



CANTO

TENTH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

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Didn't fool you for a moment. Of course not. This is

# The New MILLENNIAL HARBINGER

Or: THE WORKING MAN'S MODEL BOTANIC GUIDE TO HEALTH, HAPPINESS, HUGO  
AWARDS, HYGROMETRY AND OTHER WONDERS OF THE AUSTRALIAN BUSHLAND

Number Thirteen

December 1974

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Edited printed and put about by John Bangsund : Parergon Books PO Box 357 Kingston  
ACT 2604 Australia for members of FAPA and ANZAPA, Lee Harding and some others

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and this issue is respectfully dedicated to Lee  
Harding, author, entertainer and friend.

And enthusiast.

If there's one word that sums up all that I know and  
love about Lee Harding, it's enthusiast. And if you  
think I am an enthusiast, you've never met Harding.  
He's an enthusiast's enthusiast.

My enthusiasms sometimes last for months, even years,  
and they cost me a fortune usually.  
No, cynic, I am not talking about marriage. It takes  
more than enthusiasm to enter upon that wholly estate  
or intestate these days: it takes sheer madness. In  
my case it takes sheer madness on the part of the lady  
concerned. In Harding's case it would take... gee, I'm  
not sure what it would take, but it would be something  
... transcendental, shall I say... something...  
something beyond the wit of mortal man to describe...  
something incandescent, translucent, overmastering,  
transforming... something perhaps mad, but mad beyond  
the wildest imaginings of madness. Or rich. There's  
always rich.

Harding's enthusiasms don't last for months. If they  
survive overnight they're pretty powerful.

What can one do with a man like that except admire him?  
Hate him, of course. (You weren't born yesterday, were  
you.) Harding introduced me to one of his passing  
enthusiasms, fandom, and I reckon that's enough reason  
to love and hate a man as any I've ever heard.

Lee wrote about me, most flatteringly, in a cruddy  
thing that Leigh Edmonds put out last year. Lee said

that I am 'the last person I would entrust with any worthwhile project'. He also said that I am 'a bastard out of sight' - and there was a whole lot more like that. The whole piece positively simmered with thinly-disguised affection. 'Let us not forget' he said 'that AUSTRALIA IN '75 was originally his idea.' That kind of thing.

On the first Tuesday in November, at 3pm or thereabouts, all Australia stops to watch or listen to a horse race. Today is the first Tuesday in November. It is also Guy Fawkes's Day. I stopped work, reluctantly, I admit, to watch my horse come in fourth. I did not till this moment stop to think of Guy Fawkes ('the only man ever to enter Parliament with honest intentions'). But several times today I have thought of Lee Harding, and of what I might do to embarrass him. Why? Why not? As December 1974 has drawn closer I have thought more and more about what I might do to embarrass Lee Harding.

I have decided that nothing I can think of is likely to embarrass Lee Harding.

But I've done my best.

Ten years ago Lee published Canto One. The least I can do to embarrass him is publish something that looks, from the outside, like Canto Two.

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Note: Some of the articles listed above were not available at the time of going to press.



11 November: Sally is in the diningroom stroking her pussy and making motherly noises. She has only had him for an hour or so, and he is three weeks old. Sally wanted to call him Scythrop, for some reason I don't follow, and I wanted to call him Wombat, because he looked like one when Kathy next door first showed him to us, but we compromised on Dylan. He is, I need hardly explain, named after the poet, the eminent Sydney science fiction fan, the former secretary of the United States Treasury, the TV western hero, and - someone else - uhuh - Tom Dillon, the well-known singer. With a name like that, what a wonderful start in life for the poor little bugger! (The man ain't got no culture! - SB))

Two issues ago I was talking about cats, and how they get their names, and all kinds of great stuff like that. (If you want a copy, ask. I didn't send many out.) I think I asked, rhetorically as it were, why people don't give their pets names like Ted and Jane. Since then I have been officially introduced to Fred, the black and white cat who lives next door on the other side. (As David Grigg once said: Every time someone says he doesn't believe in theories, a theory dies.) Dylan has met Fred, too. Dylan thinks Fred is his mother. Fred obviously wants to be nice to the kid - show him how to fight, kill birds, rip the stuffing out of chairs and so on - but what Dylan tries to do to Fred is, you know, just a bit hard to take. I don't know whether cats believe in fellatio, but it's pretty obvious that Dylan isn't looking for sex just yet, and in any case Fred has only the dimmest memory of sex, if any, so he stalks off and grumbles a bit. It all takes time, I guess. Dylan is destined to remain a boy soprano, though we haven't the heart to tell him yet, so he and Fred will probably work things out one way or another in time.

Harding used to tell me about the homo-sexual cats who used to get up to all kinds of odd things in his back garden, but I never saw them. Harding introduced me to cats, as well as science fiction and fandom. (And wine: but that's another story.) Grushenka's mother or grandmother, or maybe both, could be discovered from time to time paddling in Harding's kitchen sink. Even Grushenka had a bit of this in her, but her trick was to wade through the gutter outside whenever there was any water in it. It's taken me a long time to work this out, but I am now convinced that they were all trying to imitate Harding, but never quite managed to walk on the water. It all takes time.

Lee Harding: ah, there's a name to conjure with! Bim-sallah-bim: there's another! It's a laugh a minute in fandom, folks, and I have only Harding to thank for it. And my own innate naivety and stupidity, of course.

#### CULTURAL NOTES:

'Kung Fu' finished on local telly last week. Now someone has told me that David Carradine committed suicide recently. Life is too sad for words at times.

On 19 October Australia saw its first colour telecast. The subject of the telecast was a game of golf somewhere. Since then we have had regular colour transmissions. I reckon Ross Symons blushed when he announced at the end of the ABC News that that was the first ABC News in colour. He looked as though he was blushing anyway; it's hard to tell on our set. Anyway, now if you're rich enough and patient enough you can see all the world's gloom and despair in vivid colour in the comfort of your own Australian livingroom.

#### POLITICAL & SOCIAL NOTES:

'I have been nearer to despair this year than ever in my life. We may be moving - perhaps in ten years - into large-scale famine. Many millions of people are going to starve. We shall see them doing so upon our television sets.'

- C. P. Snow (Time, 22.11.1968; NMH3, December 1968)

'You're right! The politicians get together in Rome and produce fertilizer!'

- Paul Ehrlich (to Prof. Colin Clark, Monday Conference, ABC TV, 11.11.74)

#### SPORTING NOTES:

Some years ago I speculated ignorantly on the spelling of the name of my favourite card game. I mentioned that my grandmother said it was called 'coon can' because 'any coon can play'. My grandmother, bless her, died about ten years ago, and she was no more a racist than you, me and the dago next door. (I once said something in her hearing about The Bomb. Remember The Bomb? Only David Grigg thinks about The Bomb these days. Grandma looked me straight in the left earlobe and said God would never let it happen. I remember my grandmother with love and admiration.) Anyway, I asked my countless readers at the time to tell me what they knew about 'coon can', its origin, significance, abiding worth &c. And of course I never heard a damn thing. Some time later I read Graham Greene's JOURNEY WITHOUT MAPS, and there on page 52 he was talking about people playing 'Kuhn-Kan'. The mystery solved! Until today. Both Oxford and Webster give the spelling as 'coon-can' (from 'conquian'). Every home should have a dictionary. And a pack of cards, of course.

#### LITERARY NOTES:

Last Friday evening I asked Australia's most eminent living poet 'Who do you write for?' I did not get an entirely satisfactory answer. I mentioned that my favourite novel is *AT SWIM-TWO-BIRDS*. He said that the book terrified him. Later he seemed to suggest that this is the kind of book I should write if I applied myself &c. I am confused. Let's face it: we were both confused that night. Kaiser Stuhl's flagon burgundy is a nice drop, by the glass - but not by the flagon. Sally was so overcome by being in the presence of Australia's most eminent poet and Australia's most eminent John Bangsund for a whole evening that I had to drive home. I must ask him what he meant by 'the throwaway Irish novel'. At the time I nodded knowingly, but now I haven't a clue what he meant. He promised to write an article for me about Thomas Love Peacock's incredible percipience (for a self-taught man), his inability to see the future of 'the March of Mind', his odd understanding of what Beethoven was about, at a time when most Englishmen despised anything written since 1750 or thereabouts, and so on. Where Peacock was wrong about Shelley. That sort of thing. I might remind him one day when I am great & famous and the editor of a literary magazine worthy of his presence. Until then... Well, it was a most pleasant evening, and I learnt a fair bit about myself, and a little about him. You can't really ask for more than that.

#### MOTORING NOTES:

One day, about ten or eleven years ago, I drove my latest secondhand car up Harding's driveway. My latest secondhand car was the car I had most admired and coveted in all the world since it appeared at the 1950 or 1951 Melbourne Motor Show. It is still the car I would most wish to have sitting in my driveway - alongside the rather ordinary vehicle I use for getting around in, that is. Harding looked out his window. I could see him, and I knew he could see me, and I was awfully proud. Harding said 'Oh my god! - not an Alvis!'. He said it the way you might say 'Oh my god! not quintuplets!'. I gathered that he was not impressed. Later I realized that it was not so much that he wasn't impressed as that he felt an Alvis wasn't the kind of car I should buy. He was right. I should have bought a Volkswagen. Lee drove a Volkswagen. But I... I was mad about cars, and idealistic about cars in a way I felt Lee could never even begin to appreciate.

I was wrong of course. Lee has at least as fine a taste in exotic automobiles as I have. He just doesn't buy them, that's all.

Some years later I got round to buying a VW, and Lee and I once more were friends. Then I came to Canberra and traded the VW on a Renault 16TS, and Lee said that was the only car to drive, and we were friends again. Lee Harding knows, as well as I know, that there are only three cars in all the world worth owning: the Volkswagen (Beetle or 1600TS fastback - same thing), the Renault 16TS (if you can afford it) and the 1951 model Citroen Light 15 - no, dammit, the 1951 Alvis TA 21. (Same difference.)

As it turned out, I drove the Alvis for a year or so, and I have very happy memories about it. Among my friends I think only Lee and Carolyn remember the Alvis, and my memories of all three at that time are inextricably woven together.

I was driving the Alvis when my father died. He had just started paying off a Morris 1100, and I sold the Alvis and kept up the payments on the Morris, because it seemed sensible at the time. Sic transit &c...

#### BUSINESS NOTES:

I wonder what it would cost to insure an Alvis TA 21 these days. The Alvis cost £500 back in 1964, and I guess it would cost about \$2500 at least now, if you could find one. The Renault I am driving cost me \$1900. It is worth \$1400 to the trade. With a bit of spit and polish it would cost you \$2500 in a used-car yard. Last year it cost me \$132 to insure it. This year my insurance company quoted me \$240. I felt this was a bit much. I wrote to about twenty insurance firms in Canberra, asking for a quote. The last claim I made against motor insurance was in 1963, when I wrecked the expensive, decorative bits on the front of a Humber Super Snipe, so I'm a good risk. The highest quote I received from the people I wrote to was \$217, the lowest \$109. I compromised on a quote of \$136 from a firm with which I already have a fair amount of business. My insurance lapsed on 31 October, and I posted off a cheque to my chosen firm the night before. On 31 October another firm rang me at work and said I could have comprehensive insurance for \$73. Bloody hell. I saved over \$100, but the thought of losing \$63 still rankles. If you live in New South Wales, gentle reader, and have a good insurance record, forget the rest - go straight to NRMA! (Wasn't that boring?)

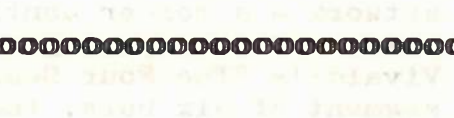
#### MORE LITERARY NOTES:

Lee Harding is editing an anthology entitled *BEYOND TOMORROW*. It has an introduction by Isaac Asimov and includes works by Aldiss, Le Guin, Lafferty, Blish, Ballard, Anderson and Grigg. Grigg? What are you up to, David?



A letter from Lee Hardina

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an (and don't you fergit

it) - and this wroiling boiling inner turmoil went on building up for two years until it exploded at the Seventh Australian Convention and, well, the rest is history. ASFR gave me the chance to reject Harding's material, so now you know why it really started and, since Lee hasn't written anything for me for so long, why it is finishing. But that's another story.

Canto One, dated December 1964, appeared in January 1965. In the finest fannish tradition. The covers were of thin card-board, blue, and taped at the spine with black binding-tape, supplied, if memory serves me, by the Victorian Railways Institute Library (where I was Head Librarian until the theft was discovered). I had drawn cover after cover for the magazine, some of them agonizingly intricate, but all that remained of my work were the words "canto one" - in lower case of course, because we wanted people to understand that we were right with it, typographically. (We stole the idea from New Worlds, actually.) Lee, whose middle name is Granger, had dug up from somewhere a quite pleasant photograph of an astronaut playing a cello, and this, together with my lettering and a very intricate baroque border, which he had dug up from somewhere else, made up the cover illustration.

Canto One contained forty pages, not counting the covers. You had to count the pages to know this because Lee, who is really a very accommodating chap who likes to please everyone, had numbered some pages and not numbered others. For the contents page I had executed another very intricate piece of artwork - a border containing, among other things, a treble stave and the opening bars of the Autumn movement from Vivaldi's "The Four Seasons". All that survived was a short segment of six bars, the origin of which I defy the most erudite musicologist to identify. Instead of my work there appeared on the contents page yet another grangerized illustration, and there were about a dozen more scattered through the magazine.

Lee wrote three pages of editorial and one of technical credits. Bob Smith wrote lovingly about Japan in "Mukashi, Mukashi", John Foyster had an utterly incomprehensible short story and a disturbingly comprehensible poem, Don Symons had a poem which I think I'll reprint in this issue - and all the rest of the magazine was written or drawn by yours truly. Under my best-known pseudonym I wrote "Sir William and I in Adelaide", a rather crummy report on the Adelaide Festival (at which Sir W. Walton was GofH), and "The Beheading of Basil Pott", a short story which has subsequently been bounced from all the best sf magazines and reprinted (slightly revised) in Leigh Edmonds's Rataplan. As Roy Swellfoot I contributed a four-page comic strip, and as R. McGedden some doggerel that apparently read well at the time but now makes me feel pleased that we had the foresight to run under a pen-name. Of the illustrations, apart from the Harding cut-outs, three were by Bill Rotsler (courtesy of John Foyster, I imagine) and the remaining eleven by me.



I think Lee had three or four letters of comment, possibly more. I remember one from Peter Singleton and another from Harry Warner Jr, who correctly identified the Wagner quotation in one of my drawings. (Since I had only put the Wagner quote into the drawing to elicit a comment from Harry, this was only just. If I'd known of James Blish's predilection for Richard Strauss at that time I would have put in a Strauss quote for him.)

In his editorial Lee promised to tell us in the next issue about his rediscovery of Tchaikovsky. We're still waiting.

During 1965 work continued on the second issue. Don Symons wrote a fascinating autobiographical piece which read like a James Bond escapade. I wrote another story - "The Translation of Saint Priapus" - and a brace of articles, including one on the Thomas Hardy Society of Japan and another in the form of an interview with a rather unusual hi-fi fanatic. I did more illustrations, including the most complex and difficult drawing I have ever finished, a title-page for my story.

At that time Joan Sutherland came to Australia. Ken Hince, bookseller and music critic (and an awfully nice bloke), wrote a review of one of Miss Sutherland's evenings, and I wrote - on Lee's instructions - to The Australian, requesting permission to reprint. Which was granted. I was convinced that Lee now had more than enough material to fill Canto Two, but when I rang him one day in June to see if he'd started he told me that John Foyster was planning to attend some of the Sutherland operas and then write an article about them, which meant that the issue would be held up until August. "August?!" I screamed into the phone, and protested bitterly. But to no avail.

Fourteen months later, in ASFR 3, I announced that new subscribers would receive a complimentary copy of Canto Two, to be published in December, which seems to indicate that Lee had been thinking about it again, and a few issues later I mentioned Canto Two a second time, in connection with the birth of Lee and Carla's second child, Belinda; I reasoned that since no.1 had been dedicated to Erik, Lee would want to get out no.2 so he could dedicate it to Belinda. But no such luck. The Hardings' third, Stephen, has his first birthday on 12th January, and there's still no sign of Canto Two.

Meanwhile, what of the brilliant material Lee had collected for the phantom fanzine?

Well, no doubt the letters of comment and possibly some other things are secure in the Harding files (a local euphemism for "irretrievably lost"), but others have percolated into various fanzines. Some have not been published.

"The Translation of Saint Priapus" appeared in John Foyster's



But the best contribution of all was Don Symons's article. Lee gave it back to Don and urged him to write a novel around it. He should, but he hasn't. I hope, whether he eventually expands it or not, that he will let me publish it in Scythrop. If he does, it will not only make Scythrop's reputation; it will stand as the final monument to Canto Two - the fabulous fanzine that almost but never was.

Last issue I wrote honestly, if ignorantly, about the latest book by Bert Chandler. I think our friendship will survive this, but I couldn't help wondering when I read what I had printed. I know I could say anything I wanted to about George Turner's writing, and whatever I said, remain a friend. I'm not so sure about Lee Harding - which is why I posed the question.

Next issue I shall tear Leigh Edmonds's budding reputation as a dramatist into tiny little shreds. I'll be so honest about it you'll cry.



18 November: Hey wow! We're having a Tupperware Party! No, we're not: they are. I just got chucked out for being a disruptive influence. Rule 1 for Tupperware hostesses and sales personnel: Get rid of the bloody men, quick.

So here I am, all alone, no-one to talk to except this IBM (\*sob\*) and you. Hi! And I'm under strict orders not to finish the flagon, dammit. Hi, anyway.

What will I talk about? Would you like to play a game? Goodie. You just look at these famous photos of famous people and tell me who they are, right? Right.

Ten photos of Lee Harding, did you say? Bloody hell. You've played this before, haven't you!

I guess I don't feel like playing games.

Presenting: IN TODAY'S MAIL!!!

(First screening. Live. In colour.)

Five bills. One un-proofed (oh boy, there ain't many of those around these days) un-proofread catalogue of cut-price records from Bradford, Essex or Leeds, Dorset or somewhere. One crazy rock fanzine from Brute Tornley. One brief newszine from Darroll Pardoe (good stuff, too). One Aussiecon 1974 Achievement Awards Nomination Blank (not a religious outfit, but dangerous to your health).

Of the latter (ahem) I shall speak.

'The optional preferential, or Aussie Ballot, will be used' states this worthy sheet. Dear friends, observe those words. In previous Hugo nomination and ballot forms the words 'Australian ballot' have been used, and the system wrongly so described by those words is the preferential ballot.

Let's be serious for a moment.

Okay now? Good.

The Australian ballot is a secret ballot: nothing more, nothing less. I shall repeat that. The Australian ballot is a secret ballot. The term 'Australian ballot' has absolutely no other meaning. Since you are required to sign your name on this nomination form (and were required to do so on every Hugo ballot I've ever seen), the voting process for the Hugo Awards is not, never has been (as far as I know), and moreover never should be - an Australian ballot. I trust that is clear. I trust that before this Australian Worldcon is

just a dim memory every clear-thinking, fair-dealing, Cosmic-Minded fan will have got that into his thick head. No offence, of course.

In Australia we have various systems designed to ensure that the most Cosmic-Minded and thick-headed person attains various more or less unimportant mundane offices. Take the Australian Parliament, for example. (Please, won't you take it?) My employer, ladies and gentlemen, democratically elected by all Australians of age 18 or over except some.

Australia is a federation of six sovereign states: Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland (reading roughly left to right, except politically, and bottom to top). Each state has its own government and parliament. Each state also is divided into electorates for federal purposes, roughly based on population. From these electorates we get the members of the House of Representatives. A sorry lot they are, too.

Since the Australian Parliament is Bi-cameral (and you know what that means, don't you, eh?), there must be an upper house. This is called the Senate in ordinary parlance, the 'states' house' in floury rhetoric, and 'those obstructionist bastards' by those who know what's going on. Each state elects ten Senators. And so, democracy being what it is and so on, Tasmania with a population of something less than half a million has ten Senators, and so does New South Wales - which has a population of about four million (all of whom are on the Federal Highway in overpowered white Holdens every weekend). The Australian Capital Territory - or Canberra, if you prefer - has no Senators, despite its population of about 300,000. If my slightly sodden calculations are correct, Tasmania has one Senator for every 45,000 voters; New South Wales has one for every 400,000 voters; and Canberra and the Northern Territory have none.

Think about that next time you are about to use the term 'Australian ballot'.

The system described by our worthy Worldcon organizers as 'the Australian ballot' is in fact what we call the preferential system. By means of this system we are allowed to elect the person we dislike least, rather than the person we like most. (This is awfully Australian and will not be understood by foreigners who still think that the object of any election is to decide which person is liked most. Australia has always been way ahead of the rest of the world in these matters. Just ask us: we'll tell you.) Most people in Australia don't vote Labor, you see. The Australian Labor Party, since its inception, has



advocated all kinds of radical, socialist policies, such as public participation in the public prosperity, one-vote-one-value, the right of the worker to enjoy the fruits of his work - all that kinda stuff. Absolute rampant communism and common sense &c. No good. Unfair to shareholders &c. And &c.

(Dear me: is my bias showing?)

The Labor Party has always advocated also the first-past-the-post voting system. You know: you back your favourite horse, and if it doesn't win that's tough. You don't go to the bookmaker and say 'Jeez, mate, me horse didn't win, but me second choice did - so give me all the dough I would've won if me first choice had come in.'

This second-choice system doesn't operate on Australian racecourses, and it doesn't operate in American or British elections (to my knowledge), but by god it works in Australian elections - and it has worked most efficiently for years and years to keep Labor out of office.

Extreme example of the system's operation: You have an electorate in which the Labor candidate has scored 48% of the first-place votes. The Liberal candidate has scored 30%. The Country Party candidate has scored 14%. The other parties' candidates - say, the Australia Party, the Democratic Labor Party, the Nazi Party, the anti-pornography bloke and the lady who reckons there should be more traffic lights in the electorate - between them score 7%. The invalid votes make up the remaining 1%. Everyone except the people who voted Labor or Liberal gives his second preference to the Liberal candidate. Result: Liberal 51%, Labor 48% - and Labor loses.

That's the Australian system, gentle readers.

The present Labor government (which in any other country, just about, would have been described as getting an overwhelming mandate, achieving a landslide majority &c) has tried to introduce a system called 'optional preferential voting'. Under this system you just vote for the person or persons you want, numbering your ballot paper from 1 to 20, or 1 to 4, or just 1 - whatever you like. All this means is that in future Labor voters need only number one square on the ballot paper. Other voters, who desire more than one vote (sounds vaguely undemocratic, doesn't it?), may number the other squares.

That, dear Hugo voters, is the system you are now invited to use.

I don't know which persons or groups will appear on the 'Contribution to the Field' Hugo ballot. If you feel, as I do, that Franz Rottensteiner is the person who most deserves this award, you will give him no.1. If you feel that Jannick Storm is the next most deserving candidate, you will give him no.2 - and if Franz misses out there's a chance that Jan will win. If no-one but you and me knows that Franz and Jan deserve this recognition, we will give Stanislaw Lem no.3 place - and after him, Jack Williamson (for his tremendous work in the field of sf education, of course).

This is called using the system. There is nothing wrong with using a system which is there to be used.

I don't know who you would name if you were asked to nominate the 'person or group that has made over a period of years a hitherto unrecognized contribution to the science fiction field' - in the context of a World Science Fiction Convention - but Franz, Jan, Stanislaw and Jack are the people who spring to my mind. Also Bruce Gillespie and George Turner, but from my own very personal, irrelevant and maybe stupid feelings. I shall not nominate nor vote for them, simply because they are Australian. (From the same crazy feelings I will not allow myself to be nominated, however unworthy or unlikely.) Anyway, if by some stroke of rationality these four most deserving people were to appear on the ballot, I could vote (1) Franz (2) Jan (3) Stanislaw (4) Jack - and it might very well turn out that my fourth-place vote for Jack would give him the award. Stranger things have happened - and I assure you, much less just things - in Australian politics.

The Tupperware ladies have now invited me to join them in coffee (which I need badly, believe me), so I shall adjourn this discussion. But not before apologizing to my friends Jan, Stanislaw and Jack for placing them after my friend Franz in that Hugo category. My apologies, friends: you all deserve Hugos more than a lot of people who have won them. And so do Bruce and George. And (bloody hell) so do I, come to think of it.

In sum: I prefer not to win anything on preferences. I prefer not to vote on preferences (but I will if it's the only system going). I will certainly not stand for any award given by a World Science Fiction Convention when the Worldcon is conducted in Australia. No bias, no reflection on previous awards. I would like to have a Hugo, but by god I shall have one only when it is awarded on neutral territory!

Ends emotional polemic.  
Rejoins ladies.