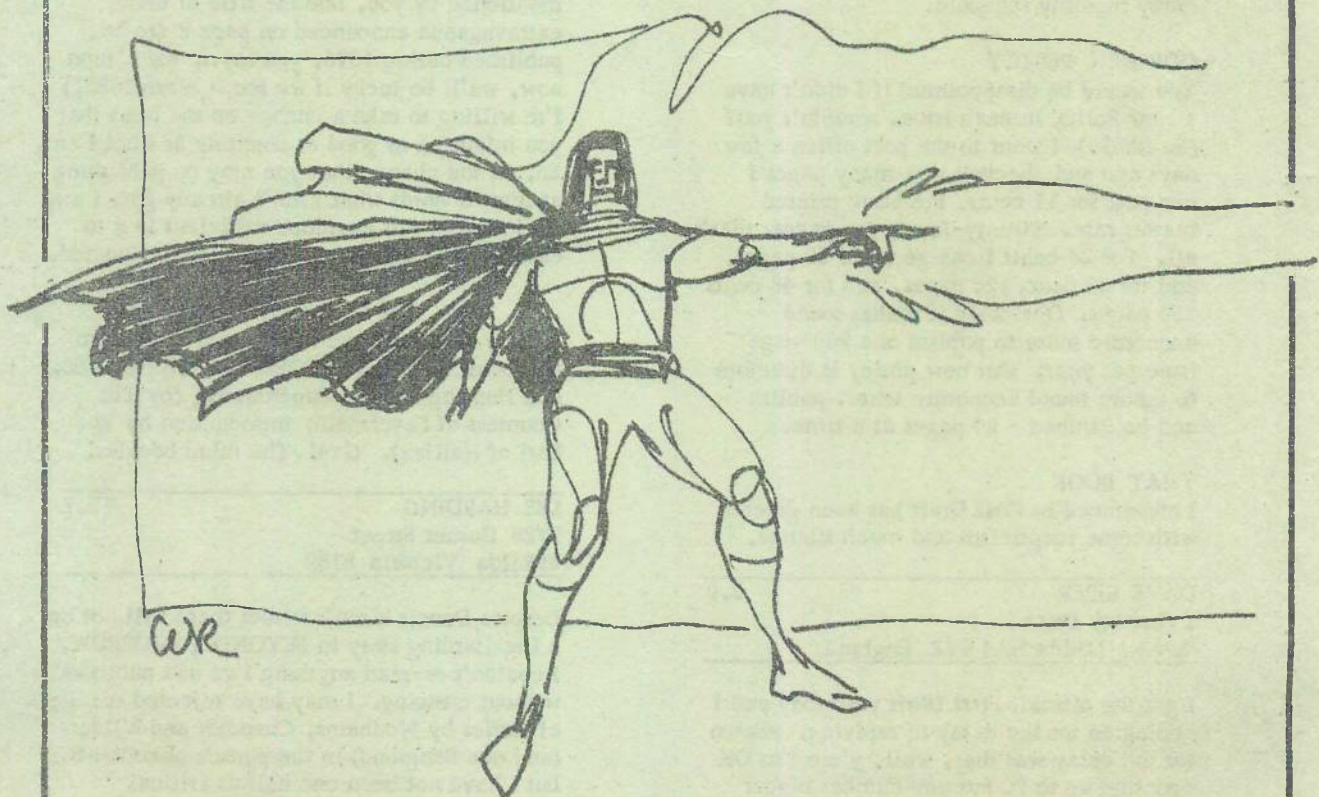


Philosophical Gas

30



of their mss as I have of my own. So I view with awe the prospect of your selecting 75 000 words of your best fanwriting. I wish you luck, with the grumbling qualification that maybe this sort of thing is best left to an outside party. Sometimes the bits and pieces we think of as great are really so-so, and the bits we disown... masterpieces.

(My secret, Lee, is that I know all my stuff is so-so. Also I don't think I'll live long enough for some outside party to select and publish the best of my fanzine writing. One does not, after all, kid oneself that one is a Willis or Burbee or Tucker or Bloch, does one? One does not.

(That heap of ones there is thrown in for the enjoyment of such of our readers who have been involved of late in the great Editorial We Controversy, a rather futile discussion into which I-we-one will not be drawn.)

A. BERTRAM CHANDLER 10.2
Cell 7, Tara Street
Woollahra NSW 2025

Your letter of January 30 is to hand, also the batch of minizines (NMH 12,13; FD). And what's all the flap about? In this case I was the writer, you the reviewer. What you reviewed you didn't like, and you said so - as have we all from time to time. The fact that you're a personal friend of the writer has nothing at all to do with it. And your review wasn't a patch on the one in Nation Review. That was a real stinker. Oddly enough, though, you praise THE BITTER PILL for the very part of it that was slightly condemned by Ken Longworth in the Newcastle Morning Herald. He reckoned that the maritime sequences were 'too heavily technical'.

In any case, I'm flattered that you mention me in the same breath as Len Deighton, who is one of my own favourites. Deighton, as you know, made two comparatively recent attempts to break out of his own secret-agent infested ghetto, with ONLY WHEN I LARF and BOMBER. Susan, who doesn't much care for the real Deighton, thought ONLY WHEN I LARF excellent and found BOMBER unreadable. I found ONLY WHEN I LARF only so-so, and deemed BOMBER a great novel. As it says somewhere in the Bible, 'One man's Mede is another man's Persian.'

(Have you ever considered writing Keats & Chapman anecdotes, Bert?)

Also I love Flashman, although Susan doesn't much care for him. (Flashman is mentioned in Farmer's TARZAN ALIVE. Although Mr Farmer does not make the claim, I think that he, like Tarzan, Sherlock Holmes et al, must have been descended from the group exposed to that dose of mutagenic radiation. Although no hero he displays a fantastic talent for survival.) Anyhow, George MacDonald Fraser made a brief foray out of his private ghetto with THE STEEL BONNETS, a very well researched history of the Border Rievers, petty gang leaders who infested the border between England and Scotland prior to the Act of Union. None of them had the glamour of a Ned Kelly.

When I read Fraser's book I had been trying to get BURY MY HEART AT WOUNDED KNEE from all three of the public libraries to which I belong - Launceston, Hobart and Woollahra. (Ultimately I was knee-deep in Wounded Knees, but that's another story.) On one visit to Hobart I found in the library a book covering the same period of American history - Stephen Longstreet's WAR CRIES ON HORSEBACK. At the same time I took out Fraser's STEEL BONNETS, and I had with me all three issues of Playboy with the serialized FLASHMAN AT THE CHARGE. Neither as a historian nor as a writer is Mr Longstreet a patch on Mr Fraser, but his WAR CRIES ON HORSEBACK abounded in larger-than-life real-life characters: Lieutenant Colonel Custer, Chief Sitting Bull, Chief Joseph and many more. THE STEEL BONNETS, however, was no more than the chronicles of the dreary doings of petty gangsters. I put the book down half read - I never finished it - and turned with a sigh of relief to the latest instalment of the Flashman history.

It boils down to this: As a writer you haven't a hope in hell of pleasing all of the people all of the time, or even some of the people all of the time. The best you can hope for is to please some of the people some of the time.

Let's hold it there for a moment, Bert. In The New Millennial Harbinger 12 I wrote some ill-considered off-the-cuff comments on Bert's novel THE BITTER PILL (since voted a Ditmar Award as Best Australian SF 1974). In NMH 13 I quoted Maurice Dunlevy, the Canberra Times's resident literary pundit, to the effect that a reviewer cannot have writers for friends and write about them honestly. That statement is still very much a matter for

discussion, and I hope that readers with thoughts on the matter will share them with us.

I sent Lee Harding NMHs 12 and 13, together with a kind-of story I had written - a story motivated by Lee's need for contributions to his anthology, but completed for its own sake. Lee reacted strongly:

'I still find your opinions (statements?) on art and writing a little ridiculous. Whenever an amateur (i.e. a person without the self discipline to pursue an interest purposefully) sticks his head into art he usually makes an ass of himself. So I did not at all appreciate your - nah, I can't call it a "review" - remarks on Bert Chandler's book. Pretty damn smug. Nit-pick your politicians for all they're worth (which probably isn't much on the going market), but when you approach a work of art - good or bad - at least give it the dignified respect of a proper criticism.' Lee liked the story, but felt it wasn't suitable for his anthology, which is fair enough. The other bit - about amateurs and art and so on - we had a bit of a fight about, in letters and in person. That's all cleared up now, more or less, but the questions remain (as questions, I mean, not as a divisive force at work against the friendship which Lee and Bert and I enjoy).

What is an amateur? I don't like Lee's definition much. What is 'the dignified respect of a proper criticism'?

'This one has a flip side. Something called ROCANNON'S WORLD by Ursula K. Le Guin, which I couldn't bring myself to read.'

That was Lee's review - in ASFR 4, back in October 1966 - of one of my favourite books by one of my favourite authors. I don't quote it entirely to embarrass Lee, because it's exactly the kind of thing I might easily write myself now. All I ask is whether this is included in whatever Lee means by 'a proper criticism'. You, dear reader - if you are reading this, there is about a 75% chance that you are a writer or a reviewer or both -, what do you think about these three pretty basic questions?

(What questions? you ask. These:)

Can you write honestly about the work of a writer who is also a friend?

What is an amateur?

Does any work of art, good or bad, deserve the 'dignified respect of a proper criticism'?

If you are really feeling energetic you might also tell us whether you feel that it is okay to nit-pick politicians while reserving proper criticism for works of art.

Meanwhile, back at Cell 7:

At the moment, in my own case, 'some of the people' now includes the Japanese. A publishing house in Tokyo is going to reprint all the Rim Worlds and Grimes novels. One interesting point that has come up is that regarding illustrations - both dust jacket and internal. When I first started as a contributor to the American sf pulps it used to be said, with some justification, that the average magazine artist has a mental age of six and can't read. Mind you, there are some good artists. When most of the Grimes novelettes were being published in IF I used to love Vaughn Bode's pics, especially when ships were involved. Nonetheless, book and magazine publishers in the Western World do tend to give their artists a free hand, very often with disastrous results. One novel recently had a picture of the central character, a Royal Navy Captain, on the dust jacket. He was in uniform. His cap badge wasn't quite right. But the biggest gaffe was depicting him with a neat moustache - even after the writer had specifically pointed out that in the Royal Navy, as far as facial hair is concerned, you either wear a 'full set' or go clean-shaven.

The Japanese, however, don't leave everything to the artist. In their innocence they assume that writers know what they're writing about. Can you imagine me answering a long-distance telephone call from Tokyo, trying to explain to a rather giggly Nipponese maiden what the Mannschenn Drive looks like? No kidding. We got all sorts of pseudo-technicalities more or less ironed out and I said goodnight and hung up. Then the telephone rang again. It was the same wench. 'Can you tell me, please, what is the Survey Service cap badge?' Oddly enough, I have the details of Rim Runners' uniform trimmings quite firmly fixed in my mind - the main part of the badge is, of course, the winged wheel - but I had to invent something for the Survey Service (a winged star, I decided) on the spur of the moment.

Bert concludes by mentioning that he has been prematurely retired from his job as ship's master because ANL - no, I'm wrong: USS, isn't it (oh hell) - has retired two of its older ships. He hastens to assure me that his retrenchment is on full pay - and that we might very well see him in Canberra some time. I look forward to that. Bert Chandler is one of my favourite people. (And judging by the letters I get, one of yours, too.)

Ken Ford

ME AND HE

HE WAS OBVIOUSLY the type of person who would burn a guitar. I could see how obvious this was when he nonchalantly poured a bottle of metho over a new-looking twelve-string and lit a match, which lit the guitar, which lit his face, which smiled as I approached.

That's a good guitar you're burning.
Yeah.
Why are you burning a guitar?
I want to.
Oh, I said. But why?
Don't really know, he replied.
It's a rather silly thing to do, don't you think?
Yeah.
Then why do it? I asked.
I suppose it's because I'm so enigmatic.
Oh?
Yeah. I think I'll burn a book tomorrow.
We moved as the bus drove up to the stop.
He added: I think I'll read it first, though.

An old drunk in the back seat was talking to himself. He was rather audible, and it made me feel uncomfortable.
Why don't you talk to him? I suggested.
What?
Talk to him.
No.
Why not?
I don't want to look stupid.
But it would be nice. It would be the chance to put into practice all those ideals you keep talking about.
Then it wouldn't be right.
Why not?
'Cos then I'd be talking to him because I wanted to put into practice all I've been talking about, and not because I wanted to talk to him.
Oh.
The bus continued. The drunk went on.
Talk to him, I said again.
No.
Why not?
He's happy enough.
What?
He probably doesn't want to talk to anyone, and I'd only spoil it.

Oh. The bus kept going. The drunk kept talking.
Talk to him, I pleaded.
OK, he said. He made no move.
OK what? I asked.
OK, this is our stop.
He pulled the cord. We got off.

Want to see something funny? he said.
Oh yeah. Where?
At my place.
We went to his place. We went into his room. On the bed was a pile of books. On top of the pile was a book called COLD MOUNTAIN. Chinese poetry by Han-shan.
Ha-ha, he laughed.
What's the joke? I said.
He took the top book of Chinese poems and pointed one out to me.
Read it, he laughed. I did.
'A thatched hut is a home for a country man;
Horse or carriage seldom pass my gate:
Forests so still all the birds come to roost,
Broad valley streams always full of fish.
I pick wild fruit in hand with my child,
Till the hillside fields with my wife.
And in my house what do I have?
Only a bed piled high with books.'
Ha-ha, he laughed.
Yeah. I didn't laugh.
Yeah.
Far out, I said.
Yeah.
Too much, I said.
Yeah.
Rather obscure, I said.
Yeah. Ha-ha.
Um. I looked around vacantly.
Television, he suggested. We watched some, then I went home to bed.

Next morning he wasn't on the bus.
I haven't got anyone to talk to, I told the person next to me.
Too bad, he said.
I smiled. I had tricked that person.

At college that day I saw him in drama class.
He was reading a book.

Is that the one you're going to burn? I said.
 No. I like this one.
 In drama class we find out about ourselves
 and each other. We learn to be better
 people, hopefully.
 You can be nice at times, I told him.
 That's a nice touch, he said.

On the way to the bus stop later in the day
 he was whistling a happy tune to himself and
 doing small dance skips, except when other
 people walked by.
 Why don't you whistle and dance when other
 people walk by?
 Umm... because if they saw that I was happy
 it would make them sad.
 Why?
 'Cos they're not happy.
 I don't think so.
 You don't?
 No.
 Oh.

So why don't you whistle and dance when
 people walk past?
 Gee, you've got me there.
 Someone walked by, he gave a little
 impromptu performance. The person walked
 hurriedly away.
 Perhaps I'm not too good at it, he said.
 Perhaps.
 That night we went to a film.
 There's no one here that I know, he said,
 looking quite scared by it all.
 No, I said. It was a good film.

On the bus next morning he told me he had
 taken up writing.
 Am I in it?
 Yep, you're the protagonist.
 Far out, I said.
 Yep.
 You're very nice at times.
 I'm nice all the time, but sometimes I just
 don't show it.

John Litchen

THE OTHER HUGO

THERE HAS BEEN a new wave of South
 American writers over the last few years.
 Actually I should say that South American
 writers are causing a new wave, a new rave,
 because they have suddenly been discovered
 by those who read in English. Those who
 have been bored with traditional themes and
 subjects, who want something new, something
 a little different, perhaps something a little
 fantastic, are beginning to find all of this
 and more in the works now being presented
 in English translation for the first time.

Many of these writers have been around for
 years. Their works are rich and fantastic
 (in the true sense of the word), almost
 unbelievable, peopled with characters real
 and imaginary, surrealistic, weird, wonderful
 and impossible. Yet nothing is impossible
 for these writers who have in many cases
 rejected European forms and delved into
 their own turbulent and unique histories,
 legends and beliefs as the source of their
 inspiration.

Writers such as Miguel Angel Asturias from
 Guatemala, who won the 1967 Nobel Prize
 for literature; Gabriela Mistral and Pablo
 Neruda, Chilean poets, both Nobel winners;
 Alejo Carpentier, Cuban author of THE LOST
 STEPS, EXPLOSION IN A CATHEDRAL and
 THE WAR OF TIME; Jorge Luis Borges from
 Argentina, author of FICCIONES and THE
 BOOK OF IMAGINARY BEINGS; Carlos
 Fuentes, Mexican, author of WHERE THE AIR
 IS CLEAR and THE DEATH OF ARTEMIO
 CRUZ; Manuel Mujica-Leinaz; Julio Cortazar;
 Octavio Paz; Gabriel Garcia Marquez, a
 Colombian, creator of the magnificent ONE
 HUNDRED YEARS OF SOLITUDE... They
 are giants, all of them.

Now the same sort of thing is happening,
 though on a smaller scale, in the world of
 science fiction. We are beginning to see
 good English translations of sf originally
 written in French, German, Russian, Polish
 and other languages. Not much Spanish yet,
 and from South America just a few short

stories by Hugo Correa - the other Hugo, as John Bangsund insists on calling him. John asked me to write something about Hugo Correa, and I have some good reasons for doing so: he is a damn good writer, and possibly the only South American writing sf as we know it - and I married his sister, Monica, just on two years ago. (Now you can say I'm biased. I don't mind.)

I lived in Acapulco for most of 1968, and while there I found a lot of science fiction that had been published in Barcelona, and some in Mexico, but nearly all of this was translated from English. Some were from Europe, including a few from Spain, but as far as I could tell at that time, there was nothing from South America. In the six years since then Hugo Correa is the only South American sf writer I have come across, and I only discovered him through Monica. Shortly after she migrated here from Chile she mentioned to me that her brother was a writer, and when I asked if she had any of his books, she lent me an anthology of his shorter stories. You can imagine my surprise when I discovered that they were all science fiction.

Apart from that collection he has published five novels since 1959. He writes a regular column for the magazine *Ercilla*, as well as articles for other magazines and newspapers. At the time of writing, I understand that he appears every week on a television program, along with other Chilean writers. In his 15-minute segment he talks about sf, current scientific developments, UFOs, the world of the future, Strange Happenings and the like.

Two of his early short stories have appeared in *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, and one of those stories, 'Alter Ego', has appeared in an anthology bearing the cumbersome title *INTRODUCTORY PSYCHOLOGY THROUGH SCIENCE FICTION*. He is in good company in this volume: some of the best sf writers, including Ursula Le Guin, are represented here. As far as I know (I am still waiting for my copy from Space Age), he is the only non-English writer present - certainly the only South American. His stories have been published in Spain, Holland, Belgium and Argentina, and one of his novels is to be published in France. Recently he was invited to spend six months at the University of Iowa - lecturing, I imagine. And during 1972 he was the subject of a special issue of the

Spanish pro-fanzine, or fan-prozine, *Nueva Dimension*.

Nueva Dimension is one of those magazines that can't quite be classified. It is published by a dedicated group of fans in Barcelona who also happen to be quite professional writers. The magazine is very professional in appearance, and it is distributed in just about every Spanish-speaking country - and yet it has much of the informal approach of any good fanzine. It seems to be put together with the kind of fervour, zeal and passion that creates the best fanzines. Just about every writer of stature in the USA has had stories translated and published in *Nueva Dimension*, and there have been special editions dedicated to the work of such people as Donald Wollheim, Robert Sheckley, Harry Harrison, Gerard Klein - and Hugo Correa.

The editors of ND compare Hugo with the giants of South American literature, claiming that his imagery is equal to (though different from) anything they have written. Like some South American writers, they point out, he is better known outside his country than within it. (This has changed now. Chile is proud of its most famous sf writer.)

It is difficult, the editors say, to define Hugo's style. He is more humanistic than technical, more fictional than scientific. He moves within so many literary styles that it is impossible to classify him. At times he reminds one of Lovecraft (Asterion). The poetical elegy of 'La Bestia Marciana' and 'El Regreso del Arcangel' reminds one of the melancholy of Bradbury. Even his more technical sf is subtly different from that of the Anglo-American writers.

Although his writing covers all kinds of subjects and forms, Hugo says that he prefers to work in the sf medium. He believes that sf should be used to criticize the dehumanization of the world by the mechanics of science and technology. He considers that Man knows very little, that his very nature is a mystery, that we exist alone in a world about which we know nothing.

And of course, this is what his stories are about: the discovery of Man, his relationship to the mysteries of his environment, his reactions to the unknown. He is deeply concerned about the lack of communication between people within his own country, let alone those from different countries with other languages, customs and ideologies.

Though he has a sombre side, Hugo is also a person fond of jokes: his conversations are filled with a kind of sardonic humour. He loves talking, and once he starts, it is difficult to get a word in edgewise. He has very definite opinions about everything, and yet he is always asking questions (though often he doesn't wait for answers).

His monthly column in *Ercilla* is like his conversation, verbose, rambling, yet full of interesting ideas casually thrown out for his audience to chew on. The column is quite the opposite to his short stories, which are terse and direct. Unfortunately my Spanish is not good enough for me to appreciate fully the moods and worlds he creates: I can understand just enough to make me realize how much I am missing. I can't wait for his work to start appearing in English.

As *Nueva Dimension* says, he stands alone. There is no one of whom he should be jealous.

Notes: *Nueva Dimension*, when last sighted, was edited by Sebastien Martinez, Domingo Santos and Luis Vigil, and published by Ediciones Dronte, Merced 4, entl. 2a, Barcelona 2, Spain. Monica and John Litchen live at 25 Woodville Park Drive, Werribee, Victoria 3030.

Now, here's John Berry. I seem to recall that John asked me to point out that his report on the 32nd World Science Fiction Convention was to appear in Mike Gorra's fanzine, *Random*, as well as here. So be it. I've just changed John's title slightly, that's all.

John D. Berry

FREE AND EASY WANDERING

SIMILES OF A SUMMER NIGHT

THE CARDINAL POINT to remember about Discon II is that it was Too Damn Big. With more than 4500 members, the worldcon has passed beyond the stage where it comfortably fills a hotel in some major city, and it has taken on a wholly new role. It used to be that, for fandom, the worldcon was that one opportunity to see all the friends you'd only see once a year. But how can that role be fulfilled when everybody's comment is 'I saw a lot of people I wanted to talk to at the other end of a crowded party, but we never got a chance to talk'? This is nothing new, to be sure, but even the same old complaint has a new validity when the membership of

the con starts to figure in the thousands. The worldcon isn't the same thing that it used to be. I had fun at the Discon, just the same.

I'd spent the summer wandering to California, but I'd made a point of coming back to DC for the con. Although I'd moved out of my house in Falls Church in June, I had a place to stay at Ted White's house, so that I could 'come home' each night instead of staying in the con hotel. It made a lot of difference. I remember Sunday night, when I went out for a pizza with Lou Stathis and Susan Palermo and a couple of other people, and they acted like prisoners let out of jail. They had spent

three straight days in the Sheraton Park, while I had been driving back across the Potomac each night and enjoying three of the greenest, prettiest parkways in the area. But I suffered culture shock from the moment I first walked into the hotel on Thursday night. I was used to the relatively small crowds of the Disclave, which I'd attended in the same hotel for the last two years, and the swarms of fans that spilled out of the hotel during the Discon overwhelmed me. I found as many people wandering through the lobby at 4 am at the Discon as I would see in the middle of the afternoon at a Disclave.

The size of the worldcon destroyed one of our simpler pleasures from the Disclaves, one which we'd been telling people about and looking forward to all year: sliding down the metal strip between the escalators to the lower level. Those escalators were unused at the Disclaves, but over Labor Day weekend they were in constant use (the huckster room was down there) and it's very difficult to slide down the strip between two moving escalators. There were still, however, just as many catacombs and undiscovered crannies in the hotel as ever - only hundreds more people to get lost in them.

One of the early highlights of the worldcon - and one that Terry Hughes has described well in *Mota*, so I don't feel compelled to say too much about it - was the 'room party' with Bob Tucker in a dark corner of the balcony of the banquet hall. I didn't realize at the time that it was the banquet hall, and that it would be well lit and filled with people for the rest of the con; at the beginning I thought we might make that darkened corner a rendezvous throughout the entire convention; but in fact, Thursday night was the only time it was available. I was still thinking in terms of the Disclaves, where that hall is never used, and serves as only one more vast darkened cavern to wander into and explore when the rest of the convention gets dull.

That evening it was still one of those places. I don't remember now who pointed me in the right direction, but I found a good many of the people I most wanted to see clustered in that little alcove, while Tucker was holding forth. It had been quite a while since I'd talked to Bob, and it was indeed a pleasure to listen to his stories and talk with him a little and re-affirm in my own mind that Bob Tucker is, indeed, one of the most fascinating men in fandom. I wouldn't think of telling any of his stories here in print; you'll just have to go and listen to him in Melbourne next August.

There were two people I particularly enjoyed getting to know better at this con: Will Straw and Susan Wood. I'd met Will for the first time last year at the Torcon, and to be honest, it wasn't until that moment that I was completely convinced he wasn't a hoax. (I thought his letters sounded a lot like Harry Warner's.) He was certainly a flesh-and-blood human being, but in Toronto he was one of the quietest people at the whole convention. I never really got a firm impression of him there, although friends of mine said they'd got a very good impression indeed. In the year between worldcons I got to know Will much better on paper, seeing inside his head a little bit instead of inside the fanzines he appeared in, so when the Discon rolled around I was better prepared to get to know him in person. I don't remember having any lengthy conversations with him alone, and certainly we never got into anything very heavy, but somehow out of that convention I picked up a strong liking for Will Straw. His mind sometimes runs in the same channels mine does. He was a very sane sort of person to be around; his presence enhanced the groups of people he was with, even though he might say hardly anything. The last time I saw Will, he was wandering through the last-night parties in a sleepless stupor, having decided to stay up all night so that he and Norm Clarke could catch a hastily-arranged ride back to Ottawa at 6 the next morning. Will was definitely looking worn down and strung out by a full con weekend, yet even then he was a good person to be around.

SUSAN WOOD was someone I had been around many times, yet I had got more of a feeling for her from her writing than from what I'd seen of her in person. When she was still with Mike Glicksohn in Toronto I once visited them for several days and I'd come away liking them both, but with a much more distinct impression of Mike than of Susan. (Mike was one of those people I felt an instant, inexplicable friendship with, even though I had hardly known him until then and had felt a little trepidatious about visiting them.) As some of you know, I've become more and more a fan of Susan's writing; from her fanzines and some of her articles in other places I had started to get the feeling that here was someone with very much the same sensibilities and tone of perception that I have. She kept on producing fanzines that I would have been happy to have published myself. And it seems that the appreciation runs both ways, as I discovered when I read her latest column in *Amazing*. We seem to have a mutual egoboo society when it comes to each other's writing. (We spent a few minutes at the con just standing there telling each other how much we liked each other's writing and trying not to feel silly.) (I shudder to think what's going to happen when the three of us get together in Melbourne, John and Susan. Sorry: I promised myself I wouldn't break into articles again.) Anyway, it was at the Discon that I really found myself getting to know Susan in person.

Susan tends to travel in slightly different circles at cons than I do, although there's a lot of overlap. This time, though, I found all the circles tending to blend together - which is really a much nicer way to attend a con, and which is why I limit the amount of time I spend in closed room parties. One night I was hanging around in the Aussie suite, drinking Australian wine, when Susan told me that David Emerson wanted to talk to me and that she'd take me down to the Minneapolis suite where he was. Then she disappeared into a back room to listen to Bob Tucker tell stories. Well, it was half an hour or so later when she eventually dug me up again, and we headed down to Minneapolis, where we found David and a dozen or so other people, most of whom I didn't know very well.

The only Minneapolis fan I've ever talked with very much is Jim Young, and he wasn't there. As a matter of fact, it was hours later that David finally got around to what he wanted to talk to me about (an extension of a conversation we've been having in my fanzine, *Hitchhike*), but the time between was filled with a lot of quiet, beautiful music, played by David on his autoharp and various other people on guitars, and sung by anyone who felt like singing. Somehow over the years I've picked up a prejudice against folksinging at conventions, and I've avoided it consistently. I suppose the prejudice came from some of the fans who influenced me a lot when I first got into fandom, who didn't like folksinging, and it was reinforced by the evident fact that a lot of singers and players at conventions are terrible. Bellowing in the mezzanine in enough to send me scurrying for the nearest elevator. But this one long night of listening and singing with the people in the Minneapolis suite at Discon did a lot to dispel my prejudice. We ended up standing out on the balcony overlooking the pre-dawn street, David playing, Susan dancing, and me feeling the dawn suffuse my bones - singing the sun up with 'Here comes the sun'. It was a memorable night.

It didn't end there, though.

The hotel had a great big pool sitting down there across from the bar, and it had hardly been used by the fans during the con, despite the heat. I had been looking forward to swimming in that pool all summer as I anticipated the worldcon, since I knew how conveniently the pool was located and how hot Washington would be at the end of August. It had disappointed me already that nobody seemed to be using it, and I was reluctant to try to get in during

the day since I didn't have a room at the hotel. So I started agitating for the liberation of the pool at night. I had been talking about this for a couple of days by that Sunday morning, but nobody seemed to be willing to do anything about it. I'd pretty much given up.

But then Susan remembered. 'Well, are we going to liberate the pool?' she asked, of me and the room in general. And the answer of course was 'Yes.' The group consisted of Susan, Mike Gorra, Mike Carlson, David and me, and one or two others. It took us a while to get co-ordinated and get down to the pool, but eventually we got there and found ourselves before the cyclone fence that surrounded it. Over we went, and our clothes came off in little piles around the deck chairs. Dawn's early light found five or six naked fans cavorting in the pool of the Sheraton Park Hotel. Susan mentioned that she had told her colleagues in Regina that she was going to a serious, academic conference, so we all tried our best to be serious and academic while cavorting.

The old black janitor who was sweeping up in the bar, with its picture windows overlooking the pool, showed absolutely no interest in us, but in less than half an hour (longer than I'd expected, actually) a member of the con committee came out and apologetically asked us to get out of the pool. He explained all about how we could get the con in trouble with the hotel, all the stuff we expected to hear, and we all nodded and agreed with him and got out. We were quite impressed that the hotel had called a member of the committee rather than sending a hotel dick or a cop. A very civilized hotel.

Next morning we did it all again.

MIKE GORRA, football-player and white hope of fannish fandom, is one of the people I met for the first time at Discon. I more than half expected that Mike would be a rather overbearing athletic type (that rarity or rarities among the ranks of bespectacled, introverted sf fans), but I found him very easy to get along with and I took some pleasure from his company. The key fact about Mike seems to be that he has a sense of humor about himself. He's fully aware of the incongruity of being both a high school football player and a fannish publishing giant. I don't know what motivates him to publish a focal-point fanzine, but whatever it is, it seems to be part of a well-balanced personality.

LOU STATHIS is one of those New Yorkers who looks like he's lived his entire life in the subway. He looks black and white, from black hair to pallid skin, and he emphasizes it by wearing white tee-shirts and black pants - and even, for the first two or three days of the con, by wearing grey-tinted shades. We spent some time talking about this, and I can see how the subterranean city can become so much your home that you feel positively uncomfortable when you get out in the country and the sunlight. I don't really see why anyone would choose the troglodyte existence when he's seen both and had time to absorb the feel of life outside the city, but I can certainly understand staying with what feels familiar and comfortable for you.

Lou and I had a similar reaction to the Discon banquet. We were in the small crowd sitting on the floor outside the hall, waiting just to get onto the balcony to watch the awards ceremony from above, and when we finally got ourselves some seats, we found our interest flagging at about the same rate. As Andy Offutt made a fool of himself on the podium and lost his ability to know when to quit, I found myself wondering just what the hell I was doing sitting up there anyway. It was boring, crowded and incredibly hot, and the banquet speeches promised to continue long into the night. As these thoughts were working their way into my

head, Lou got up and said 'That's it. I can't take any more.' He wormed his way through the crowd, relinquishing his seat to some panting, long-suffering fan in the press, and left. I stuck it out for a few minutes longer before realizing that he had the right idea after all. I abandoned my seat, collected Norm Clarke and Will Straw, and went out to a bar. It seemed a much more productive way to spend a Hugo banquet. (I remember when being a Balcony Insurgent was easy, when only a few people did it and you could sit around up there with your feet up and enjoy the awards.) When we walked into the bar, there was Lou at another table.

Another person I truly enjoyed meeting and getting to know was MIKE CARLSON. He's from eastern Connecticut and knows Mike Gorra from there, but Carlson seems to have some sort of job where he travels around all the time, so I didn't get an impression of him as a native of any one particular place. He had somehow sneaked up on me in fandom when I wasn't looking, or something like that. His name I had heard but I knew nothing about him, hadn't even read a letter of comment from him that I could remember. But I certainly enjoyed his company at the Discon. He was well appreciative of such things as diving into the hotel pool stark naked at six o'clock in the morning. Mike is a big, personable fellow whom I took an instant liking to, the sort of guy I could swap lines with while partying for several days straight in a big hotel. There really isn't much else to say; I don't know him very well, but I liked him.

LEIGH EDMONDS and VALMA BROWN arrived late Wednesday afternoon, and we knew then that the con had begun.

It could actually have started the night before, when a few of us started warming up for the weekend with an informal party at Ted's. All I can remember from that evening is looking at Dan Steffan sometime after midnight and saying 'It's already started, you know.' Dan nodded sagely in agreement.

Hank and Lesleigh Luttrell got in Tuesday evening, but after the long drive they just collapsed on the floor of the Notorious Hughes Brothers' basement apartment, where I remember stepping over them when I dropped by. But it wasn't until everybody convened over at Ted's the next afternoon that it really felt like the convention had begun. I'm afraid poor Hank and Lesleigh got upstaged by the arrival of the Aussies, too.

I found myself talking more with Valma than with Leigh, although it was Leigh whom I knew through his fanzines. Since they didn't have reservations in the hotel until Thursday, they stayed at Ted's Wednesday night, and we all figured that would probably be our only chance to talk with them before they got lost in the crush of the con. (Which was exactly what happened to Pete Weston. He wasn't staying at Ted's and I never got a chance to exchange more than a few sentences with him.)

Leigh arrived wearing his knit cap, which he steadfastly kept on wearing in spite of the 90° heat and the typical summer humidity. He looked somehow funkier than I had pictured him (after seeing 'Aussiefan'), with his knit cap and old clothes and his very long hair and a sort of Pu Manchu mustache that grows around into almost-sideburns. He looked just like the rest of us scruffy hippies in Falls Church - although as soon as he opened his mouth and let his accent escape you knew there was Something Different. While we sat around in Ted's crowded livingroom, Ted kept the room filled with music from his quadraphonic sound system, as he usually does, and he and Leigh naturally fell into a comparison of musical tastes, as most

people eventually do when they visit Ted. It turned out that they had almost totally divergent tastes, and I found it fascinating to listen to the two of them arguing over the merits of different 20th century composers. I'm used to arguing with Ted over rock, folk and romantic classical music, but the disagreements Ted and Leigh had were over composers and works that were just names to me at best. Fascinating, I tell you.

We thought we'd take Leigh and Valma out to one of the local restaurants and show them one of the good sides of American dining, but as it turned out we just gave them a lesson in what to avoid. We drove down to Annandale to the Spaghetti Mill, where we found a very suburban restaurant full of dark wood and cocktail waitresses. The menu looked wonderful, but we knew something was wrong when we were brought several little loaves of cold round bread with tubs of cold butter just perceptibly flavored with garlic. This was the 'garlic bread'. We had to taste the tubs of butter to find out which was plain and which garlic, and even then we weren't entirely sure. The dinner went downhill from there. Valma ordered a spaghetti dish that she couldn't finish, even though she was starving. I finished mine, but it wasn't satisfying. All down the table were sounding groans of disappointment. We played with the napkins and waited for the slow service and discussed US and Australian wine prices.

In the course of the meal I discovered one small cultural difference that I never would have expected: in Australia you rarely put dressing on a salad. In this country it's almost impossible to get a salad in a restaurant without some kind of dressing on it. I've known people to order a 'plain salad' and get it with oil and vinegar - the 'plain' dressing, I suppose, as distinct from something fancier. Leigh expressed amazement at the variety of American salad dressings, most of which he'd never heard of in Australia. This kind of cultural perspective fascinates me.

(That's our Leigh, folks: Australia's foremost gastrognome. Gawd. Did he tell you the one about the witchetty grubs hopping down the main street of Dimboola, John? There's a cultural perspective for you! They hunt them by lamplight, and what they don't use at home in floaters, damper, Cloncurry sandwiches and other culturally respectable delights unique to the Australian cuisine, they sell to the big dim-sim combines.)

(I said I wouldn't interrupt again, but you asked for that, John, believing Edmonds like that.)

Perhaps the nicest part of the evening came late at night when we were all getting tired and working towards the point of going to bed. I walked out onto the screened-in front porch and joined Leigh, Valma and Dan, who were sitting around the table playing with Kitten's Pla-do. Kitten would come out every few minutes and hand us more Pla-do, with solemn instructions to turn it into imaginative things. Dan created cartoon characters; Valma made a complete basket of fruit; I mashed the clay around in my fingers and wondered why I wasn't being creative. We started off with several different colors of Pla-do, but by the end of the evening it was all the same shade of grey. Kitten kept wanting us to make 'just one more thing', but we finally all gave up and went to bed.

Bet you didn't think you'd won DUFF only to come over to America and make little animals out of fake clay on Ted White's front porch, did you, Leigh?

There were other Australian aspects to the con, perhaps in anticipation of the Aussiecon to come. The peripatetic Robin Johnson was there, and I reminded him who I was and resumed the conversation we'd struck up at the LACon. Shayne McCormack, who was on her way to England, spent a good deal of

her time behind the bar in the Aussie suite, practising to be an English barmaid. The role fit beautifully.

I spent the better part of two evenings in the Aussie suite, drinking Australian wine (and a bottle of Argentine burgundy that somehow got mixed in with it). The party was not quite an open one, so it didn't suffer too much from the wandering hordes of strangers searching the halls for The Party. Robin tried to limit it mainly to people that he knew or at least recognized, and as such it turned out to be much like what a good open party would be like at a small regional con: it was loud and noisy and crowded, but never too much so, and most of the people I wanted to see passed through it at one time or another.

I spent a good deal of time talking to people whom I like to see but with whom I might never sit down to have a long personal conversation. And I just enjoyed the ebb and swirl of activity, the different folks passing in the night, stopping to chat for a while, then smiling and moving on. I found that propped against the bar with a glass full of wine was the best position in which to enjoy the show, and at least one friend of mine left the party and came back an hour or so later to find me only a couple of yards from where I'd been. It was that kind of evening, both of them. I'm not sure who rented that suite and who was in charge of the party - I'd assumed it was Robin, but I believe he disclaimed responsibility at one point - but whoever it was put on a pair of very successful parties.

There was more, much more. There was a brief but excellent party in Jerry Jacks's room, where we had all adjourned at Jerry's suggestion after it started raining up on the roof. There was a dual expedition to the Indian Curry House. Between the two large groups of us we filled the entire top floor of the building, and you may be sure that fannish wit spilled from every mouth that night - every mouth that wasn't desperately downing water or being stuffed with bread and rice to kill the heat of the spices, that is.

I recall through a haze the final afternoon, which I spent sitting down in the basement huckster room at Chris Couch's table, talking with Alex and Cory Panshin while they waited for Ted to show up. Alex had been walking around the con unrecognized because of his new glasses and the absurd blue sailor's cap he was wearing pulled down over his ears. He

voiced the feeling that the con had no focus, and that future con committees would have to take a stronger hand in giving their cons direction, something to distinguish them besides their vastness. While Alex went off in search of Ted, I had a much more prosaic conversation with Cory, which was a rare pleasure. I enjoy both of them very much, but Cory has a tendency to let Alex do the talking, and I've never enjoyed talking to two people as one.

I understand that the convention went on for much longer than the weekend of its official running time. Worldcons usually do these days. I remember the LACon as a month-long convention, beginning the weekend before with the Bubonicon in Albuquerque and running through to the end of September when Alice Sanvito went home to St Louis and Terry Hughes and I left the Bay Area and headed north. This year I suspect that a lot of other attendees had longer conventions than I did, because I had to leave Washington on the Tuesday after Labor Day to go up to Delaware and help out my sister when she dislocated her shoulder.

Steve Stiles has told me tales of the constant mad antics that he was party to when he spent the following week in Falls Church (after two days his sides hurt from laughing), and everybody has told me about the gigantic house-warming party that David Emerson and Asenath Hammond gave in New York the next weekend that seemed just a continuation of the worldcon. When I got to New York a week later and went out to Steve and Barry Smotroff's place in Jamaica for a Fanoclast meeting, I got the feeling that everyone was just then finally winding down from Labor Day. The conversations ebbed and flowed during the evening (it was a big party), but they kept returning to different aspects of the con and what everybody thought about it. It was sort of a Discon Post Mortem.

The only thing everybody agreed on was that it was Too Damn Big.

— John D. Berry

(0X0X0X0X0X0X0X0X0X0X0X0X0X0X0X0X0)

Future historians pondering the discrepancies between the above version of John Berry's article and the version published in Mike Gorra's Random 5 may be assured that Mike's is dead accurate. I've altered bits here and there, on purpose or by accident; Mike published it as it was written. When he improves his repro I reckon I might write things for Mike Gorra.

THE MIND MARCHES ON

17 February: I'm not sure whether I should be on this page or not. One of the things I love about publishing a fanzine is that I get long fascinating articles from people like John Berry and George Turner and Bert Chandler, and long fascinating letters from people like Bert Chandler and George Turner and John Berry. One of the things I hate about fanzines is typing Other People's Material. Really. That doesn't mean I want you to stop writing, hell no. It's just that I'm not an awfully good typist - certainly not a fast typist - and I grudge the time and effort I spend on re-typing. Now, if everyone who writes for PG did his article or letter on a stencil, in exactly the right place, using an IBM Executive with Text face... I still wouldn't be satisfied. I would still want to go through the stuff and cut out paragraphs, restore the zeds to verbs (I have no worries with zees, except when one of you Yanks writes analyze, which is even less defensible than realise), patch up Theodore Strugeon, Samuel R. Delaney and FINNEGAN'S WAKE, and so on. Some Eminent Authors Whom I Could Name (but will not, not right now) use lots of dots in their stuff. This is possibly because they haven't learnt yet about colons, semi-colons and exclamation marks. But I shouldn't say 'lots of dots': you are a mature audience; you understand technical terms. I should have said 'paresis'. This is the technical term used to describe what we loosely call 'lots of dots'. It means that the writer concerned has... suddenly... been afflicted with an excruciating pain in the triceps of the right arm and... cannot type anything but... lots of dots. Diaeresis is even more painful: your colon sort of turns sideways - and that's sheer hell, believe me, especially if you are in an advanced stage of literacy. (In Germany this affliction is called die Umlautherausgabe and differs only from the English version in its Weltanschauung and extreme difficulty of pronunciation.)

Like many another Australian (not including Sally, who was busy in the loungeroom collating and stapling PG 29), tonight I listened to Her Sacred Majesty's authorized rep in these parts, Governor-General Johnny Kerr, outlining Australia's New Order. Australia's new order is called the Order of Australia. (You think I'm making this up, don't you?) The O.A., as it is called, will consist of three divisions - Companions, Officers and Members. There's something

breath-takingly original and inspiring about the whole thing. (Memo Jack Speer: that juxtaposition of breathtaking and inspiring was just for you. I hope you enjoyed it, m'lud.) And democratic. By god, it's democratic. If you reckon Ken Ford should be an Officer of the Order of Australia, all you have to do by golly is write to the G-G, Govt House, Canberra, and tell him you reckon Ken Ford should get an OOA next Queen's Birthday or Australia Day. (Unfortunately, there is no provision for taking honours away from people - a sad oversight on the part of Her Majesty. I would write to the G-G tonight, this very instant in fact, telling him why Ken Ford shouldn't get an honourable mention in the ANZAPA Colouring Contest, let alone an OOA, if I thought it would do any good.) Anyway, as you can tell, I'm awfully excited about the whole thing.

I'm organizing a bunch of Australian letter-hacks to nominate me for a COA, because I've featured more often in the COA columns of Australian fanzines than anyone else I can think of. I'm nominating Irene Pagram for an OOA, because the last time I saw her - and we saw a lot of her that time - she was walking down the aisle at the 13th Australian SF Convention in Melbourne, wearing a kind of dress-less evening strap, and everyone was saying 'Oo-ah!' The MOA isn't quite so glamorous an award, but anyone in the audience who feels like being on equal terms with a kind of giant prehistoric New Zealand emu needs only write to me and I shall gladly forward the nomination.



21 February: Back on page 2 I was regretting a lack of response to the last issue. Since then about 150 copies of that issue have been posted (at 24 cents a throw - gawd it hurts! - and there are about 80 more copies lying about the place), and blimey, before you can say bloodyLaborgovernment!, here are two letters of comment, sort of:

JOHN FOYSTER 18.2
6 CLOWES STREET
SOUTH YARRA VIC 3141

Philgas 29 received and, in places, read. The whole is no doubt eminently readable, but it's bloody hot tonight, so I have only time for a couple of quickies.

I'm surprised that you want to be an anarchist, but haven't known where to join. I should have thought that wanting to be a scholar and not knowing where to join would have taken up all your spare time.

I've said some dumb things in my life, but I never thought I'd leave myself so wide open as Bert Chandler suggests in quoting (if that is not too generous a word) from page 57 of JOHN W. CAMPBELL: AN AUSTRALIAN TRIBUTE. After all, the sentence Bert quotes is the second of four in the paragraph to which he refers. But then again, his 'defence' of Campbell and his writers makes it plain that he totally missed the point of the paragraph: the readers of Philgas, I suppose, can happily join him.

I must read the longer pieces more carefully, but for now, just modestly accept some praise, could you? (I could, I guess. Ta.)

LEIGH EDMONDS 18.2
PO BOX 74
BALACLAVA VIC 3183

Vigil Thompson? Chew chew chomp chomp chew... yum yum. Vigil Thompson? Who? Never heard of him.

(Me neither. You were instructed, Leigh, to eat your heart out because someone - a fan who really knows about baseball - once said that my writing reminded him of Virgil Thomson's. Maybe, come to think of it, he was referring to the well-known baseball player, Vigil Thompson, after all. Were you, Harry? Anyway, Virgil Thomson was a composer and writer back in the days when they still used things like tonality and punctuation.)

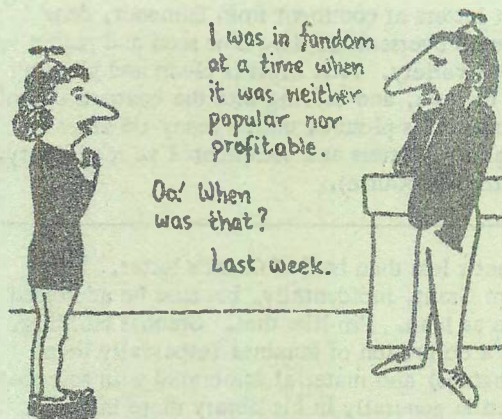
I'm not going to argue with any of your articles so there's not much in the issue to comment on, bad luck. While this issue may be more

thought provoking than the previous I didn't enjoy it as much, too much Turner, Chandler, etc. and not enough Bangsund.

Thanks, Leigh. I get a bit sick of all those letters about how there's too much Bangsund and not enough Turner and Chandler in PG (not that I ever publish them: George and Bert are beyond that kind of petty egoboo), so it was a relief after all these years to get a note like yours.

Oddly, the eight-months gap between PG 28 and 29 was partly caused by my desire to write more in my own fanzines. (I started out to talk about this last page, but somehow got led astray.) PG started as a fairly intimate, small-circulation fanzine, mostly self-written. When I killed off Scythrop (formerly ASFR) at the end of 1973, Philosophical Gas grew, became more ambitious (in my head anyway) and more or less became the fanzine-I-have-always-published under a new title. Last year I revived The New Millennial Harbinger for seven issues. The NMH was small, fairly intimate and almost entirely self-written. I had thought of continuing it this year, but I felt that a few people had mistaken my approach to things, so the issue envisaged as NMH15 became First Draft 1. Also, in 14 I published an article by John Alderson, and I felt that NMH was in danger of becoming yet another ASFR-Scythrop-PG substitute. The reaction to FD has been excellent. It encouraged me to complete PG29, and to revert to the old title. But it also meant that suddenly I had a number of articles to publish, and a stack of letters. So I'm back to square one, and I don't regret it so far. For the time being, PG is my only fanzine. If you don't like the mixture of my unconsidered first-draft thoughts and other people's well-considered articles and letters, I'm sure you'll let me know - and I'm just as sure that I won't alter the format for a while yet.

One subject which I hope to avoid in future issues was touched on in FD: Australian politics. Local readers have reacted quite gratifyingly to what I wrote nearly two months ago, but I can't help wondering what overseas readers will make of it, and more importantly, what I wrote then has taught me a lesson. (Which is what I set out to do anyway, so that's fair enough.) In two months things change. Governments fall, wars break out, new issues emerge, old issues are forgotten. I set out in FD to illustrate from one issue of one publication that 'the whole aim of the Australian press at the moment seems to be to get the Labour government out at any price'. My thesis holds good, I think, except that in



some publications (notably The Australian, and even, surprisingly, in The National Times) there seems lately to have been a swing back to fairness at least, if not an actual swing back to Labour. The details of what I wrote could be challenged on many grounds. Mr Whitlam returned to Australia, stayed for a few days, then went on with his overseas mission. The Morosi Affair burst into the headlines again a few days ago, and there's obviously more involved there than I gave credit to two months ago. (PAUL ANDERSON, in a long, thoughtful letter which I will not be publishing, says that my explanation of the Morosi Affair has cleared the matter up for him. I'm sorry about that, Paul. If you really want to know what's going on - and I don't blame you if you don't - you must subscribe to Nation Review.) The figures I gave for the Queensland state election were wrong. And so on. But as I said, I think my thesis holds good. Mr Whitlam attacked the media in Parliament for reporting only the trivia of his trip, while ignoring what he was really up to, for example. I agree entirely. I read more newspapers and watch more television and listen to more radio than a grown man should, and I am more than mildly interested in the image (mostly rotten) and survival (still doubtful) of Gough Whitlam's government - as you know. I did not read or hear or see anything in the Australian press (always excepting Nation Review) during January like this:

'I do think there was a good statement by Whitlam, the Australian Prime Minister, the other day, when he said that the great danger to the world was that people would lose their heads - (that they would) see this, not as a problem to be solved, but as a problem from which they would react in violence and

frustration. I certainly hope that doesn't happen.'

The subject: inflation, unemployment and all the economic ills that beset us just now. The speaker: J. K. Galbraith, in a television debate on the BBC, on 24 January.

I guess it doesn't prove a thing really. But if anyone cares to send me an authenticated quote by J. K. Galbraith of the opinions, or even the existence, of any Liberal politician, dating from 1949 to the present, I will be happy to publish it in full. And when I say Liberal, I don't mean your namby-pamby Jeremy Thorpes and US congressmen: I mean real full-blooded, British-to-the-jockstraps, Australian reactionaries.

Leigh, you don't really want more of that kind of stuff, do you? No, you want more of this kind of stuff:

BILL WRIGHT 7.2
 53 CELIA STREET
 BURWOOD VIC 3125

Thanks for FD. The Rotsler 'Bird by the Sea' is beautiful, and so is the rest of the fanzine. You express exactly what I wished to say about Opposition political tactics a-la the Morosi affair et al. It is to the credit of the Labor Government that they haven't responded already with a scandal about Mr (deleted) and a parliamentary page boy.

(I hate interrupting, let alone correcting, censoring or deleting, Bill Wright, but the fact is that all the attendants at Parliament House I've met are quite adult and not at all likely to attract Mr X. Also, Bill's next paragraph is all about my story, and I think I should skip that.)

The P. K. Dick meeting of the Nova Mob was well attended by Messrs Gillespie, Foyster, Turner, Wright, Taylor, Bernhouse, Gerrard, Johnson, Darling and two newcomers. You would have enjoyed the meeting. A letter from Dick was read out by Bruce. George Turner, with his usual perceptiveness, pointed out that there is a quality in the letter which is absent from his novels: anger. Bruce made an interesting point: Dick doesn't set out to destroy the world in a different way every time he sits down to write a new novel; his interest is in the way that a few human beings hang on to life against hope or reason. The question of whether Dick is trying to find his own way out through his novels, or is telling us all the time that there is no way out, was not resolved.

(I really dunno why you people in Melbourne

bother with all this crazy Buck Rogers stuff. Besides, Philip K. Dick probably knows as well as you and I do that there's no way out at all, just no way, until we discover anti-gravity.)

A message for Sally: All things are beautiful so long as you've got them in the right order.

(S.B.: Message received and understood, Bill.)

GRANT L. STONE 14.2
LIBRARY, MURDOCH UNIVERSITY
MURDOCH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA 6153

I must throw in my agreement with your views on the Australian Press in general and The Bulletin in particular. Freedom of the press is an unknown concept in Australia, with all press in the hands of four 'press barons', all of whom have vested interest in one political party, the Liberals. Prof. Henry Mayer calls the situation an oligopoly seeing as how these same four groups also control magazines, radio and TV - e.g. the Packer Group responsible for Sydney's Daily Telegraph also controls The Bulletin: no wonder its bias is right.

(Your facts are a little out of date there, Grant. Next issue, if my contributors allow me space, I shall write about who owns what in Australia's media. Freedom of the press is not an unknown concept in Australia, but as you imply, it is mainly the freedom of the owners of the press that is practised. And I don't think that's exactly what John Milton, amongst others, had in mind. Anyway, here you are, Grant L. Stone - I do look forward to meeting you! -, saying exactly what you feel like saying in one tiny little corner of the Australian press.)

Must agree emphatically too with the statements about changes in The Bulletin over the years. The library here was donated a rather large and complete run of The Bulletin from the 1880s to the present. Just perusing old issues in preparation for binding, and other mysterious matters librarians get up to, one could not help but notice the change from alive, biting journalism, assisted by extremely competent and satiric cartoons, to today's standard of weak writing and cartoons reproduced in the main from Punch.

Enjoyed especially the way you put First Draft together. I'm not very experienced at all in fandom, having only been acquainted with it for the last eight or so months, but through the generosity of Leigh Edmonds, who has been donating his overseas fanzines to the collection here at Murdoch (now you know why you never

get letters of comment from Edmonds, dear friends overseas!), I've now seen and read a wide variety. First Draft is clean and pleasing to the eye, and delving into the contents doesn't change this picture, unlike many US zines featuring letters and comments I've read (sorry, Patrick McGuire).

That's less than half of Grant's letter. I call him Grant, incidentally, because he addressed me as John. I'm like that. Grant is building up a collection of fanzines (especially local fanzines) and material associated with science fiction generally in his library there in Perth. I wish him the very best of luck, and urge all readers to send him their publications. As he says further on in his letter, 'any area of print and thought with only a fifty-year official history is one which is soon to have much historical criticism and analysis' - and he wants a comprehensive collection of this stuff to be available in Australia. I would rather see a collection of this kind in Canberra, mainly because it's sort of handy, but I haven't had any sign of enthusiasm from the Australian National Library, so I hope you will put the Murdoch University Library on your mailing list. I must confess that I have a sentimental as well as a practical reason for hoping this. Murdoch University is named after one of Australia's greatest men of letters, Walter Murdoch. It is not generally known that he was a science fiction enthusiast. Here is the only letter I ever had from him, in the very early days of Australian SF Review. I am awfully proud of it.

WALTER MURDOCH 5.4.67
162 MILL POINT ROAD
SOUTH PERTH W.A.

Many thanks for your letter and for the kind things you say about my writings. They go back at least 65 years. Yes, I am interested - very much so - in your project. My acquaintance with science fiction began with my reading of various stories by Jules Verne - does anyone read him today? - and, much later, by the early books of H. G. Wells, who was ever a pioneer. Yes, I would be very glad to see any spare copies of your Review. As for taking any active part in your enterprise, my handwriting will have revealed to you the fact that I have reached the grey ultimate decrepitude. This letter is written in bed! It doesn't seem likely that I shall ever again write anything worth reading. Thank you all the same for the invitation.

26 February: Re-reading the last few pages makes me wish I had stuck to First Draft as the title of this publication. My writing has really gone off lately. A few days ago I was talking to one of my workmates about this. His name is Robin Brown. He wrote that little poem about Inflation in the last issue - him, yeah. (Today he showed me another poem. He didn't write it, but it's his style. It's called 'Acupuncture', and it goes like this:

Somewhere
A voodoo doll
Screams in agony.)

Anyway, Robin says his writing has really gone off since he's been working for Hansard. He had his first anniversary on the job a week or so back. My third anniversary is just eight days away. Maybe I've got more fortitude than Robin, or maybe I didn't start off as good a writer as him; I don't know. But the way he feels is the way I've felt for quite a while now - since about the third day on the job actually. Listening to half-illiterate and three-quarters-inarticulate politicians, public servants, businessmen and Spokesmen for all kinds of Important Things, on half-worn-out taperecorders, surrounded by the noises one would expect to be surrounded by in a corner of the biggest printing factory in Australia, does tend to blunt one's sensitivity to the finer nuances of language.

Our typists don't help much either. Bless them, they're more than conscientious and more than passably intelligent, but they do hear some odd things on those tapes - and if we're not careful we'll hear what they have typed, simply because it's there in front of us. The voice on the tape says 'in sum', and the typist renders it 'in some', and it makes sense, and we don't notice it - and 'in some' becomes the official Hansard transcript. Happens every day.

Sometimes the typists' mishearings are amusing. We've long since stopped talking about keeping a note of these things, since it would take up all of someone's time. Today Alf had something about 'parliaments in cane counter' - what on earth could the typist have had for lunch? - which turned out to be parliaments in the UK and Canada. In one five-minute segment I encountered the following mishearings:

'treacle grants' (tree-pull grants)
'respected' (respective)
'is through' (include)
'altitude of these' (opportunities)

'more talking' (militating)
'variety in the land' (varieties in demand)
'numeral' (innumerable)
'save for the' (faced with)
'oat-wheat countries' (OPEC countries)

The champions recently - those I remember from the last week or so, that is - were:
'If we were faced by 20 million sheep we would lose our virility itself' - which actually concerned 'our ability to sell' - and, Robin's classic, 'our poker machines are burning' - 'our paper machines at Burnie'.

I have a wild theory that our typists are all married to compositors and proofreaders. Nothing they have done in my three years with them, however, quite matches this collector's item from the Richmond News-Leader of 25 April last year:

WASHINGTON (AP) - Former Mice President Spiro T. Egnew drew applause when he arrived at a local sports arena for a concert by singer Frank Sinatra.

Catcalls from the crowd of about 15,000 persons were ...

Parliamentary committees proliferate, which is just fine in one way, since they keep me in work and enable me to print this rubbish and send it to you. But they are boring, dead boring. For a start, most of the committees are concerned with money - where it's going, who should get it, whether we could get more by trading with Indonesia or putting in an Omega base, whether the farmers will lose more if we stop this or that subsidy or practice, whether politicians would be straighter if we registered their share-holdings, and so on, ad nauseam - and frankly, I'm not interested in money, at least not in this way. Last week a new committee held its first meeting, a committee so far not at all concerned with money (but give it time): the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Parliamentary Committee System. Yessir, a committee looking at committees. It had to come.

I wish to make a prediction. If the committee committee makes the kind of recommendations which I imagine it will, then I predict here and now that we will eventually see a Parliamentary Committee appointed to examine the report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Parliamentary Committee System.

Well, it's a free country, isn't it? Of course it is. They don't have Hansard in China, do they? Of course they don't. Do they?

27 February: Today one of my bosses quit. Officially I am employed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate, and today the Speaker, Jim Cope, resigned. I won't go into the details, partly because I have so far heard or read at least six different versions of what happened, and partly because I said I wasn't going to write about politics any more. (I think I said that, but it might be only a malicious rumour.) Anyway, I have leapt to my typer this night to transcribe for you Mr Cope's moving speech of resignation, as reported in large type on the front page of tonight's Melbourne Herald:

"When the result of the division was announced, Mr Cope rose to his feet and said: 'Gentlemen, I hearby tender my resignation as Speaker of the House of Representatives.'"

If the Treasurer resigned (not an impossibility, but I said I wasn't going to talk about politics), no doubt the Herald would have him 'herebuy' tendering his resignation.

I had a note from Bruce Gillespie today. Remember Bruce Gillespie? 'I enjoyed Philgas 29 very much, especially - well, everything. Especially John Alderson's piece, if anything.' Bruce promises to write to me properly after the Worldcon, and I'm printing that here to keep him up to it. Six months you've got, Bruce. It isn't too long.

Speaking of Kurt Vonnegut Jr and Senator James Anthony Mulvihill (Lab., NSW), here's

VALDIS AUGSTKALNS · 7.7
1426 22nd STREET
PARKERSBURG W. VIRGINIA USA 26101

Sorry about giving you the wrong address for Vonnegut. I've not been in Massachusetts since 1969 and now find that he's moved to NYC, dumped that nice fat white-haired lady that used to live with him (or perhaps she died), and taken up with a chick, Jilly Krementz, who is America's favorite photographer of intellectuals and intellectualoids. Damned if I know what's going on. So it goes, I suppose. The man doeth not even have a listed phone anymore. That's rational; once you have become a success in the USA, the audience will eat you alive. It happened to Senator McGoo and is happening to Nixon. GOLDEN BOUGH, anyone?

(On Scythrop 28:) you mean David Oistrakh, I presume. An excellent musician. String

players seem to be a more diverse group than average. My favorites on the cello are Nikolaus D'Hamoncourt doing Bach's solo cello suites, and the ominously mysterious Zoltan Racz, who has put out some nice Max Reger solo cello suites for the Reger centenary. (I confess I've not heard D'H. nor Racz. I'd better ask Edmonds about them.)

Senator Mulvihill sounds like a colonel I met during my US Army career. This bird would talk non-stop for 10 to 20 minutes using English words any 3 to 7 consecutive ones were related to each other and in isolation made sense. But beyond that, pure gibberish. The first time I heard him I'd had a couple of drinks and for one sinking moment of pure terror thought: That's it, laddie. Demon rum has gotten you. You've flipped out at last. I glanced over to the assistant adjutant sitting next to me. Ro... Ro... Rosita, I stammered. Don't worry, Val, she said soothingly, I can't understand him either. Even in the middle of WW2, when Senator McGoo-to-be and his weird friends were dropping bombs on top of poor, little, innocent me, I never was half as scared as that night when gibberish flowed.

There is an advantage to having guys like him around. If you can convince him of the value of a particular policy, you are certain that practically anyone can be convinced. Unpleasant as the thought is, one should own up to the fact that, no matter who he represents, he is representative of the great bulk of the human race. Admitting that fact seems to me the first step to wisdom.

(On PG 25:) I suspect Bill Wright is full of whatever's pejorative these days on the subject of the unbearability of reality. I would say that statistically aggregated, the bearability of reality is constant. Some individuals may find aspects of it nasty, but some more than others. As the old Heinlein bromide has it, on an absolute scale the hazard in life is constant: one death per person. Philosophical masochists tend to torture themselves with demons of their invention, but you cannot count that as pain. Pure pleasure, man. Pure.

....

All the best to Senator Mulvihill and the rest of you upsidedown guys.

Val wrote more in that letter about Willard Gibbs. In an earlier, lengthy, letter he more or less clarified for me exactly who Gibbs,

Tucker et al. were, but then inexplicably marked the letter DNQ. If I get the feeling that more readers than Ken Ozanne and I are interested in reading about Gibbs's completion of 'Newtonian-Cartesian mechanics at a hierarchical level of abstraction ... subject to the natural Goedelian limitations of any language' I shall ask Val's permission to publish all this fascinating stuff.

JERRY KAUFMAN 20.1
622 W 114th STREET, 52A
NEW YORK N.Y. 10027 USA

George Turner is a fine, occasionally spiteful, critic (but who can blame him for spleen when you see what he is up against?). From his outline I find that I've inadvertently read some historical fiction, but I also find that my tastes run to the vaudevillian in sf and history. Farmer's portrait of Burton (with Farmer himself in the novel as Burton-fan) led me to read up on Burton, who only on occasion was the main show of Victorian England or the Orient, and more often was amusing if rough on the sensibilities. I can only thank Farmer for the intro, not call him a 'twit'.

THE POOR MOUTH has just been published in English in this country. The reviewer (in the NY Times) says essentially that the book is Flann O'Brien's masterwork of Gaelic, a satire on the academic and nationalistic uses of the language - and it loses something in the translation. Maybe someone will send you a copy. (Someone did. I hope to write about THE POOR MOUTH and STORIES AND PLAYS real soon now.)

If Barry Gillam split an infinitive, he did it with malice aforethought, just to grossly annoy you. (Ah, you'll have to do better than that, Jerry. I struck an infinitive a few days ago that was split by about twenty words. To adequately and with some semblance of grammatical dignity and logical awareness match something like that, you will have to really, as it were, try hard.)

I don't much agree with Chandler on the value of dope as a referent in poetry - a totally worthless opinion, as I can't think of any counter-examples. But I do like his writing style. He sounds like he is engaged in a comfortable conversation, one hand wrapped around a *joint* mug.

George Turner and Sandra Miesel ought to

meet sometime. Hmm, I think I've just thought of two potential DUFF candidates. You'd love having Sandra down there, since she is lovely, brilliant, a good conversation-alist, and strong as an ox. Give you something to talk about when she breaks your arm in a polemical dispute. How would George affect us on a visit? (Differently.)

THE BEST OF HANSARD (continued)

'I can imagine then that therefore you could imagine how 30 people would look sitting on those stairs I would think.'

'Do you have any view yourself as to whether you think the conflict could be greater at local authority level?'

'In the current inflationary climate that we are in, and I expect will be in until we are out of it...'

JOHN BROSAN 17.12
4 LOTHAIR ROAD
SOUTH EALING LONDON W5 ENGLAND

Note new address. Yes, I have moved at last. The horrors of 62 Elsham Rd are no more. I am now sharing a house with Pickersgill, his girlfriend and someone else. Much more expensive but a palace compared to the conditions I have been living in for the last few years. ('Conditions' is a euphemism for slum.) Unfortunately, today is the day I've got to go back to Flat 1 and talk to the landlady about the state of the place... the holes in the walls and ceiling caused by people's boots, tent poles, darts, air gun pellets etc. I tried covering the worst of the holes with adhesive wall tiles but they kept sliding down. Tsk... I'll not only lose my deposit, I'll probably get sued as well.

Susan Wood's description of you is quite mind boggling. Witty, urbane... good grief. Strange, yes, I'll go along with that. Fascinating? Well... And she didn't mention that you cheat at chess.

Merv (Barrett) and I have been boring poor John Foyster recently with a barrage of tapes describing life in England. Next time you're visiting John, ask to hear the one we did at the Globe (if you haven't already). (Unless you've made another, it's right here in this room somewhere, John.) Should shatter any illusions you may have about British fandom.

True, it does contain a historical recording of a London tube train ride. Unfortunately the rest tend to be a bit dull. Peter Darling said he listened to one I'd given him to pass on to Foyster and it put him to sleep. It's not what I say but the way I say it. (Come to think of it, the tape I have was made some time during 1971, because I remember playing it at the Adelaide convention. That had a tube ride on it, and a lot of people saying things like 'Australia in '75? Yeah, fair dinkum, cobber, you beaut! Not bloody likely, actually.' All these people were obviously smashed. I mean, one actually claimed to be Graham Hall, and we all know that he migrated to Cuba years ago, don't we.)

Saw Shayne McCormack at the NovaCon in Birmingham. Gave me the impression that she didn't find life in England that enjoyable. The NovaCon was quite good though it gave a lot of people the shits, literally. Something we ate. Probably the banquet food, which was worse than usual, and (and that is - come on, John - what do we always say that is?) that's saying something. (Good lad.)

Harry Harrison (oops, I've dropped a name) gave Peter Roberts and me a lift back to London. We got lost trying to get out of Birmingham, but apart from that it was an amusing drive, even though I had a rotten hangover. Harrison stopped at a garage to ask for directions to London and the attendant asked him where he was from. Birmingham, said Harrison. No, you're not, said the attendant. You've got an American accent. I can tell! He then proceeded to ask Harrison what he thought of England etc while Harrison jumped up and down impatiently, still trying to extract the information on how to get to London.

This letter is longer than I hoped. I'm supposed to be working on my boring horror book. I'm a little behind schedule... it's supposed to be completed by the end of December and I've only done three chapters. Another 60 000 words to go in a week and a half. Ho ho.

THIS IS PHILOSOPHICAL GAS, FOLKS -
THE JOURNAL OF LIFE, LITERATURE,
LAUGHTER AND WORLD AFFAIRS, BUT
NOT IN THAT ORDER.
I just thought I'd mention that.

SHAYNE McCORMACK 25.2
49 ORCHARD ROAD
BASS HILL NSW 2197

No, I haven't gaffiated yet, though the thought has entered my head lately. I have had a rather unpleasant time over the last few months (I know how you feel: I still haven't got over seeing Brosnan last year), and with things being so insecure and not knowing where I stood in your books, I thought it best to subscribe and at least receive your fanzines, which I always love to get. Anyhow, now I'm back home, I shall just have to hope that things improve all round. I suppose I should be glad I went to England, it was an interesting experience, at least.

Something Else will come out again some day, though at the moment it's very difficult for me to get anything printed, since I don't have a duplicator or a typewriter, and my money is all being used in more mundane things, like paying off loans and debts...

I hope you don't mind my publishing that, Shayne. For one thing, your fans will be happy to know that Something Else is not dead. For another - well, you saw Buck Coulson's letter in FD about Bruce Gillespie 'preparing to make a trans-oceanic trip that not one in a hundred American fans could afford', and I was hoping that you or Bruce or someone would point out exactly how such extravagant trips are financed.

I enjoyed Shayne's worldcon report in Eric Lindsay's Gegenschein, and I must really write to him and say so. (Gegenschein is getting better all the time, but I won't tell him that.) Shayne hints that she might be tempted to arrange a Georgette Heyer Tea at the worldcon in Melbourne, and I hope that someone on the committee will take her up on it. The special guest at such a gathering should be George Turner, who might be prevailed upon to give selected readings from VICE AVENGED.

Mentioning Eric Lindsay reminds me of something I have felt like saying about his fanzine and mine. Eric subscribes to a system of spelling reform invented by a really nice bloke in Canberra named Harry Lindgren. I don't, but never mind that. The first stage in Harry's system is called SR1, and it involves, very simply, spelling every word containing the short-e sound with

a short e. Hence, 'any' becomes 'eny', 'said' becomes 'sed', and so on. Eric uses SR1 fairly consistently in all his writing. When one strikes the spelling 'persuits' in Gegenschein, this might be an error, an extension of SR1, or an early example of SR 30; I suspect the former, but would be unsurprised if it turned out to be one of the others. Anyway, if Eric really wants to fight the good fight for spelling reform, I shall not gainsay him. (Consider yourself ungainsaid, Eric, or ungensed, as you will.)

What I do object to is Eric's translation of other people's writing into SR1. He does it throughout Shayne's article, for example. He does it in the recent long official announcement of the Fanzine Activity Achievement Awards. And I think that this is wrong.

In Philosophical Gas I maintain a quite definite double standard. In my own writing I spell as well as I can, and I invariably follow Oxford (except when I don't). When I am editing articles I correct misspellings and fiddle about with the grammar a bit. Articles by American writers, such as John Berry's in this issue, I leave in American English. Letters, or such parts of letters as I print, I tend to publish verbatim, except when I get sick of it. It's not so much that I'm wishy-washy in this matter; it's more that I'm wishy one minute and washy the next. Right now, for example, I have no teeth in my head - they're in a glass in the bathroom, because my gums are infected and hurting like buggery -, and I am feeling distinctly washy. So I've left Jerry's misspellings, and John's lots-of-dots, and Shayne's two sentences joined by a comma. Tomorrow I might wish I had cleaned them up. But is it my job to sub-edit letters? I don't mean carving bits out of them: that's selecting, editing. I mean imposing my ideas about spelling and grammar on someone else's writing.

It's a difficult question. I can only say that Eric won't be getting any letters of comment from me unless he promises to publish them verbatim. After all, I'll be publishing a letter from him next issue, and leaving it in SR1. If you have any strong feelings on the matter, let me know.

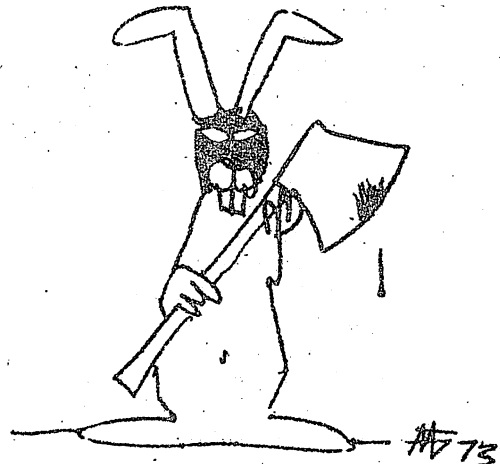
This is not an invitation to discuss the merits of spelling reform. You can do that in Eric's fanzine or in Harry Lindgren's.

Now I think I've had enough for one issue. There are still many interesting letters to publish, and I promise to get around to them next issue. I'll be having a bit of a break before I start no. 31 - Sally and I are going to visit her parents during the Easter holidays, and I suspect that this issue will not appear until shortly before we go - so 31 will be dated April-May. By April overseas readers should have received First Draft, and possibly PG 29. The immediate future of Philosophical Gas depends to some extent on the reaction I get from overseas readers to those two issues. If that reaction is anything like so lethargic as Australian readers' response, PG might not be long for this world. I'm not feeling too good meself. Two days now on soup and yoghurt. Gawd, what I wouldn't do for a steak and a bottle or three of good claret.

Happy Easter, anyway.

John B.

WHEN A RABBIT KILLS A
CHICKEN
WARNER BROS. AND DISNEY
SICKEN.



AUSSIECON MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION: *To Membership Secretary, Box 4039, Melbourne 3001.*

Please enrol me (us) in the 33rd World Science Fiction Convention.

I enclose \$ ____ . *Full Membership \$10, Supporting \$3 per person.*

First Name _____ *I undertake to notify the Membership*

Surname _____ *Secretary if I move before August.*

Address _____
Postcode _____

Note: Material returned as undeliverable will be retained until the Convention.

GUESTS OF HONOUR:

Ursula K. LeGuin should need little introduction to readers of modern science fiction and fantasy. Her trilogy set in Earthsea has gained her many honours both within and outside the field, notably the (U.S.) National Book Award for Children's Literature. Her first HUGO was won in 1970 at the Heidelberg Convention in Germany, for her novel THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS: more recently she has been honoured for her shorter fiction.

An enthusiastic leader of workshops for new writers, she is expected to lead a one-week workshop to be organised by the AUSSIECON Committee in connection with the Convention. If you are a young enthusiastic writer, and this interests you, and you are prepared to work very hard at a residential course early in August, get in touch with Bruce Gillespie at the Committee address by late May, to be considered for the Workshop.

Donald H. Tuck is an indefatigable bibliographer of the fields of science fiction and fantasy, and is well-known among overseas fans for the 1955 SCIENCE FICTION HANDBOOK. His new work in three volumes has started to come out from Advent: Publishers, and is titled THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY. The Hermit of Lindisfarne has been win-kled out of his shell - he tells us he will have a notebook with him to write down all the errata from the first volume that people tell him about!

Susan Wood & Michael Glicksohn were the reason the 1973 World Convention was held in Toronto, Canada. Not to decry the hard and effective labour of the many other Torontonians, but if Susan and Mike's beautiful fanzine, ENERGUMEN, had never been published, there'd not have been the number of faithful readers who became faithful supporters of Toronto's bid. ENERGUMEN, and Sue's own magazine ASPIDISTRA, were the finest flowering of the mimeographic art, and the strange synergistic connection between enthusiasm for amateur publications and that for conventions gained Canada the nod. At Toronto, when Australia won the 1975 bid, Bruce Gillespie, himself the producer and editor of a highly-regarded fanzine, SF COMMENTARY, announced the names of the most popular Fan Guests-of-Honour we could possibly have chosen. Nothing since then has caused us to change our minds.

GENERAL NOTES:

Your membership card, Progress Reports, ballots and Hotel/Banquet reservation card will be posted to you. Please do not write direct to the hotel to reserve a room, as you will not get the special discount we have been able to arrange: \$21.50 single, \$29 twin or double. T.A.A. will register you for a possible group flight to or from Melbourne: at the moment there looks like being one from Sydney at midday on Weds 13th August. The Convention officially opens on the Thursday morning - but there is sure to be many attendees around on the previous day, setting up Art Show and other displays, getting together and meeting overseas visitors. Again, the official closing is Sunday 17th, but don't forget the country trip - probably Vintage Train to Ballarat and Sovereign Hill - on the following day.



AUSSIECON

33rd World Science Fiction Convention Melbourne, Aug 14th-17th 1975

PROFESSIONAL GUEST-OF-HONOUR: URSULA K. LE GUIN

AUSTRALIAN GUEST-OF-HONOUR: DONALD H. TUCK

FAN GUESTS-OF-HONOUR: SUSAN WOOD & MICHAEL GLICKSOHN

SOUTHERN CROSS HOTEL, 131 EXHIBITION ST., MELBOURNE

CHAIRMAN: ROBIN JOHNSON

VICE-CHAIRMEN: LEIGH EDMONDS & BRUCE GILLESPIE

AUSSIECON will make 1975 a red-letter year for science fiction enthusiasts in Australia. For the first time, the World Science Fiction Convention is to be held here, in Melbourne, and anyone can go along, buy a membership, and spend four days in the company of their favourite authors. The programme will include interviews, talks and panel discussions as well as a film programme, a Costume Parade, an Art Show and the Banquet.

Memberships can be bought now, and you will save money over the price to be charged at the door. If you are not certain you will be able to attend in person, why not buy a Supporting Membership, and you will still receive all the Progress Reports and the Programme Book. Supporting members may pay the extra to convert to Full Membership, and will still save money. A full membership costs \$10, a supporting membership \$3, while full memberships will cost \$15 at the door, and conversion of a supporting membership is \$7. There will be an extra charge of \$8 for the Banquet (Saturday evening August 16th), and we plan a trip to the country on Monday 18th (after the official closing of the Convention) which will also cost extra, but will be another opportunity to get together in a social way.

We have obtained a special Convention rate at the Southern Cross Hotel, but it is not necessary to be a hotel resident to attend the Convention. We also have a small room allocation at another City hotel at very special rates.

Another major advantage of buying your membership early is to vote in the annual HUGO Awards. Members of the 1974 World Convention (DISCON II, in Washington D.C.) as well as AUSSIECON members may nominate their favourite stories (other categories, too), but only members of the 1975 World Convention may vote to select the winners from those nominated.

Nominating ballots must be received by us by 25th March to be counted: after that the voting forms go out to members, and these must be back by July 25th. The rules of eligibility are given on the nominating ballot, which will be sent to those who join in time. Two other Awards will be presented at the Banquet and voted for in the same way: the GANDALF Award for Heroic Fantasy (awarded last year for the first time, and very appropriately, to J.R.R. Tolkien, in whose memory it was set up by Lin Carter), and the John W. Campbell Award, to new writers.

On the back of this sheet you will find brief details about AUSSIECON's Guests of Honour, and a form to fill in and return to us with your payment. Cheques may be made payable to AUSSIECON. The address for correspondence is Box 4039, Melbourne 3001.