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RON'S

ROOST

## THE PERFECT FANZINE

is a never ending road, for the simple reason that each person has his or her vision of what they want for their own 'perfect' zine. Each person has an idea of the contents they would like and the layout and the reproduction (perfect, of course). Contents and layout are up to each individual fan, but reproduction depends upon the resources of each fan and the amount of money they have or can borrow, or it just may be they know someone who has those facilities needed.

The cheapest method, but with a print run depending on the strength of the typist, is carbon paper. Alan France was the Aussie fan most renown for his use of this method, and his fanzine, FANAC, is now part of fannish history in this country.

Hectagraphing has had its day in Aust., and has passed into the mists of time.

There are still a few diehards using spirit duplication, but with print runs between 100 and 250 this method tends to faint with the strain. That leaves three methods which fan tend to stick to - mimeo, offset and zerox.

The last is as good as offset, as long as the machine used is in the peak of condition. When we had our Programme Book run off by Pink Panther for MEDTREK we found a page with the incorrect reverse thereon. They ran copies off on their zerox machine and the only tell-tale that it wasn't offset like the rest of the Book was a slight difference in paper colour (it was whiter).

With the advent of paper plates for small offset machines ten or so years ago, it is continuing strange that more fans haven't used this method of duplicating. Reproduction is lightyears ahead of mimeo, especially in the reproduction of artwork, and with the longer print runs now encountered the costs are approximately equal, if fans join their resources and purchase the equipment for co-op. use. There are still a few die hards who would rather use mimeo, but these dinosaurs will probably die out in the next five to ten years. (cont. p. 18)

# BUGS

BY DON FIDGE

JULY 14

Dr. Hubert Higginson addressed the more distinguished-looking of the four men: "When I was a kid I saw a science fiction movie called "The Fly", I think Vincent Price was in it. Anyhow, it was about a matter transmitting device pretty similiar to what I'm about to demonstrate."

Bert Higginson had rehearsed his "sales pitch" in bed each night for weeks but today nothing he said sounded right. He had planned to explain his invention by likening it to a television picture, broken into dots at one point, transmitted to another and then reassembled in order, but those fellows, who insisted on asking the wrong questions at precisely the wrong time, just weren't allowing his speech to go as planned.

In a corner of his laboratory, until recently a bakery, stood Bert's invention, a large glass case resembling Houdini's water torture cabinet from the Tony Curtis film and three small metal boxes, converted army surplus two-way radios.

"And now for the demonstration," announced Bert, sounding impressively confident despite the 70% failure rate of his experiments. An equilateral triangle had been carefully marked on the battered surface of his work-bench with a small cross showing its exact centre. One of the "two-way radios" was placed at each angle with the packet of cigarettes bought specifically for the demonstration, as Bert did not smoke, placed in the centre.

After a short pause designed to add an air of excitement to the proceedings (though actually appearing that he had forgotten how to operate his own machine) Dr. Higginson flicked a switch on his "Houdini Cabinet" and the cigarette packet immediately disappeared from the table, reappearing in the cabinet.

It wasn't until the following day, after Bert had been promised the grant necessary to continue his work that he happened to pick up the cigarette packet, which proved to be surprisingly light. The seventeen cigarettes missing from the still sealed packet were never located.



OCTOBER 16

It was necessary to stage the next display of Dr. Higginson's scientific genius at the ungodly hour of 5 a.m. as this demonstration took place in a public park.

While the initial grant had proven totally inadequate, Bert had been promised practically unlimited funding if he could prove that his invention could operate over longer distances - his previous "transmissions" had been over only a few metres.

The "two-way radios" of the first demonstration had by now been replaced by a single device which could easily have been mistaken for a scaled-down model of a radio-telescope and which could, theoretically at least, be focussed on any target within fifty metres.

A selection of balls had been spread in a rough semi-circle about thirty metres from Bert, his "radio-telescope" and his "Houdini Cabinet". Desperately short of cash to continue his work, Bert Higginson didn't consider spending \$280 for new basket-balls, softballs, footballs etc. at all extravagant, after all he was displaying his wares to an important and select group on a sporting field.

After nominating a basketball, the largest available target, Bert twice failed to "pick-up" anything with his machine but on the third attempt a cricketball disappeared from the neat, carefully prepared turf and reappeared, as hoped, in the glass cabinet. Despite his poor aim there could be no doubt that Bert Higginson had again earned the funds necessary to continue his work. Bert always regretted not having quit while ahead that day as each of his three subsequent attempts to accurately focus on that troublesome basketball succeeded only in taking hefty divots from the sporting field. As he packed his equipment into his station-wagon, Dr. Higginson felt guilt about his unintentional act of vandalism, mingled with the joy which accompanied his success.

FEBRUARY 29

As soon as the new machine, the third version of his original design, was completed, Bert delivered a short clumsy speech to the team of eight technicians now working for him, thanking them for the hours worked in the previous hectic weeks and allowing them an extended weekend commencing immediately. It was only 11.15 a.m. on a Wednesday but this was Bert Higginson's toy and he wanted to be the first to play with it.

Bert had calculated the range of his "Mark 3" to be about a kilometre, twenty times that of its predecessor, but calculations meant nothing, only results counted at this stage in his work.

Some weeks earlier Bert had realised that testing his improved machine would be a problem since he was now purely interested in transmitting over long distances, the problems of accuracy could be tackled any time.

He had never stolen anything before in his life, however Bert felt that the only logical way to test his invention at this advanced stage was to adjust his machine to maximum range and see what would appear in his "Houdini Cabinet". (The cabinet could and should have been replaced months before, but Bert still wished to retain something from his earlier work).

Bert's hand trembled and he closed his eyes as he flicked the switch to activate his machine for what he knew to be a reckless experiment. He might steal something valuable, cause a serious accident or, as he really feared, accidentally focus on a living object, perhaps a person. If a person was to appear in his cabinet Bert would have some fancy explaining to do. But what if his machine had focussed on only an arm, a leg or a head?

When he opened his eyes Bert was both relieved and disappointed to find only an orange occupying his cabinet. Relieved that no harm could possibly have been caused, apart from perhaps a shock to anyone viewing, by the disappearance of a piece of fruit but disappointed because it would be virtually impossible to trace its source and thereby determine his machine's range.

It was now approaching midday and Bert was for the first time since sending his staff home positive he knew the correct steps to take; first he would have an orange for lunch and try his machine again hoping to pick up something "traceable".

A scalpel used by one of Bert's technical team was soon cleaned on his sleeve and, after pondering for some time on a matter which always perplexed him; why his electricians insisted on using surgical equipment, Dr Higginson proceeded to dissect this lunch. It was immediately obvious that this orange was not an orange. Externally the resemblance to an orange was excellent although Bert later discovered that there was no indication that this piece of fruit had ever been attached to a tree or anything else for that matter. Internally it was not segmented and resembled an apple, although the flesh had a peculiar greenish tinge and it smelled strongly of passionfruit after being cut. Bert reasoned that such a fruit could not be natural as it contained no seeds and therefore, logically, could not propagate.

The only explanation which Bert was able to suggest to himself was that he had focussed on a bowl of fruit and somehow jumbled three or four items to produce a... "hybrid" and "bloody mess" were the terms which came to mind.

Obviously Bert Higginson was unable to resist the temptation to try again, as the directional control on his machine was not yet completed and he was "grabbing in the dark" as the head of his technical team "Candy" Cary described this sort of experiment (only Candy knew that this form of experimentation would take place before the direction-finder was complete), Bert had to physically move his machine across the laboratory before his second transmission. Wherever his machine was originally focussed, Bert reasoned, there was no longer anything to transmit.

While he realised he must use his machine again Bert was now extremely nervous, until now he had always felt "in control", his results were pretty much as anticipated, his calculations had checked out, but no calculation could account for the "orange".

Practically no physical effort was involved in operating the switch on his machine but Bert stood gulping air and preparing himself like a weight-lifter attempting a personal best before moving his index finger the all important centimetre.

A large house plant in an ordinary reddish-brown unglazed flower pot appeared in the cabinet, a plant with a red stem supporting blue leaves which felt cold and metallic, growing in iridescent pink soil. Bert cut his hands as he studied the remarkable piece of flora, deep cuts as though from razor blades; however he could never locate any sharp edges to the plant and as the cuts healed



within minutes he finally wondered if his wounds were merely in his imagination.

MARCH 1

Roger "Candy" Cary sat and stared at the three objects before him; the orange (now sadly decayed), the plant and a small "plastic" stool about the right size for an eight year old child and yet too heavy for him to lift. Candy was confused by these items but more than anything furious with his boss, Bert Higginson. Since joining Bert's team only three months earlier he had become a close friend as well as head technician, or as he put it, "The bloke-who-can-get-things-done". Candy knew that he would be called back to work before the remainder of Bert's grumpy but diligent little group, but this was just too much. Having arrived home presumably for the weekend at 11.45 a. m. on Wednesday he had expected to be left alone until at least Friday morning. Candy was one of those odd-ball science fiction nuts you occasionally have the misfortune to meet and when he started working for Bert Higginson back in November he had been on page 105 of something called The Stars Like Dust by ..... somebody or other. He was now on page 107 and the local library was becoming impatient. Candy needed to lose himself in the "inky blackness of the Horsehead Nebula" for an hour or so, but he could get no peace at all.

A cryptic phone call demanding your immediate presence anywhere at three o'clock in the morning is never pleasant, but when you have to "go to work" apparently as part of some sick joke it is quite enough to try the patience, particularly if, like Candy, you have very little patience to try.

Arriving at Bert Higginson's laboratory (it now seemed to be a laboratory, not a bakery) shortly before 4 a.m., Candy had at first been concerned for the boss' welfare. He looked... like Columbo on TV, but now Candy was wondering if Dr. Higginson had confused today's date, March 1st, with the first day of the next month.

Bert had led Candy to the three items before him and questioned succinctly. "What do you make of these?" He then wandered through the door muttering something about coffee being a stimulant under his breath. Bert Higginson would never become hooked on the harder drugs such as nicotine or alcohol.

When Bert returned, looking more of a mess than before as he had an impressive coffee stain down the white lab coat he always wore while working (his scientist's coat) he was not prepared for the tirade of abuse from his ex-friend Roger Cary.

"How dare you bring me at here at this time of day to look at some rotten fruit, a dyed bush and a heavy kids chair?" was about the first of Candy's lengthy and impassioned speech fit to chronicle, all that preceeded this was pretty colourful stuff. Bert Higginson then did what he should have done some time earlier, that is, explain that he had "picked up" these objects from... well, somewhere. Candy sat staring at his boss during the explanation in complete silence except for the "What kind of a half-witted brainless pathetic fool do you..." which escaped from between clenched teeth at one stage. Bert didn't seem to notice this outburst and he did manage to keep a straight face. Suddenly it dawned on Candy Cary that his story just possibly might be true.

The technician now studied the objects before him with a completely different attitude. Perhaps this was not a rather poor sort of a practical joke. It could have been an important accident, the type of thing which could achieve more



than endless hours of research by highly trained and skilled personnel. If so, he was fortunate to have been in any way involved. Unlike Bert Higginson, Candy Cary considered there to be five objects before him, not three:--

1. A decaying piece of fruit - nothing could be determined from that.
2. A house plant of unusual colour -- he was no expert, but felt sure that this could have been 'engineered', if that was after all Bert's idea of humour, most primary school kids have made red or blue celery by standing a stalk in a container of ink.
3. A flowerpot - an ordinary clay flowerpot obtainable anywhere, including, no doubt, Bert's garden at home.
4. The soil in that flowerpot - it was pink if he stood here but noticeably "pinker" if he stood further away. That he could not explain.
5. A child's stool - a simple stool made obviously of brown plastic, but unnervingly heavy, no explanation.

Against his better judgement and despite the fear of being made look "a complete and utter nong", Candy Cary apologised to Bert. He had no better explanation of these objects than the one given by his boss - they had been picked-up by the machine from... nowhere very local.

The two men spent the next two hours bouncing suggestions off each other as to the source of the "pick-ups, as they had now agreed to call them. This was just about the only point on which they had agreed.

Candy suggested that a malfunctioning of the machine could have transformed quite ordinary objects into those before them. Bert took this as some form of personal insult and it seemed that fisticuffs would ensue. Fortunately both men realised that Bert, who had been working by now for twenty-four straight hours, was exhausted, frustrated and subconsciously still aggrieved by Candy's earlier refusal to believe his story. They calmed down, sort of.

Next Candy suggested "time-warping", a term very popular in his favourite form of literature and given a different meaning, or no meaning at all, by the many unsuccessful authors who considered SF writing easier than the "orthodox" story. Perhaps the fruit, plant and soil were future developments or merely the product of two or three hundred years of natural evolution captured somehow by the machine. Bert's only reply was a look, the kind of look usually reserved for snails found wandering across a plate of salad - another suggestion dismissed.

Bert's final idea was to do with an abstract and totally unproven theory of parallel-worlds and the breaking of dimensional barriers. He remembered reading something along these lines many years earlier. This train of thought was abandoned when he realised he had read of this phenomenon while aged twelve, in a Superman comic.

As no further ideas were forthcoming it was eventually agreed to once again move the machine half-way across the room and flick the switch. Candy and Bert had both decided that, if nothing else, operating the machine was in no way dangerous. Therefore, why not.

Discussing the matter months later Hubert Higginson and Roger Cary agreed that the first impression they had of the next transmission was that of meeting a distinguished, elderly but mentally alert man. Staring at him, he "felt" like a tiny old man. He stood erect but was no more than a metre tall. His hands and face were covered in short fur, grey on the hands, grey and white on the face.

no more than that could be seen as he was fully clothed.

It wore.. no, sorry,.. He wore a bright blue sports jacket with a laughably flamboyant red 'tie' (a big bulky thing) which matched the large buttons on the jacket. His trousers appeared to be made of the pink soil Bert and Candy had examined earlier, with a colour which stubbornly refused to settle on any one shade. His brown leather shoes indicated a most peculiar triangular three toed foot, wide and straight across the front and tapering to a pointed heel. To complete this ensemble this.. "elegant gentleman" carried cane, presumably for appearance only, as it was pencil-lead thin and could not have taken much weight, not judging by its appearance anyway.

Neither Bert nor Candy seemed capable of movement, both men simply stood staring at their guest for some seconds and it was therefore left to him to make the first move. After glancing around the room for no more than two or three seconds, the tiny "man" took a step forward, placing him against the door of the glass cabinet and rapped the glass confidently with his cane, he wanted the door opened. Candy Cary who was still too shocked to consider his actions logically hurried across to the cabinet which imprisoned their guest and opened it. It was almost a reflex action.

The little old... man calmly and silently stepped from the cabinet and began to examine every single object in the room, with the exception of those situated high above his head. Perhaps his eyesight was poor, as he took the trouble to move within centimetres of each object he examined or perhaps, as was more likely, he was waiting for some form of action from his "captors", who were doing excellent impressions of wax models. Bert was now sitting open-mouthed on his work-bench and Candy had not moved since opening the cabinet. Neither took their eyes from their guest.

The inquisitive and somehow extremely dignified visitor touched only three objects as he moved around the large room and it was plain by his calm steady actions that he was reclaiming his own property as he placed the plant and stool (which he lifted without effort) by the cabinet which had given him his dramatic entrance some three minutes earlier. The orange was now a gooey mess and although he at first claimed it also, he had then dropped it on the floor after giving a very human what-the-hell shrug of his tiny and apparently frail shoulders.

It became quite obvious that the... whatever-he-was was fed up with being stared at by a pair of stationary hosts, when he sat on his stool and began to return the stares. It was up to Bert and Candy to take some action.

Bert signalled to Candy to follow him into the next room, used as a lunchroom, and both men were somewhat relieved to leave their guest alone in the laboratory and close the door behind them. As they left the room the elderly gent, who had shown no fear of either man despite being only half their height and presumably about one fifth their weight, withdrew what looked to be a newspaper from his trouser pocket and settled down for a read. All letters on the page were squares, but were of different colours and sizes.

"Well, say something," growled Candy at his boss. "Why did we come in here and leave him in there? We can't learn anything this way."

"I wanted to discuss him with you, and it didn't seem right to do it in front of him," replied Bert with a nervous giggle, and then both men again lapsed for some time into total silence.

In an attempt to ease this seemingly endless and embarrassing barrage of



# GRIMESISH GRUMBLINGS -

## A COOK'S TOUR OF THE U.S.A.

A BERTRAM CHANDLER

Series characters tend to take after their creators. Grimes has a nickname - Gutsy Grimes - that refers to his love for good food in large quantities rather than to his courage. However - and fortunately - I am by no means the only science fiction personality capable of doing damage with knife and fork or chopsticks. Such meals as Susan and I enjoyed in the company of SF fans or pros whilst in the U.S.A. were memorable occasions. So, come to that, were quite a few when we had only each other for company.

Perhaps our first distinctly pleasurable gastronomic experience was shortly after our boarding the North West Orient flight from Honolulu to Los Angeles. Robin Johnson had cooked up a rather complicated deal for us which kept our expenditure on fares well below the sum of money we had been allocated by the Chicon Committee but ensured that all our journeying within the U.S.A. would be at least comfortable - and, at times, luxurious. This was to fly from Sydney to Honolulu by PanAm, by what that airline euphemistically calls Cabin Class. (Tourist Class, by any name, is airborne squalor. But since my retirement from the Service of the Union Steam Ship Company of New Zealand, in whose employ I was often obliged to make trans-Tasman flights as well as those around Australia and up and down New Zealand, that is the way I usually travel. When you have to pay your own fare it's not the same. From Honolulu, and eventually back to Honolulu, we had one of those fly anywhere 45 day deals, First Class.

We disembarked in Honolulu, travel worn, passed through Immigration and Customs and finally boarded the North West Orient 747. First of all we were impressed by the almost sinfully wasteful spaciousness of the First Class cabin. Before we had time to take it all in a dear old lady pressed upon each of us a tall condensation-bedewed mai tai. (A mai tai is a rum-based Hawaiian tipple, with plenty of incorporated fruit salad and decorated with an orchid.)

The reference to the "dear old lady" might mystify readers. We, too, are still somewhat mystified by North West Orient's First Class Cabin Staff policy on what must be that airline's glamour runs, from California to the Orient and back, with Honolulu as one of the stops. The flights inside the borders of the mainland U.S.A. have normal staffing.

As I have said, it was a "dear old lady" who twisted our arms as soon as we sat down. She could have been Mrs. Slocum from ARE YOU BEING SERVED? .. but

much sweeter natured. The other female flight attendant was in the same age group. The male flight attendant could have been Mr. Humphreys, also from ARE YOU BEING SERVED?, but almost at retiring age. Had I been feeling stronger after the first leg of the flight probably, MCP that I am, I should have pined for the more usual glamourpusses but, as it was, I thoroughly enjoyed being coddled and pampered by the old dears. The meal we had, a sort of brunch consisting of crudites, a passable quiche and a lush sundae, was a great improvement on PanAm's plastic food in Cabin Class.

In LA Susan and I went our separate ways for a while, she to stay with girlhood friends and myself to stay at the Hollywood Roosevelt (not a too bad hotel and boasting a very good swimming pool). That first night I went, with one of my long time Faithful Readers, to the nearby Hungry Tiger for dinner. Among the items on the menu was Fried Potato Skins. I'd heard about this delicacy and thought that I'd like to try it. As far as I can gather the potatoes are first baked in the normal manner, in their skins. They are then cut in two and most of the pulp scooped out. The cavities are filled with shrimp &c in a cream sauce and the half potatoes fried, skin side down. The end result can be recommended. (I had it again, and Susan for the first time, at Scampi's, one of the Hyatt Hotel's restaurants in Chicago.)

An eatery that I used often to frequent when I was last in Hollywood is The Hamburger Hamlet. It has improved. There is a wide variety of hamburgers - the differences being mainly in the sauces poured over them. The improvement is that now you can order your hamburger - which is a big one - the way you want it, well-done, medium or rare. The draught beer is still served in what are almost goldfish bowls. Other meals in LA were an excellent Chinese dinner with the Blochs, another one with Mike Hodel of Station KPHK prior to my being interviewed on his programme and another one with Joe Billings, my long time Faithful Reader. All of these were good but there was nothing on the menu worthy of special comment.

In Chicago, as I have said, Scampi's serves the famous fried potato skins. A favourite place for the conventioners' breakfasts was a small French-style café situated in the underground shopping complex below the hotel. This served delicious croissants as well as eggs and bacon cooked in the French manner.

Perhaps the most outstanding meal in Chicago was at a Szechuan restaurant not far from the hotel, where the Chicon Committee entertained the GoHs to dinner. The new - as far as we were concerned - delicacy was water snails done in the Chinese manner. (The restaurant has its own snail farm.) Snails done in the French manner tend to have their flavour masked by the sauce. These Chinese snails tasted of snail - and none the worse for that!

After Chicago we were on our own for a while, in New Orleans. Our hotel was in the French quarter. (Paddington with a French accent...) The streets, with their iron lace balconies on either side, were fascinating. We enjoyed meals of local delicacies - shrimp, catfish, oysters and so on. After one tour - New Orleans by Night - we finished up at the Café du Monde for Creole coffee (chicory-flavoured! and very good) and beignets (the New Orleans version of the doughnut, very light and liberally coated with powdered sugar).

The one truly memorable meal, however, was Breakfast at Brennan's, which was part of our hotel package deal. Brennan's is one of the famous New Orleans restaurants. Their breakfast - so-called; we had it as a brunch - is sufficiently filling to last one until breakfast at a more usual time the following morning. We made pigs of ourselves on baked apples with cinammon, Oeufs Huzzard (sort of like Oeufs Benedict but different - and better) followed by bananas



marinated in rum then flambé<sup>1</sup>, the fire being extinguished by a generous scoop of superior ice cream...

New York was next. Our first culinary experience was at the Carnegie Delicatessen, which was almost next door to our hotel. Although this was not Susan's first time in New York she had never fed in a New York deli. So on the (Sunday) morning after our arrival we patronised the Carnegie for breakfast. Scrambled eggs with onion - not bad at all. Then she saw that the bloke at the next table was tucking in to a plate of Nova Scotia smoked salmon with cream cheese. She said that before leaving New York she must have the same.



A little while later we were going to a show and so having an early dinner. We went to the Carnegie. Susan ordered her heart's desire. But the dinner time portions were far larger than those at breakfast time. She stared, goggle-eyed, at the plate. I did too. Then my order - a turkey, smoked tongue and corned beef sandwich - came. The waiter threw his arm around my shoulders and said, "You thought hers was big... Look at yours!"

Luckily we were returning briefly to the hotel before going to the theatre so were able to improvise a refrigerator with the ice bucket and a plastic bag. The second half of my sandwich made a quite substantial supper for the pair of us. (Susan, I have to report, did not leave enough of her meal to justify a request for a doggy bag.)

My agent, Scott Meredith, had promised us a slap-up dinner in New York. Very unfortunately he was indisposed during our stay but had deputed my personal groom in his stable to do the honours. The meal was at The Leopard, one of those small, very select - and probably very expensive - restaurants. Young Henry Dunow, Susan and I really enjoyed it. (After all, none of us was paying for it.) There was no menu; the stately maitre de just came to stand by our table to tell us what was available for starters. The right wine was poured without its being ordered. There was a similar procedure for the soup, then for

the main course, then for the sweet. Notwithstanding all the pleasurable ritual we did manage to discuss quite a lot of business.



Another day the Wollheims took us to their favourite French restaurant, and another day Susan Allison (now science fiction editor for Berkley) took us to her favourite Japanese establishment.

Our final stay on mainland U.S.A. was at San Francisco. Jack Vance tried to get his revenge for the Korea House in Sydney. He and Norma took us to a new, well-spoken of Chinese restaurant, China House. One of the whose specialties is jellyfish. He ordered this, obviously with no intention of trying it himself. I think that he was rather disappointed when Susan and I licked the platter clean as far as it is possible when using chopsticks...

What really made our evening, however, was when the owner/manageress came to our table to lecture us. She looked like a Red Guard - but a Red Guard in reverse, as it were. She held forth at great length on the vast superiority of Chinese food in the U.S.A. to Chinese food in China. She extolled the virtues of American capitalism and denigrated Chinese communism. When Susan tried to say something about Hong Kong - to which city she seems to manage an annual business trip - she was ruthlessly swept to one side and trampled underfoot. When Norma tried to say that the two males in our party were well-travelled writers, one American and one Australian, she suffered a like fate...

It was a fascinating performance.

Our next meal with the Vances was a very good lunch, with very good wine, at one of the wineries, its main building an imitation French chateau, in the Napa Valley. All of us made pigs of ourselves on the excellent, freshly baked sourdough bread. My fettucini with seafood was very good. But it was the "floor show" that really made the meal.

We were seated on the terrace, overlooking the vineyards. There were flowers in the foreground, with butterflies fluttering around them. Then I saw something that I thought, at first, was a large, brown flying beetle. I looked, then said, "Is that a hummingbird?" It was, the first of many. Until then I'd thought that hummingbirds were confined to the tropics. After our return home I've done some checking up and discovered that there are even some species living above the Arctic Circle.

There was one regional delicacy that I'd rather set my heart on sampling again but, somehow, didn't get around to. That was the famous po'boy sandwich of New Orleans. When I was last in that city - 52 years ago - a poor boy sandwich cost 10¢. Now it is \$3.50. That's inflation for you.

A poor boy sandwich is a loaf of French bread cut in two longitudinally and stuffed with meat, cheese, pickles, salad &c &c and &c. When I was 18 I could manage with ease and still have room for afters. This time I looked at those on display and decided, reluctantly, that such a snack would be well beyond my capacity. Susan, with so many other and more interesting goodies to try at least once, was not in the mood to go shares with me. As long as she was getting her real American cheesecake with blueberry topping she was happy.

- A. Bertram Chandler.



quiet, Candy Cary eased the door open about three centimetres to have another peek at their ever-alert guest who acknowledged his presence with a casual gesture and returned to his paper.

"You know," said Candy, now desperate to say something to Bert, "when he stands there with that cane of his he reminds me of Charlie Chaplan."

"Funny, he makes me think of what Bugs Bunny will look like when he reaches his eighties, except our friend doesn't have much if anything in the way of ears." It was this reply from Bert Higginson which christened the little man Bugs.

Somehow having a name for their visitor made both men feel more comfortable in his presence and, as neither had anything to say which they considered confidential, they returned to the laboratory to see what Bugs was up to.

Bugs had finished his own "newspaper" and had now obtained another, a "Sun" from Bert's wastepaper-basket and while he didn't actually smile it was obvious that he was delighted by its pictures. After completing a quick perusal of this 'paper Bugs walked across to Candy and held the newspaper out at arms length, his head cocked in a peculiar, questioning manner.

"I think he's asking if he can keep it," ventured Bert and Candy, who had also interpreted this action in this way, smiled and nodded to the little man who, obviously offended, threw the 'paper to the floor and returned to his stool.

Bert Higginson cautiously picked up the "Sun" and handed it to the little man, shaking his head vigorously. The paper was courteously accepted. "And don't you forget, Candy Cary, never nod your head to our friend Bugs when you mean Yes," admonished Bert with mock severity. Both men... no, all three men in the room were now quite at ease.

Candy had just reminded Bert of his responsibilities as a host (a guest who has come to stay for an unspecified period needs a bed, a change of clothes and suitable food and drink) when Bugs suddenly became interested in Bert's machine. Until now Bugs had touched nothing except the discarded newspaper without first seeking permission in some way; his manners were exemplary. In one corner of the laboratory was a small box which Bert used to hold papers of no value which he was afraid to throw out. Being a messy worker there was always the chance he would mistake for a valueless piece of scrap a calculation which would take weeks to repeat, hence the "better-keep-it-just-in-case-box". Bugs had selected two foolscap sheets from this box, both represented problems which Bert had solved early in this theoretical work. The information on these sheets, should anyone be able to interpret it, was so basic to his experimentation and proven so conclusively that Bert felt he could throw these papers away, almost.

The small man "offered" both sheets of paper to Candy and Bert in turn - he was trying to ascertain their authorship. Bert raised his hand and Bugs, who had now produced a pencil - a pink iridescent pencil - from his breast pocket, started to add squares of different sizes to one page which he then appeared to sign with a series of rapidly drawn squares before handing it to Bert. Whether Bugs was proving, disproving, completing or merely ridiculing the earlier calculations will probably never be known, but his opinion of Bert's second set of workings was made quite obvious when he methodically tore the foolscap sheet into eight equally-sized pieces and dropped it into what he knew to be a wastepaper-basket.

By now both Bert and Candy regarded Bugs as a kindly, if somewhat egocentric, old man and were therefore startled not only by his actions but also

his speed as he grabbed a screwdriver and began to tamper with Bert's machine. Unlike those inventions of mad-scientists etc. seen on television, real machines while still in the experimental stages are not packaged neatly in metal cabinets, All of the "works" were quite unprotected.

Bugs was merely re-calibrating certain mechanisms and adjusting faulty workmanship in the device, but at the speed he was working both man watching assumed him to be vandalizing their work and moved forward to stop him. It was quite a comical scene as Bugs, swinging his cane menacingly above his head, drove Bert and Candy back into the corner. It was like watching a chihuahua terrorizing a pair of great danes. But he was not going to be stopped. Eventually, once it became obvious that no serious damage was being done to their work, Candy and Bert both sat cross-legged on the floor and gazed in amazement at the furry little gentleman who worked on their machine with such confidence and speed, the earlier misunderstanding forgotten. All three men were again on friendly terms.

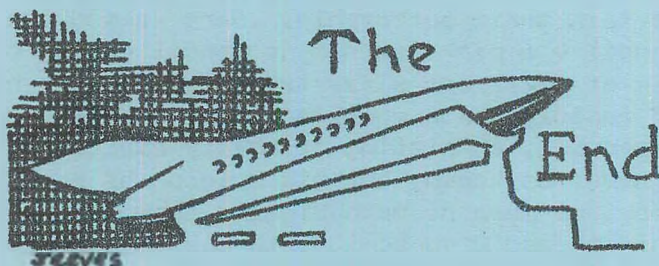
Suddenly, before Bert and Candy could get to their feet from their positions on the floor, Bugs placed his stool and plant in the cabinet, sat on the stool, waved good-bye to his friends and, using his cane to flick the switch on the main control, transmitted himself away.

Bert and Candy spent the next three days "un-reversing" the machine which had suffered no ill effects from its adjustment. They refused to admit that in some ways it had been improved add when they had it pretty much as it had been, Roger Cary said to his boss, "I suppose you realize we have no proof at all that this machine has ever picked up anything. Even the ooze which was once your marvelous orange has disappeared."

"A damn' good thing," was Bert's reply. He had decided to keep quiet about recent events: he didn't want anyone thinking his experimental results were not tying up with his theoretical calculations. It's pretty hard to get the funds needed to continue experimenting even when things are goint to plan.

Bert still had a lot of work to do. The next demonstration of his device was due in a week and he now realized how important it was to have the directional control complete. He would look pretty silly if he picked up a "who-knows-what" from "who-knows-where."

- Don Fidge .





# RIGHT FOR THE WRONG REASONS, THESE KLARBYNIANS

smelling his breath  
solemnly agreeing its badness  
the smell of devils dwelling  
within him born of his evil as  
worms are in cheese

smiling apparently obsequious  
as old-time manservant to his masters  
he promised gladly to accept  
and undergo their exorcism  
regardless how painful

their methods to his alien  
corporate structure  
first though he please must be  
allowed to show them the chamber  
his people used to deep freeze

and crystallize out in harmlessly  
trappable inert form their own  
revenant possessors  
so saying guided the elder court  
into the cryochamber where

his spare crew lay frost-glittering  
as iceplant stems silhouetted  
against the sun and as they gasped  
in horror dogged  
the lock behind and trapped them in

that'd teach them  
to crack wise with an Earthman  
they could die of cold first  
or fear who cared now to establish  
control of their left-leaderless tribesmen

whiplash his devilish grin

- STEVE SNEYD

# TAKING THE COMMANDING HEIGHTS

here the snake sheds  
human skin

the city so glorious  
carved all from one flawless

emerald it will if needed  
house our whole star fleet and still

leave room for enough colonists  
to repopulate the planet it swells from

in relative proportion say as  
owl's radar horn face to

the complete owl  
no wonder they fought so fiercely

to retain the place  
no wonder our more backward

gutterscraping foot-troopers  
claimed they believed

they had died in the battle and  
gone straight to heaven as it says

in the scrappy superstitions they miscall  
religions

a pity there are no more  
survivors of the conquered than

this single pair  
ah they were beautiful until

our analytical techniques  
triggered the sloughing phase



the woman's shape even as a cast-off  
cloak so beautiful

there is no other word beautiful  
beyond belief i shall attempt

to remove when the scientists'  
attention is distracted

keep it for myself  
a figurehead' perhaps for my ship or maybe

i will make  
some slave i purchase wear it

when we mate  
that skin only i wish

to retain of this place  
memory of the great green

glittering translucent  
chambers where our ships flit

like fleas our glory  
shrunk to nothing

in comparison that i do not wish  
to haunt me or the tawdry speed

our soldiers changed from  
worshippers to looters

give me a cowpat instead  
a throne like so would better suit

STEVE SNEYD

## RON'S ROOST - Continued.

The next point of discussion is what can be seen surfacing in future fanzines is the format of the zines - will they be typeset, typewritten or will a VDU be used, coupled with a typewriter, be it daisy-wheel or dot-matrix? We can see the answers to some of these in the current crop of zines. With the rapidly rising cost of postage, the smaller typefaces are being used in increasing amounts. Several fans, including Bruce Gillespie and Neville Angove, are using typesetting. Just how far are they ahead with costs/coverage?

Both SFC and THE CYGNUS CHRONICLER are US 4to; other Aussie zines are either A4 or 4to. At a rough count, SFC gets about 1400 words to the page, TCC about the same. SFC is almost all print, TCC about 6/10 print. SFC runs to some 15 pp per issue, TCC 20 - almost the same (21,000 words per issue).

The A4 mimeo zines run (taking Q36 as average) some 765 words per page, about 33 pages of print per ish, with an issue running total wordage about 25,245 words. The 4to zines, taking THE MENTOR as average, have about 663 words per page, with about 29 pages of print, giving a total wordage per issue of some 19327.

What this shows is that it does not matter what sized page you use, you still get the word count - and that typesetting does save postage. However, unless you own a composing machine/VDU computer setup, I don't think it worth the extra cash for typesetting. A good typewriter face is just as good with offset. Of course both Bruce and Neville are getting a more professional look to their zines, which is obviously what they want.

Sooner or later, THE MENTOR is going offset. Just as soon as I go through the 20 reams of blue duplicating paper I have left. Hopefully by that time I'll have the bugs out of the 320 and can get as good a job with the offset as this is for mimeo. - Ron.

-----ooOoo-----

## FANZINES RECEIVED:

### AUSTRALIAN -

A'AKA I - Seth Lockwood, 19 Coleby St., Balcatta, W.A. 6021.  
GOBSTOPPER I - As Above.  
THYME 19 & 10 - Roger Weddall, 106 Rathdowne St., Carlton, Vic. 3053.  
FORERUNNER V5, n.5,6 - Shayne McCormack, PO Box A491, Sydney South, NSW 2000.  
AGRO 3 - Agro, PO Box 310, Smithfield, NSW 2164.  
THE CYGNUS CHRONICLER 14 - Neville Angove, PO Box 770, Canberra City, ACT 2601.  
ORNITHOPTER 10 - Leigh Edmonds, PO Box 433, Civic Square, Canberra, ACT 2608.  
WEBERWOMAN'S WREVENGE V2, n.3 - Jean Weber, c/- CSIRO, Box 333 (rest as per Herman).  
WAHF 10 - Jack Herman, Box 272, Wentworth Bldg., Sydney Uni, NSW 2006.

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### OVERSEAS -

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW - Dick Geis, USA.  
NOCTILUCA MICROPOLITANA 1 - Bruno Baccelli, Italy.





SPACED OUT!... In Love?





## The R. E R. Dept.



Shayne McCormack  
PO Box A491,  
Sydney South,  
NSW 2000

Well, it looks like you've gotten a LoC out of me - or at least Jack Herman has. Its time to Stand Up and Be Counted.

Yes, I did suggest to a number of people (six I think - I really do my ballot stuffing in grand style, don't I) that it would be a nice idea if DATA made it to the nominations ballot. Why? Well mainly because Susan Clarke has been my friend for around 12 years and has produced more fanzines than most of us (probably including Jack) as well as keeping media fandom alive when at times she barely had enough money to feed herself and her children. She has had to struggle against apathy from within her own Club and cynicism from without, yet she still plugs away, year after year, retaining, somehow, her sanity and her love of fandom, and just as a byword, putting out one of the most readable zines I receive - DATA. I thought that, considering some of the stuff that's been nominated for Ditmars, it would be nice to see a quality media zine up there - and it would also be a nice buzz for Sue, and some small repayment for the years of thankless work she's put into the zine.

This is, of course, no excuse. I should be given a White Feather, barred from the Gentlefans Smoking and Cud-Chewing Club, turn in my corrector fluid jar and never darken fandom's door again. Especially considering all of the six or so fans I spoke to have a like appreciation of DATA, wanted to nominate it anyhow, but had no idea how to, since general fandom has this nice way of never letting media fandom know when nominations are going on.

And yes, Jack, they did nominate it with the intention of getting in onto the nominations ballot. Excuse me, but what else are nominations for, pray tell? Hmmm?

I don't recall the incident fully that brought about Jack's parting barrage of my thinking it was a great joke on fandom - but of course if Jack says it happened that way, then It Must Be True. Jack has never poked fun at the Temples and Idols of Fandom, he is a True Believer. I may have, in my sometimes foolish and loose-lipped manner, told him of my talk with the few media fans who actually nominated DATA - and of course handling the incident in such a light manner was obviously wrong of me. I'm not sure that I like my conversations being repeated in fanzines in such a way, either.

Media fandom is in the process of creating their own National Convention with their own National Awards. General Fandom may now sink back into the comfortable padded seats of their own closed fannish rooms and sigh in relief.

Mr Mapson  
PO Box 7087,  
Cloisters Sq.,  
W.A. 6001

On Diane Fox's story: its main fault is that it is too short. Diane spends over half the paragraphs describing in (rather too) extensive detail the various stones, and then we are given only a glimpse of the hunter. The lack of emotion is also evident, except in a single sentence. It is only a suggestion, but I feel the story would be improved by writing it mainly (or solely) from the hunter's POV in the first person. I did like the story, though (honest) through mainly its juxtaposition of a well known image of the mind (see JG Ballard's The Crystal World) into a fantasy surround.

On Chandler and pet corns: when I opened a new bank account recently (at a very well known bank) I showed them a birth extract some ten + years old (perfectly acceptable at the Dept of Social Security where I work). They refused to accept this, preferring instead to see a bank book (totally unacceptable by the DSS)! Has Mr Chandler considered that certain persons' pet corns might be people with numerous pet corns?

In reply to Richard Faulder's comments on classics & the need for prerequisite knowledge to understand sf: by his (seeming) definition of 'classics' as those books overwhelmingly popular with 'average readers' Mills & Boon must be high art and Dostoevsky a BOF. Classics are those books which, after a long period of time, continue to be relevant (though often after reassessment) to people. Books that are overwhelmingly popular will (mostly) eventually become quaint historical curiosities and literary cul-de-sacs. As to "the need for an appropriate background", this is not necessary. What is necessary is a competent explanation from the author. I am not familiar with the seafaring life of the turn of the century, nor colonialism of that time, but can still enjoy Joseph Conrad.

I had actually already encountered Jack Herman's info on Ms Julian May after writing my LoC. This still does not invalidate my comments though - a rose by any other name would write like PJF.

Raymond L Clancy  
494 Midland Ave.,  
Staten Island,  
New York, 10306,  
U.S.A.

I understand myth as being what John Alderson says it is. Pity my dictionary says just the opposite. It is a good one, but Lexicographer and liar are almost synonyms. My respects to Mr Alderson.

In my neighborhood, we are worse off for food than A Bertram Chandler. Our canned beans have changed. Our corned beef in cans comes mostly from sub-tropical Argentine beef. Inferior. The most terrible portent is that our fresh food is often as bad or worse than tinned stuff. That old world of which Chandler writes exists only for those here who own land on which to grow food, and who fish and hunt besides. I suppose the rich manage, and I have read good reports about Indonesia and Bulgaria. We want to teach them, God save the mark! Glad to have Yugoslavia added to my list. Some people should survive with or without silly frills.

The article by Jane Brooks has me properly awed. I hope the two projects she publicizes will be accomplished. Good luck with it, Australia!

Spaced Out reminded me of my latest reading - Mutant 59. This germ ate plastics, and after the Earth was saved from it, managed to hitch a ride to Mars.

I tied Centaur Courtship up to the myth matter. Wonder whether some professor doubts that bit of



history, especially as we have written witness to the initial belief of Indians here that the Conquistador and his mount were one.

Wonder whether you know why cholera, small-pox, et cetera, Ron. What happens today is more frightening. Now, in this land, we have millions of medical and surgical cripples, millions of "retarded" children, the creations of the medical and nursing professions, the drug manufacturers and their allies, organised crime. Some blessings!

Alderson thrilled me again. This nonsense about Thera stuck in my craw from the beginning. Faulder fascinates me. Wonder whether he ever considered that women bear children flat on their backs for the convenience of males, and that the position is the cause of suffering and risk.

We are now "enjoying" mass murder and suicide on our highways, due, I imagine, to medication of the vehicle drivers. Maybe I exaggerate. Vested interests do not furnish the numbers for their own destruction. That is a sane action, but I prefer the sanity of Peter Kells.



Peter Lempert  
c/- Agro  
PO Box 310,  
Smithfield,  
NSW 2164

Yes, I know The Mentor is available for a LoC, but at the moment, being new to fandom, I am observing. Some of the things in the letters are a bit beyond me at the moment.

Some rather interesting things were said about 'The Empty City'. What I want to know is, is there some sort of stigma attached to Western Australia? I don't see even if I lived on Mars whether that would make it more understandable to Richard Faulder.

I most certainly refuse to believe that a person of my limited education (4th Form, if you must know) can write a story which is totally alien to most people. All the answers they want are in the story. Perhaps if they read it twice...

Judith Hanna  
22 Denbigh St.,  
Pimlico,  
London SW1V 2ER  
U.K.

Thanks for the Mentor 38; and for the graphics credit which, however, I must disclaim. What I want to respond to in that issue is, as you might guess, John Alderson's article on The Historical Basis of Myth, which after all is to some extent a reply to my previous comments on a previous article of his....

Yeah, well... when the Bastard from the Bush mounts his mythological hobby-horse and starts galloping off madly in all directions, the result is, as ever, a right old bricolage of mare's-nests. If he stuck to just one subject, some such simple response as "I agree with John Alderson that..." or "I disagree with John Alderson that..." might be possible - or if he even stuck by his own statements. But no, he skips about like a spring lamb from methodology to Ned Kelly to cross-cultural comparison of myth to creation myths and the historicity of Genesis to the Aboriginal Djanggawul cycle to account

of the origin of fire, on to a most peculiar statement, "But the Queensland myths give us the identity of the gods of the Greeks (and most other people). They were simply the women", to the historicity of Prometheus, Herakles and Hera, finishing up in a tangle of yet more wild and varied assertions unsupported by anything approaching evidence: and what sort of case does he think he can make without evidence?

Not good enough, Mr Alderson. You have some reasonable statements in there, but you just don't support them. Nor do you stick to them. You say, for instance, "I am very aware of the integrated nature of society" (p.7). By that I take it you mean to imply that you are aware that a society's myths are an integral part of the nature of the society to which they belong, and relate to its other social institutions. Or do you? For that awareness doesn't prevent you from boldly wrenching myths (or legend or oral history) bodily from their social contexts to decorate your discourse.

Or again, he says "Science is bedevilled by fashionable theories, a nonsensical idea that one single theory can account for everything... I emphasise that there is truth in all these theories, but absolute truth in none." Again, a fair enough statement. But in the previous paragraph he's asserted his theoretical standpoint, "and I state categorically, if my methodology is wrong, so is that of Frazer... and I maintain this is classical usage" (p.3). Classical usage it may be, but to say as John does, that Fraser's methodology is that of "virtually every other anthropologist who has ever used myth" is entirely incorrect.

Frazer was an outstanding 'armchair anthropologist' at the turn of the century, but since those days, Bronislaw Malinowski invented real anthropological field work, which means making a long (six-month minimum) stay amongst a people, taking down detailed and comprehensive field notes, not just about striking oddities in belief or custom but about all aspects of their way of life, and so building up an ethnographic description of a society as a functioning organism. Frazer, working before Malinowski, had to glean his information from less reliable accounts of the "A Journal of my Travels among Savages" type, penned by amateur gentleman whose knowledge of the said Savages was mostly what the local missionary or colonial administrator had told them over drinks, supplemented by the local colour noticed during a stroll through the village, or memoirs or (sometimes) learned papers produced by the missionaries and administrators themselves. It all had the Vanceian flavour of striking and exotic oddities in belief and custom held up against our own culturally conditioned preconceptions. Frazer had no choice but to make what he could of such unreliable material as was available to him; John Alderson has less excuse for relying on his intuition rather than on available evidence - that may have been acceptable back in Frazer's day when there was little else to work on, but these days suggests a wilful and perverse retreat from logic and good sense. After all, even when John has read such academically approved books as the Berndts on the Djanggawul cycle, what he makes of them bears no necessary resemblance to their authors' intentions. Having been lectured by the immensely pear-shaped, fruity-voiced R.M. Berndt on "Aboriginal-mythic beings" and sacred sites, I'm quite sure that Berndt did not "accept the historical basis" of the Djanggawul cycle in anything like John's whole-hog spirit.

"Now the cult exists and so do the cult sites and there is no reason whatever not to believe that the cult was not founded by the Djanggawul and the onus of proof otherwise must be on the sceptic" says John (underlining his). Not at all. It's the True Believer who should be able to frame a convincing case in support of his ideas: the whole basis of science is scepticism about what can't be proven. It's only blind faith, or childishness, to cry out otherwise. No,



Mr Alderson,, you can't get out of it that easy - if you claim to know who compiled Genesis, who wrote "the books of Moses", who was the serpent in the Garden of Eden, and that Hera, Herakles, and Prometheus were all real people, you can't expect us just to take your word for it; you must present us with the evidence on which you base these wild assertions. Nor should you simply gloss over the weak points in your theory - you should face up to them, tell us that you're aware of them and, if you can, refute them. No, you can't just assert that they don't matter. You must prove your case if you want us to accept it. After all, as you yourself state, "There's truth in all these theories, but absolute truth in none". And the only way anyone can judge of truth, validity or logic, is by looking at your exposition of your case. As far as I can see, John, you just haven't made anything approaching a case.

Well, Ron, I had intended to go on at length about why Ned Kelly, though a legend and oral tradition, is not a myth, nor are the First Fleet and Bateman's founding of Melbourne at all mythic: myth is not simply inexact popular history; I would like to know John's source for his assertions that folk-tales recently collected in Ireland are "virtually word-perfect with the same stories preserved in 14th century mss" - if this is so, I suspect the reason is that the tellers had in fact read the mss, or learned the stories from some hedge-scholar who had - Ireland's Gaelic culture, after all, was literate and some remained so despite the worst efforts of the English. I'd like to see John explain what he means by such statements as "Evidently the difference (between myth and history) lies, not in the historicity of the event, but in the telling of the story." Exactly what is the difference then? How does he get from one to the other? Once again, Mr Alderson, if you want to be taken seriously, you've going to have to do better than this mare's-nest of unsupported assertions.

Richard J. Faulder  
c/- Dept. Agric.,  
Yanco,  
NSW 2603.

You make a number of comments about the current state of fandom and the direction in which you see it heading. In a sense, though, I think your comments are the ones which fail to address reality. Basically, fandom has changed in the years since we entered it. What you see as cliquishness is probably closer to remaining true to what fandom was when we joined. Unfortunately, this can now be only partially successful at best. At the time of our initiation, now more than a decade ago, fandom, the sort of people who joined fandom were outsiders (although now necessarily loners - the very fact that they made efforts to meet like people argues the opposite) for whom reality was, in some qualified way or another, undesirable, where one couldn't relax. As the years have passed, and especially since the influx of post-Aussiecan fans, fandom has become more and more to resemble reality. A Western Australian fan remarked recently in print on the emotional tension she detected in the atmosphere at the last national convention. This was not evident in those early cons. If one is no better off for having gone to a convention, one might as well not go. (As far as attendance goes, I'm afraid you set a rather poor example these days.) It was always my understanding that the purpose of cons was basically to enjoy oneself, and I would find it hard to criticise someone for wanting to set up a con where this became more possible than now. (I suspect that this is no longer possible, but that's another matter.) I am familiar with the arguments that we need to attract fresh blood into fandom, but the position has been reached where we need to ask ourselves if the cons we have today are the occasions which will do that. (In an aside, I will defend apas. While it is true that they can, and do,

encourage cliqueishness, they also make possible a greater degree of ongoing communication among a wide group of fans than is the case when fanzines alone are circulating. I speak as a past, but not present, apa member.)

[I was, and still am, primarily a science fiction fan, and this fanzine mirrors that aspect. When I first entered fandom there were apparent only three major fans - John Foyster, John Baxter and Graham Stone. Shortly thereafter John Baxter gaffed and I concentrated my attention on the remaining two. Stone has an incredible wealth of knowledge of sf and past (pre-1965) Australian fandom and Foyster was at the time putting out SATURA. There was no club in NSW other than the Futurian Society (then mainly acting as a lending library) and the Melbourne SF Club was the only other active group in Australia. The only fanzine coming out of NSW (other than the newsletter of Stone's) was The Mentor. All the fan activity at that time was by sf fans (I'm including John Foyster in that, too).

In all my time in fandom I've been against cliquishness, including my time as SSFF Secretary. As to not attending cons - having a family slows you down, as well does putting out a bi-monthly zine. Of course I did co-organise one of the most successful cons of the last few years - MEDTREK. The main problem has been a shortage of the folding blue/green stuff, though.

Back in those early years - the late and middle 60's, fans were welcomed with open arms - this is what I think fandom is all about. - Ron.]

Much enjoyed Diane Fox's short-short. Beautiful imagery and handling of language, a most effective punchline. One of, if not the, best things she's done and a long way from A Roo'd Awakening.

I was intrigued by your attitude to the publication of contributor's addresses. Unless specifically asked otherwise, I would make a point of publishing same, since I operate on the principle that the contributor's deserve the opportunity for garnering a bit more egoboo by having someone else ask them for material. Your reasoning that it is laziness on the part of the editor for him to do so escapes me. A fan is a science-fiction fan if s/he calls himself one, regardless when the last time was that s/he read any.

[Like you're a virgin because you once were one? - Ron.]

Peter Kells is one of those people who are in the fortunate position of being able to indulge themselves by living a life closer to "nature". Fortunately for our natural environment, the number of people in this position are few. My mind recoils in horror at the prospect of the entire Australian population flocking to the kindly tropical and subtropical east coasts to live an idyllic rustic existence. It all comes back to the comment I tend to get rather tired of making, and I'm sure people get tired of hearing me make, that all these lifestyles which are less assaultive on nature would be universally possible if we drastically reduced the human population. Of course, the population would be reduced still further from time to time if it practiced "ahimsa" and "let the insects eat". When they go, there may be nothing left. A plague of non-specific feeders, such as locusts, cares not whether it is devouring a monoculture or a mixed crop - everything will be eaten. Further, even if you are mixed cropping, it could well be that a heavy attack by a specific pest, leading to the loss of one of the species in planting, would result in your diet being deficient in certain food elements. For any given set of environmental conditions, there will be only a limited number of species of food plants suitable for human consumption available. This is especially true in areas less conducive to the growth of plants than the idyllic environment in which Mr. Kells chooses to live. In any event, it makes environmental sense to keep losses to pests.



and diseases at a minimum, since the smaller these losses, the smaller the amount of the natural environment which must be sacrificed to cropping. "The balance of nature" does not necessarily favour the growth of plants. For example, our own native eucalypts grow much more vigorously in places like California and Israel, where they do not have to endure the crippling burden of insect adapted to feed on them, as they do in this country.

Clearly, Mr Kells has no appreciation of bio-engineering if he fails to find a batwinged horse improbable. Horns, yes - I certainly did not deny the possibility of a unicorn. Fabulous beasts have been flowing from my pen for years - at an age when other children were drawing stick people. I was drawing stick Selenites, complete with tentacles. I guess my basic objection to that drawing was an aesthetic one to its lack of independent originality. It was merely being different, or so I felt, simply for the sake of being different. His paragraph of merequine imagery was most enjoyable.

Artwork was again quite enjoyable this, but I did take exception to the centaress on the back cover. (Julie Vaux's Altamirran centaresses suffer from the same problem.) The logical place for the mammarys on such an organism is either just in front of the back legs, as in normal equines, or, more conveniently, at the front of the body, at about the level where the legs join the body (although this would render them vulnerable to being banged around by passing vegetation. Kerrie Han's version would do horrendous things to her from lumbar vertebrae every lactation, since the bioengineering which would make it possible to hold the humanoid torso upright would make it very difficult to bend over to permit suckling. If she knelt or sat down, then she would become vulnerable to predator attack while suckling. Maybe this is a symptom of my "dessicated intellectualism", but I prefer to regard it as a challenge to Ms Hanlon to make her creations both credible and attractive, rather than take the safe Jenny Hanniver approach to the constructive of strange organisms.

Diane Fox  
PO Box 129,  
Lakemba,  
NSW 2195

John Alderson's "Cow Power" was very workable sounding. There's only one place where it is likely to go wrong -- I refer of course to the human element. No matter how foolproof a system is, there will be eventually some fool with the ingenuity to prove it isn't (if ingenuity is the right word here). I suspect our present setup arose by the same method that water carves out great canyons -- by sinking to the lowest level, that is, the lowest common denominator of efficiency and IQ.

I didn't know about cast/wrought iron. What is the difference by the way? I've some idea that cast iron is simply allowed to "set" after coming out of the furnace, while wrought iron has more work done on it to toughen it?

Steve Sneyd's poem seems to be inspired by a painting - any details on this, please? A bunching of grotesque images, with a slightly bizarre theological speculation to conclude. Enjoyed it.

Julie's comments on musical instruments were most interesting, but not really relevant to the small scale versus large scale technology argument. I think that John meant to say that a superb musical instrument was as much a work of art as a work of technology. Art can use technology, and does with delight, but technology cannot create art if there is no great talent there in the first place. An instrument maker will use wood if it available, or metal if it is available and will try to achieve the extreme of perfection that his



subject can be brought to. A family of instrument makers might practice their art in a country town just as well as in a large industrial city - in fact in a non industrial setup there would be far more demand for musical instruments (re radio and TV so people would have to entertain themselves.

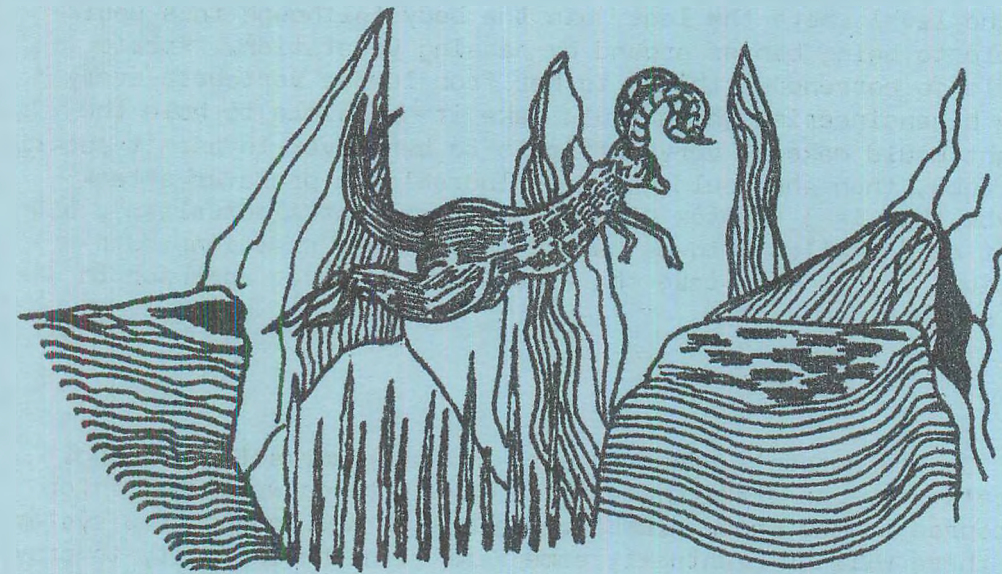
[I disagree with that, Diane. A large population in a small area needs technology to support it and the more people would use as that many instruments - look at present day: schools and institutes., for example. - Ron.]

Disagree with R. Mapson's comment that Peter Lempert is The Empty City calls H G Wells a bore - and agree with your comment, Ron, that the character does so. If I write a story about an incestuous cannibal rapist who bites the heads off kittens, does it therefore follow that I too indulge in these habits?

Maybe the arty critics who disliked Quest For Fire were turned off by the primitive squalor and brutality realistically depicted. (It didn't worry me - but too many people don't know how much they are controlled by conditioned reflexes, and by the prejudices of their own little groups. "Yuck! He's eating

insects! Without washing them!") This sort of reaction is suppressed and often a person wouldn't see it as the reason he/she disliked the film!

Richard Faulder's comment that not only the style, but the genre of a novel attracts or repels potential readers, is a good point. (The really great writers tend to



rise above genre limits - but few writers are great.) Another less noticed but perhaps more influential factor is the author's personality and outlooks on life. A wide range of 20th Century classics are depressing - depict a meaningless absurd universe from the point of view of characters who are decidedly anti-heroic, or even abject. (D.H. Lawrence's characters are definitely not abject, Hesse's are often mystics, intellectuals, etc, Joyce often depicts sympathetic and hopeful characters, even Kafka enlivens his dismal tales with bizarre humour - but there is this rather bleak background quality all the same. It had a lot to do with WWI and II and the depression, just as similar attitudes seem to have been sparked off by the Vietnam war and the nuclear threat.) For some reason academics seem attracted by pessimism - probably because the average academic heads a fairly pleasant life compared with the average, say, factory worker, and perhaps feels that the inequality should be balanced somehow.

I don't think that a closed-cycle economy ever has existed or ever could exist, even on a generation ship, after all, the ship had to be built and stocked in the first place. To keep a closed-cycle



economy closed, you'd have to put armed guards and barbed wire around the hordes (but even that wouldn't work as they'd tunnel underneath).

[You obviously don't consider yourself part of the 'hordes!,,Diane. - Ron.]

Peter Kell's view of The Empty City - "it was all a dream!" was quite close to the actual situation - it was a hallucination. With the ending leaving the character undecided between hallucination and the improvement/transcendence of reality - symbolised by the act of writing.

Did Kerrie Hanlon do the wizard's daughter illustration on p.26?

[Yes. - Ron.]

Michael Hailstone  
PO Box 193,  
Woden,  
ACT 2606

I sympathize deeply with Bert Chandler in his latest Grimesish Grumblings. I feel that the motorcar, if not the internal-combustion engine, must have been invented by the devil.. It's reached the stage where, in these benighted hick parts at least, one is not allowed to live on a farm if one does not own a car. I don't mean it's merely hard living on a farm without a car; I mean that others won't let you live there if you don't own one. Of course motorcars have always existed all through history, and human life would be impossible on this planet without them - so such folk could have you believe.

As for "sci-fi" - just lately the Hilton bombing and the Ananda Marga have been in the news again, three members of the latter having been found guilty of conspiracy to murder one of our local Nazis and now to stand trial for bombing the Hilton, all through the testimony of a certain Richard Seary. Now it might be quite right to describe Seary as a less than reliable witness, but nevertheless I did not at all care for the arguments dug up against him by that trendy local (and I think now defunct) newspaper, Sydney Shout, back in August 1979. The corn that mob trod on was in finding Seary unreliable because he was, amongst other things, an "ex-sci-fi writer". "His life history is one of instability and insecurity," Shout summed up. Of course I wrote the idiots a blasting letter, but typically I lost out, because after that very issue that printed that claptrap they had a coup d'etat (or should I rather say coup de bureau?) and of course the new management didn't have to answer. So, instead as nastily as I could I just reproduced the relevant extract in the Crux 2 editorial. Wonderful country we sf folk have to live in.

I wanted to comment on an earlier Grumblings made early this year but didn't because of the dread disease of singularrhosis: I haven't been able to find the piece of paper I want to quote from. I refer to the one about the American film featuring a former American officer on the Titanic, and also to his letter in TM 40 about the television station's newsreader referring to the Lusitania as an "American cruise liner".

Bert might be interested to know that this brand of American chauvinism over British ships is to be found even amongst American survivors of the Titanic at the time of the disaster. I refer him to a book a friend of mine borrowed from the Manly public library nine years ago; I can't remember the title because it's too longwinded, but it is a collection of accounts by sundry survivors of the sinking, edited by a certain Winccour and published in 1960. Its catalog number is 910.453/WIN (I'm almost sure it's the same in Sydney as in Canberra). Typically useless, the National Library doesn't stock it, but two suburban Canberra libraries do (Woden and Kingston), but predictably I haven't been able to find it on the shelf on either branch. Anyway, I refer

to the account by the retired American army officer Archibald Gracie, who quoted a fellow-American's account published in one of the New York newspapers a few days after the survivors reached that city aboard the rescue ship Carpattia. It was such an incredible load of gushing claptrap that I just had to type it out: it has to be seen to be believed, .. brimming with the blatant jingoism and sexism of the times. (The writer was a woman, in case you're wondering). Gracie thought the account was so good, he had to quote it. The woman criticized the Titanic's speed through the icefield and her ostentation and luxury, saying that a desire for simpler living led to the founding of "our American nation", and praising all those men who had died supposedly for the likes of her. She ended her gushing rave with: "Thank God for them and their noble death". I kid you not. Nowhere did she even so much as hint that the Titanic and her crew might not be American but British. Nor that all those wonderful brave (American) men died for no noble cause, but because of a stupid bureaucratic rule that did not compel a ship of that size to carry enough lifeboats for all on board together with an arrogant cockiness in man's supposedly boundless ingenuity and dominance over nature and suchlike crap.

If John Alderson insists on believing that the Earth tips over now and then, that's okay by me, though I'd like to know how he can dismiss ice-ages, as "mathematically impossible" and yet believe in Earth-flips as physically, let alone mathematically possible. There are many possible causes of ice-ages, such as the Sun simply giving out less heat, but what could possibly contrive to make the Earth suddenly tip over is beyond my imagination. Besides, if the last glacial was caused by the Earth tipping over, that would have thrust West Antarctica into warmer latitudes, melting the ice-sheet, and there is no evidence that that has melted for millions of years.

One personal gripe at you, Ron: You're clearly freaked out by unconventional usage. At least I take that as the reason why you cut out of an earlier letter what I still feel was a perfectly reasonable question about Something Richard Faulder was raving about in one of his letters. I bring this up now only because I feel, if you're going to be so stodgy about words that aren't in your dictionary, I don't see why I should have to suffer such trendy journalese abominations as "Australian fans pre 1975." But then I guess I'm not going to make myself very popular making such complaints. To quote from a story in the latest Analog, "All the world hates a linguist," so I guess I can forewarn to make many foes, especially if and when Crux 5 ever comes out. Though maybe I can take some comfort in finding a fellow-sufferer in Jack Herman.

What I edit from letters is a combination of considerations of brevity, clarity, repetitiveness, and the lay of my thoughts as I am red-pencilling/stencilling, based on an estoic sense of reality of fanpibbing beyond the usual..... - Ron.

Or, if you will, as ~~you~~ I like it. - Ron.

James Styles,  
Flat 5,  
723 Park St.,  
Brunswick,  
Vic 3056

Let me say what wonderful reproduction you are achieving with your artwork. My favourites were the covers of TM 40. The beautiful woman Warrior from Mad Max 2 showed how easy and wasteful a fighting death can be even if the ideal for which the fight is being fought has value. Certainly if I ever run a Con Mad Max 2 and The Clockwork Orange will get shown by

crook or hooker.

I must sympathise with Bruce Weston who complains re the size of



R&R versus SF in TM 39. However I must disagree with him. I think one piece of fan fiction is probably enough for TM, especially when you can fill the gaps with regular columns from John Alderson and A. Bertram Chandler. But how can one leave out loss from Foyster, Ortlieb (re the Ditmars... turning into a pleaaant controversy... as the King said to his dungeon master, "If you rake all the bastards over the coals you won't miss any guilty ones!"), Kells, Herman, Fox, Warner and Faulder.

Mentioning the latter right wing moralist I cannot see how he "defended" himself against James Styles. A few mutterings concerning the excess resources being expended "looking after the excess human population" being justified as his excuse for not pursuing "the big dreams" and aspiring "new attitudes". I'm afraid that throughout our history there has always been an elite who have creamed off the excess of our resources. Besides, Science has a long way to go before "most of the resources of the human race" are fully utilised. I have travelled the so called "Third World" and the West and I think what we require is a National Socialism that educates its people to a standard where they perceive that as an elite it is their duty and right to raise those less fortunate races and cultures to their level (and not by partial genocide, or slavery, or segregation, or contraception). Indeed Richard Faulder claims that his letter was mainly re contraception (by them that is) and I must inform him that I am entirely against all forms of artificial contraception using the argument that "The End does not justify the Means". I think that artificial contraception will do more harm than good to the long term existence of the individual and the human race.

[/The best form of "natural" contraception in nature is lactation - as long as the female is feeding the infant, she won't get pregnant. (By 'best' I mean most effective). And where does that leave the women? - other than 200 years worse off. - Ron.]

Richard, I cannot see why our physical lives should become more pleasant. Hardship should harden our intellect, strengthen our spirituality, increase our emotional tone and honesty, and enhance our mental prowess. All we need is the wisdom to direct our intelligence!

Joseph Hanna-Rivero's comment on Spaced Out should become more funny reminds me of a Wizard of Id sketch where the King is overseeing his troops move into battle and says to Sir Rodney that he wants those troops spaced out more. Sir Rodney replies that... "If they weren't spaced out they wouldn't be moving into battle!" (Latter reminds me of accounts of WW I troops going into battle well charged with rum - which somehow makes the first sketch a little blacker).

[/Something like Jim Beam and fans... - Ron..]

"Treat other people as you would like them to treat you" doesn't cover people (or aliens) of very different cultures, beliefs or lifestyles!

[/I dunno - how many people like being knifed, raped, killed, swindled or blown up? - Ron.]

Jean Weber  
13 Myall St.,  
O'Connor,  
ACT 2601

Regarding the proliferation of "relaxacons" - I see them as much the same as a party one might hold at one's house, except they're usually 2 or 3 days long and usually occur at a hotel... and they're given a glorified name. I'm even calling my birthday party a "convention", because it amuses me. After all, if people are coming from all over the country, at vast expense for travel, they

might as well get their "money's worth". No?

A couple of years ago I lost interest in most programming at conventions, and only attend for the opportunity to meet people (not exclusively old friends, I might add.. though they predominate in the people I spend time with, I've met at least one new "friend" at each con in the last year or so). Considering the effort required to put on a well-prepared programme, I'd rather the organisers didn't waste their time, if the result were to be poorly done. As an occasional con-organiser myself, I am not willing to take on more than I think I can handle responsibly. Hence Circulation has a very low-key programme, though more than some "relaxacons", to be sure.

I think there's a definite place for both types of cons... a few (perhaps only one) properly-organised con each year, done by a group of people who can and will devote the effort to do a good job, and then a series of (mostly regional or local) excuses for a long party, termed "relaxacons". The latter are usually, in my experience, less "exclusionary" or "exclusive" than a party held at someone's house, and newcomers are welcome, but no special effort is made to cater for those not already in the circle. People get together in many guises to enjoy themselves... I think no one has any obligation to devote time to strangers if they don't feel like it. (The same remark I would not make about, for example, club meetings, where I think there is some obligation to make newcomers comfortable and welcome.) It may be desirable or even preferable to be less "cliquish", but I don't think any of us have any obligation in that direction.

At least people like Eric and I are honest about our preferences... but I think you either misunderstood Eric's remark, or he was indulging in Lindsay hyperbole. Eric has welcomed numerous "newcomers" to fandom (I am a prime example), but he feels no obligation to do so. He knows, like most sensible fans know - that to ignore people simply because they're new is often to miss a great opportunity to meet someone well worth knowing. But just because someone is a fan doesn't make them worth knowing, by any means...

Could you pass on to Kerry Hanlon my interest in commissioning a cover for Weberwoman's Wrevenge? Her work is magnificent (would love to have had your Mentor 40 cover for myself).

/I know... - Ron./

APP Joseph Hanna-Rivero A41087 Diane's Seeker in the Crystal Maze was a nicely written piece of fiction in that it was entertaining. I particularly like the twist ending which was very appropriate.

I won't say too much about John Alderson's bovine except that it was all I ever wanted to know about cows but was too afraid to ask! By the way, if they ever do take cows into space, I'd be interested to know what they'd do with all the excrement this animal seems to produce; rocket fuel, perhaps?

Steve Sneyd's Alternative Gate was a cleverly designed poem with a rather crafty explanation of the trinity. I really think the fan poetry you publish is a lot better quality in most cases than the fiction.

Nice Spaced Out by Mike McGann. By the way, I happened to buy a few of the T-shirts Mike produces with artwork of his imprinted on them and I think they're fantastic. I recommend



them to anyone who likes to be noted. in the crowd!

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Jack R Herman  
Box 272,  
Wentworth Bldg.,  
Sydney University,  
NSW 2006.

On the editorial in TM 40 -- here is the 51st version of the same story --there are two sort-of cons: those for general consumption and those for mates. I cannot see why there cannot be private parties for fans, called cons. Why do all cons have to be general cons? Widely advertised? If I want to get together with people I know and whose company I enjoy, why can't I do it at a con?

Similarly apas are nothing more than extended letter substitutes. There is nothing mysterious or esoteric about them. I have recently joined a US apa -- not even a very fannish one -- and found no difficulty in being accepted.

[I have made my comments of what I think an apa should be in EOS 1 back before ANZAPA started -- in fact those comments crystalised the idea of ANZAPA in Leigh Emmonds mind and he followed those comments with a letter to all known Aussie fen about starting an Australian apa -- ANZAPA. -- Ron.]

There are general cons, zines and parties -- at these we get to meet new fans and find out if they are the sort of people we'd like to be friends with. Thence fandom does break down into various groups, with little intermingling. What is there about fans, as you see them, that makes ALL acceptable at ALL times? What I do is no more "elitist" than only inviting friends to our house!

John Alderson continues to demonstrate that he uses one of the major by-products of his cow farm. The excreta (solid) of the male (breeder) cattle.

I fully concur with Bert's corns. As a non-Christian the use of "Christian" name irks me, particularly. On written forms, I take great pleasure in putting penlines thru it and substituting "given names".

Attention Mike McGann: "Zero G" puts so much spring in your walk that you don't come down. If his landscape is supposed to be lunar, it should read "Low G".

Jean makes the assumption that "History" taught in high schools is "History". This is no more accurate than the assumption that Science is studied in its entirety or Maths. As the student matures a wider canvas is presented, in those subjects as well as history. A historian, ideally, looks to the source material -- primary sources like diaries, account books, letters, maps etc -- not secondary material. There is a discipline within history -- historiography -- that compares secondary sources and speculates on their differences.

QUEST FOR FIRE should not have been \*R\* even if it had simulated sex scenes. They were an integral part of the picture -- absolutely necessary and in no way offensive. The film should have been classified \*Adult Guidance Recommended\* (a new category but a necessary one).

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Andy Andruschak,  
PO Box 606,  
La Canada-Flintridge,  
Ca. 91011, USA.

I noticed your comments on sales tax on books. Here in the USA the situation is complicated by the fact that we have no sales tax...yet... but that every state has a different sales tax structure.

Here in California, the basic sales tax is 6% on items thruout the state. And in Los Angeles County we have an additional  $\frac{1}{2}$ % tax to finance the operations of our bus system. But that 6% tax does not apply to certain exempt items. Food is not taxed, nor are magazines. But books aee. The thing that makes a printed item a magazine is a date on the cover. This can lead to some interesting battles at the checkout counter over the digest size SF magazines, as they are more in the size of paperback books rather than the size of the rest of the magazines in the store.

Sales tax here is a Federal tax. It was imposed as a 'temporary' measure in WWII. There are basic exempt items - food, books, mags, etc. 'Luxury' items (watches, jewellery, cars, radios, TVs, VTRs) are taxed at 30%; there is a rate of 7% covering household goods, and everything else gets taxed at 20%. It is already included in prices in shops, so we don't have to worry about adding it on... - Rpn/

In your comments on Marc Ortlieb's letter, I must disagree with you about clubzines not being eligible for awards like the Ditmar and Hugo, or any others. I do regard them as fannish fanzines. The fact that a club subsidizes them instead of a single person is OK with me... why should the fanzine Hugo be confined to those with money? If a talented faned can get backing from another group of fans, fine and dandy. Please consider the zine on its own merits.

I can think of several times that clubzines have been major fannish triumphs - the old SHAGGY and RUINE come to mind. Nowadays the southern clubzines such as ANVIL and ATARANTES come to mind.

I have been settling down to the diabetic lifestyle, mostly by becoming a recluse. I find myself drifting more and more away from fandom, since fandom and I do sot share the same interests. I guess I am too hung up on the space program and hard science to go in for all the mystic bullshit being kicked around fandom. As for conventions and parties and club meetings, same reasons exacebrated by the fact that there is nothing I can eat or drink at such events - not on this damn restricted diet...It wasn't until I got wammed by this diabetes that I ever realised how much sugar goes into most canned and processed food.

John J Alderson,  
Havelock,  
Vic 3465.

Now, I have come across something like Richard Faulder's closed economies. He's speaking of a mob of sheep (note: not a flock, they have an organisation). But it is not a closed economy for the Lord sends the rain upon the rational and Faulder alike. One may wonder, in the ultimate, is the Cosmos a closed economy, or does God exist beyond it? It was Faulder who raised this, the silliest Aunt Sally I've ever seen inflicted on anyone, and who now boldly demands that I say that I am not talking about a "closed-cycle" economy. Well, I won't - I just suggest he read my articles again.

Most correspondents are criticising me for admitting as history, certain matters which are not fully documented, but Jack Herman takes the opposite position and claims I wish "to deny all history". Well! Well! Now I am aware of historic method, which Jack refers to pompously as "historiography" and it's a pity he didn't recognize my own use of it. But I must correct him. PRE-HISTORY refers to times much anterior to the written record. It is of course quite significant that Lord Acton in his letter to the contributors of the massive Cambridge History series did not in any way define history. However, Elton, in The Practice of History does. Thus: "It is concerned with all



those human sayings, thoughts, deeds and sufferings which occurred in the past and have left present deposit; and it deals with them from the point of view of happening, change, and the particular. " He then continues.. "Since no other treatment of man's experience answers to this definition, the autonomy of history - its right to be distinguished from cognate sciences - is established." (p.12). W.K. Hancock, Attempting History says, "The word: history has various meanings. To most people nowadays it means the human past, or fragments of it... But history can also mean the historian's attempt to explore past happenings and to tell a story about them" (p.1). Not a word in either of them about written records. Perhaps some of you ought to write to the authors and put them right.

I confess that I didn't know my favourite flutist, James Galway, uses a silver flute. I think it's just affectation, but then I am only going on what I have read about silver being added to bells (bells, but not flutes, are often discussed by archaeologists). However, I am not going to argue the point on this, but I am pleased for Julie Vaux for supplying the information. If I was misleading about the case of making musical instruments, I did not mean to be. There is considerable misunderstanding about technology. It is the knowledge or science of techniques and in some degree is common to all peoples and times. Most people think it means super-computerised machines but these come into the same category as a flint chip; mere tools. It is the artisan who uses the tool who is important. A violin may be made using flint tools. I know a violin maker, good enough to get a scholarship to further her studies at Cremona in Italy, and the most sophisticated tool she used was a vice.

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Bruce Gillespie  
GPO Box 5195AA,  
Melbourne,  
Vic 3001.

I'm glad that you're keeping people like Bert Chandler and John Alderson writing, although sometimes I'm really in the dark as to what John Alderson's opinions really are. I'm glad you're not running too much fiction: I rather thought that was the weak point of the magazine in the old days, and nothing much has changed in the quality of fiction in fanzines (sorry, Diane).

I tend to agree on your remarks about conventions and the nature of fandom. The only trouble is that fandom doesn't stay around and fit the ideas about fandom which you and I picked up back in the sixties when we got involved. I can't figure out Australian fandom at all now. Back rubs, indeed! I can remember sf conventions in Australia where there were no unaccompanied young ladies, let alone anybody who would let some grimy old fan rub her/his back. Now the fans are not even so grimy. What leaves me puzzled is the immense fracturing of fandom, so there are vast groups of people of whom I know nothing. Most of the new groups do not seem to read fanzines, or they read fanzines I've never seen. So you can hardly blame the old-style fanzine fans for sometimes wanting to get together with people who speak their language. (I don't go to conventions these days because I find it hard to discover anyone who is on my wave length.)

Take a problem that has worried me for some time: S F Commentary. It has not appeared since June, 1981. I haven't had the money to publish it. I keep hoping that some fan will come along who will want to do the same kind of magazine. I have hundreds of pages of brilliant material on file for such a person. Such a person should be lunatically dedicated (as I was once), single (unattached to anything but the idea of doing a brilliant fanzine), concerned about the state of science fiction, and - most important of all - well-paid. Fanning seems to be a rich man's hobby these days.

(Maybe that's not entirely true. Maybe I've just become poor. Costs have gone up six times since 1969, but my income is less than three times what it was then.) I'm trying to get the show on the road again soon - but that's not the point. There's no one out there, wanting to carry on a tradition started by Bangsund's ASFR, or (if you'll believe Foyster) fanzines which go back to the 1930s and 1940s. The lack of that kind of feedback makes me think that I'm now in a fannish world I don't understand, and will perhaps have to leave. (But not yet.. .. never yet.)

But to get back to your original argument - I think the new fans will always come in, despite SMOFs and invitational conventions and apas. But even now, they seem a quite different sort of fan - very sociable and convention-oriented; very pleasant; but I'm not on his/her wavelength. My loss, not theirs.

[I don't know, Bruce... I think the best way to reach those fans you are talking about is via fanzines - on sale in the bookshops. Many of the newer readers of TM have been reached this way. Another good source, I have found, is via the Media fans and their zines and clubs.

There are about three times as many media fans as 'printed' sf fans and many of those fans are also hardcore written sf fans, who haven't had the opportunity to find out that fanzine fandom (related to hardcore sf writing exists. (They also write good fiction....)

Just in case there is anybody left who remembers greater days of Australian fanzine publishing, could you please publicise the following:

\*\* Available at last! S F Commentary Reprint Edition: First Year 1969, published by Bruce Gillespie, (address as above). The first eight issues of SFC, which have been out of print since they first appeared. More than 200,000 words, retypeset and printed. 200 numbered copies only. A new introduction by

Bruce Gillespie, detailing the intertwined histories of SFC and ASFR. Alarming photographs of people as they appeared in 1969. All yours for \$40 (the amount it would have cost to photocopy the original issues).:\*\*

[For those who haven't seen an copy of SFC, It contains in-depth reviews and essays on science fiction novels and anthologies by well known critics and writers. The lettercolumns are also a goldmine for discovering authors views and thoughts. Good in-depth reviews like those in SFC do not age. If you can afford the \$40 buy a copy - it can only increase in value. - Ron.]

Harry Warner, Jr.  
423 Summit Ave.,  
Hagerstown,  
Maryland 21740,  
U.S.A.

The editorial in TM 38 provides additional support for my certainty that any sort of awards will be engulfed periodically in controversy, no matter whether they're well or poorly administered. The losers always outnumber the winners by such a lopsided margin that some complainers are created by the law of averages, for one thing. But I do believe that some of the fusses over awards in fandom could be minimized or



averted by fuller disclosure of things that happened, as soon as possible after they have happened. In this particular instance, if the Star Trek fanzine nominations were disallowed in reality, in addition to their possessing this status in rumor, prompt publication of the tabulation of all the nominations, accompanied by an explanation of the ruling on the ST publication, would have made the committee's decision seem like a decision rather than a secret action. If the Ditmar rumor isn't based on fact, my belief still is justified by numerous episodes in the history of the Hugo nominating and balloting.

By instinct rather than by knowledge, I side with John Alderson's belief that myths frequently have a basis in fact. But I'm sure some of your loc writers have already hastened to point out the dubious validity of his comparison of recent "myths" like city founding facts with the kind of myths which require some sort of supernatural activity to function properly.

I suppose some sort of milestone is attained when someone writes a nostalgia piece about canned foods. It's symbolic of the fact that canned goods, once regarded as a per se bad influence on civilized peoples, are now accepted as such an essential of civilization that it's time to regard some canned goods as good and some as bad; formerly, if it was canned, it was bad. I enjoyed Bertram Chandler's essay on the topic, although I was wishing he could explain out of his seafaring experience how it's possible to sell profitably something as inexpensive and as heavy, as a can of edibles which has been shipped half-way around the world from its nation of origin.

Your summaries seem adequate to me for what you mean them to accomplish. I like the little reproductions of the covers you append to the text, although I'm not quite sure why since I rarely spend much time looking at covers of science fiction paperbacks in drug stores and book stores around Hagerstown. Maybe it's just a continuing satisfaction at the ability of fanzines to publish this type of illustrations, something unthinkable before electrostenciling became generally available to fans. Long, long ago when Julie Unger was publishing a newzine and wanted to include in each issue a reproduction of a new prozine cover, he was forced to resort to photographic copying of the cover and having a halftone made from the picture, then pasting or stapling the printed copies of the picture to his otherwise mimeographed fanzine.

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WAHF: D.R. Fidge, Lousie Hollingberry and Eric Lindsay.

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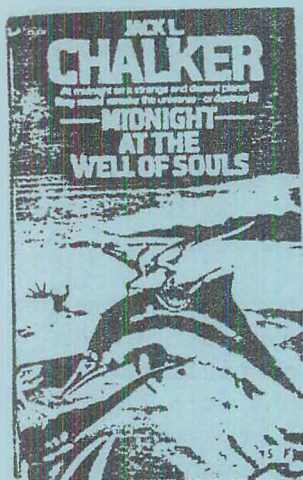
—oo0oo—

Some of the regular readers will have noticed that John Alderson's column is missing from this issue (sighs of relief are heard...). Next issue The Mentor will be commencing a series by John on The Structure of Society, which are extracts from a forthcoming book.

This issue 'just grew like topsy' - it wasn't supposed to be this large. I will be trying for around 30-36 pp, which is not too bad for postage costs, and still feels 'thick'.

A Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year to all TM's readers. - Ron.

# S. F. BOOKS RELEASED :



MIDNIGHT AT THE WELL OF SOULS by Jack L Chalker. Penguin science fiction. Published by Penguin Books Aust Ltd. 360 pp. A\$3.95. On sale now.

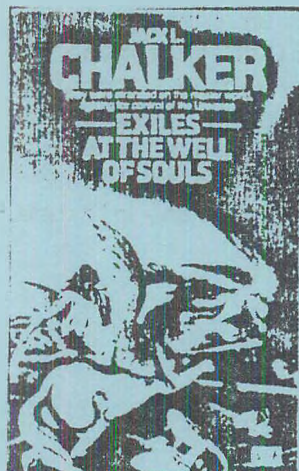
Some books stir that sense of wonder straight away -- this is one of them. Nathan Brazil's adventures on the Well World is memorable sf and this book -- book one in the Well World series, is worth a read. An ancient race, the Markovians, had rebuilt worlds millions of years ago and their civilization spanned galaxies. Then they disappeared, leaving their worlds, with crumbling cities, but no artifacts. About the only other thing they left were what were apparently gigantic 'brains' or computers under the crusts of their planets, some of which were still undamaged aeons after their makers had disappeared.

It fell to Varnett and Skander to find the door into the Well World and thus enable Brazil and several others to fall into that Well and thus a good 'hard' sf novel. \*Recommended\*.

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EXILES AT THE WELL OF SOULS by Jack L Chalker. Penguin science fiction. Published and Dist. in Aust by Penguin Books Aust Ltd. 335 pp. A\$4.95. On sale now.

Midnight At The Well Of Souls was well received. This is the first in a two parter -- the second part being Quest For The Well Of Souls. This novel is set mostly on the Well World, but only two of the original characters appear -- not Brazil. It follows the escapades of a selfsufficient skipper, Mavra Chang as she sets out to try and rescue a scientist and his daughter (not a beautiful daughter...) from the evil machinations of Antor Trelig, who has designs on the Universe as well as the fat daughter -- but only to control her father through her.

Chalker uses the fascinating background of the Well World as he did in the first book, but this second volume seems to lack that spark which permeated the first volume. Well worth the read, however.

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THE GOLDEN TORC by Julian May. Pan S.F. Dist in Aust. by William Collins. 383 pp. A\$4.95. On sale now.

This is the second in the series of the Exiles in the Pliocene and carries on the account of the struggle between the humans, Tanu and Firvulag as they fight for dominance





in a world dominated by psi powers and torcs worn by the majority of the participants.

The introduction gives a run-down of the events of THE MANY COLOURED LAND, but if you missed that book and wish to savour the background of this companion volume - I suggest you hunt for the first volume before it gets too hard to find. I said that the first volume is well worth buying and gave it a \*recommended\* tag. The same goes for this volume, Buy it.

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MAKE ROOM! MAKE ROOM! by Harry Harrison. Penguin SF: dist in Aust by Penguin Books Aust. Ltd. 222 pp. A\$3.95. On sale now.

If you saw the movie Soylent Green you will have most of the story line of this novel. It follows the book quite closely. It is one of Harrison's better books, along with Deathworld and Deathworld II. It gives a chilling future towards which New York and some of the other bigger cities are tottering. Since it was written it appears that the big cities may wallow in their waste before much longer with a much smaller population.

If you haven't read this novel it is worth getting. If you like the "older" type Harrison, then definitely purchase it.

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QUEST FOR FIRE by J.H. Rosny-Aine. A Penguin Book, dist in Aust by Penguin Books Aust. Ltd. 143 pp. A\$3.95. On sale now.

I haven't seen as yet the movie Quest For Fire (which was commented on by Bert Chandler in TM 39.) This novel came with the usual sf books for release. It is good, solid fantasy set about 80,000 years in the past (or 800,000 if you look at it another way). It reminds me of another series written by H.G. Wells about prehistoric man and some of his adventures. This novel was written 14 years later, in 1911 and still reads well today (it was translated in 1967).

If you have read the above Wells, Vardis Fisher, and those other authors who have attempted to portray primitive man, you will enjoy this attempt.

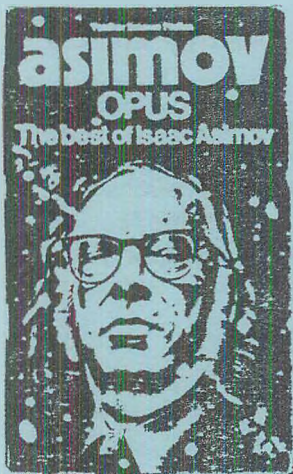
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OPUS by Isaac Asimov. Panther SF. Dist in Aust by Granada publishing (Aust) P/L. 672 pp. A\$6.95. On sale now.

This volume combines OPUS 100 and OPUS 200 in one volume. Essentially it consists of extracts from the first two hundred of Asimov's books. They range from his science fact pieces in F&SF to his science fiction shorts. Interlaced through them in a semblance of order are his commentaries concerning the pieces themselves and personal history and anecdotes.







If you are an Asimov fan (and not only of his sf) or you have only lately come to the sf scene, this volume should be a welcome addition to your shelves.

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WHO NEEDS MEN? by Edmund Cooper. Coronet Books, dist in Aust by Hodder & Stoughton. 192 pp. A\$3.95. On sale now.

This novel was written in 1972 and shows the turbulence of those times. It tells of some of the last battles between some of the last men in Scotland and the Extarminators - clones or parthenogeniĉ women who had taken over the world after a series of wars early in the 21st Century. It is a fatalistic book, which is unusual for Cooper, and he keeps the mood of despair and blood-shed and death all the way through, though there are some light moments.

The heroine, throughout the story, knows that her love for the Scottish leader will ultimately end in ruin, but she carries on - knowing that in the end all is lost. It is that kind of civilisation. It is the end of the human race as such. With reproduction being by cloning and parthenoginic birth, natural selection does not operate to its fullest - no new combinations can come up. Genetic engineering could offer some hope - but who picks the traits?

I kept reading though I knew that the end was foretold - the pace is quick and there is action. Not a book to be read while in a depressed state.

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PENDULUM by A.E. Van Vogt. New English Library, dist in Aust by Hodder & Stoughton. 223 pp. A\$4.95. On sale now.

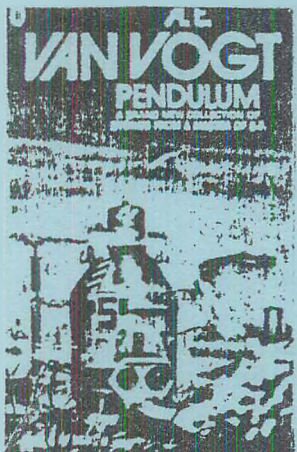
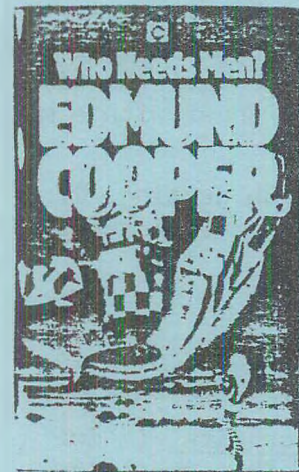
If you have read Van Vogt previously you will know his writing style. It hasn't changed over the years noticeably. This is a collection of his stories which cover many of his newer works (I don't think any that I read in this volume I have read anywhere before). They are: Pendulum, The Male Condition, Living With Jane, The First Rull, Footprint Farm, The Non-Aristotalian Dectective, The Human Operators, and The Launch of Apollo XVII. They are all written in his peculiar style and some are worth the reading (Living With Jane and The Human Condition - the former for those who haven't read much of Van Vogt and the latter to show the collaboration with Harlan Ellison).

An average volume - read it if you have a lazy Saturday or Sunday afternoon.

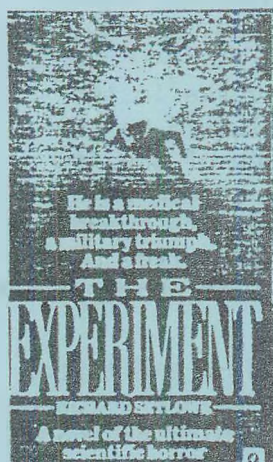
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THE EXPERIMENT by Richard Setlowe. An Arrow Paperback. Dist in Aust by Hodder & Stoughton. 299pp. A\$4.95. On sale now.

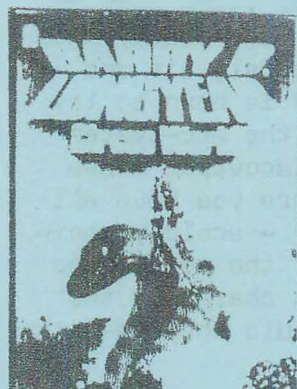
This is a borderline novel. It is being marketed as mainstream, but it has all the elements of a pure sf novel. From the blurbs and first third of the novel the impression is given that the viewpoint is anti-science. It concerns the development of artificial gills - available now in the rough - and the fitting of them to a man dying of lung cancer. His one remaining lung is removed when he goes into coma and the gill operation performed. The intent is to observe the operation of the gills for the short time the man remains in coma before he dies. No-one is more surprised when he rallies and becomes stronger.

The plot then revolves around what to do with him and the moral questions - if he breathes water and not air (which is the 'breath of God') does he still have a soul? And is he fully human? His wife and three children are estranged and he becomes further and further removed from his fellow humans (my slip is showing). A engrossing novel, worth purchasing.

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CIRCUS WORLD by Barry B. Longyear. Orbit SF. Dist in Aust by Doubleday Aust. P/L. 219pp. A\$5.95. On sale now

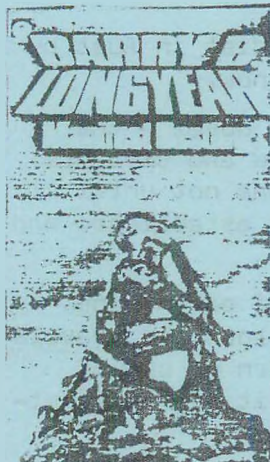
The stories making up this volume were first published in Isaac Asimov's SF magazine and here has placed them in chronological order of events and made a novel out of them. One of the central characters, Lord Ashly Allenby, who figures in the plot through the interconnected 'chapters', provides continuity. The setting is a world which has been settled by a circus ship - trapped when their ship broke down. For over two centuries they had gone their way; when their planet was picked as being in a strategic position - and the fun started.

Each part reads complete in itself. Some novels made up of discrete parts become greater than the sum of the parts. This is a good read, but it is never greater than the parts.

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MANIFEST DESTINY by Barry B Longyear. Orbit SF, dist in Aust by Doubleday Aust. P/L. 284pp. A\$5.95. On sale now.

This book is built along much the same lines as Circus World - a series of Novellas, but in this case the combination works and the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. Possibly because the stories themselves are better written and the subject matter more fulsome. The volume chronicles the progress of the human race as it expands into a galaxy teeming with other races, several of whom are also expanding.

The stories are written with insight and depth. The headlong crash of humankind with those other races and the bloodbaths which follow make absorbing reading. \*Recommended\*.





DARKWORLD DETECTIVE by J. Michael Reaves. Bantam SF, dist in Aust by Transworld. 257pp. A\$3.50. On sale now.

There are all too few good sf detective works in the field; the one previous to this was DEADLY SILENTS by Lee Killough. The setting is the planet Ja-Lur, one of the few planets still close to the Darkness - another cosmos with different laws - where sorcery works. Some of the humans on Ja-Lur can use the remnants of the Dark Lore left from when the influence was stronger. The most powerful of whom was the ruler of the planet, the Dark Lord.

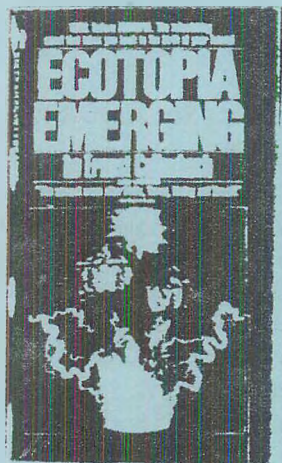
Kamus of Kadizar is the private detective of the title. Born on Ja-Lur and trained on earth, he had returned to Ja-Lur to live and earn a living at detective work. Which he found quite hard, as he was a half-cast.

A very engrossing, novel.

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ECOTOPIA EMERGING by Ernest Callenback. Bantam New Age, dist in Aust. by Transworld Publishers. 337pp. A\$4.50. On sale now.

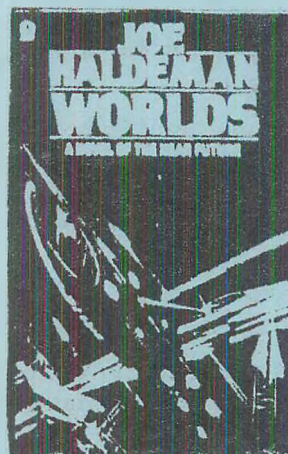
This is a book that both Dick Geis and the Foxe would love, I think. The setting is the USA several years from now when the oil shortage and the Multinationals have really made themselves felt and the pollution, both chemical, air and moral is overwhelming. A new political party is born to try to wrest control back to the people and bring the eco-system under control. A young girl (17) has just discovered a new solar cells with much increased power. So here you have all the relevant features of the revolution today - ecology, sexual equality, the multi-nationals, the power of the people and the corruption of high officials (the ones in charge of the multi-nationals are 'criminals' - how else could they keep their positions?)

I couldn't finish it - I got up to page 52 then gave up. You may like it though, if that is your scene.

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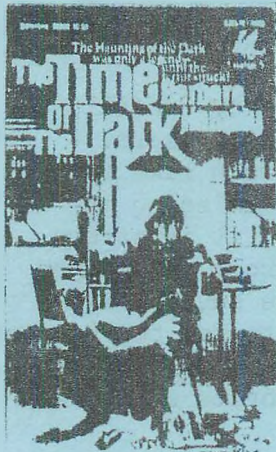


WORLDS by Joe Haldeman. Futura Publications, dist in Aust by Doubleday Aust. P/L. 262pp. A\$5.95. On sale now.

I found the method Haldeman uses in this novel - the usual chapters interdispersed with diary notes and extracts from letters, distracted from the flow. It was not until the second part of the book that the flow was established and I started to enjoy it.

Set on New New York, a satellite world of earth and earth itself, late in the 21st Century, it follows the travels and tribulations of Marianne O'Hara, a girl born on one of those satellites, who ends up in the thick of it. A interesting read, though not one of Haldeman's best.





THE TIME OF THE DARK by Barbara Hambly. Del Rey Fantasy. Dist in Aust by Doubleday Aust. P/1., 263 pp. A\$5.95. On sale now.

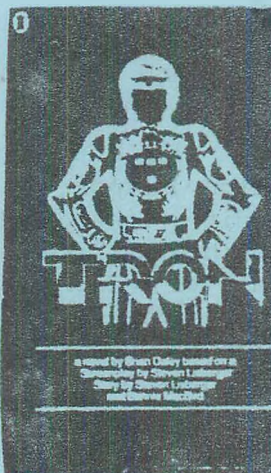
Sword and Sorcery seems to be overwhelming the sf lists, these days. The cover of this paperback looked good so I was looking forward to a good read. It turned out to be fairly mediocre fantasy - set in an alternate universe, with humans losing their mastery of the surface of their planet to the Dark, creatures out of some Lovecraftian nightmare. That touch is a good one. One has to get some way into the book before momentum takes over and you are caught up.

Not a bad buy if you enjoy fantasy - and it is the first of a series.

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TRON by Brian Daley, based on screenplay by Steven Lisberger, story by Steven Lisberger & Bonnie MacBird. Published and dist in Aust by Hodder & Stoughton Aust. 186 pp. A\$3.95 (listed). On sale now.

Needless to say, this is the novelisation of the movie, to be released on December 3 in Sydney. It is very low key throughout and seems to follow the images in the movie (I've seen the shorts) quite closely. Taking place mostly in computer games landscapes in the computer itself, it moves quite swiftly and makes a nice light read. I would think, but for the computer terms, that this would make good reading for early teens - in fact because for the computer terms this is probably the market for it.

As stated above, not a heavy read, but a time-passer. Oh, the backcover blurb says: "This electrifying novel shows the world of computer gaming from the inside - where real people become electronic pawns in a world they do not understand". Apart from the (unintentional?) pun, the blurb writer obviously hasn't read the novel.

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THE BOOK OF DREAMS by Jack Vance. Coronet SF. Dist in Aust by Hodder & Stoughton. 235 pp. A\$4.95 On sale now.



This is the fifth and final novel in the Demon Princes saga. It follows the adventures of Kirth Gersen as he tracks down and attempts to terminate the fifth and final Demon Prince.

The landscapes and the atmosphere are, as usual, saturated with the Vancian favours and I found the book quite enthralling. I have read a couple of the other Demon Princes novels, but whether you have or have not does not detract from the enjoyment of this one.

The plot is suitably convoluted and the backgrounds of each world described is the usual well-executed scenery.





THE STEEL OF RAITHSKAR by Randall Garrett & Vicki Ann Heydron. Bantam Books, dist in Aust. by Transworld Publishers (Aust) P/L. 180 pp. A\$3.50. On sale now.

I think this must be the first new book by Randall Garrett (even if it is a collaboration) for some years. The collaborator is his wife. It commences much like the Edgar Rice Burroughs Carter of Mars novels - an aging man is on a cruise ship in the Mediterranean when it is struck by a 'meteprite'. He wakes up in a younger body on another world. In some ways that other world is more savage - in some ways, less. There are no wars, for instance, but personal combat is still prevalent. It is a low technology culture, as the only iron available comes from a meteorite which fell thousands of years before.

The man, Ricardo Carillo, finds himself accused with stealing, or helping to steal a semi-sacred jewel.

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THE GLASS OF DYSKORNIS by Randall Garrett & Nicki Ann Heydron. Bantam Books, dist in Aust by Transworld Publishers (Aust) P/L. 174 pp. A\$3.50. On sale now.

The second in the Gandalara Cycle (a trilogy) finds the hero, Rikardon (aka Ricardo) still in pursuit of the Jewel, through its influence on his adopted father and his cat, Keeshah. The cats in this story are head high, telepathic to a degree and are loyal only to their Riders. Rikardon is a Rider and this second in the trilogy sees him tangled with a second female of the (slightly) alien species he found himself embodied in.

The books are well written and make good light reading. The covers of both volumes are especially good - the only fault with them is that the characters are described as 'pug-nosed', while the folk depicted on the covers are homo-sapiens. Worth reading.

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TOM SWIFT 6 THE RESCUE MISSION by Victor Appleton. Carousel Books, dist in Aust by Transworld Publishers (Aust) P/L. 144 pp. A\$1.95. On sale now.

One of a series of children's books. Aged, I would guess between 10 and early teens. The vocab is fairly sophisticated, but then, children start young these days. (Evelyn learnt to spell the word television at school at age six). Fast moving story set on a planet of robots, whose contempt for all except the bionic member of the crew is plainly visible. Tom Swift answers a call for help, but at first, only robots are found, headed by an incredible cyborg. The developments are rapid, with no real depth to characters and one is expected to know a fairly high degree of technical wording. Should be popular with teenage readers.



## OTHER OCTOBER RELEASES -

GRANADA: ALIEN ACCOUNTS - John Sladek.

TRANSWORLD: CONDITIONALLY HUMAN - Walter Miller, Jr.

DOUBLEDAY: CAMBER THE HERETIC - Katherine Kurtz.

## NOVEMBER RELEASES -

HODDER & STOUGHTON: THE FAR-OUT WORLDS OF A E VAN VOGT - A E Van Vogt.  
CAGEWORLD 3 THE TYRANT OF HADES - Colin Kapp.

DOUBLEDAY: OUTWARD BOUND - Juanita Coulson.  
PAWN OF PROPHECY - Eddings.  
STARSHIP ORPHEUS - Jade.  
SWORD AND SORCERER - Winsky.  
WARRIOR OF VENGEANCE - Anton.  
DUNGEONS OF DREAD - Rose Estes.\*  
PILLARS OF PENTEGARN - Rose Estes.\*  
MOUNTAINS OF MIRRORS - Rose Estes.\*  
RETURN TO BROOKMERE - Rose Estes.\*  
\*D&D Books.

WILLIAM COLLINS  
(Pan Books) WHERE TIME WINDS BLOW - Robert Holdstock.  
CITIES OF THE RED NIGHT - William Burroughs.  
A WILLIAM BURROUGHS READER - ed John Clader.

DONNING CO. THE PROMETHEUS MAN - Ray Faraday Nelson.  
THE HARP AND THE BLADE - John Meyers Meyers.

GRANADA: FRANKENSTEIN UNBOUND - Brian Aldiss  
THE MAKESHIFT GOD - Russell Griffin

TRANSWORLD: EYAS - Crawford Kilian.  
INTO THE SLAVE NEBULA - John Brunner.  
THE GOD PROJECT - John Saul.

## DECEMBER RELEASES -

TRANSWORLD: UNDER HEAVEN'S BRIDGE - Ian Watson & Michael Bishop.  
GREY MANE OF MORNING - Joy Chant.

DOUBLEDAY THE MAGIC GOES AWAY: Larry Niven.  
PATCHWORK GIRL - Larry Niven.  
ATTACK FROM ATLANTIS - Lester Del Rey.  
AYES OF TEXAS - Da Cruz.

\*\* Most of the books noted above will be reviewed in the February issue of The Mentor. By then I hope to have had caught up on my reading to be more current with the reviews.\*\*

# JANUARY RELEASES -

## TRANSWORLD:

LENSMAN FROM RIGEL - David A. Kyle.

## GAMES -

### DOUBLEDAY:

STAR FRONTIERS -- Science Fiction  
Role Playing Game.  
A\$18.

This game is from TSR who made their fortunes with the Dungeon and Dragons sets and the role playing D & D Books mentioned above and which will be reviewed next issue.

The game itself comes with two rule books - one Basic Games Rules, the other Expanded Game Rules. There are two layouts and an Adventure Module, plus cutouts to play the game with.

With all the reading I've been doing lately, I haven't had time to try out this game, but it looks quite complicated and absorbing.

The blurb reads 'For 3 or more players, ages 10 and up' - so if you have a bright 10 year old, or anyone, really, who enjoys science fiction and role playing games, this would make a good Xmas present.

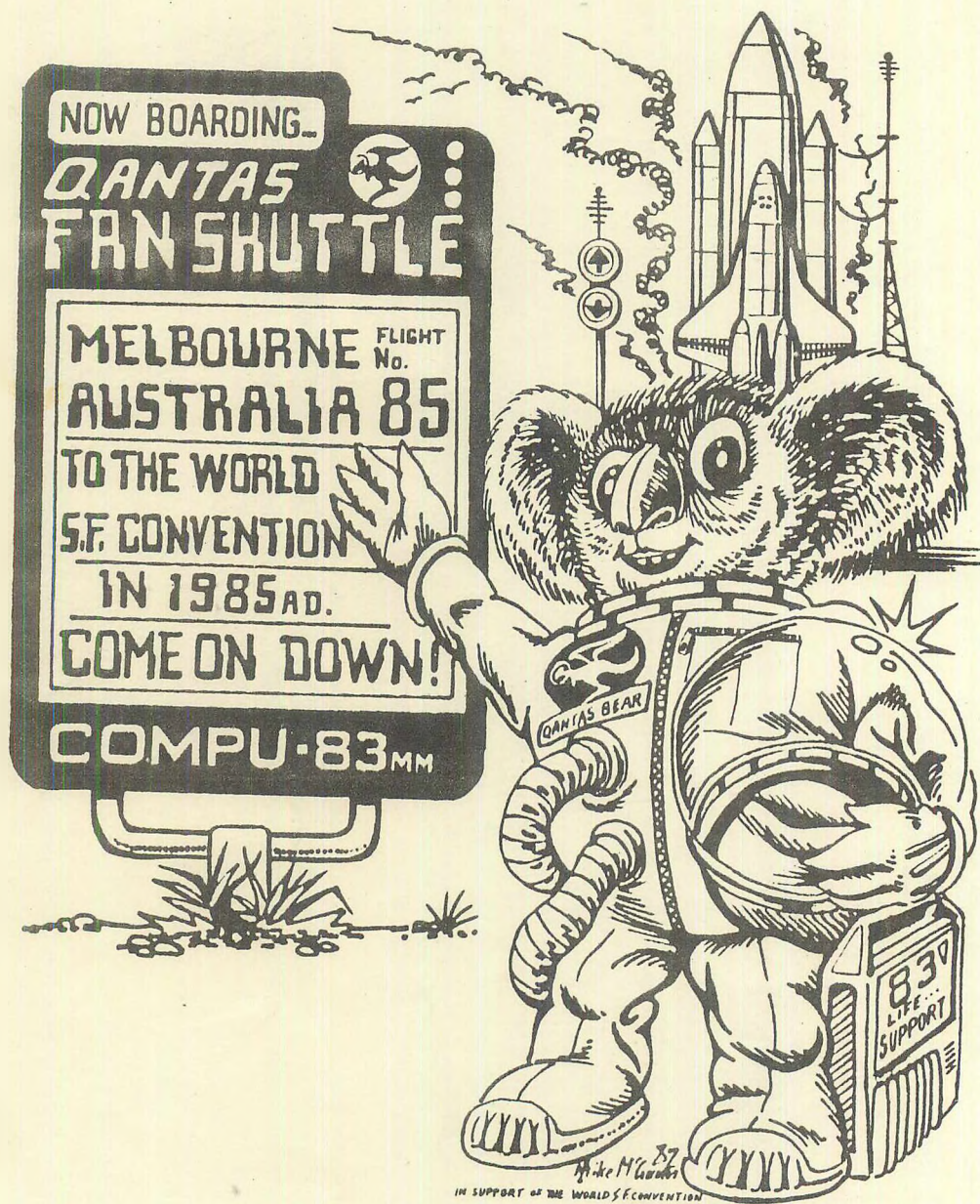
It is available at GALAXY and THE COMIC BOOKSHOP, as well as the hobby shops that dot Sydney and other capitals. Get it now before school comes out.

—oo0oo—

FOR ANY FANZINE FANS INTERESTED - we still have several \$100 shares in the printing press/platemaker left. If you buy a share it entitles you to free use of the equipment. The only costs you are up for is cost of paper and chemicals/ink, plus \$3 per hour labour if you aren't there to help run off your zine.







IN SUPPORT OF THE WORLD S.F. CONVENTION  
MELBOURNE 1985