

# THE SPACE WASTREL

3

VOL 2  
ISSN 0817-0010



---

## THE SPACE WASTREL

---

This issue is for June 1986 and is Volume 2, Number 3.

The Space Wastrel is edited and published by Mr (Mark) Loney, (Ms) Michelle (Muijsert) and Mr (Julian) Warner.

The zine is printed courtesy of The Astronautical Society of Western Australia. Our publishing schedule is March, June, September and December. So far anyway. Our editorial address is:

The Space Wastrel  
P O Box 545  
South Perth WA 6151  
AUSTRALIA

---

### CONTENTS

3 . . . . .	An Editorial . . . . .	.Mr Loney
4 . . . . .	Paradise Lost By The Dashboard Light . . . . .	.Dave Luckett
6 . . . . .	it's the real thing. . . . .	James Styles & Conspirators
11. . . . .	Something Else To Do With Grapes . . . . .	Ian Nichols
13. . . . .	Successful Party Tossing for Beginners . . . . .	.Amelia Underwood
16. . . . .	How To Wipe Out 85% Of The Population. . . . .	Mark Bivens
18. . . . .	The Swedish Affair: A Madge Yules Mystery. . . . .	Mr Warner
21. . . . .	Bob Shaw Forum . . . . .	Bob Shaw & Mr Loney
27. . . . .	LoCt In Space. . . . .	Letters

---

### ARTWORK

Our Cover illustration is by Graham Ferner and is used without permission. His models were Wolfgang Vogel and Amelia Underwood. Our thanks and apologies to all three.

Our Bacover is by Larry Dunning and interior illos are by - who else could it be? - Craig Hilton.

Many thanks, Craig and Larry.

---

### AVAILIBILITY

TSW is available for Trade,Article, LoC, Artwork or letter indicating interest. Overseas readers who supply an article, artwork or who LoC will receive the following issue airmail.

Tsw is available for \$1.50 per issue, but we're damned if we can see why you'd want to pay.

If there's a red X on your mailing label this is your last ~~issue~~ unless you do something. We have only X'd Australians this time but will be Xing overseas non-respondents from next issue (the reason for this bigotry being that we do appreciate the vagaries of international surface mail).

---

# an editorial

from Mr Loney

---

When Mr Warner and I were publishing the first volume of The Space Wastrel, a long time ago in a country town far away from the fair city of Perth, we waited until our fourth issue before editorialising about our goals and such-like. In these modern times, where the pace of life is much faster, the expanded editorial team of this resurrected fanzine feels that the third issue of the second volume is an appropriate time to address our readers, both old and new, on those weighty topics of editorial aims and policies.

First it is necessary to acknowledge the important role played by that enjoyable, if somewhat flawed, convention, AussieCon II. The nomination of Michelle and I for DUFF in the two weeks we were in Melbourne supplied the impetus for the early return of TSW (the possibility of publishing again after I graduated having already been aired). I still think it's a pity that Slippery Jim & The Ratettes declined to nominate for DUFF. Running two opposing DUFF bids from the same fanzine - Mr Warner also having an incarnation as Reverend Jules of the band - would have proved an interesting dialectic. Of longer term importance has been the resurgence of activity by Western Australian fandom since AussieCon II and the more recent, more successful, SwanCon XI. Contributors to TSW have been springing up from Western Australian fen at a rate that is nothing but encouraging. Our next issue, TSW 2/4, had a healthy backbone of articles before this issue was completely typed.

So The Space Wastrel, heeding the winds of fate as it chooses the direction in which to sail, has the hope that it will become the publishing home of a new generation of Western Australian fan-writers. As Perth fandom is planning bids for two major conventions, the 1989 Australian NatCon and the 1994 WorldCon, at the moment as well as carrying on with annual SwanCons, a Western Australian fanzine that tries to present it to the rest of the fannish community can't be that bad an idea. And having said that, please don't imagine that encouraging local contributions means that we intend becoming exclusivist. Craig Hilton may only live a few suburbs away and be the most likely contender for the next Best Australian Fan Artist (as well as illustrating this issue of TSW), but we would be happy to publish good fan art from anyone. As well as good articles, locs, reviews, con reports....

At least a couple of future issues look like being organised around particular ideas or themes. After Craig Hilton dubbed this issue, while still in the planning stages, the special alcoholism issue, we've decided that the articles so far in hand for TSW 2/4 must make it the special sercon issue. There are plans for a special rat issue, but at this stage Michelle must take sole responsibility for that idea. And on the subject of responsibility, I think that it is important that Mr Warner and I acknowledge that the layout and look of TSW, a layout and look that we both find attractive and, dare we say it, professional, is entirely the result of many hours of hard work by Michelle. My typewriter certainly has a hand in it and Mr Warner and I may rapidly be becoming expert offset printers, but if you find TSW to be pleasing to the eye, you should give credit to the newest member of the TSW team. We certainly do.

And one last thing. We'd like to see Irwin Hirsh win GUFF. Your vote can help that happen.

# Paradise Lost

by the Dashboard Light

-----by DAVE LUCKETT-----

People used to ask Ringo Starr why he looked so unhappy. That same question is often asked of me, and I always - these days - reply the same way he did - by looking startled and saying, "I can't help it. It's me face."

I have no idea how Ringo came to have a face like a trod-on spaniel. I do know how I acquired an expression of deep gloom myself. It has, of course, to do with sex.

I lost my virginity - or perhaps I should say that I mislaid it - on the front seat of an aged Valiant sedan in a drive-in in Port Hedland. The drive-in is still there, though I doubt very much that it's been classified by the National Trust as yet; and so far as I know, the Valiant is, too. It refused to start after the (on-screen) performance, thus setting the seal upon a memorable evening.

The film was 'Raintree Country'. The other performance was equally regrettable. One moment I was watching the credits roll at the start of the main feature, and wondering if I could parlay my insecure hold on the young lady's left shoulder into something more interesting without an unseemly struggle; the next, I was supine, astonished, with my feet hard up against the rapidly-fogging window, while she did vacuum-cleaner impressions with a brisk efficiency which somehow appalled me.

What was worst about it was the thoroughly businesslike tone of the act - not that I have any objection to a no-nonsense approach, which can be inordinately refreshing after the agonised skirmishing which passes for courting in this culture. No. It was the *quid pro quo* nature of it that got to me, the event's transactional basis. And it was clear that she wanted to have it off, and over with, before the film proceeded too far to pick up the story.

It was then, or shortly afterwards, that I came to the conclusion that there may in fact be some substance to the idea that one should Save Oneself for Marriage, or at least for someone who's prepared to practice with you a bit. It really wasn't near as much fun as I'd been led to believe.

The impressions of that evening remained with me for the rest of my teens and twenties, and were the direct cause, besides a certain lunatic reticence, of my becoming known, within the narrow circle of my acquaintance, as something of a curmudgeon and misogynist. Every time I actually went so far as to strike up a conversation with an attractive woman, the vision of those steaming windows, the moist, anatomical noises, and the tinny squawks which emanated from the speaker, and from myself, rose up to haunt me. My face would take on the expression it usually does when I'm thinking of something profoundly embarrassing - a look somewhere between gormless bewilderment and grim disapproval - and the conversation would falter and die the death. Even Sally, who is more perceptive than most, conceived that I nurtured a profound dislike of her, when what I really felt was abashed.

Needless to say, given my hapless demeanour, no further assault was made upon my virtue for upwards of a decade afterwards, to my intense regret. I do not propose to enlighten you as to the nature and perpetrator of the one which

-----Paradise Lost by the Dashboard Light-----

finally did occur. I will say that there was nobody, nobody in the world more pleased about its overwhelming success than I. The sheer magnitude of that event, which was as unlike the previous experience as it is possible to be, briefly altered my entire physiognomy, so much so that for a time I was actually able to hold a social conversation with a woman without putting her in mind of Savaranola with dyspepsia. Unfortunately, the years of grief - and it was not much less than that - had left an indelible impression on my dial, into which it still slips whenever I'm thinking about something.

All this is but a prelude to a major appeal, which is this. My face probably does reflect a certain dourness. Oh, what the hell, actually it's as cheerless as a boarding-school breakfast, at least in repose. *Take no notice of this.* The expression of morose displeasure is not what I really feel. What I'm actually doing, behind the forbidding mask, is considering how best to impress you with my witty badinage, my droll manner, my winsome conversation. That the countenance which fronts any such attempt dooms it to failure is not unknown to me, but that message does not always get through to my facial muscles. Just bear with me. The picture will be restored as soon as possible.

-----  
DUFF - SITUATIONS VACANT  
-----

Nominations are now open for the 1987 DUFF race. The fund was created in 1972 to encourage closer ties between fans in Australia and North America, with host countries alternating each year. DUFF delegates visit a major SF convention in the host country, and meet fans they might otherwise never meet in person.

The 1986/7 race will bring an American fan to Australia to attend CapCon (the 1987 Australian NatCon) from 25th to 27th April 1987, in Canberra. The winner may also be FanGoH at a Melbourne RelaxaCon, a week before CapCon.

Candidates must have three U.S. and two Australian nominators. These five must send their nominations to the DUFF administrators by the end of ConFederation (1st September 1986) and the candidate must put in a 100 word platform and a \$10 bond by the same date. Voting will start as soon as the administrators return from ConFederation and distribute voting forms; probably mid-September. It will close on December 31st 1986 (to give the winning candidate/s time to arrange their trip, CapCon being in April).

DUFF exists solely on the donations and contributions of fans, and always welcomes material for auction and donations of money. There will be auctions of DUFF material at future Cons. Contributions can be brought to the Con or sent to the local administrator. Anyone may contribute, even if ineligible to vote. Cheques should be made out to Robbie & Marty Cantor in the U.S. and DUFF AUSTRALIA in Australia. The administrators:-

U.S.A.:-	Robbie & Marty Cantor	Australia:-	Lewis Morley, Marilyn
	11565 Archwood		Pride, Nick Stathopoulos
	North Hollywood		54 Junior St
	CA 91606		Leichhardt NSW 2040
	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA		AUSTRALIA

Send them your nomination today, or at least before September.

-----  
REMEMBER! IRWIN HIRSH FOR GUFF, OKAY?  
-----

---

# it's the real thing!<sup>tm</sup>

---

A drunken rave masquerading as informed and intelligent opinion on bbeer. Perpetrated mainly by James Styles with some help from Julian Warner, Rob Cox, Trish Crowther, Mark Loney and Ygor Rega. Edited into a coherent state at a later date by Mark Loney. Well, almostcoherent.

-----Totally Tasteless-----

There is something terribly untoward in the way most fans treat alchohol. It is almost as if it were some ordinary common milk. Something to fuel them into flights of fantasy. But there is more to booze than sheer potency and here we will not alienate the Inner Circle by throwing Bundaberg Rum on troubled mixes. There is, may we be so bold, such a thing as subtlety.

Let us have a ~~wine~~ wine. Ian Nichol's article in TSW2/2 claimed, "most fans have a taste in wine which can only be described as execrable and infantile. They tend to buy in bulk or by label. The enjoyment of subtle bouquets, the fine tastes, become submerged in a desperate attempt to throw as much down their throat as is possible in a short time... It is unfortunate that there are writers who seem to foster this ignorance of ignorance." Let us avoid these vinegary comments by looking to beer, a trufan's drink.

And what better way to judge beers than to compare the high tech, high finance and high seas beers of the incipiently multi-national Bond Corporation's Swan Brewery, with the traditionally brewed, communally financed and pure spring-water beers of the two pub Matilda Bay Brewing Company. Now the Swan Brewery has a long and noble brewing history in the State of Western Australia, having wafted the odour of hops through the main streets of Perth for many decades. But the 1970s saw it abandon the quaint brewery building on the Swan River foreshore that it had occupied since the previous century; choosing instead to move to the promised land of the Canning Vale Industrial Area and the new technology of chemical beers, large stainless steel tanks and the complete lack of the smell of hops. Shortly afterwards the Swan Brewery was taken over by the Bond Corporation, a business coup that was later seen to be a practise run for the similarly successful out-of-town takeover of the America's Cup.

The Matilda Bay Brewing Company has also made succesful takeovers. First it took over an old hotel in the heart of the port city of Fremantle, installed a mini-brewery in the basement, and captured the diverse custom of the young and trendy, the alternative and folky, and those of English and European provenance who still hankered for the dark ales of their youth instead of the traditional and pervasive Australian lagers. Their second success was taking over the perennially unsuccessful Chelsea Tavern, installing another mini-brewery, renaming it The Brewery Alehouse, and then finding another group of customers in the form of the middle-class and decidedly more affluent inhabitants of the surrounding suburbs.

So these are the two companies whose beers will be pitted against each other in the following great booze-up. The tasting panel followed all the internationally agreed upon procedures for beer adjudication; beginning the night with small amounts in clean glasses, refreshing the palate and cleaning the glasses between different beers, and finishing up with an appalling number of empties littering the lounge room floor. The panel chose Bulmers Woodpecker Medium Sweet Cider to refresh its palate and clean the glasses between the

-----it's the real thing<sup>tm</sup>-----

competing beers, confident that its distinctively different taste would allow a proper differentiation between the heady aromas and dichotomous tastes of lagers and dark ales. Smith's Crisps also had their place on the table as the night progressed.

To begin with the Swan Brewery; let us take the case of EMU EXPORT LAGER (5% Alcohol). Notice that when flat, Emu Export Lager is the same as that bubbly character, Woodpecker Medium Sweet Cider. That is, pale brown. Or maybe just a tad darker. Colour - pale brown. Light, refreshing taste. A taste of malt.

INDIA PALE ALE (6%A) comes from the Matilda Bay Brewing Company in a dark brown bottle that happens to be the same colour as its contents. Upon opening the bottle, it was remarked that there was a strong odour of sweet catfood; sweet tuna in aspic to be precise. With some regrets, the tasting panel discovered that it also tasted like sweet tuna in aspic. The bottle blurb claims a powerful hops character. Unless the Matilda Bay Brewing Company is using seafish hops, their claim must be dismissed as arrant nonsense. A grudging seal of approval was given to a 50/50 mix of India Pale and Woodpecker Medium Sweet Cider. An unusual mix to be true, but we had to empty the glasses somehow.

EMU BITTER BEER (4.6%A) has a colour close to that of its tank sibling, Emu Export Lager. One member of the tasting panel claimed that it had a chemical texture. Others expressed relief after the previous experience of India Pale Ale. More carbonation than Emu Export Lager and a definite bitter taste.

IMPERIAL STOUT (7%A) pours in a treacley fashion from a dark brown bottle that lays claim to a powerful bouquet and roasted barley flavour. The bouquet was not as powerful as the India Pale Ale but it was far more pleasant. We agreed that it was a sweet, fruity odour - but couldn't place the particular fruit. It is smooth and quite drinkable, not as smooth and creamy as Guinness or Coopers, but lacks depth and complexity.

SWAN LAGER (5%A) has the same colour as the two preceding Swan Brewery efforts. It has a bouquet that is noticeably bitter - unlike its two predecessors. The most flattering comment about its taste was that it was neutral. The consensus was that it was the Claytons beer of those tested so far - the beer you're having when you're not having a bbeer. The XXXX of Western Australia, which could explain its low popularity.

In order to upset the careful balance between brewers that this tasting had so far maintained, it was decided to allow the tasting of COOPERS PALE ALE (5.8%A) even though it was from South Australia. Compared to the India Pale Ale, Coopers Pale Ale was. Darker than any of the Swan Brewery contenders, its most disturbing aspect was its murky appearance. Although the tasting panel were aware of the problems South Australia is having with the salinity of the Murray River, we didn't expect to have it so graphically demonstrated in the visual appearance of their ~~wine~~ beer. Smooth and creamy, Coopers Pale Ale rolls off the tongue onto the back palate. A pleasant interlude, it left the tasting panel with the sad fact that a South Australian beer could be in the race for the America's Cup after all. Particularly when we noted its propensity to form an enormous head when given half the chance.

EXPORT SWAN LAGER (5%A) proved to be the first Swan Brewery beer that wasn't the same colour as the first three. It was, in fact, darker than the Coopers Pale Ale - although, of course, nowhere near the depth of colour of the Matilda Bay beers. A definite malt odour made Export Swan Lager a beer with a definite promise. It is ultimately disappointing though, for two reasons.



-----it's the real thing<sup>tm</sup>-----

The first is that although it goes down quite smoothly, it goes down without sensation. Almost a Claytons beer. The second problem is that as Export Swan Lager warms up in the glass, it rapidly becomes bitter and unpleasant.

OKTOBERBRAU (5.6%A) is a bottle without a label. Only a small tag around the neck indicates its contents. With this understatement, Oktoberbrau marks out its place as a real sexist mans beer. The tag advises that Oktoberbrau will continue maturing over several years. Some amongst the tasting panel agreed that several years could be required to develop the complexity and depth that Oktoberbrau currently lacked (others could be seen thinking of times to come when the reverently laid down bottle of beer would compete with any mere wine), but all agreed that it was a very drinkable drop already.

SWAN GOLD (3.7%A & Reduced Calorie Beer) was the first in the attack of the low alcohol, socially responsible, beers launched on an unsuspecting populace by the marketing wizards of the Swan Brewery. With few, if any, redeeming features, it was decided that Swan Gold was a Claytons beer to outperform all previous Claytons beers.

SWAN LIGHT (0.9%A) is the ultimate in socially responsible beers. Even alcoholics can drink it without fear. Because Swan Light slides in under the 1.5% limit that determines (in Australia) whether a drink is alcoholic or not, it can be sold in corner stores along with Coke and other soft drinks. We decided this was entirely appropriate as Swan Light is best considered as a soft drink. Only for the very socially responsible. Like rooting in the proverbial canoe.

So beer is the safe alternatives to SwanCons. Overseas fen may be relieved to know that they can leave their supplies of Budweiser and Heineken at home and rely on a surprising depth of diversity and excellence in beer for the 1994 Worldcon in Perth. (Even Carlsburg Elephant Beer is readily available in Fremantle and its eastern suburbs).

But, ah, you young virgins; do not fear that you will be plied with these evil brews in an attempt to deprive you of your inhibitions. The wine connoisseurs will ply you with \$150 bottles of '69 Chateau d'Yquem in an attempt to buy your virtue. Beer snobs, on the other hand, will be happy to enjoy their beer and leave your virtue to dream molestation.

Hurrah for brewer's droop!

GUFF GUFF GUFF GUFF GUFF GUFF GUFF GUFF GUFF GUFF GUFF GUFF GUFF GUFF GUFF GUFF  
G U F F G U F F G U F F G U F F G U F F G U F F G U F F G U F F  
UFF GUFF GUFF GUFF GUFF GUFF GUFF GUFF GUFF GUFF GUFF GUFF GUFF GUFF GUFF GUFF

Listed on the page opposing are the 1986/7 candidates and platforms. Votes and voting fees (not less than \$2.00 Australian or US or one pound sterling) must reach the administrators by 31ST JANUARY 1987 to be included. The administrators are:-

Europe:- Eve Harvey  
43 Harrow Road  
Carshalton  
Surrey SM5 3QH  
UNITED KINGDOM

Australia:- Justin Ackroyd  
GPO Box 2708X  
Melbourne  
Vic 3001  
AUSTRALIA



-----Guff Ballot-----

Valma Brown: I want to shout at Dave Langford and go to dinner as requested by Hazel Langford. I want to meet all those Beaut British fans I missed at AussieCon, see the ones I did meet and meet all the ones that Maggie wouldn't let out. I have a soft spot for British accents and because of this, Leigh Edmonds will be accompanying me to make sure I come back. I have been involved in fandom since 1971. I am currently a co-editor of 'Fuck The Tories' and co-publisher and boss of 'The Notional'. I like Conventions, fans and parties where I can talk to people. I love talking to people.

Nominated By: Hazel Langford, Joseph Nicholas, Marilyn Pride, Yvonne Rousseau and Grant Stone.

Irwin Hirsh: Unbearded, and hatless at conventions, Irwin nevertheless possesses all the qualities to be a worthy fan fund winner and a fine administrator. In 9 years he has published 100+ fanzines, including SIKANDER, THYME (with Andrew Brown), and for 6 apas and has been a member of 3 convention committees, including the running of a WorldCon film program. His other interests include films, music, fine art, sports, fine food, and making good use of metropolitan transit systems as a way of discovering cities. A freelance film editor, Irwin would like to be Australia's Steven Spielberg when he grows up.

Nominated By: John Foyster, Carey Handfield, Dave Langford, Marc Ortlieb and Arthur Thomson.

Jean Weber: Having discovered fandom at AussieCon I, I have been publishing WEBERWOMAN'S WREVENGE since 1980. I am an enthusiastic apahack and book reviewer, an organiser of conventions until I learned better, have been Editor of ANZAPA for two years, and am suspected of a prurient interest in other people's personal relationships. I'm well known for my feminist views, my (lack of) taste in rum, and my dislike of large groups (so why do I enjoy Conventions?). How much of the above is true? Bring me to CONSPIRACY in 1987 and find out --- if you dare. (Trip report with in one year.)

Nominated By: Sally Beasley, Leanne Frahm, Joy Hibbert, Cath Ortlieb and Sue Thomason.

-----

I vote for:	( ) Valma Brown	( ) Hold Over Funds
(List 1,2,3, etc.)	( ) Irwin Hirsh	( ) . . . . .
	( ) Jean Weber	(Write In)

I enclose . . . . . as a donation to GUFF.

(Make cheques, etc. payable to Eve Harvey or Justin Ackroyd, not to GUFF.)

Signature . . . . . Name . . . . .

Address . . . . .

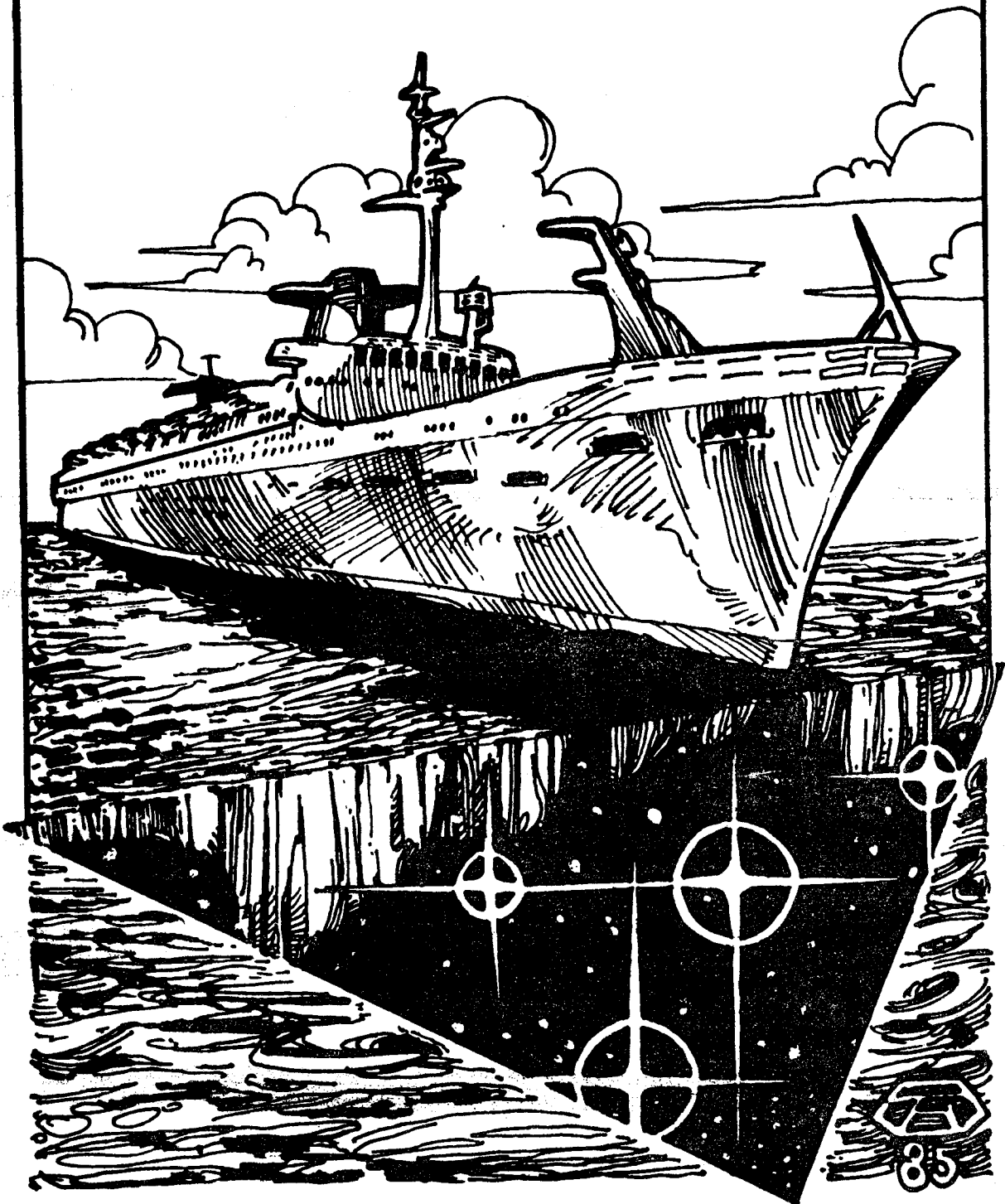
If you think your name might not be known to the administrators and that your vote might thus be disqualified, please give the name and address of a fan or group to whom you are known.

. . . . .

-----

This ballot is produced by Michelle Muysert for The Space Wastrel 2/3. Reproduction of the ballot, to say the least, encouraged. Please substitute your own name when doing so. Votes do not have to be on an official voting form but must contain the same information as requested above.

# BERMUDA TRIANGLE IN '88



US\$20.00 Pre-Supporting

US\$3.00 Pre-opposing

US: Bermuda Triangle in '88, P O Box 268526, Chicago IL 60626

AUSTRALIA: Michelle Muysert, P O Box 545, South Perth WA 6151

---

# Something Else To Do With Grapes

---

-----Taste by IAN NICHOLS-----

It seems that my last little article about fan drinking habits caused at least two hearts to beat a little faster, and elsewhere in this issue you will probably discover a drunken rave masquerading as informed and intelligent opinion on beer, of all things. I do not drink beer. Not because of any revulsion for the proletariat taste, nor out of a pretension that it is not a fit drink for one who is used to better things. It is simply that I am allergic to hops, in any form, including in Clayton's tonic. However, when I read, as I did when I was given a sneak preview of this article, that approval was given to a mixture of pale ale and cider, I feel that one or two things could be mentioned about beer, as a preface to the main subject of this article, which is Cognac, and other distilled grape wine products.

Beer has a long and noble history, possible as long and noble as wine. The origins of both are lost in antiquity, despite rumours to the contrary. Nobody knows who made the first beer or wine, because both emerged in the times when there were no excise laws, so nobody bothered to keep a record. It is certain, though, that both were around in Egyptian times, although what a 4904 B.C. vintage would taste like today, I have no idea. I should imagine the whites would not be as good as the reds. Beer, however, has no such problem, because beer doesn't age, nor does it mature in the bottle.

Beer is made, and aged, in great big vats. Like all alcoholic drinks, it is made by yeasts converting sugar into alcohol. When they do this, they release carbon dioxide as a by product, along with a few other gases. The basic ingredients of beer, at least these days, are malt, hops, sugar and water. The malt is most usually made from barley. These ingredients are combined together and fermented, which means that the yeast eats the sugar and produces alcohol. There are two types of fermentation, top fermentation and bottom fermentation, which simply means that the yeast either settles to the bottom or rises to the top during fermentation.

There are various types of beer, which go by the names lager, ale, porter and stout (yes, best beloved, stout is a form of beer). There are also new and old beers, although that distinction belongs almost exclusively to the state of New South Wales, and derives from the fact that old beer is a top fermentation beer, which was the first method used to brew beer in Australia, whilst new beer is a bottom fermentation type, hence using a newer process. The age of the beer itself has nothing to do with the names.

Ale, porter and stout are all top fermented beers, and tend to have a more pronounced hop flavour than lagers. Lagers are bottom fermented beers, and owe their name to the practice, in Germany, of storing the beers in casks to age it, in cellars, hence 'lagering' it. Part of the taste revelation for W.A. beer drinkers with the advent of the small breweries is due to the fact that all W.A. beers are bottom fermented, hence are lagers. Whatever, a good beer is far too fine to mix with cider, you fucking barbarians.

Cognac, on the other hand, is often mixed with other things, and good cess to those who do, if they know what to do, and how to do it, because, quite frankly, there are some cognacs which taste better as mixers. As with everything else, there are good ones and bad ones. There are also brandies, which are not cognacs, and armagnacs, which are also not cognacs, nor are they brandies, and calvados, which is quite distinctly none of the above. Except for calvados, however, all are made from grapes. Calvados is made from apples, but tastes a bit like brandy.

-----Something Else To Do With Grapes-----

cognac or armagnac, at least, it tastes more like them than it does like any other spirit.

Why, you may well ask, is anyone going to pay lots for good cognac and then throw dry ginger into it? Because, mes amis, you don't pay lots for good cognac, you pay a small fortune. The stuff that somebody flogs you for twenty bucks a bottle is not good cognac, even though there may be three stars on the bottle. Let me explain.

Cognac is a small town in the region of the Charente. It is in fact on the banks of the River Charente. It is a region which produces wines which are justly famed for being some of the worst in France. So what do you do when you've got grapes, got wine, it's the seventeenth century and everybody's making a fortune out of wine export, except for you, because your wine is weak, watery, and tastes of old socks? You burn it. In a still, and turn bad wine into great spirits. Then you put it into casks of Limousin oak, which is pale, and lock it away somewhere for a few years, then you drink it. It'll taste terrible, but a lot better than the wine did.

You see, there are certain things which have to be done to the spirit before it goes into the barrel. The first is that it has to be cut from 72% alcohol to 40% alcohol with water, since cognac is produced by a double distillation process in pot stills, and comes out as stuff which will eat through your stomach lining in nothing flat. Once it has slept for a few years, and two years is the minimum for it to be labelled cognac, it takes on much of the oak complexity, along with the congeners from the grapes. This is where the differences start to creep in. Cognac aged two years in Limousin oak is going to taste a lot better than black and gold brandy, which has a lingering aftertaste akin to burnt Vegemite, but it really is the bottom of the barrel as far as cognacs go. There are many, many brandies which taste better, including some of our better Australian brandies. This two-year-old cognac is good for mixing. Fifty-year-old cognac is something you will note down in your commonplace book.

This is where the problem arises, though. There is no agreed upon meaning for the various signs that are placed upon cognac bottles, except that you can pretty much rely on VSOP cognac as a better liquor than three-star. Four-star and five-star could mean anything, depending on how unscrupulous the makers are and how far away from home you're buying the cognac. It is not unknown for unscrupulous makers to place upon bottles destined for export a series of five stars which look very much like the five stars placed upon Courvoisier VSOP, which is, at its oldest, fifty years old. If you want good cognac, stick to reliable brands, and pay the price. Reliable brands are: Remy Martin, Hennessy, Martell, Courvoisier, Bisquit, Hine, DeLamain, Baron Otard.

One of the little oddities of cognac is that it's almost impossible to get the equivalent of single malt scotch in cognac; all cognacs are blends. However, if you wish to spend the cash and experience one of the finest things in life, try to get hold of a cognac which has been 'early landed' at another port and aged there in a customs house. One such label is Berry Bros. and Rudd Ltd., and you can get in touch with them at 3 James Street, London, SW1. Try a bottle of their '29, if you can get it, it has all the fine taste, crispness and dryness which separates cognac from any other spirit, makes it one of the finest drinks on Earth. Just don't mix it with dry ginger (or, for that matter with cider).

It appears that there is also some confusion over what sort of glass is best used to drink cognac. Let me state, categorically, here and now, that it is neither the brandy balloon, although that's a good second best, nor is it, as

has been suggested to me by those who should know better, a champagne flute, f'chrissakes. The glass used in Cognac to drink cognac is a fairly wide, reasonably thin-walled tulip-shaped glass with a stem, quite similar to all those cheap ones you see in Target and Action in half-dozen packs by Crystal d'Arques. The idea is that the bowl can be held in the hand to warm the spirit, whilst the nose is not absolutely assaulted by the spirity smell. (I confess, though, to a certain pleasure in using a brandy balloon. The stuff swirls so well, especially in front of an open fire, with an affectionate companion, in a double bean bag, with some soft brie nearby, and nothing to do the next day. Ah, me.)

If I'm still alive, and the crick don't rise, next issue I might tell you about the difference between cognac and all the rest.

Love'n'kisses - Ian.

=====

Long, long ago in a slanshack far, far away there lived a wild young fake fan called Amelia Underwood, who styled herself 'Socialite at Large'. Amelia's motto was 'the Party Invitation is Mightier then the Sword' and she was true to her belief. This fannish place, as you might guess, was then younger, newer and more raw than just about any in existence today. So I present Amelia's guidelines for correct fannishpartyng to you in the hope that you may recall with some affection the days when fen were single and parties were Something Else. I, at least, feel nostalgic on re-reading this olde article, since I remember those long-gone but much-missed days when I was Amelia Underwood....

## SUCCESSFUL PARTY TOSSING for beginners

-----by Amelia Underwood-----

A fannish party may sound like a good idea - and frequently it is - but it should be remembered that it's not always as easy to succeed at as it sounds. As an experienced party thrower I can speak with some authority on the pitfalls and the best way to avoid them.

Firstly, the guest list should be constructed with care. Bear in mind that fen are often inclined to solitary pursuits and are not necessarily going to turn up just because you're nice enough to give them an invitation. Often two will arrive when you expect three, or three when you expect seven or even thirteen. If you ask fen to 'bring friends' or, worse, 'anyone interesting you can think of' you will in general meet with a blank stare. If you've been silly enough to say this to a fan who doesn't have any outside friends, I can only say you deserve whatever you get. In any case you're not likely to meet with too much success on this front - fen may be crazy in groups but outgoing they definitely aren't. So the thing to do is make your guest list long. A 75% turnout is good and is only achieved, in my experience, by ringing each and every individual on the list. Postal and second-hand invitations are rarely successful.

The next problem with the guest-list is the 'mix'. Fen are frequently something close to xenophobic about strangers, however they still get sick of each others' company eventually and it's advisable to strive for some 'new blood' each time. You must be careful however as fen will recoil from evidently Mundane persons and may hold it against you for months if you attempt to force such persons

on them (figuratively speaking, I mean). As a rough guideline, try 10% - 20% new blood, but nothing too alien to the fannish mentality - unless you can pass it off as a real alien, of course.

Okay, so you've got your guest list and now you want to issue invitations. A point here: ringing up and simply saying "Come to a party" is not music to the ears of many fen and it definitely isn't the right approach. A theme or name for the party is often a good idea and you should try to make it sound as though it's going to be different. Past successes in the name department have included such favourites as 'The Bunny (Easter) Party', 'The Venus Party', 'The St Valentine's Day Massacre Party' and the unforgettable 'Eve of Destruction Bad Taste Party'.

Which brings us to costuming. While it's a good idea to pick a party name such as the last two above which lends itself to costumes, it's not clever to insist on costume. The more exhibitionist individuals will dress up (or down) anyway and the reticent just won't. If you insist the most likely consequence is that you'll scare off the retiring types, hence the exhibitionist attendees will be left without their admiring/bemused/aghast audience.

Try to pick names which suggest a specific type of costume and not to ask for general SF-related costume. That sort of thing is the province of Masquerades where it's worth going to the extensive and expensive measures necessary to make an SF or fantasy costume recognisable. Fairly obvious improvisations are much more likely to be successful at a party.

Then of course there are fannish communities where the whole idea of costume parties is frowned upon. Attempts to change such attitudes will prove futile - act with discretion.

So you've decided on the party theme and you've picked up the phone to start issuing invitations. What do you tell them apart from the crucial details such as time, date and location? Well, for Christ's sake, remember to tell them it's a Bring Your Own. Admittedly there are a lot of fen who don't drink or drink only lightly, however those who do will rip through your best Brandy or Whisky at a ridiculous rate. Let them bring their own cheap sparkling wine or whatever it is they're prepared to pay for. You, after all, are providing both the Inspiration and the Facilities which really should be quite sufficient.

Remember to tell them they'll enjoy it - I can think of 2 or 3 fen who would never consider this aspect if you didn't tell them. Tell them they can sleep overnight on the floor or any flat surface apart from your bed if they can't get transport home. This seems to work wonders with fen who live some distance away and also with those who are silly/conceited enough to think you might relent about the bed bit. And it guarantees a clean-up team next morning.

On to purchasing and preparations. Fen, of course, need all the normal party-type things - munchies, soft drinks and paper cups to practice biting, crushing and throwing at each other - however it can often help to have some sort of gimmick as well. For several months we had balloons by the dozen at all our parties. It even seemed that some fen came sheerly for the joy of beating other fen about the head with said balloons and then killing them (the balloons). Other successful gimmicks were paper streamers, which were used to tie up party attendees, and lollipops which have an interesting effect on conversation when someone manages to get their teeth stuck together.

When preparing for the party try to have two or three rooms available to party in. This allows feuding fen to hold court without fireworks (another good gimmick but, please, not the verbal type). Also there are sometimes a few fen

-----Successful Party Tossing for the Beginner-----

who like to do Mundane things like dance and this requires considerable horizontal space. Do remove the TV and other breakables from the room but leave zines, books and games where they can be seen. Drag out any recently received zines, new art books, or best-selling SF novels and scatter them casually about. Parties are a great time for Egoboo - fen will pounce upon such items and rapidly become too intrigued and sometimes admiring to notice they've been set up. Warning - don't get diverted yourself while you're doing this - it's disastrous to start scattering, sit down for a brief browse and look up only to discover guests arriving when the breakables are still in the room. Two other vital points: don't put out all the munchies at once as it seems some male fen aren't fed at home at all, and don't put the booze table and the books in the same room as this will cause severe congestion of the area.

Party time at last. By now you're probably exhausted with the effort of just organising the damn thing but don't let this slow you down. There's lots to be done yet. Regular stereo patrols are a must. There's a delicate but not easily attained balance somewhere that will allow the music lovers and dancers (if any) sufficient volume to get the rhythm but won't upset the majority who are talking and feuding elsewhere. Unless your dancers and/or talkers are an extremely amiable lot frequent visits to moderate the volume and even break up arguments about taste will be required.

At the same time you need to be at the elbows of your new people to ensure they are introduced to an accepted by the fannish crowd. You should stick with this task for a minimum of 20 minutes to ensure that graft rejection doesn't occur. It's possible that the new people won't take with any of the talkers - if so it's probably best just to leave them to the tender mercies of the stereo crowd.

While you're doing this you should keep an eye out for corner-sitters. Some of these people will be shy, feeling left out and resenting everyone who's having a good time. These people need to be drawn gently away from their corner and pushed carefully but firmly into an interesting conversation. Others of the corner-sitters however will be readers who genuinely prefer this activity to circulating - these people will resent being disturbed. The difficulty lies in telling which category your corner-sitter fits in. Unfortunately I can only say that the ability to differentiate will come in time and to start with it's best to enquire carefully.

Are you beginning to wonder why you wanted to hold this party?

These few duties being taken care of however the rest is relative plain-sailing. Replenish the munchies every hour until they run out, check that none of the feuds are getting out of hand and try to have a good time.

Which only leaves finishing the party. This is something which seems to concern a lot of people but I never bother. When you get tired (which will probably be early after what you've been through) clear any fen out of your room, turn the stereo down a bit and catch some sleep. When you awake several hours later, revitalised or perhaps just seedy, the hardcore should still be there, keeping the party warm for you. If they are, congratulations on a successful fan party! Send me an invitation to your next one! If not, try again and forget the invite!

Cheers!



---

At this point in the zine we expected to be bringing you a review of Niven & Pournelle's latest epic, Footfall, however its writer got bogged down in the mechanics of dropping rocks (would we kid you?) and so instead we present for your education and possible future use....

# How to WIPE OUT 85% Of the Population.... (without even trying)

-----A Scholarly Paper by Mark Bivens-----

Many, many, many years ago, I, like many others, had a deep interest in dinosaurs - you know the big, clumsy lumbering critters which woke up one morning and found out they were dead? Anyway, I grew up, or at least older, and I discovered Sf, etc,etc. So, when I got to University and started taking some Anthropology, I became a regular reader of such journals as Nature and Science, and found that there had been a change in theories about dinosaurs. Now they were active, warm blooded masters of the Earth, who were killed by some catastrophe.

The link to Footfall is that when the Fithp drop an asteroid on us, one SF writer/government adviser comments, "Oh, a dinosaur killer". This roused my interest enough to go over some articles on the physics involved.

## 1. What To Drop.

First we guess that the Dinosaur killer was a metallic meteor of some size. It's composition is known, to a degree, since the layer of sediment marking the end of the dinosaurs, the Cretaceous Boundary Clay contains immensely larger quantities of Osmium and Iridium. Normally Iridium is found in crustal rocks at 0.005 parts per million, and Osmium at 0.001 ppm. The Boundary Clay level varies, but globally averages 30 times the normal level. So it seems likely that the item which did the damage was metallic. A nearby Supernova can be discounted as one powerful enough to do the damage would not have left any survivors at all. So a meteoric infall seems the logical conclusion. (Alvarez et al, Science, 1980, vol 208, pp 1095-1108.)

## 2. Where To Drop.

The Cretaceous Boundary Clay also gives us a clue as to where the rock fell. In New Zealand the level of Iridium is 20 times normal. However, in Denmark it is 160 times normal. This tends to mark the North Atlantic as the strike zone. The strike would have to be in an ocean, not only because of probability (70% of the surface is Ocean), but also because a ground strike capable of putting the amount of crap needed to do the environmental damage, would have totalled the earth as a going concern for too long for any survivors.

The eminent astrophysicist Fred Whipple produced a theory about the location (New Scientist 1981, Vol 89 #1245, p 740). Iceland. No, the item didn't fall on Iceland, it created Iceland. Iceland is of recent volcanic origin, and the rocks, and other evidence date the island's formation to about 65 million years ago. If the strike ruptured the crust, then the upwelling of magma would likely obliterate any crater, as would continental drift, as Iceland lies on the juncture of the North American and European tectonic plates.

### 3. How Much To Drop.

Alvarez (qv) has estimated that the mass of the object was in the range 100 - 1000 billion metric tonnes. It was big enough to do the job, but only a small item in astronomical terms. W H McCrea (Proceedings of the Royal Society, 1980, Vol 375, #1760, pp 33-34) estimated that the closing velocity of the object was in the region of 20km per second.

Now the calculation of the energy release is basic physics, as learnt in High Schools everywhere:

$$E_k = \frac{1}{2}MV^2$$

(Kinetic energy equals half the mass, times velocity, squared.)

$$E_k = 250,000,000,000 \times 20,000^2$$

(Using half the mass of the mid-range estimate - 500 GigaTonnes.)

But!!! That mass is in Tonnes.... it should be in Kg, giving:

$$E_k = 250,000,000,000,000 \times 20,000^2$$
$$E_k = 5 \times 10 \text{ to the } 24\text{th Joules}$$

That gives a yield of 500 million megatons of TNT. A BIG mother.

This estimate doesn't take into consideration energy loss due to the object's entry into the atmosphere. Indeed, as McCrea (qv) took the mass to be nearer the upper than the lower end of Whipple's range, the figure above may well approximate the actual impact mass. The evidence of the clay is that a lot of energy was used to vapourise some 2 cubic kilometres of metal and rock, and then spread it all over the world.



Proponents of the nuclear winter theory see this as corroborating their ideas; that moderate quantities of fine particles in the atmosphere could cause a massive drop in temperature. This is true, and was the major contributor to the mass extinction of almost every creature with a mass exceeding approximately 25 kg. (As an aside, the eruption of Mount St Helens produced a lot of high-altitude debris, which, it was thought would cause lowered temperatures. It didn't. It was found that particles suspended in the atmosphere require a diameter less than 10 angstrom to cause the cooling effect.) The rest of the damage was done by the shock-waves caused by the object moving at Mach 60 through the atmosphere and then impacting in the ocean. The resultant Tsunami would have devastated low-lying areas (à la 'Lucifer's Hammer'). The combined effects would have been disastrous.

The changes were rapid; instantaneous in geological terms. The majority of species died out in a few short years. Apart from the initial destruction, it is thought there were two related reasons for the mass extinctions. Many animals starved to death and those that did survive had irretrievably scrambled breeding cycles. These are both directly related to the meteor impact. The rise in temperature in the Atlantic Ocean was enough to break the self-supporting ecology of the food-chain. Starting at the bottom, it killed off micro-organisms. It ended at the top with predators dying of starvation.

The climate of the Earth was also disrupted. Scientists believe this was the final, fatal blow to the limited number of survivors of any of the larger species. The majority of large animals now have fixed seasons for mating. Disrupt the seasons and the reproductive cycle is also disrupted. Apply this reasoning to dinosaurs, and we can see their extinction was as total and as rapid as it was because they were unable to effectively reproduce. The creatures that survived to repopulate the Earth had a body mass of 25 kg or less and a reproductive system that avoided a fixed mating cycle. Randy little beasts, like the modern-day mice, voles and Homo Sapiens, etc., who breed nearly any time the inclination strikes them.

There is a lesson in all this, but it doesn't enable us to answer the vital question. Should the same thing happen again, who will be the survivors: The environmentally adapted ~~Homo~~ Sapiens, mice rabbits and voles; or only those arch-survivors, the cockroaches?

---

## THE SWEDISH AFFAIR: A Madge Yules Mystery

-----A Sort Of Con Report from Mr Warner-----

*Miss Maud had rung with an urgent message - it was scrambled on the memopad in big red letters. "Mad Sci-Fi conventioners on Rampage!" it shouted.*

*"A job for the Z-Team," thought Madge and called out for her two trusty aides to ready the trusty fiat for a voyage north.*

*In moments Mary Klone and Mike Hell were in position in the Fanbuster Fiat, Mary nervously revving the engine in anticipation of the night's action. Leaving the trusty hound Francois Truffaut to guard the Yules' secret HQ, the Z-Team roared northward in search of trouble with a capital F.*

*"Fans...huh!" Madge spat out the word - not liking the taste of it in her mouth.*

*"Fen," Mike corrected - being more au fait with the perverted argot of the*

sci-fi clans.

"Hmmmph!" hummed Madge, not caring to discuss Finnish grammar. It had been quite some months since the last big convocation of these underworld devotees of speculative lies. Perhaps they might have matured this time - grown less violent, less drunken, less argumentative - more friendly even.

The Z-Team shouldered through the door of Miss Maud's respectable Private Hotel and headed up the stairs to where the heinous cations of the maleficent fans would be in full swing.

Suddenly the dim wood-panelled passage they were in opened into what in normal circumstances would have been a normal hotel TV lounge. However - here were members and criminal associates of that elite of the fanfiends - the Swankon Eleven ConCom!

"Piss off!" said a disaffected voice from deep within an armchair. "You're not invited."

Then it became obvious to Madge's educated mind - this was not only a naughty gathering - this was the secret ConCom Cocktail Party! Recumbent ConCom crime bosses furtively sipped reeking 'cocktails' as they lounged and hung on the words of a strangely accented being in their midst. Through the murky fog of sweat and ego steam the Z-Team could make out the features of the grand figure of a famous author. It was no less than Caroline J Cherryh - perpetrator of many non-mainstream fictions and a person of known skiffy associations.

Madge paused to exchange a few words with an associate of hers who happened to be present - he was a behemoth-like policeman who had been converted to the cause.

"Piss off!" the voice came again from the armchair. "You're not wanted here."

"Psst -- this way," the voice of Carey Handfield, Finnish double agent, beckoned them into the relative safety of a private Finnish boudoir. In they went, to escape whatever awful fate befell those who did not "Piss off". The Z-Team watched in amazement as a cohort of ne'er-do-wells filed into the room for a discussion of crimes past and future. These were the reviled Eastern States Fan Mafia - perpetrators of many sci-fi cons - some even bigger than Swankon!

Worry creased Madge's brow. Why were these denizens of fandom conversing amiably with the fan-busting Z-Team? "Maybe our disguises are a little too good," thought Madge. "They're mistaking us - horrible though - for real fan." We're in for an interesting weekend, thought the Z-Team to themselves....

Well actually that's all just romantic bullshit. That was just Thursday night, apparently before the con had officially started.

A month or two before the con there had been some wrangling over whether Erik should get a friend of his to DJ the Masquerade for \$150 or whether I should do it for considerably less. "Yeah, sure - no problem," I said, neglecting to remember that I am one of the least organised people I know. (Outside of work - there, I'm fine.) So far too late, a week ahead of the con, I'd actually booked a DJ desk, which just happened to be too big for Mark's car and had to be carried for two incredibly long blocks to Miss Maud's. It took two long hours of public servant lunchtime to get that desk shifted less than a few hundred metres but we did it, at the expense of a dodgy back and some crimped fingers. Lots of borrowing eventually garnered me enough popular material for DJ type record playing.

As Roger Weddall, Peter Burns and ASMS had slanshacked at our place the night before, it was a little more brothel-like than normal on Thursday, but we somehow got organised for the pre-con foray aforementioned. That ancient fannish disease - poverty - meant that we were commuting to and from the con each day. It was not until Friday that I made a spur of the moment descision to buy a weekend membership for the con, as I wasn't sure how much I wanted to see.

It has become standard operating procedure (S.O.P. for you D&Ders) for me to roomparty until the wee hours and sleep until circa midday so I always miss out on a good percentage of the program. I'm damned if I'll miss out on a good roomparty though. There couldn't have been many I didn't participate in at some stage over the weekend. As usual my memories of the con are fragmented and full of gaps which people subsequently fill with accusations and embarrassing reminiscences of their own. Certain things certainly did happen though. The Masquerade/Cabaret on Saturday was a bit scratchy, mostly loads of technical problems like incompatible equipment, jury-rigged lights and mikes and just plain bloody gremlins. The costumes were OK but then I've never quite liked the idea of Masquerades; remind me to tell you about it over a drink sometime.

The incredibly pared-down remnants of Slippery Jim and the Ratettes, Dave Luckett, Ian Nichols and myself had practised for months before so that we could play a short bracket during the Masquerade. On a last minute whim we called ourselves the Rail Barons, which was appropriate for we are all probably better Rail Baron players than we are instrumentalists. We stumbled and lumbered through our set - aided by Gina Goddard for an encore. Somebody commented that we need some rhythm accompaniment - and in retrospect I agree. That's something we'll have to look at before we play again. After the Masquerade I was to wear my DJ hat. Despite the aforesaid technical problems I enjoyed the first hour or so of the job, though it tended to drag a bit toward the end. I was a fairly hot and tired little boy by the time I hit the roomparties but they were nonetheless good.

Of the roomparties I remember best the filksinging and the film production parties. C J Cherryh, despite throat problems, kept her twelve string strumming busily and her quavery voice going long into the night, and I admire her fortitude. Others of us occasionally contributed to the best of our respective abilities. So far as the film production discussion goes, eventually, after much silliness, I think we came up with 'The Return of the Magnificent Seven Fen Meets Anti-Fan' or something similar as the proposed title for a new 'Perth in 1994' film. This has since caused some conflict but the original birthplace roomparty was fabulous, with silly ideas flowing thick and fast.

A few photographs of ~~the merriment of the~~ weekend are in my possession but I am keen to see others to jog my memory. Who got a decent shot of Justin's drawn-on tummy? Or other such marvellous moments?

I was disappointed by the lack of a real dead-dog party and the post-con cocktail party was quite frankly a rip-off. The attendants couldn't have recognised a cocktail if it was introduced to them - and the drinks there were, were not cheap.

The best part of the convention must have been the fact that I was for a whole weekend amongst people I know and love. There was no-one there whom I could actively dislike, it was just a gathering of friends with very little politics. (but then I wasn't involved with the ConCom.) Conventions would be heavenly if some poor bastard didn't have to organise them and be responsible for every minor disaster and the resultant personal rifts. My congratulations

# BOB SHAW: FORUM & AGAINST

---

Herein we reprint various responses to Mark Loney's article 'Shaw Things: The Women in BobShaw's SF', which appeared in The Space Wastrel 2/2. Firstly we print a letter received from Bob Shaw in reply to Mark's article, Mark's reply to the letter and lastly, some excerpts from LoCs commenting on the original article. We reprint the text of Bob's letter in full, excepting a postscript.

---

Many thanks for the copy of TSW 2. I enjoyed all of it, but human frailty -- plus a shorage of time -- leads me to comment solely on the article about my own work, especially as most of the comments therein are based on ignorance.

I refer in the first instance to the comment that a 'misogynistic view of women is endemic to Bob Shaw's fiction'. That remark is followed by the odd and enigmatic statement that 'Five novels span the years 1969 to 1983 for Bob Shaw'. Does the latter mean that Mark Loney is unaware that I have published nineteen novels and three collections of short stories? Or does it mean that he has selected five books because in some way they support his case, and would prefer a newcomer to the field to be kept in the dark about the others?

Either way, I am entitled to challenge his critical stance, his apparent claim to be presenting an overview of my work. Many times throughout the article he purports to be commenting on 'all' my fiction, but readers of TSW should reflect on the fact that he dealt with only five pieces out of more than eighty published works and make up their own minds about his degree of competence or credibility.

This kind of biased selectivity is a device which he seems well on the way to perfecting, because at the beginning of the article he almost convinced me that I was guilty as accused! He quotes part of a sentence from the first chapter of the US edition of ORBITSVILLE DEPARTURE in which the hero is thinking about his wife: "It was good that she was self-willed and self-reliant, but -- the thought refused to be dismissed -- how much better everything would have been..." The implication is that in the unquoted remainder of the sentence Dallen opines that everything would have been better if his wife had not been self-willed and self-reliant. Alarmed at the mere notion of having written such a thing, I dashed to the brag shelf, looked up the relevant passage and saw that the rest of the sentence was: "...had they been going to Earth together, sharing all the new experiences the journey had to offer."

I ask you! Is that misogynistic? If anything, the portrayal of a man longing for the company of his wife on a voyage so that they could share the new experiences is quite the reverse of misogynistic, but it shows you that Mark Loney is not above cynically doctoring my text to try proving his point. He even goes on to use the same half-sentence as evidence that the 'worlds portrayed by Bob Shaw are jejunely sexist'.

(Literary sidelight: Mark goes on a bit about the fact that quite a few of my male protagonists had names beginning with G. I'm not quite sure why that should weigh on his mind, but in case anybody gets the idea that there is some subtle significance in it, let me explain how it came about. At the very early

stages of plotting a story I use single letters to represent the various characters. The hero always appears as G -- abbreviation of Good Guy -- and when it comes time to give him a full name I tend to stick with the initial.)

Mark proceeds to say that the nasty character of Elizabeth Lindstrom in ORBITSVILLE is the logical extension of ideas about women that are present to some degree in 'all Bob Shaw's fiction' and that she can't have been somebody I invented for the individual requirements of the book. I underlined the 'all' in that quote as a reminder of this particular critic's dubious credentials; but he is right about my not having invented Elizabeth Lindstrom specially for ORBITSVILLE. I didn't invent her at all! I worked in the same office as the real-life Elizabeth for several years and every detail of her physical aspect and character, including the passing of handwritten dirty jokes, was straight reportage. It is a rule of mine not to transplant a real person bodily into a book, but this person was such a writer's delight that I fear I got carried away. And in case Mark should say it is significant that I selected a female nasty for that sort of treatment, I chose an equally dreadful male nasty from the same office and made him into the awful Don Spain in THE PEACE MACHINE. A couple of the Sunday paper critics complimented me on that characterisation, and it's odd to think that the original will end his days without ever realising he has been immortalised in print.

I think the nub of Mark's problem is revealed in his comment that Elizabeth 'does not exactly offer a positive role model for the young female reader'. My God! What sort of books does he usually read? Does he think that modern novelists should write Victorian morality tales? Does he think that young female SF readers need my guidance in the conduct of their lives?

The point is that none of my characters is meant to be a role model for anybody. My characters do not symbolise social groups or schools of thought or political movements. They are individuals -- nothing more, nothing less. I know women who, although fully aware of modern feminism, actually enjoy being at home and raising children. They are free to do so as far as I'm concerned. I'll go on putting an occasional one of them into my stories, and I certainly wouldn't -- as Mark does on my behalf -- classify them as dummies because of their preference. I have to admit that the description of Jane Wason in her

I have to admit that the description of Jane Wason in her dress like a film of gloss paint -- quoted from OTHER DAYS, OTHER EYES -- is over the top and I would no longer consider writing in that particular way. (That was sixteen years ago, however, at a time when many authors were consciously trying to demonstrate that SF was not to be regarded as children's literature, and one method was to put in dashes of explicit sex.) A minor point in passing, to do with accuracy: Mark says that Jane is wearing that dress when she and Garrod meet. In fact, when they meet she is wearing nothing more provocative than an 'oatmeal suit'.

As the article goes on the statements in it become more sweeping and progressively wilder. For example: 'It is worth noting that the only attractive wives in Bob Shaw's writing exist as computer generated fantasies.' That truly incredible statement was concocted to bolster Mark's ultimate conclusion that in my books all the heroes' wives are 'fat, dumb and sneaky' and also 'not sexual'.

The thing which intrigues me most about all of the above is that I have had similar attacks from mirror images of Mark Loney, people who have read only a handful of the fourteen other books -- the ones which don't exist in Mark's literary universe -- and who have castigated me for 'always' portraying the wife



as being too intelligent for the husband, too well educated, too domineering, too ready to use her sexuality to control a man who is emotionally and sexually in thrall to her.

Look, for example, at the wives/female protagonists in ONE MILLION TOMORROWS, THE GROUND ZERO MAN (reissued as THE PEACE MACHINE), A WREATH OF STARS and DAGGER OF THE MIND. Those women are characterised as being slim, beautiful, clever and complicated -- though there is more to them than just a list of attributes. They also have unfading sexual allure, and in many cases the husband's fictional problems arise from the fact that he is hopelessly and irrevocably in love with his wife, even after many years of sometimes-stormy marriage. How does that square with the conclusion Mark reached after having read 'all' of my fiction?

Then there are other books, such as MEDUSA'S CHILDREN and THE CERES SOLUTION, in which the leading characters are women who exist as strong, resourceful, fully autonomous individuals far outside our Earth-bound concepts of marriage and husband-wife relationships. And stories like 'Crossing The Line' for which I have been criticised in fanzines for showing family life and marriage as too cosy and harmonious....

Mark also makes a great play of the fact that when there is an 'other woman' in my stories she is young, attractive, unattached and available to the hero. Perhaps I take too simplistic a view of these matters, but isn't it usually through having these attributes that a woman gets to be an 'other woman'? I find it hard to visualise a man or woman who becomes dissatisfied with his or her spouse and turns to somebody who is aged, unattractive, locked in marriage and unavailable.

I could go on and on, but I have learned that one cannot win arguments of this kind. Mark sounds to me like the sort of critic who is capable of saying, "Aha! These other books only prove my point! Shaw realised he was revealing his true views about women and tried to cover up by appearing to swing the other way."

The truth of the matter is that I have no views about 'women' -- because to do so would be an even greater denial of individuality than believing in national characteristics. As is the case with men, each woman is a unique character and deserves to be treated as such. What I do have, and it may be something to do with my Irish background and Celtic ancestry, is an instinctive and faintly mystical respect for women. When I'm seated in company and a woman joins the group I still find myself getting to my feet to greet her, even though today that can be regarded as a crass sexist insult, but that's leading on to a different subject....

I'll finish this letter with a second literary side-light. When I first began writing and was faced with the problem of putting characters into my stories I made a conscious policy decision about females. Women are not inferior to men in any way and must be given equal rights. They are unique individuals and therefore, I reasoned, should be portrayed with a great a range of human virtues and defects as male characters. A writer who invariably portrayed women in a flattering, approving or even a neutral light would be just as guilty of sexism as the worst misogynist.

Was I wrong?

-- Bob Shaw, 66 Knutsford Road, Grappenhall, Warrington, Cheshire WA4 2PB ----

-- Mark Loney Replies -- During my years of study at the Western Australian Institute of Technology, in what was then the School of English and is now the School of Communication & Cultural Studies, I, along with my fellow students, was told again and again that the worst crime that could be committed in the writing of an essay, a crime for which dire retribution was promised should it ever be committed, was that of plagiarism. The theft of the ideas of another scholar, for that is how use without acknowledgment is considered, was seen to be far more heinous a crime than non-attendance at tutorials, handing in work late or even being unable to spell and punctuate correctly.

Luckily Bob Shaw has not accused me of plagiarism - but he has accused me of matters almost as serious. After acknowledging one criticism as correct, as I have already done so in a private letter to him, I feel obliged to defend myself against all other charges of *biased selectivity, cynically doctoring (the) text* and so on. I was, of course, at fault for not making clear throughout my essay in TSW 2/2 that I was discussing five book length works by an author who has published four to five times that many titles. I haven't read Medusa's Children and The Ceres Solution (though I intend to rectify the situation - I'm intrigued by Bob's claims for them), but find it interesting that another book Bob claimed in his defence, A Wreath Of Stars, I had short-listed for discussion in 'Shawthings' but dropped in the second and later drafts because of length considerations. And on the subject of length, I should also have made it clear that a two thousand word essay about five specific works is not the place where conclusions are drawn about all the published works of an author; even if those five works form a significant percentage of the published total. I do, however, stand by the conclusions I came to about those five books and the way they represent women.

I also stand by my use of part of a sentence from the first chapter of Orbitsville Departure, a sentence that Bob completes in his letter to show that I was "not above cynically doctoring (the) text to try proving (my) point". Completing the sentence does not, to my mind, change the implication that is so clearly present in the partial quote I originally used. When I was writing 'Shawthings', I decided against using the complete sentence because to do so would have necessitated further explanation (the significance of the trip to Earth, why Cona Dallen had refused to go and so on) in an essay that I had a strict size limit on. Using the partial quote allowed me to make the point I wanted to much more economically without, I think, withholding any important information from the readers. Having now learnt the risk of being penny wise and pound foolish in essays, what follows is a longer examination of the passage in which Garry Dallen does opine that everything would have been better if his wife had not been self-willed and self-reliant.

Orbitsville Departure opens with Garry Dallen and his wife Cona at an aperture on the inside surface of Orbitsville, a decidedly enigmatic structure built by an unknown race to englobe a star, that provides a truly enormous living area for whatever race discovers it. Garry is about to leave for Earth, now nearly abandoned as the majority of the human race has migrated to Orbitsville, but Cona has decided to stay on Orbitsville with their new born son. Cona is a professional historian, while Garry is a member of the civil service who is transferring to Earth for promotional reasons.

Her overt reason for not accompanying him had been that Mikel was too young for the journey and the drastic change of climate, but Dallen suspected otherwise and his pride was hurt. He knew that she was reluctant to leave her ailing father, and also that - as a professional historian - she was deeply committed to her current book on Orbitsville's Judean settlements.

That passage is on page seven of my DAW edition of Orbitsville Departure. On page nine is the sentence that I quoted in part in 'Shawthings' and that Bob quotes in full in his letter. In that sentence, the narrator is letting us know what Garry Dallen thinks about Cona in relation to her refusal to accompany him. Everything would have been better if only Cona had been going to Earth with him. She is not going to Earth with him because she is self-willed and self-reliant - and does not see her best interests being served by going there. I submit that it is not far-fetched to draw the conclusion that Garry Dallen is, by implication, thinking that it would be much better if Cona Dallen was not self-willed and self-reliant. If A then not-B. If not-A then B.

Bob defends the character of Elizabeth Lindstrom in Orbitsville on the grounds that he, "didn't invent her at all". He simply transposed an individual from real life into his fictional world, and what can the criticism be of that? I think that the argument is self-evidently made of straw. At the risk of pointing out the obvious, I doubt that the office in which they met was the corporate headquarters of a multi-planetary organisation devoted to the exploration and colonisation of space. I similarly doubt that the real life model of Elizabeth Lindstrom was the President of anything except perhaps her local sewing club. And if it was true that "she was the richest person who had ever lived, and so far above the law that she had been known to kill out of sheer petulance", then I think it might have been an idea to report her to the local constabulary and Inland Revenue before writing her into a book. But the nub of my criticism in 'Shawthings' was not that Elizabeth Lindstrom, in isolation, was a nasty female character who could lead a whole generation of young women astray. Rather it was that she was the culmination of a group of attitudes towards female characters that can be found in the published works of Bob Shaw as early as 1969 and as late as 1983. The observation was that there was a large group of unsympathetic female characters that could be seen to have common traits and patterns of behaviour.... ....and that sympathetic female characters were, to say the least, thin on the ground.

Nor can it be said "that characters do not symbolise". That assertion runs counter to the myriad of modern literary and linguistic theories - whatever else they disagree about, they stand united on that point. Simply by writing about "individuals - nothing more, nothing less" Bob is reflecting the ideology that has underpinned and informed the novel (and other prose fiction) since its first stirrings in the seventeen hundreds. Our culture places supreme importance on the individual experience, and articulates that importance through, among other things, the novel. And in the same way the novel articulates the individual experience, it articulates other cultural values; sexual roles, political ideologies, the nature of work and so on.

-- Harry Warner, Jnr Comments -----

The case against Bob Shaw seemed quite serious when I first read the article about his female characters. But then I started to think about the females in the novels and plays and movies of other good writers, and I realised that the dowdy or nasty wife and the attractive other woman is one of the dozen or so basic gimmicks of plots everywhere. Then I thought about all the writers and playwrights who have done the same thing in reverse: depicted a husband as ugly or bad or dull and tempted his wife with a handsome virile, intelligent other man like ~~the~~ Clark Gable. This convinced me all the more that Bob isn't doing anything unique or significant in his reliance on this particular method of getting the plot to move forward. There has been so much ink spilt over feminism lately that people notice it when women are involved in stories being published nowadays.

-- Mark Loney Replies -- The problem is, as Harry so rightly points out, after you've gone through the texts and discovered all those criticisable attitudes and values - so what? It is perfectly true that criticism much the same as that I levelled at Bob could be levelled at the vast majority of writers, dead or alive. As I once remarked to a tutor, feminist criticism often resembles shooting at tin ducks with a sub-machine gun. The reason I levelled it at Bob was outlined in the opening and closing paragraphs of 'Shawthings'. His visit to Australia for AussieCon Two led me to brushing up on an author I had wholeheartedly enjoyed in the mid to late seventies - and discovering a different response in the middle of the eighties. The thrust of my personal musings, once again dealt with far too briefly, was on the way I had changed - and whether knowledge of that change meant that any criticism I did make was based on far too easily shifted sand.

-- Frank Macskasy, Jnr Comments -----

Mark's article on the women in Bob Shaw's novel made thoughtful reading, and I think I'll be having another (closer) look at his books. I wonder though; is there any significance in the fact that Shaw writes about beautiful, sexy, unattached females and unsexy, unintelligent, plain wives?

But dammit if his books aren't good reading. They are. His ideas are interesting; characterisation believable; and he tells a good tale. A pity that his female characters seem to be stereotypes.

-- Mark Loney Replies -- Frank comes exactly to the point when he talks about good reading. Yes, Bob Shaw has excellent ideas. Slow glass alone would be enough to warrant that statement. His characterisations (whatever I think of them on a subjective level) are well drawn and he has a craftsman's skill in the telling of his stories. But I no longer find that enough to guarantee myself a good read. Let me illustrate what I mean by taking an example from another writer. A month or so ago I was reading the Dean McLaughlin collection Hawk Among The Sparrows. The last story in it was 'The Brotherhood of Keepers'. It was quite a competently told effort, not award material but definitely worth some attention, that I was enjoying until the following sentence leapt off the page and struck me in the forehead (figuratively speaking).

He wished he were a woman, or a child, so he could retreat into the weakness of frustrated tears.

I don't like the values that that sentence expresses. In fact I find it quite offensive. I don't see anything terrible or demeaning about men crying and I certainly don't think that crying by women or children is necessarily a sign of frustrated weakness. Key sentences like that colour the whole text as far as I'm concerned. I know other people read right over a comment like the one above. I was talking about Bob Shaw's work in conversation before writing 'Shawthings' and was challenged by another fan about what I was saying. We had both read a lot of Bob Shaw and had quite different reactions to the same books. He thought the ideas were great, the characters well-drawn and the plots excellent. He also thought that criticism or analysis stopped there. I think it can go a little further.

---

#### THE SWEDISH AFFAIR

and condolences go to all members of the ConCom no matter how well or badly they did their job; I think it's a challenge to run the distance.

I was, (as per usual, perfectly well disorganised on my own thank you and I enjoyed myself a lot. Thank you.

# LOST IN SPACE *urgh!*

---

Letters are edited by Michelle. Editorial comments - with the name of the 'speaker' - have been interpolated into the letters this time. I know this is an editorial mode which is not universally popular and I hope no-one is offended by it. There's one WAHT this issue:- Greg Egan, who writes to Julian, rather amazed to discover that they went to school together. Well, Greg, add another coincidence - Mark tells me that he went to university with you! For a state larger than many (most?) countries, Western Australia is a very small place.

---

James Styles: 9 Tyson Street, Richmond, VIC, 3121.

---

RESCON is an interesting idea, but I feel the major international aspect of a RESCON would be usurped by the actual WORLDCON of that year anyway. It is still more appropriate for the Rest of the World to try to ensure that the WORLDCON becomes truly THE WORLD SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION. I know the difficulties that face this assumption are illustrated by the voting might of US fandom at World Science Fiction Society (WSFS) Business Sessions and the desire for the majority of fans to have the WorldCon near home. The NASFiC might be a toothless beast but I believe the NASFiC will always be more relevant than a RESCON, mainly since more fen reside in North America. This is an Australian's opinion and I will solicit and await opinion from overseas fen before letting my ideas become more concrete on this matter.

*Michelle:* Basically I agree with you, James, but I don't see your arguments as a reason not to have a ResCon; rather they put it in perspective. ResCon would always be secondary in importance to WorldCon and that's fine by me. WorldCon and even NASFiC are larger Cons than I'd like to attend.

Mr Warner drinks OP rum and Cointreau cocktails before retiring at night. Perhaps this illustrates his need to write from a dictionary. However, us plebs could do without his 'somatizing' 'micturition'. Jules asks for suggestions from loccers - I have one - perhaps he could lend more of his musical collection to the dreaded Ian Nichols, who could use his warm car experience to warp them.

*Mr Warner:* Some of us are genteel enough to know how to mix cocktails, though OP and Cointreau may be a bit 'heavy' for milder souls such as yourself, James - and being genteel, I use 'somatizing' and 'micturition' rather than 'fucking boring' and 'pissing'.

*Michelle:* Well, I think you missed your audience there, Jules.

I must say that I agree with Frank Macskasy Jnr's comment on SDI. I find the most unethical thing about SDI is the immense cost involved, in relation to the many other things that the money could be spent on. Although I'm the ultimate greenie I still fail to swallow the necessity of SDI for ultimate conservation. Besides SDI is aesthetically displeasing.

---

Rob Gerrand: 863 Hampton Street, Brighton, VIC, 3186.

---

Mr Warner needs to de-parenthesise his prose. I know it is cute and folksy to drop in and out of sentences, mid-idea - it can often hide the fact that there

-----LoCt In Space: Rob Gerrand-----

is no idea - but ultimately it is not effective, no matter whether you are trying to be witty or wise. It is difficult to be either while being self-indulgent like that. But, and this is the reason I'm proffering you this impertinence, if one can chop through the broth and fuddle, Mr Warner does have some interesting things to say, and some good ways of saying them. Give your writing respect, Mr Warner; you won't lose readers by taking it more seriously, which is not to say more solemnly.

*Mr Warner: I must admit to developing ideas tangentially so that the original concept is often lost or undeveloped in substance. This is probably a legacy of my Goon Show/Monty Python/Molesworth affection. Just a gentle reminder often gets me back on the track.*

I enjoyed very much Dave Luckett on Jack Vance's Rhialto The Marvellous. I too am fascinated by most of Vance's writing. Dave put forward some points that I certainly had not considered before. His article finishes too abruptly, however: What is it that Vance is saying about human beings that saves him from being a mere stylist (whatever that is)? What does Dave think Vance is saying, full stop? I'm interested in his view.

I also liked Ian Nichols' piece on Chateau d'Yquem. In principle, he is quite right to extoll noble rot, and Chateau d'Yquem as a noble exemplar of it - one indeed that is worth sacrificing one's virginity for; even worth fraudulently pretending to still have one's virginity if that can ensure more tastings (besides, it is much more fun to re-enact virginity loss than actually to lose it).

Where I quibble with Ian, however, is with his implication that Chateau d'Yquem is non-pareil. I would suggest that there is a wide range of Victorian noble rot whites, any of which can beat the pants off the venerable Chateau d'Yquem, not to mention off avid virgins.

*Mr Warner: I can smell an argument brewing! (...With light buttered toast vapors, a honeyed cling and a soft, lingering back-palate finish.)*

And, finally, concerning Michelle's splendid idea for a ResCon. Why not? And again, why not? Or how about a RestCon?

*Michelle: Yeah, technically I agree with your spelling. But ResCon's so much easier to pronounce... I'm glad you enjoyed Dave's article on Vance's Rhialto. Prior to publishing this issue, Dave hadn't seen your comment and I don't know if he intends to write anything further on Vance. I hope so, as I also am intrigued and delighted by the works of Jack Vance.*

-----  
Jane Tisell: 6/64 Studley Park Road, Kew, VIC, 3101.  
-----

The main reason for this letter is to support Michelle's idea for ResCon. I'm not sure if it has been thought of before; but now seems to be an appropriate time to bruit the idea about again, especially with the reverberations of AussieCon 2 still ringing in Australian fandom's ears. I heard various theories for why Australia won the '85 bid, one of which was 'why not let the poor sods have it, they've been trying hard'. I somehow think pity is not a good grounding for WorldCon, however. If Ms Muijsert's idea had been in force and we'd won a bid for ResCon, surely we'd all have had much more fun!

Michelle: I'll admit that I have often had the same thought about AussieCon 2. Still I did have a darned good time and thoroughly enjoyed meeting lots of Northern Hemisphere type fan. It's rather sad to think it'll be probably another decade til we have the same sort of chance again. Sigh.

P.S. Out of curiosity - why do the men have the appellations but Michelle is Michelle. I mean I know Michelle is Michelle but....

Michelle: They're pretentious and I'm not? My last name's too hard to pronounce? Of course it could be that they were not long out of high school when they first started doing TSW and boys will be boys.

Mr Warner: Actually Mr Loney and I refer to each other using the honorific as a mark of respect, whereas on the other hand, Michelle's just a woman. (Boom!)

Michelle: Well, that tactful and eloquent masculine statement says it all!

-----  
Harry J N Andruschak, P O Box 606, La Canada-Flintridge, California, 91011, USA  
-----

I think the idea of ResCon is silly. What is a fan in the U.K., for example, supposed to do. Pay money to go to ResCon when it may be cheaper to go to WorldCon? Most countries now have some sort of Con in August for those unable to make the WorldCon.

Even here in the U.S.A., more and more Cons are coming into existence over Labor Day weekend to give those unable to afford going to a WorldCon elsewhere in the U.S.A. (we are a spread-out nation) something to do. NASFiC was just a logical outgrowth of the idea. It is also a recognition that USA fans out-number the rest of the world.

Of course  
I don't like killing  
people - but it's  
a viable alternative!



I think we should just stick to small cons all over the world for those unable to attend the WorldCon or NASFiC.

Michelle: Hmmm... let's take this one point at a time. ResCon is supposed to be an alternative for those who can't afford to or don't want to go to WorldCon or who'd like to visit a country

other than the U.S.A. So of course if it was cheaper to go to WorldCon in the U.S.A. that's where your U.K. fan would go (providing they wanted to). I wasn't thinking of making ResCon compulsory....

Your statement that most countries have some sort of Con in August for those unable to make WorldCon is, I am afraid, untrue. Most countries don't. At best you might find half a dozen countries that do and when last I checked there were more than a dozen countries in the world... even the fannish world. Anyway, let's say we have a Con in Australia in August in place of WorldCon. Fine. NatCons attract at best 6 to 10 non-Australian's; this year's attracted precisely 2, last year's attracted 0. We like to have foreign fan here - it's great! But



-----LoCt In Space: Harry Andruschak-----

when we don't have WorldCon we just don't have the drawcard. And I think U.K. fen and many European fen would make the same complaint.

It is a little superfluous to point out to an Australian fan that the U.S.A. is a spread-out place. According to my Encyclopaedia the U.S.A. has a population of over 200 million people and an area of 9,363,404 square kilometres. Australia has an area of 7,704,441 square kilometres which house 16 million people. Which then is the more spread-out? To get it right in perspective, the State I live in, Western Australia, has a population of 1.25 million (1 million of whom live in the capital city, Perth) and an area of 2,527,632 square kilometres. By contrast Texas, where everything is bigger, has a land area of 692,407 square kilometres and a population in excess of 13 million.

The point of this geography lesson is that your letter betrays a woeful lack of knowledge about, and a disregard for, things outside the U.S.A. I feel that you have explained and endorsed the situation in the U.S.A. admirably but it's not the same elsewhere. Likewise, you have every right to object to the concept of ResCon, however before attempting logical argument against the concept it might be an idea to check out the true international scene.

-----  
Frank Macskay, Jnr: P O Box 27274, Wellington 1, Aotearoa.  
-----

Perhaps the only way to ensure that WorldCons are truly international, is to try to internationalise the attitudes of American fen. Americans are seemingly quite parochial (the world ends at the eastern and western seabords...) and it is this attitude which must be corrected. A strong, international fandom might be a good counter to this - especially if we can pour this Internationalist propaganda into the U.S. through fanzines, LoCs, etc.

Mr Warner: It is easier for both the U.K. and the U.S. to be parochial as they can exist as self-contained fannish communities whereas we in Australia and New Zealand being few in number and widely spread, feel compelled to reach out via fanzines and touch the rest of the world. A few Statesiders and Brits already know that we are not just 'hicks from the sticks' - we just need to spread the good words.

Michelle: Actually, despite my comments above to Harry, I don't particularly agree that U.S. fen are all that parochial. They certainly seem to be willing to go to WorldCons in places other than the U.S.A. these days - there were plenty at AussieCon, there were in excess of 100 pre-supporting ConSpiracy and the rumour is Netherlands 1990 too is getting the support it deserves Stateside. But generally I would like international fandom to be stronger and will do my best to help it any way possible. I think the advent of a three Continent zine (Fuck The Tories) is an excellent sign.

-----  
Harry Warner, Jnr: 423 Summit Ave, Hagerstown, Maryland, 21740, U.S.A  
-----

Since I don't go to cons very often I can't pose as an expert on reasons why a ResCon would work or wouldn't work. From my ignorance, I can venture the belief that it seems like a reasonable idea. But I can't help thinking about how trivial an event led to this whole continuing trouble with worldcon domination and sites and so on. By chance, the first big convention in the United States was planned for New York City while a world's fair was in progress there. So planners decided to call it a world convention and linked the two world events together in advance publicity. If that first convention had been held in another

year or another city, it wouldn't have been called a worldcon; nobody expected fans from foreign countries to make a trip to a fan convention at a time when the Depression was still a problem and commercial air travel was skimpy. It would have been called a United States convention or a national convention or something less grandiose than a world convention. And then decades of disputes over why a worldcon is almost always held in the United States and related problems would never have turned up. The honest thing to do in the late 1980s is to rename it as the United StatesCon, hold it in this nation every year, and start up some sort of genuine worldcon with a global rotation pattern much along the lines of ResCon. But that will never happen I'm afraid.

*Michelle:* Now, that's an interesting idea...

I'm afraid Mr Warner wouldn't believe it if he saw a list of the records his northerly namesake has most recently acquired. I'm interested mostly in the kind of music that is called classical or serious or good or longhair although none of those designations is exactly right. I suppose my worst musical experiences wouldn't be too significant to rock enthusiasts, either. The live disaster I remember best was a performance of Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony by the Hagerstown Symphony Orchestra about ten years ago. I think a tape of it exists and if I ever get hold of it, I'm certain I'll be able to sell it to a recording company as a party recording for musical highbrows. The most awful recording I've acquired recently is the one entitled Classical Barbra, the one on which Barbra Streisand sang classical music. I would never pay full price for it but I came across a used copy for 59¢ and it has brightened my gloomy days for several weeks. I don't think Barbra can sing popular music very well, but this record is something special in the way of ignorant vocalizing and bad taste.

*Mr Warner:* I can sympathise; I also own a few records because they are so unbelievably awful, a prime example being Betty, Helen and Dorothy Wiggin, a godawful trio from New Hampshire who call themselves 'The Shaggs' and who recorded a whole LP despite a total lack of musical skill or talent.

Did you hear  
Swordtail's dead?

How do you know?

Ah, well, it was all  
for the best. He wasn't  
in very good health.

He died, didn't he?

I have been blaspheming in various fanzines recently by stating in letter columns that I didn't read this or that article about the delights of alcoholic beverages. I'm too disturbed about all the tragedies and miseries that drinking has brought to fans in recent years to find pleasure in that sort of material. However, I did read Ian Nichols' article to the end. I even found a specialized kind of pleasure in the article, in the sense that it dealt with such expensive beverages that any fans drank under the article's influence wouldn't be able to afford very much consumption and therefore would be less imperilled than those who yield to propaganda for cheap beer or free whiskey at con bidding parties.



-----LoCt In Space: Harry Warner, Jnr-----

*Mr Warner: One is here tempted to quote from that delightful Edwardian ditty, "have some Madeira m'dear". (Cryptic aside: "Hist, what voice in yonder bunker breaks? -- 'Tis the gruff castrato of ----- 'El Locketto' roundelaying a round lady".... "I have a small cask of it here....")*

*Michelle: ??? There's a definite cryptic aside to Jules' character. Anyway, Harry, I hope this doesn't mean that we've upset you with our rather crass article on beer swilling. The misery of alcoholism is to me a very real spectre, having had a drinking 'problem' in my teens myself. We are all too flippant about the dark side of 'social' drinking. Sigh, again.*

-----  
John Newman: P O Box 189, Prahran, VIC, 3181.  
-----

Thank you for TSW 2/2. I know I have been graced with this zine in the past, but I'm damn sure I made more sense of this one than the previous.

One of us has changed. Maybe both. I wish I had caught the SDI ish (sorry, John, teething problems with the mailing list), just so I knew what had been said. It never ceases to amaze me that the Americans can go on convincing themselves that engaging in an arms race is a peaceful activity. I found Harry Warner's letter illustrative in this case because it points out so clearly how folk like to 'get down to details' before they have made sense of the generalities.

Let me explain what I mean. Harry says good things like 'in my ignorance, I suspect no layman can be sure...' and puts himself at the mercy of the 'experts' when deciding SDI's feasibility. However, by the time he has pitched the discussion at this level he has accepted that SDI is a good thing (if it works)!

Sure, I'm not necessarily qualified to say "Yes, so many thousand laser battle stations can shoot down all the expected warheads", or anything like that. I am however qualified to point out, as is any citizen concerned about the future of the world, that all talk of 'Ultimate Defence' has been a pile of nonsense because SDI is a defence against only one kind of attack! I, or any other person with a modicum of common sense and no technical knowledge of weapons systems, as qualified to say 'Hey, this is wool being pulled over my eyes! You guys are selling me a story to justify a continuing military budget!'

Of course the Russians are concerned about SDI. It is the means by which the US military will buy themselves a meal ticket into the next century, with a mandate to both make space an active part of the US arsenal, and to ensure that their weapons technology is as up to date as possible. The sky is not the limit any more. (I don't know if I'm repeating anyone here....)

*Mr Loney: There were lots of reasons behind the push for SDI. A technological 'fix' to a political problem can always appear attractive. Particularly when that technological fix is going to mean a lot of money...*

*But from what I can tell by reading the popular press (as I'm no longer on the Astronautical Society Management Committee I don't have access to all those primary information sources any more), a lot of influential people have begun to realise how much setting up an operational SDI would cost and the research program is coming under increasing funding pressure. The string of recent NASA and USAF space command disasters, as well as the growing opposition from the scientific community, wouldn't have helped either.*

*I expect SDI to continue under Reagan, albeit in a much smaller form than originally announced, but I don't expect it to survive the arrival of the next President except in token form.*

-----LoCt In Space: John Newman-----

*Hopefully the basic R&D that will be done will have its uses in other, more productive, fields. I could be too optimistic - but as always; time will tell.*

I reckon the best bit of the ish was Brian Forté's letter. I particularly like the idea of fandom in yhiddish!!

*Mr Warner: Don't ask me, I'm just a goy. Frankly, I think the man's talking out of his tuchis.*

-----  
Brian Earl Brown: 11675 Beaconsfield, Detroit, MI, 48224, USA.  
-----

The Space Wastrel continues its strange flirtation with - normalacy. It's an unlikely, but successful approach. Mr Loney continues to write well written and carefully argued serious articles. His piece on the women in BobShaw's fiction shows that one can be sercon without being boring. I'm also impressed with his last paragraph which adamantly refuses to condemn.

Ian Nichols claims that most people's taste in wine is either infantile or execrable. I'm in a third position that Ian doesn't consider. That of no taste at all for wine. I like it best when it's drowned in 4 parts concentrated fruit juice. Everything else reminds me too forcibly of those medicines Mom tried to force down me as a child. I'd rather drink beer than wine and rather a soft drink over beer. Guess that means I'm not a normal fan.

Michelle's ResCon is an idea. I'm not sure if its time has come or come and gone, but it's definitely an idea. Personally, I think it's time to drop the pretension that the worldcon is a world SF convention. Better to just admit what it's been all along - the North American NATCON! To Hell with overseas bids. To Hell with all worldcons for that matter.

Oh well. Keep up the good work.

-----  
*And on that rather positive note (?) we draw nearly to the close of issue 3. As Mark has mentioned earlier in the zine, I'm looking for material on rats - don't ask why - for future issues. It does appear that next issue will be a sercon issue and, though we basically have sufficient material to go to print, if anyone has anything serious they'd like to say, send it in.*

Mark has also said that the official stance of this zine is Irwin Hirsch for GUFF. Well, that's right, but speaking as a New Zealander, I'd just like to mention Tim Jones to you. Tim is a write-in candidate. He's a thoroughly nice guy, who does a very good zine. While we know that Tim hasn't a hope of winning GUFF (it's a very strong field and, yes, they are all nice people, too), any publicity Tim might get from this GUFF race can only be good for him. If for no other reason than that some New Zealand fan would like the rest of the world to know that there is a New Zealand fandom. 'Nuff said.

We are still looking for more artwork. In particular we would like some fillos to break the LoCCoL up a bit. Craig, our resident artist, is a busy fellow and likes to have some time left over from doing TSW illos for doing illos for other Aussie zines. We are sympathetic to his point of view.

We hope you've enjoyed this issue. I've had a good time putting it together and experimenting a bit with layout. Any opinions on the current look would be valued.

See you next time (unless there's a red cross on your mailing label, that is!).

# The SPACE WASTREL

