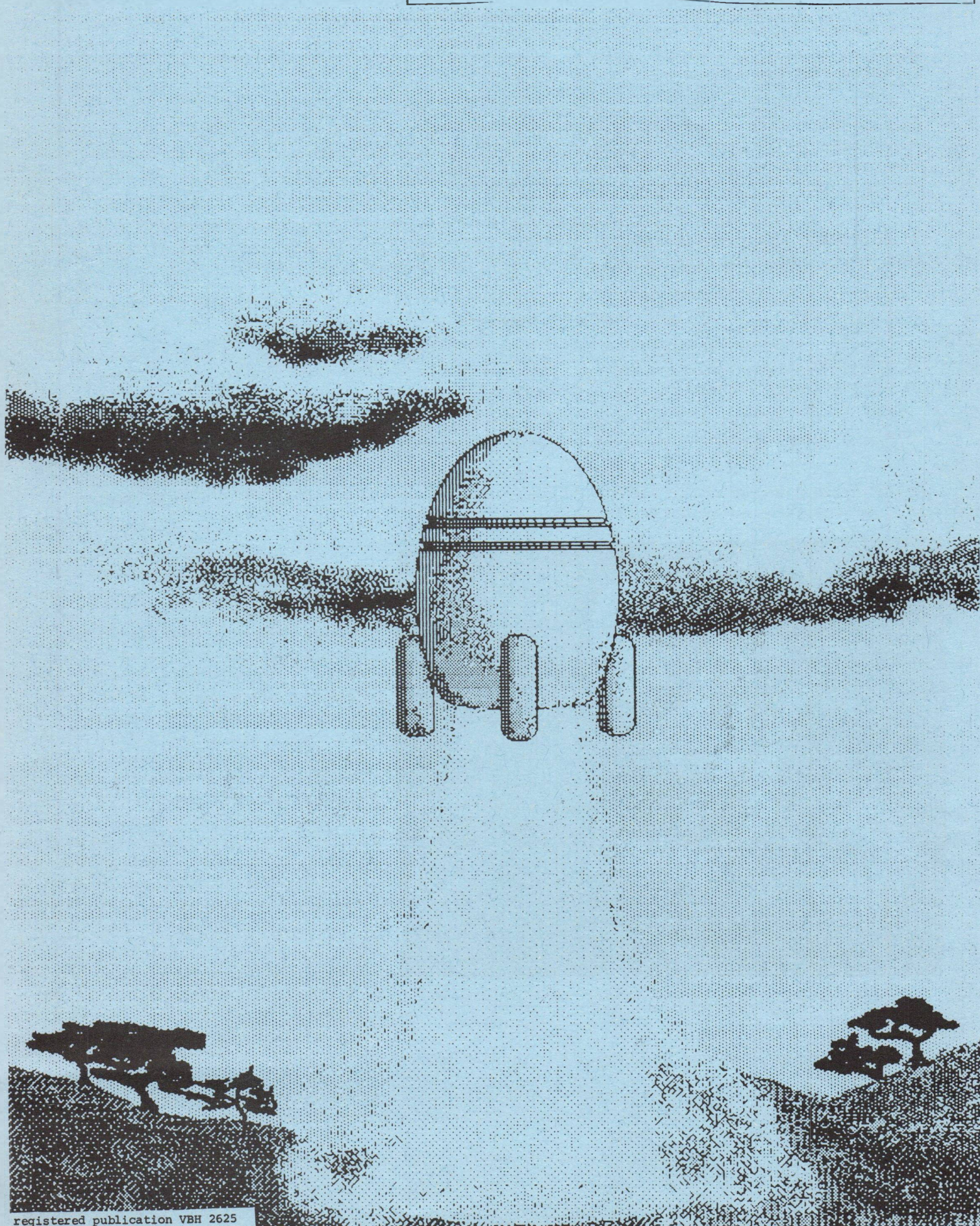


IN THIS ISSUE:

GAEA - both a planet and a god, she is now dangerously insane. She has made herself into a fifty-foot replica of Marilyn Monroe and is transforming her entire world into a bizarre Hollywood fantasy. (See page 4)

thyme 58

the AUSTRALASIAN SF NEWS MAGAZINE November 1986



'CAPTAIN EO' AN OUTSTANDING SUCCESS

He sings. He dances. He commands the motley crew of a spaceship and battles evil demons with laser blasts from his fingertips.

It's none other than Michael Jackson as Captain EO, the space-age hero Disneyland's and Disney World's latest attraction - a 17 minute 3D film which has been called the most expensive short movie ever made.

'Captain EO' opened this month at both Disney parks with a star-studded premiere at Disneyland; Michael Jackson did not grace the proceedings but his co-star Anjelica Huston, Executive Producer George Lucas and Director Francis Ford Coppola appeared for the ribbon cutting ceremony.

'Captain Eo' comprises a ten minute space adventure followed by a seven minute rock video. Jack Curry (USA Today) describes the spectacular thus: 'In a starry sky that seems to envelop the audience, a hurtling asteroid advances until it appears to hover over the theatre. As a testimony to the incredible effect, many kids reached out to touch it.'

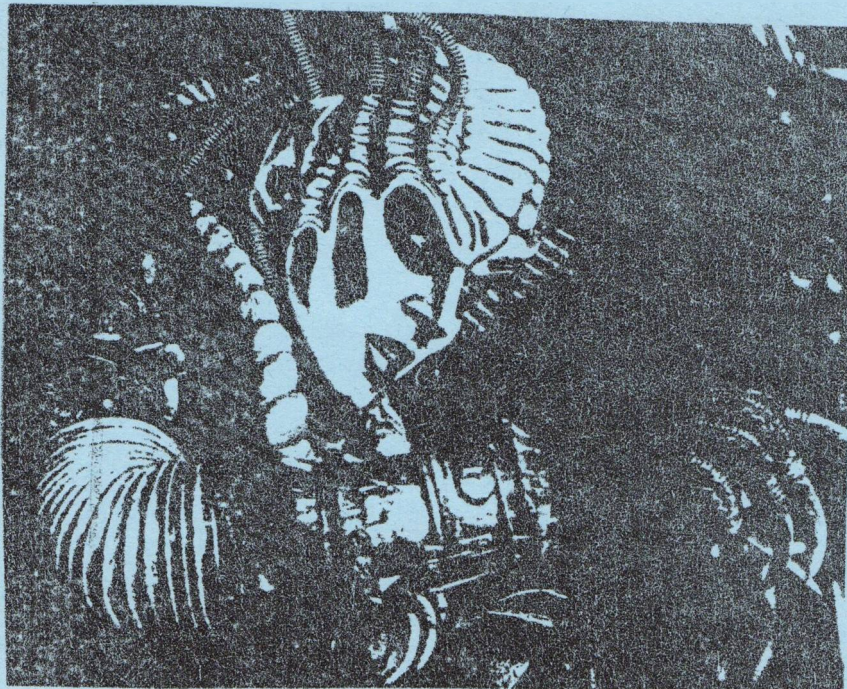
'Soon we're inside the cockpit of a typically Lucas spacecraft. A variety of endearing creatures ['endearing creatures', eh...?] ineptly pilot the vehicle until hero Eo... takes over and wards off an enemy attack.

'A phenomenal battle scene follows in which lasers and explosions burst from the screen, and flight sequences make you feel like a Jedi warrior.

'Crash-landing on a benighted planet, Eo and his band go to the castle of a wicked ruler (Anjelica Huston) and the movie shifts from (being an) adventure to a futuristic 'Wizard of Oz'-type musical.

'Zapping the bad guys with light, music and love [urk], Ec turns the witch's soldiers into a cosmic chorus of backup dancers...

'In a coup de grace, Eo flashes a smile and zaps the evil queen, turning her into an intergalactic [~~groovy~~] glamour girl who leads the newly lovely denizens in a holographic adieu to Eo.' Well.



Anjelica Huston - chief baddie in 'Captain EO'

'Captain EO' had its beginnings in discussion between George Lucas and the chairman and chief executive officer of the Walt Disney Company, Michael Eisner, concerning various theme park projects. "It was said that Michael Jackson was a Disney aficionado," recalled Eisner, "so we called him and asked him if he'd like to do something with the Parks." The result is now on view in two specially built 'Magic Eye' theatres. To celebrate the opening of the new attraction, Disneyland opened continuously from 10:00am on the 19th of September through to 10:00pm on the 21st - a total of sixty hours.

Says Jack Curry: 'Sure, 'Eo' is derivative of its creators' other work, but it literally and figuratively flattens all its antecedents... the amazing technology - you still have to wear those silly,

plastic glasses - makes 'Captain Eo', in all senses of the term stand out.'

None of the music from 'Captain Eo' will be released as a recording. As for home video plans, Walt Disney have hinted that it's a possibility, but have refused any further comment on the subject.

(from Kerry Hennigan/The Dragon's Hoard)

Thyme #58 - the Australasian sf newszine for those who wish they couldn't read - is "put together real nice" by Peter Burns and Roger Weddall. All correspondence, care parcels and letter bombs please to: P.O.Box 273, Fitzroy 3065, AUSTRALIA - or why not give us a ring during office hours on (03) 619 8731.

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So much for the business end of things. Unless, of course, you find there is a big, silver X on your mailing label, which means that you should search the colophon above for things you can do to convince us to keep on sending you copies. Otherwise....

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In the last issue of Thyme, in connection with the Australian Ditmar awards, we heard from John Foyster on the possibility of science fiction being 'seduced by its image' of being 'reading for teenagers'. Read on, then, and see if you don't agree with us that, for some of the material John refers to here in his promised article, even young teenagers might be a little too old and jaded to wolf down uncritically....

TRIUMPH OF THE SWILL

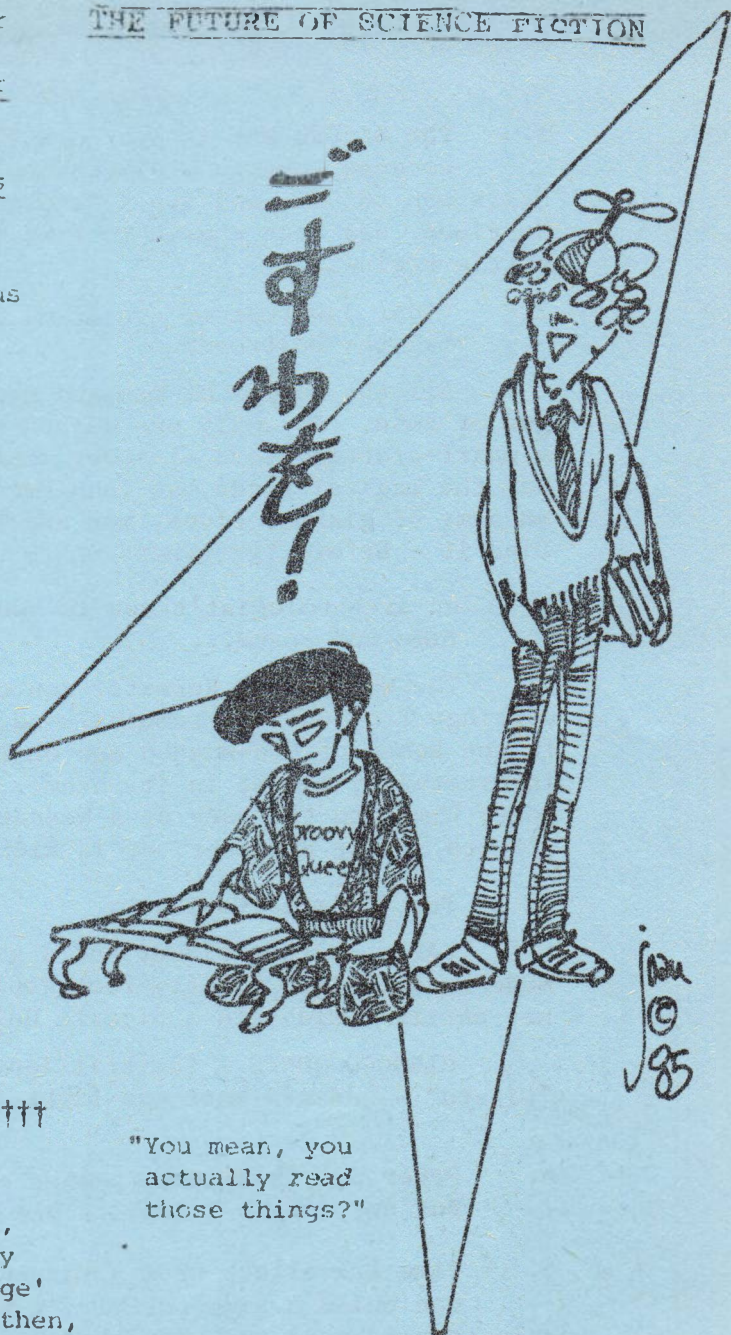
by John Foyster

Having recently, but only half seriously, taken up again the habit of reading Locus and Science Fiction Chronicle I could not help but be overwhelmed by the advertising content - not just the amount but something, something about the content of the advertising. It took some time, but I worked out what it was: the artwork for the ads was amazing, fantastic or, not to put too fine a point on it at all, extremely reminiscent of the covers of the Ziff-Davis Amazing Stories/Fantastic Adventures, those magazines so derided by science fiction fans in the early 1950s. It is almost as though, thirty-odd years later, the reviled mode has triumphed.

For earlier readers, there were so many things wrong with the Ziff-Davis approach that it is scarcely worth going over that old ground again. And indeed I won't. But just reading the advertising copy lets us know what the publishers believe about the nature of the audience for science fiction.

I'm going to look a little more closely at some of the copy used in ads in the December 1985 SFC and the January 1986 Locus; I don't expect that there would be much variation if one were to look at issues months distant from those dates.

THE FUTURE OF SCIENCE FICTION



"You mean, you actually read those things?"

1. The Biofab War is over - but the last of the insectoid aliens have escaped through a dimensional portal to an alternate world where the Nazis won the war and the K'Ronarin fleet has never been. One man, John Harrison, has been chosen to find the Biofab nest before the ultimate battle begins.

2. Vidar Jawbreaker, son of Odin, faces a terrifying god of dark evil - Ygg the Destroyer.

All the worlds of men and gods are threatened by the mad hatred of Ygg, god of ruin. And only one weapon can stop him: the legendary Sword of Frey, a dwarf-crafted sword of power that bestows victory upon any who wield it. Yet the magical blade has long been hidden from all eyes, and Vidar must lead an army of giants, elves, men and Aesir through the Gates between Worlds to find it - before Ygg grasps it for his own deadly goal!

3. An archaeologist's son is swept up in a bizarre odyssey of travel through time and space...

The Wiederhaus Repeater can create holographic images of people and settings from ancient remains, and Professor Levan applies the marvellous tool to the bones of Cro-Magnon man on the island of Cyprus. His son Richard is inadvertently caught in its beam... and is swept into a time vortex that transports him into the body of a Neanderthal boy. Can the Professor reverse the effects of the Repeater, or is Richard trapped 33,000 years in the past?

4. The Ultimate Conflict:

GAEA - both a planet and a god, she is now dangerously insane. She has made herself into a fifty-foot replica of Marilyn Monroe and is transforming her entire world into a bizarre Hollywood fantasy.

CIROCCO JONES - the brilliant, tough Earth-woman who became Gaea's "wizard" - and who must now fight the planet-god to the death!

5. Peter Cory's awesome powers could prevent the destruction of the galaxy. But only if he learns to use them in time.

6. Time travellers from a future utopia are stranded in the past until they can build a time portal. A research scientist and his students agree to help them - until the time transport experiments begin to go wrong. How could their human pawns know the travellers have their own plans for the machine - their own secrets. The future is no utopia. Their past is not ours. And the machine is the greatest weapon in a dimensional war that could obliterate the Earth.

7. In the normal course of things, the invention of the matter duplicator would not have proved fatal to human civilisation. But the duplicators were not invented on Earth; they were secretly introduced to an unready culture by aliens bent on conquest and colonisation. Since the beginnings of Cweom-jik rule, a human underground has toiled desperately to regain Man's heritage. Now they are ready to properly thank the bird-like aliens for all their help...

8. In a crumbling palace on the banks of the River of Faerie there lived four brothers. The eldest was king of all the country round. He was a fine swordsman, but he had a rough temper, and one day, in a fit of rage, he almost killed his younger brother. Luckily the young prince, though badly wounded, had the strength to flee...

Best-selling fantasy author Steven Brust returns to the world he created in *Jherag* for a tale of exile and return centred on the strangest palace since Gormenghast - and the most intriguing band of battling princes ever to pick a quarrel, slay a dragon, confound a wizard, or even seek the advice of a talking horse. [Oh, Mr Ed, where are you when we need you? - eds.]

9. For four long years two great powers have grappled for the fate of a galaxy - now the ultimate battle begins...

10. Share the excitement, the challenge and the promise of humanity's greatest adventure.

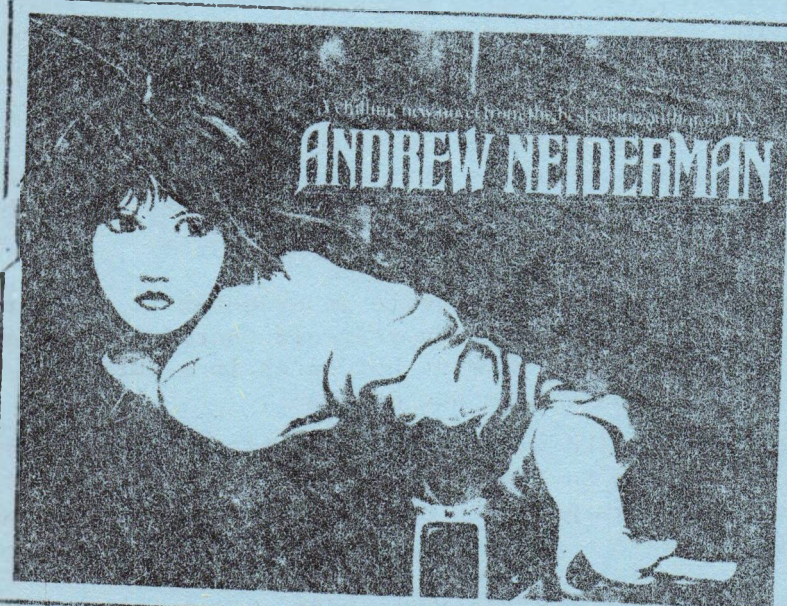
Beginning the compelling saga of a courageous dynasty destined to transform a harsh and hostile planet into a green and growing world.

11. The colonial war is finally a reality - and only one person can reach the President of Earth, Inc. Can the skyrider take on the entire corporation space force to get that message through?

12. Slaying a dragon was simple. John Aversin - Dragonsbane - was the only living man ever to have done so. And now, to save a beleaguered land, he'd been called on to do it again. But slaying Morkeleb, the largest and wisest of dragons, was only the beginning of his perils...

13. LOVE AND DEATH

On a lonely distant planet, a colony desperately struggles to survive, dependant on its life-saving mental link to the near-immortal Dushau. But now that connection is threatened. The Dushau "Oliat" is dangerously close to Renewal, a sexually active state that cancels telepathic abilities. Can the Dushau hold off Renewal until the colony is more firmly established? Or will the deepening bond between Jindigar and Krinata, the first human ever to link minds with an immortal, jeopardise the existence of the last Dushau in the universe?



LOVE CHILD

Sometimes it takes a potion - sometimes it's in the blood! Carol is a normal teenage girl longing to learn about love. Or is she? Within her hides a dark and deadly force that threatens to turn her young desires into ravenous bloodlust. What she doesn't know can kill you.

November • \$3.95 • 320 pages • 0-812-52312-1

14. What really happened on that Dark and Stormy Night?

Shelley's classic novel Frankenstein created a publishing sensation that will never fade from public consciousness. Alas, we moderns know the central event she described - the reanimation of a long-dead corpse by the application of electricity - could never happen. But Wait! By a curious chain of circumstances SF superstar Fred Saberhagen has come into possession of a manuscript written not by some otherwise obscure gothic romance writer, but BY THE MONSTER HIMSELF. AT LAST - THE ELECTRIFYING TRUTH about the hideous Dr Frankenstein and his Monster with a heart of gold...

15. When Keith Stoner awoke, he was in an almost unrecognisable world.

Eighteen years before, he had sacrificed himself to save the greatest mission in Earth's history - a joint U.S.-Soviet retrieval of the first alien craft to enter our system. But when saboteurs threatened the Soyuz,

Stoner gave himself as a hostage - sinking into suspended animation aboard the alien ship, trusting recovery would be made.

Now, eighteen years later, Stoner has been awakened - but so has the alien consciousness that kept him alive all those years. The alien within Stoner intends to explore our world... and nothing will stand in its way.

Now if it is your view that these fifteen little chunks of twaddle are exactly projecting the kind of image you think science fiction should have then you'll not find much point in what follows. After all, what is significant is that the people who okayed the copy for these ads decided that it was the image they wanted for their books - or at least the image that would most attract significant buyers such as are to be found amongst the readers of SFC and Locus. And what the copy does is make me want to run, as fast as possible, away from that stuff. (This may, of course, be the intention. But there's still a comment on the readership of science fiction.)

As well as the text, if not better, the accompanying illustrations convey the atmosphere of the junk pulps of the late 1940s/early 1950s. But fortunately low technology does not allow me to reproduce those illustrations [except for the one above we snuck in anyway].

If we look a little more closely we see a few interesting little points. Yes, numbers 1 and 6, with their quaint use of 'dimensional' and 'portal' are for books from the same publisher, and presumably were hacked out by the same drudge - one hopes that more care went into the construction of the novels than these blurbs advertise, yet one suspects that the blurb-writer was paid more per word.

The first blurb has something in common with most of the others - the emphasis on one man/one thing against the rest of the universe which has been for so long the mainstay of mindless science fiction - the little man who becomes superman. Puberty blues gets only one obvious contender (number 13 - the JLAS rides again!)

But the best criticism of this trash is, I think, to be found by reflection upon ads elsewhere for non-sf novels. I've chosen a few from recent editions of the New York Times Book Review. The difficulty there is that much of the copy is based upon remarks by reviewers, which I plainly couldn't include in the terms of the beef I have. But I have found a few for you to muse upon.

1. The year is 1838, and the most beautiful belle in Savannah is the arrogant and capricious Natalie Browning. A sixteen-year-old charmer accustomed to getting her own way, Natalie is now about to meet her match in a turbulent and dangerous adventurer that will, at last, make her a woman.

Scrupulously researched and filled with fascinating history that takes you from the glorious world of antebellum Savannah to the treacherous wilderness of Georgia upcountry, () presents an unforgettable portrait of a young land, and the men and women who made it their own.

2. Everyone told her that business, especially banking, was no place for a woman. But Quincey Brown wanted what men had: the power to change the world, like the visionaries who built the railroads, the turbine, the telegraph. (), spanning two continents in the tumultuous decade at the beginning of this century, is her story: her start on Wall Street, her dreams and struggles, her triumphs and betrayals. Here are the lives she touched, the men she loved, in one vivid, magnificent portrait of a fiercely independent woman, blessed with unshakeable faith in herself.

3. Funny, tough-talking, and ultimately touching, () introduces you to three generations of a family that represents a good portion of the ethnic groups in America - Cherokee Indian, Irish, Jewish, and Italian. But all three McMullen men shared what Grandpa Jesse likes to think of as "the criminal gene". And he intends to capitalise on that in one last big scam that will keep them in clover forever. Sweeping you from an unforgettably out-of-context Irish wake in Brooklyn to a not-so-secure genetic engineering laboratory in Silicon Valley, () overflows with streetwise wit and colourful characters who leap from the printed page right into your heart.

4. In 1944, OSS operative Richard Mallory and Marie, a beautiful agent of the French Underground, enter Nazi-occupied Paris. But their mission - like their romance - is doomed.

Now, four decades later, the CIA needs Mallory to extract a defector from East Berlin. The time and setting have changed; but the pawns are still the same: Mallory and Marie. Only the stakes are now even higher.

5. Enter the world of BaNare, a people who live on the edge of the Kalahari Desert, at the farthest reaches of human habitation.

The world of Mojamaje, Eater of Rocks, whose first memory is of a terrifying battle with Boers... whose last memory will be of fire and the blessed rain that will save his tribe... who will become a great leader in his own time.

Told in the cadences of the oral tradition of ancient Africa, () is both epic and intimate - the story of five generations who live through an era of danger, upheaval and change; the story of an outcast mother and her heroic son Mojamaje, of his love for the powerful Maka and their remarkable daughters, Naledi and Maboko. And it is the story of the BaNare themselves, who stare in amazement at the first wheel they have ever seen, peer quizzically at their first plough, recoil in fear from the first white man... and who learn, under Mojamaje's wise guidance, to enter a world we begin to recognise as our own.

None of these are exactly rivetting, but nor do they exhibit the grossness of the appeal to adolescence in the skiffy plugs. If this is the image which the science fiction community wants, then it can scarcely complain about the reactions of the Luc Santes of this world. On the other hand, if this is not the desired image, what should be done?

John Foyster

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

If the image of science fiction itself is changing, then perhaps too is the way sf fandom operates these days - at least in Australia. Well, look at the possible changes to the established categories of Ditmar award....

THE DITMAR DEBATE

The commentary on the proposed, new categories of award continues to roll in - telephone calls mostly... but Irwin Hirsh, one of the dying breed of those who can write letters, sent us these musings...

'Dear Roger and Peter,

thanks for *Thyane* #57. It was a good issue.... My reason for writing is to comment on the Ditmar discussion. Like seemingly everyone else I don't like the proposed slate of categories, and given Jack Herman's openness on this matter I'll be sending him a copy of this letter. I'm not sure how much my opinions should be taken into consideration, given that the last Nationalcon of which I was a member was in 1984, and that I will not, most likely, be a member of the 1987 Natcon.

'I must say, up front, that I'm fairly ambivalent about most award systems. Most can't reasonably define the 'best', because there are so many problems with them. The only awards which do define the 'best' are the ones in which all participants are specifically trying to win.

'Because all the teams involved want to win it, winning the VFL Grand Final could be said to define the best team in the competition, while to a footballer either the Brownlow Medal or the goalkicking award is just a bonus to be come by along the way, although no-one regrets winning them.

'Similarly, there would be no-one, I'd say, who tries to win a Ditmar, and winning one would be incidental to the motivations behind the writing of an Australian sf novel, or the publication of a fanzine, etc..

'Having said that doesn't mean I don't like awards such as the Ditmars. Three times my fanzine has been nominated, and each time I've felt good about it. It is a nice feeling, knowing that someone likes my work enough to nominate it. Of course given the choice, I'd rather they'd written an extra - or better, or longer - lcc, than have nominated my fanzine; But I don't have that choice, so I'll take the egoboo in whatever form it comes my way - just as long as someone doesn't try to say I should keep sending them my fanzine just because they've nominated it for a Ditmar.

The Importance of Continuity



In the future, Ditmar awards will look the same, from year to year - an easily recognisable shape that is significantly Australian.

'It strikes me that if the Ditmars are going to mean anything there has to be continuity from one year to the next. For ten years now we've been adding and subtracting categories, and I would have thought we'd now have an idea of which categories we want and which we don't. If nothing else, Jack Herman's statement of intent has been good for getting a discussion going, something which ten years of awards chopping and changing hadn't, really, been able to do.

'In mentioning the importance of continuity I think I should expand on this. We now have the situation where the categories are selected by each year's Awards Sub-Committee, so there is nothing to say that a Best Fanzine category won't appear only every other year [or even less frequently]. However fanzines will continue to be published whether there is an award for Best Fanzine or not. What is someone to make of that situation, twenty years from now, when they look down the list of Ditmar winners and see that we only gave the Best Fanzine award every other year? (And this isn't confined to just the Best Fanzine category; every category's continued existence is subject to the whim of the Awards Sub-Committee now.) I would guess that that person twenty years from now would just dismiss the results out of hand; if we don't care enough about our awards to provide continuity to them, why would or should they?

'Some would agree that as I am a fanzine editor I have a vested interest in wanting the Best Fanzine award to stay, and not be combined with filking, etc.. To a degree they'd be right, but I know that I wouldn't actually be disappointed if I'm not nominated. But I have enough hassles trying to compare a newszine like *Thyme*, a non-sf fanzine like *Fuck The Tories* and an sf fanzine like Bruce's *The Metaphysical Review*. There is no way I am going to [try to] compare these with someone's filking, or someone else's costuming abilities. I've never sat in on a filking session, and more often than not I miss masquerades etc.. My guess is that this award, unchanged, is going to come down to a clash of factions. While it is not true that people are not exclusively 'into' one aspect of fannish endeavours, there aren't a great many who are 'into' all aspects of fandom.

'However costumers etc. do deserve to be, in some way, honoured for their achievements, if that is what they want. I would suggest that costumers already get that with the awards given out at the end of each masquerade. But what they miss out on is that there is no historical list of winners published in the convention programme book, in the way that past Ditmar winners are listed. I would suggest that some research be conducted into the past winners of Natcon masquerades, so that a list can be published side-by-side with past Ditmar winners. This would go a long way to providing the recognition costumers deserve.

'Turning to some of the specific comments made in the last issue of *Thyme*, I find that I can't go along with Perry's idea that Best Fanwriter and Best Fanzine are honouring the same thing. The table given neither confirms nor disproves his contention. Four times the Best Fanwriter and Best Fanzine have been won by the same person in the same year, and four times this hasn't happened. In

'Perry is really getting into a chicken-and-the-egg situation when he suggests that without fanzines fan writing would cease to exist. It is equally true that without fanwriting, even that of the editor themselves, fanzines would cease to exist. Fanwriting and fanzine editing, even in editor-written fanzines, require different particular skills. And given that both add to the enjoyment to be gained out of fandom, strong consideration should be given to continuing to award Ditmars to the best in the various fields.

'As to what awards I believe should be awarded, I would go for Best Aussie Novel, Best Aussie Short Fiction, Best Aussie Fanwriter, Best Aussie Fanzine and Best Aussie Fan Artist, at least. Some may suggest an award for Best Aussie Film, but I doubt the producers/directors of such films actually are aware of the existence of the Ditmars. And as such I can't see that they'd necessarily be greatly honoured to get a Ditmar. Surely to be of any worth an award should mean something both to the recipient and to those giving the awards.

'I can also understand the desire to reduce the number of awards given out, given that it costs the convention committee a fair amount of money to produce the awards. Unlike the WorldCon, where a lot of people join as a Supporting Member, just to vote for the Hugos, I doubt the Ditmars can be considered to be such a revenue-gaining device.'

[Your comments concerning attempts to equate 'Best Fanzine' with 'Best Fanwriter' are ones I can only agree with. Last issue's writers suggested pretty strongly that Fanzine Editing was a fairly significant endeavour, but I think you're right to say it's silly to select one of either fanwriting or fanediting as more important than the other. They are obviously different skills. John W. Campbell (namesake of the well-known award) wasn't ever known particularly for his writing ability - a couple of (admittedly excellent) short stories, and that was it - but there is many a great sf novel which would never have seen the light of day without his particular editing skills having been brought to bear upon it. In the world of fandom, even the best writing can be trampled by a poor editor, while just average writing can be helped immensely by good editing.

[On the other hand, editors might be important (essential, even) to fanzines, but as Leigh Edmonds has complained on many an occasion, the best editor in the world will languish, given a total lack of good writers. You need both; and if one should be recognised by an award, both should be.

[And then some people wrote in about The Motional and Fuck The Notional, and the topic of Aussie fanzines in general... take it away, Joseph Nicholas:]

'Thanks... for the photocopies of The Motional and Fuck The Notional, about which Judith will say more in her letter. From my point of view, however, the former is really rather a good parody, and like all good parodies dead on target with some of its criticisms - Valma's report of Swancon, for instance (and you'll notice that every word of the paragraph to which Dave Luckett took such exception in Fuck The Notional appears, only slightly amended, in The Motional's parody); Damien Broderock's jargon-clogged excuses for his pursuit of the "truth" about George Turner's sexuality; the constant references to "funny little people" in the fanzine reviews.... I know that Leigh and Valma have not been having a particularly good year, with illness and overwork and whatnot, and that I should not therefore admit to having enjoyed The Motional, but I have to confess that despite myself I did giggle a few times. Several, even. Quite a bit, actually... I'd love to know who produced it [join the club], because apart from anything else there's a real talent at work here: one that is clever, observant, sharp, and not afraid to speak its mind. One, to judge from the preponderance of Melbourne names it mentions, that is probably Melbourne-based. One that it's possible could bear some slight grudge against Leigh and Valma for past disagreements. And one that, on this basis, Judith and I would tentatively identify as Christine Ashby.'

'Fuck The Notional, on the other hand, is contemptible shit from beginning to end - a deliberate, cold-blooded assault by a bunch of cretinous wankers with no other aim in mind than the sabotaging of Valma's GUFF candidacy. For them to admit up front that their attack is provoked largely by pique at the failure of The Space Wastrel to get the glowing review they think it deserved only points up the shabbiness of their method - one so laboured that they can't even accuse Leigh and Valma of being pretentious and condescending without sounding pretentious and condescending themselves. Luckett's contribution is the clearest example, as pompous and long-winded as the mouthings of any Conservative politician (never mind the fact that anyone who can't spell "informative" has no business preaching grammar to anyone else). In typical Conservative practice, facts which don't quite fit the arguments are massaged until they do - such as the suggestion, by both Nichols and Loney, that Leigh and Valma had some role in the actual editing of the second issue of Fuck The Tories. This disingenuousness is only compounded by Warner's claim that he and Loney are still inexperienced fanzine editors who should be given more leeway, despite the fact that they've been at it a couple of years now. Which leaves Muijsert, presumably still smarting from losing DUFF to some close friends of Leigh and Valma - always assuming she has any motive at all besides the jealousy (of their targets' reputation, skill and intelligence) which so obviously drives her comrades. Even those they praise, such as Marc Ortlieb and yourself, must be scrambling to escape from the stink of this bunch's corruption.'

'On the other hand... on the other hand, the very day before your package arrived I'd handed over to Avedon Carol and Rob Hansen for the third issue of Pulp an article netitled 'Distance, Context And The Lucky Country: Notes Towards A Theory Of Australian Fanzines', an involved and lengthy piece which I'd hoped might provoke some debate in Australian fandom about the poor reception accorded Australian fanzines in Britain and elsewhere. But with the publication of The Motional and Fuck The Notional I'd surmise that you now have your very own home-grown version of the unlamented Topic A. Poot. What chance now for a learned debate when you can engage in some eye-gouging in the gutter instead?'

Joseph Nicholas

[Peter here: For the past two years, I have been watching the TAFF feud - your 'Topic A' - rage through various fanzines, bewildered by the vitriol thrown back and forth. From a distance of 20,000 km, it is very difficult to see why people are drawn to say some of the things they do. There is obviously background knowledge and experience, possessed only by a few of the original participants, which was quickly lost or laid by the wayside as the feud widened, became increasingly personally directed, and generally raged out of control - "truth the first casualty" and all that. It is very difficult to argue rationally when the original issues have been lost or misunderstood.

[Your comments about Fuck The Notional disturb me a little (sufficiently to consider them worth airing). I agree with a lot of what you've said - my impression of this fanzine, too, is that it is mostly over the top and uncalled for. That is, except for one article - the one written by Michelle Muijsert.

[You point out that Michelle's article is sour grapes over losing DUFF. I must admit that this possibility had never occurred to me. However, I am not a candidate either for DUFF or GUFF and have no intention of ever being one; and I tell you that what Michelle wrote was the truth. I know because I was there and I saw (much of what she talks about) happen. If she hadn't written it, I would have, though possibly not as well. The 'crime' that Leigh and Valma were guilty of (and which almost certainly at least helped spark both The Motional and Fuck The Notional) was one perpetrated not against DUFF or GUFF but against FFANZ.

[In The Notional #14, in announcing the FFANZ result, it was suggested that the race had been improperly run; that if they had not been denied their democratic rights, their votes would have resulted in the improper winner, Roger Weddall, being replaced by the more worthy George Turner. I ask you to read Michelle's article in the knowledge that it is factually correct and ask yourself "Why did Leigh and Valma say what they said about FFANZ?" Therein lies the crime of this whole sordid business.

[Beyond that point - that article - the waters become considerably muddy - to a point where, rather than commenting further, I'll just go on to Part 2 of the reply form the 22 Denbigh St. People's Revolutionary Collective - Judith Hanna writes:]

Oh dear, another mugging in the neighbourhood! Let's hope it doesn't turn into another messy Topic A.

'But why should a few sour notes in what is overseas considered just about the only non-boring Australian fanzine provoke not one but two simultaneous parodies? Your Fan Philosopher says: 'If everyone puts you on a pedestal, they'll protect it with their lives; if you try putting yourself on a pedestal, they will rush to knock it down.' Ian Nichols takes what seems to me to be a more realistic view of mob psychology: 'By the force of Australian fandom's pathetic desire to create saints and heroes, Leigh and Valma have been removed from the world of mortals...' There seems to be agreement that Leigh and Valma were inhabiting an eminence up above the mob. It seems that everyone had come to take for granted the regular appearance of a consistently literate and entertaining "You-Beaut" Production, be it called Ornithopter/Rataplan or The Notional. Tall poppies, and as such natural game for the knockers.

'Recently, there are signs of a new Melbourne fanzine renaissance, with zines like Larrikin, The Metaphysical Review and ASFR coming out fairly regularly. Despite Michelle's clean layout and production, The Space Wastrel needs to liven up what's written inside before it will attract similar attention, and it needs to appear more frequently.'

'P.S.: Thyme's great strength O/S is the gossip in its "Who's Where" section, and sometimes its news & reviews - but these could often be improved by some more interesting writing!'

[(Still Peter:) I'd have been quite surprised if Australians didn't have a better opinion of Australian fanwriting than overseas readers did. Australian fan writing is about Australians after all. I have this theory that the quality of any piece of writing improves immensely when you know the person it's written about. I've

noticed that my own opinion of British fanwriting has improved a lot since I've met a few of the people who live there too.

[Some of the in-depth news that Thyme prints - Constitutional crises and batties to save Ditmar categories - probably leaves most Australians bored to the back teeth [what do you mean, probably?], so what hope does any British fan have of staying awake through it all? There's only so much you can do to jazz up a discussion about the Constitution. I'm glad you like our gossip column though.]

THE ART OF FANZINE PUBLISHING CONSIDERED AS A BODY-CONTACT SPORT - #1

by Perry Middlemiss

Publishing a fanzine can be tough: time-consuming, expensive and mentally draining. Often it's a thankless task providing the publisher with little in the way of financial or emotional reward, but somehow having an attraction which convinces a sizeable number of people around the world that the end product, and the resultant response, is worthy of their deepest endeavours.

Why that is so is a difficult question, and is not one that I feel competent to answer; I'll leave that up to the shrinks. What I consider myself more capable of is to oversee a discussion about the mechanics of publishing fanzines. I will grant you that that is an easier problem, yet not one that I have seen adequately dealt with before. I feel that there is a dearth of written information in fandom relating to this physical publishing process and intend, as best I can, to address the topic - with a lot of help from my friends and acquaintances - over the coming months, in these pages. I have already contacted a number of fanzine editors who have indicated their intention to appear in this series of articles over the next few months.

If I receive the help in this task that I expect, and obtain the response that I hope for, I would like to collate all information into one concise volume, some time in the near future. This, I feel, would be an invaluable reference guide for new and old fanzine editors alike. If it doesn't turn out that way, well, tough. I expect that, even if the exercise doesn't fulfill all my ambitions, it will be very useful (and possibly entertaining) and will give me the chance to find out how my fellow fanzine editors go about kicking their prodigies out the door time after time.

Before we get into the first piece, don't for one minute expect that the ensuing discussion will be anything other than an unruly mess. But then, what else could you expect from a bunch of people who can't make up their minds if fandom is either a goddam hobby or a way of life?

The Problem of Going Monthly - #1

by Perry Middlemiss

As I see it there are four major problem areas associated with producing a monthly fanzine:- (1) regularity; (2) material; (3) expense and (4) time. A large volume could be written about all these points and they are all inter-related to some degree, but I will attempt only briefly to tackle the first of them and give you some indication of my methods for getting over the difficulties.

So you've decided to produce your fanzine on a monthly schedule and things have been ticking along quite nicely for a few months when you find yo-rself falling a little behind your self-imposed deadlines. What do you do? Will anyone notice?

To answer the second question first, yes people will notice. [Whether they care or not... sorry - eds.] If you let your deadlines slip by a day, no-one is going to pay much attention, but if they slip by a week or so this will have a much greater effect than if you let a bi-monthly slip by the same margin - for some reason the gap between bi-monthly issues appears to be more than double the gap between monthly publications. Maybe it's that the impression of a month-old fanzine is still fresh in the mind when the next installment rolls up, while something that happened two months back is beyond most people's attention span. Though with some fans I start to wonder; not long ago one of the editors of this esteemed journal commented to me that he thought it had been a while since Irwin and I had produced our last issue of Larrikin. Informed that he had only had the previous issue just over a fortnight ago, my enquiry then as to the level of his recent consumption of turps was not received overly well.

Right then your readers have noticed the delay in the publication of the issue and you are wondering about what you can do about not having the same thing happen the next time. Well, you can help avoid having a repeat performance but it all depends [on how lucky you are] on how willing you are to spend a bit of time and how committed you are to hitting your self-imposed schedules.

One thing is certain: if you're not motivated you might as well give the regular schedule away and just put out the fanzine whenever you get around to it, because no matter how good you are at deciding on a deadline, if you couldn't care less whether you hit it or not, you probably won't in the majority of cases. On the other hand, if you are willing to take the time, a small amount of planning won't go astray and will become invaluable during the preparation of some future issue when time is tight. Plan what articles/artwork you want from whom and by when. And then write the deadlines down and stick by them. Give your contributors realistic deadlines and request that they let you know how they are going at say weekly or fortnightly intervals. (This contact is good for morale as well as information/idea sharing.) It is quite possible to do this without seeming overbearing, if you explain your obsession with deadlines and your requirement to be able to cover any gaps with other material. They may think you're crazy but at least they'll know where you stand.

Okay, you've got a plan with deadlines and all that stuff and still something goes wrong and the issue's late, so what do you do? No, come back down off that ledge - if it's late, it's late; there's nothing you can do about it now except try to ensure that the same thing doesn't happen again. And the way to do that is to take note of what went wrong with this issue. And write it down. It's too easy to forget the seemingly minor but ultimately important problems if you don't have them documented.

For example: with issue #4 you had an important contributor who submitted her article late (just a few days) and the work needed a rewrite, which took a few more days, forcing the issue to be published a week late. It is now issue #12 and you want to use the contributor again. You remember you had problems with her last time but you can't recall exactly what they were. If you had written down the details you could make allowances this time: maybe give her longer, allow for a bigger gap between her deadline and the publication date, or send around the big boys with the tyre levers.

Even allowing for all that, something unexpected may come up, like a sudden illness. There is really nothing you can do about it other than to catch up in later issues, grin and bear it. That happened to me a couple of months ago. I came down with a mild form of glandular fever and was off work for a couple of weeks sleeping a lot and staying off the booze. In such a completely sober mood I was not particularly receptive to Irwin's regular phone calls regarding deadlines and the like.

That's one solution to the problems with regularity; another, of course, is to have lots of money, lots of material and work at it full-time. Many of us may want that to be the case, but it's a bit of a pipe dream few of us can afford. The more realistic one is to plan well ahead and take note of what went wrong, learn from your mistakes and pray the bank doesn't cut off your Bankcard.

Further discussion of monthly fanzines will follow in the months ahead.

Perry Middlemiss

[If you have any thoughts on the matter of fanzines, and in particular the subject of monthly - or just regular - fanzines, why not write in and let us hear about it? Mail on the topic can be addressed and sent to Perry Middlemiss, GPO Box 2708X, Melbourne 3001, or just sent to us here at Thyme (P.O.Box 273, Fitzroy 3065), and we will forward them on - after reading them, of course - to Perry himself.

Wai, Péhea, Kea Hei, Inahea, Āhea, Mō Te Aha - The CHANGES OF ADDRESS

Sydney: Richard, Susan & Kelly Hryckiewicz have moved house, to 38 Hornet Street,
Greenfield Park 2176. Home 'phone: (02) 823 1931. They also have a new

Postal Address: P.O.Box 275, Smithfield 2164. And if that weren't enough, they also have a new party: Saturday 25th October, midday to midnight, including a BYO BBQ picnic. Non-news: Terry Frost & Karen Vaughan, newly wed, are "contemplating" moving to Canberra you've been warned, sort of (says Terry).

Perth: John Hall Friedman's wife, Michael Gardner (yes, M-i-c-h-a-e-l - she probably had a brother etc. etc.) is pregnant, and expecting in April/May. This will be their second child. And speaking of children... Evan John Luckett Beasley was born on the 15th of October, a quarter past midnight; congrats, Dave & Sally.

Adelaide: Alan Ferguson, late of Scotland & points South, has arrived in Australia with girlfriend Carol Sinclair, to stay for good. Welcome to Aus! They arrived "a few days ago" and will for the moment be contactable and living at Carol's parents' place: 40 East Terrace, Kensington Gardens 5068. Alan & Carol will wed on the 9th of November, what's more; details to follow, for sure....

Melbourne: Just when you thought it was safe to go out to the cinema... Angus Caffrey & Ali Kayn's film 'My Country' will (Angus insists) premiere at the National Mutual Theatre on the 25th of October (well, by the time you read this...) and there will follow two additional screenings, in November - day after Cup Day, and the day after that - For those two later sessions it will be \$5.00 per ticket, so rush now before they sell out - see Lee Harding, Erik Harding, Valma Brown, Jane Tisell and more!

U.S.A.: Ted White has moved - no, he's still in gaol, but in a different cell - please note the change: Theodore White, A7, Fairfax County Adult Detention Center, 10520 Judicial Drive, Fairfax VA 22030, U.S.A.

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And so that just about wraps it up - except to list the credits for this issue, and to mention that your editors can be bribed... I'm rather partial to lunches or home-cooked dinners, and proof of this can be seen in the fact that nowhere in this issue is mention made of - ah, but I guess I did promise not to say. Thanks for this help with this issue to: Cath, Irwin, Jack, John, Joseph, Kerry, Marc, Nancy, Perry...

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