

THYME TEN/ELEVEN

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For a few months now, we've been planning a special issue of THYME, one which would attempt to encompass the sphere of fannish activities in Australia in 1981. The issue you're holding in your hands right now is it. Within, you will find articles on the Australian fanzine scene, Australian conventions, a summary of events in 1981, and as much more as we can fit in.

But before introducing the first of our articles, let me reiterate that plea that must be so familiar to regular THYME readers: how about subscribing? This issue is going to as many people as we can find addresses for, in order to remind them of our existence, and, we hope of our value. A fandom that is to achieve some sort of unity (as it must for endeavours like the Melbourne in '85 bid) needs an organ through which it can communicate, both with itself and with fandom in other countries. Although we are glad to contribute the work necessary, we would be glad of increased financial support. Paper, postage, sundry expenses - a loathsome burden financially.

But the cry for filthy lucre is not our only plea: the lifeblood of any fanzine is contributions, and this is especially so in the case of a newszine that is attempting to be current and topical. Rumours, gossip, con reports, club news, convention information, feuds, COA's - all is welcome. Just be sure to tell us which bits are DNQ.

Without further ado, let us wish you a happy and fannish 1982. And now - the issue:

AUSTRALIAN FANZINES IN 1981 - YAWN

by Leigh Edmonds

Australian fanzines in 1981 were fairly uninteresting. The line-up was good in theory but lacked the application.

The odd thing is that you'd expect people who are producing fanzines to do so because they like doing it, and to therefore do so to the best of their ability, but this appears not to be the case. The interesting question is "why?", but I can think of no real answer.

A quick look around Australian fandom would indicate that, with the level of fanac in Sydney, there might be some good fanzines coming from that fan

centre. Unfortunately, this is not the case; though Jack Herman has produced a couple of interesting fanzines this year. It is perhaps the level of social interaction in Sydney fandom which has resulted in its poor showing in fanzines - who has time to produce a fanzine when there is something happening every week, and who wants to interact with fans by post when they can interact in real time?

The other great influence on Sydney fandom is the local apa, APPLESAUCE, which absorbs such a large amount of fannish energy. Apart from producing about a hundred pages a month, the apa also gives its members a different idea of what a fanzine might be than the sort of idea one might get if brought up on a diet of genzines or British fanzines. This means that a fanzine like RHUBARB demonstrates, as do most apazines, little or no editorial wit or discretion - as a result it must be one of the most remarkably uninteresting fanzines ever to be published for general circulation in Australia. Also from Sydney comes the Sydney Science Fiction Foundation fanzine FORERUNNER, which has lost much of its authoritative nature and become much more personable since the change of editorship from Jack Herman to Shayne McCormack.

But if things are poor in Sydney, they are not much better in Melbourne, which is the home of the old guard in Australia. Only Irwin Hirsh/Andrew Brown, Mervyn Binns and Bruce Gillespie still seem to be publishing. SIKANDER started with considerable promise but seems to have lost a sense of purpose and now meanders. Mervyn Binns still keeps on publishing the news, without much style but at least with some energy. Irwin and Andrew have been plugging along now for some time and Bruce keeps on doing what Bruce has been doing for the last ten years or so. There is not, as there once might have been, a central "theme" to Melbourne fanzines, no current of fannish drive or understanding which, at previous times, has united Melbourne faneds.

From the West the stream of small fanzines seems to have declined at last, with only Seth Lockwood still keeping the flame. The only voice we hear regularly from South Australia is the almost irrepressible Marc Ortlieb - who began the year so well with a couple of excellent issues of Q36, but who has been strangely silent after his overseas experiences.

Meanwhile, Canberra is putting in a bid to become the fan publishing capital of Australia. Jean Weber's WEBER WOMAN'S WREVENGE is a Sydney style fanzine (with all the advantages and faults of that school), Neville Angove publishes slick looking semi-professional fanzines, and there is, of course, ORNITHOPUER (showing its Melbourne origins and being, in my opinion, the best fanzine published in Australia - I have some modicum of self esteem).

There are, of course, several other fanzines being published but, in summary, it appears that 1981 was a fairly uneventful year for fanzines in Australia. For no accountable reason, there seems to be no "zip" in most Australian fanzines and there appears to be no improvement in sight. It seems that very few people are interested in actually writing well for fanzines, the style is generally personal and uninspired. The large majority of fanzines published in Australia in 1981 seemed to be intended to do no more than remind the reader that the editor exists: there is no real attempt to edify or entertain the reader, just an

attempt to fill in time and fill up paper. I personally find it all rather dull.

To make matters worse, I see no reason why Australian fanzines should get better in 1982. Unless some charismatic figure looms to lead Australian faneds in some new and glorious direction, things should continue as before. Not, of course, that that would be a totally good thing. One of the strengths of Australian fanzines has been that they have plodded along, throwing up a TOUCHSTONE, a SCYTHOP, an OSIRIS or a Q36 occasionally. And who knows, maybe 1982 will be the year in which another fanzine reaches the standards set by the best Australian fanzines of the past.

My awards for fanzine achievement in 1981 (if I were to give any) would be:

Best fanzine - SF COMMENTARY

(Since I'm no great fan of sercon writing, I surprise myself by writing this. However, Bruce really does do a good job, and he has been at it so long now that he and his fanzine meld well, so that the sercon pill is often surrounded by the most personable and entertaining sugar coating. Besides, Bruce publishes Uncle George at his best and that alone would be worth the price of admission.)

Best writer - Marc Ortlieb

(Well, he certainly is the most consistently inventive, entertaining and versatile of the current crop of Australian fan writers. Other good writers such as David Grigg, John Foyster and Leanne Frahm do not appear often enough to get the nod.)

Best fan artist - no award

(Neither Marilyn Pride or Chris Johnston have appeared in fanzines often enough in 1981 and although there are other artists around, none are good enough to compare with these two in imagination, style or execution. Meanwhile, over the Tasman...)

Best other - Jack Herman

(This only gives me an opportunity to note the influence that Jack has had on Australian fanzines. I am no great fan of the didactic style which he carries through, but he does it so well. It's a pity that others who have followed him lack his intelligence, understanding and facility with words.)

Worst fanzine

Worst writer

Worst artist

(No names - no pack drill.)

Editorial note: waving the awesome banner of editorial privilege, I'll comment on a couple of things in Leigh's piece. The reason for Marc Ortlieb's strange silence following his return from overseas has now become readily apparent - the awesome 70 page trip report, also known as Q36G. The amount of effort (and money) which must have gone into this still stuns me - and rather embarasses me. GRUNDOON 2 ? Huh ?

As for the lack of appearances by Chris Johnston in Australian fanzines during 1981 - Chris is now a very hard working commercial artist, and I'm inclined to think he has little time for fan art these days. To some extent, the same may be true for Marilyn Pride, who also lives by her earnings as an artist.

With the rest of Leigh's piece, I concur. AB.

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* THYME'S FAN *
* OF THE YEAR *

When we first chose the name THYME for our fanzine, we were inspired not so much by a love of herbs as by the homonymic qualities of the word. We're sure you've all come across that large American news magazine with a similar sounding title; and thus, you will know that it has the habit, annually, of selecting some person whose activities have had a profound effect on the macro community known as the world: their "Man of the Year".

Meanwhile, back in the micro community known as Australian fandom, we thought it might be a good idea if we nominated some person whose efforts have had a profound effect on our fannish lives: THYME's "Fan of the Year". To comment on our selection, here's Peter Toluzzi:

So THYME are giving a "Fan Of The Year" award. I could quibble about the precedents being set by Our Humble Editors - as arbiters of the public taste, can we now look forward to savage editorials, "State Of The NatCon" reports, etc. ? And how will their rivals, NEWSWEAK, stage their bid for increased popularity ?

Regardless, I believe this a worthwhile innovation, both for the sake of recognition and perhaps to generate discussion. Perhaps next year we shall see some nominations...?

So, without further preamble, the Fan Of The Year for 1981 is Jean Weber.

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I presume that the Editors will tell us the reasons for their selections; my role is to tell you a bit more about Jean herself.

I first met Jean at Eastercon 79 in Melbourne. Anyone who asks me about Varley, feminism, Applesauce, and massage within the first two minutes of our meeting is a friend for life ! Jean appeared on a panel dicussing feminism and SF at that convention (the panel was chaired by Christine Ashby and included Helen Swift, Valma Brown, Adrienne Losin, and Marc

Ortlieb) which was generally considered a highlight of Eastercon. A month or so later she joined Applesauce (and later Anzapa), and quickly injected a variety of interesting discussion topics. Some were slanted towards her feminist beliefs: rape, relationships and their varying formats, female writers of SF, etc. But her interests are very wide-ranging indeed - she also initiated discussions on such diverse topics as attitudes toward work, verbal vs. non-verbal thinking, and selfishness (or 'self-interest'). She has instigated a lot of introspection and communication in Applesauce - though to be fair, the time was ripe: writers such as Sally Underwood (now Beasely) and Helen Swift were also actively contributing around that period.

Jean, now a naturalised Aussie (yay team !), was born and raised in the USA (if you ask her which state, she replies "When ?"). From this vantage point she has been able to highlight some cultural and attitudinal differences in a very personal way, while at the same time contributing to the strengthening of fannish ties across the Pacific. And if I had to venture a guess as to why she's been so successful on all these levels, I would single out one factor above all others: her personality. It's usually difficult, if not impossible, to separate the medium from the message; Jean's friendliness, sincerity, forthrightness, and sheer humanity are such as to make it very difficult not to listen to what she says and give it serious consideration.

I was sitting in the hotel foyer at Unicon VI, talking with Jean and Marc Ortlieb, and feeling somewhat nostalgic. We reminisced about Aussiecon, which had been The First Time for each of us. Wasn't it grand... and Swancon 5, a few months away, was to be the fifth anniversary. Someone really should do something...

Jean's not perfect. For one thing, she is nowhere near as wily at dodging work as such seasoned buck-passers as Marc or myself. Four months later we were presented with The Aussiecon Memorial Fanzine (Volume 1), the best nostalgia-trip many of us have had for ages - and a great boost to the 83 bid as well. This was followed by Volume 2, and then WEBER WOMAN'S WREVENGE, which has rapidly become a fascinating and stimulating genzine - evidenced by the great letter column it boasts, one of the best to be found in any Australian genzine.

Jean has been attending conventions all over Australia for the last few years; she is largely responsible for the rebirth of Canberra fandom, culminating in their first convention for many a year, Circulation One. She is also an aspiring writer of SF - she won the Swancon LitComp, received an Honourable Mention at Nucon, and her first professional sale, "Troubleshooter", appeared in FUTURISTIC TALES in September this year. The story grew out of ACCESS, a sort of workshop-by-mail organised by Peter Rhodes and centred around the Canberra Writers (SF) Co-Op. Jean has contributed greatly to Access: material, constructive criticism, direction...

Well, I haven't told you much about Jean Hollis Weber, the person - no summary of activities and contributions can really do that. If you want to know more, you'll have to meet Jean... and I urge you to do so, for that is a very worthwhile (and eye-opening) experience indeed. Whatever their reasons, I applaud the Editors of THYME on their choice of Fan of The Year for 1981.

THE OTHER EDITOR SPEAKS: In selecting Jean Weber as our "Fan of the Year", we have managed to give recognition to all facets of SF fandom, rather than turning the spotlight on just one of the forms of activity to be found in our microcosm. During 1981, Jean Weber made major contributions as a genzine publisher, apa member, and convention and club organiser.

The first issue of Jean's fanzine WEBER WOMAN'S WREVENGE appeared in early 1981 and before the year was out, the fourth issue saw the light of day. Jean's efforts, while not reaching the level of Perfect Fanzine, have managed to produce a fanzine that ranks among the best for 1981. What WWW lacks in appearance, Jean makes up with regularity, consistency, and, above all, a new set of subject matter for Australian fanzines. Feminism and human relationships are topics that have not previously been greatly covered in Australian fanzines, and Jean covers them in an urbane, mature manner. Jean has also been one of the more reliable and prolific contributors to other fanzines, with a steady supply of letters of comment and articles. In addition, Jean this year produced the 2nd volume of the Aussiecon Memorial Fanzine, which, while it didn't reach the heights of the first volume, was a very nice follow-up.

We can't comment to any great extent on Jean's apa contributions in 1981, as neither Andrew or I were involved very much in ANZAPA or Applesauce last year. Nor can we comment on the success of her convention and club organising activities in Canberra. Yet for all these activities, the reports we've received have been uniformly good, as indeed they tend to be for any of Jean's activities (except those involving large bottles of Bundaberg Overproof Rum, perhaps). We feel no hesitation in naming Jean Weber as our Fan of the Year, 1981.

-- Irwin Hirsh

Thank you, Irwin. And now, from someone who deserves the title of THYME's Contributor of the Year, comes the following consumer's guide to Australian conventions, 1981.

THE CONS OF YESTERYEAR

by Judith Hanna

"Let's not have a whimper,
Let's have a bloody good cry,
And always remember the longer you live,
The sooner you bloody well die."

None of that hypocritically pseudo-impartial judgematical preamble about what makes a perfect convention: who goes to cons to praise them ? No, let's get stuck straight into that good old fannish pastime of whinging about them. After all, 1981 certainly gave us plenty and varied cons to complain about.

Lost in the Mists: the first event of the season, MEDVENTION II was held in the gian white wedding-cake Hydro-Majestic Hotel at Medlow Bath with its magnificent views across the Megalong Valley all blotted out, and was not organised jointly by Eric (Half-a-case-of-gelig-nite) Lindsay and Peter (Toots) Toluzzi. Not only the scenery but also my memories of events there are all fogged out. Had ol' Gelly-baby Lindsay managed to get around to publishing the Medvention non-programme book which set out the superbly original array of non-events (compiled by Jack Herman and myself) not offered to occupy the weekend, I could refer to that to refresh my memory. Not having a programme is definitely cheating, since it cuts out such a major source of grumbles, and how is anyone to enjoy themselves with nothing to grumble about ? Even the food was superb. The one programmed non-non-event was, however, definitely atrocious: a non-talent quest hosted by Terry Frost. Leading contenders were Marc (the Fence) Griffen, Mark (Troll) White, both reciters of verse and worse, a chorus-line which included Herman, Whiley and Taubman, but the runaway winner was me with yet worse verse. Suspicion that the prize, a bottle of Bundy (Rough !) O.P., might be poisoned brought forth a heart-warming display of fannish unselfishness: a panel of tasters, Jean Weber prominent among them, tested all its contents most thoroughly before I was permitted to ingest a drop. At breakfast next morning, while Ken Ozanne continued his dastardly attempts to build up a fortune by usury in toast, the tasting panel agreed that their suspicions had been justified - there had definitely been something rum about that rum. The closing moments of MEDVENTION mutated into a Contortion whereat the last lingering attendees tied themselves into intricate knots to which performance those enslaved by the Space Invaders remained sublimely oblivious. Then we pulled their plugs...

Enough of this Silliness: Congoing is, as any sensible person must realise, insane, expensive and a total waste of time. Fancy spending all that money in order to attend a programme of which one disapproves, to rent a bed in which one hardly gets to sleep, and to ignore a mob of strangers fixated on SF-offshoots of which one thoroughly disapproves. The idea's ridiculous ! 1981 was the year I resolved to give up all this conventional fannish lunacy in favour of a saner and more economical life-style. As a token gesture towards this resflution, I managed to stay away from Merv Binns' CINECON, held as the traditional Melbourne Eastercon. But had I been there, I would have been thoroughly disgruntled by the fact that its programme was devoted entirely to films. But no doubt the media-freaks enjoyed it...

Fresh Blood: NUCON, organised largely by neos - the University of New South Wales Science Fiction Society - with a programme aimed specifically to attract neos, survives in my memory as a convention unsure of its own identity and therefore lacking that nebulous something that might best be called character. The programme's one

success was the Masquerade, which was a costume party rather than a competitive parade. Its greatest lowlight was the exclusive special preview of Russell's ALTERED STATES; perhaps one should not blame the committee for the quality of that film, but since when did fandom temper grumbling with mercy? From the predominance of fannish items ('Neo-fan Introduction', 'Just-a-minute'; both items recycled from the programme of Syncon) and the dearth of serious discussions of SF (only Larry Niven's GOH speech, one panel on Magic on the Monday morning when both audience and panel were noticeably worse for wear) it would appear that what they were trying to attract neos to was fandom: NUCON seemed to be attempting a recruitment drive for that amorphously social aggregate unified only by its members' addiction to the congoing habit. Since most of the committee were either non-fans or neos with no clear of the ethos of fandom, such a goal stood little chance of success. But for established fans set in the habit of staying away from programme items whether of serious or fannish nature in favour of sitting about in elitist clumps unfavourably comparing the form of the current event with what had become enshrined in nostalgia as 'the good old days', NUCON's out-of-its-depth identity-crisis offered unparalleled scope for the exercise of keenly honed critical faculties.

Serconism Rampant: ADVENTION, the 1981 National Convention, last of that ilk now that New Zealand has nudged us into Australasianism, was the first Adelaide convention I've attended. It proved to be even more solidly serious than Melbourne cons are wont to be - thus the far-flung colonies ape even to excess the manners of the metropolis to which they look for guidance - and drew forth particularly from those who do not waste their time attending such much criticism of the 'heaviness' of its multitude of tals and panels. An efficient and experienced committee ensured that these both started and ended on time. But application of this efficiency to the Masquerade became a heavy-handed over-organisation which squashed the vital spirit of fannish frivolity out of both audience and participants. The spectacle of a Masquerade is as much, if not more, in the dramatic presentation of character as in the parading of costumes. Allowing some informal mingling of audience and participants, as has become usual in Sydney and Perth conventions, helps everyone enter into the spirit of the event. Good Lord, dressing up and such mummery is done for fun and entertainment - it's not meant to be taken seriously. The presentation of Rob McGough's Dune Show, however, laboured under no such misplaced seriousness. The programme as a whole suffered from climactic problems which drove out many, myself included, who might otherwise have caught more of the meaty sercon stuff. But an atmosphere that when not opaque with eye-stinging pea-souper cigarette smoke was swept by icy gales, though it might have made GUFF-winner Joseph Nicholas feel at home, didn't make for comfortable listening. One can, however, only feel grateful that the committee didn't extend its hospitable efforts to the lengths of importing a tornado or two in a similar effort to reproduce the native habitat of DUFF-winner Joyce Scrivner and her accompaniment, the luscious Mr. Lien

Academic Wankcon: or "The ANU Conference on Speculative Literature: The Australian Context" was even more solidly sercon than ADVENTION had attempted to be. Its success in actually achieving what ADVENTION had attempted was due not only to the uniformly high quality

of the papers delivered by, among others, George Turner, Van Ikin and Bruce Gillespie, but also to the fact that the audience was prepared to, and did, listen with respect to the programmed speakers. Such unusual behaviour may be attributed in part to the fact that this academic conference attracted only those prepared to take SF seriously, in part to the smaller numbers attending allowing the building up of rapport between the speaker and the audience, a rapport which sparked during question-time, and in part to the absence of alternative areas of comfortable seating to which one might escape to indulge in the customary gossipy grumbling. The absence of any vestige of the "sub-cultural cringe" by which fans habitually consign themselves to a genristic ghetto was noticable; this was perhaps because of the emphasis on writing which though shaped by 'the speculative impulse', into exploration of an alternative condition, is nonetheless an expression of the writer's perception of his or her own cultural milieu, i.e. on SF as a branch of literature rather than as merely escapist entertainment. After a heavy day of critical history of Australian SF, the rarefied intellectual riff-raff relaxed with a rousing party at Jean Weber's whereat I did not go to sleep but did sit on Lee Harding's knee while he explained how he'd rather be at home writing. Some woke up for next day's programme, some snored through the second, less cogent, day's play.

Much Mummery up the Cross: The trouble with being a committee member, I found, is not that one doesn't enjoy the convention, but that one can't be sure that others really mean it when they tell you it was great. The trouble with reviewing a convention one was involved in organising is the virtual impossibility of disentangling the committee's rosy plans and objectives from how it actually turned out. TOLKON tried to be different: it would focus on fantasy rather than on nuts-and-bolts future prediction (and for this it was nicknamed Ludcon), it would rely on live performance rather than on mass-produced films for entertainment, and it would encourage not a passively receptive audience but rather, active participation in events. TOLKON aimed to entertain as much as to instruct, and separated the two strands in its programme: there were sercon talks and panels on fantasy literature, but it was the leavening of "playacting" - music, mime, dramatic presentation, and members' willingness to tart themselves up in non-modern costume - which formed it character. It turned out to be an exuberant convention in which the unabashedly exhibitionist performing talents of different sectors of the Sydney fan community were given full play: as well as the con-hardened veterans of the Sydney SF Foundation, the programme made room for both fantasy-role-playing and miniatures wargamers, for the medievalist-revivalist SCMA (then Society for the Current Middle Ages, now Society for Creative Anachronism) whose Medieval Fair in Hyde Park was the highlight of the weekend, and for the Tolkien Society players who presented two dramatic mini-fests of Tolkien's works. Though I didn't actually get time to sit around in corners gossiping about it, I gather that it did succeed in being both different and enjoyable.

What's a Wuzzie ? They seek it here, they seek it there, these rugger buggers called for it most lovingly throughout the watches of the night... and then there were the traffic jams, and all the takeaways were closed, and the hotel ran out of oysters and food...

there was lots of good grumbling at CIRCULATION. Not about the con itself - oh, no, that was fine, with a programme that didn't take itself so seriously as to take affront at being ignored in favour of conversational sprawling along the corridors. Perhaps it worked so well because so many fans are public servants: long addicted to apathetic inertia in the corridors of power.

The Cheap Alternative: There was going to be another Medvention - then the HydroMajestic was found to have raised its prices to match its altitude. Which priced it right out of fannish reach. At the second-last minute, WYCON, or perhaps it was STRATHVENTION, was announced - words by Peter Toluzzi, pictures by Jane Taubman. Clutching at the last tattered shreds of my sensible resolution, I actually managed, at the very last minute, to give it a miss, deciding to catch up on the grumbles afterwards: "Well, what did you do? What happened there?". "Nothing, absolutely nothing," the replies were unanimous. "How was it?" "Great, absolutely great! Superb!" Nirvana, absolute nirvana? The perfect convention at last?

The following is an attempt to note all the significant events in Australian fandom during 1981. It is rather less complete than I would like it to be (hence the apparent paucity of events in the earlier part of the year), for the reason that I couldn't find all the materials I wanted i.e. Irwin buried all the first six months of FORERUNNER somewhere in his basement and then couldn't find them again. The latter part of the year was at least adequately reported through THYME and other sources. Well, I'll try to do better for 1982 folks.

- Andrew Brown

1981: THE YEAR IN REVIEW

- January A flurry of activity from Canberra: Jean Weber produces The AussieCon Fifth Anniversary Memorial Fanzine Volume Two, and the Canberra Science Fiction Society begins to revive.
- Joyce Scrivner wins DUFF, enabling her to discover if Australia is still here.
- February Medvention II held at the Hydro Majestic Hotel, Medlow Bath. In Canberra, Jean Weber published the first issue of WEBER WOMAN's WREVENGE, and the Canberra SF Society begins holding regular meetings again.
- March Joseph Nicholas wins GUFF.
- April Merv Binns' CINECON held at Easter (17th - 21st), a con heavily oriented towards media and film SF, with GOH Robert Bloch. Rumour has it that the convention lost over five hundred dollars. Also at CINECON was Baltimore fan Lee Smoire, who impressed many fans at CINECON and over the three months of her visit to Australia.
- May John Foyster returns from New Zealand to find his house flooded.

June Advention '81, Oberoi Adelaide (6th - 8th). GoH: Frank Herbert. Australian GOH: John Ossian. Fan GOH: K. U. F. Widdershins. Guests: Joseph Nicholas (GUFF), Joyce Scrivner (GUFF). Seen by many as over-programmed, Advention did produce some good moments, such as the popular DUNE SHOW (albeit a repeat from SWANCON). Some controversial changes to the A. S. F. S. constitution were made, including a standardised (and expensive) format for the Ditmars, and the replacement of 'Australian' by 'Australasian' throughout the constitution. Justin Ackroyd wins the bid for the 1982 Australasian convention, and announces TSCHAICON.

Rumours begin to spread about a possible Melbourne in '85 Worldcon bid, should Australia in '83 fail. An alarmed Marc Ortlieb, wearing his Henry Kissinger hat, publishes THE AUSTRALIA IN '85 DISCUSSION PAPER 1.

Bruce Gillespie publishes the annual issue of SF COMMENTARY, number 62/63/64/65/66. /

July 'Speculative Fiction: The Australian Context', an academic conference held at the Australian National University, Canberra, meets with acclaim from the fans who attended. Held on the 18th to the 19th, its carefully prepared items hold the interest of the attendees more than would be the case at a normal convention.

Space Age Books holds its 10th anniversary party. Richard Faulder and David Grigg turn 30, celebrating the occasion in Canberra at the ANU conference. Andrew Brown turns 21. Derrick Ashby becomes Official Bloody Editor of ANZAPA. Roger Weddall returns from Europe. On the publication scene, THYME 1 is published, and Marc Ortlieb does THE AUSTRALIA IN '85 DISCUSSION PAPER 2, in which a letter from Irwin Hirsh confirms the existence of a embryo Melbourne in '85 bid.

August Tolkon (Unicon VII) held at the New Crest Hotel, Sydney, 21st - 24th, successfully emphasising performance in its programme. Phantastacon '81, 21st - 23rd, at the Melbourne Townhouse, appears to have been successful in its own way, attracting mostly a comics and Dungeons and Dragons audience.

Derrick Ashby is seen at a party, wearing a MELBOURNE IN '85 windcheater.

September At Denvention, Australia loses the bid for the 1983 Worldcon, by about 400 votes, despite polling the largest number of votes for any outside America bid ever recorded. The Melbourne in '85 committee swings into action as soon as the results are known, handing out flyers to Denvention attendees. The results also precipitate the announcement of Syncon '83, by an arrangement at the Advention business session where Sydney would hold the '83 national/Australasian con if Ain83 failed.

In Melbourne, the Nova Mob SF discussion group revives, with meetings at John Foyster's house.

Judith Hanna and Joyce Scrivner together concoct a rumour that Marc Ortlieb has resigned his TWAGA membership, despite heated denials from Marc.

Judith also manages to sell a story, "The Most Beautiful Girl In The World", to the Australian Women's Weekly, where it is heavily edited. Jean Weber sells her story, "Troubleshooter", to Australian semi-prozine FUTURISTIC TALES.

October Circulation One draws 86 people to the Hotel Ainslie, Canberra, on the 3rd and 4th. I have no idea how many Comicon III, the 1981 Australian Comic Convention, drew to the New Crest on the 3rd to the 5th.

Harlan Ellison was announced as Guest of Honour for Syncon '83, to howls of laughter from those who've seen him in action at American conventions. The DUFF nominations closed, leaving Derrick Ashby, Daryl Mannell, Damien Broderick and Peter Toluzzi as candidates. The Hydro Majestic hotel raises its prices, forcing the cancellation of the planned Medvention III.

November The Britain in '84 bid collapses, to the relief of many. Julia Curtis and Roy Ferguson marry.

December Wycon/Strathvention, a Medvention substitute, is held at the Strathavon Country Club, north of Sydney at Wyong, on the 5th to 6th. A very laidback relaxacon indeed.

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Awards 1981

Pat Terry Award for Humour in Science Fiction and Fantasy --
- awarded to Walt Willis

William Atheling Award for Criticism in Science Fiction or Fantasy
- awarded to George Turner

Australian Science Fiction Achievement Awards (Ditmars)

Best Novel - "The Dreaming Dragons", by Damien Broderick

Best Short Fiction - "Deus Ex Corporus", by Leanne Frahm

Best International Fiction - "Timescape", by Greg Benford

Best Fanzine - Q36, by Marc Ortlieb

Best Fan Writer - Marc Ortlieb

Best Fan Artist - Marilyn Pride

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A HANNOTATED 'AIGNA

Compiled by Andrew Brown

In October 1981, we published in THYME 6 Judith Hanna's report on Circulation, the Canberra relaxacon, though the uninitiated may have thought it was fiction from its bizarre description of the event. In November, we received a subscription from Julie Vaux. With it she included the following heart-rending plea: "Could you please translate

Judith Hanna's article back into English for the benefit of neofans ? Someone should publish a glossary of terms. What's a TWAGA, a HEFTALUMP, a Big Momma Hyde, a Porno Bunny ?". Well, we think a glossary of fannish terms is rather a larger project than we would like to tackle at the moment. But we're perfectly willing to explain some of the terms - we're always ready to do, well, just anything for one of our subscribers, honest.

Circulation - A Relaxacon

by Judith Hanna

Sounds innocent (1) enough, doesn't it ? But when we heard that it was headed by the notorious Weberwoman (2), with the infamous Tolutz Le Trek (3) (purveyor to fandom of sex, drugs, rock and roll, self-proclaimed guardian of fandom's immorality) as Mascot (4), we recognised it as an attack on fannish decency. We knew we'd have to be there.

Beiltro (5), the man from TWAGA (6), was there. We made contact (7). (That he's a MAOist (8) plant HEFTALUMP (9) knew: of course politics and morality have nothing to do with each other - but was it mere coincidence that CHOGM (10) was in Canberra that weekend ?) He seemed to have dropped from the sky impeccably clad in suit and tie: a guise (11) that would never do. "Get it off!" I told him (12). I had made the trip stowed away in the vehicle of Tolutz himself: it was a hell of a journey (13). There was bad news. Schmidt (14), who'd been infiltrating the Smithfield mob (15), had been nobbled in Syn City (16): he wouldn't be down. But the Hatter (17) was taking over their computer installations.

The forces lined up against us were formidable. Weberwoman, with Big Momma Hyde (18), her enforcer. Tolutz himself. The Syn City mob, there in force. The big, bionic Porno Bunny (19), known to us as a pusher of the Vile Evil Gooley Effluent of Malefic Insidious Toxic Effect (20). L'Edmonds (21) offering for sale pornographic fanzines. "I'll-just-blow-'em-all-up" Lindsay, hung about with a dozen kinds of booze (22); I was forced to test them all. Censoring immorality calls for such sacrifices. The Smithfield Four flashing (23) subliminal (24) images of smut across the screen. We knew what

(1) This should have been the first clue for the novice reader. Really, can any conjunction of the words 'innocent' and 'Judith Hanna' be regarded with anything but suspicion ?

(2) Jean Weber.

(3) A DUFF candidate whose initials are the same as those of pre-menstrual tension.

(4) An airport in Sydney.

(5) A backwards type.

(6) Those Who Ain't Getting Any. Not to be confused with TWIGI, Those Who Is Getting It.

(7) Say no more !

(8) Not a Chinese agent, despite your initial impression.

(9) Hanna's Evil Fan Federation Advancing Lewd Unlawful Mass Perversion.

(10) Some mundane event, now forgotten.

(11) An American fan editor with too many Hugos.

(12) See (7).

(13) There must be a shorter route, Neddy.

(14) Your guess is as good as mine.

(15) Evil media freaks.

(16) East Melbourne.

(17) I'm starting to get pretty jack of these annotations, boss.

(18) Obviously the well known transvestite S & M writer, Leigh Hydeing.

(19) An expatriate WA DUFF candidate.

(20) A very Krafty pusher.

they were up to -- nameless (25) orgies followed. Beilfro was in the thick of it. To avoid a demarcation (26) dispute, I left the sex to him, and concerned myself with other varieties (57) of immorality. Brown Valma (28) was selling Sao biscuits for Melbourne in 85. It seemed innocent enough. I took one. Too late I realised they'd been doped to trigger my were-dormouse (29) change.

When I awoke, it was all over (30). I'd been kidnapped back to Syn City by Marc the Fence (31).

But it had been worth it. We'd found out what it all meant: a plot to take over Ghod's Own Country, America - Operation DUFF (32) was its codename (33). Its motto - have a 'P' (34) for DUFF.

Don't be taken in by it.

(21) Scourge of the Skies.
(22) 12 brands of tequila.
(23) See (12).
(24) Only subliminal ?
(25) What's wrong with 'Fred' ?
(26) Groan...
(28) Well known Judith Hanna clone.
(29) What this latest masquerade is I have no idea.

(30) What exactly was all over and who it was all over remains to be found out.
(31) See (14).

(32) Down Under Fan Fund.
(33) Its real name is Bert.
(34) Possibly an obscure reference to the Beer Powered Spaceship.

I trust that the above has made things much clearer, Julie.

AND THIS TOO MUST PASS: So we come to the end of the 1981 retrospective part of this issue. We hope that you've enjoyed the above material, as well as some of our innovations, i.e. page numbers (at least some of the time) and stapling. We usually abhor the use of staples - in the words of Justin Ackroyd, "I don't think THYME should be stapled - they'd get caught when I recycled it".

So enough frivolity already, OK.. on with the news (first THYME news for 1982):

WORLDCON NEWS: On the subject of the late Britain in '84 bid, Dave Langford writes:

"Either Joe ((Nicholas. AB)) or Kevin Smith has got something wrong in the reported bit from the former. The Britain in 84 bid was a perfectly serious one, embarked upon because originator Malcolm Edwards considered that there was a chance of winning - and so did the other committee members. (I hope. Otherwise what were they doing on the bloody committee ?) The reasons for throwing in the 1984 bid were twofold. Firstly, the need to keep the bid secret before Denvention in order not to prejudice the Australian 83 bid had an unfortunate backlash in that certain lesser-known British fans, who unbeknownst to the committee were attending Denvention, promptly seized the chance to announce that since they had not been given full knowledge of the bid it was therefore (a) a bad thing and (b) a hoax. This didn't exactly make for a

good start. Secondly and more importantly, the revelation of the Australian 85 bid meant that there was a good and deserving non-US bid after all - so out of courtesy to our good Australian friends we thought it would be nice to withdraw and improve Australia's chances, as now formally announced in ANSIBLE 22. (Though I might mention that at least two committee members were a bit peeved by the lack of reciprocal courtesy in AUSTRALIAN SF NEWS, remarks like "Britain must not be allowed to win" not being all that triffically wonderful for relations.) The 'switch to 1987' towwhich Joseph refers is by no means definite - but we had to do something with the half-hour programmed slot at Novacon 11, and hence the hasty change of dates. As it turned out, that particular half-hour was squeezed off the programme for a variety of reasons. If a definite 1987 bid does emerge, I'll let you know..."

Al Fitzpatrick, our Texan correspondent, informs us that Houston has decided not to bid for the 85 Worldcon. Instead, they are bidding for the 85 North American Science Fiction Convention (NASFiC), and for the 1988 Worldcon.

Mike Glycer, in FILE 770 no. 29, refers to the Columbus in '85 bid as follows: "This is a terribly funny hoax, and a story more and more people know, but with typical fanthink I have been denied permission to print the perpetrator's story.". However, until I get more details from the States, I don't think this can be accepted at face value, despite what Mike says.

AMERICAN EXPRESS: Baltimore fan Lee Smoire, so beloved by Australian fandom, is working as a travel agent.

MORE CONVENTIONAL NEWS: Jean Weber (13 Myall St., O'Connor, ACT 2601) is organising CONOON, a relaxacon to be held on March 12th - 14th, at the Bundanoon Hotel, Bundanoon, NSW. Bundanoon is 2 hours drive south of Sydney, or you could take a train. Membership is \$5, accomodation is \$54 (two nights, with meals) or \$33 (Saturday night and meals) - or there is a camping ground nearby. All accomodation is most likely to be shared, as there are few single rooms. The con will have the use of a private function room, and a non-programme may or may not be organised. Room bookings must be made by the 26th February to ensure a room; book through Jean Weber, \$10 per person deposit.

SMOFTCON - a brief organizer's report

Sunday 24th January 1982 was Melbourne's hottest day for fourteen years, and SMOFTCON panelists found themselves competing (willingly enough) against the roar of the air conditioners. Trinity College proved to be a reasonably satisfactory venue for a relaxacon, and the 37 members - 9 of them from interstate - appeared to enjoy themselves in spite of the weather. We are a little puzzled as to why almost nobody went swimming, but we presume that the walk to the pool was too daunting.

SMOFTCON raised \$253 for the Melbourne in '85 bid, not counting T-shirt sales, and generated a lot of goodwill. The programme (this was a Melbourne-style relaxacon) was light but well-attended, and the tuck-shop was worth all the effort (special thanks to Sue Grigg). The

alternate programme was Kathryn Grigg, one month old on 23rd January and already an ornament to fandom.

We, Christine and Derrick Ashby, do not conceal that it was All Our fault, but we would like to thank a number of people for their help; Sue for the bickies, Mark Linneman for getting the swimming passes, Peter and Elizabeth Darling for sorting out T-shirts, Paul Stevens for organizing the film, Justin Ackroyd for the auction, Andrew Brown for the Hon Moonquet - most of all Malcolm Gordon and Steven Roylance for rescuing the kitchenette from Utter Darkness.

- Christine & Derrick Ashby

SMOFFCON - a brief attendee's report

The most significant thing about SMOFFCON was the bloody awful weather. After a week of bearable weather, Melbourne decided to turn out a stinker of a weekend, with the temperature climbing past 40 on the Sunday. It was the type of weather that left you suffering from heat exhaustion after a 100 yard walk. It certainly hastened the rapid demise of the cricket game planned for Sunday morning - not a totally bad thing: it saved me from having to display my total ignorance of the fundamentals of bowling, batting or fielding. It forced a very relaxed mode of operation on the convention - but then, it was supposed to be a relaxacon. It also created my favourite con happening, the Sunday night water pistol fight. Jack Herman is no slouch with a loaded water pistol, I can tell you. And watch out for Judith Hanna - she has a beguiling smile and an itchy trigger finger. Thanks go to Cathy Circosta for munitions supply.

The programme was quite entertaining. The panel on the worst science fiction of all time produced a wretched reading by Marc Ortlieb from a book called "Impact", about a meteor hitting the Sino-Soviet border and triggering World War III. The closing line was something like "Now we can raise a son without having to be afraid that he'll die in a war. Only governments cause wars, and there aren't any governments anymore!". Sure... Another good item was the film on Sunday night, "Cactus Jack", which was a bizarre live action version of a Roadrunner cartoon. Ann Margret as the Roadrunner character, Kirk Douglas as the Wiley Coyote equivalent, and Arnold Schwarzenegger as a good guy. It had everything - the villain being flattened by a boulder, the villain painting a tunnel in a mountain side only to see the good guy drive straight through, the five second mid air suspension... classic Warner brothers stuff.

Saturday night was distinguished for the traditional Melbourne convention visit to the Hon Moon for a Chinese banquet, organised by me. As good as ever - and much lychee pilfering at the end. After that, Irwin and I corrupted Rob McGough with the music of the Laughing Clowns at a local rock venue.

All in all, not a bad little domestic relaxacon: I admired its presumption. Could have done without the weather, but.

- Andrew Brown

FINIS: Remember to send in your THYME Poll form, preferably before the end of February.

THYME POLL 1982

The Thyme Poll 1982 is intended to recognise the efforts of Australian fans (and a few other people) in a number of categories in the year of 1981. (In other words, this is where you get to have your say in the New Year issue of Thyme.)

Rules: You may not nominate yourself, but you can nominate people who appeared in your fanzine/whose fanzine you appeared in, if you wish. Thyme is not eligible, but Irwin Hirsh and Andrew Brown, their other publications, etc. are.

Your choices will be kept confidential, but we will be publishing a list of those who voted: please write your name in the space provided.

The deadline for all ballots is the 20th of March, 1982. Send your ballot to either Irwin Hirsh, 279 Domain Rd, South Yarra, Victoria 3141, or Andrew Brown, 660 Swanston St, Carlton, Victoria 3053.

Mark your choices in a ranked order, and remember that the poll is for work done in 1981, not for career work.

Your name: _____

Best Fanzine

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Best Single Issue

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Best Fan Writer

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Best Fan Artist

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Best LoC Writer

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Best Article

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Favourite Typo (give details of fanzine, author, etc., please).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Event of the Year

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Non-event of the Year

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Sexiest Fan

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

And rounding out the poll, two categories that are not directly related to fandom but are of interest to your editors.

Favourite Song of 1981

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Favourite Album of 1981

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____