

# THYME



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The Australasian SF News Magazine

#88 — November 1992

## Editorial

by Alan Stewart

Hello, and welcome to another edition of Thyme, though this time it's in a couple of parts, and in the future will be more so. This section will deal with news, happenings and reader response in the form of letters and articles. Accompanying is Australian SF News which I'm editing with Merv Binns and this handles publishers' information, recent local releases, author tours, book reviews and things associated with written SF. In future there will be other 'segments', but I'll leave the details as a surprise. The couple of loose inserts at the back are ballots in two current Fan Fund Races - FFANZ and TAFF, and are one of the main reasons for this issue. Thyme plans to emerge about every 2-3 months, but will consider doing a special rush mailing if something warrants it, such as a Fan Fund ballot, a Convention, or author tour and something needs to be communicated fast.

Unfortunately a lot of the stuff 'inherited' from Greg Hills and Mark Loney will not be printed, although I've managed to salvage some of the book reviews. Many of the letters are dated and advertising material is long past the date it could have been usefully distributed. A big thank you to all those who wrote in or traded zines, and I hope to list you all, though it might take a couple of issues. Zines received might become a feature of every second issue, as might Convention information. I'll just see how it goes.

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Thanks also to Mark Linneman and Neil Murray.

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## News

**Patrick Liam Reddan** arrived at 3.23 pm, all 8 lbs 6 oz of him, Wednesday 4th November to proud parents Tim and Tracey, and big sister Madeleine.

Also arrived recently was a son **Simon Alex** to Helen and David **Hodson**, at 8.30 pm, 10th September at the Royal Woman's Hospital.

For the first time a **short story** from an **Australian** magazine has made it into the prestigious US anthology The Year's Best SF, edited by Gardner Dozois. The story is Greg Egan's *The Moat* which appeared in Aurealis #3. Another Aurealis story made the honourable mention list in Gardner's book, while the equivalent list in Datlow and Windling's Year's Best Horror and Fantasy featured two stories from the magazine.

**Robocon**, held in Brisbane during September, was a success and donated over \$2 000 to their charity AIDS Research.

A Wealth of Fable by **Harry Warner Jr**, an informal history of SF fandom in the 1950s, is now available in hardcover from SCIFI Press, PO Box 8442, Van Nuys, CA, 91409, USA.

Nominations are welcomed for the **A Bertram Chandler Memorial Award**, which recognises contributions to the appreciation of Science Fiction in Australia, via professional and/or fannish endeavours, carried out over a sustained period of time, and should be sent to the Australian SF Foundation, PO Box 4024, University of Melbourne, Victoria, 3052. The inaugural 'Chandler' Award was presented to Dr Van Ikin at Syncon '92.

Local SF fan **Jodi Willis** had a successful trip to the Paralympics in Barcelona recently. Jodi won a silver medal in the discuss and then a gold and set a new world record in the shotput for women with impaired vision.

**Lewis Morley** and his *Lost in Space* robot from the TV ad were whisked off to New Zealand recently. For 2 days in mid-October Lewis was involved in shooting a 'Comedy Company-like' program which wanted to use his model.

Well known Melbourne fan **Ian Gunn** had his name up in lights, so to speak, with the recent publication of Physical Education Issues by Damien Davies from Macmillan Education Australia. Ian gets his name in print on the inside front cover as he supplied many of the illustrations for this book, a text for the new physical education subject in schools. Ian's work has been noticed and he's been asked to do more work with this author. It was another well known fan, Bruce Gillespie, who introduced Ian to this publishing game and has provided him with the opportunity to do this work.

This year's Down Under Fan Fund (**DUFF**) winner Roger Weddall has returned from his trip to North America. Away for a shorter time than he had originally planned, five weeks saw Roger attend the 1992 World Science Fiction Convention in Orlando, Florida, as well as him visiting fans and fannish centres in San Francisco, Seattle, Chicago, Birmingham (Alabama), Texas and Los Angeles.

"Everywhere I travelled," Roger reports, "the fans I knew, the fans I didn't know and the people in general were friendly, kind, considerate, hospitable ... and just a heap of fun to be with. I can't wait to get my donkey back over there."

With the return of this year's DUFF representative, interest now focuses on the next DUFF race which will bring an American fan to Australasia around Easter next year, to visit and meet fans Down Under. Art Widner, who is the American administrator of the Fan Fund (and who visited these parts as a DUFF winner in 1991) is currently compiling the ballot for the next race. Copies should be available in Australia in the next couple of weeks. For any further inquiries regarding the next race, or the Fan Fund generally, or to be put onto the DUFF information mailing list, please contact Roger Weddall, PO Box 273, Fitzroy, Victoria, 3065, AUSTRALIA.

According to Roger as per Janice Murray as per Bill Bowers as per Teddy Harvia: Leah Zeldes Smith will be running for DUFF now that Bill Bowers has declined. Sheryl Birkhead is a firming prospect.



## Complete 1992 Hugo Balloting Results

Here are the complete Hugo statistics, as compiled by Tom Veal and Jim Satterfield. All nominees who received at least 5% of the nominating ballots cast in that category are listed.

Total Hugo Nomination Ballots Received: 498

Total Hugo Final Ballots Received: 902

### BEST NOVEL

Barrayar	216	216	239	261	321	370
Bone Dance	134	136	153	175	209	288
Stations of the Tide	126	127	136	150	179	
All the Weyrs of Pern	108	109	124	143		
Xenocide	100	102	117			
The Summer Queen	95	95				
No Award	18					

Best Novel: 412 ballots cast

Nominations: Bujold, Barrayar 102; Card, Xenocide 65; Bull, Bone Dance 59; McCaffrey, All the Weyrs of Pern 45; Swanwick, Stations of the Tide 41; Vinge, The Summer Queen 41.

Robinson, The Dark Beyond the Stars 38; Effinger, The Exile Kiss 36; Arnason, A Woman of the Iron People 35; Cadigan, Synners 35; Tepper, Beauty 34; Denton, Buddy Holly is Alive and Well and Living on Ganymede 27; Niven, Pournelle & Flynn, Fallen Angels 27; Vance, Ecce and Old Earth 27; Gibson & Sterling, The Difference Engine 26; McDonald, King of Morning, Queen of Day 25; Resnick, Soothsayer 23; Barnes, Orbital Resonance 2.

### BEST NOVELLA

Kress, Beggars in Spain	164	166	199	216	317
Rusch, The Gallery of His Dreams	141	144	156	176	229
Willis, "Jack"	97	101	113	132	
Swanwick, Griffin's Egg	96	96	99		
Kress, "And Wild For To Hold"	64	66			
No Award	52				

Best Novella: 236 ballots cast

Nominations: Rusch, The Gallery of His Dreams 73; Kress, Beggars in Spain 72; Willis, "Jack" 59; Swanwick, Griffin's Egg 38; Kress, "And Wild for to Hold" 33.

McCaffrey, "Rescue Run" 27; Anderson, "Star of the Sea" 25; Ash, "Man Opening a Door" 23; Bryant, "Fetish" 21; Murphy & Van Name, "Desert Rain" 21; Resnick Bully! 20; Daniel, "Candle" 19; DiFilippo, "The Mill" 16; McLaughlin, "Ode to Joy" 16; De Lint, "Our Lady of the Harbour" 14; Kagan, "Raising Cane" 14; Barnes, "Canso de Fis de Jovent" 13; Zahn, "Guilt by Association" 12.

### BEST NOVELETTE

Asimov, "Gold"	230	234	252	265	373
Cadigan, "Dispatches from the Revolution"	112	113	131	163	220
Willis, "Miracle"	100	102	121	144	
Waldrop, "Fin de Cycle"	96	98	109		
Chiang, "Understand"	78	79			
No Award	41				

Best Novelette: 243 ballots cast

Nominations: Waldrop, "Fin de Cycle" 38; Cadigan, "Dispatches from the Revolution" 34; Chiang, "Understand" 28; Willis, "Miracle" 27; Asimov, "Gold" 25.

Benford, "Matter's End" 22; Fowler, "Black Glass" 22; Resnick, "Over There" 21; Connor, "Guide Dog" 20; Kelly, "Standing in Line with Mr. Jimmy" 20; Brin, "What Continues, What Fails" 19; DiFilippo, "Mairzy Doats" 18; Jablakov, "Living Will" 18; Schwartz, "Getting Real" 18; Resnick, "Song of a Dry River" 16; Rosenblum, "Water Bringer" 16; Robinson, "A History of the 20th Century, With Illustrations" 13; Spinrad, "What Eats You" 13.

### BEST SHORT STORY

"A Walk in the Sun"	131	134	140	148	175	217	267
"One Perfect Morning, With Jackals"	113	113	118	123	143	173	228
"In the Late Cretaceous"	88	90	102	108	127	159	
"Press Ann"	77	78	81	95	113		
"Winter Solstice"	70	71	79	94			
"Buffalo"	64	64	67				
"Dog's Life"	58	59					
No Award	41						

Best Short Story: 260 ballots cast

Nominations: Resnick, "One Perfect Morning, With Jackals" 30; Bisson, "Press Ann" 28; Landis, "A Walk in the Sun" 28; Kessel, "Buffalo" 26; Resnick, "Winter Solstice" 26; Soukup, "Dog's Life" 26; Willis, "In the Late Cretaceous" 26.

Robinson, "Vinland the Dream" 22; Costikyan, "Bright Light, Big City" 21; Fowler, "The Dark" 19; Egan, "Blood Sisters" 16; Egan, "Fidelity"; Morrow, "Daughter Earth" 15; Bisson, "They're Made Out of Meat" 13.

### BEST ORIGINAL ARTWORK

Whelan, The Summer Queen	255	256	272
Eggleton, Stations of the Tide	103	105	124
Canty, White Mists of Power	95	95	105
Eggleton, Lunar Descent	73	75	
Maitz, Heavy Time	73	75	
No Award	34		

Best Original Artwork: 117 ballots cast

Nominations: Whelan, The Summer Queen 29; Eggleton, Stations of the Tide 14; Canty, White Mists of Power 7; Eggleton, Lunar Descent 7; Maitz Heavy Time 7.

Whelan, All the Weyrs of Pern 13 [withdrawn by artist]; Whelan, The Initiate Brother 10 [withdrawn by artist]; Gurney, Dinosaur Parade 6.

### BEST PROFESSIONAL EDITOR

Gardner Dozois	196	197	226	263	351
Kristine Kathryn Rusch	112	113	133	162	219
Stanley Schmidt	118	120	135	143	
Ellen Datlow	95	96	102		
Edward L. Ferman	87	87			
No Award	33				

Best Professional Editor: 270 ballots cast



Nominations: Gardner Dozois 138; Kristine Kathryn Rusch 89; Ellen Datlow 68; Stanley Schmidt 61; Edward L. Ferman 51.

Beth Meacham 35; Kim Mohan 24; David G. Hartwell 22; Lou Aronica 18; Martin Harry Greenberg 17; David Pringle 16; Dean Wesley Smith 15; Terri Windling 15.

#### BEST PROFESSIONAL ARTIST

Michael Whelan	197	197	222	257	383
Don Maitz	110	110	140	177	262
Thomas Canty	131	131	146	168	
David Cherry	112	114	136		
Bob Eggleton	106	106			
No Award	24				

Best Professional Artist: 284 ballots cast

Nominations: Michael Whelan 88; Don Maitz 67; Thomas Canty 55; David Cherry 41; Bob Eggleton 41.

Frank Kelly Freas 28; Keith Parkinson 26; Vincent DiFate 23; Jody A. Lee 22; Jim Burns 20; Tom Kidd 19; Darrell K. Sweet 18; James Gurney 17; Nicholas Jainschigg 17; Stephen Hickman 16.

#### BEST SEMIPROZINE

Locus	201	202	214	239	360
Science Fiction Chronicle	185	187	197	211	272
Pulphouse	127	128	133	159	
Interzone	83	83	100		
New York Review of Science Fiction	54	54			
No Award	30				

Best Semiprozine: 243 ballots cast

Nominations: Science Fiction Chronicle 132; Locus 108; InterZone 51; New York Review of Science Fiction 47; Pulphouse 37.

Quantum 36; Science Fiction Review 23; Science Fiction Eye 21.

#### BEST FANZINE

Mimosa	116	140	151	152	199
Lan's Lantern	87	90	106	109	162
File 770	84	87	104	107	
No Award	63	67	68		
FOSFAX	49	51			
Trap Door	38				

Best Fanzine: 221 ballots cast

Nominations: Lan's Lantern 53; File 770 48; Mimosa 48; FOSFAX 38; Trap Door 20.

Ansible 19; Stet 19; Pulp 14; The Reluctant Famulus 14; Outworlds 12.

#### BEST FAN WRITER

Dave Langford	100	106	115	116	133	175
Harry Warner, Jr.	78	79	84	89	119	151
Mike Glyer	75	77	84	86	89	
Avedon Carol	42	61	63	63		
No Award	54	54	59			
Evelyn Leeper	50	50				
Andrew Hooper	32					

Best Fan Writer: 193 ballots cast

Nominations: Mike Glyer 35; Dave Langford 32; Evelyn Leeper 22; Avedon Carol 20; Andrew Hooper 18; Harry Warner, Jr. 18.

Arthur Hlavaty 17; Teresa Nielsen-Hayden 12; Joseph Major 10.

#### BEST FAN ARTIST

Brad Foster	95	97	110	132	201
Teddy Harvia	89	90	97	116	157
Peggy Ranson	69	69	86	99	
Stu Shiffman	66	69	74		
Diana Harlan Stein	58	58			
No Award	45				

Best Fan Artist: 191 ballots cast

Nominations: Teddy Harvia 60; Peggy Ranson 38; Diana Harlan-Stein 26; Brad Foster 23; Stu Shiffman 23.

Merle Insigna 22; Sheryl Birkhead 17; Joe Mayhew 14; Alexis Gilliland 13; Taral Wayne 11; Bill Rotsler 10.

#### BEST NON-FICTION BOOK

The World of Charles Addams	151	156	159	166	179
Science Fiction: The Early Years	97	102	109	115	127
The Science-Fantasy Publishers	91	92	99	106	
The Bakery Men Don't See	85	91	91		
No Award	41	44			
Clive Barker's Shadows in Eden	25				

Best Non-Fiction Book: 144 ballots cast

Nominations: Gomoll et al., The Bakery Men Don't See Cookbook 29; Bleiler, Science Fiction: The Early Years 28; Addams, The World of Charles Addams 17; Chalker & Owings, The Science-Fantasy Publishers 17; Jones, Clive Barker's Shadows in Eden 13.

Willard, Pish, Posh, Said Hieronymus Bosch 14 [ineligible; not nonfiction]; Brown & Contento, SF, Fantasy & Horror: 1990 11; Byfield, Witches of the Mind 10; Schulz & Joshi, An Epicure of the Terrible 8.

#### BEST DRAMATIC PRESENTATION

Terminator 2	261	262	280	305	443
Beauty and the Beast	245	247	273	298	336
Star Trek VI	147	149	164	180	
The Rocketeer	81	86	95		
The Addams Family	75	75			
No Award	39				

Best Dramatic Presentation: 334 ballots cast

Nominations: Terminator 2 170; Beauty and the Beast 157; Star Trek VI 137; The Rocketeer 86; The Addams Family 71.

Hook 62; "Unification" (Star Trek: The Next Generation) 39; The Fisher King 31; Dead Again 24; "Darmok" (Star Trek: The Next Generation) 18; Silence of the Lambs 18

## JOHN W. CAMPBELL AWARD (Sponsored by Dell Publications)

Ted Chiang	188	203	211	223	230
Laura Resnick	133	137	142	165	170
No Award	54	54	58	58	
Barbara Delaplace	43	43	50		
Michelle Sagara	34	34			
Greer Ilene Gilman	23				

John W. Campbell Award: 174 ballots cast

Nominations: Ted Chiang 36; Barbara Delaplace 19; Laura Resnick 19; Michelle Sagara 14; Greer Ilene Gilman 13.

Jane Fancher 11; Stephen Baxter 10; Douglas Bell 10; Mary Rosenblum 10.

## Con Report

by Mark Linneman

## MAGICON

50th World Science Fiction Convention  
Orlando, Florida, 3-7 September

Magicon was a success. The program was good and varied and the facilities excellent. The convention had a friendly atmosphere not usual for cons with over 5,000 attendees.

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Worldcons are different animals. Not counting videos and gaming there were over 700 program items spread from noon on Thursday to 4:30 pm Monday; thirty items at one time in peak periods. More than 500 different individuals appeared on panels, autographed, had readings or gave demonstrations. There were so many choices and so many prominent authors that each individual could choose to create their own Worldcon. This was fortunate; Jack Vance, the professional guest of honour, is not someone to build a convention program around. Those attending Tschaicon in Melbourne sometime in the early 1980's will remember that neither cooperativeness with fans nor charisma are among Mr. Vance's strongest points. A Worldcon is the perfect place to honour a Jack Vance - his work can be celebrated while you do not depend on your GoH to carry the program. Except for one extended autograph session the pro-GoH was largely invisible. The legendary Belfast fan, Walt Willis, was fan GoH. His activities were curtailed by ill health but he was often in the fan lounge to meet and talk to interested fans. Meeting Walt Willis was one of the high points of the convention.

Some authors were present who do not generally attend Worldcons. Andre Norton, although now in a wheelchair most of the time, is in good health. She was a prolific panellist and had a huckster table (Andre Norton, Ltd.) selling special editions. James White was a delight - as charming and funny as predicted. It was also interesting to see what John Norman looks like (a short, slender, distinguished white haired man of around sixty accompanied everywhere by a striking looking woman of about his age). Not a prototypical barbarian hero.

The Art Show and Huckster Room were huge and well planned. The emphasis upon the more well-known professional artists rather than aspiring fan artists was a popular move. It greatly increased the average quality of pieces. Hugo nominees were particularly well represented. A retrospective, organised by Vincent DiFate (artist GoH), was fascinating. "Looking Back at Looking Forward" had about 150 pieces dating back to the 1950's. This study of the evolution of SF art was arranged by topics such as "space art" or "fantasy". About 300 hucksters were available, selling everything from Simak and Norton first editions to *Star Trek* models. The masquerade emphasised humour. My personal favourite....offstage a woman screams, panicky running footsteps are heard, ominous music, a narrator speaks of dark secrets - and a six foot tall very silly looking chicken bursts onto stage as the MC announces "Yes, it's the Poultry-geist". Without any prompting 2,000 audience members begin to chant "fowl, fowl, fowl..."

Marc Ortlieb would have been proud to be involved in that one. Another.... a massive and indistinct figure in silhouette, a portentous (pretentious?) voice intones famous words ending with "...one ring to bind them all" and when the lights come up a "person" dressed in a Trek costume is standing there covered in fried vegetable slices. As soon as we are informed that we will be assimilated there's no need to wait for the narrator - it's Borg of the Rings. There were excellent serious costumes too but as someone who is basically masquerade impaired I'm the wrong person to discuss them.

The incident Magicon is most likely to be remembered for was a Hugo mix-up. A slide projector was used to flash the winners on a screen as MC Spider Robinson read the names. Anyone who attended Aussiecon II remembers that this is a very dangerous concept. When the Hugo for best fanzine was presented Spider pulled the card out of the proper envelope and read "Lans Lantern - George Laskowski" - screen flashed "Mimosa - Dick and Nicki Lynch". George accepted the Hugo. Two presentations later Spider announced that a tiny mistake had been made and Dick and Nicki Lynch were invited up on stage. By then Nicki had disappeared, apparently to the toilet, and five minutes of desperate ad-libbing ensued while they tried (unsuccessfully) to locate Nicki. Very low comedy. Spider wore the incorrect card as a badge the rest of the night and was heard to say repeatedly "...it wasn't my fault".

Magicon gave ribbons to attach to your badge for a variety of activities. You received one for voting on the 1995 Worldcon site selection, for being on the program, etc. Bruce Pelz, a veteran LA fan, had twenty-three varicoloured ribbons. They included serious items such as "...former Worldcon chair, former Worldcon fan GoH" and descended to "...feather ceremony (??), VIP" and (my personal favourite) "set completer". It was damn near as impressive as the uniform of an admiral in the Hungarian Navy. Stephen Boucher, who had brought over ballots from Melbourne, had ribbons announcing that he had voted on Worldcon site selection seven separate times. Stephen was one of the fairly small Australian contingent at Magicon. I saw Stephen, Robin Johnson, Donna Heenan and DUFF winner Roger Weddall; in 5,000 plus faces I likely missed a few others. Clearly last year's Worldcon (Chicon) had more Australians attending.

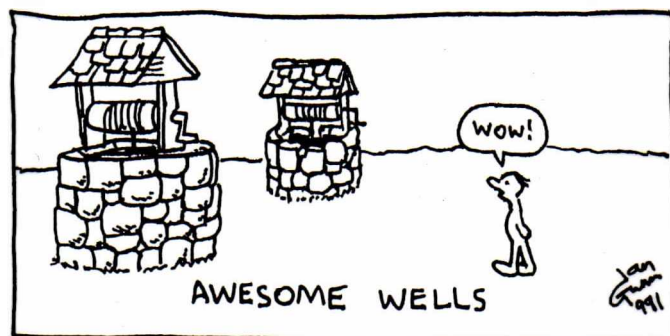
Among the most impressive aspects of the con was the convention centre and the multiple hotels of varying price range. The facilities may have been too big. Even with over 5,000 attending the largest room

in the convention centre was never used. It did take 7-10 minutes to get from one end of the centre to the other. The bus that ran between the hotels and the centre was needed. While the two closest hotels were within five minutes walk others were over a kilometre distant. Florida in early September has weather rivalling Brisbane's in February - a humid high of 32 degrees plus with afternoon thunderstorms are usual. The Convention Centre was also air conditioned to American taste to a bone dry 19 or 20 degrees. It was a shock entering or departing - I'm surprised the cardiac care unit wasn't required regularly. Despite these quibbles the Centre was clearly the best major convention facility I have ever seen. I cannot comment on all the hotels. The Peabody, where I stayed, was a good choice as the party hotel.

Fritz Leiber's death, announced Sunday, did cast a pall over some events. Fritz was well known and liked. It did not come as a surprise. Mr. Leiber had a series of strokes and when GoH at a convention in Michigan a few months ago was clearly in bad shape.

The 1995 Worldcon (Intersection) will be held in Glasgow, 24-28 September. Samuel Delany and Gerry Anderson will be pro-GoHs. The main question heard after the announcement was "...who is Gerry Anderson?" I'm not really secure that my explanation was believed. ("puppets? are you sure?") Mr. Anderson is NOT a big name in the U.S. Glasgow beating Atlanta for 1995 site selection was a mild upset; the local vote did not dominate. Intersection won by 300 votes out of almost 3,000 cast. It won both on ballots cast at Worldcon and on mail ballots. A good overseas bid can win with a massive investment of time and money.

I liked Magicon. There always seemed to be at least six different things to do. The convention was run in a friendly and fairly efficient manner. The biggest compliment paid to the convention was that there was not a mass abandonment of the activities to go to either Disneyworld or Cape Canaveral. That's competition.





## Column

### Have Gail Will Travel by Terry Frost

Writing for fanzines is an addiction, the only beauty of which being that it doesn't mar your skin, bulk you up with dense muscles, turn your lungs into five kilometres of hot bitumen or make your nose collapse from within. I suppose it can be compared to amphetamines in that it makes you lose sleep, whipsaws your nerves and occasionally leaves a bad taste in the mouth, but for the most part it's a benign mojo of little physiological consequence. Nonetheless, it is addictive and a duty.

I did have a column written for the lastish of Thyme: fifteen hundred well-rounded words that formed my punter's guide to the Ditmar Awards, which, as local fans know were given out in April. Thyme itself came out in July, so the piece became a bit dated and the editor chucked it out. As for the editorial disputes, I don't want to get involved with the internal Borgia-like machinations of fans who live in Richmond. Been there, done that and as someone pointed out in the lettercol lastish, for a news zine, Thyme is becoming too self-referential. On with the shadow boxing.

### Doctor Doctor.

A while back, Isaac Asimov croaked and, as happens when entropy causes a venerable SF writer to become recycled, many fans mourned the man and his works with a piety that seems a tad ritualistic. This is based mostly around juvenile nostalgia for works created before most of us were an itch in Daddy's levis. I've yet to meet anyone with a fully formed forebrain who likes anything Asimov has written in the past twenty years. In my mind he rates well below guys like Bester and Kornbluth in the wordsmith game. Asimov's primary gift was that of self-promotion.

If you want to know why there's so much shoddy, commercialised and crummy science fiction on the shelves, one of the reasons is Isaac Asimov. The guy's ego and hubris inflicted on the world endless SF anthologies with his name emblazoned on the cover, but into which he had minimal input, a series of stories written by other people set in a rather dated and shoddy "Isaac's Universe" and similar ventures of dubious creativity. It was as if Asimov had embraced the concept of "He who dies with the most books wins", all the time knowing that people like Simenon, the French geezer who wrote the Maigret books, had beaten him from day one.

If you're wondering how this has an effect on the shelves, most of the US publishers put out only a certain number of SF books per year. If those available publishing slots are taken over by cloacal works like those mentioned above then new writers of talent and imagination are limited to the positions left and some aren't going to be published. At least one talented and promising author has left science fiction because of this dwindling available slot situation and the nostril-high bullshit level. Asimov helped to stuff up the science fiction industry in a big way and it would be dishonest not to mention that at least once while sycophants mourn in their pious Pavlovian response.

### Fandom above the Brisbane Line and Below the Belt.

This bunfight between Melbourne and Brisbane fandom is the sort of storm in a word processor that makes one want to grab the antagonists by the ear-lugs and scream "Get a life, you sorry wankers!" into their florid little faces at something approaching a Jimmy Barnes decibel level. Find a real issue to complain about or shut the fuck up. Something of empirical importance: like the effects of Bruce Gillespie's fanzines on the destruction of Brazilian rainforests, the ubiquitous and obsequious nature of hotel staff at conventions, mediafandom's curious habit of dragging third rate actors from England and America for conventions and charging three figure sums to gullible punters for the dubious privilege of having their photo taken with guys who played aliens years ago and hardly remember it. Or more poignantly, the tragic lack of mini-bar facilities in the rooms at the Shore Inn during Syncon '92.

There are more important things wrong with Australian fandom at the moment. Some of us are taking ourselves far too seriously. There's a fierce territorialism in fandom. We aren't the Crips or the Bloods or some other LA street gang defending our turf with a psychotic single-mindedness. The parochialism is a little silly given that it is coming from a bunch of maladjusted middle class people who dress funny, read funny things and, in most cases, have a water retention problem.

Maybe we should have cons on neutral territory. A decade ago it was suggested that a natcon be held in Bali on the basis that it was cheaper for everyone concerned than flying between Perth and the Eastern States. But Indonesia has since become ideologically unsound. Any fannish gathering may be mistaken for a protest march by East Timorese and the local militia may perforate fandom-as-we-know-it with several hundred rounds of 7.62 mm NATO ammunition.



The Birdsville Hotel comes to mind as an alternative venue. Nice place, fairly equidistant from all Antipodean fannish nexi, not too crowded most of the time. The weather's nearly always fine and if you can't pay the hotel bill they simply take you out into the desert, slash your tyres, fire a shotgun into your radiator and leave you to die unless some dork under a parachute appears out of the sky with a surfboard strapped to his feet and offers you a Coke.

As far as I can see from the lettercol lastish you're all suffering from immense personal insecurities which need some degree of professional assistance. A fortnight at the Club Med in Phuket with an adept sexual surrogate should do the trick. Your yin and yang are seriously out of balance, gang. Your chakras are all over the place like a dog's breakfast and your noses are getting longer.

## Article

### Futureology in SF (or: How not to predict the future without really trying.)

by Mark (Rocky) Lawson

I should make it clear right from the start that I was not forced to watch either the full length movie of the cartoon series *The Jetsons*, or the film *Alien Nation*. No-one held a gun at my head. I was not suddenly possessed or stricken by disease. I was my normal self. Right. Now you have an idea of my normal mental state, which, if I watch films like those without being threatened, is very strange indeed.

Actually, and here I must confess to being really odd, I didn't mind either film although the question of whether *Alien Nation* really counts as science fiction, or as a police drama in which some of the actors have funny heads, is one for a panel at a future SF con - a panel I would prefer not to sit through. But both films set me in mind about one of the basic rules of those interested in predictions and the future, including almost everyone who reads SF. The rule is that any prediction says a great deal more about the people who made the prediction, and their concerns, than it says about the future.

Thus, various American predictions made over the years of a utopia full of automated freeways (usually forecast to be in operation in 20 years time) say more about America's present car-based culture than anything useful about the future of freeways. Most of the SF of the '50s and '60s, to take another example, was strongly stamped with the concerns of the then-

current cold war - concerns that now seem silly - while present-day SF often has some reference to environmentalism.

Back to *Alien Nation*, in which a ship-load of people with funny heads - Alien slave workers from somewhere - land in the Mojave desert and are allowed to stay. They soon become accustomed to strange earth-American ways, including donning long black leather coats and robbing liquor stores at gunpoint, setting-up the equivalent of Alien night clubs and degenerating into drunkards, albeit where drunkenness is achieved through sour milk rather than alcohol. Leaving aside the strange detail of sour milk, this is assimilation indeed. No doubt the people who ran the migrant orientation program are proud of the results. In fact, the Aliens seem to be little more than Anglo-Americans with funny heads - the Japanese and even Black Americans have cultures that are more "different" than that of the Aliens.

Thus the film says more about current American concerns with assimilating minority groups and, perhaps, racism, than it says about a possible future. Yet the details of the differences between Aliens and humans are so silly that it is difficult to take the film's "message" about tolerance seriously. I thought about constructing a likely true history for *Alien Nation*, as part of my lengthy quest for historical truth in science fiction, but the film is so obviously a straight police drama (and enjoyable at that level), it is best left that way. Those into political correctness (PC), and thus into anti-racism, would do much better watching the non-SF film *Mississippi Burning*. It is also a police drama (based on a true story) but the film's references to racism and its causes, in between the action scenes, are much more sophisticated.

This is all a long way in space and time from the movie *The Jetsons* - a rather unexpected and late spin-off from the television series which, as the series was repeated endlessly, almost everyone would have seen at some point. But while *The Jetsons* cannot really be said to be making a serious statement about possible futures the results are typical of much more serious attempts at depicting futures. Despite the attempts of the producers at Hanna Barbera to "futurise" (new word) the details of the domestic lives of the Jetsons they remain essentially typical (or media-typical, a new phrase) of the culture that produced them.

George Jetson lives in a futurised apartment block and has to be got up to go to a job he hates. He commutes in a car that he flies instead of drives but is still oppressed by highway gridlock and police

highway patrols. His wife stays at home while the two children follow popular fads and pay as little attention as possible to their schoolwork. The plot of the film, which I shall not relate here, has the occasional reference to recycling and appears to be a vote in favour of controlled mineral exploitation and worker-participation. In other words, the film is very much a reflection of current concerns.

SF is not usually as bad as the examples I have used to illustrate my point. The genre does produce genuine efforts to explore possible future or alternative worlds, the consequences of new technology, and so on. In that regard the genre plays an important role, as the future is inherently unpredictable (a point I will discuss sometime in the future, I hope). Nor is SF the only means of dressing up the present. Historical films are often more about the culture that produced the film than the historical events (real or fictional) which the film is meant to depict. The chariot racing scene in the famous film *Ben Hur*, to pick an example at random, has far more to do with car racing at Indianapolis than a close study of ancient chariot racing practises. There is even an ancient lap counter.

There is nothing particularly wrong with this. All three films mentioned were entertaining in their own way, and were shaped by commercial influences (police dramas and racing scenes draw crowds), rather than any esoteric ideas about genre purity. But top-rank science fiction, or decent historical films, should be something more than the present dressed up with funny gadgets.

## Letters

Clive Newall, Secretary, ASFF.

An open letter to Australian fandom:

The following appeared in the July-August issue of Doxy (v3, issue 4), under the (misleading) heading "Financial Funny Business":

*"The sum of \$2000 (...) seems to be the amount associated with a deal between the Australian SF Foundation and those running the recent National Convention. If this goes on the Foundation will be able to go broke with producing its legendary vast-circulation news-sheet."*

At the time of Doxy's publication, the Foundation had outstanding loans to three conventions: Swancon 18 (\$1000, since repaid), Constantinople (\$500) and SynCon '92 (\$1000).

It is assumed that SynCon '92 is the 'recent National Convention' referred to by Doxy. The figure of \$2000 ? Only the editor of Doxy knows...

As for the 'legendary vast-circulation news-sheet', I can only assume that Doxy is referring to the "Modest Proposal" that was circulated by some fans shortly after Suncon (1991 Natcon). Nothing has been heard of that proposal (which the Foundation offered to "support" but not organise) for some time. It was never contemplated that the Foundation would provide substantial financial backing to such a venture.

I hope this will serve to clear up any misconceptions that the article in Doxy may have created.

Note that none of the above information has been in any way "secret". Financial statements and records of Foundation business are circulated to members of the Foundation, and any interested fans are welcome to join the Foundation and support us in our activities.

Our address is:

The Australian Science Fiction Foundation,  
PO Box 4024, University of Melbourne, Victoria, 3052

Cath Ortlieb PO Box 215, Forest Hill, Victoria, 3131

## AN OPEN LETTER TO FANDOM:

I would like to thank the committee of **Conjunction 3** (Beky Tully, Danny Heap, James Allen, Richard Freeland, Carol Tilley, Glen Tilley and George Ivanoff) for organising and running such an enjoyable relaxacon on September 18th-20th. I think everyone who attended really enjoyed themselves. In the past I have been involved in cons in a variety of roles and have observed the problems that plague cons, some beyond the control of the committee. The **Conjunction 3** committee made every effort to ensure everyone had without being overbearing. It was a true relaxacon with enough on for people to attend if they wished or find somewhere to natter with friends or make new ones.

As one of the guests of honour I could not find ANY fault with the way I was looked after. The members of the committee worked very hard themselves but took the time to check if everything was okay, including catering for Michael [*my son*] (three and a half) when he was there. It really was an 'honour' to be asked to be a guest of honour at the con and everyone (committee and conattendees) made those two and a half days very special for me.

Eric Lindsay 7 Nicoll Ave, Ryde, NSW, 2112

Re Australia in 1999, please note that we are not a bidding committee. We are a committee advertising a bid. As such, there is nothing in our material relating to the actual site (that is up to the bidding committee), nor can we ask for, or accept, pre-supporting memberships (only a bid committee can do that). That said, we are always happy to see others adding their support to the bid.

Kim Huett PO Box 679, Woden, ACT, 2606

Was amused to see paul Ewings bring out that evanescent canard about *Mr Squiggle* being an SF program. All I can say is that if 'media fans' like Paul think SF is all about rocket ships with nose-holes, sentient steam shovels who like rubbing themselves up against young women irascible blackboards, then I for one am glad a gap remains between SF fandom and such bavardage. Please let Paul know that I am equally willing to accept a full grovelling apology for this lapse in either a private note or in the pages of Thyme.

Gerald Smith GPO Box 429, Sydney, NSW, 2001

I am enclosing the financial statement for Syncon '92 [*no room this issue*], as you can see things are not that good. However, the bills outstanding are to members of the Committee and to the ASFF who have graciously agreed to wait. In order to repay the money we will be holding a series of fundraising activities under the banner of Sydney Fans Incorporated. [*Activities for August-October 1992 supplied*].

There are a few things in Thyme #87 I would like to comment on. The Committee Awards presented at Syncon '92 were for "Services to Sydney fandom". Given the people they were awarded to I believe there is a good argument for saying they were for "Services to Australian Fandom" but the Committee did not feel it could present such an award.

Sure there were mistakes made in the publicity for Syncon. However, I dispute that as being the principal cause of low attendance. Other factors at work that I identify were the recession; the collapse of Compass Airlines; the proximity in time to Holodiction; and, though I hate to say it, the relative obscurity of Michael Whelan who, though a fantastic guy and a great artist is less well known in Australia than he deserves to be. Those who criticise the publicity

should remember that a convention is produced by amateurs in their spare time and the resources simply aren't there for a blaze of publicity. As it is, most of Syncon's publicity was paid for by the Committee and so does not show up on the financial statement.

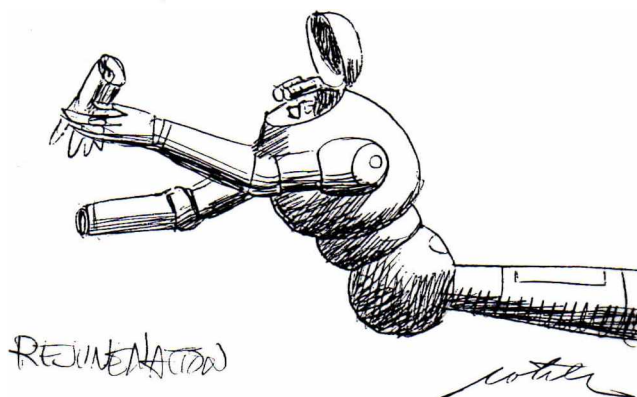
The press release was primarily intended for the mundane press. The omission of Best fan Writer and William Atheling Award was therefore only because readers of the mundane press were unlikely to be interested. Certainly no slight was intended. Equally, that is why the Best Fanzine award was changed to Best Magazine. As for the omission of credit to the Australian SF Foundation, that was indeed an oversight and one for which we apologise.

Sheryl Birkhead

23629 Woodfield Rd,  
Gaithersburg, MD 20992 USA

Tee hee - using Ian's piece as the cover was *timely* in that it is also a fairly big illo on page 65 of Fosfax which, for me, came the day before Thyme #87. The comments about Ian's 'fanimals' cartoon amazed but did not surprise me. All along I thought US fans had a monopoly on being fuggheaded and saying things before thinking. A cartoonist here (drew the strip *Popeye*) was fired for what people *might* infer from a strip, meaning the people making the decision felt that way and could not accept that the strip itself had **not actually said those things**. The point being that it happens everywhere and sometimes the consequences (even to the unsuspecting) can be pretty severe.

WAHF: Annie Hamilton, Joseph Nicholas, Lloyd Penney, Michael Hailstone, Tony J Brook (Melbourne Horror Society), Andrew I Porter, Åke E B Jonsson, Steven Butler, John Newman, Karen Herkes, Harry Andruschak, Sergei Strelchenko, Tom J Füllöp, Danny Murphy and Boris Sidyuk [*Boris' article on 'Ukrainian SF' will hopefully appear next issue*].





## Social Calendar

20 November	MSFC <i>Red Dwarf</i> food night, 7.30 pm, 74 Melville Rd, West Brunswick.
21 November	Austrek Phasor Strike Day, 12.30 pm, \$5, 370 Huntingdale Rd., Sth. Oakleigh
27 November	MSFC 'SF Blankety Blanks' night
29 November	MSFC tobogganing
4 December	MSFC set-up-a-stall night
5 December	Nova Mob end of year lunch (03 429 8354 for details)
5 December	'Christmas at the End of the Universe'
	Combined party, 6.30 pm, 210 Dorcas St., Sth. Melbourne, \$6 (\$3 with plate of food)
11 December	MSFC 'SF Trivial Pursuit' night
18 December	MSFC Medical Oddities Show and Tell night
8 January	MSFC Fun and Games night
15 January	MSFC Musical Jam Session night
16 January	MSFC BBQ, BYO everything, 11 am, Batman Park (near World Trade Centre).
22 January	MSFC Celebrity Heads night

## CRITICAL MASS MEETINGS

Usually they meet to discuss SF and debate first Wednesday of each month, from 8 pm at SA Writers' Centre, 242 Pirie Street, Adelaide, with dinner beforehand at East End Coffee House.

3 February	Juliette Woods & Damien Warman	On Editing <u>Nemesis</u>
3 March	Tony Pezzano & Tony Smith	Sex and the Single Titanide
7 April	Michael Clark	Differences with the Difference Engine
5 May	Yvonne Rousseau	On <u>Hyperion</u> and <u>The Fall of Hyperion</u>
2 June	Roman Orszanski	Some Post-Modernist Writings

## 1992 CONVENTIONS

### **STAR TREK: THE NEXT CONVENTION** 12 to 13-12-1992.

Australian National University, Canberra. **GoHs** Media (tba), George Ivanoff. **Mail** GPO Box 2080, Canberra, ACT, 2061. **Membership** \$25. **Room rates** \$72 adults, \$60 students.

## 1993 CONVENTIONS

### **RADICON** 29-1 to 1-2-1993

Elizabethan Lodge. **GoHs** Bjo & John Trimble, Ray Barrett, Peter Sumner, Paton Forster. 2 Masquerades. Art/craft show. **Charity** Red Cross **Membership** \$140 to 22-1-93 (instalment plan avail). \$20 Sup. **Room Rates** \$110 (for four) **Phone** (03)-557-7088 8—10pm. **Mail** PO Box 322, Bentleigh 3204.

### **SWANCON 18** (1993 Aust NatCon) 8 to 12-4-1993

Ascot Inn, 1 Epsom Ave, Belmont, Perth. **Theme** Apocalypse Wow! **GoHs** Terry Pratchett, Craig Hilton. **Banquet** tba. **Membership** \$60 to 31-12-1992. \$70 to 7-4-1992. \$75 at door. Child (aged 5-13 on 8-4-93) \$25. \$20 Sup. **Room Rates** \$65 sing/doub/twin/trip. Payable to The Ascot Inn. **Mail** PO Box 318, Nedlands 6009

### **STAR WALKING II** 21 to 23-5-1993

Townhouse Hotel, Swanston St, Melbourne. **Theme** All Things Strange & Alien. **GoHs** Howard Kazanjian, Lisa Cowan. **Membership** \$100 (\$120 door), \$60 day. \$35 Sup. (Pay to SWII No. 2 a/c) **Banquet** \$40. **Hucksters Tables** \$130 pro (includes 1 membership), \$50 fan. **Room rates** \$95 double, payable to 'Townhouse'. **Phone** (03)-755-2361. **Mail** PO Box 118, Springvale 3171

### **DEFCON** ('93 NZ National/Aust Media NatCon) 4 to 7-6-1993

Hotel St George, Willis St, Wellington. **GoHs** Larry Niven, Julian May, D C Fontana, David Gerrold, Dennis Skotak (Oscar winning special effects man), Mark Harris, Gail Adams. **Membership** \$A55 to 3/6/93. \$A25 Sup. **Charity** Wellington Astronomical Society. Roleplaying and Boardgaming available. **Hucksters Tables** \$A20 amateur (club, con), \$A80 professional. **Room rates** \$NZ60 sing, \$NZ75 twin/doub, \$NZ85 trip. \$NZ20 deposit required. **Mail** PO Box 30-905, Lower Hutt, New Zealand



Number 49

November 1992

Edited by

Merv Binns

Alan Stewart

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## Local Releases

hc = hard cover tpb = trade paperback (C format) pb = paperback (mass market, B format)

### September 1992

<i>Voyage to the Red Planet</i>	Terry Bisson	Pan	pb	\$10.95
<i>Garden of Rama</i>	Clarke & Lee	Orbit (Penguin)	pb	\$12.95
<i>The Dragon Reborn</i>	Robert Jordan	Orbit (Penguin)	tpb	\$29.95
<i>A Time of Omens</i>	Katherine Kerr	Harper Collins	hc	\$35.00
<i>The Funhouse</i>	Dean R Koontz	Headline	hc	\$35.00
<i>Blood Trillium</i>	Julian May	Harper Collins	hc	\$35.00
<i>Timedriver's Dawn</i>	L E Modesitt Jr.	Tor (Pan)	pb	\$ 7.95
<i>The Carpet People</i>	Terry Pratchett	Doubleday	hc	\$18.95
<i>Company of Stars</i>	Christopher Stasheff	Pan	pb	\$11.95
<i>Untold Legend of the Batman</i>	Len Wein	Tor (Pan)	pb	\$ 7.95
<i>Marnelon the Magician</i>	Patricia C Wrede	Tor (Pan)	pb	\$ 7.95

### October 1992

<i>Child of Time</i>	Asimov & Silverberg	Pan	pb	\$12.95
<i>Meridian Days</i>	Eric Brown	Pan	tpb	\$19.95
<i>The White Rose</i>	Glen Cook	Roc (Penguin)	pb	\$11.95
<i>Domes of Fire</i>	David Eddings	Harper Collins	hc	\$35.00
<i>The King's Buccaneer</i>	Raymond E Feist	Harper Collins	hc	\$35.00
<i>The Throne of Scone</i>	Patricia Keneally	Grafton	pb	\$11.95
<i>Rule Golden/Double Meaning</i>	Damon Knight	Tor (Pan)	pb	\$ 7.95
<i>Hideaway</i>	Dean R Koontz	Headline	pb	\$12.95
<i>Raising the Stones</i>	Sheri S Tepper	Grafton	pb	\$12.95

## November 1992

### *The Hitchhikers Guide*

<i>To The Galaxy</i>	Douglas Adams	Pan	tpb	\$24.95
<i>The Thief of Always</i>	Clive Barker	Harper Collins	hc	\$19.95
<i>The Glove of Darth Vader</i>	Davies & Davies	Bantam Skylark	pb	\$ 4.95
<i>The Lost City of the Jedi</i>	Davies & Davies	Bantam Skylark	pb	\$ 4.95
<i>Dhalgren</i>	Samuel R Delany	Grafton	pb	\$10.95
<i>The Gap Into Power</i>	Stephen Donaldson	Harper Collins	hc	\$35.00
<i>Twilight</i>	Peter James	Signet (Penguin)	pb	\$12.95
<i>Radio Romance</i>	Garrison Keilor	Faber (Penguin)	tpb	\$18.95
<i>Tolkien Centenary Posters</i>	Alan Lee	Grafton	tpb	\$24.95
<i>The Crystal Line</i>	Anne McCaffrey	Bantam	hc	\$29.95
<i>Boy's Life</i>	Robert McCammon	Penguin	pb	\$12.95
<i>Floater Factor</i>	Melisa C Michaels	Tor (Pan)	pb	\$ 7.95
<i>The Brentford Triangle</i>	Robert Rankin	Corgi	pb	\$10.95
<i>Teklab</i>	William Shatner	Pan	tpb	\$19.95
<i>V: Symphony of Terror</i>	Somtow Sucharitkul	Tor (Pan)	pb	\$ 7.95
<i>The Invisible Man</i>	H G Wells	Tor (Pan)	pb	\$ 7.95

## Reviews

Reviewers: GH = Greg Hills BH = Beverley Hope ML = Mark Loney  
MO = Marc Ortlieb AS = Alan Stewart

MO

**The Best of the Rest 1990** Edited by Stephen Pasechnick and Brian Youmans  
Edgewood Press tpb 1991 113pp US\$8.00  
ISBN 0-96290666-1-1

Given that so much sf is published in the small press, this anthology is an excellent idea. It draws its material from low circulation magazines and anthologies, the main criteria being that the publications have one or no full-time employees and a circulation of less than 10,000 copies. Pasechnick and Youmans are half of the editorial team that produce the magazine *Strange Plasma* from which one of the anthology's stories is drawn.

Australian small press material is well represented. There are two stories from *Aurealis*, Geoffrey Maloney's *5 Cigarettes and 2 Snakes* and David Tansey's . . . *And They Shall Wonder All Their Days*. Also there is a Terry Dowling story, *Mirage*, from *Rynosseros* and a George Turner story, *Generation Gap*, from *A Pursuit of Miracles*. Other authors I recognised were Carol Emshwiller, whose story *Peri* reminded me of the stories she used to have in *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*, and R A Lafferty, whose name will be familiar to most readers of short sf.

Don't look for space opera here. The stories are more *F&SF* style than they are *ANALOG* material. My favourite, by James Alan Gardner, is called *Muffin Explains Teleology to the World at Large*. It is a fantasy about what happens to a six-year-old girl around whom the entire universe really does revolve. I enjoyed the mixture of strange philosophy and pure whimsy. The stories most closely resembling 'old-fashioned sf' are George Turner's and David Tansey's. Self-conscious Literature drips from the anthology. There is a story from Garry Kilworth about Truman Capote's trilby and Matt Lowe's *Gooba* which deals with a circus that Earnest Hemingway used to own. I quite liked the tone of the book, but then I've been collecting *F&SF* since 1970.

Where it provides a particularly useful service is in its small press listing. If you're looking for potential markets for your writing, this list is invaluable. It also lists those stories that almost cracked a mention. Terry Dowling is listed three times, George Turner gets a further guernsey and Michael Pryor's story *Talent* from *Aurealis* #1 rates. Those of you who know Minneapolis fan Terry Garey will be pleased to note that she also gets listed.



The Best of The Rest is available from Edgewood Press, PO Box 264, Cambridge, MA 02238, USA for US\$13.00 including postage & packing.

AS

### **Anvil of Stars** by Greg Bear

Legend tpb February 1992 442 pages £8.99 (UK)  
ISBN 0-7126-3890-3

Greg Bear's latest novel is a sequel to The Forge of God and describes the voyage of the spaceship Dawn Treader, built by the Benefactors who saved some of mankind when the Earth was destroyed, and crewed by selected children. Their mission is to obey the Law and execute justice upon the creators of the destructive self-replicating machines which destroyed Earth. Advised by moms and the ship's brain, their voyage becomes tedious and long training sessions until a possible target is sighted.

Anvil of Stars builds upon the premise of two powerful high technology alliances, one self-proclaimed righteous the other destructive, established in The Forge of God, and details humanity's active role in their war. With a crew of 82 Children, aged about twelve when the voyage begins, Bear puts them through hoops and describes the social problems and interactions as boredom and finally tension are encountered. With the echoes of a crew of children fighting an alien enemy in a very high-tech future, Orson Scott Card's Ender's Game immediately springs to mind. It's not surprising that a similar leader-type to Ender Wiggin emerges in this novel. Some of the aliens encountered also echo Card's work, but that might be coincidence.

Towards the end Bear has built the enemy up to be so all powerful and supreme there looks to be no way to defeat them, despite the optimistic thread running throughout the novel. This huge impersonal impression of the aliens, and indeed the super-tech battle, removes the reader from any real identification with what's happening. It's only the human children one can identify with, and in this closed society engaged in war, Bear allows plenty of scope for sympathy and feeling.

Anvil of Stars succeeds in being a tale of action and wonder, even if most of the events are incomprehensible by today's technology, and worth reading for the thought experiments of possible science. The characters are personality types, reasonable for the given situation, and reflect human reactions and emotions. It will probably confirm readers opinions of Bear, being similar in style to his earlier epic novels.

GH

### **Dream Weaver** by Jonathan Wylie

Corgi (Transworld) pb March 1992 655 pages  
\$10.95 ISBN 0-552-13757-X

This novel is pretty good for most of its length, though as with the Pohl book it 'loses it' at the end, abandoning the easy, laid-back and understated style that carried the earlier sections so well in favour of bluster and melodrama. Still, the couple of dozen pages at the end of the book do not quite destroy the pleasure I garnered from the earlier portions of it.

The book appears to be entirely stand-alone, too, which after wading through piles of series books came as a relief. The story concerns Rebecca, daughter of the Baron of Edge. Edge is a once-powerful territory, source of fine swords, now fallen on hard times. Rebecca's father is an ambitious man who looks to marry his daughter off to a wealthy man in an attempt to revive Edge's fortunes — and relieve his own poverty. Rebecca is not as enthusiastic as her father about this plan, and is besides distracted by odd events such as paintings that change and strange dreams. As the book is woven, more and more apparently unrelated events get tied into the warp, creating a complex tapestry in which it is difficult to tell what is *really* going on. If Wylie's skill had been equal to the task this book could have been memorable; as it stands it is still worth a look.

AS

### **Dark Force Rising** by Timothy Zahn

Bantam (Transworld) hc August 1992 376 pages  
\$24.95 ISBN 0-553-08574-3

In this book, the second of the new Star Wars trilogy, Timothy Zahn continues the action and excitement. The familiar players from the movie series and first novel are back. What's new is a long lost fleet and the changing alliances between nations and free traders as virtually everyone must take sides with either the Empire or the New Alliance. Space battles; daring escapes from the heart of Grand Admiral Thrawn's ship; stirrings in The Force - it's all there. Some of the feats and action are a bit unbelievable but fit in with the milieu created in the cinema. There's a sort of cliff-hanger ending to add spice for the coming conclusion. Recommended if you enjoyed the films, but it doesn't really stand up as a good SF novel in isolation.

AS

**The Sapphire Rose** by David Eddings

Grafton pb May 1992 \$11.95

The Sapphire Rose concludes David Eddings' latest series, known under the umbrella title 'The Elenium', which he began in The Diamond Throne, and then filled in time with The Ruby Knight. This final volume, by far the heftiest at 525 pages compared to the earlier 396 and 347 pages respectively, at least concludes. As expected it completes the travelogue aspect of Eddings' sagas by taking his band of adventurers into the northeast section of the frontispiece map, the heart of Zemoch, about the only area they haven't travelled already in the series. The packaging is even okay with Geoff Taylor's wraparound cover actually illustrating a scene from the text.

The book is divided into three sections and can be summarised as follows: Part 1 (pages 1-160): Sparhawk, now armed with the Bhelliom (Sapphire Rose), restores his Queen and the company march off to the city of Chyrellos which becomes besieged. Part 2 (pages 161-303): The good guys win, the siege is broken. Good guy elected Archprelate. Part 3 (pages 304-525): Sparhawk and friends go off to fight arch enemy, Otha, and his God, Azash, on their home turf. Good guys win.

The kindest comment to make about this book is that it is probably the best Eddings I have read so far. Unfortunately that still doesn't raise it that high in the epic fantasy stakes. The *deus ex machina* of favourable Gods popping up just when needed makes the tale pretty unbelievable. Eddings habit of having people turn out to be more than they seem, that is, more than he's told the reader they are, is just not playing fair. The elements of gore and tragedy try to bring the tale down to earth, make it more 'realistic', but the characters are just too incredible. The major suspension of disbelief required to enter the magical world of Sparhawk and company can't cope easily with day to day nitty gritty seemingly straight from our mundania.

If you enjoyed the earlier books in the series, this one won't disappoint, and might even surprise you. The Ruby Knight was basically middle novel padding, not adding much to the story, and could easily have been condensed and added to the earlier Diamond Throne. The Sapphire Rose suffers a bit the same, particularly in the early sections describing the politics and machinations within the city of Chyrellos and the subsequent siege. Eddings is at least improving, and hopefully his next series will be a another step upwards. He's finally drawing interesting characters,

like young Talen in this novel, who are a bit deeper than mere sword carriers.

Recommended if you're an Eddings fan, but there are better epic fantasies around.

AS

**The Worthing Saga** by Orson Scott CardLegend tpb 1991 396 pages £7.99 (UK)  
ISBN 0-7126-3641-2

In this book Orson Scott Card continues his mission of rewriting his works and collects his preferred 'Worthing' texts in one volume. Of the twenty one tales present, only three haven't been published before. There's the pertinent stories from the collection Capitol, plus the 'chapters' of The Worthing Chronicle, itself a rewrite of the original Hot Sleep novel. Written mainly in 1978-1980, they represent some of the earliest of Card's works, and his first attempts at linking to make larger pieces.

Interestingly there are a great many 'hallmarks' of Card's later works present in these pieces. Quite a few take place in a rural frontier setting which echoes the times of Alvin Maker, despite being in the future and on another planet. There's also terrible accidents and harm to small children. The all metal world of Capitol reflects the ships and buildings that are home to Ender Wiggin. The idea of a select few people controlling and shaping society also occurs, shades of Treason and Wyrms, with strange powers the key to their rule.

The odd mixture of metallised far future and frontier worlds, combined with telepathy and suspended animation, result in an unsettling and awkward read. There's not the feel of characters you can identify with, in fact most of them are pretty selfish and obnoxious, and the author seems to be pushing a moral point. This volume reads like a lesson, contrived and dedicated to one purpose. There's no sense of fun or excitement. The interest from the future possibilities shown cannot outweigh the heavy undercurrents and sense of fate attached to the text.

It's an interesting read from the point of view of Card's concerns and values, but not an exciting sense of wonder SF novel. Perhaps it's the ten year old nature of the contents, the rest of SF has moved beyond this, or maybe the fact that all the tales are now together, not read in isolation in their original publications. It really is a 400 page saga, and recommended mainly for Card fans who know what they're getting. Jason Worthing and company have outlived their welcome.

GH

**Jack the Bodiless** by Julian May  
(Volume 1 in the 'Galactic Milieu' trilogy)

Harper Collins hc July 1992 425 pages \$35.00  
ISBN 0-00-223875-6

This is one of those books I hate to love. The prose is purple, the action rides roughshod over plausibility, but I loved every chapter of this 421-page brick. I had been concerned because Intervention disappointed me — even bored me in places — after the thrill of the 'Pliocene Saga'. Readers of that series (The Many-Coloured Land, The Golden Torc, The Non-Born King, and The Adversary) will be familiar with the background and some of the characters, since Marc Remillard and others turned up in the older series. Jack The Bodiless deals with Marc's youth and Jack's childhood. The next volume, Diamond Mask, will presumably introduce Jack's mate. The third should therefore finally get to the meat of the 'Metapsychic Rebellion' whose failure led Marc to flee six million years into the past.

Jack opens with a waffling introduction which, while entertaining, really should have been chopped. Old readers already knew it all; new ones will pick up it as they read along. The plot and the action start with page one of Chapter One — page 20 of the book — and roll inexorably to page 416, after which May spends six pages tidying up. While there are plenty of strands leading on to volume two — not least being the mysterious malign entity known as 'Fury' — the loose ends are few. For all its length the book was meticulously planned and executed.

In a future where the maturation of the human mind has activated — made 'operant' — the latent powers of the mind, advanced alien races have intervened to guide and nurture the growth of the human race. The Remillard family is in the forefront of the 'operant' metapsychics (May's jargon for psis), for good (Paul) or bad (Victor). Seven of them have been included in the first hundred-seat representation of Humanity in the 'Concilium' — the Galactic Milieu's governing council. Against the background of preparation for this momentous event, the family must fight internal dissension and a rash of mysterious killings. With Marc's assistance, Marc's mother has gone into hiding to bear the child who will become Jack the Bodiless and who will later — ironically — thwart the Rebellion Marc will lead. Who is Fury? (We don't find out in this book.) Who or what is Hydra? (This we find out.) What is the relationship of the Lylmilk to Humanity? (This long-time readers will already know.) This book is a page-turner.

AS

**The Carpet People** by Terry Pratchett

Doubleday (Transworld) hc September 1992  
176 pages \$18.95 ISBN 0-385-40304-6

The Carpet People is the latest book from Terry Pratchett, but also his first, in that it is a rewrite of a novel published when he was seventeen. It doesn't flow as well as his popular Discworld tales, but that may be due to retaining the original storyline. The real world origin of things like the distant place A chairleg, where varnish comes from, are self-evident to the reader but a major disaster known as The Fray is never really explained. This makes the book feel patchy and jagged, not a seamless story one enjoys zooming through while reading at a sitting. For what you get it's too hard a slog. If you're a Pratchett completist wait for the cheaper paperback (there's no nice pictures to vanish between editions like with Eric).

BH

**A Time of Omens** by Katherine Kerr

Harper Collins hc September 1992 355 pages  
\$35.00 ISBN 0-246-13781-9

Katherine Kerr has found a great concept for fantasy with the idea of 'wyrd', which allows her to reintroduce characters over and over in different lifetimes while they try to grapple with the lessons they have to learn and the 'wyrd' they are dealt. This makes for compulsive reading as you try to discover who your favourite characters are this time, and how they face their problems.

In A Time of Omens, the sixth novel in the Deverry saga, the characters are as exciting as ever with many of the loose ends from earlier in the series tied up. We learn of how the True King of All Deverry comes to the throne and Nevyn's role therein, as well as how Rhodry gets tangled up in successive lifetimes with a creation of the guardians, nearly to his downfall. This book traces Jill's search for the lost elves, among her other trials, and Salamander, one of my personal favourites, reappears with an interesting role in the world of humans.

A Time of Omens would could probably be read on its own, but if you haven't read the other five books in the saga do get hold of them if you can. I can't recommend the saga, and this particular book, highly enough.



AS

**The Face of the Waters** by Robert Silverberg

Grafton hc August 1991 348 pages \$32.95  
ISBN 0-246-13718-5

Robert Silverberg's latest novel, The Face of the Waters, is set in a future where terran settlers live with the native Dwellers on floating islands of the planet Hydros. Earth had been devastated by solar flares in the past, and as there was no spaceport on Hydros, it was populated by terran prisoners, their descendants and one-way travellers. Literally a 'water-world' the colonists are metal poor and at the mercy of the natives. An unfortunate incident involving local marine life leads to the exile of one community, and their voyage eventually takes them to the mysterious region known only as The Face of the Waters.

His descriptions of shipboard life, as well as the exotic wildlife encountered, echo similar passages from Valentine Pontifex. The details and minutiae are shown vividly, and one can almost taste the salt laden air or see the barbed flying creatures. The interstellar civilisation is ill-defined, the native culture remains enigmatic, but this is the tale of a small group of terrans confined to small areas of one planet and that's what Silverberg concentrates on. The narrator, Valben Lawler, 'doctor' to the island, is easily identified with and his views tend to colour the reader's impressions of his fellow travellers.

The Face of the Waters is an entertaining novel, competent and well-written as usual from Silverberg, but it doesn't have that un-put-downable quality of a great book. There's a sense of fine craftsmanship, everything works well together and a tale is told. Recommended for Silverberg fans who know what to expect, and worthwhile for casual SF readers.

GH

**The World at the End of Time** by Frederik Pohl

Harper Collins hc 1992 393 pages \$35.00  
ISBN 0-00-223970-1

Pohl is usually good value. He turns out a consistently enjoyable product, and yes, this book is up to standard. I enjoyed it. But it does disappoint, because it's not *new*. There's not one idea that you can point to here and say 'that's new, that's challenging'. Biosculpture, gene manipulation, intelligent sun-dwelling plasmoids, black holes, people haring off helplessly at close to the speed of light, corpsicles, antimatter — tried and true themes and ideas.

World at the End of Time uses two separate plot threads. One concerns certain individuals involved in Man's first attempt to set up a colony outside the Solar System. The other concerns a very powerful entity known as Wan-To who lives in a star and is rather concerned about the attempts its siblings are making to kill it. The two threads never merge, but each has an effect on the other. One of Wan-To's feints in its struggle is to arrange for whole groups of stars to head off into the wide blue yonder at constantly increasing velocity. Unfortunately, Man's first extra-Solar colony is on a planet of one such star. Through the eyes of Viktor Sorricaine, who manages by dint of lengthy periods in frozen sleep to see most of the subsequent history of the colony, we are taken through about 4000 years (colony time) or many billions of years (Wan-To time) of events.

I felt that Pohl lost it a bit later on, in his attempt to supply a happy ending to the end of the universe. For no logical reason a creation designed solely to accelerate a group of stars towards light-speed decides that enough is enough and proceeds to start slowing them down again. Earlier in the book Wan-To observes that planetary intelligence seems self-limiting, time and again rising only so far before destroying itself; yet the last sentence of the book is 'It had never occurred to Wan-To to think about what those silly, short-lived little creatures might become ... in some tens of thousands of years.' Really? What about all those *earlier* 'silly, short-lived creatures' who amounted to zilch? Then again, when the stars slow down they're a long way off, but Pohl glosses over exactly how far away they are. We are talking about something that has moved at close to the speed of light for *billions* of years (the number 'ten to the fortieth' gets thrown in as the age of the universe by this time). These stars are out with the quasars by the time they slow down again. A long step even for tachyon transmission.

In the end, this is a light, enjoyable novel that explodes no shibboleths but at least does not actually insult the reader's intelligence.

ML

**What on Earth** Edited by Tim Jones

AS

WICG magazine \$5

One of the pleasing aspects of recent years has been the continuing growth in the amount of science fiction published in Australia. Both Aurealis and Eidolon continue to appear regularly and I have no hesitation in recommending subscriptions to either of them. What on Earth, a short anthology published by the Writers' Intensive Care Group, spreads the wings of science fiction publishing to New Zealand. With nine stories and one poem in less than fifty pages, What on Earth is limited to pieces that range from the short to the very short. Some of the very short pieces, such as *Pioneering Spirit* by James Dignan, are inconsequential throwaways, but there are several pieces that tease the imagination. *Freeze Out* by Jonathan Dupree outlines an idea that would seem to have some promise for a longer piece and the same can be said of *The Abyss* by Sue Emms. What on Earth is available from 8 Kings Avenue, Dunedin, New Zealand, and, as I can think of much worse things to do with your money, I can only recommend it for those interested in the development of New Zealand science fiction. Cheques should be made payable to "What on Earth".

GH

**The Druid of Shannara** by Terry Brooks  
(Book Two of *THE HERITAGE OF SHANNARA*)

Orbit (Penguin) pb May 1992 471 pages \$11.95  
ISBN 0-593-02374-9

The only previous book I've read in the Shannara group was the original The Sword of Shannara, which was awful — as well as being too obviously derivative of Tolkien. This book is better, though parts of it read like they were cribbed from The King of Elfland's Daughter. One subplot involves Walker Boh, who has had an encounter with a beastie whose venom is turning him slowly to stone. Boh was seeking a means of bringing back the castle of Paranor, home of the vanished Druids, as part of the fight against the evil 'Shadowen' who are attempting to take over the world. Another subplot involves the daughter of the King of the Silver River (Elfland by another name), who saves Boh as part of her greater quest to save the realm from another danger. While the immediate objectives of both subplots are attained, and indeed the latter is completed, the book itself finishes on a cliffhanger. I have no inclination to buy the next book.

**The Gap Into Vision: Forbidden Knowledge**  
by Stephen Donaldson

Harper Collins hc 1991 410 pages £14.99  
ISBN 0-00-223828-4

Stephen Donaldson has returned to the world of the Gap: to Morn Hyland- now trying to survive as a captive; Nick Succorso- her master and ruthless illegal; and Angus Thermopyle- languishing in the grips of UCMP security. This second novel of the projected five volume series introduces the alien Amnion and raises questions of loyalties and allegiances. It develops the main characters from the previous book, but raises more puzzles and enigmas than it answers. Definitely a '...to be continued...' read.

The main characters are about all that develops in this book. Background society and technology remain vague. You can't get a sense of what the events described are being played out against and hence their importance. It's like a soap opera where everything that matters seems to be happening to the main characters or is known to crew members of the ships they happen to be on. Suspension of disbelief is a bit hard to come by with this tale. The despair and rigours suffered by Morn just seem too melodramatic.

Donaldson expounded about Wagner's *Der Ring des Nibelungen* at the end of the first volume. There he explicitly connected Morn and Angus with Sieglind and Siegmund, thus rendering the existence of their son in this volume no surprise at all. Such circumscription of the characters stunts the flow of his tale. Fitting events into preplanned slots gets in the way of entertainment. This volume is more interesting than the first, as ideas and intrigue increase, but I can't forgive lines like "He was accustomed to women who dropped dead with pleasure when he took them.". Only for die-hard Donaldson fans, the spark of the occasional wonderful idea has been smothered by the prose.

## Books Received

<i>The Stallion Queen</i>	Constance Ash	Ace	pb
<i>The Thief of Always</i>	Clive Barker	Harper Collins	hc
<i>Anvil of Stars</i>	Greg Bear	Legend	tpb
<i>The Druid of Shannara</i>	Terry Brooks	Orbit (Penguin)	pb
<i>The Worthing Saga</i>	Orson Scott Card	Legend	tpb
<i>Dhalgren</i>	Samuel R Delany	Grafton	pb
<i>The Gap into Power</i>	Stephen Donaldson	Harper Collins	hc
<i>The Gap Into Vision</i>	Stephen Donaldson	Harper Collins	hc
<i>The Sapphire Rose</i>	David Eddings	Grafton	hc
<i>Domes of Fire</i>	David Eddings	Harper Collins	hc
<i>The King's Buccaneer</i>	Raymond E Feist	Harper Collins	hc
<i>Dracula: Prince of Darkness</i>	Martin H Greenberg (ed)	Daw	pb
<i>Horse Fantastic</i>	M & R Greenberg (eds)	Daw	pb
<i>The Anubis Murders</i>	Gary Gygax	Roc	pb
<i>The Throne of Scone</i>	Patricia Kennealy	Grafton	pb
<i>A Time of Omens</i>	Katherine Kerr	Harper Collins	hc
<i>The Dark Tower</i>	Stephen King	Warner	pb
<i>The Watcher's Mask</i>	Laurie J Marks	Daw	pb
<i>Jack The Bodiless</i>	Julian May	Harper Collins	hc
<i>Blood Trillium</i>	Julian May	Harper Collins	hc
<i>The Best of the Rest 1990</i>	Pasechnick & Youmans(eds)	Edgewood	tpb
<i>The World at the End of Time</i>	Frederik Pohl	Harper Collins	hc
<i>The Carpet People</i>	Terry Pratchett	Transworld	hc
<i>The Face of the Waters</i>	Robert Silverberg	Grafton	hc
<i>Raising the Stones</i>	Sheri S Tepper	Grafton	pb
<i>Dream Weaver</i>	Jonathan Wylie	Corgi	pb
<i>Dark Force Rising</i>	Timothy Zahn	Bantam	hc

## Fanimals

### A TAD ENVIOUS?

BY *John Gunn*  
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