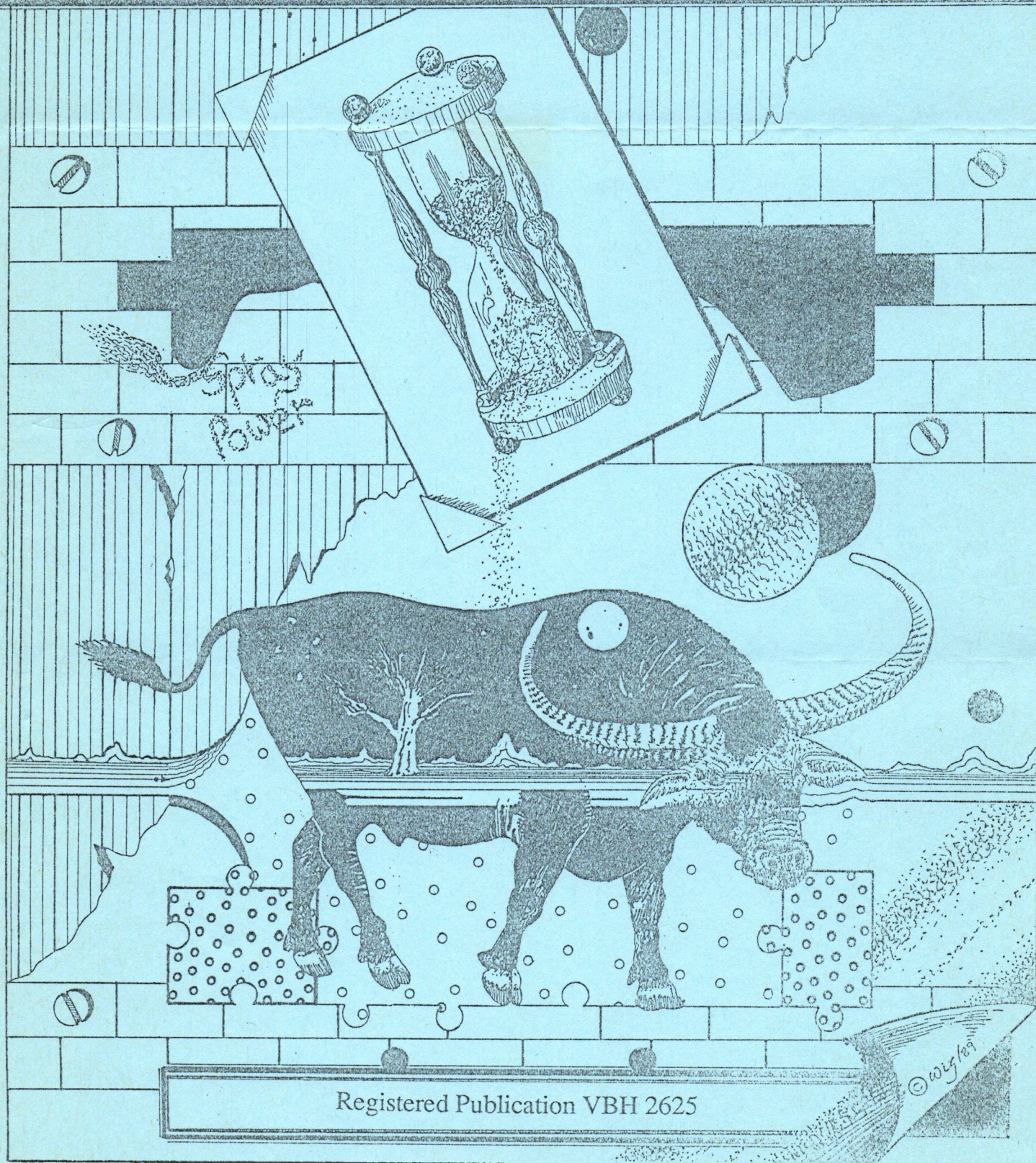


# THYME #75

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April 1989



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## FAN FUNDS

### GUFF:

Nominations are now being called for for the GUFF race of 1990. Winners will go to Confiction, the 1990 Worldcon, to be held in the Netherlands, in August. The nominating Deadline is **16 September, 1989**. (Voting Deadline is anticipated to be 21st of April, 1990.) Nominatees must supply the administrators with:

5 signed nominations - 2 from Europe, 3 from Australia.

A Platform of not more than 100 words.

A non refundable bond of Oz\$15, Dutch F20, or UK£6

and A signed promise that should you win, you will, barring acts of God travel to and attend Confiction.

If you have any queries, contact either administrator:

Irwin Hirsh, 26 Jessamine Avenue, East Prahran, Vic, Aus, 3181

Roelof Goudriaan, Caan van Necklaan 63, 2218 BB Rijswijk (ZH), The Netherlands.

[Irwin Hirsh]

### FFANZ:

As announced last issue the winner was Brian Howell, who is probably back in New Zealand by now. The 10 Australian voters were: Roy Ferguson, Terry Frost, Eric Lindsay, LynC, Clive Newall, Gerald Smith, Alan Stewart, Karen Vaughn, Jean Weber, & Roger Weddall.

The 35 New Zealand voters are too numerous to mention here, but it was good to see that there were so many this time. Next year an Aussie gets to go over there. Terry Frost, the Australian Administrator, will hopefully be opening nominations shortly.

[Lyn McConchie]



# Australian Science Fiction Achievement Awards 1989

## ("The Ditmars")

### BEST INTERNATIONAL FICTION (51)

* Card	6	7	11	13	16	24
Gibson	7	7	7	10	12	
Crowley	6	6	7	7		
Sterling	5	6	6			
Shepard	3	5				
Butler	2					
No Award	20	20	20	21	21	21

### BEST AUSTRALIAN LONG FICTION (38)

* Broderick	11	16	21		
Rubinstein	8	9			
Lake	4				
Logan	4				
No Award	10	11	14		

### BEST AUSTRALIAN SHORT FICTION (48)

* Sussex	20	21	21	25	
McMullen	11	12	13	15	
Madden	6	7	9		
Cummings	4	4			
Egan	3				
No Award	4	4	4	4	

### BEST FANZINE (63)

* Get Stuffed	23	23	27		
Science Fiction	15	18	20		
Lantern	14	17			
ASFR	10				
No Award	1	3	10		

### BEST FAN WRITER (53)

* Gillespie	19	20	27		
Ikin	10	14	17		
Middlemiss	11	13			
Herman	7				
No Award	5	5	5		

### BEST FAN ARTIST (56)

* Gunn	22	25	25	32	
Hanlon	14	14	15	19	
Hilton	11	11	14		
McKenzie	7	7			
Wlodarczyk	3				
McGinn	1				
No Award	1	1	2	3	

### \* WILLIAM ATHERLING AWARD (49)

Blackford	13	13	19		
Webster	15	15	18		
Webb	10	11			
Bridgstock	2				
No Award	9	9	9		

## TOTAL NUMBER OF BALLOTS CAST - 65

All of the ballots were only distributed to the last pair when a possible contender was NO AWARD.

Discrepancies in the number of ballots cast and the figures at any point in the distributions occurs because with each distribution there may be ballot papers the offer no further wish to be part of the ballot. I regard No Award as a final statement and do not distribute further a ballot after this choice.



## 1989 Australian Science Fiction Media Awards (ASFMA):

The winners, announced at Conspire, were:

Best Writer: Nikki White  
Best Artist: Gail Adams  
Best Fanzine: SPOCK  
Best Audio/Visual: No Award.

[Last year these were known as the "Robbies"]

### SWANCON 14

Thyme is unfortunately unable to bring you a review of the Natcon this year. The most commonly cited reason given to us from the attenders whom we approached was that they were going to be writing for their own 'zine. (Equal third place goes to "Work", and "What me? Put pen to paper?") So while we are disappointed by this inability of ours, we can only say that our loss, has got to be fandom's gain, and so in the long run, we aren't actually sorry for this lack. We'll just have to make certain in future that we are never in a situation where we cannot afford to attend ourselves.

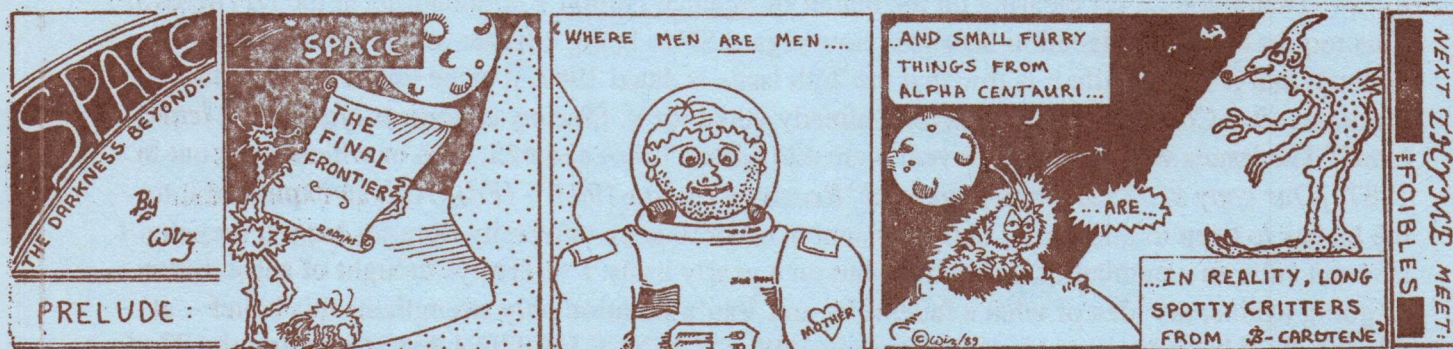
While we cannot bring you a review of the Con, we can bring you a public message of Thanks from Cindy Clarkson, the ex-Chairthingy of Swancon 14. Cindy writes:

"This is a general hi and thank you to all those people who helped at SWANCON 14. If you sat at the registration desk, the huckster's table, helped move things around, set up, or break down, gophered, whatever, you have my gratitude and thanks.

No matter how much effort and planning goes into a convention, of any size, the committee relies on the attending fans to help run the convention. SWANCON 14 ran smoothly thanks to the generosity of fans. Thanks."

Cindy - ex-chairthingy.

We have also received a large number of comments about this year's DITMARs from our readers. Some of your comments appear on the following pages, followed by a brief word from Grant Stone, the Swancon Committee Member responsible for looking after the DITMARs this year.





Dear Thyme,

first, a stirrer - Why no SF Poetry category in the DITMARS? (So who else has one, you ask? Well, the Nebula anthology now annually includes winner of Rhysling (??) US SF Poetry award.

*[The DITMAR Ballot already included more categories than was constitutionally allowable. Now you want more! No way, mate, we've been down that road before. -LynC]*

second, a hope that your reviewer 'Salmon Rushdy', name-alike of the world's most hunted writer, has bulletproof corks round his hat - alright, the name's not spelled exactly the same, but that's asking a lot of the bounty hunters from Quan (??) to know the difference.

*[Firstly it was a SHE, no a HE who wrote that piece. Secondly I took the liberty of changing the spelling of the surname in the hopes that it would protect the innocent. The Author has already expressed her disappointment over that, but I'm inclined to agree with you - it is actually safer for her this way. Mind you 'Rushtdie' (my initial choice) would have been better than 'Rushdy'. -LynC]*

... Best Cheers, Steve Sneyd:

4 Nowell Place,  
Almondbury, Huddersfield  
West Yorkshire UK HD5 8PB

Dear Thyme,

... The DITMARs certainly seem to be a strange set of awards. Of the 'zines listed under "Best Fanzine", I only received GET STUFFED. And where is THE MENTOR, the 'zine I would vote for best Australian fanzine?

Harry Andruschak

PO Box 5309,  
Torrance, CA 90510-5309  
USA

*[Good question. Last one we received (#62), was dated January 1989, but #63 was April 1988, and #62C was March 1988, while #62A was May 1987. Maybe it's the confusion about issue numbers that has been turning people off? Or the time gap between parts of the same issue? Or maybe, we in Australia, who do receive lots of other Aussie 'zines didn't think of it when nominating? Who knows, except the DITMAR committee who are (quite rightly) sworn to secrecy on such matters?]*

Dear LynC,

Thank you .... for clearing up the matter of Science Fiction's nominations in the DITMARS. This requires some explanation because I now regard SF as being eligible, when previously I doubted that it was. While it is true that the 26th issue is dated 1987, it came out in 1988. In fact it came out after Conviction, so we haven't already voted for it. *[See my comments after Van's letter - LynC]* The issues we voted for last year were #24 (dated 1986) and #25, both of which came out in 1987. *[Our copy of #25 is clearly stamped "Received 19-Jan-1988" - (Ed)]* As Van explained it to me he has to keep to this sort of dating system in order to keep university libraries happy; they don't take out subs on a number of issues basis but on a yearly basis. I've always thought of subscription as going against my idea of what a fanzine is, and Van's situation only strengthens this belief - at this rate he'll be publishing his 1991 issues in 1995. (SCIENCE FICTION #28 arrived [on the 22nd of March], and it is listed as being the first issue of 1988.)



However, prior to the arrival of this issue of Thyme I had thought that SF wasn't eligible, since I was totally unaware of the existence of the 27th issue. ... I had thought that Swancon was breaking its own rule about eligibility when it allowed SF on the final ballot, but such is not the case. (Then comes the matter of Van's nomination for Best Fanwriter. I don't recall seeing his writing in any fanzine other than SF. And if he didn't appear in issue 27 he only appeared in one issue last year, making him ineligible for nomination under the rules which Swancon, itself, decided upon. I wonder how many people who nominated him knew, for sure, if he was eligible for nomination. My guess is that most didn't know and they nominated him to see if he was eligible; saying, in effect, that if he is eligible they'd like to see him on the ballot. *[From what Grant says, a lot of that sort of thing took place. Where demand was sufficient I think he may have bowed to popular demand. After all the DITMARS are meant to be a popular award -LynC]*)

But all this brings up that 'two issues a year' bit. It doesn't make sense, since two is just an arbitrary number. Why two? Why not three? Or four? Surely the awards should be honouring quality, not quantity? Being involved in fanzines is a hobby, and if all one is able to do is write one article a year, or draw one piece of artwork, or publish one fanzine in any given year, then that is acceptable. And if the quality of the [work] is better than anyone else's, that should be reflected in the DITMARS. In addition, this eligibility is unfair to one-shots. *[I was actually under the impression that it was specifically meant to make one-shots ineligible. One-shots often don't have any clear person to give the award to, and this gives awards committees too many head-aches. - LynC]* While it is true that frequency of publication is good, the converse is not true - that infrequent publication makes a fanzine bad. A fanzine is a fanzine whether one issue was published in any given year or ten issues. If a publication can't be nominated in the category of Best Fanzine, [that implies] it isn't a fanzine. The category is called Best Fanzine, not Best Fanzine-which published-two-or-more-issues, after all.

It is my feeling that it will only be a matter of time before we see the publication of many single-sheeters in late December, each published by people who pubbed only one issue of their fanzine during the year; the aim of each single-sheeter being solely to make a fanzine eligible for nomination for the DITMAR. The point to note is that should any of those fanzines make the final ballot, what made them gain nomination is not the good quality of the first issue for the year, but the publication of [that] second issue, and that quality is irrelevant. I'm concerned that while the DITMARS are supposed to, in part, encourage quality, this fanzine eligibility requirement makes it a dis-encouragement award. A single-sheeter published just to qualify is not what the DITMARS are supposed to be honouring.

The odd thing is that all that was needed for the 'two issues' rule to take effect was for someone to think it up and type it on the DITMAR nomination and voting forms. I think it is about time that the convention committees, who presumably like the rule, should explain why they allowed it to go through. And if such an explanation is not forthcoming I suggest that all right-minded people boycott the three fan categories - which is something I've done these past two years.

Yours Irwin Hirsh.

26 Jessamine Avenue,  
East Prahran, Vic. 3181





Dear Thyme/LynC,

...

You're right that Science Fiction did not "officially" publish anything in 1988 -- but only if you're going to be legalistic and take the cover date as the date of publication even when there is good solid evidence that the cover date does not represent the actual publication date. Just about anyone who gets the magazine -- by trade, by subscription, by whim, or by bookshop sale -- would know that issues were published in 1988. The 1987 cover-dates are there because Science Fiction is in the position of having lots of institutional subscribers, all of whom go ape if I use "real time" cover-dates instead of "schedule" publication dates. (I've learned this the hard way over the years. If institutional subscribers are expecting Vol.9, No. 1 to be dated 1987, it creates an enormous problem to date it 1988 just because it actually appeared in 1988. I have literally lost dozens of institutional subscribers by doing this, and I just can't afford to have that happen.)

So the situation, for the record, is actually as follows: three issues of Science Fiction were mailed out in 1988 - #25, #26, and #27 - but all three were cover-dated 1987 for the simple reason that they should have appeared in '87. The printer's bill for #25 was paid in 1987, so maybe its status as a "1988" issue is wobbly, but I don't think anyone received a copy before February 1988. The printer's bills for #26 and #27 were both paid in 1988.

It appears [the awards committee] decided that actual publication dates were more important than cover-dates, and this seems reasonable to me (but then, I am biased on the issue!).

You also suggest that people might already have voted on Science Fiction #26 at Conviction, but issue #26 was not mailed out until July 11th 1988 and Conviction was on June 10-13.

The Index issue (#27) raises problems which are more complex, and I'm certainly not accusing you of getting your facts wrong here. My personal view is that if people wanted to vote for the Index issue then they should have nominated its compiler, Chris Nelson, for the Atheling Award. However, it is an editor's decision to do something as brave/eccentric/boring as devoting a whole issue to an index, and I therefore see nothing wrong with people voting for or against that editor's decision to do such a thing.

As for me as a nominee for Best Fan Writer: I am embarrassed by that. There is a considerable art to good fan writing, and I am honest enough to say that I don't think I have that ability. (I'd like to, but I don't; there it is. Whatever abilities I might have lie more in the critical field.) I certainly did not nominate myself for the fan writer award. I have ranked myself below all the other fan writer candidates on my Ditmar ballot, and I think others should do the same.

Hmm: I've just re-read what I've written and it looks a bit peevish. I apologize for that, because I don't mean it to be. I'm sure there was nothing personal in anything you said, and I don't intend there to be any rancour in what I've said. I think I needed to speak up for myself and "set the record straight".

Van Ikin  
C/o English Department,  
The University of Western Australia,  
Nedlands, WA 6009



*[You are also right, Van. I do owe you an apology with regard to issue #26. I (and others in Melbourne) was honestly under the impression that I had received it BEFORE Conviction. You, who had to pay Australia Post for it's mailing, do of course know better! I'm sorry if my editorial article did in any way influence the vote, but somehow I think not, given the way voting for Best Fanwriter (an award even you agree you were not eligible for) went. As for you not being a good Fan writer, I disagree. You are a good writer, and the decision as to whether or not it is "fannish" surely rests with a majority decision from all fans, not just yourself. I look forward to seeing more original work in your next issue. - LynC]*

## A small contemplation on the nature of the Ditmars in 1989.

This is the second time that I have had the pleasure of organizing the Ditmars. Each time has had its share of controversy. Now that you have the figures in front of you, it should be apparent that the fan community is divided, almost equally, about the usefulness of the 'International' Category. You know my views, but again, for the record: To my way of thinking we should retain this category but endeavour to make sure that eligible works have been available to the wider SF reading public in Australia, and that means available outside the specialty bookstores. If you feel like applauding the latest US and/or UK releases you join either the Worldcon, or the UK Natcon and vote in the appropriate ballot. (Case in point George Turner's most recent work is on this years Nebula ballot because last year was the first time it was available in the US.)

The second observation I would make is that voters voting past their first choice consistently go for the known name, or talent, which makes it almost impossible for new talent to be recognised. This gripe is in part directed at the 'Best Australian Fiction' category, because, as much as I admire Damien Broderick's talent, I had the distinct impression in this ballot that the works were largely unread by the voters. *[And it's a real pity we can't ENFORCE responsible voting on the electorate! -LynC]*

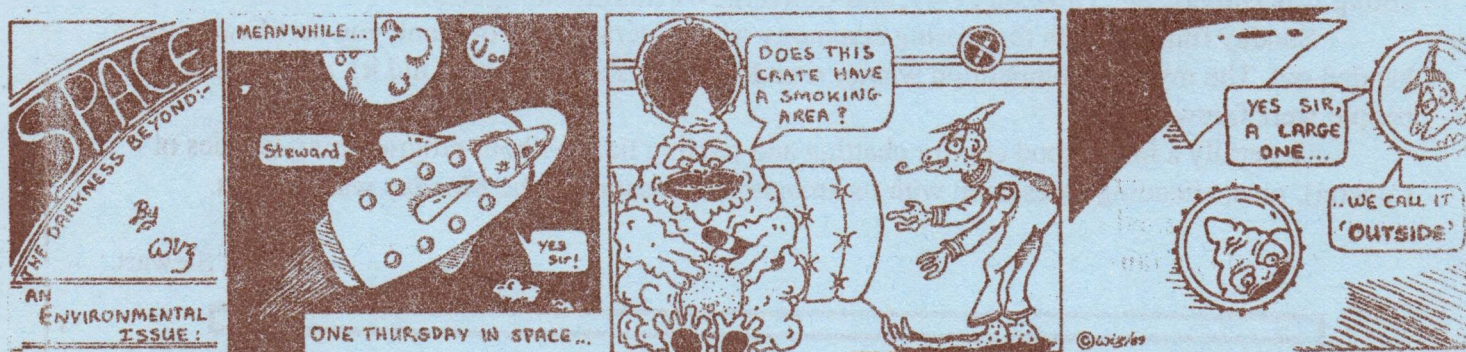
The fan awards tended to be dominated (at least it seemed that way on the night) by the crew from Get Stuffed. I, for one, saw this as an encouraging sign as we, the fans, recognised the revitalizing energy that is in this group from the MSFC [Melbourne Science Fiction Club]. It is to be hoped that their energy spills over into the wider SF community as an encouragement to a new blooming of fanac at the fanzine level in Australia, and a removal of the Media/SF fan barrier. (You remove it by failing to recognize it.)

Congratulations to all who made the ballot, and of course the winners.

The Trophies will be in the mail soon...

(that was a Joke!)

Grant Stone





# CONSPIRE -

## A reprise of the 1989 Australian National Media Convention

(17-20 March, Hotel Rex, Canberra)

Just arriving at Conspire seemed to be a problem. The MSFC van did a windscreen; other vehicles from Melbourne needed replacement starter motors, alternators, tyres or ran out of petrol. And the Austrek bus driver refused to stop at the Con Hotel! Perhaps there really was a conspiracy, or it was going to be another Canberra Con of doom.

When we arrived Friday afternoon the welcoming scuttlebutt was "A GOHless Con!". Confirmed later at the opening ceremony, neither John DeLancie nor Michelle Nichols would be attending. Apparently the US agent negotiating their attendance was not officially authorized. Four conventions in the US for the same weekend were also GOHless, according to rumour. Robert Jan, the Fan GOH, had to carry the banner alone.

I'm afraid I forewent the cocktail party in favour of food which turned out to mean the Pancake Parlour. On Saturday the opening ceremony was a wee bit apologetic, but everyone seemed prepared to make the best of it. Various parts of the mystery competition began at this time with a couple of 'deaths' amongst the audience and the MCs, Tim Richards and Narelle Harris, being upstaged by 'super-heroes'. After that I spent most of the Con talking to people, checking out the Hucksters room, eating jaffles cooked in our room, collating 'zines, manning the Huttcon table, and generally not doing much really, at least that's what it felt like.

A few exceptions included competing in Theatre Sports, run by Tim and Narelle, as a member of The Stuffed Aardvarks. Unfortunately we lost out to Chop Suey, a last minute entry, who did a very nice 'Carmen Vulcan' in the 3 minute opera section.

The video room was very small, and extremely hot and crowded when anything popular (like Star Trek: The Next Generation) was showing. A similar sized room was used for the artwork and cuddly toys display. 'Skunge', a purple punk teddy, came second. This room was interesting as the record covers on one wall coupled with the mirrored ceiling gave an illusion of space.

As usual the banquet went way over time, was under-catered (although the overflow had a very nice meal in the restaurant), and the Masquerade started 90 minutes late. Anyway there were a few good costumes such as a Romulan landing party, and 'Alice 12' from one of the Mudd Star Trek episodes. In the following cabaret Blake Edgerton, done up as Yahoo Serious (complete with banana spiked to his guitar) and his friends from Queensland did an amusing song based on their D&D characters and narrowly won from Ian Gunn with his 'I am the very Model of a Modern Science Fiction Fan' recital.

The ASFMA awards were handed out, with no real surprises - Gail Adams, Spock, & Nikki White - except for NO AWARD in the audiovisual category. It seems that a lot of people hadn't seen the nominated works and voted an uninformed No Award, instead of leaving the section blank.

Dancing after the cabaret, ended at 12pm due to hall rental time running out. Most room parties kept getting cancelled after that. No Fan Block Booking.

At the business meeting the main news was that Huttcon won the 1990 Natcon. I think the voting was Huttcon 54, TrekCon IV 47, and Converge 41 (unofficial figures).

Sunday finished with the closing ceremony where literally tens of thank you certificates were handed out. The mystery competition winner was drawn (Dr Zachary Smith did it), and various people were farewelled.

Generally a fairly good con for chatting and passing time without programming (shades of Capcon), plus, attending Questacon with its animated Dinosaurs on the Monday was a bonus.

Alan Stewart.



## Who's Next?

It was bound to happen. Not even Jenny Chudecki was immune from what has come to be known as the Ackroyd Effect. But I leap ahead of myself. There is, you see, something strange about sharing a house with Justin Ackroyd. Alan Wilson did, and he married Judy. Kevin Noonan did, and he married Denise. Torbjorn Von Strokirch did, and he married Robyn. I did, and I married Cath. Indeed Justin's mere proximity can cause outbreaks of wedlock, as Jack Herman and Carey Handfield, both of whom shared a room with Justin at LACON II, discovered to their inestimable gain. (True, Jack succumbed earlier than Carey. Probably because he shared a bed with Justin, but that's another story altogether.)

The strange thing is that most of the above mentioned got married in order to avoid having to live with Justin; Torbjorn and Robyn going to ridiculous extremes to avoid living with Justin - Tasmania to be precise. Jenny, however, agreed to marry Justin understanding that it meant that she would continue to live with him. This can only be seen as a measure of the evil spell that Justin cast on Jenny. She was, after all, simply a customer of Justin's before Justin forgot exactly what it was he was selling.

Naturally Cath and I were concerned. You see, Justin had lived with us - after we were married, so there was no danger of a relapse. We agreed to adopt him, on the condition that he move out of home immediately, which he generously did. Thus we lost a boarder, but gained a son - much to the bemusement of Cath's relatives who found our bouncing young Justin to be not quite what they'd expected when they were dropping hints about the patter of little feet at our wedding. True, Justin did do the right thing. When he became seriously interested in Jenny, he brought her round to dinner, and we did all that doting parents could be expected to do - we offered to buy Jenny a false passport and a ticket to Argentina. But it was already too late. We surrendered to the inevitable and gave the couple our blessing.

You might have thought that Justin would have been grateful for our co-operation in aiding and abetting, but no, he pulled a nasty trick. He asked for a chocolate cake for the wedding. We had taken one round to their place to celebrate their engagement - on April 1st - and so I thought it reasonable that there be one at the wedding a year later. I was determined to outdo myself in kitsch and so decorated the cake with moulded Australian animals and bright green spearmint leaves. It was only upon arrival that I discovered that this was to be THE wedding cake! I was rather flattered and terribly embarrassed.

Justin and Jenny had imported guests from far and wide. The roll call included Eve and John Harvey, Roelof Goudriaan and Lynne Ann Morse, Jack Herman and Cath McDonnell, John McPharlin and Paul Stokes, plus the usual Melbourne Mafia. Sitting in the front row were Jo Handfield, Wendy Hirsh, and Cath Ortlieb, as a warning of what that marriage lark can actually lead to - all three being obviously pregnant. They'd mulled over plans to disrupt the ceremony with cries of "Justin! How could you? And in front of our unborn child!" or "Sorry to interrupt but I think my waters just broke."; but such schemes were broken by a curt, "Don't even think about it." from Jenny as she walked up the bridal path.

The ceremony was delightful, enlivened by the celebrant who was obviously an amateur conjurer in his spare time. "You see here in my palm two solid gold rings."

"Nothing up my sleeve." interjected Paul Stokes. Andrew Brown was disappointed when the celebrant didn't toss the two rings into the air, joined as one. Instead, he proclaimed the couple



joined as one - a much nicer finale.

Then it was into the establishment for the reception, food and drink. It was all terribly fannish, with a little ribbing of the waitresses, one of whom almost cut Stoke's hand off at the wrist when he had the temerity to reach over in order to pour his own wine. Perry Middlemiss' speech proved that, if not the best man, he was certainly pretty damn good. Joy and good spirit abounded and the gathering was reluctantly abandoned when the happy couple made their way out to the car, amidst bubbles provided by Mandy Herriot, Phil Ware and Cath [Ortlieb].

It wasn't like losing a son, more like gaining a glass, brimful of happy memories. I only hope Cath and I have as much fun should our expected [now arrived] child decide to marry.

Marc Ortlieb

*[You've overlooked one thing, Marc. There are still two of us out here who've shared a house with Justin and are still single - me, and Dennis Callegari -LynC]*

---

## Save The Last Tango for Me

In the final analysis, other people's weddings are events which may be enjoyed, but which must in any case be endured. It was therefore with some not unreasonable trepidation that we ventured out on a sunny Saturday afternoon (25th of March, 1989, for the historians amongst you) to see Ian Porter and Barbara Gabel exchange mutual vows of their undying love.

Milling around outside the small but pretty St Carthage's Catholic Church beforehand, there was some consternation over the possibility that Barbara's family background might mean we'd be standing, sitting, and kneeling around inside for hour upon long hour of nuptial mass. The appearance of Ian and groomsmen, John Mazzocchi and Steve Taylor, in black suits with wing collars (fer chrissake!) was likewise not a good sign. As we were herded into the building by overeager relatives Phil (Ware) was heard to mutter that not only weren't there any Jaffas to roll down the aisle, but the thick carpeting meant that they wouldn't have been heard anyway. I settled back for an afternoon of rare entertainment...

For our efforts, however, we were rewarded with a formal but simple ceremony that was as pleasantly and obviously heartfelt as it was thankfully brief.

Father Michael Ellicott, as celebrant, seemed a little out of place and yet gave a controlled if pleasingly ambiguous performance, with such immortal lines as: "They've put together a ceremony that's very much their own..." It's always fun to read between the lines at times like this. And then there was the moment it was revealed that Ian saw the ceremony as "Whitlamesque"; one was left to wonder just what effect this pronouncement would be having on the clique of young Socialist Left, who sat silently huddled to one side throughout... were we seeing the opening shots of a Campaign of sorts? Only time will tell.

"Ian, this is a Church. Underneath the floor there is God."  
celebrant to groom, before the event



The best line of the wedding was neither Ian's nor the celebrant's, however. "Love for us is the warm experience of someone to have fun with", said the groom as He & She exchanged promises and rings.

"Fark, Fark" offered a crow by way of comment as it flew from the roof of the church while the married couple kissed. Now was that a piece of advice, or an omen?

Cleverly, I'd say, the ceremony was held not one hundred metres from another place of worship where marriages were being held all day, conveyer-belt fashion, like they were going out of style. Karen and ASMS (and more than a few others, in fact) were thus decoyed away until beyond the point when it would have been appropriate for Karen to rush to the front with babes in arms, warning Barbara not to make the same mistake that she had; instead, the twins were later given out as a matched set of wedding presents - and here comes my only real complaint of the whole affair: that the huge table of wedding presents was never unwrapped so I could see for myself the seven identical electric toasters that people (I'd heard on the day) had planned to buy for the occasion. Now we'll never know for sure whether they did or not. Or what Barbara and Ian thought of their gifts.

One thing that can be definitely announced: that the bride's empire-line gown with lego'mutton sleeves and matching corsage of Singapore orchids & pearls was in fact neither 'Ivory', 'Off-white', 'Tarnished Ivory', nor 'Cream'. Ian McFarlane alone correctly nominated 'Oyster White' and he can collect his prize - a lifetime subscription to either 'Vogue' or 'Direct Action' - from ~~the Thyme editorial offices~~ [from Thyme's roving reporter - Roger Weddall].

The reception was held at Chaucers, and as it was the place where all senior Liberal Party parliamentarians go to celebrate official events I was expecting a decent meal as well as decent service. Silly of me, really, but on reflection the food was edible, (which is more than you can say of lots of similar places) and the white wine was pleasant, if unremarkable.

The usual table games went on - nothing new in this - and what we first saw as a clever ploy to keep us in a corner away from the rellies proved to be a godsend as it meant we were furthest away from the resident band who played the latest hits of 1948. Request for Zappa fell on (literally) deaf ears. Tone deaf, possibly. *[Almost certainly, I would have said - LynC]* But none of this mattered when Barbara and Ian rose from the Head table for the Bridal Tango. Visions of Barbara - a rose between her teeth - being flung, nay, thrown back against Ian's arm were replaced by the more sober reality of the happy couple shuffling sedately to and fro until they were obscured by a throng of grandparents and cousins (hers) swaying to the music of a generation ago. Coming up next? The Bridal Breakdance. Get down!

Roger Weddall.

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## New ANZAPA Official Bloody Editor(s)

Ooops. Almost forgot. ANZAPA has new Official Bloody Editor(s), and a new address. The new editor(s) are LynC & Clive Newall and the new address is the same as Thyme: PO Box 4024, University of Melbourne, Vic., Australia, 3052. There is currently no waiting list, and new members will be most welcome.



## EQUAL RIGHTS FOR DROIDS OR: DARTH - THE GOOD GUY, PART III

[At last, the third installment of Mark Lawson's treatise on the real story behind the 'Star Wars' saga. The previous installments appeared in issues 71 (September 88) and 72 (November 88)]

As anyone who has been following this series will by now have realized, I'm on Darth Vader's side. He was a good guy who happened to lose and have his epitaph written by the victors. As I've tried to point out in the other two articles, there are many sides to the Darth Vader question including the tricky one of identifying what the rebels were actually rebelling against.

As noted before, the heroic adventurers don't actually discuss politics, which is curious as in many ways they were engaged in the ultimate political act. The films do give the general impression that Vader was tyrannical and nasty, but as the rebels spend much of their time shooting his soldiers and behaving disrespectfully towards Imperial property, some querulousness on his part is understandable.

Even classifying the conflict is difficult - it could be rebellion (nasty), civil war (very nasty) or revolution (extremely nasty). But of course it's not really a revolution where the system of government collapses and everyone has a fun time until someone fills up the power vacuum left behind. A key turning point in most revolutions is when the soldiers refuse to fire on the rioters, who are usually also their countrymen. The stormtroopers remain loyal, although surprisingly inaccurate, through three films.

An equally significant point is the presence of fully-fledged "rebel" military units including large space craft complete with trained support crew for the space fighters. The rebels are not exactly ragged and hungry maoist-style guerrilla bands but well organised and, above all, well financed.

So the most likely scenario is that of a group of planets, once part of a broad frontier but now settled and rich territory well outside the Imperial heartland, becoming tired of Imperial regulation. They might well have become resentful of taxes imposed to pay for the defence of remote provinces in which they had no interest, but I believe the real issue may well have been that of 'droid slavery.

Although in decline the Empire was a fairly civilized place and as improving technology created an'droids that were almost a sentient, albeit very diverse, race in its own right there was a move to recognize what had been created. However the economy and lifestyle of the rebel planets depended on a pliant 'droid workforce. Notions of equal rights for ''droids could not be allowed.

Thus the starring presence of good ''droids Artoo-Detoo and See-Threepio in all three films is very significant. They are there to show that the 'droids knew their place below organic intelligence and liked being there. It hardly need be noted that in the rough space bar in the first film, obviously a place at the poor organic (poor white) end of the socio-economic scale, the two an'droids are told to leave and do so willingly.

Once the android equal rights movement gained enough momentum to seriously alarm the settled planets, they decided to take advantage of an empire weakened by the bloody crushing of the dissident Jedi Knights, and possibly a major external assault, to make a bid for an independent state. The state would be set up to keep the 'droids in their place.



Long allowed to maintain planetary defence forces under Imperial supervision, the rebel planets would simply have declared independence and started preparing for the inevitable Imperial reaction. Crazy though the Emperor obviously was, he had just enough nous left to send the general who had crushed the Jedis and beaten off the empire's external enemies, although at heavy cost, to teach the rebels a lesson.

The historical parallel is far from exact, but this interpretation casts the emperor in the role of a crazed Abe Lincoln, while Darth is something like a combined Generals Grant and Sherman without the glory of having won. It is more than likely neither man cared a fig for android rights. The empire was crumbling and something had to be done.

As Darth was obviously competent and Imperial military technology superior, the affair should have been a walk-over. Darth's reputation as handed down to us is one hint of just how much the rebels lost initially, and perhaps is an echo of the similar bitterness caused by Sherman's march to the sea through Georgia. But the rebels were saved by the disastrous Imperial reliance on the Death Stars.

As everyone knows, there is some similarity between naval warfare and conflict in space, in that there is the perpetual trade-off between speed, defence and hitting power. There is no need here to go through the complicated history of armour versus torpedo; battleship versus destroyer and submarine; then battleship versus aircraft carrier versus submarine. Now it is missiles and torpedoes versus everything. The final result of all this is difficult to say, except that it would be a brave ship captain who went anywhere dangerous without air cover.

Space warfare at the time of the Rebellion was at quite a different stage. The creation of the moon-sized integrated battle spaceship, capable of blowing up full planets, must have caused the same sort of stir as the launch of HMS Dreadnought in 1906, with its single calibre powerful guns mounted in turrets and controlled by a central optical and electrical fire direction system.

However, just as the natural counter to the Dreadnought was swarms of torpedo boats, from which it had to be protected by a destroyer screen and its own formidable secondary armament, so the Death Star could be attacked by squadrons of Space Planes. It was by no means an easy task, but after repeated attempts and big losses the Rebels somehow managed to get the plans to the Death Star, work out a weakness, and to their credit, press the advantage home.

Full destruction of a Death Star from a single missile was impossible of course, but Vader was faced with the problem of repairing a very complicated spaceship a long hyperspace journey from the nearest friendly dockyard. An attempt at a quick resolution to the conflict without a Death Star by chasing the Rebel fleet around, proved fruitless. Being on their home turf the rebel fleet could be resupplied by most planets, and had enough sense to avoid a fight, while the Imperials had to send down armed raiding parties if they wanted anything. Without an operational Death Star, DV (as Darth was known) could only hold one planet with certainty. Stand off.

There was only one thing for it, take a firm grip on one of the advanced planets and start patching the Death Star. It meant, of course, converting a major fraction of the planet's industry over to producing the stuff needed for the Death Star and forever guarding against sabotage attempts, but at least it was more comfortable than chasing rebels around. In the meantime, Darth whistled up some reinforcements and the Rebels started rebuilding their fleet. It would have been a pause of some years ending in an automatic Imperial victory, but for sinister, shadowy Han Solo. His involvement must be explained via the technicalities of building Death Stars.



One basic premise of the third film is that DV had a second Death Star built close to an almost deserted planet. In present day terms, this would be something like suggesting that a fleet of nuclear-powered, Nimitz-class aircraft carriers could be built on the beach of a deserted Pacific island. No. The thing had to be repaired in Geostationary orbit around an advanced and developed planet, preferably directly above a major city with which it could communicate directly via spacehook (see almost anything written by Arthur C. Clarke for an explanation).

The notion of sabotage would immediately occur to both sides, of course, and here Solo came in extremely useful. The historical model for Solo could well have been the entertaining career of the big-time Spanish smuggler Juan March (pronounced Mark). During the first world war, to take one example, March provided food, fuel and information on Allied ship movements for German U boats from a base in the Balearic Islands, in return for cash and free passage for ships carrying his contraband. At the same time he supplied provisions and intelligence on German ship movements to the British submarine base at Gibraltar, also in return for cash and being allowed to smuggle tobacco into France. Neutral ships paid him protection money, or they were fingered to the Germans.

March provided finance and transportation at a crucial time to General Franco, who later connived at March taking over (stealing really) an entire foreign-owned company the size of one of the Australian state electricity commissions. Not bad.

It is no accident that Han Solo provides transportation to Skywalker at a crucial moment, and is a pivotal figure in the sabotage of the Death Star in the third film. Only his shadowy but immense influence and wealth could have bribed enough officials and suborned enough guards (possibly he arranged a distracting fiesta/orgy) to open a sufficiently large hole in the Imperial dockyard defenses. Then it would have been a matter of a Rebel force striking fast and hard...

As for the rest, DV seems to have gone down with his flagship, which is a pity as he did his best for what was a reasonably worthy cause. His death, and the loss of a full Death Star, pushed the feeble wits of the Emperor over the brink. Shortly afterwards the Empire broke up into quarreling fragments.

Skywalker reformed the Jedi knights with all its old faults but hardly any of its former virtues, legitimising his right to head it by revealing the previously unknown (and unproven) fact that DV was his father. Han Solo, like Juan March, probably became a media baron. Working on his media services would have been an interesting exercise in concealing the truth. The 'droids, having more sense than anybody, remained happy mainly by avoiding lengthy space sagas.

Next time, prepare for Alien(s) - the true story.

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Well, the Yarn Basket and convention list follow, but we'll take this space to thank (in no particular order): Steve, Alan, Cathy, Cindy, Grant, Roger, Harry, Marc, Lyn, Irwin, Van, Alan, Jean, Yvonne, Ian, without whom you would be receiving about 20 blank pages.

Artwork this issue:

Cover: "Triptych for Thomas I" © 1989, The Wiz

Strips: "SPACE: The darkness beyond" © 1989, The Wiz

Other: pages 5 & 15 © 1989 The Wiz, back cover © 1988 Brad Foster



## The Yarn Basket

### That Bug again:

The Pregnancy Bug has apparently spread its devastating effects to Sydney now, with the report that **Ray & Sharon Gleeson** have a new daughter **Justine**, and that **Deb Matthews** has now been struck. [Roger Weddall]

The news in Melbourne is that **Paul & Brenda Anderson** had their second (& last) child, **Michael**, on Thursday, the 13th of April. Other child, **Stephanie** is reportedly pleased despite the fact that she didn't get the hoped for sister. Ah well. [Cath Kerrigan]

And, weighing the sum of 3345 grams (7lbs.6oz to us oldies), and measuring 49.5 cm (19.5") Thyme is pleased to announce the arrival of **Michael David Ortlieb** on the 18th of April at 8.35pm. Birth notice was in the "Age" on Thursday 20th. Cath & Michael are doing fine, and Marc is doing a fine impression of the proud father. [Hospital Records.]



### CofA's:

First a correction. You may have had mail addressed to **Jean Weber** or **Eric Lindsay** returned marked "Unknown as Addressed". I'll let Jean explain:

"We have another CofA. We finally got sorted out what had actually happened, as distinct from what I'd been told when I complained.

It seems that Australia Post had assigned us to an already occupied box! For the first couple of months, we didn't get any mail, so nobody noticed. When mail started arriving, it was a matter of who got to the box first: us or them. Each party sent the other's letters back. The other people had a good excuse: they'd had the box for years and didn't know why all this mail for somebody else was suddenly showing up.

Eventually they complained, and somebody figured out what was going on."

**Eric Lindsay & Jean Weber** now have a NEW Post Office box. P.O. Box 244, Potts Point, NSW, Aus, 2011. As Jean says "hopefully things will be okay now." If you have had mail returned, just resend it. Since it was Australia Post's error they may even be willing to re-accept the item without postage. [Ask first though or it'll end up in the Dead Letter Office & never get there.]

**John T Stewart** has moved from Hawker in our illustrious capital to 16 Harrison St, Scullin, ACT, Aus, 2614.

### Bookshops:

Yet another correction to the Adelaide Bookshop situation: **Yvonne Rousseau** wrote to let us know that there are in fact two Science Fiction bookshops in Adelaide! These are: **The Galactic Trading Post**, 11 Twin Plaza Arcade, Ph: 08 223 1544 and **Known Space Books**, 233a Rundle St. Ph: 08 223 3406.

### Nova Mob:

This group now meets at **Alan Stewart's** place: 31 Brighton St, Richmond, at 8pm on the first Wednesday of every month. Several topics have been suggested for the forthcoming year including **Salman Rushdie's** infamous novel, but the next two topics will be: **Gender bias in women writers**



(particularly Anne McCaffrey) - Cathy Kerrigan, May 5. June 9 will be **Beauty & the Beast**, a round robin discussion. Contact Cathy Kerrigan on (03) 819 1982 for information.

### **Fandom Directory:**

The 11th annual Fandom Directory (1989 Edition) is now available for US\$12.95 plus US\$3 shipping (outside U.S.). The address is FANDATA Publications 7761 Asterella Ct, Springfield, USA, VA 22152-3133. Clubs, etc who innocently supplied these people with their names and addresses, be warned - they not only publish a directory but they also sell that information as mailing labels to anyone willing to pay for it.

### **Events:**

**Starwalking** are running two fund raising events in the near future:

**Indiana Jones Preview: The Last Crusade.** Starring Harrison Ford as Indy, and Sean Connery as his dad. "The man in the hat is back, and this time he's bringing his Dad!" Date is June 8th, at 7pm, at the Russell Cinemas in Melbourne. Tickets are \$8, (or \$5 Student under 16, or pensioner), money payable to Starwalking Inc, P.O. Box 118 Springvale, 3171 by May 31st so bookings can be finalized.

AND as a joint event with **TrekCon IV:**

**A Masked Ball: Winter Palace.** To be held on June 24th, at the Royal Pde Motor Inn. Costs \$30 for Meal & Ball. There will also be an afternoon fantasy Minicon, for \$5 at the same venue. Money to be paid to Starwalking as above, a week before the event.

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## **\* THE THYME CONVENTION UPDATE \***

### **MEXICON III:**

**Dates:** 26-29 May 1989

**Venue:** Albany Hotel, Nottingham, UK.

**Rates:** £15

**Room Rates:** £20, including breakfast & VAT.

**Mail:** Greg Pickersgill, 7a Lawrance Rd, South Ealing, London, W54KJ, UK.

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### **SATYRICON:** NZ 10th NatCon

**Dates:** 2-5 June, 1989

**Venue:** The Alplen Motor Lodge, St Andrew St, Dunedin

**GOH:** Still being negotiated???

**Rates:** possibly NZ\$35

**Mail:** Satyricon, N.A.S.F. (Dunedin), P.O. Box 5516, Dunedin, Aotearoa

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### **ICONOCLASM:**

**Dates:** Friday June 16 -Sat June 18

**Venue:** Griffin Hotel, Leeds, Yorkshire, UK

**Mail:** Jenny Glover, MAVERICK, 16a Aviary Pl, Leeds, Yorkshire, UK, LS12 2NP.

**Ph:(UK)** 0532 791264

[Some sort of Relaxacon???

### **NOREASCON 3:** 47th World Science Fiction Convention

**Dates:** 31 August - 4 September 1989

**Rates:** \$US80 to 15/7/89, \$US20 supporting, \$US50 Children. After 15/7/89 membership can only be purchased at the door.

**GOH:** Andre Norton, Ian & Betty Ballantine

**Venue:** John B. Hynes Veterans Convention Center, and others in Boston

**Mail:** Norascon 3, Box 46, MIT Branch Post Office, Cambridge, MA 02139, USA.

**Agents:** Australia: Carey Handfield, PO Box 1091, Carlton, Vic, 3053.

[PR#5 has now arrived, and Hugo Nominations have now closed. No word yet on when we will receive voting forms in Australia, but they should be being mailed out next week, due for return by 15 July. Site Selection Ballots (due 15 August) will be sent out at the same time. These mail outs will only go to members as at the 1st May.]

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### **STAR WALKING:** The Convention

**Dates:** 8-10th September, 1989

**Venue:** Melbourne Townhouse, 701 Swanston St, Carlton, 3053

**Theme:** "All Things Weird and Wonderful"

**GOH:** Jeremy Bullock (Boba Fett, from The Star Wars films)

**Rates:** \$60 till con, \$75 at door, \$25 Supporting.



**Room Rates:** \$82 a double bed room, \$92 a double & single bed room. All payments to be made to the hotel.

**Mail:** P.O. Box 118, Springvale, Vic, 3171.

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**CIRCULATION IV:** (4th Canberra regional SF Con)

**Dates:** 29 September - 2 October, 1989

**Rates:** \$30 till 1/June/89, \$10/\$15 supporting

**Venue:** EagleHawk Hill Motel, Federal Hwy, Canberra

**Mail:** Canberra Science Fiction Society, Circulation 4, P.O. Box 47, Civic Square, ACT, 2608

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**NOWRACON:** (A Relaxacon)

**Dates:** 24th-26th November 1989

**Venue:** Leprechaun Motel, Princess Hwy, Nowra

**Rates:** \$30 till 30/9/89, then \$35. Day Membership \$16. (Includes Morning Tea) Meals extra. Hucksters' tables are \$9 (~90cm square).

**Room Rates:** \$44 Single, \$52 twin/Double, \$60 Triple, \$67 Family.

**Mail:** Edwina Harvey, 12 Flinders St Matraville, NSW, 2036

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**CONJUNCTION:** (A Relaxacon for all streams of SF/F)

**Dates:** 1st - 3rd December, 1989

**Venue:** The Diplomat Motor Inn, Acland St, St Kilda.

**Rates:** \$30 (\$40 at door). \$5 Sup

**Theme:** The Meeting of Two Worlds (& Sex in SF)

**Room Rates:** \$52 Single, \$57 Double.

**Mail:** CONJUNCTION, P.O. Box 41, West Brunswick, Vic, 3055

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**DANSE MACABRE:** The 29th Australian National Science Fiction Convention

**Dates:** Friday 13th - Monday 16th April, 1990 (Easter)

**Venue:** The Diplomat Motor Inn, Acland St, St Kilda.

**Rates:** Currently \$45, \$15 Supporting

**GOH:** George RR Martin [Confirmed at last!]

**Fan GOH:** Eric Lindsay

**Room Rates:** \$54 single, \$59 Twin/Double, & \$80 Triple/Suite.

(If you are booking for the Spaceline, you must at least book for Friday, Saturday, & Sunday. You can book extra days, but if you don't want those three you will have to go to the Diplomat (or pay Spaceline's normal prices).)

**Mail:** DANSE MACABRE, PO Box 273, Fitzroy, Vic., 3065

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**CONVERGE II:**

**Dates:** 1st - 4th June, 1990 (NZ Queens Birthday)

**Venue:** Terrace Regency Hotel, Wellington

**Rates:** NZ\$35, NZ\$40 at Door, NZ\$15 Supporting

**GOH:** Richard Arnold (The StarTrek Archivist at Paramount)

**Fan GOH:** James Benson

**Mail:** conVERGE II, P.O. Box 4188, Wanganui, New Zealand.

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**TREKCON IV:**

**Dates:** 9th - 11th June 1990

**Venue:** Melbourne Town House, Swanston St, Melbourne. (tbc)

**Mail:** P.O. Box 305, West Heidelberg, Vic, 3081

[PR#1 should be due out sometime in June.]

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**CONFICTION:** 48th World Science Fiction Convention

**Dates:** 23rd - 27th August, 1990

**Rates:** UK£40, US\$70 (or 130DFL). A\$35 Supporting, Child (under 14 at Con) UK£9.

**GOH:** Joe Haldeman, Wolfgang Jeschke, Harry Harrison, Andy Porter, & Chelsea Quinn Yarbro(TM).

**Venue:** The Netherlands Congress Centre, The Hague, Holland.

**Mail:** Worldcon 1990, P.O. Box 95370 - 2509 CJ The Hague, Holland

**Agents:** Australia: Justin Ackroyd, GPO Box 2708X, Melbourne, VIC, 3001

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**HUTTCON '89:** (The 1990 Media NatCon)

**Dates:** 23-25 November 1990

**Venue:** The Diplomat Hotel, 12 Acland St, ST KILDA.

**Rates:** \$45 to 30/5/89, \$50 to 31/12/89, Supporting \$25

**GOH:** Simon Jones (aka Arthur Dent).

**Mail:** James Allen, P.O. Box 41, West Brunswick, Vic. 3055

Edwina Harvey, 12 Flinders St. Matraville, NSW. 2056.

[Due to a change in the Media Natcon constitution, HUTTCON will be taking bids for BOTH the 1991 Media Natcon AND the 1992 Media Natcon. If you are planning to run either please contact Edwina.]

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**SUNCON '91:** (The 30th Australian Natcon)

**Dates:** 29th March - 1st April, 1991

**Venue:** Somewhere in Brisbane.

**Rates:** \$40 till 1/9/89, Supporting \$15, Conversions \$30 to 1/9/89

**GOH:** Harlan Ellison.

**Fan GOH:** Leigh Edmonds & Valma Brown

**Mail:** Suncon '91, P.O. Box 437 Camberwell, Vic, 3124

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**CHICON V:** (The 1991 Worldcon)

**Dates:** August 29 - September 2, 1991

**Venue:** The Hyatt Regency, Chicago, USA

**Rates:** \$75 to 31/12/89, Supporting \$20 to 31/12/88

**GOH:** Hal Clement, Richard Powers (Art), Martin Greenberg, Jon & Joni Stopa, Marta Randall (TM).

**Mail:** Info - P.O. Box A3120, Chicago, Illinois 60690

Regis'n - P.O. Box 218121, Upper Arlington, Ohio 43221



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