low percentage who felt bitter about being dragged into the Army for three crazy months. The bitterness was seen in Tech and Trade NCO's who couldn't see why they had to teach these kids basic training. The F-14 is getting a bit of publicity right now, isn't it, with this Lebanon business? That bit of your letter prompted mixed reactions from my family: Lyn felt that it was the comparisons between those aircraft and the ages they represented that stirred her feelings; to me I guess that forty years difference had left me with the feeling that we are going too damn fast for our good; but Geoffrey (15) presented me with pages of research on the F-14 and the Sidewinder including details of why the F-14's were justified in sweeping their wings back!!

Richard Faulder seems to have this habit of making words look dirty; first "rambling" and now "S\*E\*X"... I hope his bugs revolt and spray him with summat nasty. Actually, if he is familiar with Atom's work I am surprised he doesn't have a more developed sense of humour, and twenty five years ago he would probably have been the target for a Atom illo. (We had a nasty ol' Ted White, so I guess we could have had a nasty ol' Richard Faulder...) Australian Fandom has discovered a million and one things and I don't recall sex ever taking over as the number one priority. I don't accept the present and its successes quite as easily as Richard appears to, and who remembers all the past with joy?? And I'm sorry, but to address me "magnanimously" I have a basic rule: you gotta be older than me.

Very definitely does Terry Jeeves qualify as a true fan artist, and as Lan Laskowski mentions he was well established when I sniffed at the fringes of fandom. I don't think its the length of service that a fan artist may have within fandom that makes him/her a true fan cartoonist: its more the instant rapport that the artist has with Fandom, and that ability to - in cartoon form - say to us: "remember, thou art but a man..."

Most of your readers, Ron, seem to have missed the point with my Reflections that it was firmly tongue-in-cheek, and to be honest my favourite truly fannish cartoon is/was by Bjo...

---

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I expected better of Buck Coulson. Magic is the ancestor of science, not of religion. The original magicians thought they could affect nature. Those who discovered differently found that they could deceive the minds of their fellowmen and so perpetuated their favored status in society. The early religionists saw that one could not put his faith in magicians. Creation was a thing of unbreakable law. These latter entreated the gods to be kind to them, and only tried to influence their actions when they themselves had not wholly escaped the chains of the magicians.

Both magician and the religious learned that one could achieve desirable results by learning and obeying the laws of nature. Unfortunately, science betrays what its ancestry was. The scientist, as human as a priest, ignores his own scientific findings to perpetuate his standing in society, to commercialize the superstitions he teaches. An example of this occurs to me.

The scientific community does not protest loudly when the medical profession installs alien hearts, kidneys, and such in a patient's body - a marvellous trick indeed - but scarcely a repeal of nature's law of rejection.

The internal Mentor artwork 2as really enjoyable too.

Someone tried to break into the building where I live. Called the police. It is amazing. A voice asks for your telephone number. That is all which is done. I'm told that is the routine today, except that the police are supposed to call back. It is weird to view the breakdown of a city. The taxes increase, and the services decrease. Of course, there are good things here too; the weather and the kindness of nature compared to other parts of this country and the world. Some help at last to the elderly, in spite of their ruthless exploitation, usually.



Michael Hailstone  
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I feel bound to answer the critics of my story Out Of The Greenhouse in TM 33. Firstly, Harry Andruschak objects to its likeness to The Black Cloud.

Well, so what? I make neither secret nor apology for the fact that Hoyle's novel was precisely what I had in mind when I thought the story up. I was fascinated by the idea of the global freeze following the blotting out of the sun by the Cloud. However I concede Andruschak's point about the impossibility of keeping the approaching cloud secret for seven years. Hoyle had a much shorter timescale to work with, a mere eighteen months, because his cloud was alive, belting in towards the Sun at 70 kilometres per second, from which speed it managed to grind to a halt by firing bits of itself along its track. My cloud, on the other hand, is the normal lifeless boring kind subject only to the Sun's gravity, therefore has to make a much slower approach in order to

wheel around the Sun, rather than shooting straight off the other side.

Furthermore, by the way, I took the trouble specially to reread The Black Cloud before sitting down to write Out Of The Greenhouse.

It really pains me to have to answer Jean Weber's criticisms again, since I've already seen them in access, in which the story first appeared, and I answered them in a letter to that miserable publication, but because its wretched editor, Peter Rhodes, who earlier had asked me to write a letter of comment on the stories in his zine, seemingly no longer wants anything to do with me, that letter has been consigned to oblivion. So, sigh, here we go again:

Most of Jean's criticisms are based on ignorance on her part of the science involved, or, to be fairer, a little knowledge of certain facts which she hasn't bothered to think through. Here we come to the matter of timescales again. Sure, the sea level drops during glacial epochs, but that takes thousands of years, owing to evaporation from the oceans not being replaced by rivers flowing back into them, because of water being locked up in massive ice-sheets building up on the continents. The scenario in my story is very different: a timescale of a mere six months, in which the Sun's heat is cut off, therefore there can't be much evaporation -- there is neither the time nor the heat needed.

With the Sun's heat cut off the temperature gradient between the equator and the poles would vanish, and with it the global atmospheric circulation, and with that, the winds, therefore the waves, and so the oceans could freeze over once they had cooled down enough. Whether six months would be long enough for that to happen is open to question. The heat contributed by volcanic action would be negligible on a global scale, As for adding oxygen to the atmosphere, I don't think so, but that's that got to do with it, anyway?

In a global freeze it would be technological cultures, rather than primitive ones, that would survive best. Tropical peoples would die out very quickly, the best survivors being those adapted to cold climates, such as the Eskimos. The question here is not one of loss of technology, but loss of heat and food.

Lastly, I didn't "miss the point" about high-technology humans surviving around hot springs; that simply is not the point of the story, which simply concerns itself with what the experience would be like in one particular place -- namely Sydney.

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Leanne Frahn                      Thank you very much for the copy of TM which I've  
272 Slade Point Rd.,    received, despite air strikes, road strikes; postal  
Slade Point,    strikes and the vigilance of the Queensland Border Police.  
Qld.    4741.

The most interesting article I found to be Ron's  
Roost. Being a relative newcomer to the fan scene, I  
enjoy learning what I can of Aust. fan history, and I was particularly  
struck by your reference to a 'Mafia'. Obviously there's something here I'm  
missing -- any chance of further explanation?

[The 'mafia' referred to in Milford  
was in Milford, Usa; Judith Merrill was reputed to be running it. As for any  
Aust one -- we'll see. -- Ron.]

Gay Williams' Adventon report was interesting, as  
it was one of the few conventions I've been to, too, and thus allowed comparison.  
I couldn't agree more with her description of the banquet as a cold smorgasbord,  
and a bad cold smorgasbord at that. The hotel was guilty of lazy affectation.

I do think she was being a mite harsh on Joseph Nicholas. What he said  
was interesting: you could look upon his language as a speech impediment.

I  
found John Alderson's items, both his article and his letter, as interesting as  
I have usually found his others. He's a person who cuts refreshingly through  
the poppycock on a number of issues -- a rare breed now.

I haven't commented on  
the fiction or the poetry -- although you're to be commended on publishing  
them. The more I find out the less I find I know about writing of any sort,  
and most of all I realise I haven't the qualifications to inflict my judgement  
on another writer. There are very few people in Australia whose criticisms  
are worth having at all, and they aren't represented by the typical letter-  
writer.

And a crossword-puzzle! That's novel! Or it will be, until I find I  
can't get it out.

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Peter Kells' The Decadent Antiquarian I re-read  
and enjoyed. You will remember my earlier enthusiasm when  
I read the manuscript. Despite a few stumbles in the  
writing, this story shows an author of much potential,

and what is more it is one of the few Lovecraftian pastiches to successfully capture the mood of the original. The size reduction and redrawing for stencil by Sue Campbell, of Peter Kells' illustration came out very well.

The photos for Gay Williams (well written) Adventure report didn't come across too well: too dark - were the originals colour?).

Yes, not only were they in colour - they were from an instamatic. - Ron.7

Joseph Nicholas seems to have created a somewhat mixed impression - unfavourable in Gay's case!

SMH - 25.8.81

## COLUMN 8

WHILE the search may have ended for the scissors which Premier Jack Lang used to cut the patched-up ribbon opening the Harbour Bridge on March 19, 1932, and which are now claimed by New York and Jersey City (See Page 10), another souvenir of that great day is missing. Where is the historic sword used by Captain Francis Edward de Groot to slash the ribbon unofficially in the first place?

FOR MANY years the sword, sharp and gleaming, was held in the Sydney offices of de Groot's solicitors, Thom Stuart and Co. But an official of the firm said yesterday that they no longer had it. He thought that it might have gone with de Groot's papers to the Mitchell Library or been returned to the fiery captain before he died, as an antique dealer in his native Dublin, in 1969. After a search, the Mitchell Library confirmed that the library has the papers, but not the sword. Is it in Ireland? Has it been lost? Does anyone out there know where it is?

Enjoyed very much Captain Chandler's New Zealand article. (Maybe the sheep weren't trained - perhaps they had little transistors implanted in their heads!). Captain de Groot is one of my favourite historical eccentrics - well, he wasn't a true eccentric really, just a fascist, but it was still a rather colourful deed. The sort that appeals to people's minds but doesn't usually get taught in schools, alas.

Enjoyed Spaced Out again. Might be a good idea to collect these into a book some day.

More fine work from Peter Kells - Dreamer's Quest, while it is a treatment of the traditional faery legend, is written in the 18th Century style of heroic couplets - a style that HPL often favoured for his own poetry. I wonder if there is any truth in reincarnation?

'The Wait' by Lilianne Forbin rather depressed me as in a pessimistic mood I tend to agree with it. Perhaps all intelligent life in the Universe follows our path, and may well destroy itself at the verge of achieving interplanetary travel.

Liked Elaine Crisp's alien costume illo.

Disagree with Andy Andruschak's comment that the approaching disaster would be noticed. The human race has an awesome capacity for ignoring and neglecting the obvious. Besides, publicity now is horrible dependent on media - most people wouldn't know a pig's whistle about astronomy. And people don't really like thinking - or talking - about an approaching doom that they can't do much about. If the politicians didn't make an obvious attempt to "cover up" or order to avoid panic, there would be no reason that many people would know at all until the weather became strikingly abnormal. Even then there might be media propaganda that the strange conditions were caused by pollution. (The politicians would probably not wish to contact other groups if they survived, for the simple reason the other groups might be either

violently resentful, or want the politicians' luxuries!) Possibly, too, people might panic for a few days when they realised that disaster was approaching - and then simply calm down and ignore the situation until it affected them personally. We are very good at that.

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I was interested by John J Alderson's etymological article. In it, he stated that the origins of the alphabet are shrouded in mystery. But I contend that this 'mystery' exists only if one is in the habit (not to suggest that

Mr Alderson is) of excluding what Charles Fort called 'damned facts'. This term applies to data which is ignored or relegated to the unembarrassing limbo of mouldering filing cabinets because said data cannot be fitted into any existing scientific concept or theory. Similarly, we have what may be termed 'damned books'. One such is 'Atlantis - the Antediluvian World' by Ignatius Donnelly. It was published in 1882 and has been unjustly ridiculed by 'science' ever since. If only people would read that book with an open mind, then the apparent mystery of the alphabet's origin would disappear. The alphabet of phonetic symbols, in fact, originated on lost Atlantis which once existed in the area of the present-day submarine Dolphin Ridge, whence emerge the Azores. As with electronics, so with the alphabet - i.e. as the early days of electronics were characterised by bulky and complex vacuum tubes which later were replaced by slim concise transistors, - so did the phonetic alphabet evolve from archaic complexity to it's present simplicity. To get the idea of how complex and time-consuming the Atlantean writing probably was, one need only look at the Mayan alphabet, for Central America was an Atlantean colony. (So also was aeon-weighted Egypt an Atlantean colony - indeed that great and ancient empire was the vehicle whereby all the Arts of Civilization were diffused throughout the world). Writing, when first developed on Atlantis, was exclusively heratic but later the complex forms became simplified when writing came to be used for secular and commercial purposes.

The rough sketch I sent in illustrating the final scene of Antiquarian was admirably enhanced by Sue Campbell. The harsher chiaroscuro and silhouetted figure are far more dramatic and mysterious than those of my original drawing.

After perusing issues 32 & 33 of TM I note that there is a curious conspicuousness of absence of both Queensland fans (besides me) and zines. I wonder why this is so.

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Lastly we have some comments excised from other loccers:

Clive Warnell Brooks, Jr: I found your latest inventions of substitutes for film and backing sheets somewhat confusing, but then I never use either with the stencils for my Rex Rotary. The platen on my typer is quite hard enough already, and I have never used film. The Rex stencils do not seem to clog the keys at all, instead the punched-out material appears as a dandruff-like substance which falls into the typer, where it seems to do no harm. I have found that the expensive Rex paper clamps, which are a sort of heavy synthetic foam material, can be made by hand from the stuff used on the bottom of some soft-sole shoes. Scraps of this large enough for the purpose can usually be gotten from shoe repair shops.

I would quite agree with Bob Smith that Arthur Thomson is a far greater fan cartoonist than Rotsler, but in terms of talent and volume of output, I would say that Alexis Gilliland is quite in the same league with ATom.

Joseph Hanna-Rivero: The article on the Australian Fanzine Explosion (TM 26) was quite interesting, although I was left in confusion after reading that TM 23 was published in Sept.'73 and TM 24 in March '78. Does this mean there was a 5 year gap between both issues? /Yes, there was, though I was publishing the odd issue of other zines. - Ron./

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Also heard from :- Bruce Weston, Tracy Adamczyk, Kim Huett & Burt Libe.