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## THE SF WORLD OF BEMS, SERCONS AND BNFS

REMEMBER science fiction? A few years ago it almost died of *rigor mortis*. Science, regrettably, had overtaken SF. Everything SF had been writing about for years, walks in space, moon landings and such, was really happening. There wasn't much point in writing about it any more.

Suddenly SF is going through perhaps its greatest boom ever. Melbourne has had two SF conventions this year — one in January and another at Easter. Indeed local fans are feeling so potent they are making a bid for the 1975 Worldcon, that is the world convention, the Olympic Games of SF, and Sercons (Serious Constructive Fans) and BNFS (Big Name Fans) will fly in by the plane load from Britain and the U.S.

That's hopeful dream stuff; something more remarkable happened last week. At a time when bookshops elsewhere are expiring because of rising costs, we had the opening at 314 Swanson Street of Australia's first SF shop, called Space Age Books.

The intrepid proprietor is Mervyn Binns, secretary of the Melbourne SF club, a Sercon and BNF for nigh on 20 years. Your correspondent immediately hurried around to inspect. The window was filled with rare old pulp magazines of the 'forties — "Planet," "Future," "Fantastic" and others. Most of them pictured Bems (beautiful earth maidens) being carted off or about to be ravaged by purple Venusian slime monsters, and other untidy creatures. Paul Stevens, a well-known fan, was there. He said: "Most of the covers in those days were done by Earle Bergey. He loved big round bosoms. You will notice his girls always float around in space wearing steel bras and hardly anything else — no spacesuit or helmet to hide their shape. The fellers always had to wear space-helmets. An early example of Women's Lib, I suppose."

Inside, one asked Mr. Binns how he expected to survive in the cruel competition of the book trade. "I'll specialise in science fiction and the whole nostalgia trade," he said, and explained there was a passion now for everything associated with the 'twenties and 'thirties, from Buck Rogers and Brick Bradford right through to Sexton Blake and Billy Bunter. "Here's an example," he said. "The Americans are reprinting all the old Doc Savage books." He pointed to a row of paperbacks. Doc Savage belonged to the

early thirties and was the idol of every red-blooded American boy. He was a sort of James Bond, but much stronger, tougher, more skilled and, you will be pleased to hear, he kept his sexual

passions under tighter control. The blurb on the back of one of the paperbacks reads: "To the world at large, Doc Savage is a strange, mysterious figure of glistening bronze skin and golden eyes. To his amazing co-adventurers — the five greatest brains ever assembled in one group — he is a man of superhuman strength and protean genius whose life is dedicated to the destruction of evil-doers. To his fans he is the greatest adventurer of all time."

Lee Harding, one of Australia's most successful SF writers, was there. One wondered, apart from nostalgia, what had caused the revival. "A number of things," he said, "books like James Bond have helped. And television — 'The Man From Uncle,' 'The Avengers' and various SF series. Apart from anything else the world is in such a mess, SF and fantasy are a means of escape."

One noted that old-fashioned stories about space travel were completely out. Lee Harding, who has a book about to be published in the U.S. called "A World of Shadows," said: "Recently I was writing a novel and I had a chapter which called for a trip in a spaceship. Suddenly it all seemed just too corny. I got them back on earth as quickly as possible." He says most professional writers are now dealing with social problems and their consequences, like pollution and racial confrontation. For example, "Stand on Zanzibar," by John Brunner, depicts the U.S. in the year 2000. New York and Chicago have been turned into fortress cities in a state of siege against the elements of associated violence.

SF also, one notes, is taking an interest in sex. Buck Rogers, Brick Bradford, *et alia*, always behaved with decorum, and Earle Bergey's steel-brassiered ladies never dropped their bras to man or beast, but that doesn't happen any more. They go the lot. You get fascinating stories about females being scientifically mated with outer-space creatures. There was a book on the shelves called "Sexmat." One gathered this was a story of the future—all wars and strife had disappeared. In this Elysium males over 40 years did not have to work—they were entitled to devote themselves entirely to sex and were given a constant choice of females.

Paul Stevens says the latest trend though in SF is toward mysticism, the occult and black magic. However, for those who like their SF old-fashioned, clean and well behaved, Mr. Binns will have the vintage magazines. The real classics of 30 years ago, in good condition, will sell for around \$3 a magazine. His top price for a magazine is a mint copy of "Amazing," which contains the first Buck Rogers story. Price: \$25. If you had been smart enough to buy it in 1929 you could have got it for 20 cents.

Rub the sleep  
from your eyes:  
it's Thyme #48  
the regular-as-clockwork,  
monthly Australian newszine  
with all the news that fits  
(and some that doesn't).

This issue we are  
a little late in  
going to pless ☐  
owing to a few minor technical hitches but all that is behind us now  
and it's business as usual from our office at P.O.Box 273, Fitzroy 3065.  
Why, you can ring us on (03) 486 1358. Thyme is of course available in  
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Remember, a big, colourful, silver X next to your name on the address  
label probably means that this will be your last issue unless you...

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#### SPACE AGE BOOKS TO CLOSE

After almost fifteen years of trading, that landmark of the  
Melbourne sf community 'Space Age' Books is about to close its doors.

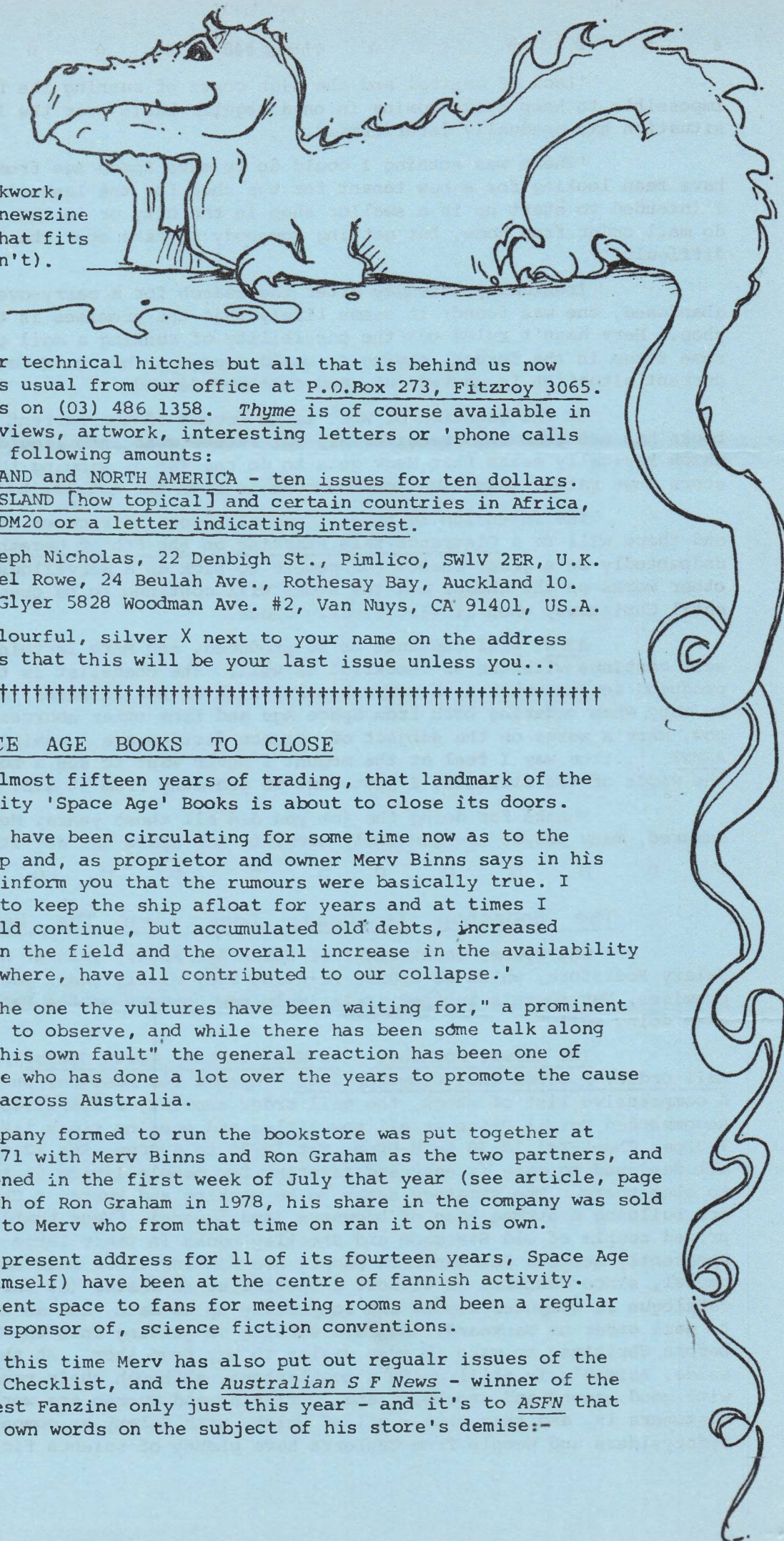
Rumours have been circulating for some time now as to the  
fortunes of the shop and, as proprietor and owner Merv Binns says in his  
ASFN, 'I regret to inform you that the rumours were basically true. I  
have been fighting to keep the ship afloat for years and at times I  
thought that we could continue, but accumulated old debts, increased  
direct opposition in the field and the overall increase in the availability  
of F&SF books everywhere, have all contributed to our collapse.'

"It's the one the vultures have been waiting for," a prominent  
local fan was heard to observe, and while there has been some talk along  
the lines of "it's his own fault" the general reaction has been one of  
sympathy for someone who has done a lot over the years to promote the cause  
of science fiction across Australia.

The company formed to run the bookstore was put together at  
the beginning of 1971 with Merv Binns and Ron Graham as the two partners, and  
the shop itself opened in the first week of July that year (see article, page  
2). After the death of Ron Graham in 1978, his share in the company was sold  
by his family back to Merv who from that time on ran it on his own.

At its present address for 11 of its fourteen years, Space Age  
Books (and Merv, himself) have been at the centre of fannish activity.  
The bookstore has lent space to fans for meeting rooms and been a regular  
advertiser of, and sponsor of, science fiction conventions.

During this time Merv has also put out regular issues of the  
Space Age Books SF Checklist, and the Australian S F News - winner of the  
Ditmar award for Best Fanzine only just this year - and it's to ASFN that  
we turn for Merv's own words on the subject of his store's demise:-



'Lack of capital and the high costs of running the business made it impossible to keep stock coming in on a regular basis over the last year and the situation has gradually deteriorated.

'There was nothing I could do to save Space Age from disaster and I have been looking for a new tenant for the shop for the last six months or more. I intended to start up in a smaller shop in the city or in the suburbs, or just do mail order from home, but getting somebody to take over the lease... proved difficult.'

Ironically, the day after the search for a carry-over tenant was abandoned, one was found; it seems likely that the premises is to become a records shop. Merv hasn't ruled out the possibility of running a mail order service at some stage in the future, saying it would depend on how he's feeling once the current situation is sorted out, and customer demand.

On the question of what is to become of the current stock, Space Age books has not gone into receivership but rather gone into liquidation, all of which basically means that Merv gets to do the job of winding the affairs of the store down rather than have someone come in from the outside to do it.

The intention is to sell off all stock to recover costs, and to this end there will be a Clearance Sale starting on the 6th of December (which will undoubtedly be a great chance for people to pick up a marvellous range of cf and other works on the cheap) and the store will continue to be open for business until Christmas, when it will finally close.

ASFN will continue to be produced, and Merv is thinking that he may well continue with the sf checklist as well. The checklist is the closest thing produced in Australia to a comprehensive list of new releases, and has been used by many when ordering both from Space Age and from other sources as well. But for now, Merv's words on the subject of science fiction are - again, we quote from ASFN: '...the way I feel at the moment I never want to see a book again and in the words of the classics, I just want to get away from it all.'

Thanks for doing the job you did all those years, Merv and rest assured, many people are genuinely sorry to see Space Age go; it's the end of an era.

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### The Bookshop Is Dead; Long Live The Bookshop

The Sydney counterpart of Space Age Books, insofar as there is one, is Galaxy Bookstore, which of course is doing very nicely thank you in larger, new premises, but there's another, relatively new concern on the North Shore that is also doing well....

The Asimov Bookshop - 61 West Street, North Sydney//Phone: (02) 957 5868//  
Mail Order: P.O.Box 122, Cremorne 2090 - opened for business on the 9th of March.  
 A comprehensive list of stock, the mail order service, a 10% discount on the Recommended Retail Price on all new titles and opening times like Tues-Wed 4:30 to 7:30pm; Thurs-Fri 12:30 to 8:00pm; Sat 10:00 to 4:00pm; Sun 12:00 to 5:00pm are all designed to make it easy and tempting for people living in the Northern Suburbs to shop there. The strategy seems to be working and Murray & Christine Brownrigg are building a strong base of browsers (and buyers). [Your humble reporter found a prized couple of old Sturgeon and Sheckley books in their large second-hand section.] Apparently quite a few Canberra people are finding their mail order facilities very useful, since Canberra is without a specialist sf dealer (at the moment). The shop's catalogue is computer-listed and completely up to date, and as well as being able to mail order on Bankcard, they are working on getting into the Viatel system/network before Christmas to make it even easier to buy from them. At the moment, all pr flak aside, Asimov's is still quite a small store, although their range is large enough with good secondhand stocks, and Christine and Murray are working hard to draw customers in, and keep them - all of which, with Galaxy as competition, means that Sydneysiders and people from Canberra have plenty of science fiction to choose from.

## ITALO CALVINO DIES

Ten days after suffering a cerebral haemorrhage, initially recovering well in a Siena hospital, Italo Calvino slipped on Tuesday the 19th of September into an irreversible coma. Arguably Europe's finest contemporary novelist, praised highly by his peers and critics alike, Calvino was 62.

Born in Cuba of Italian parents, he moved into the writing of fiction after working as a journalist for the Italian Communist Party daily newspaper *L'Unita*.

Still a productive writer at the time of his death, he leaves behind a reasonably sized body of works. His first novel, written when he was 24, was *The Path of the Spiders' Nests*, inspired by his experiences in the Italian resistance movement during World War II. He went on to pen such classics as *Cosmicomics*, winner of the Australian Ditmar Award for Best International Science Fiction; *t Zero*; *Invisible Cities*; *The Castle of Crossed Destinies*; the acclaimed triptych of short novels published in English as *Our Ancestors*; his classic anthology of *Italian*

*Folktales* and more. Winner in 1973 of the prestigious Italian literary award, the 'Premio Feltrinelli', his passing is mourned by all who knew him and read his works.

'Calvino does what very few writers can do: he describes imaginary worlds with the most extraordinary precision and beauty...'

Gore Vidal.

'Like Jorge Luis Borges and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Italo Calvino dreams perfect dreams for us.... Of the three, Calvino is the sunniest, the most variously and benignly curious about the human truth.'

John Updike.

'In that invisible city, world literature, Calvino is a grandee... Italy's best living writer.'

Susan Sontag.



Mr Calvino

## Theodore Sturgeon - Gone, But Don't Forget Him

Theodore Sturgeon died early in May this year. At Aussiecon Two, tribute was paid by writers and fans at the following panel.

Alexis Gilliland: This is the 'Theodore Sturgeon Memorial Panel', which is kind of an odd way to put it; how about... 'Friends, Australians, Countrymen, I Come To Praise Sturgeon, Not To Bury Him'... well, it's not that either, but I think it's appropriate to remember him, because Sturgeon was one of the very important influences on (modern) science fiction. He bent the field out of shape: people read Ted's writing and, whether they were writers at the time, or just aspiring writers, thought it would be nice if they could 'do' the sort of things he did.

I'd like the panellists now to briefly introduce themselves because, apart from Charlie Brown and Robert Silverberg, I haven't had a chance to meet the other two gentlemen; on the end we have....

David McDonnell: Basically, I was asked to be on the panel to talk about Mr Sturgeon from the point of view of someone who knew him only through his writing - as opposed to you people who knew him personally.

Erik Harding: When I heard that Ted had died, I rang up the committee, saying that I would like to put on such a panel as this. This had already been organised, and they asked me to appear on it.

Charles Brown: I'm the editor of *Locus* magazine... under another hat, I'm also one of the administrators of the Theodore Sturgeon Memorial Fund, which is organised to give out Short Story awards, uh... over the years.

Robert Silverberg: I knew Sturgeon personally and professionally over about a 20-25 year period - and of course knew him as a reader much longer than that.

Alexis Gilliland: I'm here moderating the panel; it's one of the things that the committee asked me to do. I write science fiction; I draw cartoons in fanzines; I've been reading for a long, long time... and whether I'm qualified or not I'm here. Anyway, supposing that we start with Bob: what about Ted Sturgeon?

R.S. The defining thing I can say about Sturgeon is that he was one of those writers that I hated to read in the early 1950's when I was getting started with my own career, because reading him was such a humbling experience, such an upsetting experience - to see what possibilities there were in the science fiction story, and to see how far an eighteen-year-old writer was from fulfilling himself. I forgave him, anyway. Sturgeon was, for a ten or fifteen year period, I think, the best science fiction writer of all. Later on, of course, he stopped writing, and for the last twenty years of his life he was just present among us but not doing very much. But somewhere between, oh, 1941 and 1955, when he was at his best, he reached a vein of poetry and visionary beauty and storytelling magic that I don't think anyone else in our field has ever matched.

He was also a charming, attractive, fascinating - infuriating, even - being. Elfin, fey, funny, diabolical, very complicated; a very interesting person who spent most of his life finding reasons not to write. It was a very slow and painful process for him. He got a great deal written, but I wish he'd written four times as much - all on the same level, of course, as his best work. But he did struggle tremendously and there were periods of his life, five or ten years, where he simply didn't get anything done, although he told you all the while that he was hard at work at something.... Ted lied a lot; that was part of his charm - and you knew that he was lying and that was even more part of his charm. I think that in fact he did not fulfill his great promise even though he wrote so well, and that's the sad part. When I looked back over his bibliography, a few months ago, when all the obituary stuff was going on, I wondered where the novels were, and I realised that in the last twenty or thirty years of his life he hadn't done much in the larger forms. The short stories were beautiful, and the novelettes... you don't have to name them; you know all the names... and then there's More Than Human which is not really a novel but which is as good as a novel needs to be, anyway, standing there like a great beacon. A couple of other book length things - The Dreaming Jewels; Some Of Your Blood (strange book) - all written between about 1950 and, oh, 1957. After that, he never tackled anything big again and I think that's sad and, now, tragic, for us.

A.K. Okay. Charlie...?

C.B. Well, I had the experience of meeting Ted when I was a teenager, and I was thoroughly bowled over because of the way he listened to what people had to say, all as equals. No matter how (in)coherent you were, or how strange, he would sit there and listen, he would smile and say something nice to you, and he would never try to walk away. He had this wh- everybody has talked about how everything Sturgeon wrote was about love, but I have to disagree with that because love is a blind sort of thing, and Sturgeon would write, rather, about the things that go wrong with people and still make you care for them; I think he was writing more about empathy than love.

A.G. There was an emotional intensity in all his writing.

C.B. I think the wonderful thing about his writing was that he could make you empathize with characters who you would normally cross the street to avoid walking alongside of - like the people in Some Of Your Blood, or Bianca's

Hands, or stuff like that: all these characters who, because he cared for them and could show you them that way, you could care for. There is a speech I have printed, in which he talks about the way he feels about things. There are some very important things in there, but the thing I remember him saying is how there is something in everybody that you can like, or love, and it is worth digging for. And Sturgeon is the only person I ever knew who claimed it was always worth digging for.

R.S. I never saw him in any way be unkind... and I don't think it was because he was bland-

C.B. Oh no, no, he was not bland at all.

R.S. - or nice, or sweet. There was actually a mean streak in Ted, which he knew about, but which he didn't allow to interfere with his actions, his interactions.

C.B. I loved Ted's writing, and I loved him as a person, but there was one thing I couldn't understand - his book reviews. He loved *every book*. [laughter all round]

R.S. The books he didn't love he didn't review. He would not hurt anyone. Ah, there were times when he wanted to - he was not immune to, to-

C.B. He even liked *publishers*.

A.G. We've dealt briefly with Sturgeon the person; it might be appropriate now to move to the image he projected. You never knew Sturgeon, David, but you read his works; what did you think of them?

D.M. Right, well; concerning the point that's just been made about the comment that Sturgeon wrote about love - the rebuttal that was made of that - I find myself at a little bit of a loss, because - if I can take a few moments of your time - what I'd like to try to do is to take you back a little way in my past, and attempt to show you why I was so incredibly devastated and in fact desolate when I was informed that Theodore Sturgeon had died, despite the fact that a) I had never met him in person, nor b) do I have anything like the depth or breadth of knowledge of his writing as is encompassed by the other members of the panel here.

Despite what's been said, I would like to start with a quote that Mr Ellison made in his introduction to Theodore Sturgeon in the anthology *Dangerous Visions*, where he made the comment that he was once talking to Sturgeon about his work and about love and it became clear - and this is Ellison's comment - 'it became clear to Sturgeon and myself that I knew virtually nothing about love, but was totally familiar with hate, while Ted knew almost nothing about hate, yet was completely conversant with love, in almost all its manifestations.'

I read my first Theodore Sturgeon story - which was in fact my first science fiction story - when I was almost 16 years old, which is very very old, but growing up in boarding schools and children's homes run by members of a catholic religious order does tend to limit somewhat one's ability to get hold of such writings.

Um, I didn't even realise it was a Theodore Sturgeon novel (or a novella, actually) because of all things the book I'd managed to smuggle in was *Alfred Hitchcock's 'Stories My Mother Never Told Me'*, Part Two, and I can't remember anything else about it, except that there was this phenomenal story in it, entitled *Some Of Your Blood*, which fortunately took up some good two thirds of the book.

The reason that this story was so significant, I think, has to be seen in the light of the fact that, a few months later, I was tricked into entering a State Psychiatric Hospital for so-called evaluation, and was then transferred to a State Mental Hospital in which they robbed me of the two years of my life between 16 and 18.

It's almost impossible, I think, to communicate to anybody the feelings of hatred, anger, betrayal, and everything else that was injected into me by this treatment. And it would have been so terribly easy for me to have spent the rest of my life in that grey void, where the only people that approached me, as far as I was concerned, were formless strangers who were trying to get close enough to me to deal me a lethal blow.

The thing that stopped me there, and I know that this is going to sound terribly pretentious, but it is actually a comment from *Some Of Your Blood*. Now I don't know how many of you have read it, and I'm not going to go through the story; the main thing is that it is basically set in the format of a psychiatric report on a patient, and there is a comment in the introduction which came back to me on numerous occasions during the years that I was incarcerated in this hospital. Again, if I can have your indulgence, I will quote briefly from it.

The introduction brings you into the psychiatrist's office and asks you to look through his folders, and there is a comment that goes:

'So perhaps the value of these folders and their secrecy lies in their ability to remind. Open one, relive it. Say here was a triumph, here is a tragedy, here is a terrible blunder for which atonement can never be made but which, because it was, will never be made again. Say here is the case which killed me though I have not yet died yet when I do I will die of it. Say here was my great insight, my inspiration; one day my book and my immortality. Say here is failure. I think it would be anyone's failure. I pray God I never discover that someone else could succeed with something, some little thing, I could have done, and did not.'

And it was these words that eventually convinced me that these people who had taken me away; who had locked me up; who had forced me to make macrame baskets when I wanted to study physics and maths; who had forced chemical substances into my body which, at best, turned me into a mindless zombie and, at worst, caused me acute physical discomfort euphemistically referred to as 'unfortunate side effects'.

These people, it was distinctly possible, were actually trying to help and to assist me.

I got out of the place; I went searching; I discovered that this book had been written by Theodore Sturgeon and I read everything of his I could get hold of, because although he may not only have spoken about love, he explained to me - he showed me - something that, up until then, in my admittedly limited experience, I refused to believe existed.

Again, I have one final quote before I finish. It is in fact taken from a story by Sturgeon called *The Graveyard Reader*, and it refers to a gentleman who was being taught how to read graves because in doing so you learn everything about the people so interred.

'I began to learn about people. I began to find out how many were afraid of the same things; afraid of being shut out; of being found out; of being unloved; unwanted; or worst of all, unneeded. I learned how flimsy were the bases of so many of their fears and how unimportant, in the long run, were the things so many of them pitifully spent their lives on. More than anything I learned how uncharacteristic of most of them were their cruelties, how excusable their stupidities; in short, how damn decent they were.

The only difference was the amount of truth. Reading a grave, you read it all: all of the truth makes a difference, but what a difference, in the way you feel about people.'

I don't want to be pretentious, I know it may sound like a wank, but I honestly feel that whatever degree of sanity, empathy, humanity and even the limited social skills I possess at this stage are, to a very large degree, attributable to Mr Sturgeon. Thank you. [spontaneous, massed applause]

R.S. I think that the passage you read from Ellison is completely wrong, and that you and your very powerful speech just now have demonstrated how completely wrong it is. I mean, where Harlan says that Sturgeon was a man, is a man, who knows everything there is to know about love, and nothing about hatred....

I think Ted would say - I know I'm going to say - that you can't know anything about love unless you know a great deal about hatred, and your own experience during those two horrible years of hatred ripening into acceptance and even a sort of love is the essential Sturgeon message. The man knew a lot about hatred and he was probably a very good hater; he transcended it.

A.G. It's true that Sturgeon was not a simple person. If he was a simple, loving person he wouldn't have been nearly as interesting, and the tension that existed in his stories, the emotional tension that we mentioned before, would have been gone, it would have been flat.

I had the opportunity to see *Some Of Your Blood* as a play when I attended 'Seacon' and I hadn't read the story beforehand. It was one of the things on the programme that I checked on - because it was by Sturgeon - but I didn't know what I was getting into - there were these two actors (professional actors from the London theatre) working with an overhead projector - it was absolutely gripping, a totally rivetting piece of theatre. I really am very glad that I've seen it. I don't know whether I'd want to go back and see it again, because it was very impressive....

C.B. ...we talk about Sturgeon's stories' emotional contents, things like that; he was a marvellous technician as a writer, too. He knew exactly what he was doing and how to get effects.

E.H. That's right. Sturgeon, I feel, would have made a great playwright.

D.M. Actually I have a friend to this day who, although not conscious of it, as a direct result of having read *Killdozer*, is utterly incapable of walking past a bulldozer. I have seen them, without realising it, cross the street to avoid walking on the same side of the street as a bulldozer in a vacant lot is.

R.S. Doesn't everybody do that?

E.H. But mind you there's people who have seen the film who laugh when they see a bulldozer coming down the road.

A.G. I think my introduction to Sturgeon as a writer was - maybe in '46 or so, right after the war - was his first collection of sf, which had *Killdozer* in it. I'd been reading science fiction for a few months - I was 15 or 16 - and that was one of the stories that made a real impression on me. Fortunately there weren't many bulldozers in our neighbourhood; by the time we were in a place where there were, the effect had worn off. But many of Sturgeon's stories were very intense, very affecting, and I think that when Bob said he didn't write many novels, the sheer intensity of what he was able to do would have worked against him doing such things. Such tension would be very hard to sustain at novel length, and if you could sustain it then the novel might be unreadable. You read the novel and it's like that thing where everybody reading it goes crazy by page 280 of the 350-page novel.

E.H. I think it goes back to what Charles said about Sturgeon's being so technically good. He probably realised within himself, as you're saying -

A.G. He might not have been able to do it.

E.H. - that he might not have been able to do it.

A.G. You know what you can do, and some things you don't try... and he might have felt that trying to top the young Sturgeon... you know, that would be a daunting thing, even if you're the man himself.

C.B. There are those of us who grew up in the fifties with Theodore Sturgeon who, in many ways, were disappointed afterwards. Bob said Sturgeon never fulfilled his promise; but I don't think that's true, anymore. I've changed my mind in the last 4 or 5 months.

Because we thought of him almost exclusively as a writer, all we wanted was the next story. But there are a lot of younger writers I've talked to in the last

few months who think of Sturgeon mainly as a teacher, who taught them a lot about writing, about life, about a lot of other things... and this is not a part of Sturgeon that we should forget. It's something he did that's very important.

A.G. Bob, would you like to comment on that?

R.S. Yeah, I would basically agree with that. Sturgeon, though he wrote nothing of Sturgeon quality after about 1965 or so, was a great presence. He was in the scene - he was frequently at conventions; he taught at writers' workshops; he wrote book reviews; he wrote essays. He was an example, he was a perceptor. I think nobody who has written science fiction of any calibre in the last 40 years does not owe an enormous debt to Sturgeon; to Sturgeon the teacher not merely Sturgeon the writer and the role model as a writer.

In that sense, yes, he fulfilled his promise as a writer and more; his was not a wasted life. I just wish that the man in his fifties had given us what he'd given us in his thirties. A man in his sixties could have taken it easy, perhaps, but there's a whole decade where... his last years were very sad, actually. When I knew him in Los Angeles he lived in squalor; he lived in poverty, because he was a terrible businessman; because he misused his advantages; because the publishers misused him.... This has not come out in the obituaries and the columns.... Ah, I don't think that was necessary, I don't think he deserved it, I don't think it should have happened, and I think it's a damn shame....

A.G. Well... do we have any questions from the audience?

X.1. I'd like to hear, from each member of the panel, which is their favourite short story....

C.B. Oh, More Than Human is the book that bowled me over; and oddly enough not the first part, not the middle part - which is the most famous part - but the last part. It just brought it all together. And I do disagree with Bob on one point: I think that More Than Human is a complete novel, and a very complete novel.

R.S. Oh it's a novel all right, but it's a novel that was put together out of parts.

C.B. It doesn't read that way -

R.S. Well, no, it doesn't read that way, but I'm talking about the carpentry now. I know how it was done ~~AAA/ITA/NOY/BOYND/YO/YEY/YOA/POYGEY/YHAY~~, and I know what Sturgeon's problems as a writer were, and one of them was the problem of sustaining the energy (of a story) over the long haul. When you do a novel made up out of three novellas you are making an end run [?] around the problem. He did it brilliantly, he did it magnificently. I wish he'd had the staying power to write a total novel-

A.G. Or five of them.

R.S. Well no, no - a novel that was not made up of three parts cunningly put together, but (which) had its own underlying integrity in a way that More Than Human... he cheated magnificently in More Than Human

D.M. I must admit I find myself at a toss up between Some Of Your Blood, for obvious reasons, and also, again, with More Than Human. Again, I must agree, not with the middle part but with the ending.

E.H. I would have to say, also, the novel More Than Human, but for the short fiction, my favourite is definitely Dermfall.

A.G. I can't really pick one of his short stories above the others, because the ones that I really liked were all so different that it would be like comparing oranges and apples. You might say "it's all Sturgeon", but no; they're all different. Yes, More Than Human was a really fine piece of writing. Possibly, because of its length, I would go with that choice.

Have we more questions?

X.2. There's an emotional intensity in his writing ab uzzle amutter mutter dah... it adds up. Now ndab de voo zoo edemarshal ada wa mutter did that come out in his personality?

C.B. I don't think so-

A.G. I met Sturgeon, I had a chance to talk with him at a little con in Pennsylvania in 1981 or '82 and his personal demeanour was very relaxed... I usually like to get people to talk about themselves; I encourage them to do the talking, but he just sort of slipped around that, and I found I was doing the talking for a change because he was interested. He was interested in the people that he met. He looked at everything, and nothing human really turned him off.

R.S. Was the question whether the emotional intensity if Sturgeon's writing was not a reflection of his character? [Ah, thank you R.S... eds.] How could it not have been?

A.G. Well, I'm sure that this is true, but you did not feel emotional intensity just meeting him. Maybe if you'd married him, ah... you might have had to deal with this, but just dealing with him on a social level at a convention, the emotional intensity was out of sight.

R.S. Many people did marry him... He was married four or five times, uh... three that I know of; at least one before I knew him. He has one child about my age, which is strange because he's not that much older than I am. But he married very young. He was involved in innumerable human interactions, marital and otherwise. He lived a difficult life, under financial stresses most of the time. In person he was extremely softly spoken; a mild, gentle man. His eyes were very searching but kindly, and anyone who believed that that was all there was to Ted Sturgeon had never read a word of what he'd written. Things were *boiling* under there.

E.H. I think that one thing that has to be made sure of is that he doesn't go the way of a lot of others where, all of a sudden, the publishers and the distributors forget his books and the books just disappear off the stands, because we've seen his books - as I said, I didn't grow up

E.H. I think that one thing we have to make sure of is that the publishers and distributors don't just forget his books, and let them disappear off the stands. I didn't grow up during the pulp era; we didn't have magazines with new Theodore Sturgeon (stories) appearing in them, but I could walk into virtually any newsagent or bookshop in Australia and there'd be Theodore Sturgeon novels or short stories for sale. This shouldn't be allowed to change.

A.G. His work is going to endure, and this doesn't need help from anybody - the works stand by themselves. People are going to discover it and buy it and when they buy one or two they're going to want a whole bunch.

E.H. He's one of the people I recommend if someone comes up who's never read sf and they say to me: "who would you recommend I read?" One of the first names I'll mention is Theodore Sturgeon, because of the way he wrote; it's an excellent way for someone to be introduced to sf because they'll be introduced by reading and enjoying his stories, and when they've read more they can come back and find so much more in his stories. It's a good way for people to be introduced to science fiction, I find.

R.S. I think that's a very good choice. He's a very seductive writer - a very seductive man, also - a very seductive writer. Some of the hardware of science fiction, some of the vocabulary, some of the conventions, completely turn off the uninitiated reader, and yet Ted would say "Come listen to me, I'm going to tell you this story," and before you know what's happening you're drawn in and you're dealing with the most bizarre manifestations of biology, chemistry... but you've been caught. You cannot choose but listen.

A.G. He was a storyteller of the first water.

## COMPLETE HUGO VOTING

There were 443 valid ballots cast in the vote for the 1985 Hugo Awards. An extra 22 invalid ballots were received. Below, in each category, nominees are listed in order from first to last, with the number of nominations that placed each entry on the final ballot being the first column of numbers. The system of voting used is 'optional preferential', referred to by Americans as "the Australian Ballot".

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## Best Novel (395 ballots)

nn

NEUROMANCER .. .. William Gibson	29	104	115	127	152	<u>183</u>
EMERGENCE .. .. David R. Palmer	41	74	75	84	102	<u>146</u>
THE PEACE WAR .. .. Vernor Vinge	28	69	74	86	102	
JOB: A COMEDY OF JUSTICE .. Robert Heinlein	26	59	61	76		
THE INTEGRAL TREES .. Larry Niven	34	55	56			
'no award'		34				

## Best Novella (355 ballots)

nn

Press Enter ■ .. .. John Varley	50	146	151	159	<u>172</u>	
Cyclops .. .. David Brin	22	58	62	67	<u>83</u>	
Valentina .. Joseph Delaney & Marc Stiegler	22	51	51	61	83	
Summer Solstice .. Charles Harness	25	38	40	52		
Elemental .. .. Geoffrey Landis	21	34	35			
'no award'		28				

## Best Novelette (349 ballots)

nn

Bloodchild .. .. Octavia Butler	22	85	91	92	98	105	125	<u>166</u>
The Man Who Painted The Dragon Griaule ..	23	58	67	68	74	87	98	<u>134</u>
.. .. Lucius Shepard								
Return To The Fold .. Timothy Zahn	15	38	38	41	49	67	95	
Blued Moon .. .. Connie Willis	15	51	54	54	61	63		
Silicon Muse .. .. Hilbert Schenk	18	36	38	39	43			
The Weigher .. .. E. Vinicoff & M. Martin	15	31	31	31				
'no award'		27	30					
The Lucky Strike .. Kim Stanley Robinson	18	23						

## Best Short Story (345 ballots)

nn

Crystal Spheres .. David Brin	12	85	87	94	101	116	<u>161</u>	
The Aliens Who Knew, I Mean, Everything ..	16	83	84	86	92	122	<u>151</u>	
.. .. George Alec Effinger								
Symphony For A Lost Traveller .. ..	11	59	59	71	72	80		
.. .. Lee Killough								
Salvador .. .. Lucius Shepard	17	43	43	45	61			
Ridge Running .. .. Kim Stanley Robinson	9	32	32	32				
Rory .. .. Steven Gould	9	24	24					
'no award'		19						

## Best Non-Fiction Book (313 ballots)

nn

WONDER'S CHILD: MY LIFE IN SCIENCE FICTION	22	57	59	71	90	<u>122</u>		
.. .. Jack Williamson								
THE FACES OF SCIENCE FICTION .. ..	23	71	73	85	89	118		
.. .. Patty Perret								
SLEEPLESS NIGHTS IN THE PROCRUSTEAN BED	19	55	55	68	82			
.. .. Harlan Ellison								
IN THE HEART OR IN THE HEAD .. ..	16	65	65	66				
.. .. George Turner								
THE DUNE ENCYCLOPAEDIA .. ..	17	48	48					
.. .. Willis E. McNally								
'no award'		17						

Best Dramatic Presentation (413 ballots)

2010	75	119	137	178	<u>230</u>
GHOSTBUSTERS	57	75	98	111	<u>140</u>
STAR TREK III: The Search For Spock	57	62	81	92	
DUNE	58	59	68		
THE LAST STARFIGHTER	40	49			
'no award'		49			

Best Professional Editor (358 ballots)

TERRY CARR	50	114	114	124	153	<u>190</u>
STANLEY SCHMIDT	45	76	77	90	95	<u>135</u>
SHAWNA MCCARTHY	53	69	69	78	85	
EDWARD FERMAN	54	43	43	44		
GEORGE SCITHERS	20	34	36			
'no award'		22				

Best Professional Artist (330 ballots)

MICHAEL WHELAN	43	128	130	137	<u>156</u>
VINCENT DI FATE	16	65	65	71	<u>84</u>
VAL LAKEY LINDAHN	25	44	46	55	68
BARCLAY SHAW	22	39	39	47	
THOMAS KIDD	17	30	30		
'no award'		24			

Best Semi-Prozine (325 ballots)

LOCUS	70	145	148	155	<u>157</u>
SCIENCE FICTION CHRONICLE	49	58	60	70	<u>74</u>
SF REVIEW	27	40	45	50	52
'no award'		42	44	49	
WHISPERS	9	21	28		
FANTASY REVIEW	15	19			

Best Fanzine (284 ballots)

FILE 770	28	69	78	85	85	<u>118</u>
RATAPLAN	13	66	71	75	79	<u>105</u>
ANSIBLE	20	53	58	71	73	
'no award'		42	43	48		
MYTHOLOGIES	7	30	32			
HOLIER THAN THOU	13	24				

Best Fan Writer (284 ballots)

DAVE LANGFORD	24	68	73	74	87	<u>112</u>
LEIGH EDMONDS	11	72	75	75	79	<u>100</u>
RICHARD E. GEIS	14	46	55	55	73	
MIKE GLYER	18	36	43	44		
'no award'		32	33			
ARTHUR HLAVATY	8	30				

Best Fan Artist (287 ballots)

ALEXIS GILLILAND	14	51	54	54	63	89	<u>120</u>
BRAD FOSTER	29	59	61	63	69	78	<u>112</u>
JOAN HANKE WOODS	10	57	60	60	68	76	
BILL ROTSLER	10	46	46	46	50		
STU SHIFFMAN	13	33	34	34			
'no award'		31	31				
STEVEN FOX	11	10					

Award  
Lucius Shepard

(291 ballots)

Ian McDonald

Bradley Denton

John  
W.  
Lucius  
Campbell

'no award'

Melissa Scott

Elissa Malcohn

Geoffrey A. Landis  
Shepard

One thing we noticed about the Hugo results was that, in spite of the unashamed plug we gave to In The Heart Or In The Head, it didn't win a Hugo. In spite of receiving the second highest number of first preference votes, its position improved by only a further one vote after the distribution of preferences. This possibly reflects the lack of availability of this work in the U.S. and U.K. (and the lack of availability of the other works in Australia - see Ditmar comments later on). Another explanation is hinted at by Dianne Fox:

'Voting for In The Heart... - John said straight out that he would vote "1" for all the Australian entries, and did. I was a little more conscious of a moral dilemma here. Fortunately, in the case of the non fiction entries, patriotism and aesthetics agreed. (I usually tend to vote for what pleases me, despite some of my choices being rather eccentric.) George Turner's book had some formidable competition. In most years I would think that the Harlan Ellison collection would unquestioningly have won. This year, no.'

Dianne also had something to say about the various reviews of George Turner's book:

'I didn't much agree with John Baxter's review of In The Heart Or In The Head, which is a far less disagreeable book than it sounds from his description. The prose is not 'clunking and grating', it is a very plain, bare, cliché-less prose that looks very simple -- very easy to read, and written only by the most skilled. It is classic prose, and most prose encountered by sf readers is slightly purplish in comparison. Not "cement", but "concrete" is the term that best suits it -- concrete in the sense that what is said is said in few, extremely exact words; with few images but vivid ones. I found the novel very evocative at times; though Turner did not choose to describe his non-literary life in detail, he made it sound vivid and interesting, and made it clear that he had used a lot of it in his novels and did not feel the need to repeat himself. After reading his comments about WW II in New Guinea, I am very much looking forward to reading Yesterday's Men.

'I did not feel that In The Heart showed Turner disliking 'everything and everyone' -- a very deep love was shown for sf, for much other literature, for the beauties of nature (the comments about the beauty of New Guinea jungle show how it delighted him despite the incredible hardship); and despite being a loner through and through, he often expresses kindly feelings for various friends. Liking or loving does not necessarily mean inability to see the many flaws and failings of a thing or person. In The Heart strikes me as a book which was written with much thought and painstaking, extremely careful honesty; neither praise nor blame, but the finding of the facts both physical and emotional. This is what makes it a good book.'

Leigh Edmonds chips in with comments about this, and other matters:

'I was interested to see what John Baxter had said about In The Heart Or In The Head. It was not so vicious or mindlessly violent as I had been led to expect by the responses you printed. I can only assume that the responses were against the tone of the review rather than the text of it. There are only two bits I'd like to think of as demanding criticism - 'clunking and grating, his style rolls over its subjects, grinding them into the cement' and '...though it does explain why he is so often a poor (writer).' These are the kinds of value judgements that any reviewer should be allowed; if you disagree with the reviewer then you know you will like the book (and John Baxter already knows that when it comes to style, we don't really agree).

'The rest of the review seems to be a fairly good description of George Turner's personality as it is revealed in the book. I can go along with it most of the way, turning away only when it comes to making value judgements which, in any event, are more implied than clearly stated. And anyhow, since I share many of George's attributes (?) I see nothing wrong with

'The most interesting thing about the reviews is that they highlight the antagonism between Turner and Baxter - one of the minor mysteries of the mid-eighties. If I'd the ability to write as well as either of them I'd reckon I was lucky; but if I could write as well as Chris Priest I'd reckon I'd won the lottery. Not that many would agree. [Me would! Me would!]

'The three issues (45 and the two 46s) make up a good bundle which I enjoyed reading. I still haven't got around to reading the most recent issue yet, but then I'm still recovering from the temporary brain-death brought on by the convention.' [You too? You should see what it's like here in Melbourne.]

'Thyme #46 - the book reviews are a good idea. Unfortunately [the reviews of the Hugo-nominated stories] are generally unfavourable, giving an overwhelming impression that it might be best not to waste one's time reading the things, and to vote 'No Award' instead. [Catches on quick, huh?] While struggling to get all the stuff on the voting list read in time, I was often tempted (not to bother), but despite the rush rather enjoyed most of the books. Certainly there was none of the novels that I would have wanted not to read, or which I would have considered a waste of my (very limited) time; I have read books which I think more worthy of the Hugo than those on the list, but they were a reasonable selection, given the neofascist political climate of the times. (There: that's a bloody sight more damning than the most savage criticism in all the *Thyme Literary Supplement*!)

'Dragon Griaule I loved; it is a pity it will not be the winner as I believe that many fans would not vote, on principle, for any story with a dragon or a wizard in it. Bigot bastards. *Salvador* reminded me a lot of Harlan Ellison's *Basilisk* - which wasn't a disadvantage. I think John told me one time, after reading a book about WW I and one about WW II and also one on Vietnam, that all war books had a certain similarity....[In any case,] I have yet to read a Lucius Shepard story that isn't good.

Salvador was, if you cast your mind back, a favourite to take out the Hugo for Best Short Story. It didn't, of course; that honour went to David Brin's *Crystal Spheres*. No matter what you thought of that story, seeing David Brin at the Hugo ceremony so happy but completely surprised at his win, you couldn't but feel happy for him as well. DC tells the story of David Brin in the lift after the show, still recovering from the surprise of his win, grinning from ear to ear, being asked who he'd thought was going to win in that category - "Why, Salvador, of course." Never know your luck in a big city, eh? Still, life goes on after Aussiecon Two and the Hugo Awards. Here's Bruce Gillespie with his thoughts on some recent Aus. sf.

# SNAPPING THE WINEGLASS STEM

A review of Recent Australian SF, by Bruce Gillespie

† Strange Attractors: Original Australian Speculative Fiction  
Damien Broderick (editor) (Hale & Ironmonger, 237pp., \$11.95)

† Urban Fantasies David King & Russell Blackford (editors)  
(Ebony Books, 181pp., \$4.95)

† Contrary Modes: Proceedings of the World Science Fiction Conference, Melbourne, Australia, 1985 Jenny Blackford, Russell Blackford, Lucy Sussex and Norman Talbot (editors) (Ebony Books and the Department of English, University of Newcastle, NSW, 156pp., \$5.00)

† The Transing Syndrome by Kurt von Trojan (Rigby, 144pp., \$5.95)

'Not very long after the invention of the novel', wrote one American commentator during the early seventies, 'literature divided into two mighty streams, one in which wineglass-stem-snapping-during moments-of-tension was impermissible and another in which it was obligatory.'

In general, Australian writers have chosen the former stream, the one usually called 'serious fiction'. In science fiction, the opposite has happened.

Science fiction began in the 'serious' stream, with Wells, Stapledon and other English and European writers, and was dragged into the popular stream by the editors and writers of America's pulp magazines.

A worthy attempt to bring the two back together can be found in three of the books under review. Two of them, Urban Fantasies, edited by David King and Russell Blackford, and Strange Attractors, edited by Damien Broderick, are anthologies of new sf stories by Australian writers. The third, Contrary Modes, editors Talbot, Blackford, Blackford & Sussex, is a collection of some of the papers presented in the academic stream of programming during Aussiecon Two, held in Melbourne in August, and was designed with the people there who heard them being given in mind.

I do a disservice to Urban Fantasies and Contrary Modes by thinking of them interchangeably, as part of one large anthology, but my mistake is understandable. Both were prepared during the same period of time - the early part of 1985 - and both draw on much the same pool of authors.

Both anthologies go against the grain of the current world science fiction monolith, which is dominated by the USA, technology, Reaganite conservatism, complacency, and gosh-wow pop-lit values. By contrast, most of the writers the Australian anthologies see themselves as writers first, and sf writers second. They want to keep their wineglass stems intact; they seek clever, literary readers, the kind of people who currently buy the books of Jolley, Moorhouse and Carey. Indeed, two writers from general Australian literature, Gerald Murnane and David Foster, appear in Strange Attractors, and their stories do not seem out of place.

There is only one problem: Australian fans & regular sf readers usually won't but the Australian brand of sf - too artsy-fartsy for them.

Not that I blame the philistines entirely. Both editors place some of their least accessible stories towards the front of their books. What can I make of Norman Talbot's *The Other Side Of The Other Side Of The Street* (Urban Fantasies), which is not only constructed like an elaborate game, but relies for much of its material on the game of Dungeons & Dragons? How does one trudge through the arid wastes of Timothy Dell's *A Step In Any Direction* (Strange Attractors) in order to reach Greg Egan's hilarious *The Way She Smiles, The Things She Says* on the other side?

And what can I say about David Brooke's assiduously barren *Du* which is placed at the beginning of *Urban Fantasies*, seemingly designed to stop people reading anything else in the book? How can I excuse Anthony Peacey's *Jagging* (*Strange Attractors*), which tries desperately to be artistic, but relies instead on clichés such as 'joyous', 'lucent', 'vast' and 'limitless'?

Skip the stories you find boring or pretentious. Despite them, both anthologies are essential reading - although I think that *Urban Fantasies* is slightly more essential than *Strange Attractors*. Between them, the books contain a wide range of highly-skilled story-tellers whose work should be better known in Australia.

David Grigg's *The Twist Of Fate* (*Urban Fantasies*) tells of a future Melbourne, overcrowded and claustrophobic, part of a whole world that offers no release from crisis. An atomic explosion (rather a small one) wrecks an area around the University of Melbourne. The work of one particular researcher is suspected. The story's main character, Stephen Tang, seeks out one of the few research students who happened to escape the blast. His search leads him to the scientific answer to the world's population problem - but an answer that he cannot allow to be published. It also leads him to badly injured Elli Wirruna, and it is the way in which the two desperate people circle each other that forms the emotional centre of the story. *The Twist of Fate* is an effective mixture of lean, gripping prose and interesting social and scientific ideas.

I could make much the same statement about George Turner's *The Fittest*, also in *Urban Fantasies*. Turner's main character grows up as his world disintegrates. It's the world of high-employment, prosperous Melbourne which slowly becomes afflicted by city-wide poverty and lack of employment. Turner's analysis of the way in which our social fabric will unravel is particularly unsettling; his reasoning is so plausible, so well thought out, so horrifying. Turner holds a mirror up to our smug, lucky faces; who will acknowledge the image seen in the mirror?

Cherry Wilder's *The Ballad of Hilo Hill* (*Strange Attractors*) seems to have little to do with our world. A small group of human beings have settled the coast of one continent of a far-distant planet. Some years before, an explorer had set out from this settlement, towards the unknown west. He vanished, and everybody thought he was dead. Catlin Kells, the story-teller, finds that the explorer is alive and well, almost in her own backyard, but nobody recognizes him and he dare not tell his story. For he has gone around the world, and seen things that might be too unsettling for the people of this small community. On the surface, *The Ballad of Hilo Hill* seems a bit otherworldly and precious, but its surface conceals some interesting truths about Australia.

*Urban Fantasies* and *Strange Attractors* are two meaty collections of writers who are serious, uncompromised, and seeking an audience where almost none has existed before. I do not have the space to discuss all the stories I recommend. They are: from *Urban Fantasies*: *A Tooth For Every Child* by Damien Broderick, *Montage* by Lucy Sussex, *The Fittest* by George Turner, *The Bullet That Grows in the Gun* by Terry Dowling and *The Twist of Fate* by David Grigg; and from *Strange Attractors*: *The Lipton Village Society* by Lucy Sussex, *The Way She Smiles*, *The Things She Says* by Greg Egan, *Glass Reptile Breakout* by Russell Blackford, *The Ballad of Hilo Hill* by Cherry Wilder and *On The Nursery Floor* by George Turner. All the others are worth trying; you might put together a list quite different from mine.

*Contrary Modes* has its eye more on the literary stream than on the popular, since most of its papers are written in academic jargon. But these papers deal with popular fiction, and raise questions about the satisfaction that people derive from popular fiction. Some of the papers are quite important. In particular, Dr Van Ikin's *Adding New Coordinates to the Chart: The Place of Australian SF in the Literary Mainstream*; and Professor Norman Talbot's *The Audience and the Narrators in Gene Wolfe's 'The Book of the New Sun'* is the richest and most satisfying paper in the whole book, and should prompt Australian readers to seek out the four novels, together called *The Book of the New Sun*, written by the Aussiecon Guest of Honour.

Other subjects covered in Contrary Modes include The Changing Role of the Female Character in Science Fiction (Bruce Wells), National Accents in Science Fiction: an Australian Perspective (George Turner) and Robert Heinlein's Stranger In A Strange Land (Russell Blackford).

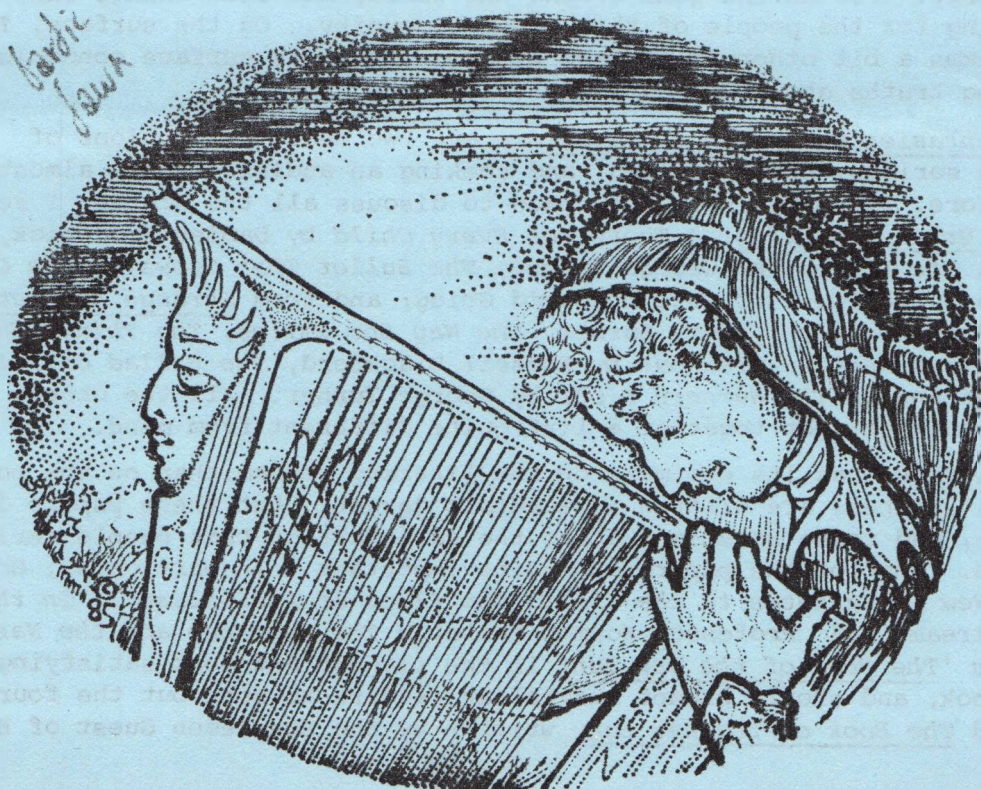
I've left The Transing Syndrome to last because it was conspicuously not launched at Aussiecon [copies of the novel were not available in time, and in any case the committee was informed it would be better if the author were not allowed to speak(!)], and because it is very much part of the popular stream of writing rather than the overtly literary. It is also the best Australian sf novel to be published originally in this country. It is slick, readable, and cautionary. It is not earnest, although it may be taken seriously.

The Transing Syndrome tells of a world in which anybody can travel from any point on earth to any other point by stepping into a 'transing' booth at the beginning of a journey and stepping out of another at the other end. Everybody accepts this technological wonder without question - except, of course, our hero Sherman. He believes that that transing process does horrible things to the bodies of those who travel that way. Because he lives in a world controlled by the transing authority, few people are willing to listen to his story. Sherman resists the authority; you can guess who wins.

I enjoyed The Transing Syndrome although it has no original sf ideas. It has such hoary old notions as the Meek Hero Who Dares All; the world-enveloping authority, borrowed from Nineteen Eighty-Four; and breathless chases and dangers. Yes, this is wineglass-snapping-in-moments-of-tension, just the sort of book that made me an addict of sf when I was twelve years old. What distinguishes Kurt von Trojan from most of his predecessors is his quirky humour. Certainly, Sherman does all the melodramatic things you expect of someone caught in such a situation. But about halfway through the novel, Sherman realizes he can't win. The whole fun is trying to beat the authorities. He spreads propaganda wherever he can; he annoys the transing goons in any way possible. He has a great time, and so does the reader. You don't find British or American sf writers admitting that it is fun to be paranoid.

The Transing Syndrome is an unashamedly pop-lit book; but it deserves to be popular. It won't win any literary prizes; maybe it should.

Bruce Gillespie



## Awards, Awards, Awards

Having just read the results of this year's Hugo Ballot, perhaps it's time to talk about the subject of our own, Australian sf awards - the Ditmars. The process of nomination & voting for the awards, and their ultimate presentation, is organised by those people running each year's National Australian S F Convention. As National Conventions are run by whoever wins the bid to hold each particular year's NatCon, there is no continuity - from year to year - of people to/who look after the awards.

Because some people place importance upon the presentation of these awards - or perhaps just awards in general - and in order that the awards are seen to be of the properly august and generally worthwhile nature that tends to come from anything being seen as traditional, a section of the constitution has been made up to formally advise people on the running of National Conventions also deals with the Ditmar awards, and lays down the law concerning what the awards are to be given for, and so on, down to their exact physical dimensions - and even their composition.

The constitution, however, is somewhat changeable, and this means that the instructions laid down therein, concerning the Ditmars, are prone to change from one year to the next, often with changes of a most drastic nature. (One year a vote was narrowly defeated to have all Ditmar awards made of, um, radioactive, black twilltone paper, in the form of a suppository. If the vote had been carried, as it nearly was, would people have as slavishly followed the dictates of the constitution as in previous years? One wonders....)

One of these days - next year, it is possible- the groundswell motion to have the constitution abolished, in part or in whole, may succeed, and then commonsense - entirely by default - would have to be used in the administration of such matters as the awards. Until then, the amateur[ish] lawyers in fandom at conventions will undoubtedly continue to roil and toil and boil and bubble as they do every year at every NatCon Business Session.

On the subject of the machiavellian machinations that took place at this year's NatCon, Jack Herman has a few words to say. Take it away, Jack.

# AN OPEN LETTER TO AUSTRALIAN FANDOM

'Advention 85 was the smallest National Convention in Australia for a decade. In case you missed it, it was held in Adelaide at Easter and had almost 80 members in attendance. As a result of the Business Meeting and Awards voting at Advention 85 several questions about the future of Australian National Conventions have been raised.

'In spite of an understanding of many years that Convention Committees need a couple of years to get things together for a major con like the NatCon (when held outside Adelaide), the Advention Business Meeting changed things back so that NatCons will now be selcted one year in advance instead of two. This has massive implications for many bids, including that contemplated for Sydney Cove in '88. While it may be the case that anyone can walk into an Adelaide hotel a few weeks before a con and get facilities, Sydney is a city that is very popular with convention organisers (in all fields) and its limited convention facilities are in constant use.

'Hotels like to have their use confirmed a couple of years in advance, otherwise they are likely to try to get another client. The Bid Committee for Sydney Cove in '88 is now going to have to put a booking on a major hotel (needed for a convention we imagine will attract over 500 attendee-) and if we are not awarded the NatCon, go ahead and hold the con anyway, hoping that it will still do all right.

'The worst thing about the rape of the constitution is that, six months later, no one who wasn't there knew about it except for a confused sentence in ASFN.

'Effrontery was also demonstrated by the elitists at Advention 85: having inherited a constitution that was alterable by a majority vote, they radically altered it and then made it changeable only by a two thirds majority vote.

'Advention 85 made the entire segment in the constitution on the Ditmar Awards 'Regulation' rather than 'Constitution' - whatever that is supposed to mean. But they didn't change the most fuckwitted section of the constitution: as stated currently, for a Ditmar to be awarded there needs to be a vote of at least 25% of the members of the NatCon in that category. Placed at its simplest: at Advention 85 (the first con ever to give one award for each voter who cast a vote) a Ditmar was awarded in any category where 11 voters cast a ballot - they had around 40 members around the time that voting closed. On the other hand, had the rule been in operation at Syncon 83, 75 ballots could have been cast and no awards would have been made because at the time we had over 300 members. If such a clause needs to be in the constitution, then surely it should also have a numerical minimum to supplement the 25% rule.

\* \* \* \* \*

'As a result of these anomalies, I feel that there is a need for a general discussion of the National Convention and its Awards, a more detailed debate than can take place at 9am on the Saturday of a Convention (or whatever other hour or two is made available for a dozen hardy souls to discuss it). God knows what else the Adelaide elitists wrote into the constitution - they haven't told anyone else - or what the awards section now reads, but the condition of having up to 10 awards given annually, usually by very small numbers of votes, needs investigation.' If anyone but I is interested, then anyone with comments can pass them along to me and I will endeavour to get in touch with all those interested with news of others' opinions.

'Theoretically, it is OUR National Con they are playing with.'

... signed Jack Herman

*Jack*

We here at Thyme are also quite interested in any comments people may have to make, and to the end of promoting some sensible, considered discussion of this matter, we'd like to throw open these pages as a forum for debate. We will also forward any comments people would like to make onto Jack himself.

#### Affirmative Awards Action In Perth

Meanwhile, some people have actually taken steps to *do something sensible* with regards to the Ditmar awards. The Committee responsible for handling the awards to be given at the next NatCon - Swancon XI, next year in Perth - have like everyone else not received a copy of the amended constitution from the organisers of Advention 85. They haven't even got a copy of the constitution as it was amended to be at Syncon 83. What to do?

The Swancon XI committee has decided to ignore the constitution, and - but why not let them speak for themselves....

'In the seventeen year history of these awards there has only ever been a set of evolving, and very general rules covering these awards which are concerned with the voting procedures for the categories of allowed awards. This seems to the current awards committee to be putting the horse before the cart (sic) [?] as there has regularly been confusion on eligibility of various works for various awards. In the spirit of attempting to remove some of this confusion the following operational regulations will be used.

'BEST INTERNATIONAL SF OR FANTASY

'A work shall be deemed eligible for this category if the work has been published for the first time, in either hard or paperback, in english and distributed to the Australian readership by an Australian book publisher or distributor in the calendar year for which the award is to be given.

'This would seem to overcome one of the most problematical situations for awards committees. This regulation excludes reprints, reissues in a new jacket, and any subsequent editions to the first in hard or paperback. It allows anthologies and author collections of previously published shorter work collected for the first time in the current year. It also allows a work to be eligible on two occasions for the first appearance in paperback and the first appearance in hardcover.

'The thrust of the regulation is however directed to the availability of the work for the Australian readership. The essential question becomes what has been distributed/released in Australia. To facilitate an answer it is proposed to publish a list of works eligible based on Australian companies' distribution lists.

'BEST AUSTRALIAN SF OR FANTASY (Long, and Short)

'A work to be eligible for this category must meet the requirements of any work under the above regulation. It must also be the work of an Australian citizen or resident of longer than seven years.

'For both the long and the short fiction categories these would seem to be reasonable requirements. It is also proposed to publish a list of works deemed eligible for these categories.

'If there are fewer than four works eligible for this category then the committee may decide to give no award.

'A contentious issue we feel but if there is only a two or three horse race at best then is it worth holding at all?'

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Thus speaks the Swancon XI Awards Sub-Committee in the Swancon XI Progress Report #2. The statement was followed by a list of titles published in Australia during the period Jan - June 1985, including a couple of works, such as The Compass Rose by Ursula Le Guin (First published 1982) that have been around for, literally, years. This gives rise to the question of what does in fact constitute 'availability', as far as the Australian readership is concerned, because - for example - it is not uncommon for new 'Australian' releases to be circulated in NSW, Vic & Qld, and for the other states to have to wait until the returns come in (if any) for the books involved to be dumped elsewhere to sell or rot. Is something that has been the rounds in the eastern states for ages but which has not been seen in Western Australia eligible for an award? 'Tis a thorny question which previous committees have tended to blithely ignore; it will be interesting to see what comes of this approach to the Ditmars.

Additional to the three categories of award listed above, the Swancon XI Awards Sub-Committee may be giving an award for 'Best Australian Fanzine', although this matter has yet to be finally decided upon. At this stage, it seems unlikely that any other awards that have been given in the past, in such categories as '(Second) Best Australian Fanwriter', and 'Best Fan Philosopher/Sculptor/Musician/Landscape Gardener/Bullshit Artist' will next year be given. We invite comment on this matter.

P.O. BOX 24

PANIC

WINDSOR



3181.

## ANZAAS Festival of Science

So you want to go to a science fiction convention? Running almost at the same time as Aussiecon Two, this year's World SF Con, The people *really* interested in science held thier own annual clambake. Intrepid reporter Mark Lawson reports on the proceedings.

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The Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science's recent congress has been described, variously, as an exciting experiment in interdisciplinary seminars designed to broaden the appeal of the tradiitiional sciences, and as a colossal wank.

Take your pick. For me the week long congress was a lot of hard work, but for those interested in hard science, and who were prepared to pay \$8 for a single session there was a lot to ignore.

To explain. The congress was held over five weekdays at Monash University in Melbourne, and was quite different from the preceding versions of such talk fests, in that instead of having scientists presenting papers that could be understood only by a handful of specialists, there were 90 seminars, each on a particular 'interdisciplinary' subject and each featuring about five speakers, plus a question and answer session.

Information overload, you say? Yep. But some of the topics were more than slightly removed from what I considered to be traditional science. For example: 'Women's Professions' Power and Control; Misbehaviour by Unions and Corporations: What Sanctions; Traditional Australian Musics - Role and Preservation; and Women's Bodies and the Law.

Some hard science was presented, and in those seminars the scientists did make an effort to communicate with the general public. The result was, basically, a "This is how far we've got" exercise, in cancer, AIDS (an inevitable topic), allergies, Antarctic Science, brain and behaviour, mental health, computer languages, and... well, a few sessions on space and lots on conservation.

lso, the congress had an associated youth congress (mainly simplified applied science for school students), a session in which ASEAN and Australian scientists "interacted" [*that's a new way of putting it - eds.*] and a whole heap of open days in high-tech, or even middle-tech firms around Melbourne.

So what was the result. Well, they got quite a few people along, but not the numbers they were hoping for (about 1500 a day, I think). And in my opinion that could well have been because they scheduled too little "science" and too much sociology. A few of the trendy and awrae sessions would have been nice, but they ended up almost swamping the congress. The most popular session I saw, incidentally, was one entitled Schizophrenia, An Australian Perspective, which was standing room only. The silliest would have been one session where a Maori activist demanded that all white people leave New Zealand.

To finish this opinionising, I would merely ask if such a gigantic PR exercise - as that was what the congress turned out to be, in essence - is the aim of ANZAAS? Not having been to the preceding congresses, I can't say how the event compares. For the media, which included me, there was little to get excited about, and few highlights.

Enough of that. On the more personal side, the congress sessions were spread over several lecture theatre blocks at Monash, and were staffed by ushers-ticket collectors who were mainly students in academic gowns several sizes too large for them. Add in a media centre staffed by confused organisers and the typically variable Melbourne weather which oscillated between wind and showers one day, and perfect Spring sunshine the next, and you've got the general idea.

**DUFF: The Down Under Fan Fund** was created in 1972 to encourage closer ties between fans in Australasia and North America. With host countries alternating each year, there have been 13 exchanges of fan representatives since, supported entirely by voluntary contributions from fans all over the world. DUFF delegates visit a major SF Convention in the host country and visit with fans they might otherwise never meet in person. DUFFers are treated as special guests, and are always well looked after.

**DONATIONS:** 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, and donations in excess of the voting donation are gratefully accepted. Cheques should be made out to Robbie or Marty Cantor (in North America) and Jack R. Herman (in Australasia).

**VOTING:** Any fan active in fandom before January, 1985, may vote. Ballots must be signed and be accompanied by a donation of, at least, \$2. Each person is allowed only one vote. If you think your name may not be known by the administrator, please include the name of a fan or fan group who can vouch for you. We will not count unverifiable votes.

**ALL VOTES MUST REACH AN ADMINISTRATOR BY NO LATER THAN FEBRUARY 28, 1986.**

DUFF uses the "Australian" Preferential system of balloting to guarantee an automatic run-off and a majority win. You rank the candidates in order of preference (1, 2, 3...). If there is no absolute majority for one candidate after the first count of votes, first place votes for the lowest-ranking candidate are dropped and the second place votes on those ballots are assigned to the candidates named. This goes on until one candidate has a majority. It is therefore important to vote for second, third, etc places, especially if you choose to write-in a candidate. (You are not required to fill in more than your name, address and first choice.)

**CANDIDATES:** Each candidate has posted a \$10 bond, provided written nominations, and has promised (barring Acts of God) to travel to the 1986 World SF Convention, Confederation, in Atlanta, Georgia, Labour Day Weekend 1986. In the cases of multiple candidacies, DUFF pays for ONE set of fares, accommodation and expenses. Platforms are reproduced on the reverse side and the ballot is below.

**ADMINISTRATORS:** R. & M. Cantor, 11565 Archwood, North Hollywood, CA 91606, USA  
J.R. Herman, Box 272, Wentworth Bldg, U. of Sydney, Australia 2006.

I vote for \_\_\_\_\_ (list 1, 2, 3, etc)

Sally Beasley \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Terry Frost \_\_\_\_\_

Name & Address (Print) \_\_\_\_\_

Mark Loney/Michelle Muysert \_\_\_\_\_

Morley/Pride/Stathopoulos \_\_\_\_\_

(write-in) \_\_\_\_\_

If you think you may be unknown by the administrator, please give the name of a fan or fan group to whom you are known:

Hold Over Funds \_\_\_\_\_

No Preference \_\_\_\_\_

## CANDIDATES' PLATFORMS

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**Sally Beasley:** I had been involved in fandom since 1971, on the fringes of Britfandom, but only discovered F\*A\*N\*D\*O\*M when I emigrated to Australia in 1977. Since then, I have been involved in the programming and running of several local conventions, and organised baby-sitting for Aussiecon II. I am in several apas - ANZAPA, A Woman's Apa, and CRAPA/PI. I have not published my own fanzine (despite good intentions for 6 years plus!) but promise to publish a trip report if elected and then, who knows? I support Worldcons ANYWHERE other than Perth.

**Nominators:** Alyson Abramowitz, Valma Brown, Eric Lindsay, Marc Ortlieb, Amy Thomson and others.

**Terry Frost:** Vote the Frost Team. Writing a DUFF platform while selling memberships to Capcon 87 (The Australian Natcon) ((free plug)) at Aussiecon II ain't easy. Don't let the list of nominators fool you - they were selected very carefully for their sterling qualities in order to give the Frost bid a touch of class it otherwise lacks. Wit, intelligence, cordiality, beard (one), housetraining, cartooning skill, funny accent, the ability to stay awake for long periods of time and silliness I already have. Also, Karen Vaughan, my fiancée, will, if I win, be accompanying me on a DUFF trip cum honeymoon.

**Nominators:** Mike Glyer, Leanne Frahm, Ken Ozanne, Paul Stevens, Art Widner.

**Mark Loney/Michelle Muysert:** (Michelle) I am a New Zealander and have been involved in fandom in Wellington, Auckland, Melbourne and Perth, where I live currently. I'm small, furry and very friendly, I love room parties, and I'd love to go to ConFederation. (Mark) I am a large furry West Australian making up the second half of the Muysert/Loney trans-Australasian DUFF bid. My first con was Swancon II in 1976 and my first fanzine was THE SPACE WASTRAL (with Mr. Warner) in 1979. Michelle and I have been a joint fanact since 1983 and we'd really like to meet you all at ConFederation.

**Nominators:** Justin Ackroyd, Alexis Gilliland, Irwin Hirsch, Peter Toluzzi, Roger Weddall and others.

**Lewis Morley, Marilyn Pride, Nick Stathopoulos:** (Lewis speaks on Nick and Marilyn's behalf) Having been into rubber for some time, I was delighted to find that fandom held a niche in which I could flourish and fester. Together with Nick and Marilyn, I discovered a group of caring and interesting people who encouraged us to always push ourselves further. My personal interests have included regular entries in Masquerades which let me enjoy absurd behaviour in complete anonymity. Most importantly, I feel that Nick, Marilyn and I represent a VISUAL face to fandom: while our written contributions have been fairly sparse, in creating a tangible aroma (for want of a better word) in the field of fan Art, we feel "strong" enough to give fans overseas a good idea of what Australian fans are about. And being VISUAL we promise a trip report with SLIDES!!!

**Nominators:** Forrest J. Ackerman, Sally Beasley, Terry Dowling, Van Ikin, Joyce Scrivner and others.

Reproduction of this ballot is encouraged; please copy text verbatim (correcting typos).

Original ballot typed up by Jack R. Herman, August 29, 1985. This copy produced by Marty and Robbie Cantor, September 5, 1985.

Even that long unslain bogey of modern medicine, cancer, is showing some signs of yielding to new found expertise in genetics and research into growth factors - chunks of protein that make cells grow.

There was also a session on the creation of the universe, and give-away free samples, and one big session on the Star Wars project, but for more information on such things readers will want to keep up with the Australian Financial Review's new science section [European/American readers of *Thyme* excused]. The section has been appearing every Monday since the 30th of September.

Mark "Rocky" Lawson

Changes Of Address (and various other, otherwise unprintable material)

Victoria: The motatious Marc & Cath Ortlieb have changed their mailing address to P.O.Box 215, Forest Hill 3131. Rumour has it that Marc became embarrassed when, after sharing Justin's P.O.Box for a year, somebody sent a letter to 'Justin Ackroyd, % Marc Ortlieb, GPO Box...'. □□□ Judy Clarke, Henry & Emily Gasko are moving to a new abode on the 11th of December - 102 Ruskin Street, Elwood 3184. Seth Lockwood has moved from Perth to 19/2 King William Street, Fitzroy 3065, 'phone (03) 419 0964. Others to leave Perth in time for/in time to escape the 'Perth in 94' WorldCon bid are Anne & Bevan Casey. Apparently so frightened at the prospect of being dragged physically back to the West to help work on the bid that they have given no-one their address, but we'll have it for you next issue anyway. Merv Binns asks that all mail for him now be sent to his home address, 1 Glen Eira Rd, Ripponlea 3182, although any mail sent to him at the 'Space Age' address will, he says, be forwarded. In a related change of address, the Melbourne SF Club shall be moving to St David's Uniting Church, 72 Melville Rd, Brunswick West 3066, open early in '86.□□□ Ruth & Mal Pritchard are now the proud parents of one Sarah Pritchard (congrats!).□□□ For all MUSFA and former MUSFA members, Blackwood is apparently happening this year. Dates are 2nd - 8th of December at the Melbourne Uni property at Blackwood. □□□ On a more general note, it's time for the Nova Mob 1985 Christmas Party. This year's festive occasion (BYO drinks and party food, although there will be a Christmas cake in attendance) is on the 7th of December, at Sean McMullen's place - 23 Cook Street, Abbotsford 3067. 'Phone: 428 2431. □□□ SCA news: on the 7th & 8th of December, there will be a St. Nicholas Day Collegium Feast and Tourney, which will comprise a day of arts and sciences [so to speak] competitions on the 7th followed by a pot luck feast [yum] with the Shire Championship happening on both the 7th and the 8th. Gate fee will be \$5 for SCA (Society for Creative Anachronism) members or hard up cases, and \$7 for others. For further information contact the autarch [sorry - read 'autocrat' - it's the effect of reading all this Gene

Wolfel] Thorfinn Hrolfsson (Steve Roylance) on (03) 25 6348, or at 1592 Malvern Rd, Glen Iris 3146. □□□ Since Aussiecon several Melbourne-based groups appear to have been vying for recognition as the Carey Handfield Fan Club. These range from "The Real Official Carey Handfield Fan Club" to the simpler, but more expensive "Official Carey Handfield Fan Club" which, for an annual membership of \$15, promises to arrange various excursions and clothing offers. Latest to the field is the "Carey Handfield Appreciation Fan Fund", which is rumoured to be collecting donations to send other people on overseas trips and keeping Carey at home for more of the time. Enquiries should be directed to the Carey-Handfield-Official-Co-ordinator-Of-Letters-Appealing-To-Everybody, Marc Ortlieb, P.O.Box as above. All sounds a bit silly to [one of us] - but if you think that sounds silly....

Lost and Found: 'To the person who "lost" their paper cup filled with ice out of the window of room 1500 (Southern Cross Hotel) at 4:30 am Sunday morning. Your ice was found and is being kept safe in a Sydney freezer and can be redeemed upon submission of a satisfactory identifying description (please remember the fracture line caused by collision with the road surface). Unfortunately the cup was too damaged in the collision and had to be written off. Contact Sue on (02) 609 6309.' But speaking of...

Sydney: While Melbourne recovers from post-convention blues, Sydney is a hive of busy activity. Gerald Smith writes (yes, he does): 'It has been rather hectic here in Sydney recently. Something to do with a minor convention in Melbourne. Seems it attracted quite a number of overseas fans. Not sure why; maybe they had to see for themselves whether it's true what they say about Melbourne. Anyway, as a result of all this activity the usual Thursday night Galaxy Bookshop roll-up has been somewhat larger than usual. There was also a very well attended party here a few weeks back with Eve & John Harvey from England, William Low, Neil Kaden and "Alison" from America. Last weekend there was a meeting held at Jack Herman's place to plan Sydney's bid for the 1988 NatCon. It also looks as if there'll be smaller regional cons in Sydney in '86 and '87.' And from Eric Lindsay: 'Doubtless you have heard by now of the new fannish cover organisation in Sydney, 'SF' - Sydney Fans - that replaces the defunct SSFF. Jack Herman's P.O.Box is the address for letters, but since there has only been one meeting, not everything is settled yet. There will be bids for NatCons (1988), plus a relaxacon late '85, plus... (a couple of larger cons inbetween) in '86 and '87. It looks like the old SSFF library might also be revived. Blair Ramage has it now, and isn't in theory all that distressed by the idea of opening it to borrowers again. Details to be settled later. Terry Frost seems to be back in the newsletter business again, also, for SF. The tentative title for the SF newsletter is SF Truth. [Everybody's gettign into the act. Even in:

Norway: As if the newsy Fanytt (ed. Ahrvid Engholm, Renstiernas Gata 29, Stockholm 116 31) were not enough to keep the inhabitants of the region well informed, now there's Once Upon A Time (eds. Johannes Berg, Johan Schimanski & Kristin Thorrud, Tuengen Allé 10, N-0374 Oslo 3, Norway) to contend with. Issue #1, out early October, was six pages and featured lots of local and other news, all nicely laid out and so on. If you're interested, that will be Nkr3:- per issue. Once Upon A Time, the New Norwegian Newszine with... 'föreningsnyheter, möteskalender, fanzinerecensioner, boknyheter' and lots more. In reverse of the usual custom (especially since the Norwegians discovered oil in the North Sea and the Swedes talk once more of annexation) we list a Swedish coa under the heading of Norway: Ahrvid Engholm is now at Renstiernas Gata 29, 116 31 Stockholm, Sverige. Tel: (08) 41 34 05. Hej Ahrvid!

More Sydney: a new writers' forum has started up. Its name is 'Access'. Remarkably similar to an organisation going a little while ago (that even had the same name), Access is a non-profit publication which invites contributions of stories, poems, artwork and the like. Constructive criticism of the works to be published therein is also sought. The first edition of the new Access will be in early January, and it is planned for the publication to be bimonthly. All enquiries (or submissions, typed on A4 paper) to: GPO Box 429, Sydney 2001. And

speaking of clubs... Dr Who fans may like to know about Data Extract, the publication of teh Australasian Dr Who Club. Subscription rates \$4 for 8 issues in Aus., it includes the latest news of the production of the show (such as the fact that the ABC are going to repeat all their Dr Who episodes from the last couple of Patrick Troughton ones on) and info on merchandise etc. etc. Mail to: Data Extract P.O.Box 148, Gladesville 2111.

Canberra: Not strictly a change of address, but a clarification of such, to end the mass confusion: resident at 14 Hannam Place, Mawson (the suburb of Canberra, not the Antarctic base) 2607, telephone (062) 86 1887 are Kim Lambert, Mark Denbow, Kim Huett, Ann Poore and Larry Larkin. Mail for Kim Huett is PO Box 649, Woden 2606; mail for the rest goes to PO Box 312, Fyshwick 2609. □□□ David Osborne, Terry van der Linden & Steve Leslie are at 24 O'Sullivan St., Higgins 2615. 'Phone: (062) 54 1358. Sian Ettershank, Paul Cooksley and Charlie Dean are now at 72 Stonehaven Crescent, Deakin 2600; 'phone (062) 81 2874. Bruce Tobin, Andrew Kelman, Mark Bain & Andre Swenson are all at Flat 28, Urambi Village, Crozier circuit, Kambah 2902; 'phone (you guessed it - 062) 31 7464. Sort of Canberra, but not: Richard Lesze and Kat Swansbra are now living in a caravan park somewhere in Wodonga. Mail could go to c/o Uncle Ben's, Wodonga, or to the coa below & ahead: Marjorie & Carey Lenehan can be reached on (0648) 33253, or at "Anastasia", Cemetery Rd, Numeralla 2630.

Perth: Michelle Muysert & Mark Loney are moving/have moved to P.O.Box 545, South Perth 6151. Cramped quarters for two people, perhaps, but possibly explained by the fact that they are soon to be married - for real, this time. Congratulations, the both of you. Speaking of marriages, winner of the rumour of the month competition is one particular one from Perth (or Baltimore, depending on who you're talking to) which unfortunately suffers from the problem of being true. Twice we've been sworn to secrecy and in spite of various people risking life and limb to come to Melbourne to tell us, we believe that people should be allowed to have secrets (even when they're not really...), so if you want to find out what this is all about, you'll just have to get hold of the next issue of the Notional, edited by Leigh publish-and-be-damned Edmonds who's rumoured to be about to reveal all.□□□ Weddings, weddings, weddings: the following piece of news was found on our doorstep left anonymously in a basket and wrapped up in a pretty pink bow (I wonder if it expects to be fed?):

'Craig Hilton & Julia ~~Barman~~ ~~Curtis~~ ~~Ferguson~~ ~~Barman~~ Whoever married on th 14th of August, in the home of Craig's aunt in Nedlands (one of Perth's silver-tail suburbs). The celebrant read a number of quotations on the subject of love, which bore a close resemblance to the more inspirational works of Helen Steiner Rice. The bride & groom then made vows obviously self-written. Vowing always to be honest with another person from the bottom of one's heart seems a dangerous idea when no human being is capable of being totally honest with *themselves*, let alone others.

'Following the marriage, the feast. Food first, then toasts including the traditional loyal toast to the Queen. (~~BY/WHICH/QUEEN?~~) Then the ~~bad/rare~~ feast of opening ~~expensive~~ presents with all the guests sitting around and comparing their investments. It was noticeable that those who had made previous contributions gave less.

'The groom wore white, with a pink bow tie; the bride a traditionally styled off-white wedding dress. Guests ranged from formal to casual.' [ ] [ ] Swancon XI letter-writing-person Cindy Evans informs that the Accommodation address for the con has changed. It is now care of the Bridgetown Police Station, Bridgetown 6255, W.A. ['Police Station'? Oh no... so much for booking a triple room.] [ ] [ ] Speaking of cons, we have it from a reliable source that: 'Balicon is definite, provided we get the numbers, and the Perth in '94 (WorldCon Bid) is also on the road. Although the committees are not the same at all, a good address for the '94 bid , for those interested, would be c/o the Swancon XI address - PO Box 318, Nedlands 6009.' Our source goes on to talk about numerous evenings out - all fannish occasions - now regrettably long past but hopefully just the beginning of many such evenings. Perth, we have it on good authority, 'isn't at all its normal, boring self!'

