
THE MENTOR

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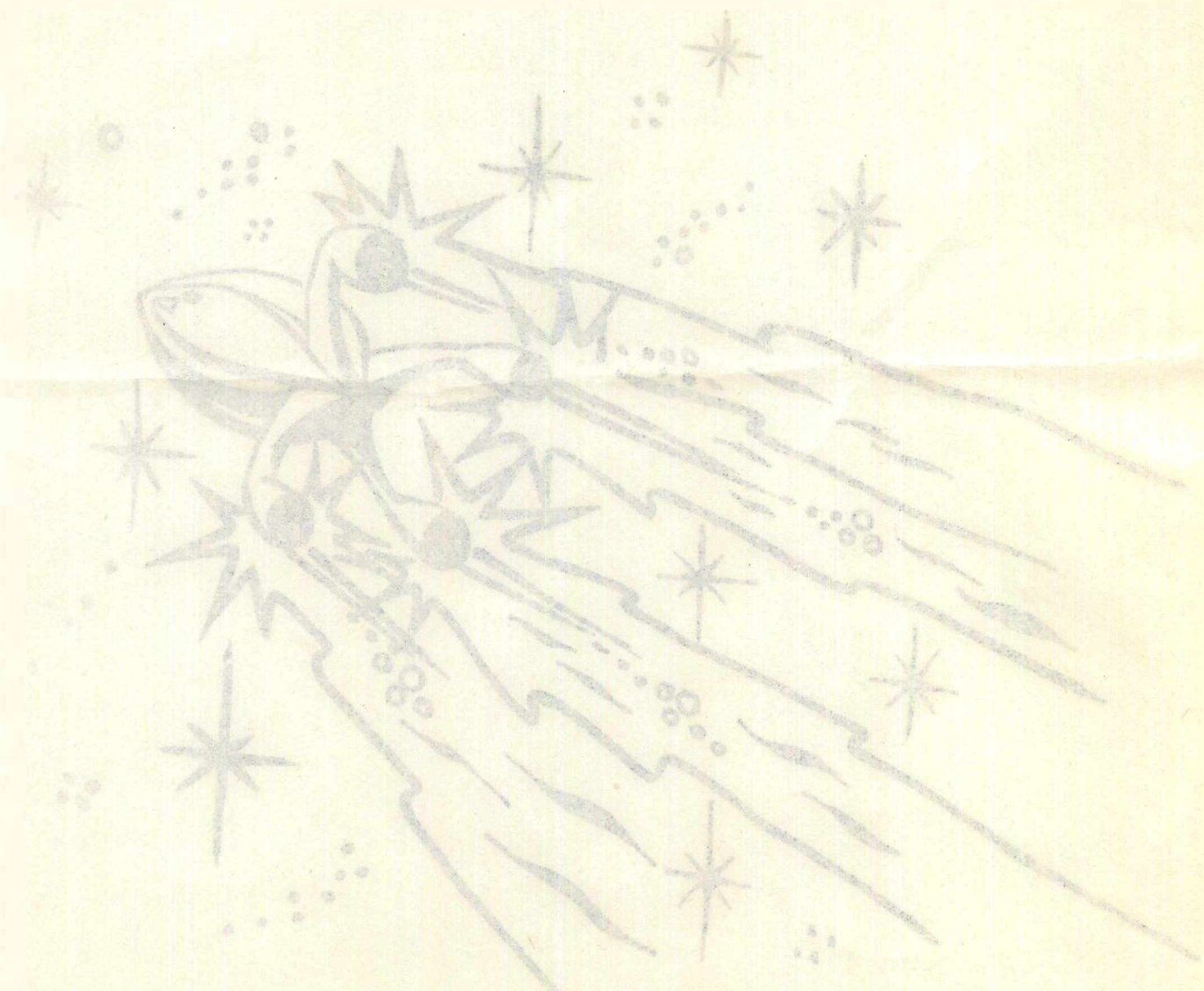
DECEMBER, 1981.



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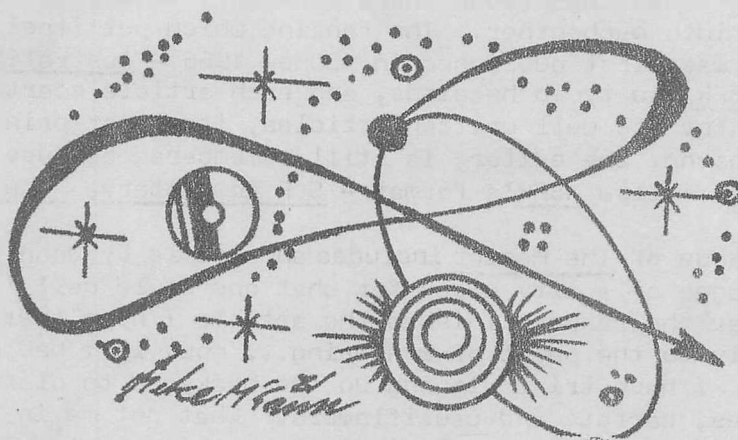
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An R & S Publication.



RON'S

ROOST.

It can be said, without too much contradiction, that fanzines published in Australia can trace their basic contents and layout back to two fanzines.

Satūna/Gryphoe was published by John Foyster between February, 1964 and June, 1965. To quote from The Australian Fanzine Explosion: "The Gryphen was a genzine, though with a notable lack of sf orientated material." Nearly all fannish fanzines published since then have followed Gryphen's format, even to the paper colour used, etc. One of the latest zines from this stable is Irwin Hirsh's Sikander; several years before that, David Grigg's Fanarchist and Leigh Edmond's Rataplan. Gryphen gave me the impetus to bring the first issue of The Mentor out.

Gryphen's headings (when there were any) tended to be hand-drawn, and the articles ran into each other. The fanzine which put itself up for all others to follow was first published in June, 1966 - Australian Science Fiction Review (ASFR). ASFR had typed headings, and each article started on a new page. It is remembered for its well written articles, its clear print and its crisp layout. John Bangsund, the editor, is still remembered because of it, overseas. The fanzines which follow ASFR's format - S F Commentary, The Mentor, and many others.

This issue of The Mentor includes an article by John Alderson on utilising the advantages of a city block for what one could call 'alternate' living. In this case after the reader finished the article I hope that it will have made you think, if only to the point of wondering... now, if I had the money (and inclination).... I have tried digging up the backyard to plant vegetables - potatoes, tomatoes, carrots and cauliflowers. What got me in the end was the weeds, and the amount of time spent digging the things out. And don't tell me that laying down newspapers is any good - they just blow away in any good wind. And, of course if you lay down plastic sheet - the snails and slugs just love to hide under it; not mentioning red-backs.

Hope you like it - and keep those letters coming!

-----oOo-----

THE BIO-DYNAMIC HOUSE AND GARDEN

BY JOHN J. ALDERSON.

The lament of a reader recently that he did not live on a farm and was thus debarred from using alternative energy forms etc. etc. prompted me to start thinking what could be done with an ordinary city block. Most of these are the traditional one sixth of an acre, and about half of this is usually given over to growing vegetables, and sometimes some fruit. Many people simply do grow all their vegetables in their back yards without any fancy thinking. That is they plan all their garden beds nicely, never mix carrots with their cabbages, and only ever use two dimensions. They do not usually use either a glasshouse or a fish pond.

First consider some facts and then do some thinking.

The sun shines everywhere, even in Melbourne. It will heat any house (indeed any building) and it can be used to cool the same. It will provide most, if not all, the hot water needed.

If you have a septic tank you may be able to provide your own gas. These small units are not terribly reliable but conversion is very cheap and if the thing fails it won't send you broke. It consists largely of making the tank airtight, heightening the effluent outlet and spudding in a gas outlet. (Actually they have one, that tall pipe).

Under normal gardening a household's entire vegetable needs can be met from a backyard. It may be of interest that the limit one man can handle of intensive gardening is a quarter acre and this would provide a good living. As will also two hundred square feet of glasshouse.

The production from a given area is limited mostly by one's imagination and to some extent by one's time.

Finally, let there be no worry about the soil. There is enough junk produced in a modern city to compost the entire area three feet deep in one year - newspapers, ~~magazines~~, cartons, wrappings, packing, worn-out socks, dead cats, leaves, etc. Bare rock will not stop a gardener, much less chappies like ourselves.

We'll start by heating and cooling the house. Ideally the house should be built on a slope with a northern aspect. A glasshouse is built at the bottom and the hot air used to heat the house from beneath. A cool-house is built at the top and the cool air allowed to percolate down from the ceiling, a series of simple vents altering the airflows according to the seasons. Houses are not usually ideal as they are usually already built and not constructed for solar heating. They have to be refitted and every house is its own problem.

but any house can be refitted and hopefully at not too great a cost.

There are three main ways of attacking this problem of heating the house. The Trombe-Michel house has masses of heat-banks in the living room and I think we may safely skip this "heavyweight solution". The Melbourne Reaction House has the air circulating directly from the heat or cooling sources in the actual living area. It has the disadvantage of the air sometimes being excessively humid and causing condensation etc. The other type of house, the Kubota Model has an air-tight lining and the air circulates between this and the walls, roof and floor. In refitting old houses variations of one or the other model is used, or a mixture of both. In both cases the house has a vertical layer of insulation sunk three feet into the ground all around it, including the glasshouse but excluding the cool house. The earth then acts as a heat bank. All chinks and holes are blocked up, including the pervious ventilators. All south windows are double glazed and made so they will not open. Southern doors must be insulated and if possible, not used. The roof is insulated. The insulation of the walls, whilst desirable, is not necessary except in extreme cases. The house now, with no more work, should halve the heating bills.

The glasshouse is attached to the north side. One twelve by six feet would be the maximum size unless you have no back yard to grow food. In extreme cases the glazing may have to be just a layer of glass a few inches out from the wall, and with no plants. In this case the hot air goes straight into the house. A modification of the Melbourne house has a false wall and the hot air from behind this goes directly into the house. Ideally the hot air should be fed into the rooms from the bottom as it naturally rises, but this is frequently impractical. The air usually has to be taken over the ceiling, down the south walls, under the floor and up the north walls and out through vents at the top of the greenhouse. In summer the vents are arranged so that the glasshouse draws cool air from the cool house, through the house and out through the top vents. The system can still be used quite successfully with both glasshouse and cool house on the flat roof of a house. Those who live in a flat (and own it) can still heat and cool their flats - you may have to be a genius, but what odds.

The cool house consists of a slatted area, covered with creepers, chock-a-block with plants over a tank of water, and the whole regularly watered. An ideal place is on the top of the house.

Now, I've spent a fair bit of space in an article on growing food on heating and cooling the house. This is a technical business and all I'm doing is telling you it can be done. The main reason for mentioning the subject at length is that the glasshouse and the cool house can grow enormous quantities of food. Oh, and of course, a solar water service: a cheap one can be made by winding black poly-pipe between two pieces of black-painted corrugated iron, putting the lot in an insulated box with a glass lid and connecting it up like the five hundred dollar efforts. It is not as efficient, so make it bigger. A more efficient one can be made by embedding poly-pipe in asphalt (say part of a garden path where there is plenty of sun).

To the glasshouse. It should have a tank for water running under at least one side. Its temperature should be about 90 deg.F. It will grow vast quantities of water plants (tropical) such as water chestnut and various lilies, etc. Tropical food plants that grow in water are many, and your local nurseryman will know nothing about them. However, two cubic yards of water will produce hundredweights of the stuff. They need some light, so leave space. Seeds and cuttings for the garden can be grown on top of the tank. A deeper bed of soil goes above this and, as many of the possible glasshouse plants are tubers, it

needs to be deep. Sweet potato is a case in point, so are yams. The creepers grow up the walls of the glasshouse. Uprights like pawpaw need height and understory plants can grow beneath them. Cram stuff into that glasshouse. But remember there is not much future in growing cabbages in a glasshouse.

The cool house can be a modest affair or one can really go to town. Construction wise it is cheap and simple - a basic structure covered with slats or wire netting, including the top. But it should include a tank as a heat bank (a cool one, of course). The size of this depends on the adventurous nature one possesses. The deeper it is the better, and if it is sunk into the ground, that's to the good. A small one could be half a yard deep, and about half the area of the cool house, possibly a hole dug in the ground and lined with plastic sheeting, or it could be five yards deep and the size of a small dam, with most of the exterior covered, of course, except for a portion for ducks to swim on. You then stock it with yabbies, mussels, fish, frogs and so forth. The banks outside should be shelving and plantings made which will attract fish food - insects mainly, though fish eat fruit and berries and even nuts such as acorns.

Back to the cool house. This should contain a good sized worm box (worms prefer temperatures between 46 and 48 deg.F., and if the worms fall out and into the water the fish will eat them. Worms eat compost, manure and vegetable matter and are in turn eaten by fish, chooks, ducks and human beings ("worm-burgers" are available in the U.K., now). They also do no end of good in the garden. Plants which go in the cool house are those which prefer cold weather. The exterior is covered with creepers and climbers like the choko, passionfruit, grape vines, and even things like peas, beans, cucumbers etc. In fact don't hesitate to grow two lots of stuff, or even three; that is, utilising walls and roofs. Certainly mix up the creepers, as legumes help other vines. The secret is to plan for a self-sustaining and highly varied ecology. It may even be advisable to have the cool house under a tree.

Mushrooms require a temperature of about 62 deg.F and will grow in complete darkness. They grow in compost with a casing of soil. Commercially they are grown in boxes of drawers and we could grow them under the house or wherever the temperature is right. The spent compost can then be fed to the worms. When the worms have finished with it, it goes on the garden as worm casts (about five dollars per kilo to buy!)

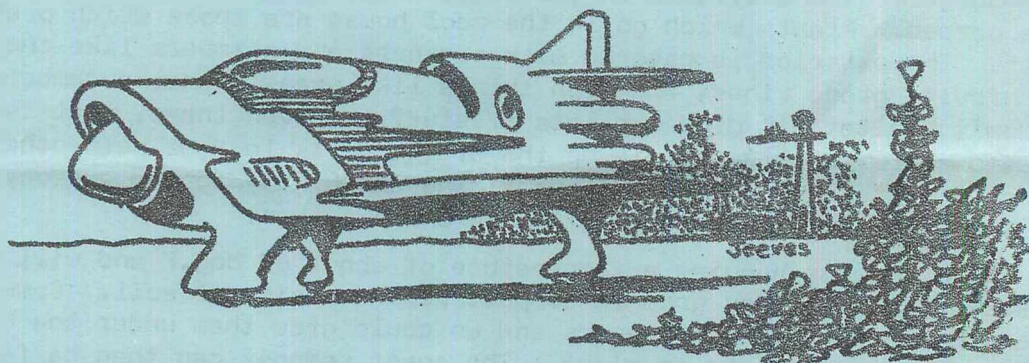
Now we at last come to the garden. There is a bit of philosophy needed to understand what we are going to do. Most gardens are two dimensional. Ours is going to be four dimensional. That is, we are going to grow up and down as well as on the surface, and we are going to grow all the time and not just in batches. We are also going to use "edge harmonics". Briefly, when one has a clump of plants, the centre plants do not yield as well as the outside ones. So we don't plant in solid blocks or in straight lines. If ever you've looked at a herb garden and wondered about its apparent lack of rhyme and reason, you'll still be lost in a Permaculture Garden. Why, we don't even have paths, except by force of circumstance. Then again, whilst cabbages, for example, have to be a foot or so apart, this is not to say that they won't tolerate a few beans between them; in fact they'll do each other good. There is a whole science of companion plants. We'll have to study it.

The above also applies to fruit trees. We can fit in a whole range of dwarf varieties, remembering, of course, that fruit trees don't like their roots disturbed - so don't plant spuds under them. However, they can be crammed together in rows, with space between rows for vegetables. On the other hand, the potatoes are best grown in a large box. Place it, by all means, under a fruit

tree. Lay the seed potatoes on the soil, cover with a foot of straw, and water etc. in the usual way. To pick the spuds, fold up the straw, take what tubers you need for dinner, and replace the straw. Providing the small potatoes are left, those plants will actually yield for years - no digging either! The only vegetables which worry the fruit trees would be such things as carrots and parsnips, which grow into the ground. Beets, onions etc. grow on the ground.

The fruit trees can actually be used as a trellis, but remember that a fruit tree will not hold a hundredweight of fruit and a similiar weight of pumpkins at the same time. However, legumes are excellent. Other plants which are excellent under fruit trees are fennel, comfrey, orris, nastursion and garlic. Strong smelling plants actually keep down a lot of fruit tree pests. Calendula is good to , and perhaps nettles.

It is time we extended our vegetable range. The petals of calendula (marigold) are splendid indesserts and soups and is good for the heart. Nettles are a splendid pot herb (they can also be eaten raw) and are a good blood tonic. Comfrey is a fine vegetable. Nastursion is good in salads. All parts of the dook are edible and good. So with many weeds. Many were formerly cultivated. Incid-



ently, a good dousing with water renders nettle harmless and it is a good companion plant for strawberries.

The garden should be a mass of trellises. Many vegetables, and some fruits, are climbers. Let them climb up. A pumpkin which covers twenty square feet of ground can just as easily be grown vertically, and shelter other plants as well. Beans and peas can use the same trellis, and peas in particular can be grown so they are reaching maturity with the first frosts and so give some little protection to the pumpkin. The trellises should be zigzagged. Sweet-corn can be grown in their protection underneath brussels sprouts.

Consider this now: a carrot grows underground. A beetroot grows on the ground. A cabbage grows up to two feet high, sweet-corn up to five feet and beans will climb up the sweet-corn - and none of them competes with the other. If they were all planted together the cabbage would be harvested long before the sweet-corn was flowering and the beans would be done before the corn was ripe, and at least another crop of cabbages could be grown before the carrots and red beets were ready. Also, a crop of radish could be taken off before any of the others were more than a few inches high. In fact, radish should be planted between other plants and largely eaten by the gardener as he works. Similiarly, most plants will be harvested long before egg plant and capsicum are ready.

So we have plants yielding from a foot below the soil surface to five feet above it. Can we top that? Yes, but of course. A grape vine will grow a score of feet above the ground with no worry at all. So, up with a good sturdy trellis and roof the garden in with grape vines. A word has to be said about layout. Begin at the kitchen door with the most used plants - the herb garden, spreading out to the least visited part of the garden being the farthest. One does not, for example, go and pick a pumpkin every meal.

One thing should be evident about this garden. Once established, planting and harvesting goes on all the time in the same area. There is virtually no cultivation in the form of digging. A good garden soil should not need digging. But it has to be mulched heavily. There is considerable difference of opinion as to whether the rubbish of the garden (that is, old plants, weeds, etc.) should be composted or applied directly as mulch. But with the mushroom and earth worm cycle, a certain amount must be composted. Besides, grab all the organic material you can - keep Australia beautiful by sweeping up the leaves in the street, by mowing the nature strip, by collecting all the horse manure dropped by the police horses, and compost it. The best method for mushroom is anaerobic composting using the modern plastic compost makers. They are also fast, which is a point, and don't take up much room.

If, of course, the back yard was solid rock, or a close approximation thereof, or covered with a luxuriant growth of couch grass or its relatives, one must have a fair bit of compost to start with. In the first case the compost is laid on the rock or whatever, several inches thick and a mulch of straw or what-have-you about eight inches thick put on top. The plants are planted in the compost. In the latter case, cover the entire area with a goodly layer of newspapers, old line or the like, add a thin layer of compost and then the mulch as before. Hopefully the weeds will be smothered.

Now we have a veritable jungle of fruit and vegetables, we have our fish pond partly under the cool house with water cress and taro and so forth, with ducks swimming on it - the fish thrive on their manure! But, they certainly need a mud pool; ten inches of mud and several inches of water, and this should have an inlet into the pool. Don't worry if the water in the latter is like soup, fish like it that way. Incidentally, they'll need the water oxygenated. Water pouring into a large pipe through a perforated grid will do that. But we can add to this.

Ducks behave themselves reasonably well in a garden, but chooks do not, and so have to be imprisoned. So do rabbits and guinea pigs. The latter are good eating. Half a dozen hens should be plenty and this allows a setting of eggs every now and then to be grown into meat birds. The pen doesn't have to be very large, about three square feet per bird. The pen is raised with a slatted floor so that the manure can be easily collected and composted. Nor do they need much head room. The rabbit hutches can be placed on top. These usually have netting floors, and if this is above a sloping floor the manure (rabbits are like sheep, they produce a ready-made pellet) will roll off and down to the ground. The only rabbits to be contemplated would be the so called fancy breeds; big rabbits with good fur which will command a premium price. Not many pair are needed to supply a couple of rabbits per week. I can speak from sad experience that rabbits will eat any vegetable grown by man excepting of broad beans. Chooks and guinea pigs are also pretty well as easily fed, but the chooks will need some animal protein as well. Their natural food is fruits, berries, roots and grubs. In nature they did not eat much grain, and it isn't necessary. They're one of the reasons for the earth worms. The garden, on the other hand, can use their manure. Lucerne (it is eaten by humans), comfrey,

silver beet, etc, will feed the birds and animals.

Pigeons can be housed on top of a pole above everything else. There is the difficulty of losing them to other mobs, but then equally, there is the possibility of your flock growing from outside sources.

The chook pen and the rabbit hutches will need good ventilation. On top of these can go a couple or three bee hives. These prefer a temperature of about 75 deg.F. If the temperature alters, the bees adjust the temperature, but they fuel their climatic control with honey. The heat from the chooks will be far cheaper. Bee boxes are not usually insulated, but they ought to be.

In this set-up we should be using some three hundred different species. Under this sort of cultivation, an ordinary suburban block will supply all the fruit and vegetables and herbs needed for health. It will also supply a reasonable amount of wine or mead, or even beer, and a whole range of tisanes. It will supply honey, eggs (duck and hen and pigeon), meat. (duck, chicken, pigeon, rabbit, guinea pig), fish (and yabbies and mussels), and a number of medicinal herbs. Also, as by-products, rabbit and guinea pig skins, feathers and wax, and a host of things, depending on one's imagination. This is only a beginning.

When I think what can be done, even on a city block, it amazes me that we ever allowed ourselves to become dependent on others for our food. It made us economically and socially vulnerable and as a result we have been cruelly exploited. As the purchase of our food accounts for about half our income, by growing our own thus, we would need to work but half the hours we do now, that is, for someone else. That such a garden is going to take a lot of time goes without saying. That it will make a family very very independent hardly needs to be stated. That we ought to be more independent is one of those humble opinions held by the author.

It may be of interest that certain buildings in Europe, built last century and covering entire city blocks (that is, the area bounded by four streets) have actually been reretrofitted in a similar way. The sunny side is glazed to within a few feet of the ground - the glaze being only a few inches out from the wall. The entire roof is glazed. Under the roof glazing, vegetable gardens have been established. Hot air is drawn down the hofs (light-wells) and the entire building heated and cooled. Those buildings are now self-sufficient for much of their fuel, for all of their heating. Their water and air are now closed systems (and thus not poisoned by the outside atmosphere) and they are also self-sufficient for a lot of their food. The science fiction dream of closed and domed cities is almost realised, with units of more practical size and of economic dimensions. These retrofit jobs are economic propositions and done without shifting the tenants. These techniques will revolutionise city living - but I cannot but deplore the trend towards nudity. It is lewd and disgusting and unhygienic and very damaging to wool-growers - and some of my best friends are wool-growers.

- John J. Alderson.

GRIMESISH GRUMBERLINGS.

A COLUMN BY A. BERTRAM CHANDLER.

UP, UP AND AWAY

Somehow, over the years, the idea has gotten around that I have a thing about airships. Now and again kind friends, chief among whom is Keith Curtis, present me with books, either factual or fictional, in which dirigibles play a major part. The latest of such gifts, from Keith, was Skyship, by John Brosnan. Despite its having been alleged to be well researched I found it both disappointing and annoying.

The cover, depicting the crippled Phoenix (that was the ship's name) drifting, at relatively low altitude, through rather than over New York was remarkably uninspired. Those skyscrapers, like matchboxes standing on end, could have been in almost any city in the world. Oh, if you look very carefully you can find the Chrysler Building but the Empire State building (preferably with King Kong clinging to its upper storeys and reaching out a huge paw to swat the aerial intruder) would, at the very first glance, have set the scene. And it would have taken no liberties with the story as Phoenix did foul the Empire State Building during her passage over and through New York.

But why did I find the book annoying?

Quite some time ago Robert Heinlein said, "Only people who know ships can write about spaceships convincingly." I'll take this one stage further and say "Only people who know the principles involved in the handling of surface ships know the principles involved in the handling of airships." It has been said by people who have been making feasibility studies that the personnel for airships, when they make their long overdue return to the world's skies, will be recruited from the sea services rather than from the civil and military air services.

But how did Mr. Brosnan annoy me?

He should have pleased me by having a naked blonde clambering over the envelope of the huge dirigible when she was over the mid Atlantic. But the lady in question was such a dim bitch that I just couldn't give a damn about what she was or was not wearing. Come to that, I should not have turned a hair if

the equally dim hero had plunged to a watery grave while attempting to rescue. In fact the only character in the whole sorry mess whom I was prepared to like was Herr Dressler, the German zeppelin designer. (It was a great pity that he was not among the survivors of the disaster.)

Well, I'll summarise madly. Phoenix, on her maiden voyage, was returning from England to the U.S.A. Ill-disposed persons sabotaged both her nuclear power plant and the computers which constituted a sort of super autopilot, looking after trim and altitude as well as steering. Helpless in the grip of a gale she blew towards New York.

But, there was an auxiliary power plant so that lights and other essential services could be maintained. This plant also provided power to actuate the rudder and other control surfaces. Using these, the airship's captain was able either to avoid skyscrapers or to reduce contact to no worse than a heavy scrape.

And why am I bitching about that?

Because a control surface, no matter how much you wiggle it up and down or from side to side, is utterly useless unless a fluid medium such as water or air is flowing past it. An engineless airship is no more than a free balloon. Unless she is making way through the air she can not be steered.

A surface ship making her way up river can be used as an analogy. She suffers a main engine breakdown but still has power for her steering engine - but her rudder is utterly useless. She will just go where the current takes her. There is, however, a way to bring her under partial control. In such circumstances an anchor would be dropped, to act as a brake. But suppose that, well downstream, there is a wharf at which the ship might lie alongside until repairs are made. Then the anchor may be weighed until it is just on the bottom. The ship will resume her sternward drift but not as fast as the current. Water will be flowing past her rudder. She can be steered. With a little bit of luck she will fetch up alongside that wharf. Ideally, of course, the river bottom should be soft mud, with no rocks on which the anchor could catch.

The first successful attempt to convert a free balloon into a dirigible with limited powers of maneuver made use of the above technique, which is called dredging. Prior to then people had been fitting balloons with all sorts of sails and rudders - which were, of course, quite useless. And then the Swedish explorer and balloonist Salomon Andr   realised that such control surfaces would always be useless unless the air were able to exert pressure upon them. He had to have something that functioned as does the keel of a sailing craft. His "something" was draglines, which decreased the speed of his balloon over the ground so that she was not travelling as fast as the wind that carried her. In 1897 he made an ambitious attempt to reach the North Pole by balloon. It seems that his draglines functioned well enough when they were trailing through the sea but, when he was over the ice, they must have fouled on hummocks and in crevasses.

Over thirty years later his frozen body, with the bodies of his two companions, was recovered.

It might be argued that Dr. Solomon Andrews' Aereon, flown successfully in 1865, was a free balloon - but she most certainly was not. She was a true dirigible, capable of flying against the wind whereas Andr  e's ship could go only with the wind, with limited power of deviation to left or right. The Aereon, one might say, was to Graf Zeppelin as a sailing yacht is to Queen Elizabeth II. Unlike a sailing yacht, however, she could never be becalmed. She made her own wind to act upon her control surfaces. I've used the idea of the Andrews Airship in more than one story so I'll not go into the principles involved at any great length.

It all boiled down to a juggling of positive and negative buoyancy. The flight started with positive buoyancy and weight aft. She did not lift vertically but glided up at an angle. When she reached her ceiling she was trimmed so as to be down by the head and gas was valved. She glided downward. Dumping of ballast and a shifting of moveable weight - the crew - resulted in another upward glide. The division between the cigar-shaped gas cells - three, in one model - functioned as does the keel of a sailing craft. And, as long as she was making way through the air, her control surfaces functioned.

And so, in 1865 and 1897, those two aeronauts with the remarkably similar names realised that a flow of air around control surfaces was essential. It is a great pity that so many Twentieth Century writers - Mr. Brosnan is by no means the only offender - have yet to grasp this.

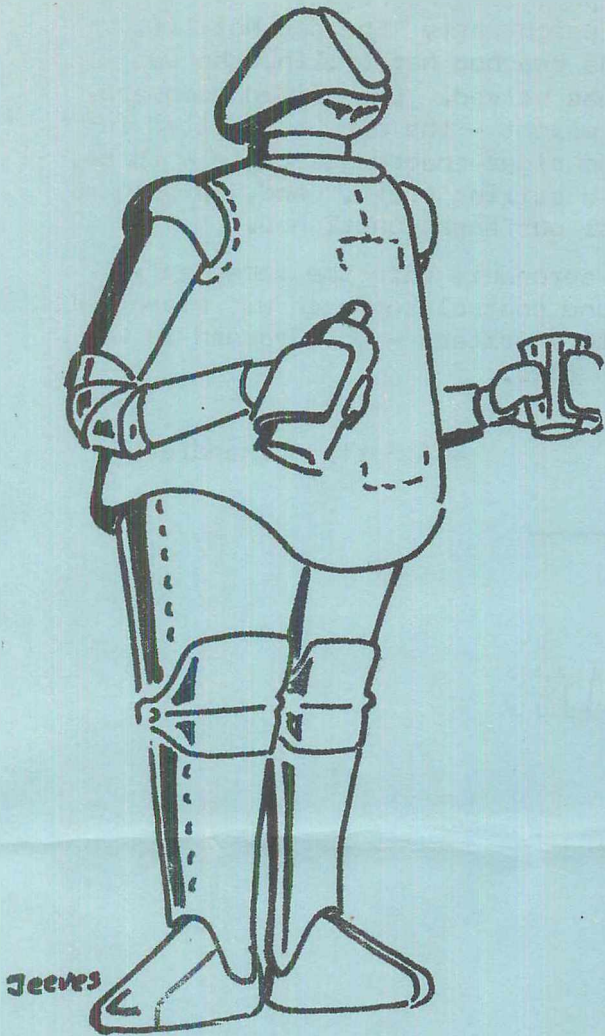
- A Bertram Chandler.

—ooOoo—

DRAGONFLY / ALTERED STATES

unsheathed
from water
 into
 storming light
ascent of reed, from
 world to world
and
somewhere
on drifting air
there is always memory,
the lure of ooze,
a yearning for
dark silences
and cool
fecal
slime.

- Andrew Darlington.



"GUARANTEED SERVICE"

BY SUSAN CLARKE

Yes, I know. I feel ill. My stomach is swimming somewhere alongside my head and the world lacks any stability at all, but please may I get up?

The 'phone's been ringing for the last two hours and it's vibrating right through my head to the base of my skull. I think it's residing there now. Please, just let me take it off the hook... or smash it into a thousand pieces!

Junior's out on the lawn. He's bleeding to death from head wounds received whilst playing cowboys and indians with his dad's camping hatchet. Let me call the ambulance or funeral directors. I don't care which. His screams are making the phone seem like a tiny murmur in the day's noise.

I can see smoke in the air. Hell, the washing machine's fused again, and the blanket I had in the laundry is smouldering -- the newspapers that Junior's been collecting are in there and if the automatic fire alarm doesn't go off soon, we'll all burn to death.

All? Well, I will.

Where the heck's my husband when I need him? I've got something I want to tell him and the Acme Housebot Company. They can take their literal-minded 'bots and place them in a rather uncomfortable and personal place where I hope they'll multiply painfully. The smoke's becoming so dense now I can hardly breathe. At least Junior's stopped screaming. He's probably dead. The 'phone may be ringing. I don't know. The ringing in my head hasn't stopped at all.

And you just sit there with a vacant metallic face and recite your instructions.

Yes, I know. "I must stay in bed and under no circumstances must I get up." But please -- just this once -- will you let me be?

REFLECTIONS OF A FRINGE FAN III

BY BOB SMITH

Wife, son, eight persian (cats) and two Afghan (dogs) watched in morbid fascination as the greybeard ex-faaan paced restlessly between his pine trees, obviously muttering to himself, obviously deeply disturbed about something.

The male Afghan turned to his mate, and shook his shaggy head in bewilderment. "I can't stand much more of this unhuman behaviour by the Master," it rumbled. "I'm gonna go bury a bone to retain my own sense of sanity..."

My son, in the rather frank, direct manner of the young, enquired of his Mother if Dad had finally flipped his lid.

"No..." replied Mum, in a tone of voice absolutely devoid of any compassion for the poor tormented being pacing below in the garden. "Your Dad is going through a kind of science fictional future shock, or perhaps it should be called a form of fannish fermentation..." (Two of the persians snorted, which is the closest they could come to a guffaw).

Well, perhaps Mum was right. I remember reading in Toffler's Future Shock back there when it was "in" to read Toffler that the music of Mozart is being played faster than it was in the Eighteenth Century, and how that really shook me, because I discovered Mozart before I discovered science fiction, and that seemed an incredible invasion of my personal rapport with that composer... Something else that was niggling at my mind was the realisation that whole generations were growing up in a world where the TV had always been there, and was anybody really buying and reading the enormous quantities of science fiction crammed on the shelves...?

Did it begin some years back when I wandered into Abbey's Bookshop in George Street, trying hard to steer myself away from the sf section, and screaming to a halt alongside a shelf of stately hardcovers because the corner of my eye had caught the magical name ASIMOV on a book that must have been at least three inches thick... It appeared to be an autobiography of the Good Doctor's early life, and for some reason I found this incredibly funny. Who, I asked myself, was this hefty tome meant for? Surely not us sf fans who had, as it were, growed up with Asimov and his robots, his articles, his feuds with Arthur C. Clarke, his fun at conventions? Was it aimed at the great mass of mundania out there filling Sydney's streets? Would anyone ever buy it...?

Did it begin when a girl in the office confided that she was "in to science fiction and just loved Isaac Asimov..."? Was the thin edge of the wedge

the discovery of the ABC's radio adaptation of the Foundation Trilogy on weekday nights at 9, an eager settling down to listen but only to be irritated by the BBC Radiophonic noises and then actually finding the voices almost boring ... Was the writing on the wall when the Financial Review ran an article on Asimov's Three Laws of Robotics? Did the final crunch come when the new series of Buck Rogers in the 25th Century had an "Admiral Asimov" forever being out-thunked by an incredibly vain robot? ("But... it doesn't look like a robot," whined a male in the office).

Just as my male Afghan had to go bury a bone to retain his sense of what should be, I hurried off to my bookshelves to loose myself in the old Asimov robot yarns, calmed myself with the services of Simak's dear old Jenkins, and re-anchored my sense of humour with Lewis Padgett's The Proud Robot.

And every second book on sf I pick up seems to have a foreword by Isaac Asimov... (On the other hand, the latest Science Digest has a chap in the letter column being grammatically nasty about Isaac...) I am not really picking on the Good Doctor, of course, but merely showing how the line between

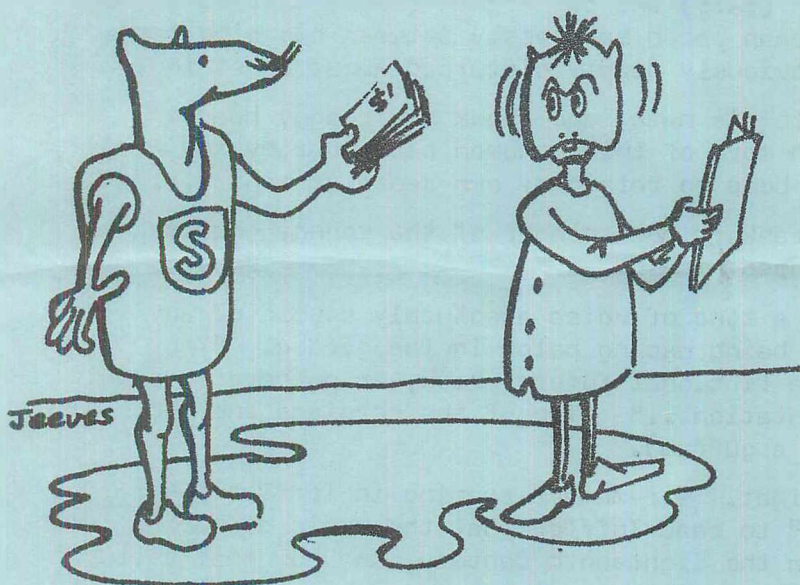
sf and fandom was almost non-existent in those days when I was what is laughingly termed a "fringe fan"... A slight swing the other side of that line and one was well and truly in the realm of FIAWOL... Which brings me to the reasons for my two and four legged family's lack of concern at my mumblings in the mulga.

I had been reading the lettercol of The Mentor 32, and the full and dreadful realisation of what Marc Ortlieb was saying was beginning to sound the drums of warning in my fannish faculties. Atom a vague legend? Humour difficult to find in the fanzines? (Is it any wonder

I dive back into the fanzines of yesteryear?) As I paced beneath my pine trees my mind tried to grasp the notion of a Fandom without the fannish humour of Atom covers and Atom illos scattered throughout fanzine pages. (At this point the ghostly shape of a young John Foyster whispered in my ear: "Better not push your sanity too far by enquiring about other vague legends...")

And so I tramped back up my garden, reflecting that the ancient and moving phrase "It is a proud and lonely thing to be a fan" has kinda taken on a different meaning in the second half of the 20th Century. Are Fans still Slans? I asked myself.

Of course fannish humour doesn't need the trappings of Foo, Ghu, Roscoe, Beanies, etc., but I suggest that it does still need the kind of talent that Atom's honest and often ego-bursting cartoons provided. Asimov and Atom... it seems to me that I could think of almost any Pro and Fan name, and write something similar to show how thin that line was back in the musty past. Why, even Tolkien fans had a sense of humour back in those days..... - Bob Smith.



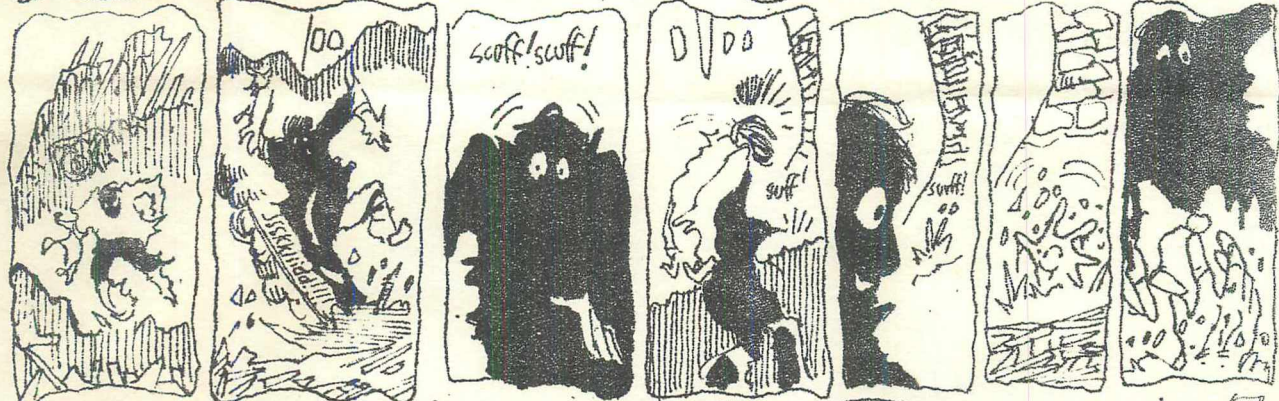
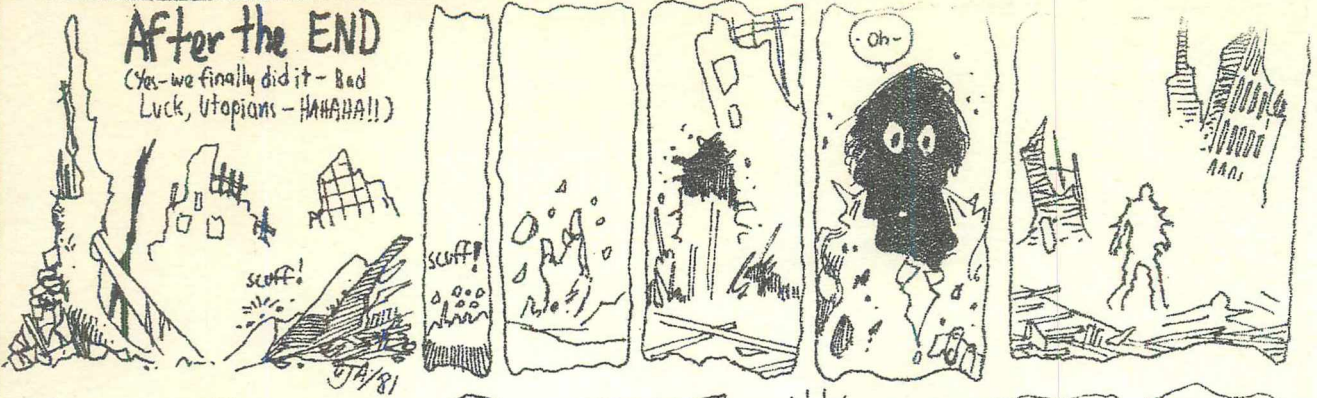
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Michael McEwan

After the END

(Yes-we finally did it - Bad Luck, Utopians - HAAAA!!)



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A general contents fanzine (science fiction material - fiction, articles, poetry, reviews, cartoons, artwork, letters and general news) edited by Ron Clarke for R & S Publications.

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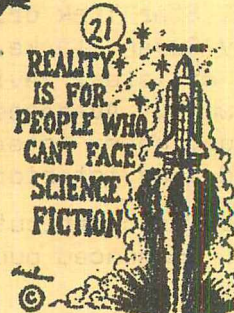
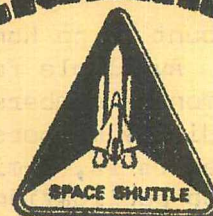
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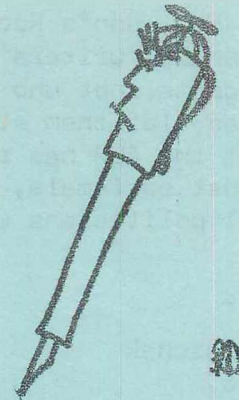
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J. Gregor
Kindara St.,
Amity Point,
Staradbrose Island,
Qld. 4103.

Bob Smith I enjoy, although he worries me at times. A couple of issues back he commented on one of my letters dealing with prehistoric fanzines, something to the effect "That there is a lot more known about that period than I would think." Not the exact wording but something to that effect. I've been wondering about that statement ever since.

What did I get up to in 1939 that he knows about and I've forgotten? Sinister, I call it. One of these days I'll write him and ask him to clarify the situation for me. What do you know that I don't, Bob? Was interested in his remarks on Dick Eney's Fancyclopedia II. I have a copy numbered A1. I wonder if everybody received a copy with that number. People did that in those days so that everybody thought they had the first issue. Have no idea how I acquired it, must be 20 years ago. What I can't understand is how Bob ever gave his copy away, that type of fan publishing has almost disappeared, nearest I've seen to it for a long time is A History of Australian Fandom by Vol Molesworth.

Something along the lines of Fancyclopedia II did arrive in the mail a few days ago, an American publication called Fandom Directory 1981, 380 pages, price \$6.98, dealing with everything from Star Trek to comics to dragon & dungeons & everything in between. One chapter "Fandom Glossary" is dealt with in 5½ pages. Fancyclopedia used a lot more space. Australian Fandom gets very little space although I understand space and mention can be had for the asking. On the other hand quite a few U.S. fanzines don't get a mention either. Quite interesting if you are interested in SF trivia. Being one of those people who will read almost anything I even read the section on how to make animated cartoons. Decided it was too difficult and will stick to my instamatic.

Back to Bob. My wife gave up glaring at me across the breakfast table years ago, I've developed a glare proof shield, absolutely nothing but a second cup of tea can penetrate it.

Mr Grimes, alias A.B. Chandler also appeals to me, anyone who thinks the way he does about Readers Digest can't be all bad. I thought I was alone, that there was something wrong with me, after all it sells millions of copies in umpteen languages and all the time I thought it was slop. I only read it in dentists waiting rooms, which is one of the reasons I hate going to them. I wonder if they read it themselves?

Will have to write to Harry Warner and find out what the Fanzine Index has to say about Science Fiction Reviews various, and if need be smarten them up. (I'll have to watch it, so far I've committed myself to two letters.)

Now, Ron's Roost. I don't quite understand your concern about the lack of female writers in SF fandom. The way I see it, the writing or content is what counts, not who signs it, male or female, and if females don't want to be involved, let them stop in the kitchen. I hope that you never get to the stage that the ALP has reached in politics, that a certain proportion of Federal members must be female, regardless of ability. If ability was a requirement, 95% of all politicians would be disqualified anyway.

Harry Andruschak
PO Box 606,
La Canada-Flintridge,
California 91011,
USA.

Received The Mentor 32 today. As always, you have a damn nice zine here, one that is a pleasure to read and causes one to think as well. For example, A Bertram Chandler's article. He mentions the use of the word "Car". This brings to mind one of the more unusual use of the term "car".

Most railroads in Great Britain have passenger "carriages" or "coaches". That is the term British Rail uses. It is the term all British railroads used... with one outstanding exception. The London Underground. Because the tube system was built by Americans, with American money, the term "car" became commonplace on the underground. Americans called them "cars", not "carriages". The tradition is carried on today.

Australia tends to follow British usage - railway "carriages", "cars" instead of "autos" and "petrol" instead of "gas". It is interesting that as yet, since the introduction of decimal currency in 1966 with the Australian dollar, no really native slang term has come up for it - the term "buck" is used, but not overall and not all the time. - Ron.

How about "rocket"? Nowadays it is common. We use them all the time. In the 1940's it was a dirty word. So thus was founded the Jet Propulsion Laboratory at which I work. "Jet" was Army Air Force's polite term for "rocket". Yes, things were that bad just 40 years ago.

Faunched over ...
the Spaced Out cartoon on page 27. Now that is what I call good fan art.

Ruth Kentwall
178 Frederick St.,
Rockdale,
NSW 2216.

I enjoyed Peter Kells' letter (TM 34) as it echoed my own feelings on Atlantis. It's nice to know that someone else prefers to ignore "science" occasionally and form his own opinions based on (I assume) reasonably extensive reading.

In his letter, Peter says "If only people would read that book with an open mind". This is something that so many science/science fiction readers don't do. Any person who begins to read something new or different with preconceived notions as to what it should or should not be is automatically doomed to disappointment. Surely anyone capable of appreciating science/sf is also capable of retaining and using some of the wonder which contributes so greatly to the enjoyment of these subjects. This sense of wonder seems to be sadly lacking these days, which is a pity.

Burt Libe
P.O. Box 1196,
Los Altos,
Ca. 94022,
U.S.A.

How do I begin imparting my relentless opinions on
outworld of Australia, sometimes claimed located in the very
fires of Earth's Hell? A continent, that began as a prison-
world, evolved into a shroud of mystery. How will its inhabit-
ants react? How strong does science fiction exist in this
unknown cosmos?

The Mentor knows... (well, you are sort of a
"shadow"). So I'll zero in on that small portion of shadow -- the Jeeves article
in TM 34. Succinctly put, Terry grasps only at shadows and grayness for his
conclusions. SF is not becoming defunct. It flows like currents and eddies
gathering into endless peaks and valleys. At present, much of it has slipped
into the trough of New-Wave depravity: Naked ugliness, overabundance of raw hate,
and madness fester in an atmosphere of deteriorating world societies and economies.
One tendril secretes space opera in absurd proportions. Another blood-lets
sword-and-sorcery banalities. Still another engages a symbiosis of horror and
murder genres. And yet another stalks the shattered remnants of psychotic
fantasy.

I am a misfit -- a writer left with the powerful sense of wonder from
my childhood -- someone who can only envision the romance worlds of delightful
fantasy. Where is my place? My juvenile fiction must contend with puritanical
censorship as a base to turn science fiction around. With improving writing
quality, why is it necessary to teeth-bare and destroy the beauty that enthralled
and fired the imagination, motivated and enraptured, let the reader escape to
breathtaking realms? I keep asking that question over and over.

With a degree in
physics, minors in chemistry and math, and 21 years experience in aerospace
engineering, I assume I know a bit about science. Readers (most, it seems) on
the whole, detest raw science. I've fought the battle too often with scientific
bridges into fantasy worlds. But stories by others, which got too bogged down
with obscure theory and/or esoterics, I myself tossed aside. The solution lies
in a proper balance of simple concepts, a well-woven story, and highly communicative
mainstream techniques.

Science has not outstripped science fiction -- no way.
And with luck, one day, I'll prove it with a return to the positive and carefully
executed sense of wonder. Fads die, while true craftsmanship endures. Science
fiction, now mired in fads, has countless new, exciting, untried directions.
Science fiction is perennial. It blooms, flowers, moulders, withers, festers,
rots, but always gets reborn. Science fiction will never die.

Frank Bryning
6/15 Charlotte St.,
Wynnum Central,
Qld. 4178

Thank you for recent issues of The Mentor, which I
have been reading with interest. I have held on to the
last four but have passed on my previous issues to the
Fryer Library at the University of Queensland, together
with some other fanzines like Etherline, SF News, Gegen-
schein, and others, where they may be preserved for posterity. The Fryer
Library is custodian of the sf magazine collection which the U. of Qld bought
from Don Tuck a few years ago. They propose to add to the collection all the
Australian written and published sf they can, including fanzines. They will be
interested in any old items which clutter up our places and which we might
otherwise dump. Charles Mustchin of Coolangatta and I and Dennis Stocks are
sf "consultants" to them in a way of speaking.

Since you mentioned in The Mentor
that you occasionally look through the Woman's Weekly, a flippant little story

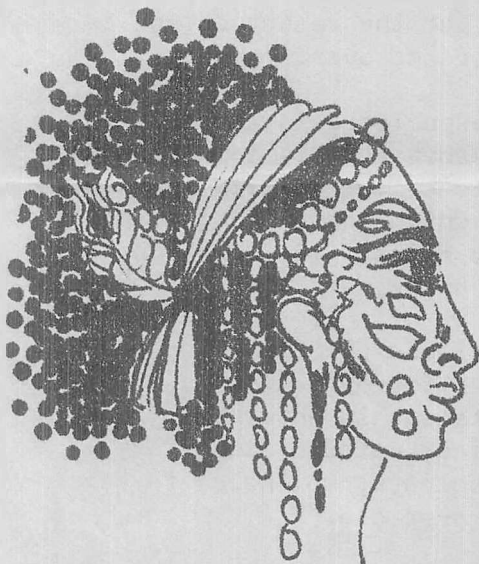
of mine (not sf) should bob up there soon. My title: Trolley Man Lost. As a married man I hope you may share a fellow-feeling with me.

Joseph Hanna-Rivero
8 First Ave.,
Forestville,
S.A. 5035

First of all let me say that your choice of cover artwork in TM 34 continues to improve, this one by Mike McGann being one of the best to date. Just what does that guy sitting on the side of the hovermobile think he's doing??

Nice article by Terry Jeeves although I really think it should have been titled: "Where has the science in science fiction gone?" Don't agree with him that science fiction will completely disappear one day. Certainly as he says it continually changes, but in my opinion fandom will be strong enough to keep it surviving.

I tend to agree with Michael Hailstone about most authors today eschewing the science out of their "science fiction". If this continues to be the case there's be no point in calling it that any longer. You wouldn't want to be heard calling it SCI-FI, or at least not around the Fission Fragmented columnist Dave Langford of Ad Astra, unless you want to be clobbered over the head with a sledge hammer!



Diane Fox
PO Box 129
Lakemba,
NSW 2195

That was an interesting comment in your latest Ron's Roost about a shortage of female contributors. I suspect that the shortage of female writers is due not so much to lack of interest, but to - a) Shortage of time - women seem to be far more snowed under with trivial and repetitive minor chores. These are very insidious; each is quickly done, but there are so many of them that they cut back writing time horrendously. This is of course due to social conditioning (ie "women's work is never done").

b) Lack of confidence - women tend to have a lower opinion of their ability to say something intelligent in print in public. This is again social conditioning, and once broken is a minor problem. It is the coming out and saying something the first time that is the tricky bit!

I missed the issue of the Woman's Weekly with Judith's story - damn! I hope someone's got a copy, so I can get a photocopy or whatever made.

Terry Jeeve's article on the unlikely future of sf was, to me, not entirely convincing. It rather reminded me of the pronouncements of various avant garde authors and critics that there is no future for the novel as an art form, as it has a) outlived its function; b) become outdated by social change.

These pronouncements have been coming out since 1895, and I suppose will eventually come true - all predictions have to come true sooner or later - but don't seem to be coming true at the moment.

There is a strong swing towards a form of fantasy in the guise of SF - towards quasi Mediaeval hierarchic cultures etc. However the tradition of having a Galactic Emperor, plus Lords, Ladies, Kings, Queens, Knights, Princesses etc is hardly an invention of the degenerate 70's or 80's. It could be cynically argued that calling an Emperor a Chairperson or Kommissar is merely a change of name, not of function (see Ancient Roman, or 20th Century history.)

I think that the swing towards fantasy is not so much an escapist one (and by the way, are any readers familiar with JRR Tolkien's sharp comment on the political views of people who denounce escapism?) As art reflects, consciously or unconsciously, social trends, the current interest in fantasy may reflect not one but many strands: 1. There is the element of fear of the future and wish to escape to the past. The future may well be racial extermination within a few years, so why criticise this laudable if hope less urge? (I don't think we'll survive nuclear war, if only because we are told we will. The people who tell us are liars.)

2. Possible breakthrough in the fields of mind science ('magick') within the next few years - use of telepathy as a military weapon etc. Just as the atomic bomb was predicted well before its use, there seems an almost predictive quality about the current amount of interest in such matters.

3. The interest in blending archaic symbols (fantasy) with ultra modern symbols (rockets and computers) for the sake of contrast. Pure aesthetic fun, in other words! 4. At last a goodbye to the stupid and adolescent embarrassment. "It's sissy to tell fairy stories." I think an interest in fantasy is a sign of maturity - not trying to prove that we've grown up and have outgrown this childish 'garbage'. It is interesting to note that fantasy is slightly more popular among women, and that many of the newer fantasy writers are women. Proof that distaste for fantasy was considered macho. Thank god we can come out of the closet at last! Instead of disguising our interest with (very unscientific) SF trappings. When the emotional side of this has been straightened out, better hard science SF than ever before will probably be written. because people will have a better idea of what they want from both SF and fantasy.

Gerard Ashworth's comic strip was well drawn, funny and sarcastic. Great!

I agree with Pauline Palmer's comment that a film that entertains is not exploiting the audience. If the director has gone to the trouble and expense of finding a decent script writer, actors and special effects people, we have received a fair go. (On the other hand if the director has contempt enough for the audience to serve us dung sprinkled with marmalade we are quite right in returning that contempt.)

Elaine Crisp's "Octo pussy" person illo was quite striking. (Should have been put next to Bert Chandler's letter though, for obvious reasons.)

I'm inclined to disagree with Peter Kells about the Atlantean origin of written language. It seems more probable that written languages were invented about the time of the "Agricultural Revolution", ie when people were first adopting a farming life. Before then, writing simply wasn't needed. (Although pictorial symbols of various kinds were used, mainly for magic). There is a brief comment in Edmund Carpenter about a New Guinean who noticed a white traveller who had a book, and asked what it was. When the idea of writing was explained to him, the New Guinean went back to his village and worked out a system of writing! The rune alphabet of the early Vikings is supposed to have come into being in the same way (The hypothetical Atlantean priest is not impossible of course, but he may simply have given the other cultures the idea rather than the actual alphabet.)

Peter A Kells I was interested by Terry Jeeves article speculating on the
PO Box 1670, possible directions of science fiction. I think it is fairly
Southport, obvious that these directions will be determined by the degree to
Ald. 4215. which technology is visible in our daily lives. It may well be
that as technology increases in sophistication it will become less
obtrusive, and that, with even further development, all the functions of a
technological civilization will be taken over by self-repairing and self-perpetuating
mechanisms. When, and if, that stage of development arrives, humanity can return
once more to a real civilization, with their minds unfettered by the artificial
needs of the present-day quasi-barbarism and compulsory Mammon worship.

As for Ralph Silverton's criticism of my poetry - I suspect that even were I to spend his suggested 10-50,000 years trying to improve my "grasp of metre", he would still perversely and indiscriminately find fault; this seems his forte. And I am mystified as to how Mr Silverton reads 'purple' overtones into Lillian Forbin's poem. The imagery of the poem was interesting and original, but there is no reason to think that it alluded to other than the cosmic. I am tempted to believe that Mr Silverton is one of those gifted individuals who are capable of reading 'purple' meanings into anything whatsoever... And perhaps, by the light of a flickering candle, he awakes, bug-eyed and drooling and pawing over a telephone directory reading 'purple' meanings into innocent lists of numbers. But thanks to Mr Silverton for apprizing me of Alfred Kubin's novel. I have never heard of it, but I shall seek out a translation.

As for the letter of Bob & Lyn Smith - one could also argue that none of those old Weird Tales writers were in the habit of employing such comic book inanities and linguistic perversions as "gotta" and "summat". (The latter, surely, ought never to ha heard outside the environs of Manchester). The three writers I chose to mention employed a comprehensible, universal form of English - and this ought to be the sole medium of all written expression in the English speaking world.

Lana Fahey PO Box 4188, Wanganui, New Zealand.

I enjoyed TM very much. Of NZ general sf zines, I have read but two: Fantasy & Warp. The former is mainly concerned with media fandom while the latter is letter/review/club news/fiction combination. I think the main problem over here is 'regularity'. No NZ zine is ever published regularly - except, it seems, the letterzine of my club! Warp comes second, but a fair distance behind. _

possibly the most well known NZ fanzine known to the rest of the world and edited by Brian Thurogood, was published monthly for must have been a couple of years; in the last six months it nearly seems to have bit the dust with a gap of that period between 41 and 42/3, which came out in September 1981. - Ron./

enjoyed about TM were its articles. Something that is sadly lacking in NZ sf zines (the contents usually contain egotistical waffle or a scathing review of either the latest sf film or book) - hardly do you find anything of outstanding interest, let alone interest, at all.

I'm perhaps being rather harsh, but the sf zines here all look the same. They seem to copy the same layout, the same style of editorial and the same topics that are flogged untiringly like a dead horse. Where has diversity gone? Will we ever see any sf that dwells on anything other than adolescent sexual fantasies and repetitive violence that appears like a re-run of one of those boring GOR novels?

I was most interested in your editorial. The same seems apparent in NZ sf zines. Of all the zines edited in NZ, I think I'm the only female editor and have the only zine/newsletter that has a high proportion of femmesfen contributing to them. (I still don't know who edits the other ST club newsletter - it is also very irregular).

I ask myself - why are there so few femmesfen writing for sf zines (other than ST)? Now, that would make an interesting article. In our club, The Alternative Factor, 2/3 of the members are female, with an age group spanning 15 to 45. Consequently, our publications have a large proportion of femmesfen submissions. Funnily enough, in Trekdom, females outnumber males. You have only to browse through the American publication, Forum (which lists current and pending ST zines and others) to see how heavily they do outnumber males. Quite astonishing. Especially when you discover that a good percentage of these females also enjoy general sf as well.

[Interesting.

Astrex, the ST club run by Susan, has a female membership of 58%, which is pretty near the ratio of females to males in Australia. Think about that.-- Ron.]

I for example, have always been an sf fan. I grew up on the Heinlein books and devoured my way through Clarke. Asimov and Bradbury and continue to enjoy any well-written sf book. But ST had always drawn me to its ideals and special charisma, that only another ST fan can understand. So, though thrown deep into the world of ST, I still indulge in books by Jack Vance and every science magazine I can lay my hands on. Maybe, somewhere out there, a psychologist is making an indepth study of it all.

John J Alderson Yes, I have read Donnelly's books (Peter A Kells). His Havelock, theory somewhat paralleled Velikovsky's, who mentions him, Vic. 3465 and the latter's criticisms of his theory are just; ie Donnelly's times are indefinite and there is till all around the earth, not just on one side. However, the mysteries of the alphabet to which I referred happened somewhat later and are chiefly so because the chronology of the Middle East of those times is a mess.

Re Neville Angove's letter. I have no doubt that everything he says about farmers leaving harvesters out in the weather (I suspect he means "headers" as "harvesters" have been obsolete for ages) is true, but it was a red herring and remains a red herring. Nor, by the way, is there any quantity of steel used in a methane digester, and in mine I can only bring to mind a few taps. Actually the steel would speedily get "digested"; in fact, two electrodes in a bucket of effluent from a digester makes a quite effective battery. Most of his criticisms were dealt with in the article in TM 34, but suffice it to say that a city sewerage works could be used to supply much of that city's energy, with a large supply of compost for the surrounding farms.

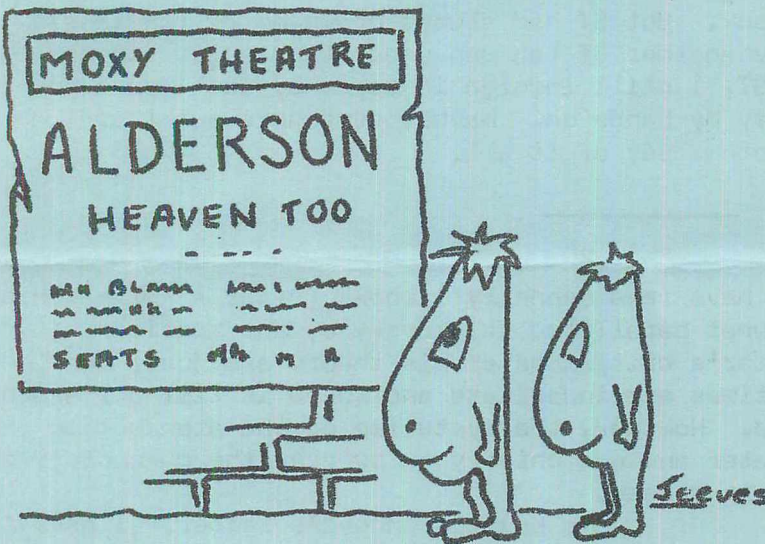
The possibility of making a rectifier out of superphosphate and baling wire is intriguing; though why I should be expected to I don't understand. Whilst I understand a rectifier can be made using some form of electrolyte and plates, I can't say off hand what they are, but I suspect that the digester effluent would be better. A hunk of crystal and cat's whisker is more commonplace. However, given a supply of methane, some silica and some soda and several scraps of wire any competent glass-worker will make a vacuum-tube rectifier though it may be simpler to use an old bottle. What Angove cannot realise is that the vast complicated and very expensive machines used by modern industry are unnecessary, and those machines, not the product, is the purpose of our

modern technology.

OK, how much energy will or need a methane digester require for construction. Directions for making a low energy digester: Dig a hole in a suitable place using a pointed stick and a piece of bark to remove the dirt. If you piss on it the night before it makes the ground softer. For a batch plant use a circular hole, if a continuous plant, a rectangular one. Line this with stone set in good stiff clay, using one's hands and certainly not a trowel unless carved from a piece of wood with a flint knife. If you are clever enough make a domed top, otherwise timber it across with sticks cut with a stone axe. At the top insert a piece of bamboo or a bone. This is the gas outlet and is stopped with a piece of clay. The whole should be well insulated with dry grass or bark from a stringy-bark. Now, if you've made it thus far without reading further, you're in trouble and could even be walled up inside it. A shute has to be made in the side ending under the level of the liquid for feeding in the manure, etc. This effectively cuts the digester into two sections, one very small. Somewhere else an overflow must be inserted ending below the liquid

level. The whole must not be allowed to dry out or it will leak. For a gas holder, kill a pig or something with a wooden club, disembowel it with a chip of chert, clean out the intestines and tie one end onto the gas outlet, and tie a knot in the other end.

Now, for some absurd reason Angove expects me, and probably anyone else who offers some way of helping the energy situation, to go back to the stone age. His own idea, expressed elsewhere, is to remove all the polluting industries into space. Now Angove, give us the plans for a rocket that will do this, the manufacture of which will not add to



the present pollution. Do this or stop your miserable carping criticism.

Raymond L Clancy
494 Midland Ave.,
Staten Island,
New York 10306,
USA.

The Mentor 32 was a superior issue. I thought the artwork especially good, cover to cover. The electro-stenciller must be pretty good, bugs and all. I appreciate the clearer printing.

Sure wish we had some "Poppas" roaming the streets of this city. The Matt the Rate are proliferating. John Alderson's Magic was interesting and informative. Hope he got things right. One must reflect that magic wasn't wasteful like science. I doubt that one caught many mackerals with those stone-age sprats, but it was a minor madness compared to putting in a thousand units of energy to get one out.

My own letter in TM 32 - the 'popular unrest' comment came from reading about the heat

and determination and understanding involved in various protests by people in the parts of Australia, away from the cities, which are being changed by the newer technologies.

Roger Waddington
4 Commercial St.,
Norton, Malton,
North Yorkshire,
YO17 9ES, U.K.

The August issue of TM arrived towards the end of September, and the October issue arrived in the very same month, which must make for some kind of record; and certainly their swift arrival has given me a new incentive for fandom. During the Civil Service strike, with so long a period between fanzines, I've been falling into apathy and idleness more easily than usual; hibernation was beckoning this winter, but now I've got no excuse.

Talking of vanishing without trace (I'm dipping in between 32 and 33, in my lazy way) does anyone know when Cape Kennedy changed back to its original name of Cape Canaveral? They still have the Kennedy Space Centre there; it's just that having lived with it for so long, there's a definite sense of loss when you suddenly notice its absence - which could cover a multitude of sins!

And new words for the coinage reminds me that we've still to get used to our 'new' decimal system, by finding nicknames for it; that is, any printable ones... There have been some well-meaning efforts by newspapers, in the shape of competitions, to try and find some names, but like some advertising slogans they've never lasted. I suspect because they were precisely too artificial; for something to impinge so on human consciousness, it must have come out of experience, not out of theory; which means we'll have to wait about another hundred years before a successor to the groat, the bawbee, the joey and the quid joins the literature. Harry Andruschak should complain; I've long seen Intermediate Vector Bosons each time I've glanced over his fanzine title, though what that reveals of my mind... The fanzine with the built-in Rorschach test!

Diane's autobiography is uncannily similar to my own, right down to those school experiences; which might seem to beg the question: is there a certain environment that helps to push a person in the direction of such an outre activity as fandom - some state of mind that must be achieved first? Onto some of those points of similarity (without going to the length of writing a very similar biography!); my first ideal was to work in a library, though I had to put this behind me due to failing my exams, and I'm now in a third-choice job out of sheer necessity. Poetry was also my first attempt at writing; and there's one of them (printed in the school magazine) that I still think stands up well. Ghost Stories of an Antiquary, and She were among my key books, which pointed me in the direction of enjoying fantasy and so more. And I can summon up at least half-a-dozen roads not taken that I've had to regret afterwards, though I suspect this is true of all human experience - I've at least achieved the gift of making do - which is priceless!

The comparison that I'm treasuring most is her mentioning the Space Annual with the story of the spaceman and the mushrooms; I don't know how old I was, but I can remember my mother buying it for me in the local branch of Woolworths and I've remembered that particular story ever since; not the least because of the queasy feeling I had on reading it. Which, through the passage of time, I came to associate with the paper used in printing. Now I realise it could well have been the idea of the smelly haircream!

And I can help her with the story of The Red Planet; for it was the middle section of the justly-famed Journey Into Space radio saga (Journey Into Space/The Red Planet/The World In Peril) written by Charles Chilton. I've got

the set of the three paper backs by the same man, and even though I occasionally circularise the dealers in the vain hope of finding another set (for when this one wears out) I'd be very willing to send The Red Planet on the uncertain journey to Australia, if she'd like to renew her acquaintance with it..?

One question is raised by these biographies, and probably unanswerable as well; ie when such hobbies as train-spotting and car number plates and even fishing are laid aside with the end of childhood, what is it about science fiction that holds the interest into adulthood, that keeps the devotee so active and vocal?

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

Chandler was enjoyable. I didn't really agree with Jeeves - not altogether. (What about Varley?). The Ashworth Strip was excellent!! Please please please get him to do some more. Why do people attack poor old Joe Nicholas - he's just an ordinary fucking fan (or is it an ordinary fan fucker?). I mean, just because your balls drop off from shock listening to his invective doesn't mean he's not a charming, witty correctly sarcastic Pommie bastard.

[I think the idea Gay was getting at was that someone who wins GUFF should be expected to act as per the audience, not using gutter language, much though it may be used in fan circles in Britain. - Ron.]

As for Peter ~~Kills~~ Kells' poetry - bleah! And double aargh! And as for his rather hairy letter, all I suggest is he get himself a Shaver. Not surprisingly, he comes from behind the banana curtain...

How many people realise, I wonder, that at one stage the New Guard in NSW numbered more than Mosley's Fascists? Sure, there was a comic element, but the menace was far more real than most people at the time or since believed. One of the factors in the New Guard's failure was that it wasn't really a Fascist organization. It was too conservative. The real Fascists are radicals, as the German authoritarian conservatives found out to their cost after 1933.

Kim Huett
GPO Box 429,
Sydney,
NSW 2001.

I'm slow in writing because I knew when I did I would have * John Alderson and I wanted to be sure than when I did, my answer would explain to him and you just why I wasn't pleased with his piece in TM 31. *to answer

First of all I would like to aplogize to John because when I went back and read my comments I realized I had voiced my dissatisfaction without explaining exactly what I didn't like. This is wrong, and I am sorry for it. I hope that John can at least forgive me for that. As to why I didn't like the piece; when I first saw it my first thought was "Oh shit, here we go again!" I thought it was about alternative fuel sources - in this case the production of alcohol and methane using a piggery. Now this idea may be original and it may or may not work. That was not my point, instead it was that when it comes to reading or hearing about such things I've reached a saturation point. This doesn't mean I don't believe in alternative energy sources or not want to know about them. On the contrary I believe in them quite strongly and do not believe enough support is given to research.

Of course you could argue that John's method hasn't had any publicity before, so it should be publicised. However most people like myself can only stand so much, so the greatest good



would be done by taking such ideas from those people organised to support this cause. This way I can go to them if and when I become interested instead of having it pushed onto me. After all, we all know problems like the energy crisis exist; if they are interested they will go to the established organisations, if not they will ignore the whole thing. John would be better off convincing the experts; after all they are the best qualified to tell whether it will work.

Ron's Roost was music to my ears, as it is the high cost of cons that has stopped me from attending any cons this year. When you have to shell out \$20 after paying for transport there and back if it's interstate, room rates, etc, in the knowledge that this price is due to a foreign GOH, makes me think twice. Even without foreign GOH's cons are getting more expensive due to inflation and the increase in con sizes which has forced cons to be held in larger and more expensive hotels. This is the main reason that the site of the usual Sydney relaxacon was changed.

Gay William's con report was interesting enough though a little short. The only problem I had was that when Gay talked about Joseph Nicholas I was not quite sure what type of objectional language she meant. Foul language seemed the most likely but it still might be the subjects he talked on etc.

Bert Chandler's column is one of my favourite parts of TM and he was at his best in 33 and 34. Gay would do well to take a close look at the trip report in 33 which was much more enjoyable than most that I have read (the main exception being those I've read by Robert Bloch). I was interested in Bert's comments about heavy editing and can assure him that even those who should know better will indulge in such barbarous acts. Witness how Analog took to Varley's Titan with a blunt meat axe and exercised anything they thought might be offensive to the general readership.

For some reason the cover of 34 made me think of the cover of Galaxy magazine during the sixties. Something to do with the logo and all those lines, I think.

After reading Bob Smith's letter I keep getting this vision of Bob and myself sitting in deck chairs on the lawn of a rest home smugly assuring each other as to how clever we were to see what others failed to. Anyway, it is my personal philosophy that one can never take the universe too seriously or those weird things which always happen would short-circuit the brain. When anything like that happens to me I merely tell myself: "The universe is the weirdest place I've ever been." Several times. This way I always end up looking at the incongruity of the situation and laughing instead of having a fit, even when I'm entitled.

R Mapson
40 Second Ave.,
Kelmscott,
W.A. 6111.

I feel I must comment on Where Has All The SF Gone? I suspect that what Mr Jeeves is suffering is that famous 'Good Old Days' syndrome (which is not to imply any degree of senility/decomposition on Mr Jeeves' part). A mere three years ago, back in my halycon teenage days (OK, so they weren't, but that's what you're supposed to call them) I discovered Mr Moorcock's hack Eternal (infernal) Champion novels, and quite unashamedly admit that I enjoyed them. However, I feel I have progressed far beyond that point, and would only find them humorous now. (I recently considered re-reading his Jerry Cornelius books, and while leafing through That Condition of Muzak I discovered a section where Col Pyat is playing tennis and says "We lost all our balls." I was immediately put off by this immature attempt at humour.)

What I feel is really happening is that we (fen as a whole) are a) becoming more discerning, and b) realising that what we would have read yesterday is not good enough for today.

Any form of consumer item (SF included, of course) will generally consist of 49% crap (no other term is sufficient to convey the inanity of this section), 49% merely competent work, and 2% quality work. Thus, the New Wave of the 60s, for instance, brought about some very fine work (eg Brian Aldiss), but because of the crap that was also written it has become a term of contempt.

The only way to improve this situation is for consumers (you out there) to demand (and only buy) the quality stuff (if people were dumb enough - and they almost are - consumers would be foisted off with 100% crap all the time), but unfortunately there will always be the juvenile market and/or those just discovering sf; and certain people who, for instance, consider God's own gift to literature to be Ron Goulart (hello Julian).

Certainly the SF of today would not be recognisable generally as the SF of the 30s, but it is no less SF for that reason: all artforms grow and, hopefully, mature and improve; I don't believe that the main problem lies with the problem as explained above, however.

So, before buying any SF (or consumer goods of any kind, from clothes to a doctor), one must consider if it is what we want, or whether we should demand something better. Rather obvious really, but as long as publishers/international corporations/governments are only interested in profits it is a maxim that cannot be repeated often enough.

Michael Hailstone
P.O. Box 193,
Woden,
ACT 2606

I read Terry Jeeves article on the disappearance of science fiction with interest, although at the beginning he seemed to be parroting that tired old cliché about science having "caught up with science fiction". Just because we've put satellites into orbit, landed men of the Moon and sent probes to the other planets, sf has not run its course -- far from it. And with the way we're now turning our back on space and the seemingly ever growing anti-science attitude amongst so-called sf readers, reality (rather than "science") has still a hell of a lot of catching up to do. He makes a very good point about the emperor's new clothes, which is a good allegory for the New Wave nonsense we had thrust upon us a few years ago. There are writers who nowadays deny that there ever was such a thing as the New Wave movement, but that rings about as true as the statement of some trendy American pseudo-scientists or sociologists who are now trying to tell us that there's no such thing as the two sexes, that men and women are just an artificial construct of our culture.

So Bob Smith thinks that fandom has lost its sense of fun. Well, what little contact I've had with fandom does back only a very few years, but really, I think the trouble lies not just with fandom, but with society as a whole. We've really lost our sense of fun over the last ten years; that is perhaps the saddest legacy of the seventies. You can't have any sort of comedy or fun nowadays without some ratbag moralist condemning it as sexist or something. (That criticism has been made of the comic strip HORG, for instance.) It occurred to me just the other day that folk don't whistle as they used to! It's become such a rarity that whistling draws odd looks. Nowadays, it seems, we're as steeped in gloom and doom that we have forgotten how to enjoy ourselves.

I share Bert Chandler's contempt for the Reader's Digest. Glad to see he's got such a good vocabulary as to score 100% in "It pays to test your word power", but then how does our top sf writer fall down as dismally by coming out with such a shocker at "looker-on"? I'm not trying to nitpick; that really is bad and shows that it's not only the younger generation that has problems in using good English, Bob. (If you're wondering what the hell I'm on about, see the editorial in the next issue of Crux, which has now gone to press.)

I can't comment fairly on John Alderson's articles on energy, as the whole thing is too complex for me to grasp, and there's as much contradictory information. But what I'd like somebody to explain to me is: while the world population has only doubled in the last fifty years, world energy use has risen sixfold in the last thirty! Now, what have we got to show for that? How much better are we really off? What is really meant by "standard of living"? Does it include the luxury to afford to waste, throw away and consume? If so, then our true standard of living is not so much higher than it was 30 years ago as is made out. John Gribbin reckons that our energy use has to keep on rising, levelling out at four times the present rate towards the end of next century, or, as he puts it, "our civilization has had it." Why? I ask. How many folk have really bothered to think it through?

Funny thing, I had exactly the same thoughts on reading Peter Kells' story as Nev Angove: wondering whether Kells and Robert Franklin (to get his name spelt right) were the same person. If Crux manages to keep going long enough, you'll see the latter gracing its pages. Ralph Silverton seems to delight in indulging in obscurantist sarcasm. Since when were crushed nuts all that great?

Diane Fox has an interesting point about public awareness about the approaching cloud. (Thanks, Di.) To look at it quite realistically though, what I seriously think would happen is that amateur astronomers would be bound to notice it, whereupon, in the absence of an official cover-up, the media

would get hold of it and blare it out on the poor long-suffering public as another great doom story. And the people of course would hear but not listen. In their perverse way they would be somehow comforted by the tale of impending doom and would not do a damn thing about it. The government in such nations as Australia and Britain, (not to mention of course the Soviet Union) has the power to clamp a D-notice on anything it considers not in the public interest to publish, but I don't know whether it has that power in the United States. So, while a lot of folk would get to know about the Cloud by word of mouth, personal correspondence and so forth, the bulk of the people, who don't know a pig's whistle about astronomy, could quite conceivably be kept in the dark until perhaps six months before the Cloud'd arrival, by which time it would be too obvious to hide.

Gerard Ashworth
8/15 Fairlight St.,
Fairlight 2094.

I, like Leanne Frahn, am a relative newcomer to fandom. Oh, I've been around the digs and the various conventions, but I haven't really got involved in fandom until now, so I'm naturally bemused by the letters page. Give me a few more issues and then we'll see what the pen brings forth.

Terry Jeeves may be right in saying that sf is dying out - but it's increasing popularity may leave that stream of thought in the dust. And why just science fiction, Terry? Why not address yourself to the lack of good literature in the mainstream. As I said in a recent letter to Neville Angove's Cygnus Chronicler, at least sf requires mental gymnastics to be read - but there doesn't seem to be a great many Faulkners or Hemmingways or Borges in the mainstream nowadays. We've yet to see something approaching Ulysses - though on different levels a Catch 22 or Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance come close.

I find it strange that Bob and Lyn Smith should ask 'where are the trufan cartoonists of today?' after they had said 'that we sf fans particularly do need to go mad sometimes'. What I'm thinking of doing is trying my luck in that arena - what-the-hell, I can't see anybody else (but as I said I'm a relative newcomer) - and prove that some sf fans are madder than others.

WAHF: Andrew Darlington.

FANZINES RECEIVED:

Australian:

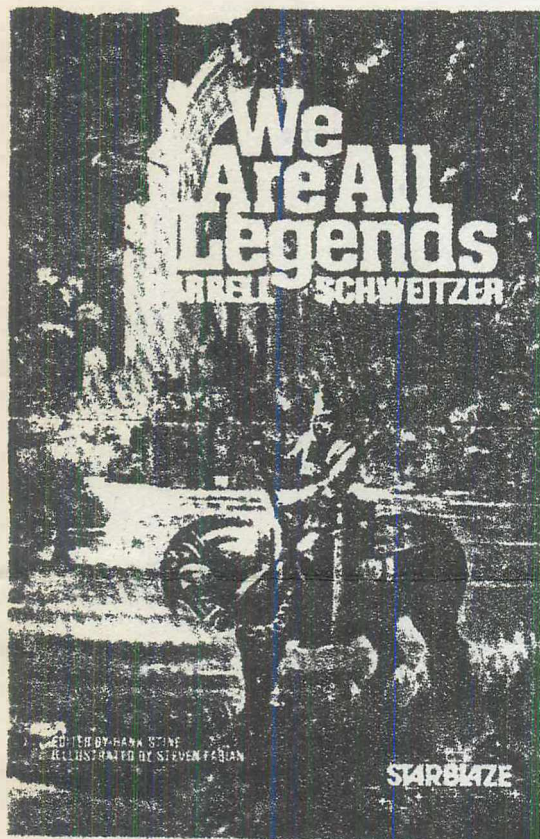
Jean Weber-WeberWoman's Wrevenge 4
Mike Schaper- Boyant Strudel 6.
Shayne McCormack - Forerunner 8
Mark Loney - Norseman Review 1.
Seth Lockwood - Fith 3 & 4.
Irwin Hirsh - Sikander 6
Leigh Edmonds - Ornithopter 8
Andrew Brown - Thyme 6 & 7.
Neville Angove - Cygnus Chronicler 10.

Overseas:

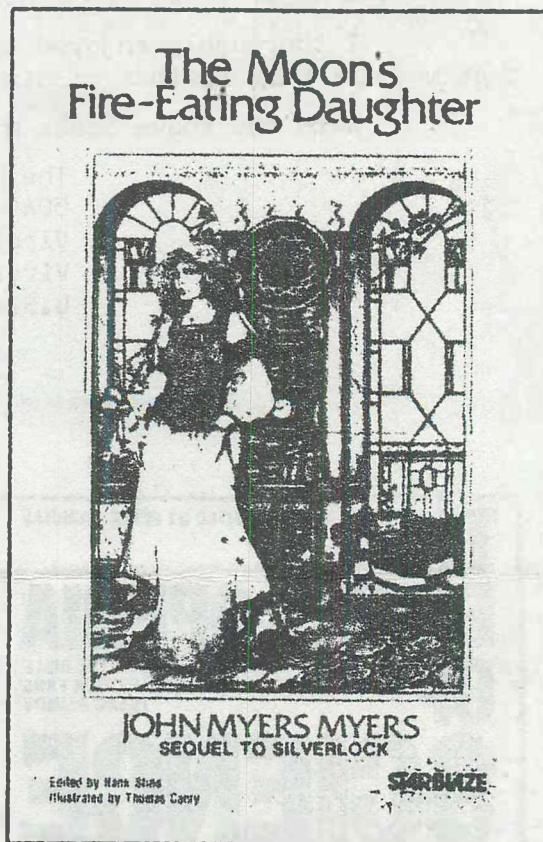
Just Me 2 - M Wallis.
Fanzine Fanatique 41/2
(Keith Walker)
Wild Fennel 15 - Jack &
Pauline Palmer.
S.F.Review - Dick Geis.No.40

Two notes: If you have "last issue" on the mailing wrapper - this is it unless you respond; I am short of articles/poems/fiction. FIAWOL. - Ron.

S.F. BOOK RELEASES.



WE ARE ALL LEGENDS
by Darrell Schweitzer.
StarBlaze Editions. US\$4.95.
194 pp, 14cmx21.5cm, with
wrap-a-round Fabian covers.



THE MOON'S FIRE-EATING DAUGHTER
by John Myers Myers.
Sequel to SILVERLOCK.
StarBlaze Editions. US\$4.95.
180 pp, 14cmx21.5cm.
Back & front covers by Thomas
Canty.

When I first received The Moon's Fire-Eating Daughter and noted the beautiful cover illustrations I thought, now this looks like a book I'll enjoy - I like good fantasy. I got bogged down in the first two pages. Now, I think that I can read through most pieces of literature I set my mind to, but the pseudo beatnik language put me off from the first. I had to skim to the end to see what had happened, after plowing through the first 120 pages. That makes this the second novel I couldn't get through - the first being Cat's Cradle.

Not recommended unless you are a student of English and have a long, cold, set winter's night to get through.

We Are All Legends is, as the saying goes, a different kettle of fish. Originally published as a series of independent stories in various sf magazines, the author has assembled them and, using connecting passages, has knitted them quite well, I thought -into a whole.

The book tells the adventures of Sir Julian, a knight in the Crusades who sets off across Europe and beyond on a mission for one to whom he is bound. The adventures read much like those of Conan, but are better written and the protagonist is of a higher mental character.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book and hope, as indicated by the ending, that we will hear further of Sir Julian, knight.

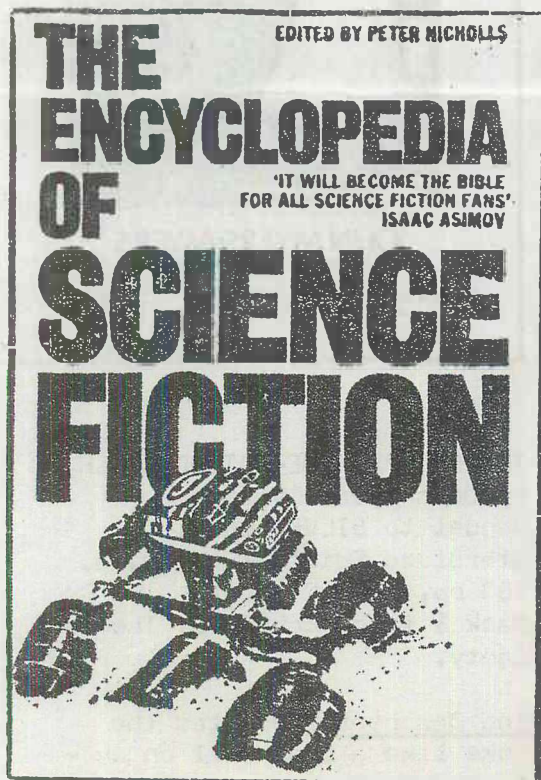
Both the above books may be obtained from the publisher:

The Donning Company/Publishers,
5041 Admiral Wright Road,
Virginia Beach,
Virginia 23462,
U.S.A.

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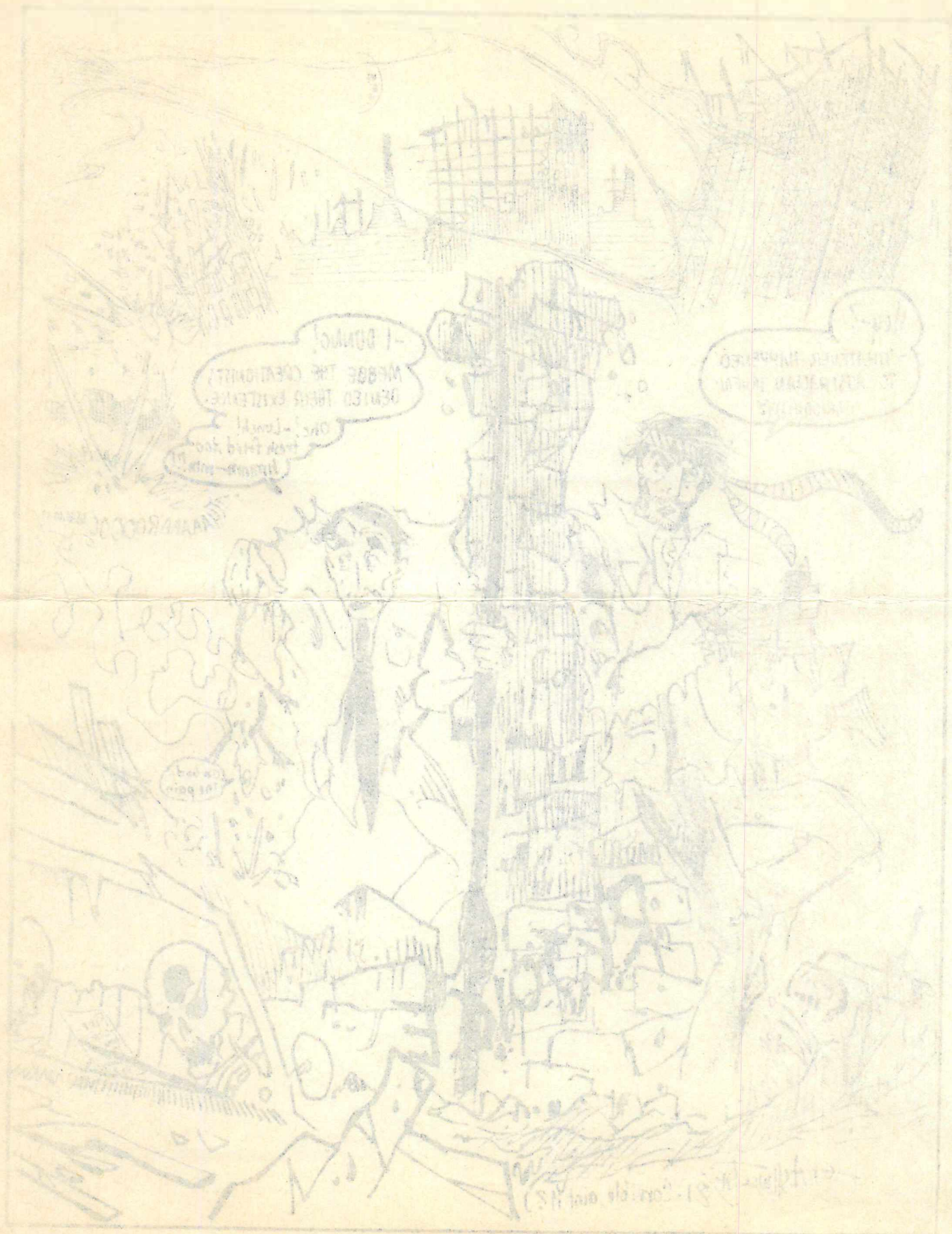
THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SCIENCE FICTION
Edited by Peter Nicholls
Granada Publishing Ltd. A\$18.95
672 pp, 26cmx17cm, paperback.

If you were one of those who couldn't afford the \$44 hardcover edition (now selling at Anton's Bookshop in York St., Sydney for \$38) then this paperback is just the opportunity. In appearance it looks like a cross between a giant paperback and a telephone directory. I leafed through it at lunchtime - that took me about 30 minutes. This is said to be the definitive reference work in encyclopedia form for science fiction. From what I saw of the entries, I believe it. It covers the field with over 2800 references covering some 188 themes with 700,000 words, detailing the whole macronism of sf.

Latest word from Granada (23/11/81) is that the shipment has arrived in Aust. and will be released shortly.

This is not to be missed by anyone at all serious about science fiction.

Releases by Granada for December include Conquests by Poul Anderson and The Steel Tsar by Michael Moorcock.





Hey-?

-WHATEVER HAPPENED
TO AUSTRALIAN TRUFAN
CARICATONISTS?

-I DONNO!

MEBBE THE CREATIONISTS
DENIED THEIR EXISTENCE.

Ohe! -Lunch!
fresh fried too
hmmm-mm!!!

AAAAAAROOOOC MAAAA

On God-
the pain

Fine-
tuning

Ashworth 11/81. (Corrible, aint it?)