

Thyme:

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Don't forget, a big, silver cross next to your name means that, if you want to keep on seeing copies of this thing, you'd better DO SOMETHING!

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Just When You Thought It Was Safe To Go Back To Perth - SWANCON 9a

a con report by Craig Hilton

"If you want a good description and definition of anarchy, go no further than the Goon Show at Swancon 9a. Swancon 9a if you weren't aware of it was a convention cum birthday party for Craig Hilton (Rat artist and idiot (Eccles) extraordinaire!).

I had the dubious pleasure of being the GoH - I say dubious probably due to the fact that I was co-organiser of the event. This probably accounts for 2/3 of the anarchy!"

Julia Bateman

Don't Stop! Don't Stop!... SWANCON 9a (a microlaxacon)

"Swancon 9a?" you ask. Furthermore: "What Is It?" "Isn't it just too much of a good thing?" and "Why wasn't I invited?"

Let me set your minds at rest. Swancon 9a was the only Swancon ever to be held at the Hilton. (Fred Hilton, 42 Spon Street, East Finchley.) It was also the only Swancon not to be officially sanctioned by the official Swancon committee.

The occasion was the celebration of 1984, the Year of the Rat, and the 17th March, my 24th birthday, thus highlighting the absorbing fact that I was born in the year of the rat. A spin-off revelry was the completion of my internship, the commencement of my unemployment* and a negative result back from my blood test for syphilis. (it was a mishap with a contaminated needle, Your Honour.)

"I see - so it was nothing," you snort. "Merely a jumped-up birthday party." Felling you with a right cross, I proceed to explain that Swancon 9a came complete with a poster, programme, progress report, Guest of Honour, two panels, a quiz, a game, a Goon Show, a film, a banquet and badges for identification. (Actually, they were rats, not badgers.) In fact, it could be considered not to be a convention only in the sense that most items ran on time.

Erik Harding led a very thoughtful panel on Religion in SF, covering examples from the medium, from the real weirdos to the almost perfectly Humanistic world of Anne McCaffrey's Pern, and then discussing mythology as part of the structure of literature. Plenty of scope there for expansion in a future con.

Ranking in the quiz was pitifully neck-and-neck, there being no noticeably high score, due to the absence of Sally Beasley. However, attendance began to well up after lunch (come to think of it, so did lunch - the revenge of the Filthy Mexican Takeaways..

* Since then, alas, the Danger of Work bell has tolled, and I have been apprehended whilst hiding underneath a tea urn. ((I think that means he found a job - but then, when was the last time that you met an unemployed doctor, eh?)) ((Er, sorry Craig!))

ohhh...), for a screening of the excellent *Bladerunner*, the "Harrison Ford Always Lets 'Em Rough Him Up A Bit Before He Blows 'Em Open" show. This was preceded by "That's All There Is", a nifty, existentialist, short cartoon made by... ahem... Trevor Hilton.

Without a doubt, the highpoint of the con was the panel by Grant Stone and Julia Bateman on The Rat in SF, where it was made evident that in general rats do get very bad press. They make appearances in surprisingly many stories, ranging from the obvious - "Rat Man's Diary (alias "Willard")", "Doctor Rat", "Mrs Frisby and the Rats of NIMH" and "The Talons of Weng Chiang" - to the briefest glimpses of tails and ears in a starship's bilge. It was thoroughly researched, well presented and kept the audience spellbound.

The word game, Just A Minute, was not one used before in a con. A member from one of the two sides of three people is asked to speak for as long as possible (up to a minute) on a given subject, without hesitation, prepetition or deviation from the subject. If successfully challenged by a member of the opposing team, that challenger must then continue for the remainder of the minute, and so on - points are awarded for the longest speech and for the person talking at the minute's end.

The game itself was a riot. The Harkonnens (sally beasley, grant stone and erik harding) wiped the floor with the Atreides (julia bateman, seth lockwood and dean weatherilt). Although, when Erik, covering the subject of the *Dune* movie ("it's an interesting point that Sting is playing the lead role") was cheekily challenged by Seth on the grounds that the word "Sting" was a repetition of the word "point", Grant restored the team's honour by reeling off a solid 40 seconds' worth of systematic rattine anatomy for "Why I love rats". ("One of the best bits are their tiny, furry paws, which are soft and furry and so lovely that they're almost as lovely as their tails which, as I've said before, are so lovely and furry and delicate...") So enthralled was everyone present that not even the opposition could bring themselves to press the buzzer and stop him. Such is the result of years with a microphone and subtherapeutic lithium levels.

Amongst the banquet were gingerbread rats and rat-shaped dates with silver eyes, liquorice tails and the occasional, scattered "raisin". Ratatouille's off, dear.

Swancon 9a wound to a close with the first WA performance of "Watch This Space", possibly also the last, if sanity is to be given any value at all. It was Goonish madness, to send folks home giggling.

Conclusions from the event? It was a successful and enjoyable convention, in just the right does to fill a hiatus in the Western fannish calendar. As for the next Year of the Rat - Perth in '96, I say! □□ □□ □□ □□ □□ □□

CONVENTION UPDATE

PARANOIACON

Dates: 29th September to 1st October

Venue: El Toro Hotel, Liverpool (Sydney) (NSW)

Special Guests: Transfinite Audiovisuals (there is no actual Guest of Honour)

Mail: GPO Box 429, Sydney 2001, NSW - careful attention to the address, as in the last issue of *Thyme* a slightly incorrect address was given.

Rates: After Easter, \$25 Attending, until one week before the con, when it rises to \$35

Accommodation: rooms come with two rates: 'old' rooms \$44/night, can sleep up to four 'new' rooms \$48/night, and over 2 people there's an added charge of \$5/p.

N.B. If you want a room, be quick about it, okay?

Hucksters: a \$30 per day includes membership for one person, and table space. There is also a lock-up room for goods to be stored in overnight.

CIRCULATION 3

Dates: 30th November till 2nd December

Venue: Southside Motor Park, Canberra Avenue (near the corner of Hindmarsh Drive) ACT

This is a large caravan/camping park/motel. It offers very basic accommodation at a range of prices but it's all quite comfortable & clean. Rates may go up by \$2 from those quoted over the page, but if things work out there should also be a 10% discount for the large group. Book by sending a \$10 deposit pr room to Circulation 3 before 30th October (after that, the committee can't guarantee you a room).

Motel section (rooms with facilities, but no refrigerators): 1 person, \$22; 2 people \$27; each additional person \$5. Rooms with fridge & kitchen section, \$5 extra/night. In order to keep the group together, the convention plans to block-book a group of motel rooms. Cabins (typically converted caravans), tent sites and caravan sites are also available but if you want one of these you'll have to book it directly with the Motor Park. There is no group concession for these types of accommodation.

Food: The convention itself will be held in the function room of the Tavern on the motel site. Food and drink will be available at almost any hour from 6am (*bleah*) to 9 pm, and grog until at least midnight. The fare is fairly good pub food, at very reasonable prices - ranging from fish&chips for \$2 through to mammoth steak ((specially flown from Russia?)) for \$6. There is nothing else food-wise in the nearby area. Also, a barbecue may be organised for the Sunday....

Programming: as traditional with Circulations, the convention will be pretty relaxed.

There will be various discussion groups organised; if you'd like to lead one, write to the committee and say so. There is only one medium sized room for the whole convention, so they're not sure about the idea of a video programme. There should be something along these lines, however.

Hucksters: \$5/table for the weekend; book by 30th October to ensure you get in.

Mail: CIRCULATION 3, P.O.Box 42, Lyneham ACT 2602.

SPAWNCON - the 1985 National Australian SF Convention

Hello. We are Jerry Kaufman, winner of the 1983 Down Under Fan Fund, and Clifford R. Wind, co-founder of Western Australian fandom and occasional visitor to Australia. At Syncon '83, we won the right to hold the 1985 Australian National SF Convention. In Seattle.

You are, unless this paper has fallen into the wrong hands, someone we would like to have know about Spawncon (the '85 NatCon's nickname), perhaps even attend.

Spawncon will be held in conjunction with Norwescon, the annual Seattle regional convention. This means that the NatCon will be held the same weekend and in the same hotel as Norwescon. Norwescon will mention the NatCon in its publications, and we will mention Norwescon in ours. However, membership in one will not get you the privileges or benefits of belonging to the other. Spawncon membership will cost \$3US or A\$4, and will get you exciting benefits (just keep reading). Send cash, money orders or cheques, the latter made out to Clifford R.Wind (#206, 308 Summit E., Seattle, WA 98102, U.S.A.) (proud holder of an Australian Bank Account).

We'd like to tell you what Norwescon membership in 85 will cost, but we can't. The con committee is still working on the 84 convention. We can, however, tell you what that will cost, and thus help you plan your attendance. The con is currently charging \$25. The '85 convection will be held approximately about a week before the end of March.

Norwescon is held at the Airport Hyatt Hotel, about 15 miles from the heart of Seattle. Membership in Norwescon would get you all of its publications and entry to all official events. Since Norwescons have about 1,500 members, 100 attending professionals, 3-track programming, a Fan Room, Art Show and all sorts of things (even an Ice Cream Social), you get a lot for your money. Membership in Spawncon will get you all its publications, a nifty membership badge, and entry to its two or three programme items. Members of both Spawncon and Norwescon will get into a wonderful party that will be co-sponsored.

What sort of programming are we planning? At the moment we have some ideas, very vague, about discussions of the Australian pro publishing scene, the Aus fan scene, and the place of Ayers rock and sheep in science fiction. Of course, we'll hold a Down Under Fan Fund auction, but that will be (we hope) part of the Norwescon programme as well. In fact, we're looking for more ideas, and hope that our Australian members will flood us with them.

We also hope, fervently, that our Australian members will flood us with themselves. Usually, ten to twenty Australians make to the U.S.A. for the WorldCon; since you only have to go to Melbourne in '85, we hope you'll make Spawncon the first, or last, stop instead.

Spawn of Prophecy, the con newsletter/PR, will next come out in August. For all enquiries write to J.Kaufman, C.R.Wind, c/o NWSFS, Box 24207, Seattle WA 98124, USA.

BEST NOVEL (200)

BEST NOVELLA (58)

BEST NOVELETTE (121)

BEST SHORT STORY (230)

BEST NON FICTION BOOK (72)

BEST DRAMATIC PRESENTATION (100)

BEST PROFESSIONAL EDITOR (76)

BEST PROFESSIONAL ARTIST (156)

BEST FAN ARTIST (193)

Brad Foster
Alexis Gilliland
Joan Hanke-Woods
William Rotsler
Stu Shiffman

BEST SEMI-PROFESSIONAL MAGAZINE (52)

Fantasy Newsletter/Fantasy Review . ed. Robert Collins
Locus ed. Charles N. Brown
Science Fiction Chronicle ed. Andrew Porter
Science Fiction Review ed. Richard E. Geis
Whispers ed. Sturat David Schiff

BEST FANZINE (165)

Ansible ed. Dave Langford
File 770 ed. Mike Glycer
Holier Than Thou eds. Marty & Robbie Cantor
Izzard eds. Patrick & Theresa Nielsen-Hayden
The Philk Fee-Nom-Ee-Non . ed. Paul J. Willett

BEST FAN WRITER (165)

Richard E. Geis
 Mike Glycer
 Arthur Hlavaty
 Dave Langford
 Theresa Nielsen Hayden

JOHN W. CAMPBELL MEMORIAL AWARD for the BEST NEW WRITER (105)

Joseph H. Delaney (2nd year)
 Lisa Goldstein (2nd year)
 R. A. MacAvoy
 Warren Norwood (2nd year)
 Joel Rosenberg (2nd year)
 Sheri Tepper

Everybody knows how these things work, don't they? Only people who are members of the 42nd World SF Convention (LA Con II) may vote for the awards. This year's ballot has to be returned to the committee by the 14th of July. In an attempt to increase the number of people voting, the ballots are being sent out with postage-paid business reply envelopes, and should be out to everyone by the end of April.

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THE EUROPEAN CONNECTION

French SF Writers in accord

The professional society of French-speaking authors was launched mid-March. Initially to be called '1984', a name change was decided on when it was discovered that several other groups went by the name, for various purposes. The new name of the society is 'Infini' ("infinity") and HQ will be at the 'Ailleurs' ("elsewhere") bookshop. All official correspondence, as before (see *Thyme* #30), to Pierre-Paul Durastanti, 23 rue Belle-Isle, 12200 Villefranche de Rouergue, France. (*Shards of Babel*)

Meanwhile, for information on the French sf & fannish scene, the best way of keeping in touch is by receiving *Yellow Submarine*, the newszine (entirely en Français) produced by André-François: BP 47, F-33031 Bordeaux-Cedex, France.

For up-to-date information on the whole European fan & pro scene, however, one can't really go past *Shards of Babel*, edited by Roelof Goudriaan - Postbus 1189, 8200 BD Lelystad, the Netherlands. Available for \$4/£2.50 for a few issues, it's well worth the money; a fascinating if sometimes puzzling read. Take for example the next item, lifted body and soul from *Shards of Babel*....

CZECH FANDOM ALIVE & WELL AND LIVING AND...

by Ondřej Neff

The boom of Czech fandom is continuing. Even people deeply involved in sf are not sure how many sf clubs exist in our country at the moment. The oldest Czech sf club, of the mathematics-physics faculty of Charles University in Prague, rests as doyen and coordination centre. It has started its own newsletter, *Interkom*, as well as the regular fanzine; something I consider a luxury. Anyway, *Interkom* is a very useful gadget. It brings a lot of information, including addresses of clubs. The latest brings news of 24 new addresses, for instance.

Meanwhile, Prague fandom is facing a t-shirt schism! What is it? Well, one of the most active newcomers to Czech fandom is a certain Mr Olša. In a very short time he has become one of the leading figures of Czech fandom, and lately he came up with the idea of special t-shirts with an sf motif printed on them. Old hands took his estimated price as way too high and the idea was rejected, but his followers now accuse the others of being too conservative. On the other side, people are now trying to throw

Next on the agenda was discussion of an organisational structure for the committee of Aussiecon Two.

The Art Show was under attack again. John Foyster felt that it was under programming; therefore under his personal control and that I should have reported to him. It was at this stage that I offered to stand aside as Art Show director and do something else for Aussiecon Two. This offer was refused. John stated that he wanted me to run the Art Show. This is described in 'Minutes of Committee Meeting' QVC19 Aussiecon Two Committee APA April 15th 1984 as

'the meeting supported the previously agreed decision appointing Mandy Herriot for the Art Show'

The discussion raged on.

Then John suggested that my actions had "undermined Steph and Chris's artistic integrity." I confess I was angry. It seemed impossible to run the Art Show without spurious interference. I resigned and left the meeting.

This is described in the same QVC as

'After further discussion Mandy Herriot tendered her resignation which was accepted by the meeting with regret.'

I feel that the reporting of this incident in QVC leaves my reputation in tatters. I have never before walked out of a committee meeting. I doubt that I ever will again but I felt that the circumstances warranted drastic action. I do not regret my resignation.

I wish to apologise to Steph and Chris if I have in any way offended them.

I wish Aussiecon Two the best of health. I will attend and will no doubt enjoy a good convention but I will not work on its behalf.

Thank you Roger for publishing this intact. I appreciate the stop press at my request.

And there it might rest except that it won't because I feel that would be quite unfair to Mandy. But first I ought to state my position with regards to the committee: I am on the definite outer. My presence is not wanted, and so on and so on - so it's not as if I'm unbiased in reporting this, even though I would like to be. Oh yes, I would like to be as far removed as possible from what is turning out to be a very messy business indeed. One of the main troubles (from perhaps an organisational but certainly an emotional point of view) seems to be that the Chairman, John Foyster, has all these ideas but, as seen from Mandy's letter, he doesn't communicate them very well to the rest of the committee. I recently heard a highly placed committee member posit that John basically really would prefer to do everything himself but can't so he has to delegate to people he can't trust. Well, can he trust them? The amount of bickering that some of the committee indulges in, about John, behind his back, is astounding. It's astounding because no one appears ever to have spoken to John about it - that communication gap is a two-way thing, you know. And there's all those stupid, nasty jokes about how Aussiecon is being renamed Foystercon, and there are ones far worse than that - coming not from the great unwashed masses but from the mouths of the committee. For a group that is supposed to be working together, this is not only childish, it is stupid.

This, however, is not my particular concern. Personally I prefer for things to be kept out in the open, and this committee has excelled in secrecy. I don't know - perhaps it's dangerous for the great unwashed to know anything about how the thing is organised, but the public face of the committee has been one big blank. Everything has to be done undercover. For instance, I was told that

somehow got the idea that I was going to do an expose on all this muckraking that's been going on. expressed regret, thought maybe it wasn't such a good idea, but did bother even to mention this to me when I spoke with ? Of course not - and that's the way it's been, all down the line.

The cynical way in which the whole thing has been run so far is the thing that puzzles me most, however. One would have thought that the committee had everything going for them. The general approach seems to have been this: 'We'll tell you what to think, and meanwhile sit there and do nothing.' In the PR 1 there's the standard line that goes: we need help to run the con, so please tell us how you can help.

To which I say: nonsense! If you're an Australian, forget it. They'll let you know, not the other way round. And if they don't really want your help but for some reason they have to use you sure you'll be called up and none of the reservations mention to you but to everyone else instead. I refer in particular to, for example, the two people running the sound. I could go on in this vein, but it seems pointless/futile.

Remember how people were exhorted to join the '83 WorldCon to help vote for Aussiecon Two as the '85 WorldCon, even when there was no competition on the final ballot? Remember how suddenly, the bid won, everything went quiet and has remained that way since? Hell, they don't want too many Australians... just those already in the know, and a few visiting Americans & Europeans... "let's make this the BEST WorldCon ever" yeah, let's make it small and informal. Let's show the Americans how to run a real WorldCon....

Now there's nothing wrong with trying to do a job well, but at what price? Not at the price that is currently being paid. It stinks. Conventions are supposed to be fun, fuck it. All the bad feeling that is being caused over here, it's just not worth it. General note to the committee: stop maligning the Chairman in public - it doesn't make you look good. General note to John: John, why don't you start working with people instead of around them or through them. Get your act together.

Having said all that, I should mention that not all the committee is guilty of acting like children, only a notable few. Moreover, I expect that this little note will have but one affect: people will possibly work together to prove that what I've said isn't so. If the only effect of this piece is that I won't hear any more catty remarks about John Foyster, it will have been worth it. As for me, well, I plan on enjoying myself at the WorldCon, too. Hope to see you there. I'm sure it will be successful, & lotsa fun! Whew. Well, is anybody still reading? Well, I try to give your money's worth, y'see....

CHANGES of ADDRESS: Gerald Smith's Address for all mail is: GPO Box 429, Sydney 2001. Patrick & Teresa Nielsen Hayden now live at 75 Fairview Avenue #2-B, New York, NY 10040. Buck & Juanita Coulson now live at 2677W-500N, Hartford City, IN 47348. Marty & Robbie Cantor are at 11565 Archwood Street, North Hollywood, CA 91606-1703. ANZAPA editor Jean Weber mentions that there is currently no one on the waiting list (ie. you could probably get onto / into ANZAPA quite soon, if you wanted to) and that sample copies of a mailing are available at \$2/copy. Write to: P.O.Box 42, Lyneham ACT 2602. GUFF: when, in Thyme 32, I suggested that it was improper for Marc Ortlieb to act as temporary Guff Administrator, I assumed that everyone knew that Marc, of course, would not actually be counting votes, or anything like that. And in any case (I hesitate to labour this obvious point) I doubt that there would be any real cause for concern if he were to count them. Meanwhile, with Justin Ackroyd overseas on his Guff trip, Aussie GUFF co'ffers are already (or is that still) \$266 in the black, towards the '85 GUFF race. And that's it for now. Thanks for this issue to Roelof, Craig, Jean & Mandy (I think) AND VICTOR!

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