

Mumblings from Munchkinland 13

Featuring:

Bert Castellari

William Veney

Arthur Haddon

Bob Nelson

& many more!



Santa Claus in Jurassic Park

A CHRISTMAS FANDOM

Stave I

Marley's Ghost

Christmas Eve. Near midnight. I lay awake, staring at the ceiling, wondering how soon I might fall asleep out of sheer boredom. My mind flits from subject to subject, alighting on none for very long, collecting nothing of consequence from any. A continuous, inaudible stream of consciousness. If there is a mental equivalent of mumbling, this is it.

Mumblings! What can I do for my next issue? Should I bother? The last issues haven't drawn much response. But then, most of the material has been pretty weak. Maybe I'm losing interest. Maybe I should just concentrate on collecting again. I ponder this imponderable...

Comes a sound of wailing. It's not Ella -- she's still asleep, as is Megan. Gradually the wailing grows louder. A faint light appears in the hallway and then, a shadow crosses the light. The wailing develops a definite reggae beat. One of the shadows acquires form and steps forward.

"Who...who are you?" I ask.

"Bob Marley," says Bob Marley. He runs a hand through his dreadlocks.

"What are you doing here?" I say.

"Sorry, mon, Jacob couldn't make it," he says, as though that explains everything.

Jacob? Jacob...Marley? Thinking is hard at this time of night. It takes me a while. Finally: Jacob Marley was the first ghost in Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. But what's that got to do with Bob?

"You were thinking of what to do for your next 'zine, right?" says Bob, becoming a bit impatient. "Well, this is it -- a Christmas fandom. Don't you dig?" At my blank stare, he sees that I don't. "It is required of every fan," the Ghost of Bob Marley paraphrases, "that their spirit should walk abroad among their fellow fen, far and wide; and if that spirit goes not forth in fanac, it is condemned to do so after gafiation. It is doomed to wander through the mundane spirit world and witness what it cannot share, but might have shared, in fandom."

"Wow," I say. Not a brilliant response, I admit, but it *is* almost midnight.

Bob continues, "You shall be visited this night by three spiri--"

"Yes, yes. I know the story," I say. "The only thing I don't understand is why *you* are telling me all this. You didn't have any connections with fandom, did you?"

"Nah, I'm jus' here as a cheap joke," says Bob. As he speaks, he and the Wailers are backing up towards the bedroom window, which is rising by itself as they approach. They step out and I see other forlorn spirits wandering the street outside: Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Claude Degler. The scene grows darker. Just before it fades out completely, I see another spirit in a white suit.

"Hey, Elvis!" I cry.

But it's too late. The night is black once again.

I return to bed and fall fast asleep.

Stave II

The First of the Three Spirits

I awake again at one in the morning and sense a presence in the room. Suddenly, an eerie figure draws back the bed curtains. I am shocked. Our bed doesn't have any curtains.

The apparition before me is a young man with dark hair, dressed in a 1950s suit. Vaguely familiar, he looks both unwell and ill at ease, and my attention is drawn to the apparent source of his discomfort -- a propeller beanie on his head, its blades spinning rapidly.

"Who are you?" I ask. This is getting to be a habit.

"My name," he says, "is Vol Molesworth."

Of course. I've just finished reading his *A History of Australian Fandom 1935-1963*. "But Vol," I say, "why are you wearing that propeller beanie?"

His face sours even more. "As penance for the sercon approach I took when writing my history, I am required to wear this... *thing* whenever I appear before such as yourself."

"No kidding! Well, your history *was* pretty heavy going. Perhaps a bit of levity..."

He frowns and then shrugs. "Come on, let's get on with it," he says. "I am here as the Ghost of Fandom Past. We are to visit others, yet of your world, who would add to my magnum opus..."

"Where will we go? How will we get there?"

Silently, he gestures for me to take his hand and, as soon as I have, we are standing before another man, seated at a desk. The man is writing:

In dealing with pre-war SF fandom it is necessary to look at the background pressures. There were no precedents for us to follow. There had been an attempt to form a chapter of the Science Fiction League in Sydney but this had failed through lack of support. I only met one member, Bill Hewitt, long after its demise, and he said the other members just lost interest.

So there were no mature fans to guide us. We were all schoolboys at Randwick High School, a suburb of Sydney, who took an interest in SF and exchanged magazines. By early 1937 one, Bert Castellari, decided to hand print a comic style quarto size one-off item which he called *Space Hounds*. This was an instant success. He encouraged me to join him as "sub-editor" and together we brought out ten issues. They were kept in a hard cover and passed from hand to hand.

1938 was our final year at high school so it was decided to suspend all activity until we left school. I had also made contact with two brothers, Eric and Edward Russell, both avid readers. As Eric was also doing his final year he agreed to join in any activity in 1939.

In 1939 we formed a club, The Junior Australian Science Fiction Correspondence Club (JASFCC). The idea was to form a chain, "A" would write to "B" then "B" would write to "C" including "A"'s letter, and then on to "D" who would have an envelope with three letters in it. "D" would write to "A", who would take out his old letter and add a new one. That was the theory.

It didn't work. The only readers we could contact were all Sydney-siders who could visit each other at various times and so there was no point in writing.

How Astounding does get around

Dear Mr. Campbell:

I would be very much obliged if you could find space to print this little notice in your "Brass Tacks" section.

Any Astounding reader in the Sydney, Australia, area who would be interested in organizing a science-fiction club is requested to contact William D. Veney, at the address given. — William D. Veney, 19 Newland St., Bondi Junction, Sydney, N. S. W., Aust.

Astounding Science Fiction, April 1940.

Our efforts to contact other readers did, however, attract the attention of American fans. As far as fandom was concerned, our centre of interest was America. The U.S. was the star and England and Australia were two planets – the English one being bigger and more mature than the Australian one – that revolved around America. Many American fans wrote requesting to be put in touch with Australians with whom they could correspond. One of these had a profound effect on us; this was Harry Warner Jr of Hagerstown, Maryland. He was editor of *Spaceways*, an excellent respected fanzine. We didn't know such things existed. He sent us copies.

At that time I was working as a junior storeman with Stott and Underwood, a business equipment company. A fellow young employee, Frank Flaherty, noticed me reading a copy of *Spaceways*, he had use of a duplicator and offered to help in producing a similar publication.

A hurried meeting of we young fans accepted this offer. We quickly gathered any material we could find and away we went.

The result was *Australian Fan News*. It has been said that a giraffe is a horse designed by a committee. This was a perfect example of an SF fan giraffe. Everyone had their input, including Frank who wasn't even a reader of SF. It didn't please anybody but it was a start.

Before we could produce a second issue Frank was transferred and we lost the use of both typewriter and duplicator.

Eric Russell and his younger brother Edward (Ted) decided to branch out on their own. They started *Ultra* with a rented -- later purchased -- typewriter but no duplicator. The first two issues were labouriously typed through five sheets of carbon. Six copies of *Ultra* then back to square one and the whole operation was repeated. Later, the brothers had access to a duplicator and *Ultra* lasted for over two years.

Amongst the other Americans who wrote to me were Donald A. Wollheim and Frederik Pohl. (Oddly enough, it was Harry Warner Jr. who put us in touch.) We found we were politically in harmony. This is 1939, after Munich, but before the notorious German-Soviet non-aggression pact. They were both avid "communists" and in those days, I was a "socialist". A "socialist" was someone who hated Hitler and a "communist" was someone who did something about it. What exactly they did I never did find out.

They were both members of the Futurian Society of New York. Donald Wollheim suggested I form a Futurian Society of Sydney, an idea that appealed to me after our sad experience with the JASFCC.

So, in November 1939, the Russell Bros., Bert Castellari and a work-mate, Vol Molesworth, met at my father's home in Paddington, Sydney and formed the Futurian Society of Sydney. Vol, Bert and myself turned 16 in the year the Futurian Society of Sydney was formed. Eric Russell was a year older and Ted (Edward) Russell even younger. With the exception of David Evans -- hardly a good role model -- all the other fans in our circle were teenagers.

Vol Molesworth. Vol (short for Voltaire) and I clashed from the first time we met. He was the hare, I was the tortoise. He once described me as the most intelligent idiot he'd ever met -- and that was "praising you up". When we agreed on a project, or on any issue, we were irresistible. When we argued, more stable or mature-minded fans withdrew to the sidelines until we cooled down.

After the Hitler-Stalin pact, my attitude to the New York Futurians cooled. I discovered Don and Fred were isolationists, members of the "Peace" movement in opposition to the capitalist war. Me, I was a hawk, there was only one good fascist and that was a dead one. If my parents would have permitted, I would have enlisted earlier than I did.

After the Soviet-Finnish Winter War, the Futurians in New York resigned in mass from the Communist Party and declared themselves "Technocrats". As I'd regarded "Technocrats" as vaguely fascist I was even more frigid towards them, despite Fred Pohl's statement they were "democratic Technocrats".

The Sydney Futurians ignored the political connotation and decided to make the term "Futurian" our own. Bert Castellari -- now a copy boy, as was Vol Molesworth -- decided to bring out a fortnightly single sheet newszine. He toyed with *Australian Science Fiction Observer* as a title but decided on *Futurian Observer*. Again he invited me aboard as with the old *Space Hounds* but this time as a co-editor. He was in charge, I was his helper.

FAN MAGAZINES

ULTRA, 10c, bi-monthly, published by Eric F. Russell, 274 Edgecliff Road, Woolahra, Sydney, N. S. W., Australia. The only Antipodean fan publication appearing regularly, it is entertaining but somewhat obscure to the American reader.

Astonishing Stories (ed. Fred Pohl)
June 1940.

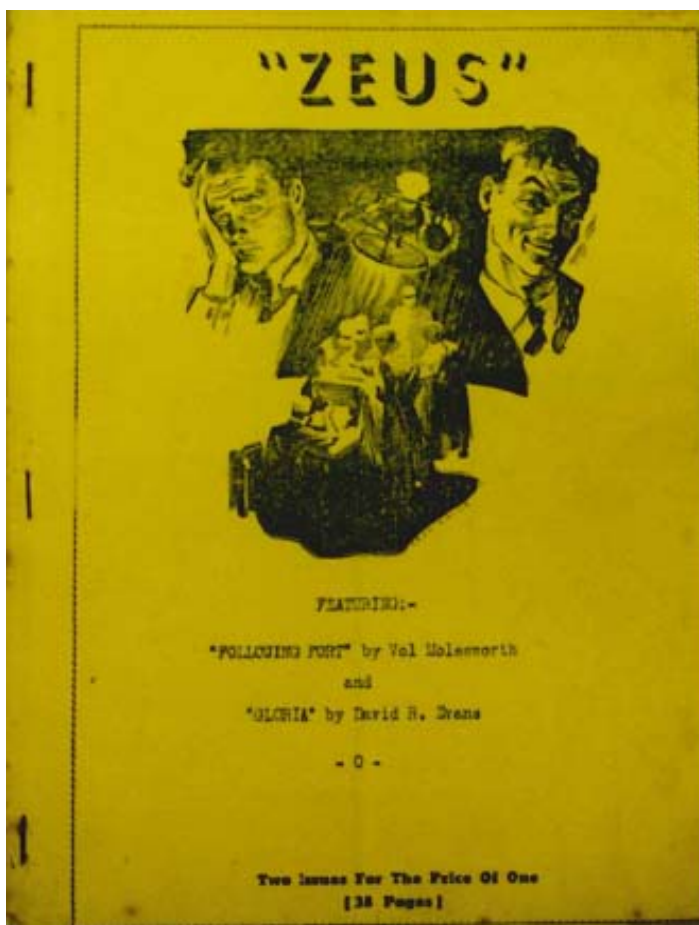
And so in early 1940 *Futurian Observer* was launched. About the same time *Ultra* acquired a duplicator and expanded into a quality fanzine. Vol tried to imitate *Ultra* with *Luna* but this was not successful. In mid-1940, he started a witty and well-produced letter magazine called *Cosmos*. He conscripted me as assistant editor, and because we had a common objective, we had a very productive period. However, after about six issues, Vol became bored and decided to discontinue publication. In a fit of magnanimity, Bert and I offered to take over for a few weeks whilst he had a holiday. This carried on for a bit longer than we had expected and we were pleased when Vol took it back.

Zeus was an attempt by six fans to bring out a composite fanzine. It failed because of the giraffe syndrome and split into two. Ron and Bert had one *Zeus* and a Noel Dwyer (supported by Vol) the other. I wasn't involved though I favoured Bert.

My youngest sister did a cover for Zeus, possibly two -- she was not a science fiction reader but she knew what we were about.
-- Bert Castellari

"Were all fans' families as enthusiastic about their hobby?" I ask of Vol. He merely gestures back to Bill Veney:

My parents did not approve of fandom. My mother, a fundamentalist Christian who regarded Charles Darwin as the anti-Christ and the theory of evolution as the work of the Devil, had to listen to me and my friends talk about dinosaurs, ice ages, and such in her own home. Also, as a member of the V.A.P. (which preceded the Liberals), she had to listen to many of us talking socialism. Her tolerance was amazing. She believed the Bible was the revealed word of God but would let me run my race convinced I'd see the error of my ways. She was half right...well, a quarter.



H.G. Wells, besides being an imaginative writer, was also an outspoken opponent of the Catholic Church. You can realize the impact on good Catholic parents when his (SF) books were discussed in their living rooms.

And hanging over all was the war. When the F.S.S. was formed we were in the period known as the "phony" way. Hitler had missed the bus. The Allies were going to squeeze him to death. The impregnable Maginot Line hemmed him into the west and the Royal Navy would strangle him at sea.

By the end of June 1940 all that had changed. Norway and Denmark had been occupied and France had fallen. The Soviet Union was co-operating with Germany and the isolationists were becoming more vocal. And Japan was edging southward.

Could it be we "British" were actually going to lose the war? We would never surrender so we would go down fighting. Japan would never get this far. Like Gibraltar, Singapore was impregnable. But wait, wasn't the Maginot Line also impregnable?

At that time, the A.I.F. had an age limit of 19. However, males over 18 and up to 35 were called-up -- we never used the word "conscripted" -- for the militia. There was talk in the newspapers of lowering the age for militia recruits to 17. This included most of us.

By August 1940 the real world had broken into our fantasy world. My mother had a field day and I broke with SF fandom. In the heat of the moment, I made uncomplimentary remarks about science fiction fandom being out of touch with reality. Vol Molesworth carefully recorded every word and used them whenever we disagreed. I was Bill "I resign!" Veney.

When the expected invasion of Britain did not take place and Roosevelt started to take a firm line with Japan, Australia tended to relax. My call-up date would be November 1941, not November 1940.

There was a confused period in late 1940 and early 1941 resulting in me stating I was a fan but not a member of the F.S.S. Vol Molesworth then had a motion passed banning me for life. This didn't worry me at all, but I did wonder why other fans who had said much more damaging things than me were not also excluded. Later, Ron Levy was also banned and I was officially advised my life-ban had been confirmed.

When I left fandom, Ron Levy became Bert's assistant on *Futurian Observer*. When Bert went into the Army in December 1941 -- we went into the same unit, on the same day -- Ron brought out one or two issues, then dropped the whole thing.

I drifted away from science fiction towards the end of 1941 about the time I went into the army.

--Bert Castellari

I got caught up in the war and my Profan just went into obscurity -- I don't remember having any copies after the war...

-- Don Tuck

"With so many of the Aussie Futurians being called up, did fanac cease altogether?" I ask Vol.



He shakes his head. "No, there were other, younger fans to take up the cause. Look..."

He turns, and indicates a second light off to our right. Like a ghostly version of Windows™, another scene unfolds. A slightly younger man is typing:

My interest in science fiction began about 1935 when I was able to obtain *The Rover* and *Boys Own* (English Threepenny publications) from the local book swap shop and found some science fiction stories in same. The first was along the lines of a purple cloud from space causing international problems (I don't think it was the story by Shiel).



THE WAR has pretty well disrupted the fantasy world in Great Britain and the Empire. Only recently all U. S. pulp magazines were barred from Canada as luxuries that must be set aside in favor of the products of war. This will remove from Canada's stands this and other magazines of fantastic fiction which will be a serious blow to Canada's fantasy reading public. Canada is not unique in this; a year ago importation to the British Isles of American magazines became impossible. Shortly after that the same became true of Australia. Yet the fantasy world continued to survive the blow.

In Great Britain a few fans still struggle on, keeping in touch with the American fantasy world over great difficulties. Several of the once numerous fan publications continue to come out whenever the possibility arises.

In Australia, however, the fantasy world not only took the loss in its stride but actually grew instead of diminished. An elaborate system of loaning and subscribing to American fantasy magazines is indulged in and the number of new Australian fan magazines is larger than ever.

Every few weeks we receive a batch of copies of the Australian fan

news sheet *Futurian Observer*. This is put out quite regularly by William Veney and Bert Castellari of the Futurian Society of Sydney. From its pages we gather news of the active little Antipodean fantasy world.

The Futurian Association of Australia was formed last August to band together all the various groups and fans in that continent. It seems to have done its work well. There are three strong local groups, the Futurian Societies of Sydney, Melbourne, and Brisbane, which indulge in collecting, fan publishing, and working for the re-entry of U. S. fantasy into the country.

These energetic fans bombarded newspapers with letters demanding the ban of the prohibition on fantasy. We do not know how successful they were, but they did receive considerable notice.

Besides the *Futurian Observer*, the boys from down-under put out *Zeus*, *Cosmos*, *Austra-Fantasy*, *Ultra*, and others.

ALMOST diametrically opposite the Australian Futurians, on the other side of the globe, is to be found the Futurian Society of New York. Outside of similarity of name, this group is not connected with

(Continued On Page 126)

High school commenced in '38 from memory and Graham Stone was going to the same school but in a different class. How we came to find our common interest is another thing that doesn't spring immediately to mind. A niggling thought is that Graham may have put a note on the school notice board; the end result was that we did get together and I joined the Futurian Society of Sydney about the third meeting. At that time I was known as Arthur Duncan and it was not until I joined the Navy in '44 that I learned that my step-father had not legally adopted me and that my name was really Haddon.

During the war years nothing of real importance happened in fandom. I say real because like all young people what we thought was world shattering was just idle babble. The F.S.S. held meetings once a month, American magazines dried up and were replaced by B.R.E. (British Reprint Editions), Graham and I spent a lot of Saturdays going to suburban book shops looking for old magazines. Vol Molesworth through contacts was getting some new issues from the States and used to flog them off for cigarettes, which were rationed of course.

The Russell brothers were bringing out *Ultra*, Bert Castellari was bringing out *Futurian Observer* and there were several other fanzines coming out in Sydney at irregular intervals. Some stability was introduced when Colin Roden (a dentist) started publishing *Science & Fantasy Fan Reporter*.

Being young enough to be insanely enthusiastic I decided that I needed to bring out a fanzine of my own and as I could talk to Graham between classes he became the technical expert for the publication. We toyed with the idea of flat bed hektograph for a while until we considered that it would be too messy (we would have been working in my grandmother's kitchen, having already been thrown out of my mother's for making and testing gas masks). Our final disastrous choice was a home made flat bed duplicator. The silk screen was not very well made, the stencils were badly cut and ink passage was uneven and not entirely legible. I blamed Graham and we were barely friendly for a number of years.

We also endeavoured to place spare commercial SF magazines into hospitals for injured service personnel and finished up being investigated by the police, who officially dismissed us as being "Buck Rogers rat bags".

"Of course, by the end of the war, that "Buck Rogers stuff" didn't seem so silly after all," says Vol. He turns and a third window on the past opens:

Some of us also knew that real change would come in many ways, and that it would involve a great deal of political upheaval. It came home very forcefully one day in 1945 when the Americans dropped their first atomic bomb. I was in Borneo at the time and I was stunned. One of the things I had known for a long time was possible was the bomb, but I never thought that it would come about in our time. I knew then that the war had to end immediately or world destruction would follow -- not that we weren't already well on the way to it. Well, they dropped another one and that did it.

-- Bert Castellari

THE FUTURIAN SPOTLIGHT, published by Graham Stone and Vol Molesworth, 30, The Avenue, Randwick, New South Wales, Australia. Monthly; 5c. This single-sheeter is about the last surviving foreign fan magazine, except for one or two infrequent English publications. The latest issue to reach us contains a long and hilarious account of the Futurian Society of Sydney's dealings with Australia's counter-espionage forces. It seems the lads, prompted by laudable motives, decided to send copies of various science-fiction magazines to wounded members of the Australian Army. They wrote away to one of the Army base hospitals for permission. . . . Well, they're not sentenced to be shot at sunrise, and have even finally been given permission to send in the magazines—but it looked pretty bad for a while, when the local police department began investigating the source of the Society's funds in grim earnest!

Astonishing Stories, February 1943.



Vol gestures back to the first writer, Bill Veney:

When I went to Hiroshima, I was filled with horror at the devastation and wondered if science had gone too far. Post-atomic war fiction seemed more prophetic than ever. However, after reading *Lest Darkness Fall*, I believed -- and still believe -- civilisation in some form or other is indestructible.

"It's hard to imagine now what it must have been like," I say, "seeing two of science fiction's most powerful icons -- rockets and atomic power -- come to life."

"Both as weapons of mass destruction," Vol reminds me. The blades of his propeller beanie are no longer spinning. "We grew up fast, we Futurians. Perhaps now you begin to understand why some of us took science fiction more seriously after the war. Perhaps, even, why my history was so... humourless."

I don't say anything at first. The informal recollections of some of the other fans of the day have proven to be in many ways more interesting -- more telling -- than Vol's didactic sequence of names and dates. They were, after all, only teenage boys at the time. Not everything they did could have been so solemn. Vol watches me thinking and remains glum. Who am I to judge this man?

"It's a valuable work," I say at last. He brightens. "And thanks for bringing me to hear the others. Without your history I wouldn't have known they were here to be heard."

The Ghost of Fandom Past smiles and nods. I realize that the propeller beanie has disappeared from his head. "So long, Vol," I say. I turn and find that I'm back in bed. I return to sleep.

Stave III

The Second of the Three Spirits



I wake again, again at one. And again, a Spirit is in the room. But this time I have no difficulty at all in identifying who it is.

"Hiya, Pop," I say. "What's up?"

"Hello, Chris. I thought you might like something for your next *Mumblings*. Here's something I have had in mind for a while."

"Great! Just in time. And if I think of it as a present, I can make you the Ghost of Fandom Present."

"Huh? Well, I don't know about that. I've been a reader of fantasy and sf for most of my life, but I've never been involved in fandom."

"Oh, don't worry about that -- it's the spirit that counts."

He chuckles. "Well, okay. Here 'tis..."

MUNCHKINS RULE, OK?

by Bob Nelson



Once upon a time they made a movie from a book. The movie made the book famous even though people usually think of the movie rather than the book when they remember the story. For a long time nobody remembered the author, but eventually somebody thought of him and made a movie about him. It was a pity, in a way, because the movie about the author was rubbish.

Years after the story first appeared another man, in another country, wrote another book. It was quite a different story, far more involved and of truly epic proportions. They wanted to make a movie of it, but for a long time they didn't. I think it was just too hard. Eventually they did, but they only finished part of the story and the movie was rubbish.

They never made a movie about the second author, which is probably just as well, but they published one hell of a lot of books about him and his story.

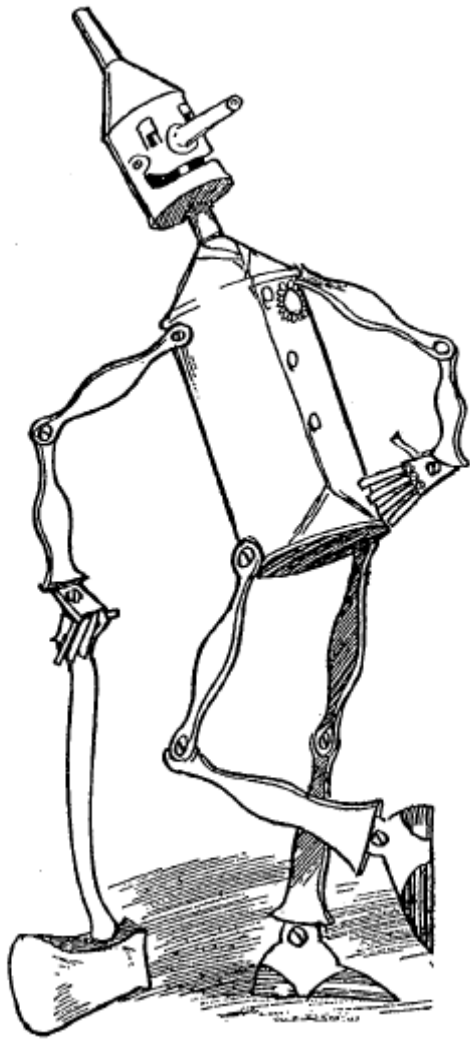
The first author was L. Frank Baum and his story, one of many, was *The Wizard of Oz*. The second author was J.R.R. Tolkien and his story, one of few, was *The Lord of the Rings*.

To compare one with the other requires, I suppose, a connection in common ground of some sort. Well, they are both fantasy --good enough? There are a lot of tales of how Baum wrote *The Wizard*, naming the magical country Oz from letters on a filing cabinet and so forth. If these tales were laid end to end it would probably become a long tribute to imagination. There are no tales about the creation of *LOTR*. The story's creation is, in fact, probably better documented than most events in, and out, of the world of literature. Tolkien's son has made a fortune (I think) out of doing just this. He was up to about a dozen volumes last time I looked (on my shelf). And he is hardly alone.

The Wizard of Oz is basically a simple story, which lends itself easily to a movie or stage musical. *The Lord of the Rings* is rather more complicated and filled with painstaking detail. When the Oz movie was made it was easy to change people, places and events to suit the requirements of a motion picture. When Ralph Bakshi tried to do *LOTR* he was overwhelmed. Trying to use his special animation technique only aggravated the situation.

The curious thing is that on the face of it, it should have been the other way around. *LOTR* is almost completely unoriginal; Tolkien merely drew upon the wealth of myth, fable and historical adventure with which he was familiar and wove it into a mighty adventure. His originality almost began and ended with the invention of the hobbit. Almost all of the things which occur in *LOTR* had already been seen in motion pictures.

Baum, who wrote simply and often carelessly, nevertheless created any number of new personages and/or creatures. A foremost example of these is the Tin Woodman. Beyond being an interesting personality in himself, his character brings us directly into the basic mystery of self, soul and our very being. Who is the Tin Woodman, who was once a man of meat? In a later story, the tin man meets his own head and has a short and not entirely agreeable discussion with it/him. Which is the original and where did the other come from? And could you do him on the silver screen? Well, since the advent of the computer you've got a better chance than Jack Haley in 1939 (or 1925 when Oliver Hardy was cast in the part). Lest you think I am critical of these actors let me hasten to point out that I refer to the physical appearance of the character, not the portrayal of personality.



Tolkien wrote and rewrote (and rewrote once more) with immense care and extreme attention to detail. I carefully traced dates, places, directions and locations through the story. I found no noticeable errors. It was possible to tell where every character was at any given time/date of the story, even whether they turned to the right or left, moved up or down. By contrast, Baum couldn't even keep track of whether the Munchkins lived in the east or west of Oz.

Tolkien was one of the world's earliest greenies. He disliked, perhaps even hated, machinery -- even machinery as simple as a steam engine. (Admittedly we are talking about a source of very visible pollution here, though nothing like the disaster of the petrol or diesel engine.) Baum was enthusiastic about machinery. One of his greatest creations was the wind-up robot, Tik Tok. The simpler example of the Giant with the Hammer really says it all, though. The Giant, like any well designed machine "...is only made to pound the road".

So who, having made a short and rather inadequate comparison, do we prefer? Fortunately neither you nor I must make such a decision. In the crunch I expect I would go with Mr Baum -- but I've known him longer and a bit of sentiment may enter into it.

"There," says the Spirit of Fandom Present. "Maybe that will stir up some comment."

"I reckon. Thanks, Dad. And speaking of comments, here's a few on the last ish."

Bert Castellari, Curtin, ACT

28 September 1995

I knew that Vol Molesworth had written a history of the time -- I think he told me about it -- but had never read it, or seen anything about it, until I saw your article. Vol told me either in the late part of the war or early in the fifties that he had re-written the minutes I kept of meetings of the Sydney Futurian Society. I have never seen the re-write and I do not know if the original minutes still exist. If they do they will have been typed in the rather large Gothic type of my old Remington standard. Very few typewriters still had Gothic type -- I don't recall ever seeing another. Vol's revision would almost certainly be in pica. *Futurian Observer* was set out on my old machine so it's a handy example. (Rumpole stuff.)

Race Mathews, South Yarra, Vic.

17 October, 1995

It is nice to know that *Bacchanalia* is still remembered, and yes, it was the 1956 convention which prompted Ian Crozier to get out a second issue from the material which had been lying around AFPA since I met -- or at least since I became engaged to -- my future wife, and entered on a forty year fan hibernation. The full story is set out in a longish paper, "From *Whirlaway* to *Thrilling Wonder Stories*: boyhood reading in wartime and early postwar Melbourne which I gave at the Nova Mob last year, and which is being published shortly by both Bruce Gillespie and the Baillieu Library magazine at Melbourne University.

Harry Warner Jr., Hagerstown, Md.

29 October, 1995

Despite rumors, I'm still trying to write locs. The trouble is, my eyes give out on me while I'm trying to read the fat fanzines, particularly those that use reduced type on colored paper, and those are the ones whose editors assume I've finally gafiated.

You and Megan deserve congratulations for creating human life in such an attractive form as the infant pictured on page 3. You both were intelligent for having Ella at the end of the 20th century instead of a century or even a half-century ago when the complications involved in her birth might have been fatal. I still contend that medical science has evolved to science fiction proportions in the 20th century more completely than any other branch of science.

Of course, if you should become a famous pro writer of science fiction or a seminal influence as an editor in the field, you will be fought over and argued about by fans and academics and many another group since you will be claimed as both an Australian and a United States of American. Canada's fandom has been fighting for years over the question of what constitutes a Canadian fan or pro because of the individuals who grew up in one nation and migrated to the other without even acquiring dual citizenship. I gather that it's much easier to become a citizen down there than it is up here, where I believe a lot of studying and test-taking on history and the Constitution is still required.

Your Australian fanzine research is very commendable because the peril of permanent loss of knowledge about early, small-circulation publications grows greater with every passing year. I've leafed through the *Fanzine Index* and found a few entries that could possibly answer some of the matters you appended with a question mark. (This was a publication originally compiled in the mid-1950s by two Washington area fans, Bob Pavlat and Bill Evans, an updating of earlier indexes by R.D. Swisher. It isn't complete and nobody has updated it since its publication, but I've found it extremely accurate for what it contains and it is scrupulous about pointing out any entry which is tentative.)

Hermes is identified as edited by E.F. Russell. *Melbourne Bulletin's* first issue is given a tentative date of November 1940. The last issue of it listed in the *Fanzine Index* is an eighth issue dated August 1941, although there was an "extra" two-page issue dated April 1941, apparently a supplement to the sixth issue published in the same month and not included in the count.

The *Fanzine Index* has a listing for another *Ultra*, a "reprint edition" dated June, 1940, without specifying if it was a reprint of one of the earlier issues or a compilation of reprints from several issues. Your "JSC Bulletin" listing is apparently the same fanzine identified in the index as *Junior Science Club Monthly Magazine* (three issues dated April, June and July, 1939).

["JSC Bulletin" is how Vol refers to the title in his history. The dates are interesting. If taken at face value, they would indicate that the JSC magazine appeared before the JASFFC's *Australian Fan News* -- but Vol does not make this claim in his history. Presumably some of the fan publishers followed the tradition established by the pro magazines of using the month *prior* to publication as their cover date.]

Unfortunately the *Fanzine Index* has no listings for most of the early 1950s Australian fanzines, mute evidence of how little contact existed between fandoms in Australia and the United States at that time.

I believe that Bert Castellari was two or three years younger than me, so he might still be spry and agile at the age of 69 or thereabouts and capable of appreciating some sort of guest of honor post at an Australian con someday soon. He, Veney and Russell were the real mainstays of Australian fandom in its first years.

[I second the motion. A in '99 committee, how about it? I'll give you a free ad...]

AUSTRALIA IN 1999!



Teddy Harvia, Hurst, Tx.

13 October 1995

Diana and I got our touch of the Australian national convention in Glasgow where we bought a Thylacon sweatshirt and refrigerator magnet at the DUFF auction.

The disconcerting thing to me about the popular culture borrowing from science fiction is its tendency to take images without the substance. Remember the romance writer who had a comet hurtling toward our galaxy threatening to wipe it out? No wonder they laugh at our sense of wonder.

Congratulations on your citizenship. I've been a dual US and Texas citizen for years.

Kim Huett, Woden, ACT

15 November 1995

Updates for your timeline:

(A) John Foyster mentions *Extant* #4 being published and distributed in 1975. I can confirm this as I have a copy in my library. (B) The second run of *Notes and Comment* is not spelt comments as you suggest. Perhaps it was the first run which had this spelling? (C) According to the photocopies of *Futurian Observer* I have the Castellari/Veney editorial team lasted only until #29. Veney retired so Castellari published two widely spaced issues while he looked for a replacement. With #32 Ron Levy joined as co-editor and that was the way it remained till the fanzine folded. This is the story as told by the colophons so it might not be totally accurate.

[The material presented in #12 was not intended to be exhaustive, more an aid to reading Vol Molesworth's history and other accounts of the times. Thanks for the info.]

Harry Pol, Sucre, Bolivia

4 December 1995

First of all, Feliz Navidad and all the best for 1996! Lisa and I are still travelling around South America. Despite the horror stories to the contrary we've had no problems with independent travel. Peru has been my favourite country so far. Highlight was the Inca trail to Macchu Pichu, something I decided I wanted to do when I was eight. It was a fantastic trek and the view after 3 days of walking was awesome.

WAHF: Harry Andrushak, Bill Danner (*Stefantasy*), Stan Robinson, Alan Stewart (*Thyme*)

Stave IV

The Last of the Spirits

I awake before the appointed hour of appearance of the third spirit, remembering that, for Scrooge, the third was a mute, solemn phantom draped in black shrouds. I am somewhat apprehensive.

A minute passes, and then, another, followed by yet another minute. After a minute, I realize with a start that another minute has passed. Another minute goes by.

"Enough of that Monty Python routine!" demands a female voice.

Ah! The final spirit. I look up. Into the baleful eyes of a curvaceous creature, half woman, half lemur.

"What the--"

"I am the Spirit of Fandom Yet to Come," she says. "You are surprised by my appearance? Mmmm... gene fusion hadn't progressed very far in your era, had it? Nada zip. You'll get used to it. Come along."

"Where are we going?" I ask.

"Up," she says. And up we go. Straight up into outer space. The view of Earth is stunning, but she's looking at the Sun. "Watch this," she says. Other odd folk surround us, all staring at the Sun in eager anticipation. One of them, a reptilian kid with bad skin, is wearing a t-shirt bearing the slogan *Fans are Slans!*

It's hard to look straight into the glare. All of a sudden there are several huge solar flares. Enormous prominences leap from the Sun, expanding and writhing around as if alive. As I watch in amazement, the strands of fire form a string of words in the solar corona:

YNGVI IS A LOUSE!

A cheer erupts from the crowd. "Froobish!" says my guide. I am too stunned to argue, even if I had a mind to. "So, what do you think of fandom in the 24th and a half century?" she asks, one furry eyebrow arched.

I regain my composure quickly. "Not bad," I say, nonchalantly. "If you like that sort of thing. We were content with ordinary old print interlineations in my day."

"Print? Great Ghu, are you from that era? Nobody but the Hermit uses paper for fanac anymore. Haven't for centuries. Cu heesh!"

"The Hermit?" I say. A suspicion crosses my mind. "Not Harry Warner Jr., the Hermit of Hagerstown!"

"The same."

"But... but, he was into his 70s when loccing zines in the mid 1990s. How can he still be active centuries later?"

She rolls her eyes. "When the Zoromes arrived, they said "Bugger Jameson, we want Harry Warner Jr! His locs have been keeping us going for years!"

Way to go, Harry! I think, and then something else occurs to me. "Say, if this is the 24.5th century, you know about all the fan publishers of my time, right? How well they're remembered today?" She nods. "So, how about me? Did I become a BNF? Did I ever win a Hugo?"

"Hugo?" she says. "Oh, yes, the primitive awards given out before the Langfords."

She consults a small device on her wrist. "Yes, you shared one. The same year that the famous Ian Gunn won every Ditmar going -- or should I say *infamous*?" she adds with a wink.

Holey moley! I think. That's terrific! It makes all that work on *Mumblings* worthwhile, after all. I'm lost in egoboo for a while before I ask the obvious question. "Who did I share it with?"

"Your wife, Cath."

"Eh? Howzat? My wife's name is Megan Lee."

"Yo? Just a parsec...your name *is* Ortlieb, isn't it?"

My heart sinks. "No." I tell her my name. She checks her wrist thingy again, taking a long time about it, pushing lots of tiny buttons or something, and sighs a couple of times.

"So what became of me?" I press her. "Did I keep publishing? Or did I chuck it in?"

She shrugs. "All it says is: Published *Mumblings from Munchkinland*. No dates, no numbers. Sorry. Nada zip. C'mon, let's get something to eat." She taps my shoulder and we're in some kind of eatery. I frown at the menu, not really hungry.

"Buck up," she says. "Nothing lasts forever. How do you like your greeps?"

"Crottled," I mumble absently, and then I realize what I've said.

We smile together. Some things never change.

Special thanks to the early fans who have allowed me to quote from their letters to make up much of this issue: William Veney, Bert Castellari, Arthur Haddon and Don Tuck. I am greatly indebted, gentlemen. Graham Stone was also supportive, as always. The usual suspects at Murdoch (Grant, Helen and Margaret) and Fisher Library (Pauline) also deserve appreciation.

It is with great sadness that I must relate news of the death of Bruce Belden, a former colleague of Pauline's at Fisher Library, from a brain tumour. Although not a fan, Bruce took an interest in the genre, spent some time showing me around the Ron Graham Collection earlier this year and was very enthusiastic about my plans for the timeline of early Australian fanzines. He was a great help. Thanks, Bruce, wherever you are.

Art credits for this issue: The prehistoric portions of the front cover are borrowed from *Tales Told By Fossils* (World's Work, 1967). The Munchkins on p.10 are by W.W. Denslow, from *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*; John R. O'Neill drew *The Tin Woodman of Oz* (1918). The babe on the postcard from Teddy Harvia was captioned: Miss Outer Space – The Girl of Tomorrow (Beauty Queens of the '40s and '50s). Family values are reasserted on the back cover, showing the Nelson-Lee household at Christmas; it first appeared as the frontispiece to Dickens' *The Cricket on the Hearth* (1846). The illustrator was Daniel Maclise.

The next issue really *will* be a while in coming, believe me. Merry Christmas, everyone, and best wishes for the New Year!

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