

THE NEW MILLENNIAL HARBINGER
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This is the third edition of NMH10. The first two exist only on stencil. John Foyster saw the first, and he'll tell you it was dead boring. One day I intend to print every discarded stencil I have, and destroy forever the myth that, drunk or sober, I can compose brilliant stuff straight on stencil any old time I like. The fact is that the sober stuff is dead boring. Ask John. He was here for a few days towards the end of last month, and out of respect for the greatest Australian fan of all time (John mentioned his name but I've forgotten it already) I remained pretty close to sober the whole weekend. I maintain still that this was both thoughtful, considerate and courteous (three for the price of two, folks!), but unfortunately it led to John's discovering that when I'm sober I'm dead boring. Maybe he suspected it before anyway. No matter.

The first edition, dated 16 May, went into boring detail about the general election to be held on the 18th. I predicted a narrow majority for Labour in both houses, and a no vote in all four referendums. In the second edition, dated 28 May, I was still predicting that. It was an incredible election: ten days after it no-one knew for sure who had won in the House of Representatives (on the eleventh day Gough went on telly and said he'd won - prompting Bill Snedden to announce that the anti-Labour coalition hadn't really lost the election: it was just that Labour had got more votes and seats, that's all), and as I write (3 June) the Senate vote is still being counted. Since it is Labour's typically socialistic/decadent practice to elect its ministers (as distinct from the Liberals' practice of having the prime minister appoint his ministers), and since ministers come from the Senate as well as the Reps, it could be a little while before we know exactly who is going to mismanage the country.

As a servant of the Parliament, and a dedicated one at that (at what? you ask) (use your imagination, I reply), it irks me not to be at my desk playing my humble part in the affairs this great nation. It irks me especially to be at my desk playing a humble part in something that has nothing to do with Parliament, when I could be at home fretting or something. For the last week or so (and for the next four weeks, if they stick to their announced schedule) I have worked on the

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Australian Broadcasting Control Board's hearing of applications for Canberra's second commercial radio licence (as if one commercial radio station wasn't enough!). It's awfully dreary stuff, but at least it has given me some idea of what court reporting must be like. Most of the witnesses have been very well prepared for legal cross-examination, and I confess I find it delightful when one of the less experienced barristers prefaces a long, involved question with some such words as 'Are you able to tell me' - and the witness answers 'Yes'. That sort of thing happens a lot. I don't think I'd ever make a lawyer.

I've had a few letters lately, mainly of the pay-up-or-else kind, but one or two have been real letters (if you follow me). Today there was one from John Brosnan. He reports receiving Scythrop 28 and Philosophical Gas 26, so those issues must have got overseas after all. Bob Bloch said he'd got his, too. It's great to get these letters. Leigh Edmonds told me last week that he and John Foyster have had three letters of comment on that 400-page issue of Boy's Own Fanzine they published in January. That's what fandom is all about, folks: not writing letters. Anyway, there was this letter from Brosnan today, and he started off by quoting from a recent issue of Private Eye:

After searching his contract files for undelivered manuscripts Jim Reynolds, Granada's brilliant managing director, recently wrote a stern letter to Flann O'Brien, demanding to know where his long overdue novel was.

Readers of Philosophical Gas and other better-quality publications will recall instantly that 'Flann O'Brien' died in 1966.

John reports: 'Hollywood was fun. My hotel was right opposite Grauman's Chinese theatre. I had the cheapest room in the place yet I was on the top floor. It puzzled me at first then I remembered the earthquakes they often have in California. The cheaper the room the higher it is. Really rich people get tents on the sidewalk (that's American for footpath... I picked up all kinds of facts like that).'

I really feel it's about time I started making some useful comments on ANZAPA and PAPA. My excuse this time is that Sally and I moved house a fortnight ago, and as usual most of my stuff is still waiting to be unpacked. You should know by now that I only ever move house to avoid having to write locs and mailing comments. Anzapans and Papans will be getting PG27 real soon now. It has a cover very similar to the cover on this NMH. This one is done on the Roneo; PG's is done offset. An interesting comparison, if you find that kind of thing interesting.

And that's all for now, folks. Keep those cards and bouquets coming.