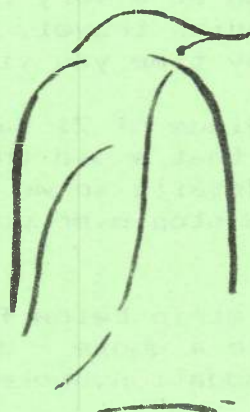


thyme 61

the AUSTRALASIAN SF NEWS MAGAZINE February 1987



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PENGUIN
POLITICS
PLEASE!

(KINGON IN '89)

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Robin Johnson

Offering special deals to CONSPIRACY '87 in Brighton, U.K. with your choice of carrier, and featuring the Official Airline, British Airways, with direct flights to London from all mainland State capital cities.

We are planning a group departure on Sunday 23rd August overnight to London, and three days and nights in London before going to Brighton for CONSPIRACY '87's opening on 27th August. After the Worldcon, we plan to leave you free time to visit friends or sightsee in Britain or on the Continent. We leave on 14th September for Singapore and a short stopover before the final leg back to Australia. Just under four weeks away - a fantastic World Convention trip at a very special price.

If your plans are to come back via the NASFIC in Phoenix, we can prepare a special itinerary for you at a very competitive price. One of our specialities is U.S. and Canadian travel, and we would be happy to quote for any route you wish, at any time you like.

Excursion fares are for a minimum of 21 days in Europe and the UK. There are often fares available that avoid these restrictions, and if this is your problem give us the details so we can quote you a fare. We also have special fares via various stop-over ports and the flights of various airlines.

I've set up a tear-or-cut-off strip below for you to send me with all the details I'll need to prepare a quote - don't forget to let me know if you already have accommodation booked.

To: Robin Johnson, 30 Mona St, Battery Pt, TAS 7000

From: (please give phone no. for after-hours contact, and address)

Here's my plan: How about giving me a quote? I've listed all the stuff you'll need, like if I can travel with the group, where I'd like to go to besides the Worldcon, if I'm going with someone, my preferred airline or stop-over ports, if any, how long I can stay or if I have no fixed plans for returning.

Thyme #61, the newszine that doesn't run away but which is quite partial to long trips, is brought to you by Roger Weddall and Peter Burns, of P.O.Box 273, Fitzroy 3065, AUSTRALIA - telephone [61 3] 619 8731 (Business Hours) or 427 0691 otherwise.

Thyme is available for local news (from anywhere), artwork that we think is pretty good, interesting letters, pedigree Burmese shorthairs (careful now), 'phone calls, two dollar coins or even regular subscriptions, at the following rates:

AUSTRALASIA/NORTH AMERICA: ten issues for ten dollars.

EUROPE/JAPAN/AZANIA: ten issues for £5, 20DM, 1000¥ or a letter indicating interest.

And introducing our overseas agents:

EUROPE: Joseph Nicholas, 22 Denbigh Street, Pimlico, London, SW1V 2ER, U.K.

NORTH AMERICA: Mike Glycer, 5828 Woodman Avenue #2, Van Nuys, CA 91401, U.S.A.

Otherwise please write to us directly. That only leaves one little bit of official stuff, a gentle reminder that, should your mailing address label have upon it a big silver X, this could be the last issue you will be seeing unless you... DO SOMETHING.

+++++

"That evening Jackson went back to work. He discovered a further class of exceptions which he had not known or even suspected. That was a group of twenty-nine multivalued potentiators. These words, meaningless in themselves, acted to elicit a complicated and discordant series of shadowings from other words. Their particular type of potentiation varied according to their position in the sentence.

Thus, when Erum had asked him 'to *trombramcthulanchierir* in the usual manner', he had merely wanted Jackson to make an obligatory ritual obeisance. This consisted of clasping his hands behind his neck and rocking back on his heels. He was required to perform this action with an expression of definite but modest pleasure, in accordance with the totality of the situation, and also in accord with the state of his stomach and nerves and with his religion and ethical code, and bearing in mind minor temperamental differences due to fluctuations in heat and humidity, and not forgetting the virtues of patience, similitude and forgiveness.

"It was quite understandable. And all quite contradictory to everything Jackson had previously learned about Hon.

"It was more than contradictory; it was unthinkable, impossible and entirely out of order. It was as if, having discovered palm trees in frigid Antarctica, he had further found that the fruit of these trees was not coconuts, but muscatel grapes.

"It couldn't be - but it was."

- 'Shall We Have a Little Talk?', Robert Sheckley.

And if you think that's pretty stange, how about this:

Ditmar Nominations Open

Nominations for the 1987 Australian Science Fiction Awards are now open, thus ending all speculation about what categories the Awards Sub-committee are finally going to settle on. This is it, final. There have been a few changes since we last heard, but the only one I'm going to note is the one which says that Michelle Muijsert (co-editor of The Space Wastrel and permanently resident in Australia for the past 4 years) is not eligible for any award. Jack's basis for saying that Michelle is ineligible is as good as his basis for any of the other category alterations he's made this year.

Here are the categories, now official:

1. BEST AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION OR FANTASY NOVEL
For an sf or f work of novel length, first published in 1986, and written by an Australian citizen or resident of longer than seven years.
2. BEST AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION OR FANTASY SHORT FICTION
As for Category 1 but the work must be of less than novel length. (Novella, Novelette or Short Story).

3. BEST AUSTRALIAN FANZINE

Awarded to an amateur magazine dealing with Science Fiction, Fantasy, Fandom or related subjects, which produced, at least, one issue in 1986 and was edited and printed by an Australian Citizen or Resident of longer than seven years.

4. BEST AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION OR FANTASY ARTIST

For works by a Professional or Fantasy Artist, Illustrator, Cartoonist, Sculptor or Artisan produced in 1986. Artists must fulfil the same citizenship or residency qualifications as above.

5. OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO AUSTRALIAN FANDOM

For the fan whose activities in any or all aspects of Australian Fandom have contributed most to Fandom during 1986. These activities include, but are not limited to, fanwriting, fanart, co and/or club organisation, costuming, filking, letterhacking and apahacking. The same citizenship or residency qualifications as above apply.

THE WILLIAM ATHELING JR AWARD FOR CRITICISM OR REVIEW

For a particular piece of criticism or review produced by an Australian and first published or presented in 1986.

Nominations close on 20th February 1987. Voting closes 15 April 1987. Nominations, votes, correspondence etc should be sent to:

AWARDS SUB-COMMITTEE
Box 272, Wentworth Building,
University of Sydney 2006.

Bleep!

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

- FAN FUNDS -

As the calendar drifts lethargically into February and events like Christmas can again be seen on the far distant horizon, perhaps you were thinking about voting in one of the many fan funds that are around this time of year. Well, the news for you is that it's too late. Instead, we offer you some results:

FFANZ RACE ENDS IN TIE!

<u>Candidates</u>	<u>Aus.</u>		<u>NZ</u>		<u>Total</u>		
Alex/Karen Heatley	3	...	0	...	3	3	■
Frank Macskasy Jr.	7	...	25	...	32	34	■
Lyn McConchie	22	...	8	...	30	32	■
Write Ins*	4	...	2	...	6	■	
Hold Over Funds	1	...	0	...	1	■	
	37	...	35	...	72		

) declared joint winners,
after the distribution
of all preferences

* Write Ins: In Australia, two votes for Tim Jones, one vote for Wellington fan Cathryn Symons and one vote for 'Footrot Flats' illustrator Murray Ball. In New Zealand, two votes for Auckland fan Dean Haskell.

Certainly, this was a surprising result, one that we believe is without precedent. Realising the result they had on their hands (and the rather depleted state of the fan fund coffers), the Administrators thought long and hard about somehow separating out one winner, but really there was nothing for it but to declare Frank Macskasy Jr. and Lyn McConchie the joint winners of FFANZ in 1987.

But, not only had fannish history been made with the first ever exactly tied fan fund race, but days later for the first time ever a winning candidate of a race had announced that they would not be fulfilling their responsibilities as winner.

In an open letter to New Zealand fandom, co-winner of the 1986 race Frank Macskasy Jr has written saying that he is unhappy with the level of support (by way of votes) that this year's race has attracted. From an Australian point of view, at least, this is hard to fathom, with this year's Australian vote tally being up on previous years, and voter participation in fact being higher than in the simultaneously conducted DUFF (Down Under - Aus/USA) fand fund race.

In any event, Australian fandom will still be able to welcome its popular choice in this year's race (see results above), Lyn McConchie. Lyn will be arriving in Melbourne 15th April before Eastercon '87, and will also be at Capcon in Canberra.

DUFF RACE ENDS

Candidates

Aus** USA** Total

Lucy Huntzinger	25	57	82
Tom Whitmore	1	55	56
Laurraine Tutihasi	6	24	30
Kathy Sanders	0	14	14
No Preference	0	6	6
Hold Over Funds	0	2	2
Write Ins*	2	0	2

32 160 192

* Write Ins: one vote for Jeanne Gomoll, one vote for Tim Jones.

** These figures weren't actually given in this form in the official DUFF report, they had to be deduced (Hence the inability of your reporters to give a detailed breakdown of how the preferences went). The sums appear to be out by one vote somewhere, so these figures can't be taken as gospel truth. The totals are accurate, however, and Lucy Huntzinger really was the winner. We knew you had it in you, kid.

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

GUFF RACE STOPS

Candidates

Australasia Europe Total

Irwin Hirsh	44	25	69	76	91	120
Valma Brown	23	18	41	41	57	63
Tim Jones (Write In)	38	2	40	43	46	■
Jean Weber	25	12	37	39	■	■
(Other) Write Ins*	9	0	9	■	■	■
No Preference	3	2	5	■	■	■
Hold Over Funds	2	0	2	■	■	■

144 59 203

* Write Ins - four votes for Larry Dunning, three votes for Roger Weddall, one vote for Marc Ortlieb and one vote for 'Crocodile Dundee'.

And so, in a campaign that polled an extraordinarily large number of votes - possibly the most in any fan fund race ever, let alone for GUFF, Irwin Hirsh was the popular choice. Irwin and Wendy Hirsh will be travelling to Britain later this year to attend the World SF Convention being held in Brighton. In relaying the results, GUFF Administrator Justin Ackroyd added that the fund currently has in its Australian account the grand total of A\$3,058.52. Your reporter then mentioned the subject of Trip Reports but alas the line went quiet - we must have accidentally been cut off. More on this later....

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CONVENTION UPDATES and other gossip

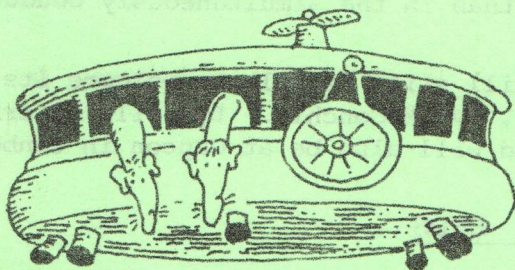
DODECACON

Dates: 1st - 15th February '87

Rates: Attending

Venue: The Leura Garage Motor Inn

CANCELLED



"We've come from Rigel, and they've cancelled."

The unfortunate news is that DODECACON has had to be cancelled, due to lack of money with which to oversee its organisation. At the time the decision was made to cancel the event, the hotel was demanding a deposit in order for function & accommodation rooms to be set aside. At that point very few people had confirmed their intention to pay for rooms, and what had started as a simple Birthday celebration was beginning to look like something involving a major financial commitment - and where's the fun in that? But there is an alternative...

YOU ARE INVITED TO A PARTY

You are invited to a Birthday Party to celebrate Eric Lindsay's 40th, Gordon Lingard's 30th, decimal currency's 21st and, *in absentia*, Bruce Gillespie's 40th; with honourable mention to Jean Weber, Valma Brown, Andrew Taubman and no doubt Many Other Fans whose birthdays are in February but who weren't clever enough to have one of the Biggies in 1987.

Time, Date: Saturday, 14th February, at 7:30pm.

Venue: the Vienna Gold Restaurant (upstairs), 121a King Street, Newtown, Sydney.

Cost: you will have a choice of three menus, with prices in the range of...

\$3 for entrees, \$8.50 for main meals, plus extra for drinks and some of the Vienna Gold's famous cakes, if you wish.

RSVP: Gordon Lingard, P.O.Box A359, Sydney South 2000, or (02) 516 5596 by 13 Feb.
(No money need be paid in advance, yea.)

Now what were we talking about a moment ago... oh yes: conventions.

SWANCON XII

Dates: 28 Feb - 2 March '87

Rates: Attending \$20, Supporting \$5.

Venue: Airways Hotel, 195 Adelaide Terrace, Perth, WA.

GoH: John McDouall

Theme: "Breakthroughs"

Mail: Swanncon XII, P.O.Box 318, Nedlands 6009.

Swancons have a reputation of being fun-filled, relaxed affairs (even when they're frantically busy being the year's National Convention), and this one should be no different in that respect. If you're in the area....

TREKCON III

Dates: 14th & 15th of March, '87

Rates: Attending \$30, Supporting \$15

Venue: The Sheraton Hotel, 13 Spring Street, Melbourne, VIC.

GoH: Betsi Ashton

Theme: "Back In Training"

Mail: TREKCON III, GPO Box 5206AA, Melbourne 3001.

This also should be a friendly, smallish convention (if only going by the limited size of the venue's function rooms), but if you're feeling like a little bit of Trekmania, we can't think of a better place to be, that weekend. See you there?

We have not given lists of Australian Fanzines, or SF/Fantasy Artists, because the nominees in these categories are not so hard to find; in the case of the 'Outstanding Contribution to Australian Fandom' category we would not dare suggest what sort of activity might cause one to be worthy of nomination ~~apart from being a good fan writer~~. With that in mind, and with the hope that the following lists are of some use, read on....

Seek And Ye Shall Find - - - - Eric Harries-Harris (Aphelion 1)
 Shut The Door When You Go Out - George Turner (Aphelion 4)
 Station 2152 - - - - - Jack Wodhams (Analog Aug)
 Stone Quarry - - - - - Gerald Murnane (Meanjin 4, '86)
 The Big Slip - - - - - Eric Harries-Harris (Crux 6)
 The Deciad - - - - - Sean McMullen (Omega Nov/Dec)
 The Only Bird In Her Name - - Terry Dowling (Aphelion 1)
 The Oracle And The Ocean - - - Ron Ferguson (Aphelion 4)
 The Palma Experiment - - - - Freda McLennan (Omega Jan/Feb)
 The Pharaoh's Airship - - - - Sean McMullen (Omega July/Aug)
 The Striped Holes Caper - - - Damien Broderick (Omega Mar/Apr)
 That Barstard Cromwell - - - - John J. Alderson (Crux 6)
 Time Of The Star - - - - - Terry Dowling (Aphelion 3)
 Time! Sang Fate - - - - - Sean McMullen & Paul Collins (Aphelion 2)
 Warhead - - - - - Josie Flett (Omega Mar/Apr)
 Watching Bobby Grow - - - - - R. E. Kelly (Omega Jan/Feb)
 What We Did To The Tyger - - - Terry Dowling (Omega Jan/Feb)
 Wilkie's Lads - - - - - Jean West Penna (Aphelion 4)

In both fiction categories, we have assembled as comprehensive a list as we were able, but these listings may not be complete, and are intended not so much as a list of recommendations, as a list of what we were able to track down.

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THE WILLIAM ATHELING JR. AWARD (for criticism or review)

Originally open to any article of sf criticism, Australian or not, nowadays the William Atheling Jr Award (after James Blish's critical *nom de plume*) is given for an individual, Australian piece of reviewing or criticism. The rules this year don't specify that the piece has to be on or about the field of sf or fantasy, but I'm sure we can all be adult about this [Jack?].

The articles listed below are hopefully (but probably not) a complete list of work theoretically eligible for the award this year; we have combed the obvious sources for work we thought might conceivably be of interest when it comes to nominating things for the award (and discarded work we thought wasn't) but if you come across material you think worthy of consideration, please do let us know, but do so quickly. That said, we hope you find this list (as well as the ones above) of some use.

Explanation of table: we have given the critic/reviewer, the title of the article (and in brackets, if applicable, the work or works under discussion) and the source. Abbreviations as follows: Aph. — Aphelion ASFR — Australian Science Fiction Review
TSW — The Space Wastrel SF — Science Fiction

<u>Jenny Blackford</u>	untitled (Robert Holdstock's <u>Mythago Wood</u>)	<u>ASFR</u> 1
	untitled (Joan Slonczewski's <u>A Door Into Ocean</u>)	<u>ASFR</u> 4
<u>Russell Blackford</u>	'Taking Wynne Whiteford Seriously' (general works)	<u>ASFR</u> 1
	'Debased and Lascivious?' (Samuel Delany's <u>Stars In My Pocket</u>)	<u>ASFR</u> 4
	untitled (David Palmer's <u>Threshold</u>)	<u>ASFR</u> 2
	untitled (Rudy Rucker's <u>Master of Time and Space</u>)	<u>ASFR</u> 3
	untitled (Keith Taylor's <u>Bard III: The Wild Sea</u>)	<u>ASFR</u> 4
<u>Dennis Callegari</u>	untitled (Gene Wolfe's <u>The Devil In A Forest</u>)	<u>Thyme</u> 53
<u>John Foyster</u>	'The Long View'	<u>ASFR</u> 1/2/3
	untitled (Richard Lupoff's <u>Lovecraft's Book</u>)	<u>ASFR</u> 2
	untitled (Greg Bear's <u>Blood Music</u>)	<u>ASFR</u> 4
	untitled (Vassily Aksyonov's <u>The Island of Crimea</u>)	<u>ASFR</u> 5

<u>Leigh Edmonds</u>	untitled (A.A.Attanasio's <u>In Other Worlds</u>)	<u>ASFR</u> 5
<u>Bruce Gillespie</u>	'Gene Wolfe's Sleight of Hand'	<u>ASFR</u> 1
<u>Sneja Gunew</u>	'Forms of Power in Recent Australian Science Fiction'	<u>ASFR</u> 3
<u>David King</u>	'The Zeitgeist Machine Runs Out of 'Steam' (<u>Strange Attractors</u>)	<u>SF</u> 22
	'A Deconstructionist's Delight'	<u>SF</u> 22
<u>Mark Loney</u>	'Shaw Things - The Women In Bob Shaw's SF'	<u>TSW</u> 2
	'Genre: Science Fiction'	<u>TSW</u> 4
<u>Rosaleen Love</u>	untitled (Isaac Asimov's anthology <u>The Edge of Tomorrow</u>)	<u>ASFR</u> 4
<u>Dave Lockett</u>	'Rescuer of Maidens - The Female Characters in Two Series By Jack Vance'	<u>TSW</u> 4
	untitled (Jack Vance's <u>Rhialto the Marvellous</u>)	<u>TSW</u> 2
<u>Yvonne Rousseau</u>	'The City Scape As Fiction' (<u>Urban Fantasies</u>)	<u>SF</u> 22
	'Dreadful Suspicions of the 'Ethical Culture' Trilogy of George Turner' <u>The Notional</u> &	<u>ASFR</u> 2
	'SF and the Dirty Little Virgin'	<u>ASFR</u> 3
	untitled (Ursula Le Guin's <u>The Compass Rose</u>)	<u>Thyme</u> 52
	untitled (Gene Wolfe's <u>Peace</u>)	<u>Thyme</u> 49
	untitled (Robert Heinlein's <u>The Cat Who Walks Through Walls</u>)	<u>ASFR</u> 2
<u>B.H.Slater</u>	'Lesser Literatures'	<u>SF</u> 21
<u>Lucy Sussex</u>	'Australian SF From The Mainstream'	<u>Thyme</u> 50
	'Long Versus Short SF: The Examination of a Fix Up'	<u>ASFR</u> 5
	untitled (anthology <u>Despatches From The Frontier...</u>)	<u>ASFR</u> 1
	untitled (William Gibson's <u>Burning Chrome</u>)	<u>ASFR</u> 3
<u>Michael J.Tolley</u>	'Oo-A-Deen': An Early Australian Metafantasy'	<u>SF</u> 22
	'The Bill Gibson Show' (William Gibson's <u>Neuromancer</u>)	<u>Aph.</u> 1
	'Aldiss, Not Heaven Too' (the <u>Helliconia</u> trilogy)	<u>Aph.</u> 2
	'Fang's Day Is Coming! (an examination of <u>The Transing Syndrome</u>)	<u>Aph.</u> 2
	'Practice Makes Perfect - The Novels of David Brin'	<u>Aph.</u> 3
	'Mastercard' (Orson Scott Card's novels)	<u>Aph.</u> 4
<u>George Turner</u>	untitled (Kenneth Cook's <u>Play Little Victims</u>)	<u>Thyme</u> 56
	untitled (David Brin's <u>The Postman</u>)	<u>ASFR</u> 3
<u>Janeen Webb</u>	untitled (William Gibson's <u>Count Zero</u>)	<u>ASFR</u> 3
	untitled (Suzette Haden Elgin's <u>Native Tongue</u>)	<u>ASFR</u> 5
<u>Margaret Winch</u>	'Frank's Tank' (Frank Herbert's <u>Dune</u> series)	<u>Aph.</u> 2/3

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LETTERS AND STUFF

[There's a Ditmar nomination form in with this issue, something which would seem to take a little of the emergency away from discussion of that particular matter. So, for something a little bit different, here's the thoughts of one recently English fan who doesn't throw away Australian fanzines any more.]

THE AUSTRALIAN BNF: MYTH OR REALITY?

by Alan Stewart

Wandering through conventional sf fandom in Australia, one comes across numerous acronyms like DUFF, FFANZ and APA; yet one more appears remote - the BNF, or 'Big Name Fan'. References always occur in North America, a few in England, but no local mentions. Are BNFs extinct in Australia? Or perhaps, have they not evolved yet here....

Having attended only three conventions, I probably wouldn't recognise a BNF if I fell over one (Humm... those out-stretched legs I tripped over in the Fan Lounge at Aussiecon II might have belonged to one), but there are signs which indicate BNFs may be struggling to become established.

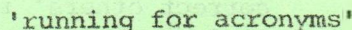
- These all sound like BNF pursuits, but no one, outstanding contender dominant.

The 'tall poppy' syndrome may also be responsible for the lack of BNFs, with numerous aspirants clawing and mouthing each other to prevent one or two gaining BNFhood. The recent commotion due to the appearance of "those fanzines" maybe being a good example of this.

But, when an acronym race can be won by gaining 25 votes, can BNF's exist? Did a BNF pop up for a few days to chair our WorldCons? Are there 'Quiet Achiever' BNFs lurking around in the background? Should every Australian fan be considered a BNF?

Alan Stewart.

[They reported back (if the lines were clear enough that night not to distort what they were whispering) that a BNF is someone who doesn't *do* anything any more; and although people would like them to be more active, everyone is reluctantly resigned enough not to mind if they don't.



[Of course, if BNF status is to be determined on the basis of activity, there's one person who's been doing a lot of *something* lately.]

Still at Marks St. However, by a stroke of luck, after a week or so of fruitless phonecalls ("Okay, mate, she'll be right, mate, see y' soon, mate, oh sorry, matie, we'll try for the next clear day, eh?") my builder Anthony Finnegan Esq. and his jobbie or rather sub-contractor, a fine-looking hunk of bronzed expertise with a powered hydraulic nailing device, my dear I feel quite faint, hang on I think this is the wrong fanzine, named Taylor if such a Christian name is credible, appeared at the tolerable hour of 10 a.m. and tore into my roof's shoulderblades with such venom that soon the whole horrid thing lay in splinters on the concrete far below, where I was, snapping away with my nifty borrowed Nikon (for the forthcoming article in the Good Weekend, natch, on remodelling your inner city Melbourne pied a terre), and a vast and drafty smelly hole was revealed or created through which I cavorted bearing bulging but happily quite light plastic bags of 2.0 thermal capacity pink batts which I strewed among the rafters, coughing

and puking the while owing to quantities of dead birds, moulted feathers, old dispersed nests, grot, grime, Neanderthal men's bones and the like. Meanwhile young Taylor was nipping and tucking, sawing and hydraulicking, not a handtool in sight as Di mentioned admiringly when she visited at lunchtime to witne-s all this enterprise. They returned the following morning which was, yes, gasp if you will, Satterdee, intending to bang up the boards, jack up the concrete or small bits of it at any rate the better to sink into new concrete the stirrups for the verandah posts, golly it's *such* excitement here in Hutchinson Street these days, only the weatherboards I'd purchased proved too few in number and the Kanga electric jacker unavailable from Trev, so the narrative became perforce a fashionably discontinuous one.

'Meanwhile, as I sit here at my groaning computer, my eye drifts to the left where an opened copy of vol 25 of the E. B. informs me, as I know you'd be pleased to hear for isn't this the very point which has been vexing both of you:

'Thus, the objects of Phenomenology are "absolute data grasped in pure, immanent intuition", and its goal is to discover the essential structures of the acts (*noesis*) and the objective entities that correspond to them (*noema*).'

'How curious to read in your hallowed pages that Brian Aldiss and his boozy buddies deploy their drinking time bemoaning my Anitpodean fate. True, they couldn't bemoan a sadder fate. Well, they could, of course. They could bemoan Lee Harding's fate.

'Enough of this desperately amusing attempt to expunge your vicious silver X from my next copy of Thyme...'

Best,

Damien Broderick

[Then of course there's Joseph Nicholas, whose letter in Thyme #58 said many things, not least about a couple of particular fanzines....]

'Obviously, we would have been happier had you consulted us before running (our letters about The Motional and Fuck The Notional). But, having seen them in print, we'd have been even happier if you'd prefaced them with a clear statement that they were written as gut reactions to what we saw as baseless attacks on friends rather than leaving such an explanation to surface only after others had replied to us. It is impossible to thus retrospectively correct others' impressions of the letters, and by not so prefacing them you in fact misrepresent them -- crucially, you encourage the objects of our attack to believe that they are being drawn into a genuine debate rather than merely being rubbished in passing in letters to a friend.

'So one shouldn't bother replying to such prattish drivel as Dave Luckett and Ian Nichols advance in their defence -- especially considering how the former is even *more* pompous and long-winded than he was in his original article -- because, as Luckett notes, to acknowledge them at all is to bequeath upon them a cachet they do not deserve. But for the benefit of readers who may be led astray by their statements about me, it is necessary to correct one or two of their misperceptions -- in particular, Luckett's assertion that I am driven entirely by dogma, and Nichols's claims that I have pretensions to being a Marxist critic.

'I cannot imagine where these ideas got started -- it's true that I have absorbed much left-wing theory, and the perspectives from which I view the world have been determined accordingly; but does this thereby render me dogmatic, or a Marxist? It seems much more likely that Luckett and Nichols have mistaken my ironic use of much cliched rhetorical phrases -- 'the ideologically correct fanzine', and so forth -- as evidence of a *genuine* identification of my positions with those being so punctured. (Perhaps they don't have irony in Perth.) Either that or they're merely using them as terms of abuse in order to avoid having to actually think about the ideas I choose to discuss -- less so in Nichols's case, but I suspect certainly true in Luckett's, whose accusation that I am driven entirely by dogma only cloaks his own dogmatic adherence to a rather tedious scientificfictional libertarianism that would not disgrace Jerry Pournelle.

'I must also reinforce, for Nichols's benefit, that the failure of British fans to respond to his fanzine does not stem from their parochialism. Were this the case, they would not respond to any overseas fanzine at all; but they clearly do. British fans ignore Australian fanzines because they perceive them as boring, and no amount of self-justification by Ian Nichols or any other Australian can counter this unpleasant fact. In addition, the fact that he receives a large number of letters in response to his fanzine -- whether from North America or from anywhere else -- says nothing at all about its actual quality. Were quality and interest to be measured solely by the size of the response, those fanzines with the largest circulations would inevitably be deemed "the best" -- an obvious *non sequitur*.

'Finally, again for Ian Nichols: as it happens, I have read some of Terry Eagleton's stuff. It was very, very boring.

Joseph Nicholas

[Before I say anything else, Joseph, a short apology is in order: when it came to printing your original letter, in Thyme #58, the prefatory remarks which Peter had written and which I had typed and which *did* set what you had to say in its proper context, ended up being lost on the cutting room floor, accidentally... tsk.

[On the question of Fuck The Tories being "correct line", I would have thought that even a cursory glance at the contents of any of the issues to date would have gently but firmly disabused the reader of any such notion; and as for the idea of your having 'pretensions to being a Marxist critic'....

[But speaking, as we are, of *non sequiturs*, I think that in your argument with Ian Nichols over whether British fans respond to The Space Wastrel or not (and if so, what the quality of that response is, and so on) has rather strayed from the point, which was your original contention that Fuck The Notional was a 'baseless attack', which - from an Australian point of view - it clearly was not.]

[One much more interesting part of that particular letter, though, was all this stuff about what the British think of Australian news. So here we are back again asking the question: "What do you do when you get your copy of Thyme?"]

'Guys,

Fine. I'm afraid you're going to have to bear with me because it is just turned seven p.m. on New Year's Eve and I am insuff-iciently sozzled. The kids are either already out or getting ready to head off to parties too numerous to mention. Cas is working all night and so I am stuck here at home on my own. And a Happy-Bah-Humbug to you too. I poured myself a large single malt, grabbed a packet of savoury biscuits and Warhoon 28, and figured I'd go snuggle up in bed and finally drift off to sleep on the twin tides of fine alcohol and even better fanwriting. Well, that was the plan but I could have sworn I caught a glimpse of this old guy in white robes reminding me of responsibilities still unfulfilled from the old year. Of course it turned out to be our Nicholas tarting himself up as an arab for his fancy dress do, but by the time I realised this the hook was set and the guilts had me well and truly caught.

'The thing is, I keep getting these copies of Thyme and I never respond. Well, there is a reason, and I think I've finally figured it out. The realisation came with issue 59 (I never claimed to be quick on the uptake). If you'll just bear with me I think we can sneak up on the reason (and a loc) here. Look, Thyme is an Aussie newszine. Oh, you already knew? Damn! Anyway, it is almost entirely concerned with topics of Aussie interest. It is concerned with Australian concerns. Now this does not mean that I am not interested in the topics you discuss, but it means that I am not concerned by them. My interest is purely intellectual. The topics you discuss invlove most of your Aussie readers emotionally whilst my interest is almost... well, disinterested.

'Occasionally, I think I might have something to add on a particular topic but I immediately tell myself to mind my own business. "Perhaps I can give them a completely different, a dispassionate, point of view," I think to myself (I always think in inverted commas because I am a particularly neat thinker who hates thoughts

splodging out all over the place). I have however learned that the very last thing people want, when they are stampeding hither and yon, frothing at the braincell and demanding that 'X' be drummed out of fandom, the very last thing they want is to hear some dispassionate twerp stick his irrelevant oar in. And that goes double for dispassionate twerps who end sentences with prepositions.

'The problem with such sensibilities is that you guys do not get your just desserts. This seems most unfair so providing you'll take the following in the right spirit I think, just between you and me, I can say a few things. Better make that between me, you, and Jack, because I want that he should know I applaud his attempts to do the best job of which he is capable. I presume you will copy him with this letter? Of course you will - Australians may no longer be able to play cricket, but that doesn't mean that they are compleat philistines.

'It seems, when viewed from this particular shore - that of an island named Paul Skelton - that Jack has simply learned from all of the aggro of the Fan Hugos, and just grabbed the Ditmar nettle before anyone else realised it was sprouting. Let's look first at the Fan Hugos. Now they are not an award for excellence. They are an award for popularity, and one that is in the gift of the members of a particular World Science Fiction Convention. Now we fans, we vocal fans, we fanzine minority, are always complaining that when they give out these awards - which are their awards, remember, not our awards - they vote them to entirely the wrong recipients. The reason for this is of course that whilst they are voting on the awards, which are their awards, we are setting the categories, which are not their categories.

'Now surely we can see that all Jack has done is to take his duties seriously. He is in charge of the Ditmars for a particular Australian National Convention, a set of awards that are within the gift of the members of that convention, and has simply tried to ask what categories of award would be most appropriate and most appreciated to and by the people whose award it is. He has official responsibilities and is acting correctly in his official capacity. He has put aside his own thoughts about 'I like this' or 'My fannish buddies like this', and tried to act for the members of the convention for whom he is supposed to be acting.

'The thing we must all bear in mind, however, at the ultimate, is that none of us really know what these people really want. Jack says he wants it discussed, and that is fine... as far as it goes. The problem is that it is only being discussed in fanzines or by fanzine fans, and these are not the people who should be discussing it. It should be discussed by the people whose award it is, by members of the appropriate convention. Certainly some of the people discussing it in Thyme are members of the appropriate convention but they are currently discussing it within a very limited clique of convention members. The place to discuss it is at the convention, where all the members are in attendance.

'Obviously such a discussion would be too late to have any utility in setting the categories for the current convention, but they ought to have their say and their opinions ought to be heeded. Surely the attendees at one Australian National Convention should be reasonably able to represent the wishes of the attendees at subsequent such conventions. If not, they would certainly be better able to represent those wishes, be far more representative, than a bunch of people heavily into the fanzine tradition who are doing most of their arguing in fanzines.

'So, to summarise, my feeling is that Jack has a very sound idea and that the Ditmars ought to be awarded in respect of categories that the people doing the awarding feel are meaning ful. We should find out, as soon as possible, what those categories are, but in the meantime we shouldn't fiddle around with them. Stick with them as they are but for Christ's sake find out what they want so that in future we can award categories which they want awarding. We must remember it is their award, and after all this prominence we have no excuse for not finding out just what the hell it is that they want.'

Skel

[Yours is a very sensible suggestion, I think. It's good that somebody thinks that Jack's doing a good job. I think he does a good job too. I just think that when he did all his sums this time around, he came up with the wrong answer.]

It hasn't made great news in Australia, but as Skel says, while we've been having our little debate about Ditmar categories, fans overseas have been talking seriously about scrapping the fan Hugos altogether because Worldcons have become too large and unrepresentative of fandom. How can a fanzine with a circulation of 100 or so get any real exposure amongst a voting population of several thousand? So goes the argument. The fanzines with the largest circulations will always win; their editors will become the 'best fanwriter', their artists 'best fanartist' and so on, regardless of the quality or anything else about the publication. So a fan Hugo doesn't really say anything much about you except that a lot of people have heard of you. It's an argument quite difficult to refute and who knows, maybe something like a fan equivalent of the Nebula will develop out of it.

Whether all the argument about the Hugos has any relevance to Australia's Ditmars is debatable though. A really huge Natcon, after all, is one with 500 members. Swancon, which was quite a nice size, got 150 and only 30 of those voted in any one Ditmar Category.

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[And having said that, we've probably slid into something fairly close to...]

THE DITMAR DEBATE

Since the categories have now been officially decided, it's probably a good time to close down discussion on this subject. However there are a couple of left-over comments and a couple of outraged letters which we really should print.

So to get you into the right mood, here's Cathy Kerrigan to say she told us so.

'Dear Thyme,

as sole dissenting voter [on the new constitution] at Swancon's business session last year, I have been quite amused by the current controversy surrounding the Ditmars. I feel that fandom has got what it deserved. However, I will refrain from adding to the furore with an in-depth discussion of what I feel is wrong with the current set-up, and will restrict myself to virtually one comment. I think that Jack Herman's efforts to include other aspects of fandom in the award for Outstanding Achievement in Australian Audio and/or Visual SF are commendable, but doomed to failure.

'Jack, I have been trying for two years to get media fandom to recognise professional media sf in Australia, without success. If any area of fandom is going to vote for that, it should be the media fans. I haven't been able to convince them yet and, if I can't convince media fans, then - to be quite blunt - you haven't got a hope in hell of convincing general fandom to do likewise. Nonetheless, I wish you luck with it and will support you in your endeavours, just as I will keep on trying to persuade media fans to recognise professional achievements by Australians.'

Ciao,

Cathy Kerrigan

[The announcement of the official Ditmar categories did raise one new issue which would seem to add a quite sinister dimension to the debate. 'Sinister' is probably the wrong word for any of this though: 'thoughtless' might be a better one. Mark Loney explains why:]

'Dear Peter and Roger,

I had been planning to write earlier and air my views on the great Ditmar debate, but then the deluge of letters from people like John Newman, Carey Handfield and Craig Hilton arrived and I found that they had said it all for me. John Newman, in particular, also said a lot of things I hadn't thought of and, as far as I am concerned, carried the debate through to

a logical and sensible conclusion. I commend his idea of determining each year's award categories through a balloting process run by future awards committees [just as the nominees are currently selected via the nominations ballot] - what, indeed, is the point of having an Australian Long Fiction Award in years when there is no Australian Long Fiction Published, for example. It would have been nice to bring the idea in this year but the Ditmar nomination forms are upon us already courtesy of the Awards Sub-Committee, Box 272, Wentworth Building, University of Sydney - otherwise known as Jack Herman.

'Until the arrival of the Ditmar nomination forms I would have agreed with your assessment in the last Thyme of Jack's behaviour throughout this affair, but now I am tempted to unleash a string of harsher words in his direction. Instead, however, I would like to ask Jack why he feels it necessary to impose draconian citizenship/residency requirements on eligibility for the Ditmars without any preliminary discussion or debate, let alone any warning or, for that matter, rationale for his action.

'I will readily admit that Michelle Muijsert, fellow editor of The Space Wastrel and spouse, is one of the few (the only?) fen affected by Jack's latest administrative fiat - but I also contend that Jack's unilateral imposition of a seven year citizenship/permanent residence period is, to put it mildly, completely out of line.

'Under Australian Federal and State law, any person entering Australia legally as a migrant can apply for Australian citizenship after completing two years as a permanent resident. Depending on the circumstances (a stateless person or a refugee, for example), Australian citizenship can be granted immediately upon completion of two years' residence (in very exceptional circumstances, even earlier, by Ministerial order). Given normal circumstances, any person legally entering Australia as a migrant or permanent resident can expect to become, if they so desire, an Australian citizen with all the rights, privileges, benefits and costs of someone born in Australia within two to three years.

'Except that Jack R.Herman, who currently likes to be known as the Awards Sub-Committee, has decided that they can't be eligible for a Ditmar Award until they have been a citizen or resident for longer than seven years. Good on you, Jack. I too have noted the flood of overseas fen coming here on short holidays so that they can be nominated for one of our incredibly prestigious awards and then, after stacking the vote with other overseas trash, pirating the Ditmars out of the country along with valuable Aboriginal artifacts and other items of our cultural heritage. Or maybe it's Jonh Foyster you're worried about? Afraid he'll nominate some overseas novel for the long fiction award on the grounds that the author spent two weeks here on a holiday?

'I am sure that the Awards Sub-Committee is well aware of the concepts of red tape, excessive regulation and even that of regulation for regulation's sake. I would submit that its attempt to determine citizenship and/or residency requirements for the Ditmars falls squarely under those headings. I would further submit that if Jack has his heart set on citizenship and residence requirements that he bring them into line with those of the governments of Australia. If nothing else, it'll give him a leg to stand on.'

Mark Loney

[We asked Jack about Michelle's eligibility and his reply was simply that she is eligible. This is really strange. What is the loophole Jack has found in his own rules to make Michelle eligible? We have published the "rules" verbatim on page 3 of this issue. They say you have to be either an Australian citizen or resident for seven years in Australia to be eligible. Michelle is neither of these things - she has been resident for four years. Can you see how Jack concluded that she is eligible? I can't. And even if some funny way has been found of making her eligible, who would know about this and know thwy're allowed to nominate her? Why would naybody choose to nominate someone who clearly does not meet the eligibility requirements?[You're assuming that anyone would take Jack's rulings seriously, Peter. Well, I do but you never know these fans....] And then what is to stop any award made to such a person being subsequently challenged? Before you tell me that Australian fandom doesn't do that sort of

Greg Hills.]

Dear,

following section:

"For next year's Awards I nominate the following categories:

"1 _____
"2 _____
"3 _____
"4 _____
"5 _____

populist sf Award? Probably. But look at the advantages!

an award in any given year.

unpopular category on for the year after that, against stiffening opposition).

pass to the vexed issues of... justano, I haven't read that far yet.

Greg Hills

ballot every so often.

actively promoting this lively debate after this issue. Anyway, here's Jack Herman.]

'Dear Thyme,

letter in 55 and saw that my approach to the generalised category had been wrong and his suggestion was a good one and formed the basis for what is now Category 5.

That's the good side. On the downside, I am still very angry with the way you, as editors, treated my letter and the debate. There was no attempt to answer the philosophy I advanced - particularly the 3rd and 4th paragraphs of the letter - but, instead denied me a detailed critique of the proposals which is a completely different thing.

Further, in your appended comments in the second and after the third paragraphs you implied I wasn't serious and I wasn't accurate (about this last point later). Later you implied I wasn't au fait with the fanzine field ("or, surely, a matter of being in touch with one's surroundings") sufficiently to identify 10 worthwhile zines. In fact, in my best of 1986 list I included four Aussie zines I thought worthy of an award. That Bruce found 10 such is an indication of differing standards or ideas of fanzines, not, as you imply, ignorance.

Later by inserting 'merely approving them' and deleting them by obliques you imply that they were part of the original letter and I have no intention of allowing Gerald and his committee any freedom to operate in '88. As you have never served on a concon with me as chair you can have no concept of the way in which I operate and I take it as a grave insult that you imply a false democracy in such a way as it looks like I AM IMPLYING IT.

I may be ingenuous but I fail to see how the line "People on the committee should be non-controversial so I am out for a start" lets you know I am joking. There is a vast difference between administering a ballot and being one of 4 or 5 voice determining a ballot.

Since you go into great (and incorrect) detail about the history of the awards, I would like you to show me when 'fans clamouring' was ever a criterion for award categories. Again, I refer you to the 3rd and 4th paragraphs of my letter. I have never suggested that 'fans clamouring' should be a criterion. [That was exactly the point we were trying to make] I tried to work categories from first principle.

Roger's learned discussion of the Ditmars lacks a little in failing to relate them to the Constitution. Up to 1976, there were three traditional categories, the occasional extra category or special award. (You omit 1969, Contemporary Author, and 1971 when there was a sort of pre-Atheling for Baxter's book on SF Cinema. You imply there were awards in 1974 when I can find no record of same.) In 1976, the Constitution was introduced and 3 traditional categories were noted as well as a provision for one further category. In 1978, when Roger was in charge [Actually, Bruce Gillespie was in charge until the nominating ballots were all in and it was realised that Bruce was a finalist for one of the categories of award, at which time Roger assumed that responsibility.], in that year 'Short Fiction' was the extra category. 1979, when I was on the concon, but not the award subcommittee, fanwriter was the extra category. At the 1979 Business Meeting, which I chaired, the awards clause was altered to specify the awards that could be given and that included a provision that the Australian Fiction Award MAY be split into Novel Length and Shorter Length. 1980 didn't. 1981 and 1982 did. In 1983, I would have, and said so on the nominating form, had there been sufficient nominations. In fact, there were 2 novels and one short fiction that received more than one nomination. This did not, in my opinion, justify separate categories. (By the way, I didn't say this was wrong, merely that 'I got shat on ... for good reason'. There were equally valid reasons to justify my decision. If I remember the 1978 Concom got shat on 'for good reason' over its administration of the awards.) [Hmmm... Are you trying to present an argument that 'good reasons' are generally wrong reasons? It's novel]

Other than that, the administrators have had no affect on the particular categories. They have been determined by Business Sessions. It is my memory, and I stand to be corrected, that the only ammendment I ever moved to the awards clause was the DELETION of a category - to wit, International Fiction. In any event, you can hardly blame me for the proliferation of categories or the particular categories I had to administer. The only administator who determined categories [~~before this year~~ - sorry, I didn't mean that] was Grant Stone in 1986 - he had not received the ammended Constitution from Adelaide and had to 'wing' it. He collected a fair amount of shit as well, although he didn't really open the area up to public discussion.

Which brings me to Marilyn's question, "And who is Jack to go deciding these things all by himself?" The answer is that I have not decided anything 'by myself'. I was the silly schmuck who decided that public was better than private fiat and opened Pandora's Box. As a result I have borne the approbium of the bearer of bad news.

Carey says some reasonable things. Like him I think there are other ways of giving awards. For fanzine activity, for example, there is always the option of a peer award, like the FAANs.

John Newman is right when he says that the Outstanding Achievement Award lacks aim. I trust he sees the aim of the Outstanding Contribution Award. But I don't like the idea of the multi-category system. It leaves itself open to stacking - to bloc-voting to ensure that the category one favours gets on the ballot [all this in a world where the number of nominations you need to get on the ballot varies from 2 to 5 depending on the category and the year]. We have seen this sort of thing only rarely in the past (like when Melbourne Uni SF Association stacked Yggdrasil onto the 1979 ballot).

Apart from the editorial treatment of my letter and ideas, I found the debate informative and convincing. It is a shame when the editors drop into ad hominem [personal] debate while their contributors are addressing the issues.

I must get back to some work on CONVICTION.

Jack.

We had a bit of a discussion about Jack's letter before going to print and I lost. So I've got the task of doing a reply. I'm Peter. This is for Jack:

I know it wasn't your doing, but the original copy of the proposed Ditmar categories we received had a handwritten note attached which said "please don't print this till its official" (or words to that effect). Sue Isle was right when she said we can't be trusted - we printed them anyway, in the public interest we thought, prepared to take the consequences of our actions. We hadn't realised that the whole thing was a cunningly disguised attempt by the committee to open the area up for public debate, silly us. As we said, it wasn't handling of the matter we objected to so much as the seeming non interest of the Concom. We're still wondering even whether the Convention is going to circulate nomination forms to members in time for them to do anything about them.

You say you "tried to work categories from first principle" and draw our attention to the principle you used. It's almost as though you've had a shot at re-inventing the wheel because the one we've been using hasn't been square enough. If you're going to criticize me (and Marilyn who said something quite similar) for suggesting that there are democratic traditions here which ought to be respected in making awards on behalf of Australian fandom, you should be prepared to demonstrate how your approach achieves our (and by that I mean all of us) aims better than what we asked for. Even the correspondence we've had from Media and SCA interested people has been critical of the changes - they said that they didn't want what you were giving them either. You misrepresent me slightly when you say that I think fans clamouring for change should be a criterion for change. What I really meant was that "fans clamouring" should be the only criterion respected in such matters.

On the subject of suggestions of "false democracies" in next year's award, we're forced to plead a little bit guilty. But we didn't mean to offend. We apologise for our poor punctuation. Still, I quote from the official flyer for the 1988 Natcon: "We will produce a genuine Awards Banquet, giving Australian and World SF Achievement awards for real merit, not just brand-name popularity". We know it's a joke, but it was reported in the same issue of *Thyme* as you, as chairperson of that convention, said you won't be responsible for the awards in 1988, Gerald Smith will be. On the one hand the awards aren't being given out for popularity, on the other you're not responsible. I couldn't help seeing the irony between that and the position you took last letter saying you weren't responsible for this year's awards either - you are just the Awards Sub-Committee making recommendations to the Committee. Are we meant to believe that you are an innocent bystander always and all these things just sort of happen to the Ditmars around you? If you say you won't have a quite influential voice in the category selections

for next year, then we take you at your word, but I still don't see how it's offensive to suggest that you will contribute - certainly your position on the Committee seems to entitle you to.

You accuse us of being wrong with our history and seek to correct us. Our area of disagreement appears to lie entirely in the pre 1974 period (you say there were no awards that year and I bow to your superior knowledge) and seems to involve a couple of special awards only. Not worldshaking stuff; though I must admit I found the story of what happened to the 1983 Short Story award enlightening. Perhaps the nominations received in the Fiction categories is always embarrassingly small and it's just that you're the one who stepped out of line by admitting it in 1983. But history does show that 1983 was a year of innovation in the Ditmars just as 1987 is. If you disclaim responsibility for these innovations (as you seem to), we accept that. Adventions have a reputation for being innovative after all. But the bottom line remains: When Jack Herman is around, things tend to change (not always for the worse). We do go further and accuse you of liking to tinker with things. We apologise if that's untrue. But why is it that this curious tinkering force sort of follows you around? If you really are serious about leading a life of controversy as you also say you are, you'll just have to accept that sometimes you'll be criticised for tinkering with things people don't want changed.

We are sorry if any of our Ditmar debate was interpreted as a personal attack on you, Jack; it wasn't intended to be. What it was meant to be was a criticism of changes which had been made to the Ditmar categories and the methods used to execute those changes. We didn't go into it unaware that chairing the Award Sub-committee is a lot of work for somebody, especially when that somebody is simultaneously having a shot at revolutionising what people get awards for. And we knew that there was a danger that criticism of works which someone has put a lot into can often be taken personally. But it wasn't intended that way. We just think you're making a mistake with the Ditmars.

But speaking of personal matters, I'm not quite sure why you felt moved to drag out the spectre of Yggdrasil's 1978 Ditmar (And surely a stickler for historical accuracy like yourself could manage to get the date right). I am not Roger Weddall, but I was a member of Unicon IV and I voted for Yggdrasil. Nobody bought my vote or coaxed it out of me, I voted for Yggdrasil because I thought it was a pretty good publication. I believed (apparently wrongly) that I had a right to express that view in the ballot box.

I've just been looking back at those issues of Yggdrasil that were the subject of its award. Probably ten years of history is some sort of yardstick to judge them by. Those who thought Yggdrasil wasn't good enough or didn't contribute enough to fandom to be considered seriously for a Ditmar (presumably because its emphasis was on fiction) will be interested to note that of the seven contributors of short stories and articles in that year's (1977) three issues (I don't include the writer's workshop material), four have since been professionally published, and three now make their living through the written word. We might have all been naive Uni Students back then, but I don't think Yggdrasil did too badly for an amateur publication. That year's catch included such gems as a short story by Bruce Gillespie and a series of articles on literary criticism by George Turner. It was the only publication at the time which took seriously any role in developing S.F. Fiction (sorry to use the word twice) writing in this country.

Yggdrasil won a Ditmar in 1978 on the voting, but had the award taken away from it by the Business Meeting on a technicality which existed in the Constitution for that year only. If that clause were still in effect, a large chunk of Canberra fandom would be ineligible for awards this year. As it was, this particular clause was removed the moment it was used.

I think the Australian Fan Community should be ashamed of itself for its treatment of Yggdrasil that day. Instead, some people seem desperately intent on propagating the myth that the Ditmar voting had been stacked as if this were any sort of defence even if it were true.

Unicon IV was organised at Melbourne Uni and was quite a lot bigger than any Natcon before it. One of the things that swelled the membership of the con was the unusually high number of Uni Students who turned up. Yggdrasil was a student publication

[Gerald Smith also had something to say about what we said.]

'One aspect of the debate that has amazed and disappointed me is how you two, as editors, and those who have written in have so consistently ignored or avoided what Jack has had to say in defence of the categories.

'If I can summarise the general feeling of the Melbourne fanzine fans who have written to Thyme in response to the suggestions, what you want is two Ditmars for the pros (and for writing only) and three for fans - 'zines, writing and art. While this seems to be a good consensus, it is an agreement of people who are involved in fanzine fandom and takes no account of those in fandom who generate fanac in other ways.' (My emphasis.)

'And yet, on page 18 of the same issue, you say 'On then to the increasing groundswell of response from our readers, and fandom in general.'

'By definition your readers are from fanzine fandom. [What, because they can read?] Where is your evidence that the groundswell is in "fandom in general"? Has anybody bothered to seek opinion from 'those who generate fanac in other ways'?

'I also take offence at the way you not only argue against Jack's ideas but also attack the man himself. At page 13 Jack says his ideas are no joke (a fact I think borne out by the recently distributed Ditmar nomination forms.). Yet, at page 17 you continue to maintain that the whole thing is a joke.

'To contend, as you do, that Jack is just starting a debate for the fun of it is both untrue and certainly unfair. His arguments in favour of his proposals are far too well conducted to fit such a description. Jack has tried his best to attain what he sees as a valid ideal and you belittle it by calling his sincerity into question. For shame.

'I also take personal offence to the way in which you have added three words to a sentence and by doing so have implied that I am Jack's puppet. I refer of course to the sentence on page 15 of #59:

'Conviction hasn't yet decided on its categories and I will not be setting them ~~definitely/approving/when~~: Gerald Smith is the convenor of the Awards Sub-Committee and will be presenting his choices to the concom for acceptance or rejection.)'

'By adding the three words '~~dearly~~/~~approving~~/~~them~~' you imply that it will be Jack's decision when clearly his meaning was that I will decide on categories but the whole Conviction committee can, if strongly moved to do so, veto my ideas. Your meaning insults not just myself but a wider group of hard working fans as well.

'As convenor of the Awards Sub-Committee for Conviction [the 1988 NatCon] I do not wish to express my comments about Jack's categories here. I may have something to say on that subject when the time comes for me to publicly announce the categories for 1988.

Gerald Smith

[Some simple statistics for you, Gerald. In 1986, no more than 30 people voted in any one Ditmar category. To date, the number of people who have written in to us expressing a view in this debate has numbered close enough to 20. I am not able to guarantee that all of the people who wrote in actually voted last year, but I think you are deluding yourself if you are really serious about suggesting that our response is indicative only of a minority bunch of "fanzine fans". You define a fanzine fan as anyone who reads Thyme [what a silly thing to say!] and use that to conveniently dismiss our readership as not representative of fandom in general. I believe it is silly to argue about a definition that goes like that, so we decided to simplify things by just arguing by your own rules. We only had one request really. We asked you (Jack, actually, but if you can do it we'll be just as happy) to produce one of these non-fanzine fans and show us that they/she/he/it wasn't happy with the Ditmar categories as they used to be, and that the greater good would be served by changing them. You have not done that. Jack has gone further - he has said that the need does not exist for him to produce any such person. We say Jack is wrong. And, Gerald, what method would you suggest we use to gather and present evidence from "fandom in general" if we (apparently) have the power to turn someone into a "fanzine fan" just by talking to them? It seems that you and Jack are suggesting the only ones really competent to collect evidence under such circumstances are yourselves. Is it unfair of us to ask to see the evidence?

[To our handling of the debate and Jack's person. Our addition of ~~'nearly approving/then'~~ was not intended to appear to put words into anyone's mouth (editing conventions are knotty things) [Aren't they, but?] and we didn't realise we were touching such a raw nerve, either.... Why is it offensive to suggest that the Awards Sub-Committee would not act independently when selecting award categories? The job of the Awards Sub-Committee is to collect nominations and count votes. I find it offensive that people should go around suggesting that part of the job of the Awards Sub-Committee is to select a new set of categories each year, and that the independence of the Sub-Committee should be such that they shouldn't feel answerable to anyone in their selection of those categories. We didn't question the amount of hard work these people do, we just think that some of the hard work this year and last has been misdirected.

[Both you and Jack accuse us of ignoring Jack's arguments. I am at a loss to know how the printing in full of a letter constitutes ignoring it. What we didn't do was comment on some parts of it. I've seen people complain about us not printing all of their letter, but never anyone complaining about us not commenting on silly statements contained in them. The particular section you cite (and you would have found our criticism in the subtext if you'd looked closely) was where Jack mentioned Melbourne fanzine fans. There were seven letters in reply to Jack in Thyme #59, after Jack's letter. Two of them were written by people who live in Melbourne; none was written by anyone currently involved in producing a fanzine. They were all written by people who 'generate fanac in other ways'. Really. Do we have to spell that out?

[Steve Roylance lives in Melbourne and subscribes to Thyme. He also recently became a Pelican (which is a kind of an honour) for service to the SCA worldwide. Is he one of those "Melbourne fanzine fans" of whom you speak? Carey Lenehan wrote to us; is his view of "fandom in general" diminished by the fact that he reads Thyme?

[Sometimes it is kinder to ignore parts of what people say in their letters than to print them and reply properly.]

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[Finally and on a much lighter note to end our discussion of Ditmars and things, Kim Huett decided to enter the fray and give us something to think about.]

Dear Roger and Peter,

Would like to say that I have been enjoying Thyme much more since #57. A combination of news & discussion on topics of general interest to Australian fandom, as in recent issues, is more to my taste than what came previously. Large quantities of reviews or straight articles do not feel right in Thyme to me.

Just for the record though, I will admit that my opinion on the Ditmar debate is 'scrap the bloody useless things & quit wasting everybody's time'.

As far as I can see they have been the major source of argument and trouble as far as the constitution for the National Convention is concerned. Even the drastic efforts at the Swancon Business meeting has made no difference to what has always been the major source of contention. Do you recall me saying as much before Swancon? Let's kill the back-patting and get on with the fun, eh?

Before I go there is one small confession I would like to make. It was me, I created Rob McGough one wet Sunday afternoon out of some putty and spare bits of Peter Toluzzi that were lying around the house. Gee I'm sorry. If I had any idea it would cause this much trouble I would have behaved myself and made another Jack Herman instead. So terribly sorry!

Must end and do a little of the work I'm actually paid to do here,

Rump Titty Ta Ta Tee,

Kim

[I find this a little hard to believe; although do you think perhaps The Motional started out life as putty and spare bits of Peter Toluzzi, though?]

[And what better introduction for a couple of reviews?]

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Anger and Meringues: Joanna Russ's Extra (Ordinary) People

(London: Women's Press, 1985; fl.95)

by Lucy Sussex

Any list of the best women writers of sf includes Joanna Russ, but her inclusion in the lists of the best sf writers is less common. This omission is odd, for Russ can quite simply write the bobbysox off most of her sf contemporaries, whether they have triangles or wobbly bits. She has wit, talent, style - and a message uncompromisingly feminist, even separatist. Suspicious minds may well wonder whether this stance causes the (non0triangular) list makers to relegate her to the too-hard basket.

Mere wickerwork, though, would not contain Russ for long. Already she has broken out of the sf ghetto into another (to be perfectly honest) ghetto: feminist studies. Russ's well-titled How To Suppress Women's Writing set off no mines, to my knowledge, in this ideological no-man's land. When it is also remembered that Russ retains popular support, if a 1983 Hugo is any guide, she begins to look indeed like a writer and woman of wonder.

Extra (Ordinary) People is a collection of dhort fiction, featuring the aforementioned Hugo-winner, 'Souls'. They are linked by the frame-story of a history lesson in the future - the stories are told by a robot pedagogue. This frame seems tenuous, even perfunctory: it ocnsists of less than a thousand words. In addition, the stories do not seem to follow any argument. They are too diverse, a grab-bag of ideas, to be edifying about anything except Russ herself.

'Souls', the first story, is set in the Middle Ages; the second, 'The Mystery of the Young Gentleman', in 1985. The third, 'Bodies', tells of a utopia of our future but the 'schoolkid's' past. These three support in their historical context the frame, but the remaining two of the collection do not. 'What did you do during the Revolution, Grandma?' is a parallel worlds story, and 'Everyday Depressions' is more of an article than a fiction.

Another curious feature of Extra (Ordinary) People is that all of the stories but 'Souls' are letters. Quite possibly this mode is a tribute to the epistolary women writers of the eighteenth century, but Russ's use of it is inconsistent. If only one of the collection had been in this old-fashioned form, it would have been aninteresting variant, and if all had been, Extra might have gained some unity. (An epistolary 'Souls' would have been problematic; the narrator is probably illiterate.) As it is, the ratio of four letters to one story jars a little.

One feature all five have in common is a middle aged woman at centre stage. In 'Souls' it is a Mediaeval Abbess, in the formidable mould of Abbesses Herrade and Hildegard of Bingen, spiritual and temporal powers of the time. Russ's Radegunde is a prodigy sent to Rome for education, which is unlikely but not impossible. The Church had dim views on a) Women and b) Nuns outside their walls, but, as Chaucer's Prioress shows, the latter could be circumvented. 'Souls' is not Russ's 1971 'Poor Man, Beggar Man', which was printed with an afterword detailing its errors of history.

Both 'Souls' and 'Mystery' confront Russ's heroines with interfering males, in Radegunde's case a shipload of Vikings. The results are bloody, cathartic and ultimately a powerful pacifist statement. In 'Mystery' a telepathic mutant is pitted against a nosy old doctor - the stakes are hardly life or death, which is why 'Souls' has force and 'Mystery' is merely diverting. It is also a close tussle between style and content, a tendency marked in all stories except 'Souls'. Style wins, like Radegunde and the telepath, hands down, and the story is the loser.

'Bodies' tells of reincarnation in a sexless, frivolous utopia; the title would apparently indicate a relation to 'Souls' but the two have in common only their author. 'Revolution' toys with sex roles (again), with a woman sent to a primitive world in the guise of a male demon. This story is disorganised, plot-wise, and it is not helped by Russ showing off: after listing Ruri court garments as *ob*, *lena*, *vistula* and *bug* she adds that she is playing tricks. These four names are Russian (not Russ-ian) rivers. Still, calling the nobles of Ruri King Fred, Count Al and Duke Joe is a lovely touch.

Both of these stories are delightful to read, but say little. Remove the anger of 'Souls' and Russ tends towards slightness. 'Depressions' is the worst offender in the book, being a plot outline for a Marxist-lesbian gothic. It is fun, witty and highly self-indulgent. To know Russ's favourite French cakes (p.159) may be useful if one intends inviting Russ and Damien Broderick to tea, but otherwise it is unnecessary.

In short, read Extra for the exceptional 'Souls' and the rest while munching coffee meringues, their culinary equivalent. Superwomyn Russ can do better than beat egg whites with sugar.

Lucy Sussex

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TORTURER OF THE SHADOW

by Dennis Callegari

A review of Gene Wolfe's Soldier of the Mist (Gollancz hc, 355pp., £10.95 - approx. A\$35)

Soldier of the Mist, (the first part of) an historical fantasy set in ancient Greece during the Persian invasion of 479 BC, can be read on the same level as any number of other fantasy novels - as a relatively straightforward narrative.

As such, it is the story of Latro, a wounded soldier of the Persian empire, trapped in ancient Greece by amnesia and by the circumstance of war. Fortunately, although Wolfe seems to have researched his subject quite thoroughly, it isn't necessary to bone up either on Greek mythology or on the histories of Herodotus to follow the hero's adventures: Wolfe is a good enough writer to insinuate the characters' society and environment into the plot without forcing the reader to do homework.

The central device in this novel is Latro's peculiar form of amnesia - the inability to remember anything from one day to the next. This leaves him in the interesting predicament of continually seeing the same things "for the first time" on a number of occasions. This amnesia is, in fact, the central reason for the novel's existence (the book is Latro's piecemeal diary and his substitute for memory); it also appears responsible for the novel's fantastic element, because Latro, presumably as a result of the wound which caused his amnesia, can communicate with the ancient gods and spirits of Greece.

Latro's forced journeys (people without memory don't have a lot of choices) introduce him to a variety of characters: soldiers, merchants, poets, whores, magicians, priests and slaves, as well as numerous supernatural creatures. Some want to harm Latro, some to help him, some to use him; through his written observations of them, Wolfe builds

up a complex but unfocused image of life in the Greek city states.

As a straightforward fantasy novel, Soldier of the Mist is well done: Wolfe handles the episodic view of the amnesiac skilfully; the characters are generally as well-developed as the plot allows; and a few scenes - primarily those dealing with Latro's encounters with the supernatural - are vivid.

Overall, the book succeeds on the narrative level, even though its incompleteness is unsatisfying. I suppose we'll just have to wait two or three years to find out how it ends.

I'm unsure, however, if Gene Wolfe can still write a story on a single level, and Soldier of the Mist manifestly isn't. The incompleteness of several sub-plots reminded me of similar situations found in Wolfe's earlier Book of the New Sun.

Wolfe, in fact, deliberately invites comparison between the two works. In many ways the new book is the mirror image of the old; consider....

Severian, the narrator and hero of the Book of the New Sun, is someone who never forgets, whose tale is drawn from memory; who lives in some distant and vaguely-defined future; whose numerous meetings with aliens, time-travellers and the dead may or may not have objective reality.

Latro, in Soldier of the Mist, has chronic amnesia and must rely on his scribbled notes to tell his story, lives in a well-documented and well-defined part of history... and his conversations with the gods may or may not be real.

It is difficult to guess what Wolfe intends to do with the story he begins in Soldier of the Mist, though there are some indications. For example, can we, the readers, trust Latro's memoirs? At one point at least, Latro himself questions the truthfulness of his own writing. Does he really talk to the supernatural as he claims?

Soldier of the Mist, like the Book of the New Sun, is intended to be another of Wolfe's metafictional games of hide-and-seek: does Latro tell the truth? Does he really have amnesia? Is he in fact the author of the book?

It is a pattern Wolfe has adopted in a significant fraction of both his novels and of his shorter work, and the carpet is beginning to wear.

I think he should try something else. But read the book; it's worth it anyway.

Dennis Callegari.

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NEWS OF THE WORLD - FANNISH STYLE

Although Thyme is primarily concerned with Australian science fiction and the Australian sf community, our reportage includes a broader range of material and information, and much of this coverage originates from overseas - which often means from the overseas magazine equivalents of Thyme.

Each country or region produces its own version of what one might call a newszine, and this article is not so much a review as an explanation of the material each publication carries, and the way it is treated....

U.S.A.

In the land where science fiction is a big, moneyed concern, there are a couple of sf newszines that are all but professional journals, certainly when it comes to the matter of their appearance.

Locus is undeniably the premier magazine of the science fiction field (indeed, it advertises itself as just that), sporting glossy, colour photos of topical items or people in the limelight, with a large section of it devoted to professional sf news:- reportage on personnel changes in the busy American sf publishing industry; information about newly-sold novels; and the like. There is the standard, extensive

listing of major, upcoming conventions, and large review sections that cover recent film and book releases.

Frequency: monthly

Subscriptions: AUSTRALASIA: US\$50/12 issues, US\$94/24 issues.

Cheques & Mail: Locus, P.O.Box 13305, Oakland, CA 94661, U.S.A.

SF Chronicle gives Locus a run for its money, and in fact the two magazines largely duplicate each other (at least when it comes to the nitty gritty such as general, professional sf news, the listing of upcoming conventions and so on). SF Chronicle is reckoned by sources here to have a marginal edge when it comes to market information, which is useful if you're an (aspiring) author, or are interested in trying to order books from overseas (read: U.S.A.).

Frequency: monthly

Subscriptions: AUSTRALIA: A\$47/one year (12 issues), A\$85/two years.

Cheques & Mail: Justin Ackroyd, GPO Box 2708X, Melbourne 3001.

NEW ZEALAND: US\$33/one year, US\$54/two years.

Cheques & Mail: Andrew Porter, Science Fiction Chronicle, P.O.Box 4175, New York, NY 10163-4175, U.S.A.

File 770. Practically forced from coverage of the professional side of the field by the afore-mentioned glossies, File 770 contains none of the review columns or the lists of convention updates, either, focusing instead on more personal views and news of the diverse, American fannish community.

File 770 has now won or been nominated for the Hugo Award for Best Fanzine a number of times, as has editor Mike Glyer, himself (in the category of Fan Writer), and when Mike hits his straps it's not hard to see why. His comprehensive Aussiecon II convention report, for example, is easily the best yet published and makes for fascinating, if disturbing, reading. From an Australian point of view, some of the material Mike spends time and space on is esoteric, and/or simply not very interesting, but each issue always contains stuff worth looking at, and his overview of general, American fannish affairs is excellent. For anyone interested in the tide of American fannish issues, File 770 is essential reading.

Frequency: approximately every 6 - 8 weeks

Availability: 'available foremost for subscriptions (AUSTRALASIA - US\$1.25 per issue), File 770 may also be earned by those who contribute hot news, or accepted artwork, and is obtainable through arranged trades, primarily with other newszines and clubzines.'

Cheques & Mail: Mike Glyer, 5828 Woodman Avenue #2, Van Nuys, CA 91401, U.S.A.

CANADA

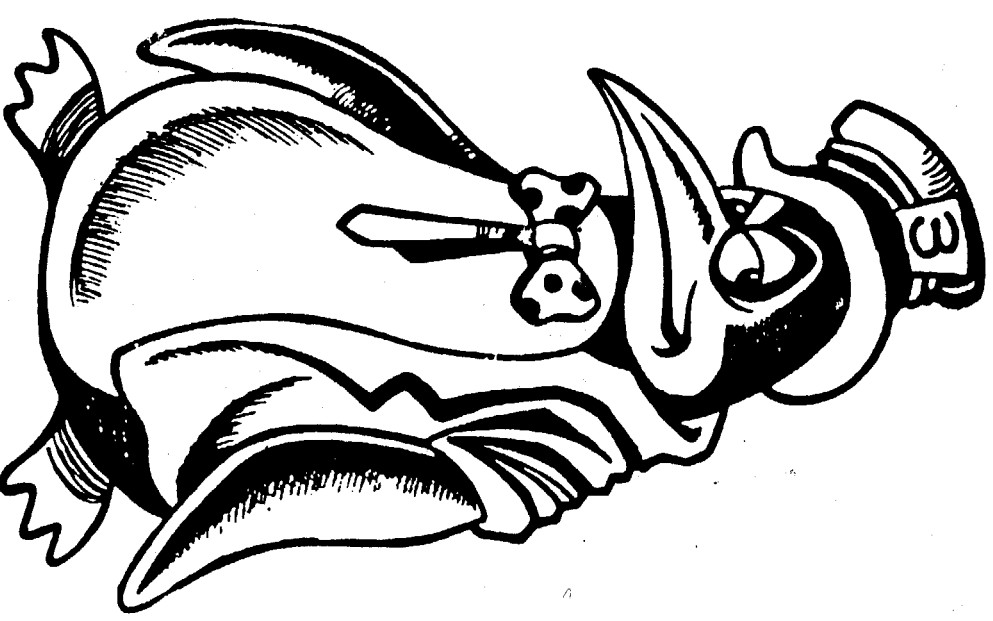
The Maple Leaf Rag is a Canadian newszine that offers information about upcoming Canadian conventions, the Canadian SF Awards ('Caspers') and, I'm sure, lots of other stuff that is of interest to Canadians, including a reasonably large letter column. It's hard for this reviewer to believe that there is such a thing as a cohesive Canadian Fandom, given the proximity of the Canadian fannish centres of activity to large American ones, and their relative distance from one another, but be that as it may The Maple Leaf Rag offers a fairly comprehensive coverage of sf-nal activity in that country (and runs lots of quite beautiful artwork, as a bonus).

Frequency: bi-monthly

Availability: 'available for trade (two copies [of your fanzine], one to each editor), submissions of artwork or news/writing, letters of comment, or subscriptions: Can\$8/year.'

Cheques & Mail: Georges Giguere, 9645 - 84 Avenue, Edmonton, AB T6C 1E7, Canada.
or: Garth Spencer, 2206 Richardson Street, Victoria, BC V8V 3E1.

MELBOURNE IN 1989!



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Fresh from the successes of KINKON ONE and it's aptly named sequel, KINKON TWO, a bidding Committee has evolved with one thought in mind:

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A bid for the 1989 National Science Fiction Convention.

Co-Convenors of the convention will be Andrew Murphy, the Convenor of KINKON TWO, whose job will include hotel liaison, and Angus Caffrey whose involvement with previous KINKONS is renowned. Justin Ackroyd is the Guest of Honour Liaison (and probably will take care of dealers' rooms and auctions). The programme will be in the hands of David McDonnell, and Ruth Murphy has the financial reins, as well as the secretarial duties. Ted Andrews has the pleasure of running the technical and transport side of the convention while Richard Freeland will continue his speciality, the alternative programme and videos.

All the elements one has come to expect from a KINKON will be there; the World Famous Peerless Film and Video Programme will again burst on the screen; Roadshow Distributors will again preview an SF Film exclusively for our members, and we will be importing a genre film not shown in this country for over fifteen years. Naturally, we will have the Lousy Film Night, with Superman and Basketcase, plus episodes of your favorite T.V. Series, a Dealers Room, and an Australian Guest of Honour.

Where would KINKON THREE be without the KINKON Literary Review ("Read Any Good Books Lately?") or the Football Panel (Albatross!) The Slide Shows, The Panels of Great and Heavy Import, The Trivia Quiz, The Masquerade and the Roof Raiser that follows....plus a few things we haven't done before, like;

AN INTERNATIONAL GUEST OF HONOUR....
THE INAUGURAL KINKON ART SHOW.....

AN INTERNATIONAL BEER TASTING COMPETITION (a panel of experts slugging it out to decide the World's Best Brew).

We have made reservations for Convention space at an inner suburban hotel, and have block booked many rooms all at reasonable rates. There are many restaurants, cheap and expensive, nearby, plus a range of alternative entertainments. (Not that you'll need them).

So do yourself a favour; get yourself up to CAPCON 87, in Canberra, and attend the business session to vote for

MELBOURNE IN 1989! KINKON THREE!

You can contact any or all of us by writing to;

KINKON THREE, 11 HOPKINS STREET, DANDENONG, VIC 3175
or by telephoning ANDREW on (03) 793 1706 after hours.

For you interstaters, our Agents are;

NSW; LEWIS MORLEY and MARILYN PRIDE
54 JUNIOR ST., LEICHHARDT, NSW

SA; A'AN BRAY
5 GREEN AVE., SEATON, S.A.

WA; PAUL J. STEVENS
3/372 STIRLING HWY, NEDLANDS, W.A.

EUROPE

Shards of Babel is an unusual beast, a newsletter published in English which gathers news, gossip and reviews from the whole of Europe & European fandom. The fact that there is no such thing as European fandom, that each country has its quite different traditions and, more to the point, different styles of doing things, makes it all the more creditable that Shards of Babel works as well as it does.

Editors Roelof Goudriaan and Lynne Ann Morse have gathered together an impressive, not to say interesting, list of contributors from most of the different countries (I haven't seen anyone write in from Albania yet), and picking up an issue of Shards of Babel is rather like dipping one's hand into a bag of mixed sweets - one never knows what goodies will turn up.

One of the more unusual problems that the newszine must deal with is the large number of languages spoken by its readers, and the different problems that creates for the various sf publishing industries, let alone the matter of the European SF Awards. The solution, of course, is to make a virtue out of the necessity, and the attempts of various organisations & individuals to deal with this makes for some interesting reading. Definitely recommended for those with their eyes on attending Conspiracy (in Britain, in 1987) or Holland in 1990....

Frequency: 'we try to appear every six weeks'

Availability: for news, gossip, ice cream & pizza... or subscriptions: six issues for US\$5, Fl.13, f3, A\$10... if you write politely, they might just send you a sample copy, also.

Cheques & Mail: Roelof Goudriaan, Noordwal 2, 2513 EA, Den Haag, Netherlands.

Fanytt ('Fanews') is a Scandinavian newsletter which, covering as it does a smaller area, is more informal in its approach than SOB. Written in Swedish, which could be a bit of a problem for those with no idea, it offers regular reportage on the Swedish sf & fannish microcosm, a fascinating beast indeed. Where else would you read of typesetters taking things into their own hands (no, not the editors) and rewriting slabs of a book in their care?

Fanytt carries the regular range of convention listings (for Scandinavia - they seem to have about as many cons a year as we do here in Australia; with, indeed, a general rotation of bids - by country - for each year's 'ScanCon'), and there are convention reports, news & reviews in general (sometimes in Engelska) and of course lots of scandal, gossip and changes of address.

Frequency: approximately every 6 - 8 weeks

Availability: send fanzines, news (interesting press clippings, even), or subscriptions: AUSTRALASIA: 8 issues for 25 SEK (equivalent).

Cheques & Mail: Ahrvid Engholm, Reastiernas Gata 29, 116 - 31, Stockholm, Sweden.

Ansible is, like Fanytt, a product of its environment in that British fandom is almost small or concentrated enough for everyone in it to know or have heard of everyone else; and this extends to the professional side of things. Thus you find the head of Gollancz sf publishing Chair of the about to happen British WorldCon, and fans and sf writers lounging side by side at the local. All this is reflected expertly in the pages of the Hugo-nominated Ansible, newszine brainchild of Hugo Best Fan Writer Dave Langford.

Gossip of the publishing world sits side by side with the latest convention report and news of the different fan funds, interspersed with Langford wit - to help the medicine go down. Recently, issues have been appearing further and further apart, whether this is due to the imminent WorldCon, Dave becoming tired of the newszine format or possibly El Niño, it isn't known. As the editor has written: 'Tentative Conclusion: I wouldn't subscribe beyond issue 50 if I were you.' With that in mind, it's still definitely worth having a look at....

Frequency: see above/every so often (formerly every six weeks)

Availability: Subscriptions A\$4 to Australian agent Irwin Hirsh (for 5 issues), or proportionately lesser amounts for fewer issues ('if you can

handle the intricate mathematics involved'), or probably available for news, gossip etc.

Cheques & Mail: 2/416 Dandenong Rd, North Caulfield 3161, AUSTRALIA.

JAPAN

Scifinform is produced by Hazu Hiroaki, one of the few Japanese fans to have regular contact with the Western world, and carries news both about Japanese fandom and some stuff from overseas - but how's your Japanese? Mine's ~~non-existent~~ rotten, but there is hope to be had for the anglophones in the promise of a special overseas edition, to be compiled in English, due out RSN. Honest?

Availability: as this is a new publication, publishing schedule has not been firmly established (i.e. the zine has no track record yet); write, in any case, to the editor, politely requesting a copy. Articles, news commentary and the like may also be welcome....

Mail: Hazu Hiroaki, Minami Osawa, 3-14-9-204, Hachiooji-shi, Tokyo, Japan.

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Getting close to the end of the issue finally and it's time for tales of moving house and going on holidays over Christmas. Melbourneans going to Adelaide have been making news lately. Here's one story

HAS 'ADVENTION 81' FINISHED YET?

It's rare to hear much of South Australian fannish activity of late. No one has seen an Adelaide fanzine in yonks and those few fans left in Adelaide seem to be getting married, divorced, arrested or quoted in the National Press.

Occasionally, though, expatriate South Aussies visit the place and, to mark the coincidence of the visit of Perry Middlemiss and John McPharlin, a dinner at Zappata's Restaurant in North Adelaide was organised by Paul Stokes. Cath and I were planning to visit Adelaide and so were invited along too.

Adelaide itself doesn't seem to have changed much. Cath and I did very non-fannish things, like visiting the Zoo and sweltering in the few days of nasty temperature. We hit most of the Adelaide bookshops, rediscovering the joys of THIRD WORLD Bookshop, where Cath found a book on Richard III she'd been after for ages, and I picked up three Frank & Ernest books. We considered visiting THE BLACK HOLE but discovered, on the window of the old shop, a sign directing us to the third floor of a building in Chesser Street; it didn't seem worth the effort. We spent Monday evening at The Jerusalem, a sleazy-looking restaurant in Hindley Street, with John Packer and two non-fan friends and I tried to con John into producing some artwork for Tigger but otherwise we left our fanning until the Tuesday night at Zappata's.

The Zappata's evening featured most of the cream of the old AUSFANS - Paul Stokes, John McPharlin, Mike Clarke, Perry Middlemiss, Frank McEwen, Eileen Millington, Chas Jensen, Don Ray and Jo, plus Robyn Mills, Cath and me. (Gary Mason had been invited but had sensibly shot through to Melbourne instead.) It was a silly, gross evening. Frank turned up with his trendy new hairstyle and was given the response that the style demanded. Stokes and I were in t-shirts, lamenting the disgustingly respectable look of our fellow diners. Don was celebrating the end of his student career. (Rumour has it that he's the only student member of a University Union ever to receive a Long Service Leave payout on graduation.) Chas mentioned that he too had joined the mortgage set. Stokes and McPharlin were disgusting, for old times' sake.

Large quantities of food were eaten and modest quantities of drink were imbibed. Conversations flitted from theatre to fandom to school to film to vulgarity to comic art to absent friends to food. Perry solicited articles for Larrikin and, in the glow of the evening, everyone promised them. Cath and I, as befitted our status as the old married couple, begged out of the room party that followed in Perry & Robyn's motel room. It was a reminder of a good time in Adelaide fandom.

Marc Ortlieb.

THE chAnGEs OF ADDRESS

Melbourne: There's been a change of Telephone Number for Mark Loney, Michelle Muijsert and Roger Weddall: 427 0691, apparently so they can keep track of all those expensive STD calls.... Rose King & Francis Payne have had a baby (so to speak): at 3am on Wednesday the 4th of February: Samuel Eugene King-Payne. The parents (hi Rose, Frank) have yet to be told that the baby's nickname is "Chip". (Thyme is useful for finding out all sorts of things, eh?) Speaking of which, it looks as though Greg Hills is set to become a permanent resident of Melbourne. It seems the time was not ripe for that fruit-picking job in Shepparton, and Greg is currently living with Ali Kayn, 3/25 Rotherwood St, Richmond 3121. This raises the question of John Foyster's prescience, because...

Adelaide: John Foyster has moved to Adelaide! Apparently the move was planned a while ago, and various members of the ASFR editorial collective (of which John is a member) had known but were sworn to secrecy until, with just three or four days left in Melbourne, the word was let around. A scramble to organise a farewell dinner (we couldn't let you get away that easily, John) saw a party numbering in its teens invade La Paella in Brunswick, where food was gobbled, conversation was made above the noise of the throng, and John was made to suffer generally ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~, culminating in a toast by George Turner. We are informed that John has not lived his entire life in Melbourne, and he's moved to a nice, new job in Adelaide, but this leaves the question hanging as to who will now organise anything in Melbourne. John Foyster's postal address is now P.O.Box 483, Norwood 5067. More news: Allan Bray has become engaged, although our spies have yet to discover her name. Anyway, congratulations, Allan!

Perth: Lee Smoire has finally arrived in Perth, and is living at 57c, Douglas Ave., South Perth 6151. But get this: you thought that it was expensive to travel to travel 'round the globe by aeroplane? It is, but Lee (or was it Lee's friends & acquaintances?) hit upon a novel method for raising that money in a hurry- the A.L.I.E.N. fund: Assist Lee In Emigrating Now. The fund was asking for money in the form of donations or long-term loans from friends (help her do what she wants) and enemies (help get rid of her) to help her over her temporary financial difficulties and fly to Australia. Well, she's here now and looking in fine form, breezing as she did through Melbourne on her way to her new home in Perth.

Sydney: Jean Weber has now moved to live in the same house as Eric Lindsay, at 6 Hillcrest Avenue, Faulconbridge 2776, although she won't be there every day of the week. Jean wrote to us to explain. 'The latest news is that I found a place to buy in Sydney, and a buyer for my house in Canberra. The Sydney place is a small, one-bedroom flat at the back of a twelve-unit building on a quiet side street just a few blocks from Kings Cross. It is in very good condition, but has no car parking space and the window looks out on next door's building. This is why it was cheap but since I don't intend to keep the car in the city anyway, and will only be there at night during the week, neither of these conditions matter to me.' And if a move from one city to another weren't enough, Jean wrote to tell us that 'just to inject further chaos and confusion into our lives, Leigh Edmonds & Valma Brown will be arriving to share Eric's house sometime early in the new year. Four of us (and a goodly proportion of our respective possessions) in a house that's full of Eric's junk? -- the mind boggles. And some wonder why I'm buying a flat in the city!' And then Gerald Smith helpfully wrote to tell us of some other local Sydney-Canberra news:

'Jim Nomarhas is happily out of plaster that kept both his arms immobile for several weeks before Christmas. He broke both arms when he fell off a horse. He had gone horse riding to avoid accompanying wife Carole to the film 'Aliens'.

'Deb Matthews is finally pregnant and she and Robbie expect the new addition to their family sometime late in August. Meanwhile they are moving to a new house (their own) in Guildford next weekend (I don't have the address yet).

'Rod Kearins and Kevin McLean moved to their own new house yesterday (17th of January). The address is 36 Burnett Street, Merrylands 2160, and the house comes complete with 10 metre pool and its own sauna.'

1987 AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION ("DITMAR") AWARDS

The 1987 Ditmars for work in Science Fiction and Fantasy during 1986 will be awarded at CAPCON, the 26th Australian National SF Convention, to be held in Canberra, from April 24 to April 27. The Guests of Honour are Robert Lynn Asprin and Lynn Abbey and (Fan Guest) John Newman.

Further Information on the Convention can be obtained from:

Capcon, PO Box 312, Fyshwick, ACT 2609.

The Constitution of the Australian National SF Con states, re Awards:

"The Convention Committee ... will, by a vote of the Convention's members, after a nominating process involving Australian Fandom generally, award up to five Australian Science Fiction Awards (of which, at least, one must be for fannish endeavours) and the William Atheling (Jr) Award for Criticism and Review."

For this purpose, the Capcon Committee has appointed a sub-committee, of which I, Jack R Herman, am Chair. On the reverse side of this form, there is a nominating form, which may be filled out by any member of Australian Fandom. The Sub-Committee will accept up to five nominations in each category from each nominator.

NOMINATIONS CLOSE on 20th FEBRUARY 1987.

DEFINITIONS OF THE CATEGORIES

1. **BEST AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION OR FANTASY NOVEL:** For an SF or F work of novel length, first published in 1986, and written by an Australian citizen or resident of longer than seven years.
 2. **BEST AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION OR FANTASY SHORT FICTION:** As for Category 1 but the work must be of less than novel length. (Novella, Novellette or Short Story).
 3. **BEST AUSTRALIAN FANZINE:** Awarded to an amateur magazine dealing with Science Fiction, Fantasy, Fandom or related subjects, which produced, at least, one issue in 1986 and was edited and printed by an Australian citizen or resident of longer than seven years.
 4. **BEST AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION OR FANTASY ARTIST:** For works by a Professional or Fan Artist, Illustrator, Cartoonist, Sculptor or Artisan produced in 1986. Artists must fulfil the same citizenship or residency qualifications as above.
 5. **OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO AUSTRALIAN FANDOM:** For the fan whose activities in any or all aspects of Australian Fandom have contributed most to Fandom during 1986. These activities include, but are not limited to, fanwriting, fanart, con and/or club organisation, costuming, filking, letterhacking and apahacking. The same citizenship or residency qualifications as above apply.
- THE WILLIAM ATHELING JR AWARD FOR CRITICISM OR REVIEW:** For a particular piece of criticism or review produced by an Australian and first published or presented in 1986.

Voting forms, compiled from these nominations, will be sent to all members of Capcon. Voting for the Awards will close on 15 April 1987.

Send completed forms to: **AWARDS SUB-COMMITTEE**
Box 272,
Wentworth Building
University of Sydney 2006.

1987 AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION ("DITMAR") AWARDS

NOMINATING FORM

(Awards Sub-Committee: Box 272, Wentworth Building, University of Sydney 2006)

((The rules governing the Awards and definitions of the Categories can be found on the reverse side of this form. It is suggested that these be perused before nominating in any category.))

1. BEST AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION OR FANTASY NOVEL

2. BEST AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION OR FANTASY SHORTER FICTION

3. BEST AUSTRALIAN FANZINE

4. BEST AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION OR FANTASY ARTIST

5. OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO AUSTRALIAN FANDOM

WILLIAM ATHELING JR AWARD FOR CRITICISM OR REVIEW

*Please supply the source of nominees in this category.

#####

Nominator Statistics:

NAME:

SIGNATURE:

ADDRESS:

Capcon Membership No:

I wish to join Capcon ...

If you are not a member of Capcon and may be unknown to the Sub-Committee, please supply the name of a fan or fan organisation to whom/which you are known:

Enclosed is my cheque for
Attending: \$35 (until 31/3/87) ...
Supporting: \$20 (until 31/3/87) ...
After 31/3/87, these will be
\$40 (attending); \$25 (supporting)
Cheques payable to "CAPCON"