# Interstellar Ramjet Scoop

ANZAPA MAILING #244 AUGUST 2008
PUBLISHED ORIGINALLY FOR ANZAPA
BY BILL WRIGHT
4/1 PARK STREET ST. KILDA VICTORIA 3182

THE JOURNAL FOR INQUISITIVE READERS

GRAPHICS BY DITMAR

INTERSTELLAR RAMJET SCOOP (THE JOURNAL FOR INQUISITIVE READERS)
PUBLISHED BY BILL WRIGHT, 4/1 PARK STREET, ST. KILDA, VICTORIA 3182

for ANZAPA #244 - August 2008

*"O Nature, and O soul of man!*
*How far beyond all utterance are your linked analogies!*
*Not the smallest atom stirs or lives in matter,*
*But has its cunning duplicate in mind.*

Herman Melville - *Moby Dick*, chapter 70

# Contents

This Issue's Cover: Way to go! ..... 3
Ambassador Doug Burrows does his bit ..... 4
Letter from Chris Garcia ..... 5
The Energy of the Universe ..... 6
Doctor Brian Aldiss in 2008 Queen's Birthday honours list ..... 7
Anzapa 40th anniversary party ..... 10
Clerihew corner ..... 11
Robin Johnson's latest trip report ..... 14
Verdi's Requiem ..... 18
Stefan Zone ..... 19
Takei ties the knot ..... 21

**Art, etc. credits**…

| | |
|---|---|
| Cover | G**raphic by Ditmar** |
| Page 2 | Masthead - photographs of Bill Wright and Dick Jenssen |
| Page 3 & 4 | Comic strips + photo of Ambassador Doug Burrows with Friend at SuperCon |
| Page 5 | Picture of Mars Phoenix Lander |
| Page 5 | Illustration by Western Australian artist Stephen Grant |
| Page 7 | Photograph of Brian Aldiss in doctoral robes at the University of Liverpool |
| Page 12 | Very dark Batman illustration |
| Page 12 | Movie still of Sean Connory as James Bond bedding yet another wench |
| Page 13 | The flighty dollar illustrated |
| Page 14 | Robin Johnson, as drawn by Jenner |
| Page 16 | Interior of the TWA building at New York Kennedy airport |
| Page 16 | Photograph of a Virgin Atlantic's Airbus 340-600; Illustration by ATom |
| Page 18 | Cover of the programme book for the Star Chorale's rendition of Verdi's Requiem |
| Page 17 | Illustration by Rotsler |
| Page 19 | Stefan Airlines |
| Page 21 | George Takei, in aspect as Mr Sulu in a Star Trek episode |

## This Issue's Cover: Way to go!

Well, it seems that finally some governments of the world have decided that it's politically expedient to acknowledge the fact of global warming and that it is, unequivocally, anthropogenic. The media, also, have decided that this is financially worth pursuing, and so we are deluged with factoids in TV news, newspapers, journals, and the Internet. And so my mind was filled with this information overload when I began my customary doodling in the hope of finding a suitable image for *IRS*.

Even though we are ***now*** deluged with news items about the problems of pollution and its effects on the planet, humankind's influence on our fragile world has been known for decades. At least thirty years ago I was telling my first-year University students what was happening, and even thirty years ago part of the problem was known to purveyors of public taste and pleasure. Walt Kelly, in his newspaper comic *Pogo*, in the late 1970's had a series of strips discussing the destruction of the ozone layer.


Now the problems of man-induced global warming, the concomitant calamities attendant on such reckless behaviour, and possible solutions or ameliorations of such disasters are highly complex issues – which I do not want discuss here. Let me just say that I see the ***main*** component of the likely misfortunes to come is one which is seldom emphasized – *world population*. As Sir David Attenborough has pointed out in a number of his documentary series, the number of humans has *tripled* in the past fifty years. So even if emissions are reduced to a third of their present level, the amount of greenhouse gasses will, in less than fifty years be as it is today. And remember population growth is exponential…

Which means that even if solutions to atmospheric degradation are found, the amount of garbage and effluent will also grow exponentially. Since it is, even if the idea is unpalatable, the strong who generally triumph, the King of Id is probably quite prescient.


I am, however, quite optimistic. Even if population explodes, and even if pollution continues to be a problem, I am confident that science and technology will ensure, if not an increase in living standards, then no significant reduction in living comforts – and that, especially, currently underdeveloped countries will have a great increase in quality of life. Just what these advances may be, and how they'll be implemented is beyond my precognitive abilities: I'm placing some faith in fusion techniques.

I guess, though, that even if the world has to devolve to some agrarian society, where the highly contaminating technology of today has to be modified – perhaps severely – there will still be some problems. Again the kingdom of Id has a comment to make.


Perhaps, should all else fail, humanity could somehow call on the redoubtable Alley Oop, who can always be relied upon to resolve any situation.


Oh, there was one other influence for the cover image. I recently added the Blu-ray edition of *Men in Black* to my collection (one of my favourite movies of the past twelve years), and the final scene of what could be the Rulers of the Sevagram playing marbles with galaxies gave me additional inspiration. The Earth has been consigned to the land fill of the universe's guardians, as being beyond redemption – along with its inhabitants - in this surrealistic and symbolic scene. *But, as I said above, I do not believe this will be our future…*

**Technical notes**

The image, as always, was generated in *Eon's Vue 6 Infinite*: smoke, fire, lightning and final tweaks were added in *Adobe's PhotoShop CS3*

***Ditmar Jenssen***

# Ambassador Doug Burrows does his bit

Last year, in his capacity as Archiregimand of Aussie Fanoclasts, the editor sent me an enterprising young wombat named Doug Burrows. Doug arrived in St Paul in a duffle bag with his very own Aussie Passport tied to the draw string. Promoted to Ambassador on arrival, Doug has since been sighted at not a few US conventions where he has been an enthusiastic supporter of Australia in 2010.

John and I went to a small relaxacon last weekend (Feb 2-3rd, 2008). As Saturday was Groundhog Day, I brought the next best thing: Doug Burrows! To my great surprise and the pleasure of several people there, a wombat was part of this year's convention illustrations. So, Doug now has his own name badge from SuperCon with a small wombat illustration in one corner. He was an unofficial GoH as we didn't buy a membership for him, but the registration person really loved having him there and wants him to come next year, too. We've sent pictures to the con web site.

Here is a picture of Doug with the SuperCon registration head, Charlotte Nickerson. She loved him so much, she made me promise to bring him back next year.

***Jeanne Mealy***

# Letter from Chris Garcia

*Following is LoC on the e-version of IRS June 08, from ex-Anzapan* Chris Garcia who edits ***'The Drink Tank'*** *and is a prolific contributor to number of other e-zines in that fannish treasure-trove.* ***efanzines.com***.

--

I've been terribly lax in my Loccing of late and now I'm back from Outer Space and have declared that I shall LoC again. And you're the one I'm starting with!

Ditmar's stuff is so instantly recognizable that it's almost iconic. The fact that I'm working on the Computer Graphics section of our Timeline of Computer History for the museum might also have opened up my eyes. The cover art for IRS June 2008 was magnificent and brought to mind classic pictures of Venice. Imagine setting a Bladerunner-type story in a Venice of the Future!

I had heard about the pre-Edison recording reported in Dennis Callegari's column and was aware that some of the good folks at Berkeley were working with the audio. I'm a nut for historical audio, as my constant attention to the National Recording Registry that the US Library of Congress runs will attest. There are a few other older recordings (including one on a piece of tin tape that was cited in a lawsuit about a decade ago) but no one can deny that Edison was the first one to figure out how to make money with it. There were also films before Edison and the Lumieres, but we don't talk about them…

I love *Arsenic and Old Lace*. It's one of my favourite films. I've seen it maybe a dozen times. It's the one Cary Grant film I keep going back to. I only recently saw Harvey and was impressed.

The Phoenix Lander made touch-down about twenty minutes before I chaired the *Trailer Park* panel at BayCon. There was a lot of interest and the tech crew had a constant internet feed of the landing on Mars.

NASA actually made a great little trailer for the landing, treating it like it was a movie. The trailer played in our *Trailer Park* panel and might have been the best trailer we showed that day.

'Vaccinated' *(Paul Offit's book about vaccine pioneer Maurice Hilleman – Ed.)* hasn't been as widely praised out this way as I'd have thought. Medical non-fiction has been hot for a few years now and this is exactly the kind of thing that would normally make the rounds on National Public Radio.

I wasn't a fan of the Science Fiction Hall of Fame books. Yeah, they had a lot of important stories and many real masterworks, but there weren't any of the things that I read SF for. They lacked the whacky and the Super-Strange. I understand that it wouldn't be a good thing to include that stuff with the legends, but it makes it hard for me to keep reading when I'm not occasionally thrown a bone in those areas.

I've met Robin Johnson a couple of times (once at a NASFiC and once at the LA WorldCon, maybe?) and he's a very nice guy. It sounds like he had another very interesting trip. My dear friends Jay and M are living in Finland at the moment and I've dreamt of making that trip, but alas, I doubt it shall ever happen.

I love Stefan's idea of the de-smellinization plant. Someone must get on that right away!

I was about to say that Leap Year Day (Feb 29th) sounded a lot like Sadie Hawkins Day. Every year, High Schools around America have Sadie Hawkins Day dances where guys get asked, or manage to come up with some scheme to ask a girl and make her think it was her idea. I only went to a couple and they were fun. The first time I went with a lass named Jenn Bushard, a lovely girl who grew into a lovelier woman.

Don't get me started on Artificial Intelligence! Here's the thing: we've got great AI, it's called *Search*, and Google is its Master. Autonomous robots have come short largely due to cost and size. More miniaturization is required before we can ever hope to make them practical. There are many other problems, but really it's only in areas of Search that AI has played out. Maybe Neural Networks did pull through a little and make some nice computer systems possible.

And that incipient Melbourne Docklands icon is indeed a big wheel. I didn't get to see the London Eye when I was out there on my TAFF trip. Another wasted chance.

***Chris Garcia***

# The Energy of the Universe

In the cover notes for the December 2007 *IRS* I mentioned that the total energy of the universe was zero. Bruce Gillespie, in his **brg* 55* (*ANZAPA* mailing June 08) found this to be surprising and wished for further elaboration. Well, here it is.

First, though, a word or two about the *Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle*. Almost all popular science book explanations treat it as an experimental/observational effect – they point out that it is impossible to determine the *exact simultaneous* value of position and momentum of a subatomic particle, because the act of observation disturbs the momentum, and vice-versa. Energy must be used in this process. Now this **is** the truth, but not the **whole** truth. The uncertainty principle is an intrinsic property of reality as we know it. In deep, deep space – where there are no observers – the principle still applies. (What constitutes an observer, I will leave for the moment). The principle concerns pairs of what are called canonically conjugate variables – for example, [momentum and position], or [time and energy] – and states that the product of the members of the pair must be less than the reduced Planck constant. For time and energy, then:

$$\Delta E \, \Delta t \quad < \quad \eta \quad = \quad \frac{h}{2\pi}$$

where h is the Planck constant (when divided by 2л this is the reduced Planck constant), and ΔE and Δt are respectively the uncertainties in energy and time.

Thus when considering the very smallest scales of time – that is, at the quantum level, where the smallest time interval is the Planck time ($5 \times 10^{-44}$ sec) – the uncertainty in the energy over that time can be very large indeed, even though the reduced Planck constant is only $1.0546 \times 10^{-34}$ Joule.sec.

This uncertainty has been used by Hawking to explain how black holes can radiate. At any point in space the energy/time uncertainty can lead to the production of virtual particles. Normally, these immediately annihilate each other, so that over a longer time interval, the energy of that small region of space remains zero. However, if the pair production occurs at the event horizon of a black hole one particle may enter the horizon (and be lost to normal space) while the other escapes as *Hawking radiation*.

Now consider the birth of our universe when the *Big Bang* occurred: a singularity in space-time which was accompanied by a period of *inflation* (see Guth[1]). The theory is that the inflation took some $10^{-37}$ seconds during which time the universe (the singularity) expanded by about $10^{50}$. (*Astronomy* 340 lecture notes[2]). The initial inflation was from the *quantum foam* of some point in space (where time is of the order of Planck time, and space of the order of the Planck length ($1.6163 \times 10^{-35}$ metre)). Because of the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle there was the associated production of matter/antimatter particles. During the inflationary period this initial, small amount was ***hugely*** increased, but leaving the total energy at zero. As Stephen Hawking[3] states:

*The idea of inflation could also explain why there is so much matter in the universe. ...(I) In quantum theory, particles can be created out of energy in the form of particle/antiparticle pairs. ... However, the matter is all attracting itself by gravity. ... (2) You have to expend energy to separate (two particles) against the gravitational force pulling them together. Thus…the gravitational field has negative energy. ...Now twice zero is also zero. Thus the universe can double the amount of positive matter energy and also double the amount of negative gravitational energy without the violation of the conservation of energy. This does not happen in the normal expansion of the universe in which the matter density goes down as the universe gets bigger. It does happen, however, in the inflationary expansion because the energy density of the supercooled state (of the inflating universe) remains constant while the universe expands: when the universe doubles in size, the positive matter energy and the negative gravitational energy both double* ***so the total energy remains zero***.

There is more on this theory on the Internet (for example[4]), but is there evidence for the zero energy? Well, yes – but probably the best source is again on the Net[5] where a crude calculation is made. Essentially, the positive energy is locked up in the matter ($mc^2$) and the negative energy in the gravitational potential (mMG/R, where M is the mass of the universe, G is Newton's gravitational constant and R is the radius of the visible universe [I said it was crude]). Since m is a common factor, all that needs to be shown is that $c^2$ is roughly equal to MG/R. And this is done. The site acknowledges the hand-waving argument, and – for the mathematically adventurous – directs explorers to a site of more complex mathematics.

Note that if the universe arose from an "explosion" of quantum foam, then new universes are likely continually budding off from ours[2, 6].

**References**

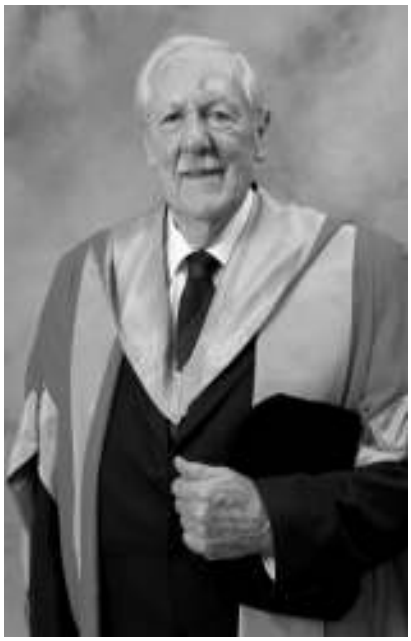

1. Guth, Alan 1997 *The Inflationary Universe* Addison-Wesley
2. Ostriker, Eve Astronomy 340. *The Origin of the Universe, Lecture 25* The University of Maryland www.astro.umd.edu/~immler/Lecture_25.pdf This is recommended ***very*** highly as a reference. Clear, simple, beautiful diagrams.
3. Stephen Hawking 1998 *The Illustrated A Brief History of Time* Bantam. Chapter 8
4. Filippenko and Pashachoff *A Universe from Nothing* Astronomical Society of the Pacific http://www.astrosociety.org/pubs/mercury/31_02/nothing.html
5. http://www.curtismenning.com/ZeroEnergyCalc.htm
6. Vilenkin, Alex 2006 *Many Worlds in One* Hill and Wang


***Dick Jenssen***

--

# Doctor Brian Aldiss in 2008 Queen's Birthday honours list

In the 2005 Queen's birthday honours list, acclaimed science fiction writer Brian Aldiss was appointed OBE for services to literature. And on July 1st, 2008, he was among twelve eminent persons including distinguished cosmologist and President of the Royal Society, Lord Martin Rees, to receive honorary degrees from the University of Liverpool. Brian's Honorary Doctorate of Literature was in recognition of his contribution to the development and understanding of science fiction throughout the world.



The oration outlined Brian's career as a writer and mentioned his MA in SF Studies and the Science Fiction Foundation collection. A touching moment in the ceremony was when Trevor Phillips, Chair of the Equality and Human Rights Commission who was receiving an honorary Doctorate of Laws for his campaigning work, stated how chuffed he was to receive his honorary degree on the same platform as one of his favourite writers. Dr Phillips mentioned that he was a big reader of SF and has 20-30 feet of science fiction books on his shelves.

In his own speech, Brian had the audience at Liverpool's Philharmonic Hall on the edge of their seats. His theme was how a society can be corrupted by being built upon lies and self-deception. He told how, in an era when drunkenness and prostitution were absolutely *not* to be found in the wonderful new Soviet Union, he embarrassed someone who clearly was his KGB 'minder' on the way back to his hotel by talking to a lady who was standing around under a bridge in rather provocative mode. The next day, said 'minder' saved the face of the Soviet Utopia by casually mentioning that the woman they saw last night, well, she was the wife of the Japanese Ambassador who was out to take the air. What the Japanese Ambassador had to say about that is not recorded.

The above information comes from avid science fiction fan and SF Librarian at Liverpool University, Andy Sawyer, who is a fierce critic of fantasy (exemplified by 'Star Wars') masquerading as science fiction. But he had nothing but praise for Brian Aldiss when he wrote,

"*I'm extremely happy to lend my name to anything which suggests that this is a well-deserved honour for someone who I have admired as a writer since my pre-teen years. Brian has shown us that science fiction can be challenging and literate and* ***fun*** *at the same time, Unlike many 'science fiction writers' he has never fallen into the trap of repeating himself and he has kept us on our toes for decades. He has written mainstream, poetry, and drama to great effect and has followed in the traditions of Wells and Stapledon by never acknowledging in his practice that there* ***is*** *a barrier between "sf" and "mainstream" literature. His work as a scholar of the genre inspires us all."*

And so say all of us!

***Bill Wright***

# Hal Clement's Mesklin

*The late Harry Clement Stubbs, who wrote under the pseudonym of Hal Clement, was a pioneer of hard science in SF and hence a source of endless fascination for Ditmar, who contributed two tributes to Hal Clement in IRS Dec 03 and Feb 04. Here, he comments further on Clement's wonky planet Mesklin…*

From the data given in Clement's article *The Whirligig World* (ASF, June 1953) it is seen that he has set Mesklin's parameters as:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Polar radius ($R_p$) | = 9870 miles | = 15884225 | metre |
| Equatorial radius ($R_e$) | = 24000 miles | = 38624256 | metre |
| Polar acceleration due to gravity ($g_p$) | = 665 x 9.80665 | = 6531.4223 | m/sec$^2$ |
| **Apparent** Equatorial gravity ($g_e^*$) | = 3 x 9.80665 | = 21.41995 | m/sec$^2$ |

(Earth acceleration due to gravity is taken to be 9.80665 m/sec$^2$). See below for a definition of $g_e^*$.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mesklin day length | | = 17.75 | minutes |
| which gives Mesklin's rotation rate ($\Omega$) | = 2 л /(60 x 17.75) | = .0058997045 | sec$^{-1}$ |

**But these values are problematical and give physically unreal results**

At the Equator, the **apparent** acceleration due to gravity ($g_e^*$) is the **true** acceleration due to gravity ($g_e$) decreased by the **centrifugal force** due to Mesklin's rotation:

$g_e^* = g_e - \Omega^2 R_e$

which is, according to Clement, is 3 times Earth gravity = 21.41995 m/sec$^2$

The true acceleration due to gravity is, using Clement's values above:

$g_e = g_p (R_p / R_e)^2$ = 1102.9457 m/sec$^2$

But the centrifugal force is:

$\Omega^2 R_e$ = 1344.3757 m/sec$^2$

again using Clement's values.

Thus: ***The Equatorial <u>apparent</u> acceleration due to gravity is <u>NEGATIVE.</u>***

Address this problem by defining, as Hal Clement did in *Whirligig World*, a *Clement-type* planet as one which has an extremely massive core surrounded by relatively less dense material, so that the gravitational attraction is always directed to the centre of the planet.

An additional condition – which holds for ***<u>any</u>*** planet whatsoever - is that for any point on the surface the apparent acceleration due to gravity (that is, the *vector* sum of the *true* acceleration due to gravity and the centrifugal force due to the rotation of the planet) ***must*** be normal to the surface. If it were not then there would be forces along the surface which will distort the planet – the surface would *not* be stable. With this constraint, the shape of a *Clement-type* planet was shown in the original article (*IRS* December 2003) to be:

$$\frac{1}{R} - \frac{1}{R_p} + \frac{\Omega^2 x^2}{2 g_p R_p^2} = 0 \qquad (1)$$

where R is the distance from the planet centre to a point on the surface, and x is the distance from that point to the planetary axis of rotation.

It then follows that for ***<u>any</u>*** *Clement-type* planet:

- the ***<u>maximum</u>*** value of the Equatorial radius is ***always*** 1.5 times the Polar radius, and
- the rotation rate, $\Omega$, the acceleration due to gravity, and the Polar radius, of the planet, are such that their combination $\Omega^2/(g_p R^2_p)$ is ***always*** a constant, and is 8/27. Furthermore:
- the ***maximum*** rotation rate is $\Omega = \sqrt{( [8/27] [g_p / R_p] )}$. And
- for the maximum rotation rate, the ***apparent*** acceleration due to gravity at the Equator is *exactly* zero.

The details of the above four points are given in the next few pages. They build on the original article, but are complete in themselves.

*<u>Please note that nothing which follows affects Hal Clement's "Mission of gravity"</u> except that the day length is shorter, and that Barlennan and his crew have a considerably shorter journey from equator to the pole of Mesklin. The maths was done <u>for fun</u> and as a tribute to Clement for making me think…*

## Some unexpected relations

In the original article on Mesklin (*IRS December 2003*) it can be seen (*Figure 6, page 10*) that the computed Mesklin Equatorial radius is nowhere near the value of about 2.4 times the Polar radius which Clement used. In fact, as will now be shown, the *maximum* ratio of Equatorial to Polar radius is 3 to 2 – the equatorial radius can *not* be more than 1.5 times the Polar radius. As well, some other properties of the planet give rise to an unanticipated constant. Finally, the rotation rate has a maximum value which cannot be exceeded.

Consider the equation for the surface shape of Mesklin when x is the Equatorial radius ($R_e$) – that is, when $R = R_e = x$.
With this value for x, multiplying equation (1) by ½ R $R_p$, and replacing α by $\Omega^2/(g_p R^2_p)$, yields

$$\frac{\Omega^2 R_p}{2g_p}\beta^3 - \beta + 1 = 0$$

where $\beta = R_e/R_p$ – the ratio of Equatorial to Polar radius. Simplify this further by writing the coefficient of the cubic beta-term as γ. Now plot this equation: $\gamma \beta^3 - \beta + 1 = 0$. The result is shown in Figure 1.

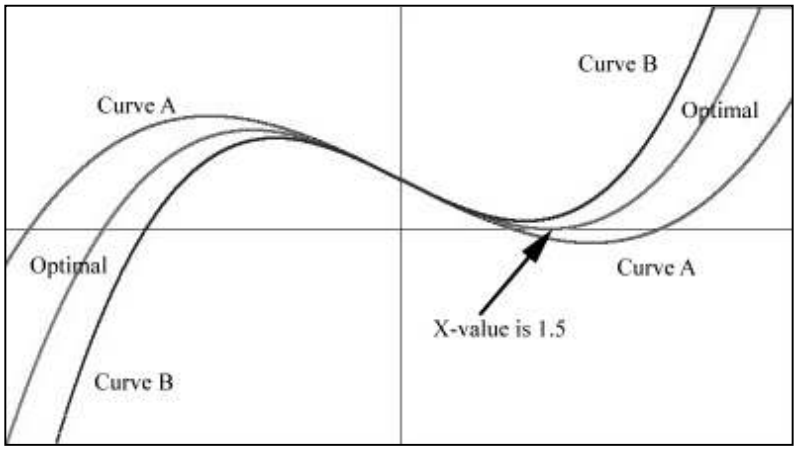



Figure 1

Curve A is for a small value of γ (actually 0.09), and curve B is for a larger value (0.21). Note that curve B has ***no*** positive root for β, and so the value for γ leads to a physically unreal solution because the ratio of Equatorial to Polar radius can **never** be negative. Curve A, on the other hand, has two positive roots – but the larger one can never be reached, because to do so would mean that β would have to be negative before the root is attained – and β can never be negative. Thus, for some value of γ between that for Curves A and B, there **must** be two, identical, positive roots – that is, the curve must just touch the x-axis. This optimal value of γ is clearly the largest value yielding a real root.

Now $\alpha = (1 - \beta) / \beta^3$, and the maximum value is when the derivative $d\alpha/d\beta = 0$. That is, when
$(2\beta - 3) / \beta^4 = 0$ – which is, of course, when
$\beta = 3/2$.
For this value of β,
$\gamma = (1 - 2/3) / (2/3)^3 = 4/27$,
and so $\Omega^2 = 8/27 (g_p / R_p)$.

All the above discussion is for a planet obeying Clement's condition that it have an extremely massive core surrounded by relatively less dense material, so that the gravitational attraction is always directed to the centre of the planet. Define such a planet as *Clement-type*. Then for ***any*** *Clement-type* planet:

- the ***maximum*** value of the Equatorial radius is ***always*** 1.5 times the Polar radius, and
- the rotation rate, Ω, the acceleration due to gravity, and the Polar radius, of the planet, are such that their combination $\Omega^2/(g_p R^2_p)$ is ***always*** a constant, and is 8/27. Furthermore:
- the ***maximum*** rotation rate is $\Omega = \sqrt{( [8/27] [g_p / R_p] )}$.

Finally, and also as a check on the above, determine the *minimum* **apparent gravity at the equator**. Some of the results seem to involve 'magic numbers' – the ratio of Equatorial to Polar radius is 3:2, the combination $\Omega^2/ (g_p R^2_p)$ is 8/27 ( $= [2/3]^3$ ) Was Pythagoras far in error when he believed that simple ratios of whole numbers determined the functioning of the universe?

The minimum **experienced** equatorial gravity ($g^*_e$) is the true gravity ($g_e$) less the centrifugal acceleration due to the rotation of the planet ($\Omega^2 R^2_e$), when $g_e$ and $\Omega$ have their minimal values, and $R_e$ its maximum. Fortunately these all occur at the same time. Thus:

$$\frac{g_e}{g_p} = \left(\frac{R_p}{R_e}\right)^2 = \beta^2 = \frac{4}{9}$$

and so, using the above in the expression for $\Omega^2$ [= 8/27 ($g_p$ / $R_p$)]:

$$\Omega^2 R_e = \frac{8}{27} g_p \frac{R_e}{R_p} = \frac{8}{27} \cdot \frac{9}{4} g_e \cdot \frac{3}{2} = g_e$$

Which gives the **apparent Equatorial gravity** as:

$$\boxed{g^*_e = g_e - \Omega^2 R_e = 0}$$

This is as expected. The maximum rotation rate of the planet will be such that – if the planet does ***not*** disintegrate under the tensional forces of slower rotation rates – the centrifugal force will balance the true gravitational force. Any further rotation, and the planet ***will*** fly apart. The 'magic numbers' ***are*** valid…

***Dick Jenssen***

# Anzapa 40th anniversary party

The ANZAPA 40th Anniversary Celebration was held on Sunday afternoon, July 20th, 2008 at the domicile of its Official Bloody Editor, Bruce Gillespie – 5 Howard Street, Greensborough.

Bruce had opined that only local Victorian members would be able to attend the event, and so it proved to be. I did a bit of log-rolling at the Melbourne Science Fiction Club meeting on the previous Friday evening and was chuffed that its librarian, James 'Jocko' Allen, saw fit to attend the celebrations.

Jocko's collaborations with cartoonist Phil Wlodarczyk in Anzapa in the 1990s are the stuff of legend. Their themes were often bizarre, as exemplified by a graphic novelette titled '*Ghoulie Bear Goes Ga Ga*', which is a pictorial celebration of serial chainsaw massacres.

If '*Ghoulie Bear*' had been published today, it would stand a good chance of picking up a major award, given that graphic novels are at last receiving due recognition.

Pictured are Clive Newall and LynC sitting on the couch in Bruce and Elaine's living room. Note the wall-to-wall bookshelves. I defy anyone to get bored at No 5 Howard Street. There's so much to see and do.

According to Wikipedia (last updated on 29th July 2008)…

**ANZAPA** - the Australian and New Zealand Amateur Press Association - is an amateur press association associated with scidence fiction fandom in Australia and New Zealand. It was founded in October 1968 as APA-A with Leigh Edmonds as its first Official Editor and is still running at the present time with almost thirty members. It is thus the oldest apa in the Southern Hemispher.

Following a suggestion by Gary Woodman, the organization changed its name in February 1969 to ANZAPA to reflect its willingness to include New Zealand members, though it took until 1974 before the first such member joined. Despite this inclusiveness, it has always primarily been an Australian apa.

The organization publishes mailings on a bi-monthly basis. Members have mostly been from Australia and New Zealand, although there have been members from the United States, the United Kingdom, South Africa and a scattering of other countries. It has always represented a strong force in Australian science fiction fandom, and many of its members have been involved in organizing science fiction conventions in Australia, including World Science Fiction Conventions held in Melbourne, Australia, in 1975, 1985 and 1999.

**BillWright**

## Clerihew corner

James Branch Cabell (1879-1958) was born into an affluent and well-connected Virginian family, from which auspicious antecedents he became an early 20th century writer of fantasy and inspirer of numerous others. Mark Twain was said to have been reading one of Cabell's books when he died but no one has dared to assert that the two events were related.

While Cabell's surname is often mispronounced "Ka-BELL", he himself pronounced it "CAB-ble". To remind an editor of the correct pronunciation, Cabell composed the couplet:

*"Damn it to hell!"*
*Said Mr James Branch Cabell.*
*"Please tell the rabble*
*That it's 'James Branch Cabell'."*

Cabell's eighth (and best-known) book, *Jurgen, A Comedy of Justice* (1919) is laced with erotic overtones. The eponymous hero, who considers himself a 'monstrous clever fellow', embarks on a journey through ever more fantastic realms, even to hell and heaven. Everywhere he goes, he winds up seducing the local women, even the Devil's wife. The novel was banned for a while in Australia but its popularity was assured when it was denounced by the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, which attempted to bring a prosecution for obscenity. The case went on for two years before Cabell and his publishers won. The 'indecencies' were double entendres that also had a perfectly decent interpretation, though it appeared that what had actually offended the prosecution most was a joke about papal infallibility.

Wikipedia provides a wealth of detail on the influence of James Branch Cabell on generations of writers. In the early 1920s Cabell became the leader of The James Branch Cabell School. James Blish was a fan of his works and for a time edited *Kalki*, the journal of the Cabell Society.

Robert A Heinlein was greatly inspired by his boldness, and originally described his famous book *Stranger in a Strange Land* as "a Cabellesque satire". A later work, *Job, A Comedy of Justice* (the title is derived from *Jurgen, A Comedy of Justice*) features, like *Jurgen*, an appearance of the Slavic god Koschei.

Fritz Leiber's *Swords of Lankhmar* was also influenced by *Jurgen*. Jack Vance's *Dying Earth* books show considerable stylistic resemblances to Cabell. Cugel the Clever in those books bears a strong resemblance, not least in his opinion of himself, to Jurgen.

Cabell was also a major influence on contemporary SF author Neil Gaiman, acknowledged as such in the rear of Gaiman's novels *Stardust* and *American Gods*. These thematic and stylistic influences are highly evident in the multi-layered pantheons of Gaiman's most famous work *The Sandman* that have many parallels in Cabell's work, particularly *Jurgen*.

There are also references to Cabell himself in the works of many other fantasy and science fiction authors. For example, the *Leshly Circuit* stories by Larry Niven feature planets and places whose names are taken from Cabell, and his protagonist in *A World Out of Time* is named Jerome Branch Corbell. H Beam Piper also used names from Cabell for some of his invented planets.

From 1969 through 1972, the Ballantine Adult Fantasy series returned six of Cabell's novels to print and elevated his profile in the fantasy genre. Today, many more of his works continue to be obtainable from Wildside Press.

---

**The optimist proclaims that we live in the best of all possible worlds; and the pessimist fears this is true.** James Branch Cabell, *The Silver Stallion* (1926)

The following info is from issue 2661 of New Scientist, 18 June 2008, page 12, but the clerihew is my own.

*Would women condemning*
*Ian Fleming*
*Still like to abscond*
*With Commander James Bond?*

Nice guys knew it, now two studies have confirmed it. It seems that bad boys really do get the most girls. The finding may help explain why a nasty suite of antisocial personality traits known as '**the dark triad**' persists in the human population, despite their potentially grave cultural costs.

The traits are

- **the self-obsession of narcissism**;
- **the impulsive, thrill-seeking and callous behaviour of psychopaths**; and
- **the deceitful and exploitative nature of Machiavellianism**.

At their extreme, these traits are highly detrimental to life in traditional human societies. People with these personalities risk being shunned by others and shut out of relationships, leaving them without a mate, hungry and vulnerable to predators.

But being just slightly evil could have its upside in a prolific sex life, says Peter Jonason at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces. "*We have some evidence that the three traits are really the same thing and may represent a successful evolutionary strategy*."

Jonason and his colleagues subjected 200 college students to personality tests designed to rank them for each of the dark triad traits. They asked about their attitudes to sexual relationships and about their sex lives, including how many partners they'd had and whether they were seeking brief affairs.

The study found those who scored higher on the dark triad personality traits tended to have more partners and more desire for short-term relationships, Jonason reported at the Human Behavior and Evolution Society meeting in Kyoto, Japan, in May 2008. But the correlation only held for males.

James Bond epitomises this set of traits, Jonason says. "*He's clearly disagreeable, very extroverted and likes trying new things - killing people, new women*." Just as Bond seduces woman after woman, people with dark triad traits may be more successful with a quantity-style or shotgun approach to reproduction, even if they don't stick around for parenting. "*The strategy seems to have worked. We still have these traits*," Jonason says.

This observation seems to hold across cultures. David Schmitt of Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois, presented preliminary results at the same meeting from a survey of more than 35,000 people in 57 countries. He found a similar link between the dark triad and reproductive success in men. "*It is universal across cultures for high dark triad scorers to be more active in short-term mating*," Schmitt says. "***They are more likely to try and poach other people's partners for a brief affair***."

Barbara Oakley of Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan, says that the studies verify something a lot of people have conjectured about; and Christopher von Rueden of the University of California at Santa Barbara says that the studies are important because they confirm that personality variation has direct fitness consequences.

"*They still have to explain why it hasn't spread to everyone*," says Matthew Keller of the University of Colorado in Boulder. "*There must be some cost to the traits*." One possibility, both Keller and Jonason suggest, is that the strategy is most successful when dark triad personalities are rare. Otherwise, others would become more wary and guarded.

Author, philosopher - and tax resister - Henry David Thoreau wrote the essay *Civil Disobedience*, wherein he says, *"A very few serve the State with their consciences also, and so necessarily resist it for the most part; and they are commonly treated by it as enemies."*

Thoreau also wrote *Walden,* a memoir of 2 years, 2 months and 2 days spent in the woods near Walden Pond, where he extolled the simple life and condemned the life led in the pursuit of material success. A committed abolitionist, Henry David Thoreau (born David Henry Thoreau) later became a naturalist and an intellectual forefather of the environmental movement.

Hence the couplet

*One of the key ingredients*
*Behind Civil Disobedience*
*Was that Henry David Thoreau*
*Liked to plow a different furrow.*

In which I've chosen to spell "plough" as "plow", as it seemed to make sense that way. It's not strictly a clerihew, in that the subject's name is not mentioned at the end of the first couplet.

---

For several years Thoreau was a tutor and general factotum in the household of Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Emerson was known as the Sage of Concord, but as I understand from a native of the area that it's pronounced 'Conkerd. Hence…

*Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau*
*Drank beer and whiskey like there was no tomorrow.*
*But the author of* Walden *was not half as stonkered*
*As the overintemperate Sage of Concord.*

"stonk", vb. "to bombard with intense artillery fire".
"stonkered" adj. "drunk", early 20c, from "stonk".

***Dennis Callegari***

The following was perpetrated by one Roy Taylor, who writes:

*"The sub prime crisis has reached Japan. In the last seven days.* ***Origami Bank*** *has folded,* ***Sumo Bank*** *has gone belly up, and* ***Bonsai Bank*** *announced plans to cut some of its branches. Yesterday, it was announced that* ***Karaoke Bank*** *is up for sale and will likely go for a song, while today shares in* ***Kamikaze Bank*** *were suspended after they nose-dived.*

*"Among the survivors,* ***Samurai Bank*** *is soldiering on following sharp cutbacks,* ***Ninja Bank*** *is reported to have taken a hit but they remain in the black. Furthermore, 500 staff at* ***Karate Bank*** *have got the chop and analysts report that there is something fishy going on at* ***Sushi Bank*** *where it is feared that staff may get a raw deal."*

This has moved the editor to fashion a clerihew of his own along the lines of…

*George W Bush deserves no thanks*
*From currently suffering Japanese banks;*
*For dud ratings affect the purity*
*Of almost every US security.*

The buck doesn't stop on the President's desk any more. It has taken wing in a flight to security.

***Bill Wright***

# Robin Johnson's latest trip report

*The first part of Robin Johnson's latest trip report appeared in IRS June 2008. The rest follows….*

**Saturday, May 10th, 2008**

When I last contributed to IRS, I had just arrived at my sister's home in the UK. Officially, the reason for my trip was her announced plan to sell her house that used to be our parents'. "*Pick out stuff you want from the attic*" she said, threatening that the rest would go to the tip. Subsequently, she had decided she would not get enough for the old place, so plans are on hold: (she had omitted to tell me this, however). She flew in from Greece to Gatwick the same day I flew in to Heathrow, and more by luck than judgment we caught up with each other on the bus from Oxford.

I decided I would cull the stored stuff as far as was reasonably possible in ten days or so, and had fun going through what were mostly my father's papers, to do with his family, and his three careers. He had been an officer in the British army, and retired as a substantive Colonel in 1960. Subsequently he worked in the movie business, as military adviser on Darryl Zanuck's "The Longest Day", and Samuel Bronston's "55 Days at Peking" before taking over, with my mother, the pottery business of my great aunt.

Most of this stuff will stay in England with my nephew, but I have filched a few duplicates as mementos. As a kid I got used to not seeing a lot of my father: He was in England for about a year after escaping from the Germans soon after his unit was overwhelmed in the retreat from Dunkirk, and I think the next time I saw him was 1946 when I travelled out with other army brats to Austria where he was in the occupation forces. Subsequently, while I was in boarding school, I went in the holiday periods to be with my parents, in Austria, Wiltshire, Jamaica, Germany, Washington, or Athens as he was posted to different jobs.

This probably kicked off my lifetime interest in travel, and the airline business. I never evinced an interest in military life or the pottery business, and Pop's relatively brief, if distinguished, movie industry career looked to me like a huge amount of work for little reward. I did visit Madrid while Bronston was filming "55 Days" there, but never met Ava Gardner or Charlton Heston! I did meet the delightful British actor Mervyn Johns, however, the father of Glynis Johns, and who had a small part in the movie, when I was seated next to him on the flight back to London.

I took a break from sorting this material one day to go to London to meet Michael Walsh, a longtime fan friend from Baltimore, who was in town for a book show. We walked from his Marble Arch hotel to the British Museum, me snapping pictures of the window displays at Selfridges en route. There is always something good to see there - and on the way back we did the bookshop thing - I bought a Dan Dare book! Michael I was to see again the following week at Balticon.

**Saturday, May 23rd - 28th, 2008 – Balticon 42 (Maryland regional SF convention)**

I tried to phone Alicia at home in Hobart before leaving the UK for the States, and got no answer a couple of times: I then called our across-the-street neighbours, who also got no answer, but guessed correctly she had gone to Shippie's for a counter meal. It turned out she had a fall and had been taken to hospital.

Our kind neighbour Caroline, a nurse, checked with Alicia's cousin Bizzie who helped get her back home and upstairs. Unfortunately Alicia had another fall getting into bed after Bizzie left, and lay stuck in an awkward position, unable to get up or reach the phone, until she was found the next day.

By the time I had flown to Baltimore and checked up on her she was in hospital again. As it was the weekend, she could not be checked out until the Falls Clinic could do an assessment, which was set up for one day the following week. (It's done at a different hospital, involving ambulance rides both ways.) I was told she would be released only after a period of observation, which would not be over until the following Monday, so there was no immediate need for me to leave for home.

> *The cartoon of Robin is by a medico and graphic artist who, for professional reasons, has adopted the pen name **Jenner**. His daily Doc Rat strip can be found on his website… http:/www.docrat.com.au*

So, amid concern for Alicia, I enjoyed myself at Balticon 42. This is an annual even run by the Baltimore SF group, and was held as it has been for some time at the Hunt Valley Inn, an outer-Baltimore area low-rise

hotel good facilities, and a nearby shopping centre with good supplies and a couple of reasonable places to eat - I don't include the local Outback among them: authentic Australian it is NOT!

To quote from the blog of the Con Chair, Greg Wright,

- The Guests of Honour have been effusive in their praise for Balticon 42, particularly in regards to the convention programming and the incredible friendliness of everyone that they met during the weekend - staff, participants and attendees alike.
- We (the ConCom) observed a phenomenon that blew our minds: near the top of the hour, the halls would fill with people in motion, and shortly after the top of the hour the halls would be empty. Based on un-scientific observation, we've come to the conclusion that people were indeed attending programming - and for all tracks.
- Sunday evening at 10 PM we had four (4) major activities that were all very well attended: the Sunday Night Film Festival, a book launch party with a concert by a local band with music written for / inspired by the book, George Hrab in concert in the hotel lounge / lobby, and an open filk circle with close to 50 people. On a ***Sunday night*** we had four events that had significant attendance.
- Even though attendance was slightly down from last year, we had record participation / attendance in the Tabletop Gaming Room, LARP, and regency and medieval dances. End quote.

A feature was THE DOVER & TRAFALGAR VICTORY BALL:
Sunday, 1PM - 3PM, Garden Room
Come celebrate the great victories of the Fleet and the Aerial Corps at the Dover & Trafalgar Victory Ball! Aviators, naval officers, and all the best of society are invited to celebrate two great victories over Napoleon in Naomi Novik's Temeraire universe with lively early 19th century country dancing led by Susan de Guardiola, assisted by members of The Elegant Arts Society. Period costume is encouraged and admired, but not required. (Female dragon captains may wish to wear dresses, to preserve the secret of their presence in the Corps.) All dragons are requested to remain outside the ballroom!

In case anyone has not been following Naomi Novik's TEMERAIRE series, this relates to an episode of (I think) the second book, where Napoleon's attempted invasion of Britain is thwarted by the Aerial Corps. Another excuse for the Georgette Heyer fans to be part of fandom!

More costumes were to be seen at the Masquerade, not to mention those on view in the halls. I was on a panel discussing the life of Arthur C. Clarke, and also one on fanzines as an introduction to fandom. I bought signed copies of the first two Temeraire books from Mike Walsh's Old Earth Books table - the Australian editions no less - among a (for me) surprisingly small pile of books given that the table of Larry Smith was groaning under the strain of all the new stuff available. I sent all the stuff home - otherwise overweight baggage would have been even more expensive - cost me $139.

By the Monday, my return plans were set. I could stay in the Baltimore/Washington area until Friday afternoon, as originally planned, but by cutting out all stopovers on my way home, and by flying continuously for three days and two nights, get home in time to see Alicia out of the hospital on time.

**Tuesday, May 27th – Washington DC**

On Tuesday (May 27) I took the cheap route to Washington. The Blue Line light rail - what used to be called a streetcar in the States - took me for 55c (age concession) to Baltimore-Washington Airport, where for 60c I took a bus to the Greenbelt station of Washington's Metro rail service. I bought a $5 ticket which was still unexpired when I got to Farragut Square near the Capital Hilton hotel. That evening I explored Washington, its bookshops and coffee houses. I missed out on seeing the National Geographic Society headquarters across the street, which I only realized was there on my last day.

In the morning, a session on funding space development started, prior to the main conference of the National Space Society. I attended a couple of sessions, then went to see the house of my relatives, which turned out to be very close to where my family had lived in the mid-fifties, when my father had a liaison job with the British Mission, and I was just starting work for BOAC, which later became part of British Airways. I visited three times while the family were in Washington, using staff travel concessions It's a hilly, leafy suburb not too far from downtown, and Lucinda, daughter of my English cousin Mary lives in a large detached three-storey house with her husband Andrew, away in Canada on a business trip, and two teenage daughters in the throes of exams. After an excellent dinner I walked downhill to the Metro station and rode back to the hotel.

On Friday the President of the National Space Society, Kirby Ikin, who I was pleased to discover was an Australian, welcomed delegates and got the ball rolling. The first presentation was on Virgin Galactic, and their plans for a privately-funded spaceport where passengers can take a ride aboard Burt Rutan's Spaceship Two to a height of 100km. I'll be saving my Virgin Atlantic miles – I'll need 2 million! Even overweight near-geriatrics – well, some of them – will meet the medical requirements, it seems.

PayPal tycoon Elon Musk then gave a presentation on SpaceX, which is building launchers for various customers and hopes to be a major presence in the post-Shuttle period, and holds one of two development contracts NASA has granted for support of the ISS after 2012. Further panel discussions and talks continued – one that particularly interested me was a talk by USAF Lt Col Peter Garretson (speaking as a NSS member, not on behalf of the Air Force), entitled Space – a Billion-year plan. He is part of a Cabal that has been working on space-based solar power systems. His view that the US should be developing means of protection from asteroids and other Earth-orbit crossing debris leads on to much greater ambitions. Yesterday I was able to access a video of the talk I attended, not including the impressive slides, but I have not located it today.

Among the exhibits on view was one showing the use of the Meteor Crater near Winslow, Arizona as the setting for the next X-prize Space Elevator competition. Apparently this year the target is for the elevator to climb 1km of ribbon, where previously the top was at 55 metres, to be climbed in 55 seconds. (The best was 57 seconds – so no prize!) See www.spacelevatorblog.com/?p=1016 to see a short video of the ISDC exhibit, and listen to the unofficial theme song!

**Friday, May 30th – Starting home**

After the Friday morning session at the National Space Society's conference in Washington, I checked out pf the Capital Hilton to go to Dulles airport, a long way out of town on the Virginia side. I had last been there a year or two ago to see the new Udvar-Hazy building, part of the Air & Space Museum, which would have been well worth another visit if I had had more time. The main terminal building, by the great Eero Saarinen (see http://www.greatbuildings.com/cgi-bin/gbi.cgi/Dulles_Airport.html/cid_2402290.html ) is now both longer and fuller of stuff than when opened, but is still a magnificent creation.

Incidentally, I'm pleased to see that Saarinen's other great airport building, built as the TWA building at New York Kennedy airport, is to be preserved. See http://www.greatbuildings.com/cgi-bin/gbi.cgi/TWA_at_New_York.html/cid_twa_ny_mce_113_12.html f or an interior view and http://www.greatbuildings.com/cgi-bin/gbi.cgi/TWA_at_New_York.html/cid_1017980176_TWA_Terminal_JFK3.html for an exterior.) Here is a piece about the proposal by Jetblue Airways.

The Upper Class seating on Virgin Atlantic's Airbus 340-600 is excellent. My seat was the last one on the right-hand side, and near the bar. Facing 45 degrees to the left, there is not a good view out - hardly a problem on an overnight Atlantic crossing. Offered a sleep-suit as I boarded, I changed as soon as possible after takeoff, and had a steward unfold the flat bed for me, as I had decided to forgo the dinner provided.

I got in about 5 hours sleep - good for me - then spent time sitting on a bar-stool chatting with other passengers, several of whom were still awake, until an excellent breakfast was served at my seat, transformed back into upright mode. I had learnt my lesson on the trip over: this time I did not wear the pressure stockings! On arrival at Heathrow, I joined hundreds of other morning arrivals to transfer airside (i.e. without entering the U.K.) to other buildings.

My bus ride as a standee took about 20 minutes. Eventually we were decanted into a bleak area with no information apart from an arrow pointing upstairs. It took me another 20 minutes to find where Finnair was to board, but there was no-one from the airline around. Knowing I had over an hour to wait, I did not worry - I had been given a boarding card at Dulles - but when there were still no personnel or information 30 minutes before takeoff time, you can bet I did!

**Sunday June 1st - The long and winding road**

The stark Heathrow waiting-room boasted one enquiry desk: eventually I found out Finnair had undergone a gate change, but as almost no-one on the flight knew either I did make the flight. A reasonable breakfast cheered me up, and after about two-and-a-half hours we were descending over beautifully green Finnish countryside, and landing at Helsinki. A circuitous bus ride eventually brought us to the terminal building, and those of us in transit to another enquiry desk.

It took about an hour of discussion before I was confirmed in business class on the Hong Kong A340. It was a pleasant flight, if a little late. A comfy seat that extended itself into an almost-flat bed, an excellent dinner and light breakfast before landing in Hong Kong.

By the time we were inside the building my departing Melbourne flight was already showing as boarding, at the far end of the enormous building. When I got to security, I was rejected as having a hand-written boarding pass. That took time to sort out, so it was lucky that Cathay Pacific was running late too!

Cathay is apparently upgrading its seats. Not on this flight, though, a 330. I was in economy, and had a vacant seat next to me, so despite having requested an aisle seat, I was able to sit by the window without having to clamber over a neighbour to get out. I did however manage to drop the small card from my camera while trying to transfer picture to my laptop, which caused disturbance to everyone near me as the seats were literally taken apart, before someone seated behind me found it on the floor. From this I learned a lesson: don't get too large-capacity card: losing 50 pictures would not have been as bad as 500 would have been!

Much of the flight was over Australia, from the Bathurst Island area north of Darwin to Melbourne took about four hours. Cathay's not-too-informative moving-map system did not show many points of interest.

Finally landing at Tullamarine, to find that my checked baggage had not made it with me, I spent the night at the Formula 1 motel within walking distance from the terminal, as all the others seemed to be full or very expensive. I had a seat on Qantas' first Hobart flight in the morning, and was told the good news that my bag had been found in Helsinki, so arrived back in time to greet Bertie, the dog, at home and to watch Alicia have her lunch in hospital.

They were able to confirm that she was OK to come home the next day, and I had to thank the neighbours and rellies who had looked after her (and Bertie) over the previous ten days. She had damaged her knee and forehead slightly in the fall, but no serious or lasting damage was evident, except perhaps to her confidence! Throwing out the furry items from the fridge and replacing them was the next item on the list.

Alicia came home, and my baggage followed by two days. It's better to lose bags on the way home, as you probably have enough spares to get by there without being forced to buy new stuff. Better still would be not to check bags through on four supposedly-connecting flights!

The world is my oyster, but two nights and days on planes and one night on the ground from Washington to London to Helsinki to Hong Kong to Melbourne to Hobart, I decided, was rather too much of a good thing even for a plane nut like me!

***Robin Johnson***

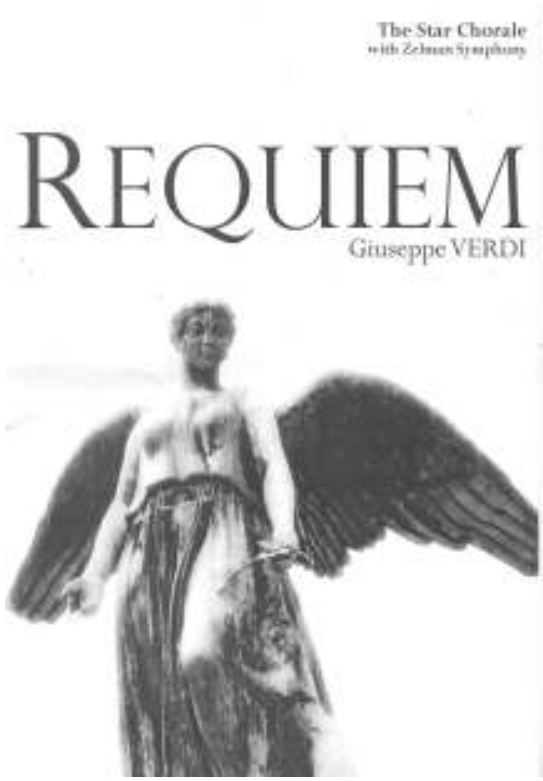
# Verdi's Requiem

The editor had a busy day on Saturday, July 26th, 2008. First I celebrated the repair of my 1987 Simpson Pope washing machine after a hiatus of three and a half years wrestling with a defective timer. I am now in the pleasurable state of having more clean clothes than places to put them.

That made me late for a pre-concert talk by a senior member of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, but I *was* in time to accompany my sister Rosemary to the concert itself. The programme included a tone poem by Jean Sebelius titled *The Oceanedes*, op. 73 (1914) that draws inspiration not from Nordic mythology but from mysterious reaches of the Mediterranean and the streams and rivers of Homeric poetry. That was followed by Leonard Bernstein's *Serenade (after Plato's Symposium)* for solo violin, strings harp and percussion that included an extraordinarily lovely duet between the guest violinist and the principal cellist.

The second half of the concert was devoted to Antonin Dvorak's Symphony No 9 in E Minor titled *From the New World* which evokes the raw energy of 19th century America, although the work is full of European gypsy melodies. An often-played LP of Dvorak's Ninth is part of my childhood memories.

After dinner at Ameretto Trattoria in Victoria Parade (a never-to-be-forgotten gastronomic experience), we walked across the road to attend a performance of The Star Chorale with the Zelman Symphony Orchestra singing Giuseppe Verdi's *Requiem*.




The programme cover at left features the striking figure of an Angel near the harbour in Copenhagen. The sculpture was fashioned by Sven Rathsachs in memory of Danish sailors who lost their lives during World War 1.

IRS aficionados will remember my almost lyrical praise in June 2007 of the Auburn Uniting Church (venue for last year's performance of *The Creation* by Joseph Haydn), which has more the architecture of a concert hall than a place of worship and has perfect acoustics to boot.

This year's venue, Dallas Brookes Hall in East Melbourne, was less than ideal in that the acoustics weren't the best and the seating is too cramped for such a long performance. I was part of a group of eight, which included my sister Rosemary and two friends, Bruce Gillespie and Elaine Cochrane, Tim Train and his lady friend Alexis. I made sure I had the seat next to the aisle where I could find room for my bung leg.

The great Italian hero and poet, Alessandro Manzoni, died in 1873, Verdi, who shared with Manzoni a strong desire for the unification of the Italian states, composed his Requiem for performance in Milan on the first anniversary of Manzoni's death.

Verdi's operatic apparatus is in evidence – full orchestra, large chorus and four soloists – but subdued. The mood ranges from sombre/contemplative to dramatic/pictorial.

David Grigg, who is listed among the Bass voices, has been a member of the Star Chorale for over a decade. His section - the Chorus - was the better part. The Timpanist had a lot of work to do and the *boom-boom* bits were handled by a big bass drum that I understand was introduced to orchestras by Mozart in 1873. One might have wished for better cello playing and the soloists weren't up to scratch, the Soprano in particular hitting too many wrong notes. Bruce and Elaine weren't that disappointed. Like me, they found no fault with the Chorus which seems to improve every year beyond expectations.

The event was recorded. A loose leaf insert in the programme book gave attendees the chance to pre-pay for CDs of the performance. I ordered three CDs on last year's experience. That may have been an extravagance.

That said, the Star Chorale's rendition of Verdi's *Requiem* was an enjoyable experience. As Elaine said, one can see the structure of the music better in a live performance. Musical director, Jane Elton Brown, has once again produced a musical feast for her army of supporters. There weren't many empty seats in Dallas Brookes Hall; which is, in itself, no mean feat for an impresario.

***Bill Wright***

# Stefan Zone

## STEFAN AIRLINES

They had an article in the paper the other day about how airlines are charging more for 'extras' to keep their profits ticking over. Apart from the fuel surcharge and food, airlines are now starting to charge for things such as chucking your bags on the plane (no extra for chucking it on the wrong plane).

"When you see a good rip-off working for another company, copy it". That is the motto of Stefan Airlines, who have issued the following announcement:

At Stefan Airlines, we're offering FREE air fares to any destination in Australia. That's right, they're absolutely FREE. But that doesn't mean you can turn up at the airport with no money. You might need it to pay for certain 'compulsory necessities', 'essentials' and 'optional extras' that the majority of our passengers feel a need to obtain before flying with one of the lowest budget, lowest quality airlines ever to be investigated by the Australian Transport Safety Bureau and the Civil Aviation Safety Authority*.

* = charges pending.

'Compulsory Necessities' include government fees and charges and the fuel surcharge. They come to a mere $200 per person.

'Essentials' include such things as a flat $50 check in fee (regardless of whether you check in online or talk to one of our new staff cardboard cut-outs at the counter) and a $75.00 hire of a seat on a plane. Well, you COULD try to stand the whole trip to save yourself money, but, you know the government and all their "safety regulations".

'Optional Extras' include $0.01 per step for wear and tear of the carpets at the airport. (A discount applies for people with only one leg), a $2.50 per ten minutes queue charge is levied while you're waiting to board the plane and a $0.02 per breath fee while you are in the terminal. After all, the air conditioners are running for YOUR benefit.

Oh, and if you think you can rip us off by hopping on one leg while holding your breath, there's a $400 fine for...

As you can see from the above, the costs will vary from person to person. However, an average trip to Sydeney will come to just over eight hu.. well, let's just round it and call it $1,000.

Enjoy your flight, not that many people can afford to travel in one of our non-existent planes (planes are an optional extra at US$100 million). The majority of our customers can hardly afford the Airport Leaving charge.

## THE AFL TWILIGHT ZONE

There is increased speculation that the Australian Football League hierarchy are planning a twilight start to the AFL Grand Final to bring it in line with the Twilight Zone they're currently living in.

Zorba the Greek seems to think that there is heaps of money to be had in showing the game live overseas, as opposed to the regular delayed telecast of games that Victorians are forced to deal with. Soon it will be better for Victorians to travel over to Turkmenistan where they can see the game live than to wait for hours in Australia for the delayed telecast.

Apparently there are bazillions of people the world over that are just dying to see the AFL Grand Final live. There are Geelong supporters from Guatemala, Hawthorn fans from Haiti, Essendon fans from Ethiopia and Dockers fans from Djibouti. And they must be contributing mega bazillions to the AFL coffers each week.

What's a mere few million Australian fans when there are 250 million Lions fans from Liechtenstein and 490 million Swans fans in Seychelles that have been waiting for years to see an AFL Grand Final live at a viewing time suited to them? Forget the safety of the 100,000+ crowd that will attend the Grand Final then have to fight their way back home through brawls outside night clubs, surely the rabid fans in the Republic of Zimbabwe deserve better?

Oh, and don't forget the flow on to merchandise. Did you know that the Transnistrian Moldovan Republic have made it compulsory for it's citizens to be attired in over-priced, AFL-approved footy team gear? (Certainly not that unauthorised, much, much cheaper footy team gear from

Dimmeys). And what about the Republic of Kazakhstan with their law of a minimum 1 football per household ??

With such a huge following overseas, it's a wonder that we haven't seen the AFL league go global with matches such as the grudge match between the top ranking Republic of Botswana head to head with the underdogs of the Republic of Azerbaijan. These types of matches were obviously played while Australians were sleeping.

I wonder what time they'll want us to play the game to fit in with the viewing pleasure of the likes of Republic of Côte d'Ivoire and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia? If we tried for a 21:00 start, this would upset the millions of viewers from the Kyrgyz Republic and Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. However, if we waited until midnight, this would put the viewing public of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Tajikistan offside.

So what's the solution? I reckon that the AFL need to hold a vote on the start time, similar to the voting that takes place for the Eurovision Song Contest.

I can do the part of the voice-over bloke and tell everyone constantly what a whole lot of rubbish the change to the start time is.

But then you already knew that.

## THE SEARCH FOR AUSTRALIA'S NEXT TOP NED KELLY

In case you haven't noticed, the Australian media has started the Search for Australia's Next Top Ned Kelly.

Partially based on the Search for Australia's Next Top Model, the media are trying to build up criminal's profiles in the hope they'll be voted as the next Ned Kelly. Even partners of criminals and other hangers-on seem eligible. The media has kept it pretty quiet, but all the signs are there.

Consider the following just in the past few months:

*Radio Station 3 AW is pushing for Mick Gatto, after a bit of on-air stoush with Mr 'Shame-Australia-Shame' Derryn Hinch. This is after Mick belted Channel 9 reporter Martin King in the ring for A Current Affair.

* Channel 9 has dumped Mick and now thinks Schapelle Corby is the one by showing a 2-part sob-documentary on the life of the drug runner.

* Radio Station Nova 100 is trying to move Roberta Williams further into the limelight by having her take part in a gangland murder tour, although she doesn't get shot. If that wasn't enough, she wanted a spot on Channel 10's Big Brother.

* Channel 7 first tried with the Battle of the Mothers, pitting 'crime matriarch' Judy Moran against Barbara Williams, but are now hoping that Zara Garde-Wilson will be the one chosen as the next Ned Kelly. If she doesn't make the grade, they've lined her up to host Australia's Funniest Home Videos.

What next? Julian Knight hosting Media Watch? Carl Williams hosting Play School? Chopper Read cutting off his ears to raise money for the RCH appeal? As if 50 hours per week of 'reality' TV wasn't enough, here's another 50 hours of how these criminals and their families are poorly-done-by.

Is there now not enough money in crime that they need to turn tabloid to make it?

**Stefan Zone Exit**

# Takei ties the knot

David Langford's semi-prozine *Ansible* seems likely to win another Hugo Award at this year's worldcon, Denvention 3 (August 6-10th, 2008). He reports that George Takei, who plays Mr Sulu in the Star Trek series, was among the first to invest $70 in a wedding license when California lifted its same-sex marriage ban on June 17th, 2008. He and long-time partner Brad Altman plan to marry in September 2008.

Here are my favourite action pictures of George Takei in the role of Sulu, supplied by Dick Jenssen.

Go, Sulu, Go!

**Prepared in Melbourne for publication in Anzapa #244 August 2008 and for display on http://www.efanzines.com**