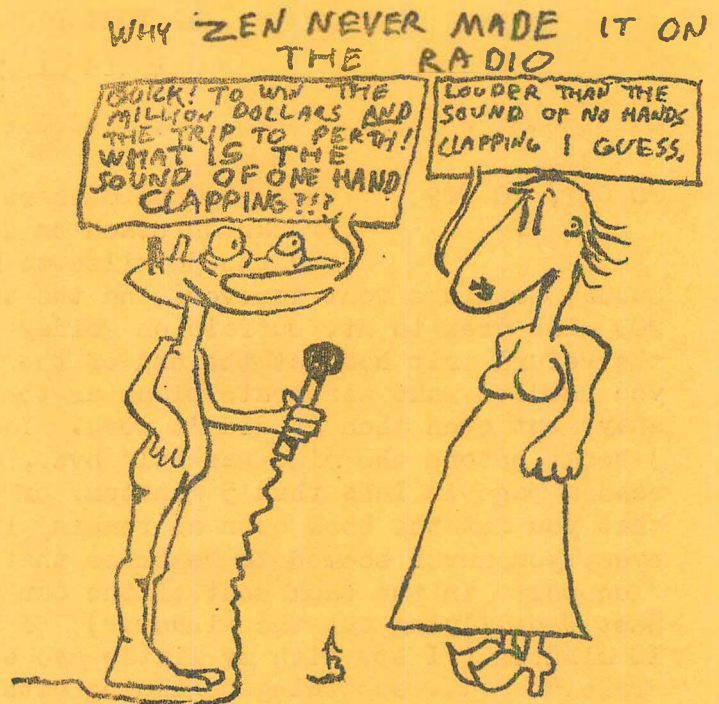


# SIKANDER



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The fanzine that promises a lot and lets the Post  
Office take the blame when it doesn't deliver.

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Pictures by Bruce Townley (p 1), Marilyn Pride (p 6), and Irwin Hirsh (p 14). Electrostencils by Noel Kerr.

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Floorboard Needed: Apply within

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\*\*\*\*\*  
EDITORIAL JAZZ  
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Irwin Hirsch

TO 002, TO 002      When you are 3 years old that 20 mile drive to Frankston Beach on Sunday afternoons took hours, and the 50 miles to Healesville very early on Sunday mornings went forever, and the only thing worse than that 200 mile trek to Mt. Buffalo on Friday evenings is the thought of the return trip home at the end of the weekend. If you're like me you used to make elaborate plans as to how you would pass the time away, but even then it didn't work. You either finished off those 3 books before the ride was half over, or you used to struggle to read a page in less than 5 minutes, or your mother would insist that you put the book down as reading in cars is not good for your eyes; you never seemed to remember that it is impossible to play "Monopoly" in the back seat of the car ("Dad, stop the car. \$3000 just went flying out the window."); "I Spy" never lasted more than 10 minutes ("I spy with my little eye something beginning with T." "Tree." "...something beginning with H." "House." "I'm not playing anymore, you're too good."); you felt silly singing songs like "Ten Green Bottles" over and over again, and your father didn't like you fighting with your little sister because you might damage the car.

One time I came up with something that I was sure would make the bane of those car trips go away. I was to note down every car number plate that I saw. And I wasn't going to stop doing this until I had spotted two number plates that were consecutive. I could envisage many lengthy car trips being fully occupied before I reached this destination.

I was intrigued by car number plates. Those 3 letters and 3 numbers told me things and helped me. My school friends were able to tell me what year the different cars were made, and I felt I was missing something because for the life of me I could not see the difference between a 1966 Falcon and a 1967 Falcon, but number plates with their ability to tell me the relative age of each car went a long way towards soothing what I felt was a deficiency in my make-up. Some of the cars - those with interstate number plates - told me tales of great adventure (and I often wondered what the kids used to do in those cross-continent trips from Western Australia...).

They confused me too. Based on a small sample size I figured that Victorians replaced their cars - and number plates - every five years. Relating this to the population and number plates of New South Wales and Western Australia I concluded that the average N.S.W. Welshman replaced his car every 20 years, while West Aussies replaced their cars every 10 months. I had never been interstate



but as my father had been to both NSW and WA I asked him to explain why this was so: were most people in NSW under 18 years old? was the population of WA so evenly spread across that great mass of land that visiting your neighbour involved a 5 mile walk? I needed to know the answer to this most vexing question. As he asked how I came to my conclusion my father must've thought I was out of my mind. My data was fairly simple: NSW had a population of about 4.5 million and all its car number plates started with an A or B, Vic's population was about 3.5 million and all its car number plates started with either G,H,I,J or K, and WA's population was 1 million and all its number plates started with a Q. My father pointed out that I was theorising that all states had their number plating start at AAA 000, when, in fact, only NSW did this. The other states all started at various spots of the alphabet. (1)

Is there anything else like the car number plate? They are such simple things: little strips of metal introduced so that some government body could stream-line the process by which they know who owns which car. Yet they can cause much anger (the Motor Registration Board was asked by many car owners to replace the LRA number plates as the owners found that they were subject to an unusually high amount of abuse when on the road, and the MRB decided that it would be a good idea never to release the GOD number plates), and be used as a mode of self-expression, giving rise to the term "vanity plate", (for instance, it is not enough that MG owners have a loud listen-to-my-car engine to show off their make of car, but they have to have a MG number plate to emphasis it.)

It is fairly well known throughout fandom that Forrie Ackerman has number plates reading SCI FI and the word LOCUS graces the number plates of Charles and Dena Brown's car. I'm not sure if California is the birth-place of the roll-your-own number plate, but it certainly is the new home of the things. It has by far the highest percentage of vanity plates on its cars than any other state I visited when in the U.S. Victoria might have a percentage which comes close to that of California's, but you wouldn't know it from a quick glance. Should you want a vanity plate in this State you are restricted to one that is comprised of 2 letters and 3 numbers, and as such they tend to blend in with the 'standard' license plate.

And, somehow, I prefer the Victorian system as it allows for a greater ingenuity. With the Californian vanity plate it is very easy to get anything up to 6 or 7 characters long, whether that be

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- (1) Which only goes to explain why Victorian fan writers such as Johns Bangsund and Foyster, Leigh Edmonds and David Grigg weren't on this years Fan Writer Ditmar ballot. How in the hell can you be a good writer when you are not using a full alphabet?



a name, place, message, whatever, and anyone looking at one of those plates would understand what it was about (given that it wasn't obscure or in-groupish). Though our system, with its tight restrictions, makes it hard to get a license plate which is immediately recognisable. Almost to the extent that the term 'vanity plate' has little meaning in this state. I, for instance, might have a plate that reads IH 020, a plate that shows both my initials and my age, but people wouldn't know that unless they knew me.

This is where that ingenuity comes in -- to use those 2 letters and 3 numbers in such a way that they contain some message that can be obvious to all. Or, perhaps I'm just saying I prefer the Victorian system because two of the cars in this household have number plates that should be obvious to the masses -- if they're in the right frame of mind. Back in 1973 my father bought a new car and it was then that he found out that for an additional \$20 he could a personalized number plate. So, off he went and got the plate on which he had decided upon: WC 041. "My idol is Winston Churchill," he would say to those people who wondered how he got WC out of Emmanuel Hirsh. "You could have saved your money and just waited to the time when they release the LAV plates," a friend who didn't need to have it explained said. Or maybe it was that policeman who while giving my father a speeding ticket who said that.

My mother decided if she wasn't to get a new car, she may as well get a new number plate -- to give the impression of a new car. At that stage my sisters and I were avid followers of that great aussie Soap Opera Number 96 and as far as we were concerned NO 096 was it for mum's car. That gave my mother the idea of getting NO 069. "I like the way the 6 is 9 upsidedown," she said when we wanted to know why she wanted that. "But you still get that with 96," we argued, not knowing the true significance of the term 69. The argument was long and hard, and my mother decided upon a compromise: NO 969. A number plate that is neither here nor there.

It took a while but eventually my mother agreed that there was very little in that number plate and made plans to replace it when she got a new car. In early 1977 out went that Ford Capri and NO 269 and in came a Triumph Stag and RU 469. ("Yes," said a friend of my parents after following my mother for about two kilometres, and rushed off without a further word because he was now running even more late for an appointment than when he was two kilometres back.)

Of the two number plates I tend to prefer my father's. It is far more subtle in that it has to be read at a certain speed and with a certain emphasis or else its meaning is lost. Which, of course, means that the reaction to it is tiny compared to that of my mother's number plate. The policeman one is just about the only reaction my father has ever recieved from a stranger, while my mother has managed to collect a whole sheath of reactions to her number plate. These range from the odd honk, right up to an owner



of an old, beautiful, Rolls-Royce who risked damage to his car helping my mother get from a side street into a very crowded, peak hour Toorak Rd just because she had "the best number plate in the world."

As for the number plate on my car? Well, I don't drive. I still am more interested in collecting number plates than cars. But if I ever do get a car you can bet that I'll be choosing my own number plates. Maybe one with fancish connotations. As for my quest to find those two consecutive number plates, I've finally accomplished it; early this year I was walking through a car-park at Monash University and there, side by side, were two cars ARZ 155 and ARZ 156.

Now I have to find something else to help me occupy my time during those long car trips. Anyone got any ideas?

- Irwin Hirsh

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\* THE HOUSE IN THE MIDDLE HEART \*  
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\* a column by Billy Wolfenbarger \*  
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1.

You could say he had strange experiences with his name. Go ahead. It's true, all too very true. And with a name like mine, you can see already how easy is the mindblowing variations I've seen of my name in print. My legal name is Billy Ray Wolfenbarger. People don't make many mistakes with the first two; tho even that can get complicated: I used to go by the name Bill, until I realized that was being a bit silly; besides, my overall consciousness is my name, which is Billy, not Bill. But you get the drift of what I'm saying.

In 1961, a year after I'd joined fandom, Cry published a we-also-heard-from line from Avram Davidson, that went like, "...there ain't NObody named Bill Wolfenbarger". An issue or two before, those crazy Cry people had mis-spelled or typo'd my last name. Later on that year, Roy Tackett sent me a copy of his Dynatron with the line he'd echoed from Avram. That phrase would creep up, unexpectedly, in some of the oddest and most remarkable places - restaurants in Los Angeles, the sandy streets of Venice West, book shops in San Francisco, between the mountains of New Mexico, not to mention other less exotic places.

From there it went crazy. Wolfenbarger, Wolfenbarker, Wolfinbarger, Wolfengarger, etc., ad infinitum. When these variations would appear in print, I'd somehow get the strange feeling there really were people by those names, and sending me



these issues by mistake - until I read them, and recognized shortly that I'd written them. I even once fancied compiling a list of these things, call them pen-names ... the fan with a thousand pen-names ... but I just can't get serious about it.

From what very hazy information I have, the name Wolfenbarger originally was a longer name; it got shortened to Wolfenbarger when the Old Country people (Germany, but then ... just maybe? ... Poland) arrived. Makes me wonder what the Old Country people call me.

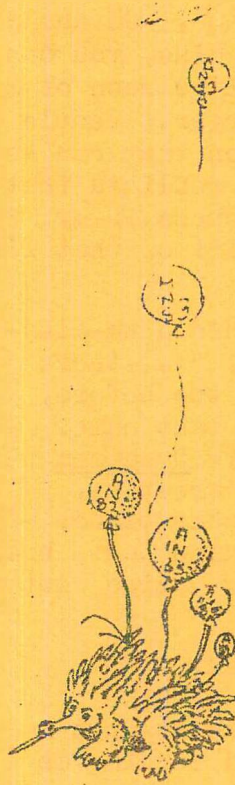
Then how do you say it? That's easy. Wolfenbarger is pronounced just like it looks. Wolf-en-bar-ger. No, not Wolfengarger. Wolfenbarger. Try it. Swallow that olive sandwich, wipe that foam from your lips and give it a try. Sitting down won't do any harm. Wolfenbarger. It's pronounced like "Wolfenbar-gerrrr", a bit like a werewolf assembling human speech again.

Being published in fanzines & other places, and with Wolfenbarger spelled the proper way, I've appeared as Bill Wolfenbarger, Billy Wolfenbarger, B. Wolfenbarger, B. A. Wolfenbarger, B. Ray Wolfenbarger and Ray Wolfenbarger.

Other names? Well, no thanks. I have enuf trouble with my own.

- Billy Wolfenbarger

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IRWIN: I'm not really sure if it is necessary - after having already presented 2 articles - to welcome you to this issue, but welcome. This issue I've gone back to the format I used in the first issue; of having little bits of my nattering between the various articles. I think this is necessary in view of the fact that I use very little artwork. And besides, one reader said he missed these little bits of chatter.

Something else that has come out of the first issue have started me wondering about whether Leigh Edmonds is, in fact, the Secret Master of Australian Pandom. Readers with long memories will recall that in his article in Sikander #1 Leigh predicted that Carey Handfield and Robin Johnson will be moving back to Melbourne, from Sydney, and will help form a Melbourne-based Australia in 83 worldcon bid under the slogan of "Oldies but Goldies of '75".

Those predictions were published in October '79, and in March '80 Carey Handfield moved back to Melbourne. And it looks like Robin Johnson



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the past few years, I have missed several movies that have featured this actress and some of them films that many have seen. I am lucky these days if I see ten films a year at the cinema and probably half that number of live performances. For the curious, the last film I was in the cinema was John Carpenter's The Fog; the last live performance, Vincent Price as Oscar Wilde in Diversions and Delights; the former was a disappointment, the latter was a revelation.

The lack of attendance is due to several reasons. One is not having the necessary funds at the right time, another and far more deadly is that like many others I am easily seduced by the number of films I haven't seen that occur with monotonous regularity on the one-eyed god, television. Over the past few weeks, let alone months and years, I have been bored, amused, entertained and genuinely moved by a myriad of flickering images. I can truthfully write from bitter experience that made-for-TV movies makes Sturgeon's Law appear generous. The batting average for good and better is about one in 25.

I probably watch ten movies a week on the box, sometimes more when I'm on holidays, which approximates about 550 movies a year of which about a hundred at most would be repeats. I don't claim as encyclopedic a knowledge as Jack Herman, for example, but I think I'd have seen somewhere near six thousand films in the last twenty years, allowing for a period when I did not have a tv set. I may not remember them all but I'm beginning - no, that's not true, I have reached a point of overkill and consequently few movies in the theatres are attractive or interesting enough to lure me. There are many that I regret not having seen on screen, among them you would have to include the following as brief example, Assault on Precinct 13, Carrie, Allegro non Troppo, Martin, Dark Star and The Wonderful Visit.

The same holds true for science fiction. I used to read a book a day, at least, a large number of which were science fiction. Over a period my sense of wonder became severely blunted. Collecting overtook reading and for a long while erroneously assumed priority. I acquired books that I intended reading someday but only because the completat collector was expected to have them. I will not dwell on specifics but for the curious, I will mention that John Russell Fearn, H.P.Shiel, William Burroughs, Charles Eric Maine, John Lymington, S. Fowler Wright, Jules Verne, H Rider Haggard and several others now occupy a much less shelf space. I will disavow any notions that the above authors were discarded for one reason only - that of unreadability. Most were unarguably discarded for that reason, Burroughs, Haggard and especially the incomprehensible Shiel were dumped for that reason. Maine, Fearn and Lymington are, believe it or not, readable but are well represented by few titles; Verne was omitted for space, bad translations and the lack of time in reading his canon of works. I still have several Vernes in my

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collection but have no urge or desire for more. S. Fowler Wright was removed/reduced purely for economical reasons. I have enjoyed his novels and still believe he is unworthy of neglect. His part in the history of sf is often underrated. A successor and contemporary of Wells, his novels are, by today's standards, still worth reading. Some have aged badly and some are even quaint but others retain a freshness that is a true delight to discover. Four Days War in particular, was a surprise and The World Below is deservedly regarded as a classic.

But that's all very well. I have strayed from the point - and the point was way back when I discussed the supremacy that collecting had over reading the past few years. There are idiots and idiots and then there's me seems to have been the way it was back then. I still collect, make no mistake, I'm not about to deny that I do. I was born with long arms and a trick memory, the basic looks of any collector. I collect the signed, the first, the specialist press and the curious and always will. (For those that want to know more about this, I suggest you keep your eyes on NIBBLES and Ornithopter where some of the raison d'etre is soon to appear.) My priorities in what I collect have changed. Whole areas that were more chore than pleasure have been removed from my collection (or are in the process of disestablishment) and are highly unlikely to return. Among them, horror novels of the '70's, utopian fiction, detective fiction (most but not all), the shadow, most pulps and pulp related material, most magazines (again, with some exceptions) and some specialist press (e.g. after several years attempting to complete all F&SF specialist publishers output I decided late last year to concentrate my efforts on a handful only with the rest, including Arkham, restricted to specific titles and authors). Sf anthologies look like being the next section to be dismantled but this will involve a shift in emphasis rather than a wholesale removal.

- Keith Curtis

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IRWIN: For those who are interested in seeing Keith's DUFF trip report I should mention that Keith recently told me that at a date sooner than Real Soon Now he will have completed a final draft of the report and it will, therefore, be ready for stencilling. Something to look forward to.

Those people who have seen a copy of the 1981 DUFF ballot may have noticed that I have nominated one of the candidates. I was going to put on a long spiel about why you should vote for Joyce Scrivner, but then I realised that it is not on for someone to vote for a fan fund candidate just because I, or anyone else, happened to write a healthy puff about that candidate. It struck me that one of the things about the fan funds is that the people who aren't really knowledgeable about the candidates should leave the actual



voting in the hands of those people who have that knowledge. So, if you don't really know much about the candidates I trust you will donate cash anyway, leaving the voting to those who do.

And while on the subject of fan funds, I should mention that the ceremony in which I handed over all funds gained from sales of the last issue was short and simple. Mainly because there wasn't anything to hand over. Which, of course, means that the extensive market research in this matter proved to be correct, and as such I've asked the same research company to look into whether Sikander #4 will appear. Their findings should be in by the next issue.

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PRIZE GUY  
\*\*\*\*\*

John Berry  
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My office associate Martin is editor of the British Mastermind journal, called Pass, and I happen to be the staff artist. I mention this only because when I became a fan back in '54, I anticipated that I would probably make my mark in fandom as an artist... I was anxious to accept Martin's request for assistance in the production of Pass, thinking that there would be scope for me to bring my literary works to the notice of the BBC. And as I've stated, I do all the illustrations. Luck such as this has dogged me throughout life...

Martin asked me if I would also assist him at a fete organised by Mastermind, to assist a local charity, Barvin Park, Potters Bar, Hertfordshire, about five miles from my house. Barvin Park is a home for physically and/or mentally handicapped men and is run by Fathers of a Catholic Order. I agreed to assist, and Martin and I designed and built a 'Cops and Robbers' theme...a large wooden section on which I drew fields and roads, etc, and Martin bored nine hundred holes in it.

Accompanied by Martin's wife, Ivy, we drove to Barvin Park and set up our stall. The 'Cops and Robbers' board was set up in the middle of the stall, and on the left we had a space and equipment for fingerprinting persons at 10p a time, the monies of course going to the same charity. A plastic container of white spirit was available as a cleanser. We commenced the chore of inserting nine hundred spills of paper into the holes... about thirty of the spills had sums of money written on them, ranging from 25p to five pounds, the idea being that for a 10p fee, victims could withdraw a spill, and whatever amount of money was inscribed thereon was the prize. The charity had also offered a number of small prizes, and we were also able to append suitable titles on other spills.



It seemed to take a considerable time to insert the spills, much longer than we thought... our activities attracted the attention of numerous inmates, who appeared to be amazed at this seemingly unproductive chore. I felt bound to whisper to Martin out of the corner of my mouth that if an alien spaceship landed, they would automatically presume we were the inmates.

We continued to take money for most of the afternoon... Ivy managed the board, whilst I found myself fingerprinting people... I was engaged in taking the fingerprints of a beautiful young girl, a task I always look forward to because one is able to be in direct physical contact with a female without fear of appearing before the local magistrate. A small crowd gathered, and I overheard subtle whispered comments of 'leave it to the professionals'... I smiled knowingly in the direction of this plaudit, and with a triumphant leer I took off the cap of the white spirit container. Really, I must put it down to sheer enthusiasm... I completely lost control of the opened container, which turned three somersaults before landing in the box of mystery prizes. Centrifugal force was of course extended to the limit. I hurriedly explained to the onlookers that white spirit evaporates quickly and does not permanently damage clothing, and I must admit reluctantly that the girl would not permit me to dab her blouse with a paper handkerchief.

Martin and I walked round the fete to chat to a few people we knew, and returned to supervise Ivy. She looked across at us, her eyes rolling in her head, nodding her head to indicate she required our presence. Standing across the board from her was a man about six feet six inches high, who would have to walk sideways through a barn doorway. He had a bundle of mystery prizes in his arms, including two oranges, a Hurricane fighter plastic kit, a hat with "Kiss me quick" on it, a jigsaw puzzle of Snow White and the book British Cenozoic Fossils. He was continually picking up spills, but, Ivy explained, he wasn't giving her the requisite 10p fee. I then noted by his expression that he was an inmate. I walked round to him and whispered confidentially to him, stating in explicit terms that he should disappear, with his prizes. He turned to me, eyes blinking in astonishment, and shook his head. He then picked up a spill with £3 on it. Spectators (and many had gathered) applauded the winner, and shouted "Give 'm the money". Ivy counted out thirty ten pence pieces, and he chortled in delight as they filled his hands. Meanwhile I cornered a Father, and explained the position to him... he came over slowly, permitting the inmate to win a Superman mask in the interim. He gripped the inmate's hand and led him protestingly away... I heard the inmate say something about "a winning streak", and I followed at a discreet distance picking up the abandoned mystery prizes. He didn't drop any ten pence pieces, though.

We collected £45 for Barvin Park.

- John Berry



THIS ARTICLE CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE IF YOU HUM THE MYSTIC  
MANTRA "ULMA GOMA ULMA GOMA UHHH UHHH" IN YOUR HOME !!!

A TRUE TESTIMONY

Andrew Brown

One of the things I am constantly amazed by is the sheer number of publications that exist for what appear to be the slimmest of reasons. Grotty little publications emanating from either the most brain damaged or the most cynical (or possibly both) American publishing firms it could be anyone's misfortune to encounter. Characterised by glossy, lurid covers and the cheapest grade of newsprint available, they feature strange articles that purport, for instance, that Kiss are not really Kiss at all, but clones created by their management when the band wanted a bigger percentage. The real Kiss, of course, having been burnt to death .. in the back of an equipment truck. Touche!

Similarly, there is the notorious magazine Official UFO. A copy of the May 1978 is luridly fascinating: "Scientific proof positive: Elvis' clone - exact duplicate escapes \$100,000 reward offered for information leading to recovery of clone. If you loved Elvis, please help us!" screams the cover. (What this has to do with UFO's escapes me - no where is there any suggestion, as one might expect, that Elvis Presley was an emissary from Venus on another dimensional plane tangent to our own reality...) Inside, apart from a description of the cloning process (with blurred shots of Elvis Presley accompanied by captions like "Note extreme disturbance of brain reflected in this zombielike shot of clone. Apparently, clone's memory kept fading in and out. However, it did say, "I've just had a long sleep", before asking to go to the toilet.") with "...nuclear-powered equipment...", is a copy of an Elvis clone sighting form. This fascinating document includes such gripping questions as "Did you ask him anything about his death? What did he say?", and "If female, did you have any sexual relations with the clone?". A terse note at the bottom of the form states "Please be truthful. We don't want any people who are joking or responding for publicity purposes. Be sincere! We are trying to help mankind!".

The other contents of the magazine are just as interesting, and no less hilarious. One article explains that health food shops are a preverted plot to sap our natural bodily fluids. Another shows how UFO's have broken up families. Yet another purports that the American city of "Bracken" has been taken over by an alien mayor - "One half million grinning idiots live in the American city that's run by an outer space alien" says the title page.



But the thing that I find most fascinating is not any of the articles, nor the vast cynicism of the magazine, nor even the utterly ludicrous letter column - what really makes it all complete for me is the advertisements !!!, which are what inspired me to write this piece. There is a particular kind of advertisement which flourishes in this kind of magazine. They all advertise miraculous methods of curing emphysema or bending your neighbours' wills, for only \$9.98, or C.O.D., \$1.00 deposit.

Progress Books, Ltd., of Oceanside, NY publish "The Magic Power of Witchcraft". Among the spells revealed in this impressive tome are incantations that allow you to live rent free, or receive automobiles as gifts. Also valuable are spells to heal torn ligaments, and remove gallstones. It also reveals that "...there is a magic handshake witches often use...", which allows the handshaker to implant thoughts in people's minds, dominate people, or make their bosses grovel.

Research Industries, Ltd., also of Oceanside, NY, with a suspiciously similar address to that of Progress Books, offers "...the astonishing power of Automatic Mind Control...", which seems to do much the same as the magic power of witchcraft, its main facility being to make your boss apologise to you and make banks offer you low interest loans, not to mention curing "ulcerative colitis".

It seems that there is not a single facet of trash metaphysics which some enterprising publishing company has not exploited. There is the occult angle of Progress Books. There is even our old favourite, pyramid power: the incredible Sensor II pendant as promoted by "The House of Collingwood", Providence, Rhode Island. Created by Dr G. Patrick Flanagan, it is a "...planar (flat) design which features concentric waves of diamonds in a multiplicity of sizes. Each diamond is resonant to an incoming signal of electro-magnetism in a different frequency...". And not only does it magnify and direct the power of the pyramid, it is also an exciting piece of unisex jewelry! It comes in bronze, silver and 14 Kt gold (at a mere \$279.95) models as well. Eve Bruce Flanagan, actress, wife and co-researcher of/with Dr Flanagan (an accompanying picture shows her smiling toothily with the amazing Sensor II pendant dangling over her awesome cleavage - doubtless Dr G. Patrick Flanagan can see the pyramids any time he wants to...) wonders "will it unlock keys of the universe and help solve the energy crisis, food shortages?".

There are obviously some very shrewd people out there. They know that many people live dull, boring lives, and many would like to find the quick and easy way to riches, luxury and domination over their bosses/peers/girlfriends. They can see the vast hold phenomena such as Von Daniken and Uri Geller have over the public consciousness, and they know just how to write an advertisement with the right combination of psychic hucksterism and appeal to



people's power drives. And they know just where to advertise, too. And, of course, in every industry, there are small firms and large firms. "Ancient Mystic Chants of Australian wind spirits. Your personal oracle, translated into English"; "Decisions made for you by certified genius.", are two classified advertisements I found in a small circulation American magazine.

I wonder what aberration of market research made them advertise in "Fantasy & Science Fiction", July 1980?

- Andrew Brown

**At Least You Can Say You Have Read It**

423 Summit Avenue,  
Hagerstown, Maryland,  
21740, U.S.A.  
February 13, 1980.

Irwin Hirsh,  
279 Domain Road,  
South Yarra,  
Victoria 3141, Australia.

Dear Irwin:

**letters**

Joyce Scrivner  
2528 15th Ave Sth  
Minneapolis  
MN 55404, USA

((on Sikander #1)) Interesting to receive a foreign fanzine from the current fan visiting. I suppose to be proper (silly) I should mail this loc off to you wherever you are now rather than expecting you to get it at home, but I'm not 'specially good at being silly (painful admission #83, \*sigh\*).

Eric's piece about Australia founded by red tape is cheering, especially since it's taken all my life for me to find out about it, but then I didn't discover what a good pleasant man Richard III was until I read Josephine Tey's The Daughter of Time a couple years ago, and he didn't do anything to the princes in the tower! I like to find out new things about the past, it makes me feel empathy with it when I find out such things as I have three pairs of boots because I forgot I bought two of them (thus discovering new things about my own past!).

John Bangsund's article brings back even better memories! Ah yes, 1972-3. I went to my first convention, I worked full time & changed jobs in the middle... However his story of the cricket match reminds me of how I played for Australia in the Seacon Australia/England match and almost lost the match. John Foyster told me to bowl an over and then that absurd Keven Smith kept hitting my shots! \*Growl.\* The umpire later told me I was a draw, but I think that was my lack of bra rather than lack of finesse.



The match was declared an official tie and I enjoyed every bit of it. (So there Kevin Smith.)

Jan Howard Finder  
PO Box 423  
Latham  
NY 12110, USA

Your tale of various names was interesting. While I have only one legal name, I spell it with lowercase. This causes all sorts of problems for other persons. It is especially

interesting, since I work for Uncle Sugar and the military. Several times I have had to state that my name is spelled the way I spell it and not the way they do. I had one twit ask me how I spelled it on my birth certificate. I pointed out that it was printed on my birth cert. and that I didn't sign it, not being able to. I may have been precocious, but that would be stretching it a bit far. Also few persons pronounce it correctly the first try, as I use Fin-der, not Find-er.

Harry Bell  
9 Lincoln St  
Gateshead  
Tyne & Wear NE8 4EE  
United Kingdom

Should you ever have the opportunity or inclination to look through the issues of Griavab I published in the mid-60's you'll find, I think, that I was using a middle initial - Harry R. Bell. The "R" is for Robert, but my full name is

actually Henry Robert Bell.

My grandfather was called Henry Robert Bell, but was always known as Harry. Following what has today become a less popular custom, my father was named after his father, Henry Robert Bell. He, too, has always been known as Harry.

In honour of my grandfather I was christened Henry Robert. The only thing wrong with this fine dynastic attempt is that when my grandfather died and they went through his papers, they found from his birth certificate that he'd actually been christened Robert Henry Bell.

I used to work with a Nigerian called Dixon Omerogbe who eventually got so fed up with having to spell his name over the phone that he just told people to ask for "Mr Dixon". Henry Pijohn (pronounced "Pie-John"), on the other hand, doggedly stuck to his guns - and his name - and bravely put up with people phoning up to speak to "Mr Pigeon" and "Mr Pee-John".

It is a strange and wonderful thing to open a fanzine all the way from Australia and find printed in it a letter of comment from D. West. Is there no end to the man's Astral Powers? Wonder what he's up to...

Pete Presford  
'Ty Gwyn', Maxwell Close,  
Buckley, Gwynedd,  
Gwynedd, U.K.

A letter from D. West in one of his sober moments is something that you should highly value. Of course the Americans gripe about British fans



being drunk all the time, the main reason being they don't get weaned off coke until they are over 21; by that time any English man worth his salt is a down at heel alkie.

I once had a fanzine from America that was sent to Wales via New South Wales; I often wonder on the message scrawled on the back "Try Wales UK". Somebody in NSW knows where the real place is! ((Does this mean that Eric Lindsay is not for real? ih))

A. Bertram Chandler  
Flat 23, Kanimbia Hall  
19 Tusculum St  
Potts Point, NSW 2011

I was especially interested in your account of your American trip, including your shinges anent a certain American airline. For the past five years - ever since my retirement from the sea - I have been compiling a Shit List of airlines. On it, to date, are Pan Am, Continental and TWA.

Flying back to Australia in 1978 from San Francisco I was unable to check my booking, by telephone, with Pan Am. It was Line Engaged, Line Engaged, Line Engaged. Arriving at the airport in good time to catch my flight I found that it had been deferred from 2100 hrs. to midnight, via Auckland instead of via Nadi. The on board service was lousy. Arriving in Sydney, disgruntled and travel-worn, I found that my baggage had been discharged in Auckland.

Last year I was among the people waiting to greet Gordon Dickson at Mascot. His flight - by Continental - was late. Gordie was later still passing through Customs. He had been trying to find his baggage - which had been discharged in Pago Pago.

A few weeks later I was flying from London to New York, by TWA. I had taken pains to ensure that I was booked into a smoking area - but somehow I forgot to lay in a supply of cigarettes (I am normally a pipe smoker) before embarking. After take-off (already suffering from withdrawal symptoms) I asked a stewardess for a packet of cigarettes. She told me that all I could buy would be a carton of duty free cigarettes. I told her that I wanted just one, repeat and underscore one, packet. She told me that it would have to be a carton or nothing. Then a steward got into the act and said that he would see what he could do. During his absence there was an announcement made, by somebody with some quite unintelligible Deep South accent, about smoking and not smoking. I assumed that he was telling us that we could smoke only in the smoking areas.

Eventually the steward returned, grinning all over his face. "You'll not believe this, sir, but hardly anybody aboard this aircraft smokes!" But he had managed to scrounge for me two filter tips - not the sort of cigarette that I should have bought but better than nothing. I lit up. And then some sanctimonious sod across the aisle said, "I beg your pardon! This is a non-smoking area!" I learned, then, that the entire bloody flying sardine can



had been declared such. And how many of my bigoted fellow passengers were motorists, contributing far more to atmospheric pollution than I, with my pipe or the occasional cigarette, do?

After the NorthAmerican, in Louisville, I was supposed to be flying from New York to Los Angeles by TWA. I changed my booking to another airline, telling TWA why I had done so. Whenever I have the opportunity I tell the above sad story to fellow smokers who are contemplating an overseas trip.

((I trust that the flight over to Chicon IV, at least, will be smooth sailing. Congratulations, Bert! ih))

Barney Neufeld  
2713 2nd Ave South, #307  
Minneapolis  
MN 55408, USA

Geo, the second fanzine I've gotten from Australia. (But, the first one was from Lindsay, and I'm not sure that really counts.)

What's in a name? Nothing much - and everything. One's name is the first gift he or she receives, and it is the oldest possession he or she has. According to occult beliefs, in fact, one's name is definition (of sorts) of the person. Now, I do not say that Numerology is as accurate as Biology, but I am not one to argue against it entirely.

Hm. A bit far from your point, I guess. I don't think I've seen (or heard) a more entertaining description of the name-game than this one.

As David Grigg well knows, handwriting is a difficult art. Being left-handed, I've had more than my share of problems trying to master legibility (one reason I type as much as I do). In fact, I have hit upon one perfectly feasible solution. But, no one today can read mirror-writing - or wants to try. So it does me little good in the public arena.

Marilyn Pride  
74 Annangrove Rd  
Kenthurst  
NSW 2154

Sikander arrived at just the right moment. Having watered the plants, tended the sick chook and done sundry other tasks I had just reached the stage of putting-off painting - a new fanzine to be read and replied to was the perfect excuse!

I liked David Grigg's piece, having wanted a typewriter more than anything through the years when I wrote lengthy novels. Unlike him I have legible enough handwriting, but a story looked so much more 'real' in type. I finally got two, in succession, which didn't work properly or weighed about half a ton, and having learned 10-finger typing and got a good machine, I practically stopped writing and started painting! Hence this typed letter - can't let all that dreary practise go rusty, as it has been doing.

(((\*Sigh\* ih))



Richard Faulder  
Yanco Agricultural Research Centre  
Yanco  
NSW 2703

Your trip report rather  
resembles the sort I might do  
if I could ever afford an  
overseas trip. The amount of  
incoming data would just be

so overwhelming that all I could do was record the events which  
most stood out in my mind. Come to think of it, my conreports  
usually sound like that.

The more I hear about Eric Lindsay overseas, the more I think he  
must be schizophrenic.

I obtained considerable enjoyment from David Grigg's article. To  
some extent I short-circuited much of his trauma. Firstly, my  
handwriting was fairly neat as a child (I fancy it may have  
deteriorated since). Secondly, my mother taught both my sister and  
I how to touch-type as soon as she bought the portable which was  
our first typewriter. Not that I'm the world's greatest typer by  
any manner of means. I tend to look at the paper on which I'm  
typing or even (shock, horror) the keys (especially for other than  
the usual letters and punctuation marks). My incentive for getting  
this second-hand IBM Selectric was a severe case of worn fingers  
contracted while typing many stencils for worksheets and exams not  
long after I started teaching. While I could have gone for a  
cheaper electric, it was worth spending the extra money to obtain  
the flexibility of interchangeable typefaces. One thing I can't  
understand: why does David need to use white-out. Any Selectric,  
even this old 1972 model can use correctable carbon ribbon, which  
allows for quicker and neater corrections (on paper, at any rate).  
((If there is one thing this owner of a manual typewriter hates, it  
is being asked to pass on a message from one Selectric owner to  
another Selectric owner about the use of said Selectrics. ih))

Marc Ortlieb  
8 Melanto Ave  
Camden Park  
SA 5038

One of these days I'll talk about the  
difficulties associated with being a  
100% Brit with an Austrian name like  
Ortlieb. (You learn to appreciate the  
"i" before "e" except after "c" rule.)

Sigh, jealousy, envy, etc. However, I  
enjoyed your sketch of your American visit. I can see I'm going to  
have to travel light when visiting the states if your baggage  
experiences are typical. Since I won't have much money for  
fripperies like books and records that will be easy. I'm sure that  
one of the high points of my trip will be hearing all the Americans  
telling outrageous lies about Irwin Hirsh getting drunk and falling  
into the hands of women. Naturally I'll believe all of them.

Jack's article on events back on god's own earth was a good read,  
even if I do find his passionate love affair with leather and  
willow a touch sordid. I probably did see some of the cricket  
stuff he describes while at my parents' place. They often have the



cricket on the tv. However, I couldn't tell you which matches I saw, as all cricket matches look alike to me. (The was Tim Brooke-Taylor's comment in one Goodies episode:- "You don't play cricket to win... You play it to draw!")

David's piece on typing was excellent. I always enjoy his fan writing, and have even been known to read his fiction. However, what makes it easier for me here is that I can empathise with David's position, having come through a very similar school system with a similar debility. In England, in my school, you had to pass a handwriting test to graduate from pencil to ink nib pen. I was the last in my class to do so, and I'm still certain that I was issued with a pen only because they were fed up with the way the ink monitors had to clean out my unused inkwell every day. (Naturally it was filled with blotting paper, as ink wells used to get. Sigh, what do kids miss in this age of biro's? Mind you, it was difficult to use as ink nib pen as a pea-shooter. We had to be satisfied with prying the nib apart, leaving two sharp points like vampire's teeth which worked remarkably well as darts. Still, enough of this rampant nostalgia.)

I hate to disillusion Harry Warner, but you should really tell him that few Australian cities get any snow at all during the year, and that the only way we're going to get a traditional Christmas is to move its location as well. Perhaps if Australian Christmas was only held on Mt. Buffalo???

Eric Lindsay  
6 Hillcrest Ave  
Paulconbridge  
NSW 2776

Glad to know that you don't believe the tall stories the US fans make up. You must realise that fandom requires myths, and if they can't get mythic figures, they have to invent them.

Gerald Smith  
8 Prawley St  
Frankston  
Vic 3199

I would like to congratulate you on your exquisite taste in choice of material. I refer to the marvellous article by Mr Herman on the great game of cricket. Such a dissertation must inevitably raise the standard of any zine. But fancy falling for the three card trick like that. You really must be more careful in your editing. Fancy allowing Jack to go off on a tangent like that and bring in politics into it all. Continue in this vein and you risk being found guilty of complicity in the heinous crime of attempting to raise the political consciousness of fandom. Tchh!

Kevin Smith  
10 Cleves Court  
St. Marks Hill  
Surbiton  
Surrey KT6 4PS, UK

Many thanks for Sikander, the cricket article in which I was surprised to see. A fanzine with cricket in it? I thought. And from overseas too. It took a little while to come to grips



with the fact that this was a fanzine from Australia, and that they do know a bit about the game there. I had only just woken up, and I don't get all that many fanzines from Australia: those are my excuses, and I'm sticking to them.

As a matter of fact, British fanzines almost never have anything about cricket in them. British fans (with a few exceptions) regard all forms of sport as unnatural, and profess extreme boredom when anyone mentions football, cricket, rugby, golf, squash, etc, etc. Thus they never write about them in fanzines.

I thought Jack Herman's piece on the 79/80 season was fairly good. It seemed to me that he explained too much about cricket for those who already know, but too little for those ignorant (Yank) persons who do not know the game. Nice to see it, though.

As I write this the Centenary Test (our version) has just ended in a draw. It grieves me to say it, but the Aussies can justifiably claim a moral victory, if only because they declared in both innings. The true victor, of course, was the English weather...

((And here I must confess that this is what I tend to think of as a solicited loc. In an attempt to continue the cricket 'flavour' that has been running through these pages, and to have an international table-of-contents, I wanted to have a report of a Certain Cricket Match from an Englishman. And Kevin was (courtesy of Joyce Scrivner) the only Englishman I knew who was part of it... ih))

I don't think I can write a very good article about the Great Season Cricket Match, basically because I can't remember all that much about it. For example, only about five names spring to mind as having played, from both teams. (When I tell you that the 'Aussie' names are those of Mike Glicksohn and Joyce Scrivner you will perhaps see some of my difficulty.) I recall the difficulty I had bowling the ball from one end of the pitch. I recall with amazement the sight of Peter Roberts bowling. I recall how I was unable to hit the ball for anything less than four when I was batting, even using a stump instead of the bat (I swapped them). I recall being rugby tackled by Glicksohn whilst batting. I recall hitting the ball into D. West's balls on the 'boundary' (the umpire gave a four for that as well). But what I remember is extremely self-centred, and I'm reluctant to write an article on a cricket match that turns out to be about me exclusively.

Leigh Edmonds  
PO Box 433  
Civic Square  
Canberra, ACT 2603

David Grigg was, as he always is, delightful. As with many pieces of fannish writing the content is light but the style is the thing, and David has an excellent grasp of style. Most

fans who have been active long run through the same sorts of experiences. I recall that my first typer was a \$50 machine bought



from Myers. After a couple of years it was that gummed up with corflu, stencil wax, dirt and other gunk that the carriage would not return without a great deal of persuasion - thump! thump! thump! So, being mechanically minded I took my trusty screwdriver pulled the typer apart to clean it; the exciting part was when all the little balls from the carriage race fell out and ran all over the floor. Naturally I couldn't find many of them and then I couldn't get them back in again. But the machine still cut a decent stencil.

As I was saying, David writes well and is almost the high point of the issue - the real high point was Eric Mayer's little comment about me. Your piece was good and would have made fine reading in an apazine. I tend to think, however, that writing for genzines takes a different set of skills, conciseness and power of delivery being two of them which spring to mind. Apahacking do not encourage these skills, leading instead to an ability to wander from idea to idea, which is exactly what you did. I can't say that your editorial wasn't interesting, just that it lacked any sense of immediacy.

Jack Herman suffered the same problem but he also experiences didactic tendencies which he does not resist and which he does not lighten with any useful humour. Not only that, his flippant explanation of the political position seemed to me to be often incorrect in inference if not in fact. It seems to me that cricket is a subject which might lend itself as a topic for some good fan writing, but Jack has not managed to do it.

As a contribution to his own fanzine Jack's article would have been okay, but it has been my impression that you intended Sikander to be a relatively fannish fanzine and Jack does not have a writing style which could be called fannish. Didactic certainly, but fannish... well Jack always seems more interested in telling people things than entertaining them, I am the opposite in that I would rather entertain (and maybe slip in a bit of meat if I'm feeling particularly skillful on a particular day). I much prefer to read the same sort of things. I can learn things much more effectively from books, magazines and newspapers than from fanzines. And when you compare Jack to some of the better cricket writers, he isn't likely to score too many runs.

Dave Wixon  
Box 8600  
Minneapolis  
MN 55408, USA

Dear ~~Irvin~~ Vladimir,  
(I always wanted to  
either be or know someone named  
"Vladimir"; that's got a certain air  
about it...)

That was an interesting series of blurbs - capsules, I guess some would say - on your US trip; but you don't fool me for an instant! It's quite transparent to an apahacker like myself that what you



were really doing was trying to fish for comments - and what better way to introduce a multitude of subjects into a single fanzine, than this...? Now everyone who was mentioned will write to tell of some incident you didn't get around to mentioning (thus effectively writing your trip report for you); and the people you met but didn't mention (such as me) will write to either protest, or say something clever so that you'll publically regret not having mentioned meeting such clever people before!

As witness this very letter, for instance!

Re Jack's article: I got a bit confused, there, as to whether it was Liberal-Country that tend to throw up on leg-spinners, or the other guys. Is there some political significance to the way the ball spins?

Gee, and you reprinted part of my letter! How've your friends reacted to my calling them all "dregs"? Will I be allowed in, in '83? Will I be allowed back out again...? ((Well, actually, we'd rather not have you "such clever people" here in the first place, and as such we figure we may as well lose the '83 bid. ih))

I Also Heard From: John J. Alderson; Harry Andruschak;

John Bangsund; Mervyn Barrett, who will no doubt congratulate me on the marvellous job I did in editing his letter; John Brosnan, "I envy you your trip to the USA - it sounded fun but I'm not sure if skiing is an approved fannish activity. It sounds too healthy."; Cy Chauvin; Keith Curtis; Gil Gaier; Dan Maxim, "Why don't you change your name to Bette Midler?"; Patrick Nielsen Hayden; Teresa Nielsen Hayden, "- and I think it's nifty too (O clever and original me)."; Tony Peacey; John Playford; Bruce Townley, "Last I heard he was marked poker chips in a card game (most likely as snacks, can't imagine what other good they would be)."; Billy Wolfenbarger, "Bill Brieding's accent from West Virginia, now, I find rather at a calm level of romance; the worst accent in the world is that of a real drunk Texan."; and a late loc from Gary Deindorfer that arrived about two days too late to have made it onto the actual letter-column.

I should, perhaps, mention that all attempts to have David Grigg's article from last issue accepted by Brian Aldiss and Harry Harrison for a follow-up volume to Hell's Cartographers, or by Andrew Porter as the lead piece in a future issue of 11461 Starship have failed. Probably because I didn't send a copy of last issue to all these chaps. David Grigg's literary agent I am not. Carey Handfield is.

See ya'

*Lucy*



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