

# THE MENTOR

## 87

*"The Magazine Ahead of its Time"*

# THE TRAVELLING MUSCOVITE #2

by Pavel Viaznikov

Do you know Kirgizstan - a republic in our (ie ex-Soviet) Middle Asia? Find it on a map, please. Just look for Bishkek (it used to be Frunze). Well, recently I talked to a guy whose brother served in.... the Kirgiz Navy. Imagine that - the only place they have for a navy is Issyk-Kul Lake, which is a big lake but a mountain one. And there is quite a fleet of torpedo boats and one submarine, all of them quite modern, all equipped with the latest generation torpedoes, and after independence, Kirgizstan claimed the base (solely out of pride, I suppose - or vanity, whatever term is more suitable). So now, if for example, an enemy aircraft carrier enters Issyk-Kul, Kirgiz will be able to meet it adequately!

Now, Von Danniken once claimed that a bit sea port in the mountain lake of Titicaca in South America was built by extraterrestrials, when this was a bay of the sea. I wonder if the Maya Indians there had some sort of testing ground, like on Issyk-Kul, and what will archaeologists say a thousand years from now about the Issyk-Kul navy base...?

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I have recently visited Irkutsk - a 6-hour flight from Moscow (it is much closer from Vladivostok or Khabarovsk). It was mostly a pleasant trip: first of all, this was not an Aeroflot flight, but a Baikal Airlines, by 757, and the service was most friendly, even though the flight was delayed four hours due to the weather conditions. Irkutsk, now, is an old town not far from Baikal lake, and this is the biggest local attraction - well, the biggest attraction in the world for those interested in fresh-water lakes. We do our best here to pollute it, but we still have not made big enough progress here: Baikal water is still the world's cleanest, and the water pumped from the depth of 1 km is bottled and sold for US\$3 per 1.5 litre plastic bottle. In winter, you can walk on the ice and see fish through the 1-metre thick ice, which is as transparent as Venetian glass. You can sometimes see the endemic Baikal seal, and local restaurants serve delicious *omul* - juicy, fragrant local fish.

The landscape is beautiful and the people nice... though do not walk out of your hotel after dark, they say, and watch your things. The hotel was not bad - it's an Intourist, about \*\*\*, bars on each floor and several restaurants (Siberian cuisine - *pelmeni* (dumplings), *schi* (cabbage soup) and the like - was very decent, but the Chinese offered the local idea of Chinese food, which can be quite a surprise for connoisseurs of Chinese mish-mash. On the other hand, the Sakura bar

offers the above-mentioned *omul* in all varieties. The hotel stands on the banks of the Angara, not far from the city centre. They also provide excursions and Baikal picnics in summer.

The city does have other things to boast of: old wooden houses in the historical centre, the #3 picture gallery in Russia (after the Hermitage and Tretyakov Gallery). Baikalskaya vodka (made with the pure Baikal water) and good theatre. The bad thing for me was that I was there in November, and could not enjoy either bathing in the Baikal (for this, one should go there in July or the first half of August) or enjoying ice and snow (December to March). But I still enjoyed it.

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The Number One item in the local SF news is the 3-month old story of the Strannik (Wanderer) Prize, which was supposed to be a writers' prize to the best novel, best short story, best publishing house, etc. Many fans considered it "morally incorrect", as the nominees were jury members, and the TERRA FANTASTICA publishing house, sponsor of the prize, was awarded the Best Publishing House award.

Now another event at the InterpressCon (St. Petersburg), where this and several other awards were discussed and given out, was a scandalous speech by a well-known SF writer A. Stolyarov - one of the apprentices of Boris Strugatski. Once he (Stolyarov) wrote several notable - in fact, quite good - short stories and novels, and many people expected him to enter at least the top five or even become one of the top numbers of Russian SF writers. Well, there he was - one of the chosen authors, I do not want to call him number one, or number 5 or any other number; but undoubtedly he is somewhere not far from the top. But what was bad is that he thinks he is number one, and whoever doubts it is a stupid fool with no taste nor reader's qualifications. And now he writes something strange - in his own words, his aim is a new Bible no less. Well, a new Apocalypse, perhaps. And his infamous speech was: We Writers and Creators (say: I, the Writer and the Creator) must write without thinking about the readers' opinions, because we have to write for the Educated Tasteful Reader and compete not with Ursula Le Guin (who can only write "about extraterrestrials who are now male, not female - is *that* Real Literature?) or Harry Harrison, but with the like of M. Bulgarkov, the best Latin American writers, etc. The reader must be Competent, as we should not write for those who cannot tell Sophocles from Aristotle and existentialism from conceptualism. Against the rest, the commercial hack-writers, we should fight without compromise.

No doubt, literature should have both mass, commercial and elite writings. But why war? What for?... The outraged speech was published in DVESTI ("Two Hundred") fanzine and caused a havoc. Arguments are still going on, and almost each time fans meet for the first time or after some time, they ask each other how do they feel about Stolyarov's point of view.

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# IN DEPTH 13

by Bill Congreve

1992 saw a little of the coming breakout of genre anthologies in Australia with the release of the horror anthology, INTIMATE ARMAGEDDONS (edited by myself) from Five Islands Press and the two Omnibus young adult horror anthologies, SPINE CHILLING and HAIR RAISING, edited by Penny Mathews. The phenomenon continued in 1993 with another horror anthology, Leigh Blackmore's TERROR AUSTRALIS from Hodder & Stoughton, CROSSTOWN TRAFFIC (Coupe, Ogden, Hood) the cross-genre private eye anthology from Five Islands Press, and MORTAL FIRE (Van Ikin, Terry Dowling), the SF companion to TERROR AUSTRALIS, also from Hodder & Stoughton. MORTAL FIRE was the first of what I suspect will be several volumes claiming the position of 'Best Australian SF'. SHRIEKS, the Redress Press women's literary horror anthology came in at the end of the year - a book much more successful at being a volume of women's writing than it was at being a volume of horror stories.

If 1992 was the year of the Australian horror anthology, then 1994 will be the year of the Australian SF anthology. First up we have another two young adults from Omnibus -- THE LOTTERY, and THE PATTERNMAKER, both edited by Lucy Sussex and both supported by Australia Council grants. We also have ALIEN SHORES, edited by Peter McNamara & Margaret Winch, the long awaited Aphelion Publications anthology of mostly new but some reprint SF that's been in the making since the sad demise of the Aphelion magazine in 1987. This volume was also published with the support of the Australia Council, as was CROSSTOWN TRAFFIC in 1993, proving beyond any doubt the changing role of the Lit Board of the Australia Council in Australian genre fiction, despite what publishers and the remainder of the industry may think. I wonder if this support will extend to horror fiction in the future?

Also in 1994 we've had the second volume aspiring to the subtitle of 'Best Australian SF'. METAWORLDS, published by Penguin, was edited by the never-say-die Paul Collins, ex of Void, Cory & Collins, etc, one of the hardest workers in the Australian SF scene. MORTAL FIRE was about 110000 words, METAWORLDS comes in a little shorter at about 90000, while ALIEN SHORES weighs in at a massive 250000 words. THE LOTTERY and THE PATTERNMAKER both come in at around 50000 words each -- a lot of which is ancillary 'about the author' and 'why I write this SF stuff' material intended for a juvenile audience but still quite fascinating, proving simply that the books have been well done.

All four of 1994's SF anthologies are selling well with ALIEN SHORES having just gone out of print. (Now, just wait for those returns!) If 1994 was SF's turn, then the pendulum looks like swinging back to horror in 1995 with at least three, perhaps four, projects (depending on the fate of INTIMATE ARMAGEDDONS' successor, SOUTHERN BLOOD) known to be in the development stage at the moment. There's also another women's anthology, this one being edited by Lucy Sussex and Judith Buckrich for Sybilla Feminist Press. This one is also being supported by the Australia Council. This one is being talked about as 'speculative fiction' and given Lucy Sussex's marked

lack of interest in genre boundaries will almost certainly contain a few stories that could be called horror.

(Why this sudden interest in women's writing versus the general fiction market in Australian genre fiction? I can't help being cynical and wonder how much of this is inspired by the possibility of getting a politically correct Australia Council grant. I've also got to note that all three of the Australian genre magazines are edited by men, and at least two of those magazines have problems recognising feminist themes, even when those themes are being discussed by male writers. [Have you noticed that there are some themes men are not allowed to write about? Not only because women editors don't recognise the possibility of male sensitivity to the themes and will misunderstand according to their perception of the author's sex, but also because male editors can't recognise or aren't interested in the ideas at all? Frustrating!] Yet these magazines are open to good stories, not simply to writers of one particular sex and not the other, and it is only the women's publishing industry that goes for the possibly discriminatory single sex concepts.) It's about time I got off the soap box and talked about 1994's four Australian SF anthologies.

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**THE LOTTERY; Edited by Lucy Sussex; anthology, 162 + viii pp, 1994; Omnibus Books, tpb; price?**

Once again I can't tell you the price because nobody in Australia puts the price on kids' books. I gave an approximate word count above for all the books because adult readers might become disillusioned at the amount of dead space in these two Omnibus books. Both contain over twenty pages of blank paper (as did the two Mathews edited horror anthologies from Omnibus before them) apparently on the theory that this makes the books more accessible for younger readers. I know I finished both more quickly than I expected. But then the unknown price above is something like \$8.95 or \$9.95. These aren't expensive.

THE LOTTERY opens with the title story by editor Sussex in which a researcher goes back in time to safeguard the existence of an aquatic species, a far distant ancestor of humanity, that is endangered by an undersea mudslide triggered by an earthquake. A nicely told story showing the fragility and preciousness of all life which I first came across at a reading at a convention where Nick Stathopoulos illustrated using marker pens and a whiteboard while Lucy spoke. A fond memory.

Gary Crew follows with a horror story of an undercover cop investigated a series of apparent suicides in classy hotel. Nice, but it could have been much more, even in a young adult book. 'The Battle of Leila the Dog', by Rick Kennett, is a nice piece of space opera first published in Eidolon. The background will be familiar to some readers of Rick's earlier work.

Isobelle Carmody's 'The Giant' has one of the best opening lines of any story I've read in the last year. 'You! Come over here. I want to tell you the story of death and of the fairies at the bottom of the universe.' Sean McMullen follows with a high school science experiment that works a little too well in a setting reminiscent of soap opera TV.

Talented newcomer Mustafa Zahirovic has the best story of a young artist whose eyes suddenly pick up a new reality. A conartist wants to buy his eyes and sell them to the military.

THE MENTOR regular, Sean Williams, follows with what is becoming his best known story, 'White Christmas', about a holiday trip into the end of the world, and Paul Voermans follows with more of his quirky humorous surrealism. Sophie Mason cleans up the book with a timely reminder that the grass is always greener for the people who own it. A moral fable?

I enjoyed THE LOTTERY. US readers will soon get the chance to try this out as it has just been sold to the US market.

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**THE PATTERNMAKER**; Edited by Lucy Sussex; anthology, 164 + viii pp, 1994; Omnibus Books, tpb; price?

The style of this is the same as that of THE LOTTERY. The experiment is to blend Australia's best known SF writers with Australia's better children's writers in two SF anthologies for the young adult market. There are a surprising number of stories from quite new and young writers, showing the strength of the genre in Australia, and their stories stand up well in theme and content, if not quite so in style, against the generally vastly more experienced children's writers.

Another newcomer, Dave Luckett, opens with the title story, 'The Pattermaker', reminiscent of an Escher print. Gillian Rubenstein follows with another futuristic moral fable, this one about prejudice and responsibility, set in an outback farming community. Emerging humorist Michael Pryor turns the tables on an alien invader in 'Home Free'. Dirk Strasser has another shot at racism and prejudice in 'Steering the Waters'. Greg Egan carries on with one of his major themes, the interaction of reality and personality, and where one stops and the perception of the other begins.

Other writers include Brian Caswell, Leanne Frahm, Alison M Goodman, and another SF newcomer, Sam Sejavka with the intriguingly named 'The Fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil', set in a future community of subsistence gatherers mining a vast garbage dump.

This volume came across as being a bit more deep and meaningful than THE LOTTERY, but the stories never become didactic. This is science fiction with a purpose, and a good example of the kind of fiction Australia's children's publishing industry is good at. It is interesting to note that of the two books, it was the slightly weaker THE LOTTERY which has sold to the US market.

Both THE LOTTERY and THE PATTERNMAKER are for readers of all ages. Both have very classy cover illustrations by Patricia Howes which don't rely on genre cliches. Both are attractive packages and make good reading. Don't be surprised if next year's Ditmar winner for best Australian short SF comes from one of these books.

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**METAWORLDS**; Edited by Paul Collins; anthology, 220 + x pp, 1994; Penguin Books tpb; \$14.95.

Expensive for its size.

This one was promoted by a bit of a conceit. One of the methods used for selection was to flag all those stories in a database of Australian SF that had received accolades of some kind. The editor then went on ABC radio (2BL in Sydney) saying the stories had been selected by computer and when the interviewer saw through the conceit in a couple of seconds, the editor was a little lost. The same conceit is used in an introduction which then goes on to list the accolades given to each story.

So, has it been selected by computer? Okay, Collins first had to leave out all those stories already chosen for MORTAL FIRE, or ALIEN SHORES or... This already implies some editorial discretion. The introduction also makes much of a number of rather minor achievements; yes, it is nice to make the recommended reading list of the Dozois, or Datlow & Windling Year's best anthologies, but to be listed in amongst a couple of hundred or so other stories in a single year is not proof positive of greatness. Without intending insult to Leanne Frahm or her story, neither is being the first Australian woman to be published in AMAZING. As a writer, this distinction can't be taken away from Frahm, but all it says of her story is that it was worthy of publication in a US magazine, along with several hundred others in that year. Also intending no disrespect for Jack Wodhams, being published in ANALOG is no sign of greatness, especially when the story is one of Jack's worst for several years in spite of having both barrels levelled at political correctness. The Strasser story is in because it had a good review? The Collins story? Another story in the same series came sixth on a fanzine poll and this is worth mentioning in an introduction which includes the sentence: 'Ten years ago it was unheard of for local

science fiction authors to gain such recognition alongside the greats of world SF.'?

It is a bit silly for the editor to so degrade the book's subtitle of 'Best Australian Science Fiction' in the introduction.

And was it chosen by computer? Given the kind of recognition level programmed for, the editor must have had a short list of hundreds of stories. Given that all such recognition is accorded by living human beings it becomes a little silly to either thank or blame a computer for the contents of this book. The computer selection becomes a marketing device that didn't come off.

Trivia: METAWORLDS was later reviewed on the same ABC radio station by a reviewer who, apparently expecting to find Arnie Schwarzenburger doing Phillip Dick in LOST IN SPACE, found the majority of the stories either incomprehensible, trivial, or too terrifying to easily assimilate (Terry Dowling's 'The Last Elephant' - The death of animal species? Why should we read about the death of various animal species? Why should something thoughtful be included in the book?) The same reviewer also lamented the admittedly rather poor representation women writers have in the book in terms that indicated women should have fifty percent of the contents irrespective of the quality of their stories. Why does the ABC pay idiots to broadcast their stupidity to the public?

The book opens with Greg Egan once again recasting Immanuel Kant with the implications of technology for a neat reversal on the theme of solipsism. I wonder if Egan has read the work of French theorist D Berlo on the nature of communication? I liked it. If we can believe the introduction, so does everybody else. David Lake follows with an intriguing time travel story into the future. The background is stronger on logic than on reality. I accepted Lake's society for the sake of the story, but I don't believe it is a society that will work. Dirk Strasser recasts the pathos and structure of Keyes' 'Flowers For Algernon' onto a context of body transformation. Frahm's 'Reichelman's Relics' looks at a future where your average suburban working class bloke in space comes across alien life and does things his way. A delicious and appropriate twist. Damien Broderick, who has annoyed certain feminists in the past, tackles one of those themes dangerous for men to write about: motherhood (parenthood?) and childbirth. Rosaleen Love continues on her merry way of puncturing human foibles with deliciously logical irony with 'The Total Devotion Machine'. There's Stephen Dedman being philosophical with the test-tube birth of a new race, Sean McMullen being horribly logical with Australian history and the nature of certain marsupials, Terry Dowling and Jack Wodhams, both mentioned above, and George Turner offering an answer to the world's woes as an interstellar probe comes home. The one story I didn't think matched it with the others was the editor's own 'The Wired Kid'. These days Collins uses a basic, cliched, no-holds-barred thriller style that neither gives the reader enough information nor enough time to be comfortable. The idea of the story contrasts quite strongly with the rest of the book, needfully offering a violent, noir future, but the style doesn't back up the idea.

METAWORLDS is another good, solid anthology of Australian SF that continues to develop the concept that ideas and imagination are alive and well in this nation, no matter what we see on current affairs TV.

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**ALIEN SHORES**; Edited by Peter McNamara & Margaret Winch; anthology, 603 + xiv pp, 1994; Aphelion Publications, tpb; \$19.95.

A massive and enjoyable book. It also contains the worst SF story published in Australia in 1994, which itself was enjoyable for all in-stories it brought to mind.

Intriguing foreword from the editors, followed by a strong introduction from Damien Broderick. Total unknown E W Story opens the fiction with an intriguing cyberpunk story that doesn't quite pay off. George Turner's well-realised space opera carries its point of a motile vegetative lifeform in conflict with the animal kingdom quite forcibly, but the speculative science is let down by basic errors elsewhere. Then

comes Rosaleen Love and Greg Egan with typical stories. What's the Egan about? Read the above review. Sean McMullen offers the solution to the mystery of *The Call*, from his novel *VOICES IN THE LIGHT*. I enjoyed the story, but I can't help feeling he has given away cheaply a mystery which should be held sacrosanct until the culmination of the *GREATWINTER* series. Sean Williams offers 'The Soap Bubble', perhaps his best story to date, and thematically related to the lead story of his collection *DOORWAY TO ETERNITY*. Then follows Leanne Frahm with a surreal fable, and Canadian Bill Dodds.

It goes on. There are twenty-nine stories here from the full range of Australian SF talent. Damien Broderick has the best story, 'The Magi', a piece which stands head and shoulders above the majority of his work. It is obvious Carole Nomarhas' favourite writer is C J Cherryh. If you're going to open your career with imitation, you may as well imitate the best.

There are stories which don't work for me: the point of Yvonne Rousseau's story was style, not content. As I noted above, Paul Collins' *Calloway* stories don't work for me. Jeff Harris's piece was simply juvenile, and vastly too long for its pointless 'fart in an elevator' joke ending. Is an apology being made here?

Other high points are Terry Dowling, Ian McAuley Hails, Geoffrey Maloney, Edith Speers, Lucy Sussex, Simon Brown, Paul Voermans.

The strike rate is high. Any reader is going to find stories in a book of this length and complexity that don't work for them, but that is part of the experience of an anthology. *ALIEN SHORES* provides a wide spectrum of Australian SF from the literary to the thriller and is a gamble worthy of the price of admission for any punter.

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Novel length SF, fantasy and horror? Outside of Aphelion Publications and the children's market, where excellence is a virtue, the publishers have recently taken such a lowest common denominator view of the books they publish and of the reading public that they are only embarrassing themselves by international standards.

Two writers who successfully walk the tightrope between theme and story are George Turner and Greg Egan, and I suspect it is no coincidence these two writers are currently our most successful on an international stage. It is also no coincidence that they must seek international publication in order to receive distribution in their own country.

And is there a general flavour to Australian SF that is revealed by all this activity? It's difficult to decide on the tone of something of which one is a part, but I suspect Australian SF, fantasy, and horror short fiction wear their moral fables a bit closer to the surface than do the fictions of other nations. Story is important, but more as a vehicle than as an objective in itself. Genre conventions are used for discussing themes as much as they are for storytelling, and this is what leads me to suggest that these genres exist less for their own sakes in Australian short fiction than that some Australian short fiction writers prefer using these conventions as a convenience to get the point across. This is a convenience being more and more widely noticed in Australia's literary mainstream where horror and SF conventions are also being discovered and employed, most often by writers who would be mortified that their ideas are standard horror, or SF, points made by Broderick in his introduction to *ALIEN SHORES*.

Most Australian SF and horror writers switch readily across genre boundaries, as are the editors of *AUREALIS* and *EIDOLON* (but not the horror specific *BLOODSONGS*) more interested in a good story than they are in which genre it lies.

Has the definitive collection of Best Australian SF been published? If we are going to entertain such a concept, then the answer must be no. *MORTAL FIRE* comes closest, but *ALIEN SHORES* is a more rounded entertainment experience and is better value. Still, all four books reviewed above are worth the price of admission. The year of the Australian SF anthology has produced some quality material.

- Bill Congreve

## ENGLISH USAGE & PUNCTUATION GUIDES

by James Verran

Correct, or at least, currently acceptable English usage and punctuation are the nuts and bolts of intelligible writing. While it is essential to catch a reader's interest with an intriguing opening, no matter how innovative the plot, poorly executed narrative and indifferent punctuation will seldom inspire a reader to progress beyond that all-important threshold.

Granted, the story may be a potential best seller, but a strong plot has little chance of success if the reader must struggle to remain interested until its disclosure. It is therefore essential that for the opening to be enticing, it must be intelligible and offer the reader good cause to read on; in short, promise an easy read.

Careless usage is acceptable in dialogue -- realistic characterizations frequently demand it -- but unless a story is written in the form of a first person narrative, the exposition should be in correct, unambiguous language with thoughtful punctuation.

Integrated dictionaries and thesauri often thwart a writer's quality time at the word processor. This is most apparent when the well-meaning producers of the software include alternative spelling for commonly used words; for example, optional -ize or -ise endings, inflection or inflexion, and encyclopaedia or -pedia. While many optional spellings are just that, some are only optional in certain circumstances, as when mentioning a product, publication, or location by name. In the main, this situation is not helped by having more than one spelling accepted by the checker -- honest mistakes will occur. The convention for printed dictionaries is that the more common usage/spelling takes precedence, which poses a problem for the writer using a software lexicon while writing in a regional style, particularly when converting Australian spelling to American, or vice versa. That is why it is helpful to use a standard spelling dictionary, and an appropriate style guide if one is available. In some instances it may be necessary to include a note on the manuscript to identify the reference work used.

For the writer not sufficiently well-heelled to own top-of-the-range software, "third party" grammar checking software is sometimes useful; however, few grammar checkers handle dialogue competently, which limits their usefulness to writers of fiction. Unless the writer is a graduate in English, hardcopy grammar and usage resources are an essential back up.

No matter how carefully a manuscript is prepared, errors, not necessarily of the writer's making, do occur. Apparently, C. J. Cherryn submits her manuscripts on disk in RTF (Rich Text Format) which eliminates much of the typesetter's work. This is one way to avoid, or minimize, the typo's that usually begin turning up with increased frequency somewhere around the last few chapters. Errors of this kind are an everyday manifestation of the chaos principle -- too many cooks... as the proverb warns. However, after reading Ms. Cherryn's article "From Disk to Typesetter" (SFWA Bulletin 117) a writer considering printer-ready disk submissions can gain little comfort -- such submissions require a level of discipline beyond the patience of most writers.

Reading the published work of successful authors will often reveal peculiarities in punctuation. Marion Zimmer Bradley seems to favour the en rule (dash) without spacing, and her works are liberally sprinkled with what at first appear to be typo's, or weird hyphenation. This is very disruptive until the reader becomes accustomed to seeing short dashes substituted for commas where a spaced em rule should reasonably be expected. To be fair to the lady, this peculiarity may not be entirely her fault; other of her stories (different publisher) do use em rules -- still unspaced -- maybe she should have a word with the typesetters.

That master of epic novels (always heavily researched and masterfully crafted), James A. Michener, places a colon before passages of dialogue where we lesser mortals would nearly always place a comma. At least Mr. Michener avoids overuse of the phrase "so-and-so said", the bane of so much contemporary writing. Although unusual, this use of the colon is a legitimate alternative to the comma when introducing direct speech.

Choosing any type of reference book is best done by looking up the same references in each available book, then selecting the one that most clearly explains the chosen topics. This method, which was used to compare the titles chosen for this article, revealed a lack of consensus on the use of quotation marks. Also noticeable, was the confusing information on when to add an extra stop to an ellipsis. Unless a writer is prepared to "tough it out" and follow the rules as

interpreted in a favourite usage guide, it is often difficult to ascertain the most acceptable usage, especially when so many guides include optional entries. No matter which source is used as a guide to usage or punctuation, consistency is the key: the same rules should always be observed throughout a given manuscript.

The following publications are mentioned because they are mostly inexpensive, and fairly easy to find. Of course there are many more, and probably superior publications, but price and availability have imposed a limit.

COLLINS GEM DICTIONARY OF ENGLISH USAGE (ISBN 0-00-458750-2), boasts over 500 pages including 336 on actual usage, plus the mandatory foreword, bibliography, international phonetic alphabet, abbreviations used, and four appendices. Although small, it is surprisingly comprehensive. The reviewed copy bears the reprint date of 1985 and has survived many sessions of occasionally heavy treatment. The current edition is selling for the same price as the other GEMS in the series. A handy reference aid with clear type, offering information on a range of usage and related topics.

COLLINS DOVE GUIDE TO AUSTRALIAN USAGE AND PUNCTUATION (ISBN 186371-131-7), by George Stern, Robert Bolitho and Russell Lutton, sells for around \$20 in paperback. This 346 page, easy to understand, guide to the essentials would have to be the first choice for Aussie writers. In Part I: USAGE, it deflates the dogmatic myths about usage, tackles common problems, gender and sexist language (ignore that topic at your peril), and clarifies nine other areas of usage. A helpful innovation in this guide is the grading (1-6) of each example with accompanying footnotes, on alternate pages, rating the validity of each example. The authors have implemented this system to acknowledge that where sentence structures were once held to be either right or wrong, there is now more flexibility in English usage (hallelujah!). Part II: PUNCTUATION, demystifies and explains aspects of punctuation without assuming the reader needs only the basic rules. In the section dealing with the use of quotation marks, the authors advocate using double quotes for primary, and singles for secondary, while clearly stating that the opposite is equally valid. They also add: "...once you have made your choice...stick to it throughout your text." The 23 page glossary is another nice touch: everything you can no longer remember about those terms you should have learned in English Grammar classes.

ENGLISH GRAMMAR ON ONE CARD (ISBN 08120-5036-3); albeit, folded to display as two, double-sided A4 pages. The card provides instant reminders for points of grammar, compiled by Vincent F. Hopper, Professor of English, New York University. This concise, plastic coated publication is available from university bookshops (always a good source for obscure reference titles) for around \$A5. Some minor aspects of American punctuation vary slightly from the preferred Australian style which some people think should be graven in stone. For instance, this guide also upholds the placement of single quotes (secondary) within double (primary quotes), which is standard American usage. While contrary to British practice, this arrangement of quotation marks is optional in Australian usage, a fact only grudgingly acknowledged in FOWLERS, which should annoy the hyper-correct pedants. The card contains sections on: Parts of Speech, The Sentence, Punctuation, and Common Mistakes in Grammar and Usage. The list of common mistakes reflects the high standard of correct English usage desired by educated Americans. Not surprisingly, the given examples of mistakes are common to Australian and British usage, also.

FOWLER'S MODERN ENGLISH USAGE. Modern: defined elsewhere as that which came into use after the Middle English of Chaucer and his ilk (post 1500). Originally written during the early 20th century, it has since been revised and reprinted several times, courtesy of the Oxford University Press. Despite its reputation, much of the content seems quaint by current standards. Sir Ernest Gowers' revision of H. W. Fowler's tome retains a Victorian wordiness that may not appeal to contemporary writers and scholars. Many of the entries

are in the form of short, and not so short, articles and essays. Nevertheless, H.W. Fowler has become to British English what Noah Webster is to American lexicography. For a couple of years there have been rumours of another revision of FOWLERS, but enquiries have failed to produce any information, or an imminent release date -- we live in hope.

HAMLIN POCKET GUIDE TO ENGLISH USAGE (ISBN 0-600-55901-7). Published in 1988 with 461 pages, this is an earlier incarnation of the subsequently described NEWNES publication. Copies of this, and other volumes in the discontinued series occasionally turn up on book disposal counters.

NEWNES GUIDE TO ENGLISH USAGE (ISBN 0-600-33189-X) published by Newnes Books in 1993. Although from the same authors (John Baillie & Moyna Kitchin) and with the same text as the HAMLIN version, its lower (319) page count results from larger pages. The increase in size gives it a slight advantage in handling over its predecessor. Originally priced at \$6.95 the reviewed copy was remaindered in the year of its printing ('93) for \$2. It is one of those reference books that beg to be picked up, if only for use to assist with unravelling and clarifying the convoluted essays in the likes of FOWLERS.

MIND THE STOP, A Brief Guide to Punctuation (ISBN 0-14-051072-9) by G. V. Carey. This 126 page, Penguin Reference Book offers authoritative advice with many useful examples. Another frequently reprinted book in the lower price range, covering almost all you need to know on the subject. In the first chapter "By Way Of Introduction" the author suggests that punctuation is governed two-thirds by rule and one-third by personal taste, which seems to let Messrs Bradley and Michener off the hook. With regard to personal taste, Mr. Carey comments: "Apart from the professed cranks, there are the unmannerly style-hogs of the 'popular' press whose reckless Remingtons run riot over the page, leaving mutilated fragments of sentence writhing in their tracks." Great stuff, somewhat dated by the "Remingtons" reference, but a situation that persists despite the switch to computers. An interesting inclusion is the chapter on proof correction containing a heavily corrected depiction of a previous chapter, with marks. Although not the latest book on the subject, it is inexpensive and probably available in a more recent printing.

TYPING FOR PUBLICATION, (ISBN 9780644-067072) a 63 page guide from the Australian Government Publishing Service. A formidable introduction to the requirements of producing a typescript or magnetic media script. Essential reading for desktop publishers, or writers who want to make a friend, or (more likely) an enemy of a typesetter. Best advice for the faint-hearted is to submit a hardcopy, in manuscript (typescript) format, and leave the professionals to take care of that which they do best.

THE AUSTRALIAN WRITERS' AND EDITORS' GUIDE, (paperback, Oxford Reference) previously reviewed in THE MENTOR #80 should not be overlooked as a source for definitive, clear advice on current Australian standards of spelling, abbreviation and punctuation.

WORKING WORDS: An Australian Guide to Modern English Usage (ISBN 0-670-90363-9) from Penguin, looks expensive, -- the reviewed (sorry, casually perused) copy was borrowed from a library and appeared to be a very comprehensive work. Compiled by Barrie Hughes, with the able assistance of Jane Drury and Margaret Barrett (and a cast of thousands), this excellent (unashamedly Australian) book warrants more than this short paragraph. It contains a few minor variations from advice found elsewhere, but any writer/scholar fortunate enough to own WORKING WORDS would be able to manage without most of the other titles mentioned here. Check it out ASAP!

To maintain the theme of Reference Books on a Budget, most of the publications mentioned are "cheapies", or remaindered copies. Once the financially challenged writer has banked the advance on that all-time best-seller, it may be taxationally prudent to buy up-market. Among the many handsomely bound reference works packaged to appeal to the upwardly mobile scribe is the OXFORD LIBRARY OF ENGLISH USAGE. This three volume set, hardbacked in genuine

imitation cloth, is presented in a stylish box cover. Volume I is the 383 page "A PRACTICAL ENGLISH GRAMMAR", volume II, the 299 page "THE OXFORD SPELLING DICTIONARY", and volume III, the 725 page "A DICTIONARY OF MODERN ENGLISH USAGE", a euphemism for FOWLER'S MODERN ENGLISH USAGE". There are other sets, equally attractive, in the OXFORD LIBRARY OF... series, among which is the OXFORD LIBRARY OF WORDS AND PHRASES: I QUOTATIONS, II PROVERBS, and III WORD ORIGINS. These sets are excellent quality, with clearly printed text, but somewhat over-priced. The patient "bookaholic" may find them occasionally marked down to around \$35 to \$40, which is fair value for an equivalent 1500+ page quality hardback.

A high price is seldom an indication of a book's intrinsic value, and should never be the deciding factor in its purchase. Elitist perceptions, based on fancy bindings and consequentially higher prices, have caused the demise of many otherwise excellent low-priced works. The book shops are stacked with prematurely remaindered publications, many of which represent good value to the discerning buyer.

- James Verran.

## A PLANET MUCH LIKE EARTH - Part 2

BY Mae Strelkov

When we first moved here, Tony could not yet join us. He was stuck doing a year of compulsory military service in Cordoba. Sylvia came up to join us, abandoning her studies in veterinary surgery in Southern Cordoba Province (she had less than a year to go), but she did not want to miss out on the adventures we'd be having here, at the start. At first she planned to return to the University "later", but by now she has changed her mind. She is practically engaged to a very nice local boy. And as she says, "I studied everything but cats and dogs. That was for the last year."

(I wish she had learned more about cats and dogs. We have them here... many cats; two dogs right now.)

I really would like to describe our arrival. But to emphasise the dramatic circumstances involved, I'd have to sketch in the place we abandoned to come up here. We'd formerly lived in Central Argentina where Vadim, my husband, had been managing an oligarchal estancia ever since the year 1961. However, the owner had died and it had been sold to a very strange clan, partners of a notorious figure who'd made his wealth during the Military Dictatorship, and (as per published news reports once that rule had lost its clout), this notorious figure had even manufactured cardboard coffins for the Army on the sly. They were always in demand for there were many citizens who continued to simply vanish.

Pretty girls were especially in danger, as I can report from stories of close escapes that our own two daughters underwent back then, on their way to and from their Universities. Our sons too had had to be tremendously cautious not to be mistaken for "extremists" and be liquidated on the off-chance they might be so. But I don't want to talk about it now. It is, for all those who lived through that time in Argentina, still a tremendously painful subject to recall.

The "intolerable circumstances" in our case, however, had to do with having to work for the new buyers of that estancia in Cordoba Province. At first we had no idea that they were thus linked with the oppressive regime; they seemed quite pleasant people excited because they were suddenly tremendously rich, when formerly they'd had to worry and struggle to make ends meet (not always quite honestly).

However, we were tolerant folk ourselves and did not criticise them for lacking the culture and distinction of our former oligarchal employers. We found it at first refreshing to watch their naivety, their enthusiasm. But it soon turned sour, for they refused to do things in a practical way. When Vadim, for instance, warned them not to import blooded cattle from Europe because in winter, in those heights there, they'd starve unless vast amounts of fodder were trucked up constantly, they argued: "Nonsense! Look at all the grass there is. They'll do well!"

"And the bitter cold - ice, snow, gales, darkness - they'd need good barns to survive." (The land was at the top of the Sierra Chica).

"Nonsense!" was the offended reply; for they always "knew better"; and the cattle were duly imported, and passed a most pitiful winter, (of unusual cold and darkness) and died. Unfed, unwanted! It distressed us terribly. The blooded horses were dying off too, equally neglected, and all because the "impossible" had occurred. The new owners suddenly hadn't a centavo of their own. The war in the South Atlantic had failed them; the Armed Forces were in trouble. No further interesting demands for cardboard coffins by the truckloads could be placed with their firm. The Military were suddenly too busy whitewashing its own image.

Our new employers there had faced the fact that we were incorruptible... so much so, Vadim had worked for perhaps the richest oligarch in the country for all those previous years and we were poorer than ever in the past. The old owner had adored us, and trusted us absolutely, so we'd not have wanted to betray that trust at any cost. Just before he died, away in Buenos Aires, he wrote a little handwritten letter telling Vadim how much he'd valued him and assuring him we'd never know in our old age, he'd see to that.

Well, we never got a centavo, nor did we expect it. He was honest, but his wife had a huge clan of her own who all needed to live (in the various "worlds" of the jet set, ever travelling around) in the "proper way". When our son's brother-in-law who is a lawyer heard about that letter we'd mentioned in defence of the poor old man's good heart, he leaped up: "Where is that letter? I can use it to get you a good sum from those heirs!"

We laughed. "Never! We trust in God, and leave it to God to arrange everything. We only kept the letter out of love for the poor old man's memory. He wasn't to blame that his family wouldn't let him spend a cent more than necessary on anybody or anything but themselves. We pity them, that's all, and go right on loving his memory, with pity."

Poor old man indeed... he even tried to reach us spookily, soon after his death, but I may be a medium by inheritance, (on my mother's side, though as a Fundamentalist Baptist missionary believe me she was very anti-ghosts and I was too till now), and so I cut short that spook's attempt to try to "right a wrong".

His presence in the bedroom had woken us up, and a strong eerie smell accompanied him, one that "spoke" of death... sweetly overpowering and unwelcome.

"What is that smell?" Vadim spoke out softly to me, and I answered firmly.

"I don't know. Let's go right back to sleep!"

And we turned over on our sides and covered our heads somewhat with the blankets and sure enough, we did fall at once asleep anew.

And thus we snubbed the poor, regretful ghost, but not unkindly, for I prayed for him till I dozed, reminding our Father of how good - though weak - the poor old darling always was. How every last peon on the estancia adored him but hated his pitiful, proud wife and all her

demanding clan when they came visiting each summer so as not to lose out when the handouts were given.

I recall how on her birthday once, when they'd had a special Mass held in her honour, we all attended for it was compulsory, of course. And after it, the priest, (just a brother of the wife of a peon, so he was treated in a patronising way by our bosses), said timidly.

"Now, *un aplauso* for the Dona on her birthday." (None of her clan were there).

Not a peon clapped, and there was an awful silence. Then I began clapping and Vadim joined in so the peones had to do so too. I felt I could not bear the embarrassment which the priest was suffering, and the hurt also that the poor old man must feel to see his adored wife thus lacking praise. He himself worshipped her to the end. She was adorable. I too had a fancy towards her, that is to say, I took delight in admiring her as you'd admire a perfect actress, which what she was at heart. (I similarly admire the Pope and Reagan as perfect actors!). She loved us too, I do know.

Yet I think I frustrated her terribly, for she really could not awake envy in me no matter how she tried. The whole world envied her for her poise and beauty and for the fact she could have whatever she might want. But she saw in my eyes a look of tolerance and perhaps pity, and that she couldn't stand. I do recognise that, had I not been so gently aloof, but run after her for favours, Vadim would have been far more successful. She resented me for my independence, my proud "British ways". Though I am English only on my father's side; my mother was an American ("*de los Estandos Unidos de Norte America*", of course), from way back. And at heart I am Chinese, born and reared there among the Chinese, as my parents were missionaries but I was not at heart. I felt I almost preferred the Chinese "unconverted", judging by the many of both types I'd gotten to meet.

So I went my own way, I always have gone my own way through life, accommodating myself to the needs of whomever I meet, but never changing into the patterns they might prefer. And, living in the heart of an oligarchal estate and getting invited constantly into their midst (for "My Lady" liked to show me off and there was no refusing), did not change my ways. I know what I wanted: more understanding of Life, that was all. And learning experiences come from every side.

The day we had to leave, the whole Sierra Chica was afire... the dry grasses for many kilometres around were blazing and sending up a black, coiling wall of flame and smoke that veiled the entire western sky as we drove away. Always before that day, and through all the years we'd lived on that estancia up high, we'd been out fighting those winter conflagrations, shoulder to shoulder with the peones (for days on end, at times.). It felt so queer to be driving off thus, and not staying to fight, yet again.

Vadim and I, that last day, both had high fevers from the flu. We hadn't slept for days and nights, doing the last packing chores with Sylvia's help. She stayed on at our old little house in the suburb of Cordoba City to attend to other odds and ends, before she could follow up north, a week later. When you haven't really slept for days and nights, you reach a heightened state of "glassy awareness". Especially if you've a high fever, to boot!

As we drove northwards hour after hour (slowly, for the Dodge station-wagon that son Ed had lent up was loaded far beyond capacity), the night intensified.... Cordoba was left behind; the salty wastes of Santiago del Estero were entered. (No-one wants a blow-out there by night, where service stations are few and far between.) We had a blow-out or two, but all went well, anyway. (Replacement tyres - the much re-treaded sort - could be bought each time.)

We had to keep the windows almost closed, for we were transporting our cats, also one of the two dogs we had then. (The other would come later with Sylvia.) The kittens had squeezed out of their containers in our car and one of them actually did escape for good (poor thing), when the back of the car had to be opened to get out a tyre.

But some of the kittens took it in their stride, sitting on my lap, or standing on the dashboard looking out at the mad whirling new universe of darkness and flashing lights as cars and trucks rushed past. One of the kittens was Spica, who enters this tale again at the



close, as he prepares to die... escorted (perhaps) by the five great condors that seemed to have come to wait for his departure. That is my fancy, certainly, but it comforted me. He is so brave and he does not want to go. He continued fighting and each time I go out to pet his brave head, he looks deep into my eyes, wanting understanding. "Why?" seems to be his question to which it is hard to reply. "Are you afraid to kill him?" the people hear ask. But Spica does not want to die!

But on our journey here in July 1983, young Spica stood so proud and lordly, looking out intelligently, accepting the strangeness, the utterly weird noises, the shaking as our car lurched along, the flashing lights and blowing horns. If to continue to be *our* cat, he must ride with us through an underworld of madness, he still "feared no ill" for we were with him, our presence reassured and comforted him. And he did find it all so very interesting! (A couple of other half-grown kittens showed similar intelligent interest. Others curled up in my lap and hid from it all, asleep, stubbornly.)

Dawn was breaking when we entered the province of Salta. The last of the old moon - a tumbled fingernail - hung drunken and tremulous in the East, while the conquering sun rose in pursuit. As the bright rays burst over the horizon, Spica was so entranced, he stared out almost unbelievably. So the ride "forever" through madness beyond our lurching vehicle would not always carry us through a tunnel of darkness and "attacking" lights! We'd left Charon's territory behind.

More hours passed as we steadily proceeded northwards, and at least we had passed San Pedro de Jujuy without entering it and sped over the central plains towards the Santa Barbara range to the east. How it towered; it's western flank is very precipitous. (As are the western flanks of the Andes; and even of the Centinela to our east here right now)

It looked that day like a mighty wall barring mundanes from Fairyland. Clouds clung to its ravines and peaks, shredded and misty, like in a Chinese painting. I was so glad to see it thus! I felt I had come "home" at last, to a place like the one where I was born in 1917, in Szechuen, China, near the sacred mount called "Omei", with a view towards the peaks of Tibet to the west.

More important than we can ever loom in this story, is the story of the land itself. The whole land, not just our bit of it. The *meaning* (for I seek always hidden meanings) of this remote place far from any city, far from any "culture" too, of course. A place where formerly natives could retreat as the Spaniards took the country over, more and more. Further to our south the brave industrious Juries of Santiago del Estero had been the first to be betrayed, "in Christ's name", and thus found themselves enslaved before they knew it, their women bearing Spanish-engendered babies, their men crushed and heartbroken, and - if still fighting - doing so only because it was a noble way to die. I read the early histories of the Conquest and Colonisation of Latin America, borrowing rare books in Spanish from the libraries of Cordoba, years ago, so I feel intimately "in touch" with the ghosts of yore here, also. The echoes can still raise gooseflesh on me, as I

evoke their memories, loyally, for I am on "their side" in all those bygone battles. I use the present tense for that... I *am* on their side, always. Defending their memories, if the tribes concerned have vanished and been reported as "too savage and devil-worshipping to civilise". But one has to define that word "devil" before accepting statements like that. Were not the doings of the so-called "civilisers" from the Old World as devilish? Even more so?

True the natives of those early days would have gone by now anyway... time carried her children away with monotonous regularity. And I think those "Old Folk" would be pleased to know that among their successors there are not only present today their masticised descendants, but also a clan of so-called "white folk" ("gone native", in a way) and determined to do honour to this region, this people, and the stories of the Past up till today. (With a vision towards the future, also, as it could be here if all goes well, and we avoid mistakes like trying to turn this valley into just another "suburb", full of industries belching out smoke and pouring out wastes into our brightly-flowing streams.)

However, once we moved up these northern wilds, I found the natives very different, as I've said. It was like running into the achenial ancestors of the proto-Asians as well as the proto-American Indians... they were, and are still, that stolid and archaic in their ways. And this is - or should have become (only I couldn't spend the time to do it up into a full book with my language studies going so nicely) - the story of our associations with them here and now. Never mind about the former Military proteges and the oligarches we had coped with when in Cordoba Province. Never mind about the bustling moderns in Buenos Aires earlier, where Vadim and I had worked in offices for years. Even the funny old Germans of the Islas del Ibicuy (Entre Rios), where we'd had a little *is/a* from 1953 till 1959, on the Rio Paranacito, till a terrible flood flushed us out for good... they too seem "unreal" now to me in retrospect. All of them were acting out their chosen roles, and their inner selves remained hidden from themselves as well as from one another. People in the "Swirling World" as I've called it simply have to be that way, to survive.

But these simple people here in this northern retreat, in the very heart of South America, surrounded, as we are by Chile, Bolivia, Brazil and Paraguay, *they* are real, in a stark, inflexible way! And so it of them I think a good deal, as well as puzzling over this "Reality" they are facing: that of "life and death" itself and "survival" in between. There are haunted sites here, about they avoid them, and the nearest they go to contacting the "Other World" beyond the grave is at Mas s, (on the rare occasions when a priest may come), or when visiting some *curandero* or witch doctor who can summon whatever spirit (or *santito*) may be required. One "saint" heals backaches, another fixes headaches, and so on. But a *curandero* is better equipped to contact such supposedly orthodox Catholic "spirits" than an ordinary mortal might be, who is scarcely able to scrawl his name. Not that a *curandero* knows how to read or write, but he - or she - has been well-schooled in magic.

seems scarcely deserving the label of "town", which it is. We stopped to load gasoline at the service station of a certain Fasen, who is of Italian origin, but has made his way out here successfully and has also taken successfully to native ways. While there, with our windows still closed save at the tops to keep the cats and kittens in, a youth rode up on a bicycle and came up to the car, exclaiming in delight at the sight of such beautiful kittens (white, fluffy and several with eyes blue-and-green), so he and I chatted about the pets.

I explained we were moving for good to "San Raphael" or "San Roque", or perhaps the right name for the place might be "Villa Monte". (All three names are used, as it transpires, defining sectors of the highway that runs through our region there.)

"Oh", he beamed.

"You're going there?"

"Yes, we bought a place there."

"Oh! Then you will soon be very rich!"

I laughed doubtfully. Our ability to grow "very rich" has never yet been displayed.

He wanted to know about the cats, and I had to explain their relationships, adding that the matriarchal mother of them all was now crouching in her box on the floor of the car, unwilling to come out and "face life" as it had suddenly become. I'd put her into the closed box with a big bone full of meat, and she had comforted herself by devouring it, all along the way.

Well, I've never seen that lad again... he may just have been a passerby, but it was a nice welcome to Palma Sola.

We then drove on, southwards this time, down the gravel highway towards our own land, with the Santa Barbara Range now at our west. The heat had been intense; Spica seemed almost dying by then, for he is delicate (though so stubbornly fond of life he's overcome many a weakness as he matured). Reaching our place I gave him water and he rallied, while the other cats and kittens ran out all ready to explore and hunt. Only the mother of them all, Wisp, stalked the place with caution, full of distrust.

The three-by-eight metre shell of a building still had no window-glass... we'd have to buy some in San Pedro. In the meanwhile I hung up plastic sheets. There was as yet no floor, either, just building debris.

And then I ran out to see the horses, already there, having been sent up earlier. They seemed surprised; they all rushed up and began pushing each other to get nearer. I felt myself pushed over in the melee, but fell softly... it was all such a "floating" sensation, that afternoon, I hardly seemed aware of my own body. I was a "sprite", freed of the weight of the flesh. This must be what "resurrection" means... a resurgence of one's true vitality, bypassing bodily aches and needs!

### Timber trucks working the jungle

Yes, we have made ourselves the spiritual custodians of this entire vast valley and the mountain ranges shielding it from Progress, beyond. We don't want to "hold back the clock", but rather set an example of how one can live in a civilised way even in the wilderness, close to nature, loving her as she deserves.

True, we don't say to the natives, "Look at the way the mountain-sides of the Centinela shine in the sunset! And the pink of the clouds at the summits!" For they would gaze at it and look puzzled, then stare back at us tolerantly and say, "*Si! si!*" For these natives are reared on Spanish-American traditions, a Spanish way of worship, Spanish prides and belligerences. And, of course, "There are two Spains", as all the writers discussing the Spaniards are always pointing out.

The division into the "two Spains" was most strikingly visible during the civil war that Franco won. Out here, in Latin America, it is similarly visible, and you have the lordly folk trying to "keep the commoners in their proper place", while the rest of us try to find a place for ourselves in the sun, despite it all. I have identified with the children of this "second Spain", of course! The other, with its *hidlago* folk, has tremendous charm; they are bewitching; we have had many friends among them too. But they break my heart. And they cannot understand what I am trying to say, or what I've been trying to make them sense ever since we first reached South America, (Valparaiso, Chile) in 1936, after a two-month boat journey from China.

What the white man did in North America is apparent to all. Those native peoples who were there when the Europeans swarmed in, fought bravely (having failed to win the invaders to civilised ways by friendly means at the start - same as was attempted by the natives down here!). Those American Indians who are still found in the USA have, today, a newly recovered pride in their own old cultures, and at the same time they walk proudly within the cultures of their new fellow citizens, the "whites" and the "blacks" now filling the scene. Yes, the American Indian there remains aware of his heritage. Here, the same masticized natives deny their former "Indian" heritage, by now, even if their features proclaim it.

It is a splendid old strain, the American Indian one. IF Sylvia marries her local swain, I can yet look forward to grandchildren with a powerful current of "American Indian" in them too.

When we reached here, as I've mentioned, I felt at once I'd "come home". Skirting the Santa Barbara's western flanks, northwards, that first day, we reached the little town of Palma Sola, its little huts and sheds so widely scattered amid the fields of the agricultural folk, it

and one day - as promised in the Old Testament - we shall ever one "dwell under our own vine and fig tree", at peace.)

So I live with these symbols and I study them still, while Vadim and Sylvia and Tony live and act out the actual story as I tell it, in my own leisurely way, true....

Rubble & timber across the main road after a storm (see chapter 1)

Right then I dubbed our land in my thinking "Eternity Point". A Jumping-off Place! From here, "Eternity" must be right within arm's reach! And as for the highway bisecting the land, it was evidently our "Space-Time Highway, as I viewed it henceforth. (I didn't know as yet, back then, of the "Ridge of the Wild Pigs", very symbolic in the context of my "Map". All these things are for me like "actings-out" of the symbols I've been studying in the high and lonely Sierras of Cordoba, from our arrival there in 1961 till we left - years and years of full-time studying. (Archaic Chinese, echoes in American Indian tongues, etc.)

Eternity Point has a "mill that turns no longer", (really!, only the millstones survive) lying by the river at the foot of our land. A millstone can represent an Era. Next comes our fenced in valley-land where we live nowadays. Then comes the highway, down which timber trucks hurtle. After that, westwards, rises the Santa Barbara Range, and our view of its heights cut off by that "Ridge of the Wild Pigs" on our western horizon. As old Chinese symbols suggested (versus Biblical echoes), our present Era has definitely been "the Era of the Gardarene Swine"; we must visualise a procession of "pigs" going over the precipice (and symbolising in old Chinese writ also, "Legion", thus), each pig representing in turn "a year elapsed". And there were "about two thousand" of these Gadarene swine. So, not only has our "wedge of Eternity" that starts at the "River of Last Resorts" (Santa Rita presides over Last Resorts), managed to bisect (or be bisected by) a "Space-Time Highway", but there's that Ridge (out-of-sight from here), the terrible precipice of the Pedregosa Ravine, cutting our property in half. Above that rises the long-coveted-by-timber-men "Forest of Forever". Still higher is a plateau, "of the Condors".

I only recently dubbed that plateau "of the Condors", when I realised it still *is* the condors' domain.

For me it is all so very meaningful; I am willing to act out my role in it trustingly to the end, whatever I - as a pawn amongst all of us, pawns - may find I still must do. For I'm fascinated! What will be the next surprise to dawn on me? There are other symbols present... There's "a fig-tree that withered", leaning over our fence that divides us from Mudwall's valley-land. It's his fig-tree, and it used to have luscious figs, but now it's dried out altogether, and people tell us fig-trees are drying out all over, around here.

Meaning? "The Fig Tree of Human Knowledge" (for that's the symbolic meaning) has given mankind nothing but weapons of destruction, more and more powerful and deadly. "May there be no further fruit" from such a tree! (Even though figs are a delicious fruit,

## POETRY, TOO

### Sub-Station One

You call up and say:  
"Hello, how are you today?"  
I'm Dead and rottin away  
but my droid is pretty bright  
It answers "I'm all right!"

You celebrate the Bi-centennial  
And call up your oldest serving menial.  
My spirit is hardly congenial,  
But my droid is going strong;  
It accepts congratulations from the throng.

So when all is said and done  
I've been dust on the floor of sub-station one  
Twenty three revolutions of the sun.  
Your polite query is replied  
By the droid who inherited my pride.

- Cecelia Hopkins

(Untitled)

Between thy own  
unknowing pursuit  
of all that's mine  
and all I would  
become  
you have boxed me  
clever.  
Amidst my ascension  
and decline  
that ever should I have  
foretold  
these very ways of you  
I might yet be more bold  
than all the wasted  
sighs I drew

- Peter Brodie

## Rejuvenation

The power of time travel lies  
In the laughter of your eyes.  
It lifts me up and takes me away  
Ten years ago today.

The demons in the past  
Fade pale and fast,  
As we re-enter childhood  
To settle in the land of could.

But I cry out in fear  
For sixteen again dear,  
I have a heart to give  
And ten hard years to live

- Cecelia Hopkins

## Cosmosis

- to begin again, amongst the ashes of the old.

If you could have seen the stars that night  
exploding in profusion  
you would take your pick  
and grab a ship  
and head off, out to greet them

Over distance the human mind reels from  
to the fiery core of a new sun  
and give birth to a race  
from the vacuum of space  
be a God from the time left to come.

- Steve Proposch

## A Bit of the Mind of God

"Here is a bit of the mind of God," he said  
and let drop the digits  
calculus cascaded and my head swum -  
numbers have never been my forte  
but rather a weakness

a wall between me and the unsundered one

The lip of the universe smacked against my skull  
binary coded - balloons, figures made solid, burst

- Trent Jamieson

# THE OZ SCENE

by Ron Clarke

This column this time around will be a basic listing of fanzines received. It will include some overseas zines, but not many - as I don't receive all that many.

THE AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION BULLSHEET #24 (23.12.94), edited by Marc Ortlieb for the Australian National SF Foundation (isn't that a double something?), PO Box 215, Forest Hill, VIC 3131. Double-sided A4. Postal subs A\$5.50 for 10 issues. The BULLSHEET is a news-sheet which comes out something like every fortnight. It includes SF club meetings all over Oz, convention updates, and bits & pieces of news. Great for keeping up on the news as it breaks. (#25 & 26 just out, xeroxed rather than Roneo, makes for more readability. Also available on Internet.

SEVERED HEAD #5, 11/95, the organ of the Australian Horror Society (aka Melbourne Horror Society ~~trying to take over Oz~~). Edited by BJ Stevens. 28 pp. Free to members. This issue looks particularly thrown together - no pages are numbered and illos step outside columns. There is an Editorial, "Presidential", Horror Update, lettercol, Interview with Sydney artist kurtstone, a round-robin story, book reviews, an interview with Sydney fan Chris Sequeira, and several pages of cut-outs which Melbourne fans seem to find jolly fun.

SOCIOPATHIC TIMES, edited by Rod Marsden, PO Box 19, Spit Junction, NSW 2088. 12 pp. I'm not sure what ST is, but it is an adjunct to PROHIBITED MATTER. I think Rod created it so he can put it out without as much effort as PM but it keeps him in mailing comments. This issue has an editorial, an article by TJ Brooke - DAARKE WORLDE - A FUTURE REVEALED, a very short story by Steve Carter - BLACK DEVIL and another story, FEMOSAUR FRENZY by Don Boyd. The back cover is a collection of cut-outs....

WEBERWOMAN'S WREVENGE #47, 11/94, edited by Jean Weber, 7 Nicoll Ave, Ryde, NSW 2122. 24 pp. Available for the usual. WREVENGE reads like a diary to me, with notes about what Jean has done, articles by her friends such as New Zedder Lyn McConchie and is filled with photos. There are articles by Paula Johanson also about farm life and another by Paula re-telling a tale by Alex Schomburg. There is also a short lettercol and some books reviewed. Jean does a good job with WW, there is much packed into it, and her personality comes through strongly.

PROHIBITED MATTER #3, edited by Rod Marsden, address as above. 62 pp. It is sub-titled Crime, Horror, Science Fiction. Rod is interested in all these, in roughly that order. PM is mostly a fiction zine, and Rod has managed to fill it with mostly readable stories. The cover is by Carnage, and is of a long-clawed naked (busty) female with long incisors. The set-out is very professional and the fiction isn't bad, either. I always look out for Ant. Rydyr's cartoons - there are several in this issue. There is fiction by Bo Widerberg, Don Boyd, Steve Carter, Keith Rex, Denise Dumars, Lyn McConchie, Todd Mechklem, Rod Marsden and G. Ivanoff. No price given, but I would say \$6 would get you a copy. Cut-outs on the back page....

EOD #9, edited by Chris Masters, PO Box 5530, St Kilda Rd, Melbourne, VIC 3004. 98 pp. folded A4, A\$6.95. A very slick looking zine, which only needs a little page trimming of the edges. The sub-title is The Magazine of Horror. Chris did 500 copies of this - so they will be available for some time. There are a lot of contents listed - fiction, articles, poetry, letters, reviews and an editorial in which Chris says this is the all-but last issue. Set-out is nice and clean though the print is a little small, but sharp. Ant. Rydyr's story, THE MISTER POTATO HEAD INCIDENT I had read before (as a submission to COLD CUTS 2) which is one of the best stories in the issue. Blood curdling horror.

MUMBLINGS FROM MUNCHKINLAND 10 & 11, edited by Chris Nelson, 23 Henty St, Invermay, TAS 7248. Published late '94. 16 pp folded A4. This is the first time I've seen this zine, which is subtitled The Only West Australian fanzine published in Tasmania! Chris gives a round up of his life up till now, including his marriage to Megan. He also gives a bit (or more than a bit) of his family history, going back to his ancestors in the USA and including photos. There is an article titled WHO WAS J. ALFRED PRUFROCK, several film reviews, what the local priest said to Chris and Megan when he interviewed them, some locs, an article explaining Internet and some cut-outs....

BLOODSONGS #3, edited by Chris Masters & Steve Proposch. Subs A\$18 for 4 issues, o'seas air A\$28 for 4 issues, from PO Box 7530, St Kilda Rd, Melbourne, VIC 3004. BLOODSONGS is distributed professionally, but not much appears to be going NSW. It has a stiff two colour cover (black and red - how come these are the main colours for horror zines?) and has fiction - by such as Robert Hood, Kirstyn McDermott, Chris Kethcum, Edward Lee and Gary Bowen, plus interviews of Poppy Brite, Ed Lee and Steve Proposch. There is also poetry and seven columns, mostly dealing with horror videos and books. A lot of the material for this issue emanates from S. Darnbrook Colsen and originated from the USA. What happened to original Oz material? Though slated as the Sex issue, there isn't much in here on that subject - maybe an earlier issue of EOD took it all. Still the only "pro" horror zine in Oz.

THE FROZEN FROG #10, edited by Benoit Girard, 1016 Guillaume-Boisset, cap-Rouge, Quebec, CANADA G1Y 1Y9. 10/94. A folded-A4 genzine, with font size much the same as TM. This issue has an editorial by Benoit, feedback on how fans manage their fanzine collection, an idea to have a worldwide fannish party, part 2 of an article on the American Comics industry, a book review and locs. Of the 28 pp, those from page 11 on are locs. Available for the usual or \$2 per copy. A zine I always have pleasure reading - Benoit has a fresh approach and his zine shows this.

ETHEL THE AARDVARK #58, edited by Paul Ewings for the Melbourne SF Club (it used to be called ETHERLINE...) and is available free to members (\$15 standard, \$2 family and overseas, \$8 concessional, or trade). 18 pp, folded A3. This ish is undated, but I received it the 1st week of January. ETHEL is a clubzine, and has club info, as well as a Presidential, Editorial, and locs. This issue is atypical in that it prints a 9.5 page talk given by Race Matthews on the origins of the MSFC, back in the 1950's. I found the article very interesting, as it gives more background to the Molesworth History, which it mentions. Overseas fans will find the snippets of info on Victorian fan happenings of interest in giving them background to Oz events and fans.

CADMIUM RELEASE #8, edited by Joe and Jason Fisher, PO Box 5074, East Lismore, NSW 2480. 20 pp, folded A3. I received this in early January. Available \$12 for 6 issues, UK\$24. The Fisher's RED DWARF zine. There are eight sections/articles - an editorial, a news section, a Starbug profile by Jason which includes a sketch, locs, a review, an interview with Kate Orman author of THE LEFT-HANDED HUMMINGBIRD, a quiz, and an episode guide to PARIS. The cover is a photo of the Bug, and the backcover is a very good drawing of a character with a "H" on his forehead... CR is aimed at fans of RED DWARF (naturally) but others who have never seen the show will find that it will help them follow all this talking about the show. A very professional-looking zine.

HABAKKUK C3V4, edited by Bill Donaho, 626 58th St, Oakland, CA 49609, USA. US4to. Available for the usual or \$2. 78 pp. HABAKKUK 1 was a very small zine, then H 2 was bigger - now H 3 is a lot of work! 12/94. This issue has a long editorial by Bill about his doings for the last several months, there is an article by Greg Benford on SF art, book reviews by

Debbie Notkin, a fanzine review column by Ted White, a looking-backward article dealing mainly with Forry Ackerman by T. Bruce Yerke, an article titled GROWING UP IN TEXAS by Bill which details the changing sexual mores of the South, and a 45 page loccol, with font size smaller than in TM. Strewn throughout are small illos. What can I say about HABAKKUK - it'll at least be *nominated* for a Hugo next year.

MIMOSA 16, by Nicki & Richard Lynch, of PO Box 1350, Germantown, Maryland 20875, USA. 58 US4to pages, with stiff card covers. Mimeographed. The usual or US\$3. Published very 6 months. This issue had a strong flavour of fannish history about it, with articles by Forest J. Ackerman, Dave Kyle, Vincent Clarke, Walt Willis, Esther Cole. Roger Sims, Bob Tucker, Roy Lavender and Rusty Helvin. However, to counter those heavyweights of olde a little there are also articles by Mike Resnick Sharon Farber, with another medical adventure article, Ahrvid Engholm with more on Swedish fan history and lots of letters. Both Nicki and Richard have editorials, one at each end of the zine. The contents are very well written, but the reader must be into faanish history, events and people to really get something out of this zine.

BUSSWARBLE #22, ersatz rave by Michael Hailstone, of 14 Bolden St, Heidelberg, Vic 3084. 18 A4 pages. Top stapled. Available for the usual. BUSS uses SR1, which is a spelling reform language, and various readers are always complaining about it. I wasn't going to review BUSS 21, as Michael said that would be the last issue; but here is #22. This issue is a bit different from Michael's usual ones in that instead of being all self written (except for the LoCs), he has a book review by Dave Hyde. Then he has a Con report by Chester D. Cuthbert on Canadian. BUSSWARBLE is a zine that is a showcase for Michael's ideas, and one of his main ideas is that he believes in certain Conspiracy Theories. Even if you come in late on his editorials on such, you can pick up much of the discussions via the comments in the letter column. Which makes for a lively zine. The back page reprints some photos from Michael's childhood. (#23 also arrived, with articles on the asteroids striking Jupiter and his South American trip.)

CANBERRA SF SOCIETY NEWSLETTER, PO Box 47, Civic Square, ACT 2608. Edited by Katrina Weeden. A4, 21 pp. December 94, January 95. Subs Annual A\$24, Student A\$12. This is the first issue I've seen for some time - and they've got more than the usual fiction. There is info on the Society, a (very) short editorial, book reviews, a list of meetings in the ACT area and conventions. Then there is the fiction: THE ORATION by Graeme Eadie, A FORK IN THE FUTURE by David Crotty; THE BLACK NUN by Maria-Louise Stephens and HAIR TRIGGER by David Crotty. If you like reading Oz sf, this is a good source. And if you are thinking of visiting the nation's capital, you might like to go to a meeting or two and meet the people. Update: I've just received the February 1995 issue (in March) and the only story included this issue is Brent Lillie's CAN OF WORMS. I had intended to publish this, but my present policy of no fiction precluded this. CAN is one of the best pieces that Brent has written and is good enough for professional publication. If you want to see a sample issue of the NEWSLETTER, ask for this one - you won't regret it.

PROBE - SFCA, PO Box 781401, Sandton, 2146, South Africa. Clubzine, edited by Derek Hohls. R4.00 each. Folded A4, 74 pp with card covers. A neat zine, with LoCs, fiction, very good articles on SF, articles on comix, overseas zines received, video reviews and book reviews. As with any fanzine, PROBE is very good for the view it gives readers of the activities of fans in that country, and the fiction isn't bad, either. This is the only zine from South Africa I see - indeed the passing comments in the letter column throws up some interesting background information. I enjoy reading PROBE, and hope they can both afford to publish it, and find enough enthusiasm to continue.

SKINTOMB #6 edited by Rod Williams of PO Box 166, Roma St, Brisbane, QLD 4003. A3 with polished paper cover. Offset, 32 pp. No subs, but #s 1-5 are \$2 each, and #6 is \$4 post paid (air). The subheading says it all: Horror Reviews, Art, Fiction, Censorshit News. This is a very slick looking issue - Rod has obviously lavished much time on polishing it's looks. Much of the art is how own - and as I've published some of his smaller pieces, you may have some idea of how good he is. There are LoCs, articles on Horror: *Exploitation or Communication?*, which covers the horror artists, including Virgil Finlay and lots of reviews of films, book and horror

zines. The best thing in this issue is an interview by Rod of Steve Carter and Antoinette Rydyr in which they explain their life view.

ERG #128, edited by Terry Jeeves, 56 Red Scar Drive, Scarborough, N. Yorks, Y012 6RQ, England. Folded A4, 24 pp. Terry has been retired for some years and in this issue he announces that this is the last issue. ERG has been quarterly, so if you work back, you can tell that he has been publishing this zine for near on to 36 years without much of a break. This issue contains a longer-than-usual editorial, a fan fiction satire on Greek tragedy, an article on the X3 Stiletto (I had a model of one of these planes (I must have been about ten), but it the end it got broken in my early teens and I had to throw it away), an article by James Verran on the troubles rechargeable batteries can give, a one-page, one paragraph Chuntering by Ken F. Slater, several reviews, short reviews of zines received and letters. Too bad Terry has to give ERG up for lack of response - I'll miss it.

THYME #100, edited by Alan Stewart, PO Box 222, World Trade Centre, Melbourne, VIC 3005. A3, 44 pp. A\$12 a year, or the usual (with arranged trades). This is a rather large issue of this Oz newszine - it's celebrating it's 100th issue, and is chocka-block with reprinted articles from its (now) many years of publishing and editors. There are background articles from the individual editors (including Roger Weddall) after which are printed representative articles from its beginning in July 1981 through to the present day. If you are interested in Oz fanzines, or haven't a complete run of this zine, then this issue would be a good one to get hold of, as it is a characteristic sample of what has gone before. You will probably like it enough to subscribe. Update: 101 just arrived in my mail-box (along with the CSFS zine) and I've just enough space to add this: there is lots of good news and photos of fans - though Alan, the FSS no longer meets in Newtown. The print size the editor uses is about 10 point - which no doubt is one of the reasons Harry Warner locs it.

DRAGON'S BREATH, edited by Zine Kat, 13 Hazely combe, Arreton, Isle of Wight, PO30 3AJ, England. DB is a one A4 page zine listing and is titled "The International Small Press Review and Monthly newsletter". And yes,

## GARTH: Man of Flesh & Steel

by Andrew Darlington

Three frames a day.

Six times a week. 308 strips a year.

GARTH is Britain's longest running strip series. Launched by Steve Dowling and artist John Allard in THE DAILY MIRROR dated Saturday 24th July 1943 he's maintained an unbroken sequence of exploits that have outlasted just about everything. The Cold War arrived and melted, the Berlin Wall was erected and dismantled, Suez, Profumo, Cuba, Swinging London, Gary Glitter, the Vietnam War, Punk, Thatcher, the Gulf (and Robert Maxwell?) all came and went while Garth bravely and obviously ransacked time and space, traversing history, myth and the future. Generations have been born, grew up inheriting the habit of a daily Garth fix from their parents, passing it on, in turn, to their own brood, talking of Golden Ages and Classic Stories that generally coincided with their own adolescence.

Two Titan paperbacks - BOOK ONE: THE CLOUD OF BALTHUS, and BOOK TWO: THE WOMEN OF GALBA encapsulate a L'age D'or of four complete stories apiece from 1971/2 and 1972/3 respectively, by which time Jim Edgar was scripting to Frank Bellamy's inking. There were earlier collections, books produced in various shapes and formats collecting tales from other adolescences - GARTH: MAN OF MYSTERY (1946, with art by

it reviews small press zines, *all* small press zines it can get its hands on, not only including SF. The Zine Kat's rating range from Groove (10 points) to Anal (2 points). For an example of his rating - he gives THE MENTOR Mutant (6 points). If Overseas subs: send a dozen IRCs. If you want to expand your horizons, this zine might be for you.

THINGUMY BOB 13, edited by Chuck Connor, Sildan House, Chediston Rd, Wissett, Near Halesworth, Suffolk IP19 ONR, England. Folded A4, 31 pp with bloody tiny print. Chuck Connor's zine is one of the most individualistic to come of Pommyland. Page 2 has an extract of a US page of an incident when one bloke was trying to throw some light up a paper tube with a gerbil in it which had been shoved up his partner's rectum when his partner farted, the gas exploded and the gerbil was shot out. Severe burns were suffered. There follows an article on the Three Laws of Robotics, an interesting LoCCol, an article on Justice, then another article by a serving female slave, (who works for Olympia) and ends with some zine reviews. Dunno, Chuck, I think you've gone too far with the font zine - even with my new lenses I had trouble reading this, in good light. The font size is the only thing that I don't care for much in Chuck's zines. He always has interesting topics for discussion.

FOSFAX, edited by Tim Lane, Elizabeth Garrott and Joseph Major. Lisa Thomas is in there also. Is published by the Falls of the Ohio SF & F Assn., PO Box 37281, Louisville, Kentucky 40233-7281. 68 pp US 4to, ditto (with rather small print it is sometimes hard to read). Mostly sercon articles and editorials, with lots of book reviews, political (US) commentary and a *major* (30 page) LocCol. If you want to get a hold of the main political topics in the US today, this zine is for you. It seems that abortion, the President and guns are the ongoing topics there - at least they are herein. Several years ago there seemed to be more topics in the zine, but lately they seem to be narrowing down a lot to just about three. That's not to say there aren't others! But these are the main three. Luckily for the rest of the world the way the US is going is some red flag of what may happen elsewhere - they tend to "lead" events by several years. Oh well, we've been forewarned.

Dowling) and a later double-pack GARTH/ROMAN BROWN (also Dowling) both from Mirror Publications, plus JOURNEY TO JASON - a 1950 serial presented in "BIG PACKED PAGES! MORE READING!" by Atlas Publications, as well as DAILY MIRROR BOOK 1976 which both also re-ran the Bellamy years. They prompt inevitable comparisons that hurtle forward to the current Martin Ashbury serials. Doubts surface and subside. I read tales of Garth miniaturised and stowing away with Cortez, penetrating a force-field to the asteroidal "Islands of Kaa" in a plastic space capsule, or combating the freakishly evil Troll. That would have been 1963-ish. Now he battles Korkil on the moon, or sails with Jason on a legendary Argonauts re-tread. Reading these strips you wonder, were the female nipples always so pert and profuse, or is this the effect of Nineties tabloidism? But no - in the PEOPLE OF THE ABYSS, depicting a war seven miles beneath the Pacific between the topless nubile Azlans, and the Cthulhu-cloned octopod Homads, not only are the nipples in the Bellamy frames as numerous, but more lovingly drafted and detailed! While even earlier than that "naked females used to abound in Garth stories" Steve Dowling told FANTASTIC ADVERTISER. GARTH and JANE were both great morale boosters during the war and hence their popularity. We could get away with a lot more in those days, I might add".

Garth is big and simple. No surname. A Schwarzenegger on steroids. He's never represented anything, and there's not much personality to blur the action. It's this essential blankness that gives him adaptability. Garth is not science fiction, but he can be and frequently has been - here opposing odd spherical aliens led by Lord Balthus. He can also be Swords & Sorcery - kidnapped to the barbarian world of Galba with its beasts and gladiators. He can be a Western, and often is - as in SUNDANCE and GHOST TOWN in the Titan volumes. He's fought forces of the occult that are recognisably Lovecraftian, or cod Dennis Wheatley. He can operate in alternative time-streams where Nazi Germany won World War II. He can be a secret agent too, when the vogue is for the Spy Thriller or Bond movie. The hair lengthens and tousles almost imperceptibly through the late '60's. Gets cropped in the late '80's. Yet what impresses about all is the essential changelessness.

The GARTH CHECKLIST in the Titan editions details 111 stories with exotic titles like THE QUEST OF TH G-RAY (1946), SPACE-TIME TRAVELLER (1951), THE STATIC ZONE (1961), THE WEB OF DIONARA (1968),

THE BRIDES OF JENGHIZ KHAN (1974), THE MIND STEALERS (1975), and LORDS OF SPACE 1984; through artists and art-teams from the late Stephen Philip Dowling (1943-1968), Dick Hailstone (1946-48), John Allard (1943-46 and 1949-72), Bellamy (71-76 and Asbury (1977 on), while scripting chores encompass Don Freeman (1943-52), High McClelland (one story - INVASION FROM SPACE (1952/3), Peter O'Donnell (1953-65), and Edgar (1966 on). Throughout these changes there are certain constants. His mentor is the absurdly Gallic and occasionally foppish Professor Lumiere who explains plots and interjects science if and when needed, usually punctuated by "Mon Ami", "Bonne Chance, Mes Enfants" or other "French-Phrases-for-Tourists" expletives. He debuted in the 1944 story THE SEVEN AGES OF EARTH as the psycho-analyst who explores Garth's previous lives. And Lumiere has stuck around ever since. And then there's Astra, the "Last Goddess" who joined Garth in 1957 as spirit visitation, muse, lover, and ... goddess. She's stayed, performing that bizarre role intermittently ever since. THE LAST GODDESS achieved comic book status in the 1958 doublepack shared with Jim Holdaway's ROMEO BROWN.

Philip Harbottle, Garthophile and 1994 scripter, Garth completist and authority on 50's fantasy culture par excellence, suggests the strip was originally denied serious contender status because of its close Superman overtones. An accusation confirmed by Comics connoisseur Denis Gifford who calls Garth "The MIRROR's answer to Superman, a musclebound hunk of a hero who came drifting in from the sea" (THE INTERNATIONAL BOOK OF COMICS). To David Kyle in his PICTORIAL HISTORY OF SCIENCE FICTION Garth is also "a strip character similar to Superman... a Greek god reincarnated (who) travels time having noble adventures". Such descriptions are unfair. "Their dismissal", claims Harbottle, "is based on a myth". Garth's strength is prodigious. His physique is that of several Rambo's simultaneously. But there's nothing supernatural about him. No superpowers. His origins are mystic - washed ashore on a raft and revived by Gala, a native girl. A man of no memory and no past. But although the brainchild of Steve Dowling, it was left to Freeman to develop and build this idea into a concept capable of running through the subsequent decades. It was he who backtracked the story through THE SAGA OF GARTH, and took it forward into space, antiquity and the future. In an interview republished in FANTASY ADVENTURE (from a 1965 SPOTWOBBLE fanzine) O'Donnell explains what he saw as his own role in the character's evolution; "in the early days Garth was more like a mythological hero with a cape and wings on his boots. When I took over in

1952 I introduced a scientific element into the stories, but he still maintains his fantasy-based settings. The readership won't stomach too much technical jargon, so I'm also trying to make Garth more human with human problems and not just technical ones".

Although undoubtedly a Man of Steel, Garth is first and foremost a Man of Flesh as well. But perhaps it's Klun of Galba who best defines Garth's timelessness: "there is a *true* man", he exclaims, "strength allied to goodness!"

O'Donnell transferred from rival tabloid THE DAILY SKETCH (where he'd written TUG TRANSON) and took Garth through the 50's, until he quit to concentrate, with Jim Holdaway, on his own glam-Detective creation MODESTY BLAISE... which is also now available in Titan edition. Then came Frank Bellamy - controversial because everything he touches becomes Bellamy-esque. He took Frank Hampson's DAN DARE and totally redesigned it. He does much the same to Garth; his illustrations are beautifully detailed, immaculately conceived - but more Bellamy than they are Garth. Harbottle points out that this is "the most untypical period of his existence", and that "any true devotee of the strip could have told Titan that this period reflected its creative nadir" (in Denis Gifford's ACE magazine). Bellamy sneaked into the MIRROR initially with a graphic centre-spread of the first Moon Landing, graduating to political cartoons, including an optimistic St George "McGovern" vanquishing the dragon of "President Nixon". By then he'd left EAGLE where he'd built his iconoclastic reputation, and gone on to illustrate THUNDERBIRDS for TV 21, as well as RADIO TIMES spot-art and DOCTOR WHO. He then ran Garth until his premature death in 1976. Former radio playwright Jim Edgar, who's first Garth script was THE BRAIN commencing 23 April 1966, had previously plotting experience with Western strips - WES SLADE for the SUNDAY EXPRESS, and the TV adaptation GUN LAW for its daily counterpart. In partnership with Martin Asbury they've taken Garth into colour and into the 90's, drawn through time and incarnations by love, sex, totems, symbols, talismen, hexes, masks, and other "spooky boondoggle" stuff. Today he looks no older, and he's still hanging tough.

Garth has adventured through five decades at just three frames a day, six times a week, 308 strips a year. Connoisseurs can pick their vintage. Their own classic stories of their personal Golden Age.

Titan Books promise more reprint volumes to come which will widen choice. In the meantime, these Bellamy editions make a pretty neat starting point.

**A HISTORY OF AUSTRALIAN  
FANDOM  
1935-1963  
by Vol Molesworth  
CHAPTER SIX.**

Shortly after the Third Australian Convention, F.S.S. members P. Glick and Lorelei Giles had married and gone to live in Melbourne, Glick seeking six months "leave of absence" from the Society, his wife allowing herself to become unfinancial. The couple returned to Sydney to live, and attended the first meeting of the F.S.S. held in 1955, #211 on February 6. Glick reported that the whole attitude was deplored in Melbourne, and urged the Society to support the Fourth Australian Convention, which the North Shore Futurian Society was planning for the Easter Weekend, March 18-19-20. As the F.S.S. was in an unenviable financial position, it might pay to "turn the other cheek" and seek reconciliation with the breakaway group.

Molesworth said Glick had been absent too long to be "au fait" with current events in Sydney. The breakaway group had rented the Society's earlier meeting place, had unlawfully used the word "Futurian", and had vilified the Society in its publications. He denied that there was a feud between the two organisations, and claimed that the whole affair had been carried forward by the animosity of the people at the Bridge Club.

Glick said people had "heard" they would not be accepted to the Society if they were seen with regular attendees at the Bridge Club. It was moved Glick, seconded Brunen, that "this Society does not oppose any Convention being held in 1955 by the N.S.F.S. and will take

no action against any member supporting the above Convention." This was carried by seven votes to three (two abstaining). A motion by Molesworth, seconded by Mason-Cox, that "the executive publish a list of persons banned from the clubroom or F.S.S. membership" was carried by a similar majority.

In the week between this and Meeting #212 (13 February 1955) Glick approached a number of former F.S.S. members and urged them to re-offer their support. The result was that 21 fans turned up to Meeting #212. The influx alarmed some of the executive council, who thought Glick was trying to "stack" the meeting.

The Chairman (A. South) declared that the meeting was to be held *in camera*, and that only financial members could remain. Glick moved suspension of standing orders to permit nominations for membership to be received. Martin attempted to second the motion, but was not permitted to do so because his membership status was in doubt. The motion was then seconded by Leggett, and carried by eight votes to two (one abstention).

Applications for membership were then submitted by F. Chaplin, N. Hemming, B. Gore, B. Finch, and Mrs. Gore.

The first applicaiton, (Chaplin) was refused by one vote. The next (Mrs. Gore) was accepted by one vote. On the next two applications (Gore and Finch) seven votes were recorded for and against, and the Chairman cast his vote in the negative, refusing the applications.

Three more applications for membership were then submitted (Mrs. L. Molesworth, Miss N. Hemming, and K. Martin), each of which was successful.

Miss Smith's resignation from the position of Treasurer was then accepted, and Mason-Cox elected in her place.

Molesworth said the meeting had been called to consider the club's financial position. The clubroom for the past three months had shown a decided loss, the average attendance being ten. "The problem now arises whether a move out of these premises is called for", he said.

Glick said many of the old members had ceased to support the club because of the feud it was contributing to against the Bridge Club group. "Many neutral members who have not specifically allied themselves with either group have been supporting the Bridge Club



under the impression that, despite the odd publication SCANSION, it has taken little action against this Society, while this Society, via a banned list and threats of banning, has insulted many of these neutral members' friends. The only way we can get their support is to stop issuing a banned list," he said.

When the Chairman pointed out that there was no banned list, Glick replied that people had been banned in fact, whether or not any list was published. Mrs. Gore claimed that she had been shown a list by Stone on which were the names of Burke, Haddon, Veney, Nicholson, Bos, Hubble, two others, and her own name.

Glick said the Futurian Society, in his opinion, had been responsible for the split in Sydney fandom, and partly responsible for keeping the feud going. He believed that if the Society took the first step, the split could be ended, which would solve the Society's financial problems.

Molesworth moved, as a test motion, that the Society abandon its clubroom premises. This was seconded by Mason-Cox, and defeated by 10 votes to 2. Those present were urged to recruit new members and endeavour to bring old members back to support the clubroom.

Twenty people attended the next meeting, #213, on February 28, 1955. Applications for membership by Gore, Finch, E. Butt, Miss N. Williams and Mrs. Mason-Cox were all accepted unaminously. Glick moved that the Society elect a number of delegates to the Fourth Australian Convention to attempt to arrive at an amicable settlement of the differences with the Bridge Club group in open debate under the chairmanship of an impartial debate. This was seconded by Mrs. Glick.

Molesworth then informed the Meeting that on the previous Thursday night he had made a personal visit to the Bridge Club to apologise to the breakaway group and to invite them back. At a table near the doorway were seated Glick, David Cohen, and Finch. When asked who was in charge, Cohen had replied: "I am. I pay the rent and take full responsibility." Cohen then refused Molesworth permission to speak to the people at the Bridge Club, and three times ordered him off the premises.

Martin said the fact that Cohen was "something of a paranoid and had an intense personal dislike of Molesworth" was no an attack on the Futurian Society itself. Martin said Molesworth had contributed quite a stroke towards the healing of the feud by getting thrown out of the Bridge Club. "We now have reached the position where the Bridge Club is disgusted with the actions of their landlord, and we can now go on with a fair chance of healing this feud," he added.

It was pointed out that at the Third Australian Convention a motion had been passed at the request of Nicholson that a conference be held between the two segments to settle their differences. At the Futurian Society meeting immediately following the Convention, the secretary had been directed to write to the Bridge Club group asking where and when they would like the conference to be held. No reply had been received.

The motion to send delegates to the Fourth Australian Convention was carried with 14 votes in favour, none against, and seven abstentions. At the following meeting (13 February) it was decided to send five delegates - Glick, Martin, Mason-Cox, Molesworth and Traeger.

Meanwhile, organisation of the Convention itself was being done principally by Arthur Haddon. The North Shore Futurian Society leaders - Hubble and Bos - had been criticised in SCANSION for failing to keep up a satisfactory library service at the Bridge Club, and had done little to arrange the Convention which their club had offered to organise.

The Convention was held at Dunbar House, Watson's Bay, over the weekend, March 18-19-20. It began with a fancy dress ball on the Friday night, attended by 42 people. On Saturday morning, about 30 attended a get-together at which original artwork from the British magazine NEBULA and NEW WORLDS was displayed.

The Saturday afternoon session was attended by 61 people. Dr. John Blatt spoke on "Science and Science Fiction" and Mr. John

Spence on "Transportation in the Future". Guest of honour, British author A. Bertram Chandler and Dr. Blatt then answered questions from the floor. On Saturday night two full-length science fiction films were screened to an audience of 51.

Only about 20 fans turned up for the auction on Sunday morning. On the Sunday night Mrs. Gore's theatrical group, now styling themselves "The Arcturian Players", staged Norma Hemming's play, MISS DENTON'S DILEMMA, to an audience of 45.

The business session on Sunday afternoon was attended by 43 delegates, with Pat Burke in the Chair. Reports were presented on Melbourne Activities (J. Keating), Adelaide (Miss Finch), Brisbane (Veney) and Canberra (Molesworth). Butt reported that an organisation had been formed in the Newcastle-Cessnock area known as the Hunter Valley Futurian Society, but that it had ceased activity when he left Newcastle and John Jvile later left Cessnock. Miss Simmons, reporting on the Vertical Horizons group, said it was no longer in existence and publication of VERTICAL HORIZONS had ceased.

David Cohen then delivered a report in which he said he was "solely responsible" for the Thursday Night Bridge Club Group, which used premises provided by him. Asked by Glick if he would hand over control of these rooms to a committee of members, Cohen said he had no intention of doing so because he had borne the financial burden for over 12 months. He intended to run the clubroom as it suited him, and if people did not like it they need not attend. He added that certain people (whom he did not name) would never be welcome.

Ian Crozier, of Melbourne, was asked to take the chair, being a "neutral". Burke then moved, seconded Nicholson, that all organisations in Sydney disband within three to four weeks and that all their resources be put into a common pool. After considerable discussion, the motion was withdrawn. Molesworth moved, seconded Traeger, that the Convention agree that there shall be one club in Sydney. Veney then moved, seconded Nicholson, that the word "room" be inserted after "club" in the motion. The amendment was carried by 29 votes to 3, and as the motion by 29 votes to one. It was then resolved by 33 votes to one that a conference should be held in the F.S.S. Clubroom on Monday, April 4.

The attendance book of the Taylor Square clubroom shows that the conference was held, with Baldwin, Butt, Brunen, Mrs. Gore, Haddon, Norma Hemming, Hubble, Leggett, Mason-Cox and wife, Molesworth and wife, Nicholson, South, Thurston, Turnbull, Veney, and Norma Williams present. Unfortunately there are no written records of proceedings. The 31st issue of SCANSION (11 August 1955), edited by Burke, reported that the meeting was "a dismal failure, marred by all the usual intolerance and clashes of personality that have wrecked Sydney fandom."

With the schism unhealed, the rival Thursday Night meetings continued in Sydney, with the inevitable result that on June 2, the Futurian Society was forced by lack of funds to leave the Taylor Square clubroom. The Library was moved to the home of Alan South.

The Bridge Club group was, however, also suffering from the schism. While Cohen continued to pay the rent, many of his supporters (including Nicholson, Burke, Veney and Haddon) no longer turned up, and by the end of 1955 attendance had fallen to six. Cohen took over the library of the North Shore Futurian Society, to run it as a business, and nothing more was heard of the Society (SCANSION, #33, 20 October 1955).

Twenty issues of SCANSION were published during the year, the editors being M. Baldwin, Burke, Earls, Fisher, Glick, Haddon, Hubble, Nicholson, R. Sebel, and Norma Williams.

The failure of the rival groups to reach agreement on April 4 prompted seven of the leading Sydney fans to form a new organisation, the Albion Futurian Society. At the inaugural meeting (10 April 1955), Arthur Haddon was elected Director, Vol Molesworth Secretary, and Neville Cohen Treasurer. The group continued to meet in members' homes throughout the year. It decided from the outset not to endeavour to recruit members, hire public premises, or publish a fanzine.

At the end of 1955, only nine members remained in the Futurian Society of Sydney. South was operating the library in his own home, but borrowing was slight. During the year Graham Stone published four issues of SCIENCE FICTION NEWS, in May, July, September and December.

Outside Sydney activities continued to flourish. In Melbourne, weekly meetings were held, averaging ten, and in October the group finally moved into its own premises at 168 Lennox St., Richmond. The library now had a permanent home. Throughout the year ETHERLINE continued its record-breaking run, appearing fortnightly under the editorship of Ian Crozier, and containing up to 44 pages an issue. ETHERLINE was now established as *the* news magazine of Australian fandom, featuring news from overseas and all centres of Australia as well as Victoria.

The Adelaide Science Fiction Group also continued to meet throughout the year. At the annual general meeting held on July 3, Norm Kemp was elected President, Dennis Walsh Vice-President, Mrs. Joyce Secretary, R. Kemp Treasurer, Hal Nicholson and Dennis Walsh Librarians, Margaret Finch secretary. The Library had grown to 1620 items.

The Brisbane Science Fiction Group also continued to meet throughout the year in the home of the Tates, meetings enlivened (and swollen) by visits by British author, Arthur C. Clarke.

The Futurian Society of Canberra held several meetings during 1955, these becoming more social gatherings than formal business sessions.

\* \* \*

For 20 years Sydney had been the "hub" of Australian fandom, but after the internal disruption of 1954 and the failure to heal the breach in 1955, the initiative passed to the other capital cities and to Melbourne in particular.

For the next four years (1956-1959) the Futurian Society of Sydney was kept alive largely by the efforts of one person - Graham Stone. When South found he could no longer keep the library at his home, Stone moved it first to his own home, and then at his own expense rented an office in the city, where he installed the library and a duplicator. Stone spent the next few years slowly building up a group of library borrowers, doing cataloguing and research, and issuing irregular newsletters and booklets. Issues of the quality SCIENCE FICTION NEWS appeared in May, September,<sup>1</sup> and November 1956; April, July, and October 1957; January, March, May, and October, 1958.

Meeting #217 of the Society was held in a coffee inn in Sydney on November 5, 1959 - the 20th anniversary of its establishment. There were only three members still financial - Stone, South, and Molesworth. Stone said that at the last meeting, held on December 14, 1955, the constitution had been amended to make three a quorum. He said that during the past four years he had made it his business to safeguard the property of the Society and to see that its name did not die out. He added that he had enrolled 66 associate members who used the library but had no right to vote. The meeting carried a resolution endorsing Stone's action. Molesworth was then elected Director, South Treasurer, and Stone Secretary-Librarian.

Under the constitution, a person who had completed 10 years' continuous membership automatically became a Life Member. Molesworth and Stone were qualified, and South became so in 1963.<sup>2</sup>

The Albion Futurian Society stopped holding formal meetings by the end of 1955, and turned into a group of friends visiting each other's homes.

<sup>1</sup> *I should have given it up much earlier and gone back to a cheaper format, but it's easy to say that now. (G.S.)*

<sup>2</sup> *Later Laura Molesworth, Michael McGuinness and Ian Driscoll also became Life Members. (G.S.)*

Throughout the whole of this period, fans continued to meet at the Bridge Club on Thursday nights under the patronage of David Cohen. Only two issues of SCANSION appeared in 1955, one in January (edited by Royce Williams), the other in December (Michael J. Baldwin). Baldwin, assisted by Hubble, put out three issues of EXTANT, a poorly produced roneod foolscap magazine; and two new fans, Peter Jefferson and Roger Sebel, produced MC<sup>2</sup> in a folded foolscap format.

Melbourne had been given authority by the Third Australian Convention to organise the Fifth Convention in 1956. The date selected for the "Olympicon" was December 8 and 9, 1956. To raise funds, the organising committee decided to sell "registrations" for 10/- Aust, 7/6 stg., or \$1 USA, which entitled the subscriber to receive a badge, the Convention Booklet and the Convention Report.

At Easter, a gathering of fans was held in Canberra to discuss plans for the Convention. Those attending were Burke, Dillon, Molesworth and wife, Frederickson, Baldwin, Nicholson, Hubble and Fisher (from Sydney), Crozier, Latimer, Lyell, McCubbin and wife, McLelland, Mortimer, Salgram, Binns and Keating (Melbourne), and Bennett, Jones and Porter (Canberra).

Meetings of the Melbourne group continued throughout the year, but pressure of planning for the Convention made ETHERLINE fewer in pages and irregular in appearance, without departing from its high standard of layout and presentation. No Sydney news is found in these issues, and only occasional reports from Brisbane and Adelaide.

During 1956, the first overt sign of dissension occurred in the Melbourne group. Leo J. Harding published a roneod 4th fanzine, ANTIPODES, outside the AFPA group, and drew some criticism in ETHERLINE for some of his remarks.<sup>3</sup>

The Adelaide Science Fiction Group continued to meet during 1956, although with reduced numbers. The library, which had started with 183 items, had now climbed to 2113 items. Annual elections resulted in Lyall Mason becoming President, Norm Kent Vice-President, Robin Kemp Treasurer, Mrs. Joyce Secretary and Librarian, and Bob Simons Assistant Librarian.

The Fifth Australian Convention was held at Richmond Town Hall. No fewer than 147 had registered, the breakdown being 87 in Victoria, 24 in U.S.A., 19 in N.S.W., five from Queensland, four from Tasmania, two from South Australia, and five from elsewhere. Attendance ranged from 31 on Saturday morning, to 112 on Sunday evening.

On Saturday morning there was an inspection of displays put together by Mervyn Binns and Keith McLelland. In the afternoon, Chairman McCubbin introduced the Guest of Honour, Brisbane writer Frank Bryning, who spoke on "Some Things We Should Expect From Science Fiction". This was followed by Melbourne writer Wynne Whiteford on "Science Fiction", and Melbourne radio script-writer Harvey Blanks on "S.F. from a Radio View". On Saturday night Barry Salgram produced a play by Norma Hemming, BALANCE OF POWER.

Following the auction on Sunday morning, the Business Session was held in the afternoon. Reports were given on the Brisbane group (Bryning), Tasmania (Frank Hasler), South Australia (Mrs. Joyce), Melbourne (McCubbin) and AFPA. No reports were received from the Futurian Society of Sydney, the Sydney Bridge Club, the Futurian Society of Canberra, or West Australia.

Salgram moved, seconded Santos, that the next Convention be held in Melbourne in 1958. The motion was carried unanimously. Baldwin (Sydney) said that in his opinion there was no reasonable organisation in Sydney able to carry out the organising of the event.

On Sunday evening two feature films were screened.

In the issue of ETHERLINE reporting the Convention (#80) Crozier announced that there could be a break in publication until April,

<sup>3</sup> *Apparently the undesirables in the Melbourne group had been kept quiet. (G.S.)*

1957, to give the editorial staff a holiday. When #81 did appear he announced that publication would in future be every three weeks instead of fortnightly.

Shortly after this, the Melbourne Science Fiction Club opened its doors at the St. James Building, in Little Collins Street. The club was to open on Tuesday and Thursday nights. The group had renovated the room, erected bookshelves, and moved its property from Lennox St., Richmond. Sydney's history was repeating itself in Melbourne.<sup>4</sup>

\* \* \*

The Sixth Australian Convention was held at Richmond Town Hall, Melbourne, on April 5-6, 1958. This time 98 people registered, the actual attendance ranging from 30 on Saturday afternoon to 45 on Sunday night.

On Saturday morning an auction was held, and in the afternoon, Mr. Barry Clarke, of the Victorian Astronomical Society, spoke on "The Canals of Mars". Following his address, reports were received on Melbourne and Brisbane activities. McCubbin reported that about a dozen people were turning up regularly at the club, and there were about 30 others at irregular intervals. The core would be quite prepared to meet in each other's homes, if and when required, and thus evade the continual financial drain and worry of the clubroom, which was being kept open as a service to fans. Bryning reported that about five or six fans were meeting once a month in Brisbane, but nobody had the time to do any recruiting or organising.

No reports were received from other fan groups in Australia.

On Sunday, a barbecue was held.

\* \* \*

Between 1959 and 1963 Graham Stone operated the Futurian Society of Sydney almost as a one-man band, although occasional help was contributed by Alan South and Kevin Dillon. In addition to opening the city office every Saturday afternoon for library borrowing, Stone carried out postal lending, published NOTES AND COMMENTS, library catalogues, and newsletters.

In August, 1963, Stone was offered a job in Canberra. Meeting #218 of the Society was held in a coffee inn on August 14, to confer Life Membership on South, and to elect Kevin Dillon to membership. Dillon agreed to look after the office and library when Stone departed for Canberra.

- Vol Molesworth -

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<sup>4</sup> *Not really. They moved to a better location, and continued there for some years. (G.S.)*

HAPPIER TIMES:

Back Row: Bruce Perdy, Don Lawson, George Dovaston

2nd Row: Brian Finch, Graham Stone, John Earls, Lyell Crane

Front Row: Jack Leggett, Clive Mellor, Lorain Gyles, Kevin Dillon

FUTURIAN SOCIETY OF SYDNEY  
BOX 4440, GPO, SYDNEY.

## VOLTAIRE MOLESWORTH, 1925-1964

Vol Molesworth died on July 14, after a long illness, at the age of 39; survived by his wife Laura and children David and Lynette.

Vol was a foundation member of the Futurian Society of Sydney, one of the group who made the first real start in Australian science fiction organisation in 1939, and was an active fan in the pre-war tradition in the brief early phase in Sydney during the war, producing the fan magazines LUNA and COSMOS and contributing to others. Later he had some SF stories published locally (besides detective novels) and many will remember his Stratosphere Patrol series among their earliest futuristic reading.

He led the 1947 revival of the FSS and continued an active member into the middle 'fifties, taking a leading part in three Conventions sponsored by the Society in Sydney. After the decline of activities he took a back seat but continued as our President. His services to the movement were many and various, ranging from maintaining contacts overseas in the years when Australia was a remote outpost indeed, through his extensive correspondence with magazine editors, clubs and individual scientifictionists which made him the best known Australian in the field known abroad, to his articles on SF in literary and student publications.

But science fiction was only one facet. His adult life was a full one, although his health was always precarious and there were many spells in hospital; he refused to be an invalid, and led an active life in spite of his diabetes. He reported and edited for newspapers in Sydney and, briefly, during the war, Newcastle and Melbourne, and later edited a number of trade journals and house organs. In his own time he had a brilliant academic career, graduating from Sydney with honours in Philosophy and preceding to M.A. with honours. He taught logic for the Workers' Educational Association, was actively interested in adult education affairs generally. He wrote two books, LOGIC FOR BEGINNERS and LANDMARKS IN LOGIC. In the mid-fifties he appeared on television frequently in panel discussion programmes.

He operated a private press, in the early 'fifties, which was partly devoted to SF - it gave us Larnack's Checklist of Australian Fantasy and one part of a planned history of Australian activities - but mainly to helping minor poets to break into print. He used the Futurian Press imprint professionally to publish a book on the 1956 Olympic Games.

He held a radio amateur's license. His unusual combination of experience gave him unusual qualifications for the job of Manager of the University of New South Wales' educational radio station; but early in 1963 he resigned to take a lecturing position and work of a Ph.D in Business Administration. A byproduct of his work was the book FACTORS IN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION, published recently.

And then last October came the coronary occlusion from which he never fully recovered.

It is harder to speak of Vol himself as many were privileged to know him, and will remember him. His was a strong and unique personality not to be met with again, to our loss. He despised complacency and triviality, and set himself and others high standards. Those able to think beyond the immediate horizon and concerned to make the most of themselves, as he was, were best able to enjoy his friendship.

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(Cont. from p. 36): THE HISTORY OF AUSTRALIAN FANDOM 1935-1963 by Vol Molesworth was delightful surprise and I was intrigued to find that there had been SF&F fans as long ago as then. (14.9.94)

MARIA-LOUISE STEPHENS, PO Box 138, Monbulk, VIC 3793. [So far] I have only read Mae Strelkov's letter... I took my atlas and found Cordoba and can visualise now where Mae lives. I also want to write to her, as I

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think we have a lot in common. It doesn't matter if she doesn't receive it for a long time - it's just that I feel I want to "talk" to her. (15.12.94)

C. R. ROSS, PO Box 268, Mossman, QLD 4873. I forgot to mention how much I enjoyed the "story" by Mae Strelkov. I have visited (if that's the word for it) South America, though very much further North, and most of

my contacts were with the Potomonas, who incidentally, have *no* mechanical ability in the least! You should have seen them trying to steer a Jeep down a runway! ... What a gas!! (19.12.94)

**JOHN FRANCIS HAINES, 5 Cross Farm, Station Road, Padgate, Warrington WA2 DQG, UK.**

I've been a DR WHO fan since the programme started, so Andy Darlington's terrific article was a real treat. Yes, Tom Baker was the best Doctor - you sometimes felt his character was working to his *own* agenda, and not necessarily just those of Earth. Yes, it all started to fall apart with Peter Davison and I thought the Sylvester McCoy stories tried to be as impenetrable as possible, with as many unsympathetic characters as they could find, and with its constant shifting in the schedules, a real attempt to bury the show by making it as hard as possible just to find it!

I think the time travel story is possibly ALL YOU ZOMBIES by Heinlein, a truly excellent one, bettered possibly by IF THIS IS WANNETKA, YOU MUST BE JUDY by (I think) F. M. Busby - strictly not time travel, but of a person who experiences his life not as a linear temporal track, but jumps unpredictably along the whole life span, back and forth.

Two mysteries other readers may be able to clear up for me - does anyone out there remember a post nuke novel called PIG ON A LEAD, possibly by someone called Ingrams - I read it years ago and have never come across it since, but my memories of it are very good. And, one of my all time favourite novels is Wolfe's LIMBO 90 - mystery is this, my Penguin edition says it is abridged, very surprising considering Penguin's otherwise excellent track record for printing complete texts - what am I missing all these years? I've never come across the "unexpurgated text" - it's also a novel that, to my knowledge, has never been reissued, a pity 'cos it's a belter! Though first published in 1952, it contains so much that is relevant today, I'm really surprised it's so little known.

Bill Congreve has a real point about the lack of potential for much in the way of new plots - there are only supposed to be half a dozen "proper" plots, and they were all used by the Greek dramatists two thousand years ago! Yes, *sf* *must* develop if it's not to engage in endless retreats, but the development is going to have to be in terms of style, characterisation, and depth - yes, I'm afraid it's time to start learning from mainstream fiction. There are hopeful signs - take a look at the work of Iain M. Banks, Kim Stanley Robinson, Garry Kilworth and Gregory Benford for starters. What *sf* *must* NOT do is follow the mainstream novel into oblivion and Booker prizes with unreadable epics about suburban angst. (14.10.94)

**STEVE SNEYD, 4 Nowell Place, Almondbury, Huddersfield, W. Yorkshire HD5 8 PB, England.**

Re John Haines' dissection of the "fen" misusage, I strongly suspect that yet again "the verdict of folksingers is irreversible", ie is here to stay. I must admit I rather like it, as brings to mind that most

**WAHF:** Rod Williams, Roy Chambers, B. J. Stevens, Rachel McGrath-Kerr, Craig Sunderland, Jim Verran, Tjohn Millard, rent Jamieson, Robert Frew, Danuta Shaw, Steve Proposch & Cecelia H.

SFnal landscape, the fen country of East Anglia, vast empty drained flatland under an even vaster dome ideally suited for following the advice at the end of that '50s trash SF film classic, KEEP WATCHING THE SKIES. Don't suppose whoever coined it had that in mind, though.

Perhaps I'd got lost somewhere in the minutiae of Australian Fandom history Chapter 4, but was baffled by the caption of the Molesworth and Veney photo - what was the significance of them both claiming it was "fake", what happened next etc?.. a story in itself that seemed untold, the caption "raising more questions than it answered", to quote the old cliché.

Re Don Boyd's mention of changelings, one very evocative way of detecting them was apparently their habit, when thinking themselves unobserved, of indulging in fantastic feats of conjuring, juggling, etc... in fact "The Legerdemain of Changelings" turned up as title of a collection of my poems Stateside yonks ago, to intrude a personal note.

GUARDIAN other day had a note on origin of "larrikin"... from Irish English, ie their usage of "larking"... larking about in turn a variant of old English "laking" - playing (which survives in the Yorkshire word "laike" = play, though that has now got other usages, as eg to laike - to play guitar).

Vinç Clarke a bit since gave me the fascinating info that there was actually one set of SF cigarette cards, prewar. they were edited by someone with the resounding name of Idrisyn Oliver Evans, who as well as being a civil servant, and a member of a Social Creditist youth organisation called the Kibbe Kift, was also a poet... who, among his few SFnal poems, or "Futuristics" as he called them, wrote in '54 what may be the first poem ever to use the (later frequent) device of purporting to be the last broadcast of the start of nuclear war.

Mae Strelkov's description of her land has true SOW - another proof that, to find "alien landscapes", just look round our planet. The ripping-off of current from street lamps is not unheard of here, though, so that kind of opportunism isn't alien in the same way as a landscape straight out of Tolkien.

Very glad to see Bill Congreve pointing out the affinity of SF and "magic realism" (to my mind both stem from the true original, but now "alternative", mainstream) - and particularly for the Carrollian "nonsense that exposes deeper truth" in the line "That hovers like a dream between our real." You *can't* say that, wd be the pendant response, you can't be "between" a single object... yet in fact that wording encapsulates the whole ambiguity and diffusion of reality, so that illusionary manifestation can so readily veil one "internal" facet from another.

Verran's name-making article is a very handy brief description of the process and the tricks available (tho he didn't mention Tuckerisation, is using names of folk you know and know won't sue!) - a handy intro to use in writing workshops (credited to him, natch). Andy Darlington's DR WHO overview was both a feast of nostalgia and an excellent reminder how much my memory had garbled of the sequence, up to the point when they moved it midweek and I stopped watching. The Gothic element is/was indeed very present, an inspiration to future horror writers at least as much as to future SF ones. (20.10.94)

Andrew Darlington's piece brought back memories of comics about zombies from the crypt with radio active brains and lips and hands dripping decay-slime being surreptitiously handed round the playground at a '50s village school... the mentions of Wertham bring up his odd ambiguity, censorvillain in one light, yet his locs in Dann Brazier's zine TITLE in the 70s were, tho brief, always sane and interesting, and I read somewhere that he wrote a psychological study of SF fans which was much appreciated in fandom as presenting said fans, in general, not as attic-bound social inadequacies, but much nearer to slans.

Pics of the early Oz fans cast a whole new light - not just constitution-crazed point-of-order merchants who would have been well at home armed with a copy of CITRINE ON CHAIRMANSHIP at a British trade union meeting, but secret wannabee Sanders of the Rivers or sheikh and harem types - another lesson never to jump to conclusions!

Odd how travel writing grips, or doesn't, quite irrationally - like travel talk generally. A guy who used to go into my local had, for a couple of years, taught English in Bogota during the height of the drug barons v urban guerillas v govt 3-way "war"; how could such a setting fail to be a source of fascinating anecdotes? - yet he could bring an eyelid closing in seconds about it. Yet somehow Pavel Viaznikov's ostensibly meandering, unfocused ramblings grip like a python. Odd. (repetition).

The Congreve explanation about publisher policy is fascinating - question, for me, if the Oz market is "the cream", the above-breakeven, for overseas (UK etc) publishers, do authors get higher royalties for sales in Australia?

Steve Jeffery asks re my title THE DOUBLE RAINBOW OF DUTY - this refers back to the old idea that birth under a double rainbow is a sign of particular divine favour/promise of great achievement (curiously synchronistically this was mentioned in the paper today - it is being said by his propagandists that "young" Kim in N Korea was born under a double rainbow, evidence of his fitness for power) - the poem's irony being that the man is indeed particularly "favoured" in having a time-travelling machine which, however, fails to actually bring him the luck he believes he is entitled to (at another level, the machine itself has the "divine" by given power of time travel, but cannot apply it to carry out the expected destiny) (Apologies - explanation has ended up longer than poem itself - though that does rather prove something pretty cliched abt the relation of poetry and prose!).

Won't get deep into the argument of what the Royals do or do not cost us - but I do suggest John Alderson look at how they got the property which they so graciously deigned to hand over part of the income from - time may make theft respectable, but it doesn't turn it into generosity. (A crude analogy, but springs to mind - welfare and food stamps given to Native Americans on a reservation cost them nothing IF you forget the lands they had taken away in the past). The Labour Party (& Liberal Democrat) policy is for regional governments *within* England to balance with Scots and Welsh devolution - ie analogous to German Lander; regions like Yorkshire, for example, having a degree of self government.

Lots of other things I found interesting, but don't stir reaction (though cover has a curious air of a seaside holiday-from-hell... "they had gulls s...o...oo...oo big, horrid great things, I daren't sleep a wink, did I, Dad") & bit dubious about the serifed ital caps you used for the poems titles - not as unreadable as Old English caps, but enough to make for studying to grasp.

**PAMELA BOAL , 4 Westfield Way, Charlton Heights, Wantage, Oxon OX12 7EW, UK.**

Congratulations to Sydney fans on restarting The Futurian Society of Sydney. It really is good to hear of new (even if they are old) groups being formed, especially when the only news of groups from the rest of the world seems to be that they are folding. If reports are to be believed though, Australian fandom is generally better than most at hanging on to the nicer parts of earlier fandom. One instance being that the schism between fanzine fandom, convention going fandom and media fandom is far less marked than seems to be the case in America and Britain. On the other hand I was somewhat taken aback to learn that the admission of female members to the FSS was such an issue in 1952. I gather that elsewhere there were few female members of fannish groups and attitudes left a lot to be desired but that the thought of actually barring women never arose. I found the photographs fascinating. The members (all male) at the first convention looked to be very young but by the time of Wentworth Falls the photograph includes women and more mature men.

I felt a bit let down by Cecelia Drewer's CHILDBIRTH ON A CIVILISED PLANET. She has such a good command of form, visual imagery and normally a clear grasp of subject matter. However even in poetry if the subject is factual it should be logically consistent. In "Childbirth" I think Cecelia is reacting either to a personal or a reported bad experience in a maternity hospital. Farmers look after their brood mares. If a society monitored the new generation by having a nursery planet and matriarchs checking on the welfare of the young, doctors would not risk damage to the baby by using forceps needlessly. Nor would pointless risks be taken with womb mothers who were expected to give the best of care to their young, even if not to produce more offspring. Even today, on earth, entering a gene pool need not mean actually bearing a

child. Sorry Cecelia, you just did not think that one through.  
(21.10.94)

I can well understand the reasons for dropping the fiction from TM but I am disappointed. It's all very well for fans who opine that if a story is good enough it will sell and that fiction has no place in zines. I suspect such fans are not trying to break into that limited and over crowded market place. TM provided a rare service to the future of SF, giving new writers a place to try their skills. Although my criticism was often quite severe I do think the standard of the work you published was consistently good.

Mae Strelkov always provides a delightful read, though perhaps A PLANET MUCH LIKE EARTH would have been improved with a little editing? I have a tendency to go off at tangents myself Mae, that's fine in conversation where people are familiar with the main track and side paths but a little hard on readers eager to see and understand new terrain.

Andrew Darlington as ever gives us a well researched and presented article. Though I usually find him more objective in his comments, this time his spleen was showing. In fact he has my sympathy, I haven't seen any modern Horror Comics but those of the 50s were clear in their spine tingling message, "Evil is ugly and society opposes evil". I am far more worried by the blurring of the lines in today's films. The opening scene of a Clint Eastwood film shows three would-be assassins cutting loose with machine guns. The "Hero" is of course untouched and easily disposes of two gunmen, the third throws down his gun and runs away. The "Hero" narrows his eyes, takes aim and shoots the fleeing gunman in the back, killing him of course.

To be honest the text in A HISTORY OF AUSTRALIAN FANDOM is a bit on the dry side but I do like the photographs. Were the attendees at the second convention as solemn and as serious as they seemed to be in the photograph? Who is the schoolboy in the front row at the table? There is definite mischief in that face which bodes well for introducing fun and saving Australian fandom from floundering on its sense of self importance.

THE TRAVELLING MUSCOVITE is fascinating, it's the article I will enjoy reading several times over. A wealth of information, landscape, architecture, natural history, folk stories and historical facts. All topped off with a truly insightful perspective on how the Russian people are themselves affected by the political and economic changes. I find myself in rueful agreement with Pavel Viaznikov. None of my very dear American friends have been able to explain to me why as a nation they export the very worst of themselves.

Coincidence, part of my Xmas gift to two of our offspring was 30 assorted packages of seeds. Those two are establishing a lifestyle similar to Buck Coulson's childhood home. Not so easy on our overcrowded island, especially as the offspring prefer benders to houses as dwellings; they are in constant danger of being evicted from the land that they own by contravening planning permission.

Interesting reviews, thank you James Verran. Lively R&R DEPT, as ever. As for Chris Masters! I chose the word abomination from his own letter, in retrospect much too big a word for a small sad person who has so little joy in his life that he has to take pleasure in tongue poking and name calling. Trouble is, either Chris Masters' vocabulary is limited or my knowledge of modern Australian slang is poor. What exactly is a tight-arsed little world? I wonder if, apart from name calling, he has any images at all of my life style or where, in the modern jargon, I am coming from. From the practical standpoint, a person who believes that you prune daffodils and grow them in South America must have some very odd images of lives outside of his own environ. One of the joys of fanzines is the opportunity to get to know people from different backgrounds, to exchange information and to debate different points of view. Alas Chris Masters fails to contribute in any way.

The debate on censorship has been going round in ever decreasing circles in numerous zines from some years now. Survival of the species means protecting the young until they are developed enough to protect themselves. We can make educated guesses about the future but we cannot be certain, so the wider the gene pool the better. Who knows what talents stand between the human race and extinction? So we must protect the young who's parents have neither the will nor the means to protect their own. With freedom comes responsibility; a large percentage of society demand the freedoms but are not prepared to exercise responsibility. As far as I am concerned the only answer we have

at the moment is law, ie censorship. If the human psyche develops to the point where most people ask themselves do I harm others by exercising a particular freedom there will be no need for censorship. The vulnerable will be automatically protected from those who have not grown to responsibility, for example it takes more than one sick (or perhaps more accurately, greedy) individual to produce and distribute child pornography. We are a long, long way from that perfect society as yet. Meanwhile, frankly, I would rather curtail some adult pleasures than risk the physical or emotional safety of children. I know my attitude is not popular which is possibly why so many people hedge their bets, hum and ha about definitions or as Lorraine Cormack writes, "Cop Out".

(6.1.94)

#### **BUCK COULSON , 2677W-500 N, Hartford City, IN 47348, USA.**

I suppose I shouldn't be surprised by the number of sf clubs - both US and foreign - which meet in bars, restaurants, libraries, and other public buildings, but the only clubs I associate with always met in members' homes. This would have been in the 1950s and 1960s, and included the Indiana Science Fiction Association (ISFA), the Eastern Indiana Science Fiction Association (EISFA), and the Columbus, OH, Science Fiction Association (COSFA). So I still consider it a modern change, though as far as I know the New York clubs always met in public areas. We also seldom had official programs; maybe that's why the two Indiana clubs faded away. These days, I gather COSFA spends a lot of meeting time discussing plans for its convention.

Verran's article was useful, though he omits a fairly popular US sport; Tuckermism. That concerns naming your characters after your friends. Bob Tucker started it, but it's been continued by other authors, including me. It does have one advantage; friends are usually delighted to see their name in someone's book, so there's less chance of someone suing you. Lawsuits have been known to happen over character names; usually the author can prove he never knew the litigant and is therefore innocent, but there is the bother of proving it. Besides, most fans I know actually prefer to be named as the despicable villain, which is what strangers sue over. The practice seems to be mostly reserved for science fiction and mystery writers - or perhaps that only seems so because I don't know writers in other fields.

All those photos of old-time fans wearing suits bothered me in the Moskowitz histories, and in Molesworth's article. Personal thing; I never wore a suit unless I had to, which was damn seldom. Certainly never to anything as entertaining as a fan club meeting, and I managed to work in offices for 29 years while wearing a suit on only two occasions (both times on trips to Honeywell's main office in Minneapolis, and both times under orders).

Bill Congreve says he "loved" the SF magazines of the 60's and 70's, but today's magazines aren't something he'd give an adolescent to read "If I wanted that kid to keep reading SF". Parents of the 60's and 70's didn't give their kids SF magazines to read, either, though of course they didn't want their offspring to keep reading the stuff. Still, reading itself is in trouble today, except as instructional material. Why read when you can watch TV? And if you do read, why read "good" books if you can get all you want of mindless entertainment at the newsstand? Literary sf has always been a small part of the field, and it will probably get smaller, and there's nothing we can do about it. Promoting it doesn't help when the consumer already "knows better". The "sense of wonder" has been taken over by TV, and movies. When I got into fandom, older fans were still trying to find a way to make science fiction more popular - get more people reading it, provide the authors with the financial incentive to produce it, etc. Okay, now we have, and I can only be thankful that I was always cynical about the ideas. Every generation finds its own entertainment, as does every individual. The good books are out there, and no two people will agree on what they are.

"Fen" as a plural of fan, is, I believe, a joke that made good, and the English language is not set in stone; plurals can be whatever the culture want to make them. "Person" and "People" for example; there are lots more. There doesn't even have to be a single correct plural, particularly with relatively new nouns. Right now, "fans" and "fen" seem to be used interchangeably, and - the important part - are both understood by the people reading them. The major reason - well, one major reason - that English is becoming a world language is because it's so adaptable. When French was the language of social intercourse and German the

language of science, there were hard and fast rules. English has never worried overmuch about rules, as long as it can be understood.

I can sympathise with Mae's postal problems. At least the Hartford City post office does stock various stamp denominations, but I have my own postal rate charts to make sure I don't get overcharged. Even on packages I generally put my stamps on at home, and keep a supply of customs stickers on hand. If I put the package into our rural mailbox, the carrier picks it up and I hear no more of it. If I take it in to the post office, it depends on which clerk is on duty, whether they accept my valuation or give me an argument. All the clerks have special postal computers now, but half of them don't know how to use them.

Apologies to John Tipper; my article, at least, was supposed to be funny, not blend into nightmare. But then I wasn't counting on anyone reading it while having a tooth drilled. You mean in Australia they let your read while excavation is going on inside your mouth? They never let me do that, but then I haven't had my own teeth for a good many years; maybe it's a modern idea.

Err... you really ought to reprint Andy Sawyer's letter, this time making sure that it is his letter, and not mine. (Were you making a check of how many people really read your lettercol)?

Agree with Rob Frew on the need to believe. I can't say I've ever believed in God; I suppose I might have when I was a small child, but I don't remember even thinking about God, and I didn't go to church until I got in the Boy Scouts; then it was just something one did as a Scout. Of course, now I'm a minister, but that's mostly a joke, though I've performed legal marriages. (Legal, not religious.) I can't say I believe in cruel acts by an uncaring universe, either, though. Cruel acts by caring and uncaring humans, yes.

L. Ron Hubbard of course wasn't "one of the most acclaimed and widely read authors of all time", but he was popular, while he was alive. Not up there with Heinlein and Clarke and Asimov, but well regarded. Several of his stories were considered classics before the Scientologists wrecked his reputation with everybody but themselves. Mostly his best work came in novelettes and what were then "short novels" and now "novellas". FEAR, TYPEWRITER IN THE SKY, RETURN TO TOMORROW, SLAVES OF SLEEP, and others. He never wrote long novels; he's the only author whose writing bloated after he died, instead of his body.

For Pam Boal; there was at least one Argentine fan in contact with US fandom in the 1950s, but he disappeared in the coup again Peron. Since he wrote us that his father was a Peronista while he was making zip guns for the rebels, his disappearance is not entirely surprising.

I'm not sure of the series that C. R. Ross mentions, but Christopher Anvil (a pseudonym of Harry G. Crosby, according to two encyclopedias) seems a possible candidate. The stories aren't in the Anvil books that I have, though. (27.10.94)

I was never a comics fan, but Juanita accumulated a pretty good collection of the Gaines comic books, and I've read a lot of hers. I was never particularly fond of the horror titles, but they were less silly than those of their competitors, and I rather like his science fiction line.

What interests me in the photos of early Australian fandom was all the suits being worn by the males. and ties! The only time I wore a suit and tie to a fannish event was when Juanita and I got married, and the only time I wore one during my stint as technical writer for Honeywell was when I got sent to Minneapolis headquarters for a conference. The idea of wearing one to a fannish gathering bemuses me, though now and then I still see people doing it. Not often, these days, though. I guess the last time I wore mine was to son Bruce's wedding....

I did locate Neryungri on a map. Farther south than I thought, but still a bit north of the US-Canadian border. And no Great Lakes to modify temperature, so I expect it does get very cold in winter and very hot in summer. Our range of -30C to +40C is quite enough for me, thank you. A good article. Changes from 15 years ago? Several personal ones, since I had a steady job 15 years ago and now I'm retired on Social Security. But unexpected ones? Not a lot. More drugs than I expected back in 1979, and more violence, or perhaps I should say more media concentration on violence.

To the letters. I dunno; Sydney harbour is at least as exotic as Mars to me, and I've been there just as often. Maybe not *more* exotic, though.

I can see Julie Vaux's point, though I wouldn't have bothered



to comment on Chris Masters in her place. Juanita and I have only been to one British con and no Australian ones, so I don't know how alike they are, but the one we went to had more smoke and more alcohol than any US con I've been to in the last 20 years or so. Bad air conditioning of course depends on the hotel, and one can't tell in advance, but there's usually a variety of food available at US hotels and in some US consulates. I have no objection to alcohol; I keep a bottle of Myers Rum in my desk drawer. But I have considerable objection to drunks, because they're unable to sustain a rational conversation and tend to disrupt other people's conversation by stumbling into them.

Gee, John, I *thought* I was writing amusingly about the events in my life. I certainly thought some of them were funny enough at the time, and others became more amusing in retrospect. Forgot to mention that the heart specialist's final instructions were, "Whatever you've been doing, keep on doing it."

Terry Jeeves has more primitive memories than I do. I remember Dad milking when we kept our own cow, but after that milk came from the store, in bottles. and beer was always in bottles or cans (since I wasn't allowed to legally enter a bar). "Rushing the growler" was a thing of the past even when I was born. No horse-drawn carts, either. A schoolmate drove out to see me, once, while driving a horse and cart, but he was just showing off his new toy. I enjoyed the reminiscences. If I was to have a heart attack while sitting at home alone, I'd get in the car and drive to the hospital emergency ward. Providing I didn't die on the way, of course. Juanita drove me in to the hospital during my first heart attack, after I'd been suffering it for some time because I thought it was indigestion. And I survived that. I'm about 7 miles from the hospital, but I think I could make it in time. (Bet my life on it, if I had to.)

No, Ron, our Constitution is specifically designed to change with the times. That's what amendments are for. They're not easy to make, but then they shouldn't be; they affect everybody. I'm not sure that all of them have been correct, but the majority of the population wanted them. 26 of them, so far.

Steve Jeffery has a good point that so much science fiction has been published that nobody knows all of it, and it's only plagiarism if you *knowingly* copy someone else's work. It would be hard to prove, now; it might have been hard to prove even in the 1970s if the plagiarist hadn't copied word for word a famous story by Anthony Boucher. Actually, I don't know that anything happened to the author, but fans had a good laugh at the editor for not recognising the story.

In a way, women's lib *is* world-wide, or at least as world-wide as the television, which can appear in strange places sometimes. TV does supply "role models" to people, and very little if it is produced outside the western world. And it influences people even in non-western societies like Japan, where it *is* produced. (Now how many people will try to tell me that Japan is a western society?) Personally, I wouldn't want to associate with a woman who wasn't the mental equal of most men.

I don't see that blacks anywhere have proved inferior, Walt. Uneducated in some areas, but there are plenty of whites doing the same antisocial acts that some blacks do. *Individuals* may be inferior; I've seen nothing to show that races are. Considering the amount of religious bigotry there has been in the world as far back as history goes, I'm tempted to agree that shutting down all churches, synagogues, tabernacles, temples, etc. might be a good idea, but of course it wouldn't work; humans seem to be born with the urge to worship something. Or at least most humans seem to be; I wasn't.

Sympathy to Danuta Shaw; new experiences, in reading or anywhere else, do thin out as one gets older.

Agreement with Tom Feller. I never went to college, am strongly set in my ways, and not particularly ambitious. I also probably made below average salaries for my positions, but that was more likely because I was working in "the sticks" (or "areas with lower standards of living".) (11.12.94)

**CATHERINE MINTZ, 1810 South Rittenhouse Square, 1708, Philadelphia, PA 19103-5837, USA.**

I had to read Andrew Darlington's piece on DR WHO twice so as to really savor it: the PBS station across the river in New Jersey - which I sometimes refer to as "The BBC in America" when I'm feeling cynical - has finally dropped the series after sentencing it to a scanty twenty minutes in the last slot before it went off the air on Saturday night. Time was when both local PBS stations had it running in hour-and-a-half chunks, one on

Saturday afternoon, and the other in prime time Saturday evening, enabling the really fanatic to catch up on major portions of the Doctor's history - and condemning the less enthusiastic else to overexposure to inter-galactic whimsy.

Long before the show left the airwaves, it was obvious that neither station management understood its appeal, because they grouped it with, not just ancient FLASH GORGON and BUCK ROGERS serials, but also with the cheapest sci-fi movies ever made. During one fund appeal, one on-air personality said the audience should hurry up and pledge so they could get back to watching the trash they loved. The switchboard lit up, but now with potential pledgers.

The truth is, like most science fiction and fantasy, the show appealed to the imaginative, who were perfectly willing to ignore the flaws in the special effects. It was sort of a reverse on something like JURASSIC PARK where the emphasis is one what you see, not what's happening. Which is why, although I'm glad we'll be hearing more of The Doctor, I feel dubious that it is Steven Spielberg who will be in charge....  
Dr. Who is not Indiana Jones. (1.11.94)

I gather Bradley Row would like to wrap up the discussion of his review of THE GATE TO WOMEN'S COUNTRY now that he's made it plain he's not in favor of burning books and repression of speech and so forth and so on, although he does loathe this particular book. Like any reasonable reviewer, he has reported the effect the novel had on him, and it remains to the rest of us to take his opinions with or without salt as we find appropriate.

I would like to make two points.

The first is that Tepper takes the moral implications of what she writes very seriously, having backed out of writing horror novels, despite the repeated urgings of her long-time editor and a lucrative market, because she felt producing scenarios that might be enacted in the real world was indefensible.

The second is that until her retirement to write in her fifties Tepper worked for Planned Parenthood, and has a deep commitment to women having control over their own bodies. The genetic practices hidden at the heart of her fictitious society are meant to be repugnant.

It is possible that Tepper's failure to conform to the genre convention of a happy ending produces confusion, and, rather than perceiving an equivocal outcome or a tragedy, less wary readers assume the author's approval of the close of the story.

However, it is reasonable to expect a book to be read without a gloss of outside information, and if someone explores WOMEN'S COUNTRY and does not understand the author's stance, then the novel is not, for that particular reader, a success. Plainly, this particular book did not work for Bradley Row, and it has been interesting and instructive to find out why.

I enjoyed Mae Strelkov's article, A PLANET MUCH LIKE EARTH, very much indeed, and hope she goes on to tell us even more about it. Likewise, Pavel Viaznikov's THE TRAVELLING MUSCOMTE offers an intriguing glimpse of an unfamiliar world. (14.2.95)

**STEVE JEFFERY, 44 White Way, Kidlington, Oxon OX5 2XA, UK.**

THE MENTOR, as I've commented before, does break the mould in concentrating on SF. In this it seems more related to the genre semi-pro magazines such as RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY. And even more unusually in its inclusion of fiction, and not just the sub-sub genre of fan fiction (ie fiction by and about fans and fandom).

[Well, it couldn't last.... - Ron.]

James Verran's writers toolkit moves on to character names. I suspect punning or spoof names are best restricted to short stories rather than novels, where they might become wearing. Peake could carry it off, and part of the delight of Iain Banks Culture novels is the off-the-wall names he invents for the ships. But it's still a complete turn off to (still) open a book and be confronted with a name made entirely out of consonants and random punctuation marks.

Did *everybody* watch the first episode of DR WHO from behind the sofa? This has worked itself into the collective unconscious of the 1950/1960s generation. Watched DR WHO AND THE DALEKS the other week on TV. It was mortifyingly naff: Cushing, Castle and extras in funny wigs and Mary Quant eyeshadow in acting that was almost as two dimensionally wooden as the terrible sets. Even the Daleks were clunky and silly, and it's only the fact that everybody obligingly stood still when challenged that let them capture anybody. When did they figure out how

to get around on non-metal floors by the way? And why do they have all that empty space inside for Roy Castle to conveniently hide in when the squishy bit giving the orders is only the size of [a] pumpkin?

Don Boyd: A xerographic process that links to a PC? It's called a laser printer, and has been around for a while already. If you take the two apart, they are remarkably similar in operation (and in their inability to work properly when you put them back together again).

Pavel: "I dislike feminists - I know some of them." But you don't know *all* of them. Right, like the equally ridiculous counter argument "all men are bastards and rapists" I presume. Such open minded tolerance. By this argument, I can hate everybody.

John Haines: This is silly. Fandom has always rested on creative spelling, often admittedly, to a fault (have you ever read YHOS for example?). But even your own etymology gives this a lie, when such a large proportion of fandom actually has a rather minimal interest in SF any more, much less any vestige of fanaticism. So if a collection of fanatics are "fans", we are - even more so - just "fen".

Actually, no - I don't like the term either. At least I'm not female, and have to suffer the even more appalling tag "femme-fan".

John Tipper: Those football (futba?) ladders have made a comeback. We have one on the wall, where Vicki is charting the slow decline into oblivion of Aston Villa (now there's a "fan"). (12.11.94)

#### **PETER BRODIE, 15/16 Waratah St, Cronulla, NSW 2230.**

Glad to see the demise of fiction in THE MENTOR. It may have been an outlet but it smelled of the sewer when fiction hove into view. Lord knows, I've contributed a few pieces of shit in my time. But struth, wot will Shane Dix do now? Will he be forced to learn how to write? No, that's impossible.

Speaking of the intellectually-challenged... I see Shane is still twisting in the wind I'm blowing. How predictable. How sad.

I can't personally see any reason for the publication of non-specific genre material (ie: SF) in amateur journals. If the people concerned want to be writers, write for the pro market. Or is it simply a matter of not having the guts to send stuff to these markets? You really learn nothing from the comments of your peers (sic) and would be better served by the yays or nays of a pro-editor.

The majority of fan-fic I've rit (er) over the years has been targeted, in that it has dealt with a known section of fandom, in one case BLAKES SEVEN, for which I produced several short stories for a few zines; simply having fun with the characters and enjoying my "bus-man's holiday". Under no delusions about producing summat worthwhile beyond the immediate fun it might provide for fellow fans. I always enjoyed the effort that went into this type of story.

Sitting down and whacking out sum Martian Miracle story for the delectation of SF fandom in general always smacked of the quick wank, besides which, the knowledge that there was no moolah at the end of the tunnel vision always precluded me from writing up to my best form.

Articles, on the other hand, are on the other hand. The research is the main enjoyment for me, the writing summat of a chore but still satisfying to get into "place". Whether reaction is good or bad is mostly immaterial. It's being able to get a point of view of some obscure info across and then letting it take its course that's satisfying. (Hello Mae, it took me long enuff but I finally understand!).

This is one reason I'm glad THE MENTOR is starting to diversify into a multi-format. Some articles are hard to place, not only in the pro field but the fanzine field, and having a forum like this esteemed rag allows writers like wot I am to hit the bell and choof orf down a narrow, but hopefully, interesting lane, once more in search of the great unprintable for the enlightening of the great unwashable.

Perhaps THE MENTOR's new by-line should read *"Journal of the Abstract"*. (28.11.94)

#### **SHERYL BIRKHEAD, 23629 Woodfield Rd, Gaithersburg, MD 20882, USA.**

The cover [of TM 85] looks a bit too harsh for me - but that seems to go along with his previous pieces. The work is well done - but not everything can appeal to everyone!

Bearing in mind that none of my stories have not even come close to appearing in professional print, I never had problems naming my characters (note that this does not say they are *good* names, just that it was an easy process). I have been noticing lately that the trend for

unusual spellings to usual names has progressed even further. A lot of the names I read in the casts of movies are totally unfamiliar to me, but some are rather attractive (in that they are pleasing to the eye - I admit that *Alun* bothered me a bit because it seemed that it would change the pronunciation - but it looks and sounds the way a lot of people say it, so why not?). I haven't read, to my knowledge, a story written by an author whose native tongue was not English, but who writes it in English - to see how it might work if the names were not quite right for the language (and I have to admit that English is the only one where I could make any decisions). It would be interesting to see if names that sound good to someone else (of another language) would still sound good to me.

I like the page illo on page 9. My first thought was a seed sprouting - but close on its heels is the thought of a heart and ancillary blood vessels. Now to read and see what it *really* is supposed to be about. Aha - both images are correct!

Aha, another instalment on Australian fandom - it would be worthwhile to compile all the bits together into one booklet. So you have any idea how complete it is? I presume it is as complete as you can make it, but that doesn't answer the question. Where there other fandoms co-existing with that of *sf/fantasy* or were they, basically, independent of each other? None of the names are familiar to me, but looking at the dates, that doesn't surprise me. How free was the exchange of prozines and such materials between countries in the 50's and 60's?

This past week was our Thanksgiving. It never ceases to amaze me just how much food and planning goes into that one meal. This year I had several new recipes to try out - but I won't be doing any of those again. As it turned out, I ended up snacking all day and tasting the dishes - so I never actually sat down to a meal. I must admit that when I put out the pan with the remnants of the stuffing in it, not even the wild critters around have managed to clean out the pan yet - culinary comment.

(27.11.94)

#### **MATTHEW RAYNER, 2 Guildford Pl, Leumeah, NSW 2560.**

My letter [in TM 86] was written a long time ago and it came as a shock to me! (Did I really mean to pick Andrew Darlington's DOCTOR WHO article to pieces, when I am myself a DOCTOR WHO fan?). Re-reading my letter months later from an objective stand-point, I seem like a real Anorak! Anyone else reading my LoC would think I hated the article, when in fact I liked it! (I set out in writing that letter to make some additions to what was stated but I ended up being critical somehow).

Secondly, and more important in the scheme of things... I thought the editorial was heading into dangerous territory. Although I wouldn't say it as racist, I think some people may interpret it that way. I appreciate your fears of moving into a violent neighbourhood, but I don't feel it was necessary to identify the problem with the Vietnamese community. Obviously because of the high density of the Asian community living in that area means that much of the young street gangs will be composed of members of that community; I don't think you can link the two.

A violent person is violent no matter what race they are from. In my area there is a lot of hype over a gang problem which I will admit does exist, but it is very exaggerated by the media. However, what the media doesn't usually report is the fact that apart from "homeboy" gangs composed of mainly Pacific islanders (although some Asian and even Caucasian youths are involved), there are also "Westie" gangs made up mainly by white Caucasians who are just as much a problem as the "homeboy" gangs. Surely this points to a larger malaise which has nothing to do with where a person is from, and their culture, but in fact is caused by factors such as unemployment, homelessness and the economy. Besides, my own belief is that we are all human and all citizens of the Earth and so things like nationality and "race" do not matter. As SF fans we should all be aware of the fact.

(9.12.94)

*[Hmm, I didn't mean to imply that the Vietnamese were the problem, after all, they weren't the reason I picked the area to live in. I don't really mind any other "races". As you say, we are all Homo Sapiens. The shops south of Bankstown station are mostly run by Vietnamese. The only thing I've seen that points to any violence is a*

*small amount of glass on the pavement from broken bottles. - Ron.]*

#### **BILL DONAHO, 626 58th St., Oakland, CA 94609, USA.**

I read Tepper's *THE GATE TO WOMEN'S COUNTRY* as soon as it came out in paperback. I've read everything Sheri Tepper has written - up to that point. But unlike Harry Andruschak, who said this was the first thing by her he has read and that he hopes to read many more, this is the last thing by her I plan to read.

I had a somewhat similar reaction to Kurt Vonnegut. I liked *PLAYER PIANO* very much, but each succeeding book by Kurt I liked less and less. I finally called it a day with *GOD BLESS YOU, MR. ROSEWATER*. Wherever Kurt was headed, I didn't want to go with him. I feel the same about Sheri now. I liked her first books, but have found her succeeding ones unpleasant. *GRASS* depicted a very unpleasant society, but one could tell that Sheri didn't like it either. One does not get that impression from *THE GATE TO WOMEN'S COUNTRY*.

Bill Congreve has a completely different definition of satire than I do if he finds any in *WOMEN'S COUNTRY*. (Some irony yet). To me the book reads as if Tepper genuinely thinks that male aggression is the major cause of war and violence (many - if not most - feminists think that way and Sheri's other books lead to the conclusion that she does too), and has presented a society that is solving that problem. I don't claim that she is advocating that solution, but I don't believe that if she had found a workable solution which wasn't breeding violence out of males, she would have presented that. And the book may well be pointing out that although logical, this solution has problems. However, whatever it is, it is *not* an enjoyable book.

And that to my mind is what Sheri Tepper has become, someone constructing logical but unpleasant worlds that are unpleasant experiences. Fortunately I don't have to put up with it. I'm surprised that anyone wants to, but obviously a lot of people do.

However, in Bradley Row's rebuttal to his critics I think he neglects one point. While the women are carrying out their breeding program, they aren't intent on killing off the aggressive males; they are quite content to let them hack each other to pieces. They only kill off the males that are planning to attack and conquer and enslave the women, and against whom they would have no other defense.

But I agree with Bradley that Sheri has made the aggressive males as unattractive as possible, far more so than even seems plausible, much less necessary. Nevertheless I found the non-aggressive breeding males even more unattractive - and in real life I find no problem in liking and relating to non-aggressive males. I wonder if she intended to do this, to point out problems with her "solution"? And if she is doing this, why not show good qualities in the aggressive males? Of course many feminists really have no idea of what males are actually like - they are the oppressors and that is about the only characteristic they see - but in Sheri's previous books she has painted quite believable and likeable males.

I liked Mae Strelkov's article very much.

In issue #85 I found Andrew Darlington's account of *DR WHO* quite interesting. *DR WHO* is available over her now, but I have not seen a complete episode. I tried one, but found so much already established and taken for granted that I didn't get it. And I didn't feel like spending the time to become familiar with it, mostly because of my experience with *HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE*. When one of the local stations started running it from the beginning I watched the first few. but I found them silly and boring, the humor to be rather labored. But after reading Andrew I think I'll give *DR WHO* another chance.

(4.12.94)

#### **JULIE VAUX, 14 Zara St, Willoughby, NSW 2068.**

On final comment on Tepper's book. Have those who dislike it considered she may have been indulging in irony of the darkest sort? The very fact it disturbs readers is a mark of its effectiveness. It does not portray a feminist utopia but rather a post-apocalypse dystopia.

One thing I like about Tepper's work as a whole is that she seems to believe that there is no such thing as a perfect society. Each of the future societies she depicts has its flaws. Read *RAISING THE STONES* or *SIDESHOW* or *GRASS!* The highly evolved pacifistic foxen have psychotic children. The HobbsLand Gods can raise the dead and make dreams solid with powers derived from some kind of nanotech but in return once awakened they become part of humanity forever.

To recapitulate *THE GATE TO WOMEN'S COUNTRY* has its flaws but they are due to it being a first novel. Please don't let this put you off reading other later works!

(11.12.94)

#### **VICKI ROSENZWEIG, 33 Indian Rd, 6-R, New York, NY 10034, USA.**

I like the cover [of *TM 86*], but am wondering about the anatomy of one of those pterosaurs, who appears to have his right wing anchored to his left leg. Never mind that there's no fossil evidence for such a thing, such an anatomical design could only hinder the animal both in the air and on the ground.

I have no strong objection to not receiving the reviews in my (non-Oz) copy, though it may make some of the ensuing discussion harder to follow. As I understand it, US books reach Oz later, and your books often don't reach us at all - what little Australian sf I have was either imported by speciality shops (Terry Dowling's work) or acquired in Canada (Paul Voerman's *AND DISREGARDS THE REST* - does he have any other novels in print?

[Yes, he has *THE WILD COLONIAL BOY ... - Ron.*]

I liked Mae Strelkov's piece about her life in Juju: it's always a pleasure to see something by her, and I enjoyed reading about a life different from my own urban existence. I would note, though, that while reforestation is an excellent idea, pine and eucalyptus both have a propensity to burning. It's part of their normal life cycle, but may not be what Mae wants near her home. North Americans have planted large amounts of eucalyptus, especially on the foggy coast of California, and much of it burned in Oakland and Berkeley a few years ago (especially when people left the leaves lying around, and let the trees grow across streets until they touched). (I feel odd talking about eucalyptus to Australians, but many urban fans, regardless of country, can barely tell one tree from another.)

I've never cared for horror (purely a personal and aesthetic judgement, of no more moral import than my dislike for grape soda), so I only skimmed the piece on the old EC pulps. One note, though: the Comics Code did not collapse in the 1960s, but was still of some force well into the 1980s. Even now, some US comics say "approved by the Comics Code Authority," though the stores now cheerfully carry those that aren't.

Pavel Viaznikov is right about the pleasure of counting: I find numbers and numerical data interesting for their own sake, as well as for the occasional absurdities they can reveal. (It is wise to be careful, however: at least in the US, even reputable newspapers will blithely print false statistical claims by politicians without noting their falsehood. Readers then assume these claims must be valid because the newspaper is expected to have checked the facts.)

US political and economic life have changed less in the last 15 years than Russian, of course. a few things that come to mind: I'm writing this on a computer on my desk, with a gigabyte of data storage; even raised on science fiction stories that included powerful computers, I would not have expected this, nor the computer stores on every street and in every mall. In 1979, we all believed that the worst possible outcome of casual sex was an unwanted pregnancy - and, regardless of one's feelings about abortion, it was a survivable experience, and there were (and still are) people who would take in a newborn infant if the mother didn't want to raise it. We were more optimistic about medicine generally: the real gains made by researchers in recent years seem to be outstripped by the losses, in terms of resistance to antibiotics and other drugs. (I grew up believing tuberculosis a solved problem; New York City is currently dealing with large numbers of multi-drug-resistant cases.) I did not expect to wind up in a job where one of my (self-assumed) duties is maintaining geographical references as countries join or dissolve. (I expected the remaining few colonies to achieve independence, but assumed the map of Europe was stable.) Three years ago, looking at our database, I was wondering how to address mail to Tallinn. Fortunately, living in New York, I was able to make a local call to the Estonian consulate (established in the 1930s, and continuing ever since, the newly independent Estonian government was happy to absorb it) and ask; they told me to continue using the old Soviet postal codes. Only this afternoon I went to the geographical dictionary to determine whether a city listed as being in "Czechoslovakia" by a computer journal (the January 1993 issue, they may have gone to press before the divorce was announced) was in Slovakia or the Czech Republic.

I like the poems this time, especially *A HYDRAN WHORE INPUTS HER JOURNAL*, but the title font is hard to read.

Buck Coulson's reminiscences are making me hungry as well; since I have a cold, this is more of a feat than it may at first appear. I'm fonder of red raspberries than he is, but never found them that difficult to

pick. I wonder if the variety that grows on this side of the Appalachians is more prolific, or less thorny, than those he gets. I've also found that there's a (hard-to-verbalize) trick to picking blackberries and raspberries; it involves lifting the canes up and catching them, gently, on your sleeves, so they're out of the way while you pick berries from further back in the bushes. (Obviously, this requires long sleeves, or very careful positioning, but the sort of jersey knit used for t-shirts is sufficient; you don't have to go out on a hot day with a leather jacket.) And no fruit on Earth, even the tangerines I love when they're shipped up here as the year dies, tastes as good as a really ripe berry I've picked myself. Happily, it is now safe to gather wild fruit near roadsides, since the lead that worried my parents when I was a child has been out of the gasoline for a couple of decades. In addition to the freshness problem, most donuts sold nowadays, at least in this part of the world, are essentially small cakes, with either holes in the middle or a cream or jam filling; the donuts Buck waxes (justly) nostalgic about were deep-fried.

While I'm not into heavy metal myself, I know at least one feminist fan who is: Vijay Bowen is a fan of the band Metallica. Also, despite what Julie implies, there is no form of music that necessarily destroys one's hearing: recorded and broadcast music come through devices with volume controls, and people who attend live concerts can always use earplugs. (I'm also not at all clear what connection exists between the desire to protect one's hearing and feminism.)

On the body of logic and styles of expression, while it's true that a five-year-old can say "I'll express myself any way I bloody please," that doesn't make it false (or invalid). A five-year-old (at least one who goes to a good kindergarten) can also say "Two plus two equals four." While I don't agree with the writer who claimed "All I need to know, I learned in kindergarten," I also don't think five-year-olds are completely ignorant or misinformed. My own feelings is that I will express myself any way I please, generally choosing a way that (I hope) will be clear to my audience. Swearing doesn't usually accomplish that, but on the other hand I don't feel a need to say "I stepped in dog excrement" to avoid the word "shit".

I think Brian Earl Brown is being slightly unfair to the ideas behind free love, though it's true that too many (mostly male) people took "it's okay to say yes" and used it to pressure women who chose to say "no." Still, I have no desire to go back to a society where I would be a social outcast if I had sex with a man I wasn't married to.

As for our Constitution, it can be adapted to changing times. The amendment process is deliberately cumbersome, to avoid enshrining passing whims as part of the fundamental law of the land, but change is possible, examples include everything from the direct election of senators, to the income tax, to expanding the franchise to blacks, women, poor people, and people between the ages of 18 and 21. (That last was a direct reaction to the Vietnam War, and seems to have made little difference in the long run.) Unfortunately (though inevitably) the courts that interpret the Constitution are part of the same government that wants, for a variety of sometimes-noble reasons, to whittle away at our freedoms, to the point that the Fourth Amendment (restricting search and seizure) is almost a dead letter, without ever having been repealed by the voters.

The film version of *THE LATHE OF HEAVEN* was made around 1980, by the Public Broadcasting System, and with Le Guin's cooperation. I was less impressed by it than by the book, but this may be as much because I'm generally fonder of prose than of film as it is because of any shortcomings in the film.

I'm not an expert on etymology, but while the "man" in "manufacture" is clearly from Latin for "hand" rather than "man" in the sense of male human, I think "workman" is "work" + "man", so "workmen" is a valid plural. (I checked my copy of Partridge's *ORIGINS*, which says that the "attractive theory" that man is from a verb meaning "to think" "is now discredited but may yet be proved correct", so we have to leave "alderman" open.) Other than that, I think the joking nature of "fan/fen" is sufficiently clear that we needn't worry about its etymological validity: one of the many processes by which our language (and presumably others) develops in that sort of folk etymology, which draws analogies and smooths out sounds to something that sounds familiar.

In response to Lorraine Cormack, what is (I think) necessary is a sliding scale for what constitutes an adult: not so much that it varies from person to person (though there's some of that, which is why the legal category "emancipated minor" was created, but that we may want different definitions for different persons. The age at which it is legal to drive need

not have any connection with the age at which one is old enough to vote, and in most of the US we can consent to sex years before we can legally purchase alcohol. There was a recent legal case here in which a rabbi, charged with kidnapping a 13-year-old, insisted that said 13-year-old was an adult (which is true for Jewish religious purposes) and thus had the right to choose where he would live; the courts disagreed. (Even in Israel, a Jewish state, 13-year-olds do not vote and are not drafted into the military.)

Walt Willis's comment about race (that "the generality of blacks are inferior"), while superficially reasonable in its phrasing (as not applying to all blacks), leads me to wonder what he's been reading. First, I notice that he's confusing race with economic status, in talking first about "blacks" in general and social and biological, including that poverty leads to malnutrition, which in turn reduces intelligence, so even if poor people average less intelligence than rich people, it need not be a permanent (transgenerational) problem, if we're only willing to take a little of the money we're spending on luxuries like Nintendo and fancy editions of novels and buy protein for poor children. (Getting rid of the lead paint in ghetto housing would help as well.) Also, 100 years ago Americans of English descent were saying the exact same things about Irish people (and blacks - some racism is depressingly hard to eradicate), and faking statistics to back their prejudices (see *THE MISMEASURE OF MAN*, by Stephen Jay Gould). One study I read about recently suggests that American blacks do poorly in IQ and aptitude tests because they believe, having been told repeatedly, that they are inferior. When a fairly complex test was given to matched groups of black and white college students, and labelled as an intelligence test, the blacks did worse; when the same test was given to another group of black and white students, labelled as a test of what they already knew, the black students did as well as the whites. Similarly, black students in a "Challenging Program" did better than students in an "Affirmative Action Program", even though the content of the two programs was the same. One other note, on genetics: playing with numbers, assuming a plausible generation length of about 25 years, you can show that the total number of ancestors of anyone alive today reaches the total population of the planet at about 600 AD. Thus, unless populations were totally isolated, we are all descended from the same people. (If we assume that there was, in fact, no genetic contact between the Americas; Australia and Oceania; and Europe, Asia and Africa before the Age of Exploration, the date of which all people whose recent ancestors lived in any one of these places (which specifically included both black and white Americans) have the same ancestors comes even closer.) It only takes one trade route, like the Silk Road or the salt-for-gold trade between Europe and Mali, or one pilgrimage destination, like Mecca, to mix the gene pools; those who assert that people from one part of this planet are genetically superior are thus in much the same position as someone asserting that his third cousin is an idiot because she comes from a long line of idiots. I don't, however, expect this, or any refutation of claims that blacks are less intelligent than whites, to affect the feelings of the real racists (I do not believe Walt is a racist, and I hope none of your readers are): Christians have, over the centuries, had no difficulty in simultaneously viewing Jews as intelligent and murdering them for being Jewish. Hate needs no rational basis, though it may claim one, which is part of why decency has such a hard time prevailing.

As I recall (and I haven't read the book in a while either) Russ's *THE FEMALE MAN* was less an attempt at either utopia or dystopia than a comment on current society (like most utopian fiction, I suppose) along with an observation of the extent to which people will take whatever conditions they grew up with as normal: thus the women of *Whileaway* can't imagine why they would want to re-introduce men into their society, while the men of Earth can't imagine how or why those women could be happy without doing so.

It's been years since I read either Plato's *REPUBLIC* or commentary on it (it's amazing what you stop worrying about once you leave school), but if I recall correctly, it was in large part written as a praise of Sparta (and, thus, attack on Athens). This doesn't make the book, or Plato, look terribly good, of course, since the Spartan political system was unusual, to say the least, in enslaving 90% of the population without giving the other 10% much in the way of leisure or luxuries.

While what an author has to say about a work is not decisive, it can be informative, and I'm old-fashioned enough to think that, to the extent that a book is trying to convey a message (many books are not, of course), the author is likely to be the best authority on what the message

is. In certain other areas, the writer is also the best authority: for example, if a critic says a writer was influenced by X, and the writer informs us that she has never read X, I will give more weight to the writer than to the critic. (Conversely, many writers have said "I never realised I was doing that until you told me," so critics do have a role to play.) On the other hand, to the extent that a book is trying to convey a message, if the author has to explicate the message elsewhere, the book has failed. That said, I generally don't care for Tepper's fiction because she pretends to be presenting moral conflicts, but rigs them: in one novel, she is ostensibly setting up a conflict between cultural non-intervention and the imperative to right wrongs. In reality, the "non-interventionists" have the interesting habit of eliminating any progressive forces (including new forms of music and medical advances), while cheerfully allowing the introduction of child sacrifice and other nasty customs. Nobody I have ever met would argue that only evil cultures should be allowed to continue in their ways, or that we should leave people alone if they are cruel but prevent them from being kind, and if Tepper believes that non-intervention inevitably supports evil, she has not made her case.

As a final note, if Australia likes being a constitutional monarchy, you could probably retain that even if Britain chose republicanism: the Queen might appreciate a mild climate and welcoming population, giving the recent scandals and the nature of a typical London winter. You'd certainly be in a better position than Albania, which once invited Henry Ford to come from the US to be king. (7.12.94)

*[I don't know, there is a push here to be a Republic by the year 2001 (about 60 % approve of it). Of course you have to get a 75% majority (I think it is) in 75% of the States. Oh, and here in Oz, women got the vote at Federation, in 1901. - Ron.]*

#### **JOHN ALDERSON, Havelock, VIC 3465.**

Can't say I liked the transvestite on the cover with the mohawk hairstyle, but the one in the window might make a fair sort of soup. Totally uninteresting.

If you want people with failing eyesight to read the poetry you print, then use a normal type-face. Using the horrible one you have is akin to those verissers who sprinkle their works with "thee's" and "thou's" because Shakespeare did. I am sorry you are not printing fiction any more, some of it was very interesting.

Some interesting discussions concerning the close associations of religion and State. We notice it in others, eg Islam, Buddhism and so forth, but naturally not in ourselves where it just as entwined... but then we worship money. Anyone who cares to plod through Frazer's twelve volume GOLDEN BOUGH and has a sense of humour, will see immediately what I am on about. Thus most Americans are debarred from even standing for President because one qualification is to be a multi-millionaire.

One might ponder too on the use of "Anglo-Saxon" to describe certain four letter words. Now even allowing our Teutonic friends to be somewhat cruder than you and I, it happens that those particular words are older than "Anglo-Saxon", and some indeed are so old they occur in Chinese as well. The laugh, of course is that if we use the same words in the Latin dialect, then they are permissible. I suspect myself that the permanence of four letter words is that they represent our earliest word formation. Ergo, we start with two roots, both of a consonant and a vowel, and put them together and get a word, that is, a two letter word is really a word at all, but a root, and a three letter word has lost one letter. Professors who talk of three letter roots aren't dealing with ancient language at all, but a modern one. Those roots (Sanskrit for example has 121 of them) are often of the earth, earthy; lacking other terms of reference they refer to functions of the body. Our ancient forebears did a good job with these words, they are to the point and we still all know what they mean.

Which brings me to censorship. As a writer I have suffered from censorship all my life, and much I may have written has not been written because no-one would print it. And this is without four letter words. To give an example. Back in 1948 I made some observations and discovered that it was the women who were leading the flight from the land... a matter of no little importance in those days. But that smacked of a criticism of women, a taboo subject then as now. Since then a paper has been written on the subject, but this time the women are leading the move back to the land... which is a good thing. Vast areas of observation are forbidden and the no-go areas are vastly larger now than in 1948.

I have read Plato. It strikes me that he was the first of the very bad logicians. However, the piece quoted by Tom Feller does not say what Tom thinks it does. but does expose Plato's ignorance of women. Plato is saying that *some* women, like *some* men, have the qualities to be Guardians. Could Plato have forced such women to have children? Shades of the Master-race indeed! Besides, Plato couldn't take criticism... he banned poets from his Republic. If Plato indeed thought, which I doubt, that apart from the ability to bear children, "there is no essential difference between men and women" then he is a bigger ass than even I think he was; and if Tom thinks that, as it seems he does, then it's time that Tom met a women and see if they think the same, let alone act the same on anything.

Those who think that women do the cooking the world over seem to belong to a very circumscribed world. In a ten month tour around the world recently I had food cooked by a woman but once (in India, by the way). I speak of course of restaurants. There are societies where the men do the cooking and in Australia I know a lot of households where the man does the cooking, and many where he ought to because he is the better cook of the two. Now myself, I can't even remember a time when I did not cook myself, and also incidentally, when I did not have a garden. Whilst I am known to be a good cook and have been invited (or commanded) to cook in other women's kitchens, my mother refused to allow me to cook in her kitchen, and so do my sisters.

Now one other point. The sewing machine has of course arrived in the East with lots of varying things one can do with them. Invariably, they are used by the men. My mother and sisters refuse to allow me to use their sewing machines because "they are too complicated for a man". To say that in most parts of the world women are still confined to the house is, and has always been, drivel. They work in the fields. When our feminists hear of such things they explode and say, "Those women are being exploited; their place is in the home!" (16.12.94)

#### **JOE FISHER, PO Box 5074, East Lismore, NSW 2480.**

I wanted to mention something about Andrew Darlington's DOCTOR WHO article. Well, I was *going* to, except that Matthew Rayner bet me to it! His letter said almost everything I could possibly want to say about the inaccuracies of the piece. A couple of extra things: Shane Dix mentioned that in THE WAR MACHINES the Doctor was called "Doctor Who" by the computer WOTAN. He was also called this by several other people in the story. Not many people seem to know that. There was also an obscure reference to the Doctor as "Doctor Who" in the camera script of THE UNDERWATER MENACE where the Doctor was meant to sign his name as "Doctor Who". Not many people know that (oh dear, I've turned into Michael Caine!)

Some of the other comments on the article were interesting too. Rod Marsden's beef about Peter Davison, I felt, was a little unfair. The Doctor is such a multi-faceted personality that I think *all* of the incarnations have equal right to be judged as worthy. At least Rod didn't lay all the blame at the feet of Colin Baker, which makes a change from the usual fan reaction. And what was those DOCTOR WHO monsters that you liked, Rod? The "Santavans"? Shouldn't that be the Sontarans? Or is it a new race I'm unaware of - perhaps led by Carlos the Santavan!?

*[That could very well be - Rod's LoC was handwritten, and may have lost something in the transcribing. - Ron.]*

One things that gets my panties in a twist is that so many Australian fans of DOCTOR WHO shat all over Colin Baker *before they had even seen any of his stories*. That, to me, is so unbelievable. How any one can have no mind of their own and make judgements about things with only second-hand reports to base their so-called opinions on, beats the crap out of me. The same often applies to critics of the *New Adventure* series - they say this book sucks, this book is crap, this book isn't DOCTOR WHO and they've never sodding read the books themselves! Auurghhh!!! It makes me so mad! I was a little disappointed that John Tipper found Colin Baker to be a "cardboard cut-out". I found it interesting that John found William Hartnell to be "the perfect Doctor" when Colin Baker has said on numerous occasions that he based a lot of his portrayal of the Doctor *on* Hartnell. He used the same arrogance and the "grouchiness" of Hartnell's Doctor. I think a lot of fans saw the instability of THE TWIN DILEMMA as being the be all and end all of the Sixth Doctor. It was done in order to inject some vitality and a little darkness into the

Doctor - something which was carried through by Sylvester McCoy. It was also to get away from the "clean" image of Peter Davison.

Rachel McGrath-Kerr mentioned my name in connection with my defence of RED DWARF and I thank her for it. Some of my previous letters have been voluble on the Small Rouge One and its occupants and the simple reason is that RED DWARF is smegging brilliant! I even co-edit Australia's first RED DWARF fanzine - CADMIUM RELEASE - to show my appreciation ("I was so impressed I started a fanzine!") We're up to issue 3 - you can contact us at my address above.

I was very disappointed to read that there will be no more fiction in THE MENTOR. As I've said before, I think, the fiction was one of the main reasons that I read TM. Well, it's lucky that there's still a lot to get out of it....

Mae Strelkov's A PLANET MUCH LIKE EARTH was interesting. It came across almost like a piece of fiction. Not that I doubt the validity of the events - it's just that it was told in an engaging and literate way, like a short story.

Not being a humungous fan of the horror genre (I like Stephen King, but that's about it, really), I only leafed through TERRORS FROM THE CRYPT OF HORRORS. What I saw looked it was well done. Andrew Darlington certainly has diverse interests: DOCTOR WHO one issue and TALES FROM THE CRYPT the next.... (21.1.294)

#### **BRENT LILLIE, 10 Cherub St, Togun, QLD 4224.**

I must admit I was slightly chuffed at the fiction being dropped from the magazine, but TM 86 still had plenty in it to satisfy the discerning reader. Ironically, I had my first SF story accepted by a prozine about the same time I heard you were dropping the fiction. One door closes etc etc....

The cover art on TM 86 was involving and eye-catching. Forming a speculative writers' group, as mentioned in the editorial, is a good idea. I've attended creative writing courses locally, at TAFE and an adult education facility, and found them to be most advantageous and enjoyable. It's the feedback from others and the free-flowing exchange of ideas, and not so much the theory side that benefited me the most. That's what I'll miss so much with the fiction being abandoned, I guess - the feedback. But I'm thankful for having my stories appear in the magazine over the past couple of years.

Hey, who needed fiction anyway, when Mae Strelkov and Pavel Viaznikov both contributed such brilliant pieces? The idyllic lake in Pavel's article sounded fantastic, as did Mae's beautiful surrounds. The scenes painted in those two articles will stay with me for a long time.

To help with the greening of your abode, I've sent you a packet of petunia seeds. We've had a lot of success with petunias at home, in pots and in the garden. They're bright and easy to grow, as long as they get plenty of sunlight.

*[Thanks, the loc and packet received intact - I'll put them in as soon as I get back from a holiday down at Ulladulla. - Ron.]*

Was TERRORS FROM THE CRYPT OF HORRORS by Andrew Darlington beautiful as well? My oath it was! I loved all those horror comics when I was a kid. I really liked the weird plots and surprise endings. I recall one story in particular, about a trucker who stays overnight in a hotel in a small American town. And guess what: *A monster lives in the throw rug next to the bed!* Naturally, the trucker steps on the rug, the monster emerges, but being something of a quick thinker our protagonist flings the mat out the window. The monster jumps out after the mat. An unfortunate pedestrian steps on the rug and is immediately consumed. Ah, it was a wee *ripper!* The latest instalment of AUST FAN HISTORY had more characters than a telephone book. It's catching up to modern times. Is there much more to come?

*[No, it finishes this issue. - Ron.]*

As usual, Buck Coulson's and James Verran's contributions make good reading. (17.12.94)

#### **JOHN TIPPER, PO Box 487, Strathfield, NSW 2135.**

You've certainly put off any likely future residents of Bankstown. Having lived in the area for all of my life, I have to say that it's really not as bad as you've painted it, so long as one keeps out of the southern plaza outside shopping hours. Back in early days (in the 1960's) it was notorious for harbouring a number of gangs whose hobby was moving around the area committing pack rapes. The rest of us spent our time hotting up cars and scaring any pedestrians dumb enough to step off the footpaths. The

roads at the time were the worst in the south-western suburbs of Sydney, and of course Paul Keating (the local member) wasn't yet ruling the country. Recently I located a video dupe of some early 8 mm movie film which I shot from a pal's car while racing around the old town (it's now classified as a "city") and although the car was speeding along the streets at 70 mph (115 kph for younger readers) the film does indicate that vast changes have occurred over the past 25 years. Ah, nostalgia.

Mae Strelkov and her family certainly like the going rough. I found her story not unlike some tale of new settlers on an alien planet. Rather you than me, Mae. What amazes me about South America in general is how diverse the countries are, in living conditions - everything. I correspond with a movie buff from Vina del Mar in Chile. His life isn't so unlike that of a resident here in Sydney, with regular film festivals and a multitude of TV channels. They're had cable for some time, so they're one-up on us in Oz.

Easy access to a comprehensive collection of early EC comics meant that Andrew's TERRORS FROM THE CRYPT OF HORRORS didn't hold much interest for me. Certainly the artwork in these garish parodies is worth the price of admission but after looking at dozens, hundreds even, I find it difficult to recall any really memorable cover or title. I'll take Jet Ace Logan or Dan Dare in preference, thank you very much, or MAD MAGAZINE.

The HISTORY, thanks to the accompanying photographs, provided its most interesting chapter. Can one see the beginnings of, dare I say it, *Mediafandom* in the photos on page 11?

To THE R&R DEPT. Chris raises the matter of doing TM in A3. I've switched to A3 for newsletters of 12 pages or less as it's cheaper so long as you're covered by a service contract which is based on the *number* of copies. My service cost is twice the cost of the paper per copy, so this saves a fair amount. Although almost every zine I've done in the past has been centre-stapled, I'd be the first to agree that setting off on that course was the dumbest thing I ever did! It's labour-intensive and time-consuming. Far easier to corner-staple and collate single sheets of paper. Once you start centre-stapling your zines, everyone expects you to *keep* doing it.

In the not too distant future, censorship will cease to be so visible. As we've all seen, computer manipulation of visual images (yeah, there's probably a term for it) is now a reality. Censors will be able, if they're not already doing it, to subtly alter movies and videos. Every country at the very least will have a different version of your favourite movie and who will know if what you're seeing has been censored? Directors can now shoot (if that's still an appropriate term) a limitless variety of endings, middles and whatever. Videos will come with built-in programmes enabling parental censoring, as just one example. Exciting, eh?

Matthew Rayner has taken Andrew to task for a number of alleged errors in his article on the Doctor. Well, Matthew, I don't know where you got the idea that the NEW ADVENTURE novels are aimed at adults. They are aimed at today's juveniles who "can't relate to an sf show lumbered with the fuddy-duddy ideas of a children's programme conceived in the 1960's". Andrew was writing of the Doctor *he* remembered, so why would the NEW ADVENTURES rate a mention? The trouble with modern day WHO fans is they are so bloody pedantic. Although, come to think of it, WHO fans have always been pedantic, so nothing has really changed, has it? Maybe one day Matthew will learn to respect other people's opinions.

John Alderson's letter indicates to me that he probably has more intelligence in his earlobe than I have in the whole of my body. I can write that I'm in agreement with most things John mentions, but lack the reading to add anything of interest. Andy Sawyer makes mention of the two publications most dear to my heart. THE MAGNET and THE GEM. A comprehensive collection of these pre-war Story Papers reside within my clutches, but I have to disagree that these are still sought after. Ten years ago collectors of these and other similar publications numbered in the thousands, but the majority have passed on since then. The very youngest readers of the originals would be at least 60 today. Most of my collection has come from deceased estates over the past 5 years.

Reading REVIEWS reminds me to mention that distributors Transworld Publishers have a twice-yearly sale at their Liverpool, Sydney, warehouse. I recently picked up hardcover editions of four of the Star Wars novels plus the Roger Stern SUPERMAN novel for only \$6 each.

Paperback fiction was only \$2 a book. Their next sale should be early in 1995. (21.12.95)

**LLOYD PENNEY, 412-4 Lisa St., Brampton, ON CANADA L6T 4B6**

85... Congratulations on restarting the Futurian Society of Sydney. A club is difficult to start and run, and many people seem to think that a club is a childish activity. However, making a club interesting is a real task. Seeing how long the Melbourne SF Club has been in existence, and how many different activities they list in issues of ETHEL, a club can be a lot of fun. However, MSFC has been the victim of member apathy lately, so keeping the club interest will be a chore. Best of luck with the club.

Toronto is the centre of Doctor Who fandom in Canada, and is also the home of one of the largest DW clubs in North America, the fun-run Doctor Who Information Network. After shipping expensive British actors overseas bankrupted the local DW con, WhoParty, one of the DWIN chapters started up a simple one-day get-together, and under the firm leadership of Lisa Truant, Eye of Orion has already gone through two successful years. Yvonne and I aren't Whofans, but we know Lisa, and many of the people who attend, and we lend them equipment for their snack bar. Many local fans have found memories of Joh Pertwee because of several visits to Toronto and area. Believe it or not, Sydney Newman lives in Toronto, but won't have anything to do with the Whofans or his creation. He always felt that it was a kid's show, and that everyone is making far too much of it. One must admit that the idea of regeneration is perfect for letting one actor out and allowing another in. Patrick Troughton had the horrific distinction of dying in his sleep while being the guest at a Florida convention.

Once again, the Molesworth fan history shows the growth of Ozfandom, and how fans can seem to get along and be constructive for a while, and yet still destroy everything in a rage of arguing, feuding, fighting and pedantic word-splitting and bylaw-stating. The more things change....

86... The closest I've been to living in the isolation Mae Strelkov enjoys is in the small village of Qualicum Beach on Vancouver Island. It just wasn't busy enough for me. I had a look at an atlas, and found Jujuy to be the most northerly province of Argentina. There's also the towns or cities of San Salvador de Jujuy and San Pedro de Jujuy. Given what you say in your article, I would guess that you live close to San Pedro.

Vol Molesworth's fan histories certainly detail conventions different than what most of us are used to. I have Worldcon programme books from the 50s (Philcon, 1953, Detention, 1959, Pittcon, 1960, Chicon III, 1961), and the programme usually consisted of the same thing, a meeting hall in the centre of a hotel. I'm starting to recognise some of the names, like Merv Binns and Race Mathews.

I'd very much like to know more about Laurraine Tutihasi's SPELL group. Once I scrape together some cash, I'd like to join a good editor's association. (28.12.94)

**TOM FELLER, Box 13626, Jackson, MS 39236, USA.**

I enjoyed [TM 85], especially the fine DR WHO article. I did notice that Andrew Darlington makes one error on page 13. Lalla Ward was the second actress to play Romana. Mary Tam's Romana actually replaced Louise Jameson's Leela. Tam left the show after one year, because she became pregnant.

Like Buck Coulson, I have an American rural background. However, I'm quite a bit younger. By the time I was a teenager, my family bought almost all of its groceries from a supermarket. However, my father always planted a couple rows of sweet corn among the field corn. I don't even bother buying sweet corn in a supermarket, because I know I would not be satisfied with the taste. When I was growing up, there was no deer hunting where we lived. However, my father tells me that his group of nine hunters shot 19 deer this year within a radius of only a few miles from our farm.

I've never read Karl Popper's THE OPEN SOCIETY AND ITS ENEMIES, so I'll accept Bradley Row's account of Popper's account of Plato's REPUBLIC. While Plato's utopia may be revolting to modern readers, let's remember the time in which he wrote it. Only a few years earlier, Athenian democracy voted to execute Socrates. During the time of Pericles, Athens embarked on an imperialist foreign policy and the disastrous Peloponnesian War. Most of the other Greek city-states were ruled by tyrants. Plato exhorted his students to be active in politics and

wrote THE REPUBLIC to give them an ideal to work toward. Many of his students, Aristotle most notably, became advisers and tutors to kings. Some also wrote laws and constitutions for other city-states. Plato himself travelled twice to Syracuse to try to educate its king to be an enlightened monarch. His last work, THE LAWS, is the result of 20 years of attempting to put his ideas into practice. The later book is rarely read, because (1) it is not as great a literary achievement and (2) the earlier work is an excellent introduction to all of Plato's ideas, not just the political ones. To equate Plato with Hitler is simply not fair. Plato never advocated the arbitrary rule of one man, especially someone like Hitler whose main qualification for leadership was his appeal to the masses. Above all, Plato was the enemy of the demagogue.

(8.12.94)

**WALT WILLIS, 32 Warren Rd, Donaghadee, N. IRELAND BT21 0PD.**

Mae Strelkov's piece must have been written to please all those, including myself, who have expressed interest in the life style of this fascinating lady. As such it succeeds triumphantly, giving us some idea of what it must be like to live in the South American jungle. One reads it with a growing admiration for this indomitable woman.

Darlington's article on horror comics was well written and held my interest despite my lack of interest in his subject matter, and much the same applies to Molesworth's history of Australian fandom.

Pavel's travelogue was something else again... an utterly fascinating glimpse of aspects of the Soviet Union one does not see set out anywhere else. It is rare to be introduced to attractive aspects of Russia like this.

Buck Coulson's nostalgic piece was appealing and Verran's review of the SFWA's Handbook was helpful.

In the Reader's Letters, I noted Julie Vaux's puzzlement about the term "smeghead" as used in RED DWARF. I think it derives from the word "smegma", which is the name given to a white deposit which accumulates under the foreskin of uncircumcised males who neglect their personal hygiene. Terry Jeeves awakens memories of the early days of radio, with his description of "High Tension" batteries and rechargeable "accumulators". There was also required a small dry "grid bias" battery, which seldom needed replacement, its function being merely to supply a voltage to the grids of the valves, no current being needed.

Like Sneyd, I could have wished Viaznikov had talked about the film STALKER. It was a disappointment to me because of its lack of sfnal content and I've been wondering what I missed. (6.1.94)

**ROB FREW, 1 Funda Place, Brookvale, NSW 2100**

It's great to hear the renewed Futurian Society of Sydney is such a success. The poetry & fiction in TM #85 was good, Shane Dix's MEMORY LAME was interesting but missed out on effectively typing the sci-fi like dream in with the rest of the story, and I know an avid Dr Who fan that will adore Andrew Darlington's article.

Flicking through the locs of TM #86, I was surprised to see an Editorial note stating that from this issue on, fiction comments will go to authors only. I fail to see much logic to this seemingly spontaneous, arbitrary editorial decision, especially when comments on artwork, poetry & articles will (I assume), still be published. I know (Ed) you're always trying to keep TM's weight down, especially for O.S. Subscriptions, but I suggest there's fat on TM in other places. Science Fiction is what attracts me to TM, I enjoy reading the differing readers responses to *all* the fiction published, and to underhandedly remove this element from the R&R DEPT is a mistake. I'll be interested to see if this decision generates much controversy.

*[The prime reason why I'm sending comments direct to authors is that, as I said back in TM 85, there won't be any fiction in future issues. - Ron.]*

Finally, to set Julie Vaux straight at the risk of sounding crass (Loc 7/94 #86), smeghead is taken from the word smegma, the clinical term for foreskin cheese. Like the term "bugger", frequent social use of the word seems to have detracted from its vulgarity.

(6.1.95)

**RODNEY LEIGHTON, R. R. #3, Pugwash, N. S. CANADA B0K 1L0**

This business of language and terminology is quite intriguing. I read the THINGUMYBOB LOC special and TM 85 about the same time. In writing to Chuck, I mentioned that I had recently read someone complaining about the term "fen". I was thinking about this because of Terry Jeeves using the term in THINGUMYBOB, in a loc. Hunting through

THE MENTOR 85, I found the loc where J. F. Haines complained about fen and Terry Jeeves directly under him. I thought that was quite amusing but perhaps I'm easily amused.

[As an aside, my usual system with locs is that I type those up in batches of the day I receive them, and in that day I type them up in order of the date stated on the LoC. - Ron.]

For instance, I was recently wondering how people would have reacted if Chris Masters had sent you a loc, and you printed it, which contained: Fornication. Defecation. Fornication. Defecation. Suppose anyone would have gotten upset, uptight, pissed off or insulted?

All these nuances of language... I sometimes get frustrated with specialized SFan jargon and acronyms... and yet, here I am inventing some. I can't recall anyone else writing it as SFan, although it may be old hat and/or never catch on. But, fans being notoriously lazy (don't yell at me, it's not my view, just one I've heard a lot), it eliminated one F. I can see it might catch on and 20 years from now, someone will wonder what asshole created such a term. Just as I wondered who invented FIJAGH and what in the hell it meant, for a long time.

Then, of course, there is specialized jargon in every fandom and sub-culture. I could start ranting on in pro wrestling terminology or pro wrestling fandom jargon, but how many people would have any idea what in the world I was talking about?

Sorry to see the demise of the fiction; it was my favourite part. It might work to the advantage of people like Duncan Evans and Brent Lillie, since they might submit to paying publications. I have to kind of wonder why you use articles you already printed once and which a substantial percentage of your readers appear to be ignoring in lieu of new fiction but it's your zine. If I knew how editor's minds work, I'd write a book about it and get rich. (23/24.12.94)

[Are you referring to the Molesworth HISTORY? The majority of TMs readers would not have seen it before, and the photographs and Graham Stone's material are new. - Ron.]

A closer examination of this overworked, bleary-eyed reader reveals that you're not just dropping loc comments on fiction, you've dropping the actual fiction. Please forgive my confusion, but a S/F mag with no S/F I had trouble visualising.

Disappointing! (17.1.95)

#### MAE STRELKOV, 4501 Palma Sola, Jujuy, Argentina.

Your new flat sounds marvellous. As for violence nearby, that's everywhere, though maybe not in this tiny corner here so remote from those out to "make a killing quickly". Here, folks wait for eggs to hatch, piglets to grow big enough for slaughter, planted rows of corn and vegetables to sprout and rain to come. (or rain to stop coming when it overdoes its response). The sun lately is so scorching people in the town of San Pedro (100 odd kms distant) were actually smitten. No air. Heat that wilts. Water from taps, near boiling-point, etc. We found it hot too, but have our cool shade under magical trees. (Our *algarrobo* is huge - that's the Baptist's locust tree, in Chinese using a character for a ghost-tree. I've seen in LITTLE BIG (that Ned sent years ago) bewitched heroines gather to mourn and celebrate simultaneously under a carrob, in the last scene. This is the tree that - all over South America - natives used to circle dancing and chanting. They called it "the Tree", the ghost-tree for them also, "tree of returning, or circling, ancestors".)

It's very cool and breezy under our *algarrobo*. As for our water tank, it is so shaded by a huge palta we planted years ago, (that's called an *avocado* abroad<sup>5</sup>), it's always cool. One day the tree's embracing limbs will push that tank over. Meanwhile, no problem yet. We don't worry over the morrow. (Believing as we do in the Jesus-philosophy the Church discounts everywhere.)

The palta is a phallic symbol to the Quechuans, due to the shape of its fruit. All our patas were planted here years ago, just by sticking palta seeds into fertile ground. Some got eaten up by horses when they grew, (making us annoyed, sure. But enough survive to stand huge and darkly shady.)

"Shane" being a name for either male or female, I chuckle whenever Shane Dix reminds us of his sex. In THE MENTOR #86 loc he reminds us again: he's partial to "my testicles and all". Well, we're partial to our "testicles" hanging all over the garden, when ripe, each year. It's a

<sup>5</sup> from the Nahuatl for "testicle".

race between us and our dogs and cats as to who collects a ripe example when it falls from an unreachable height. (Those little *avocado*-pips have grown so gigantic! In just say nine or ten years.) We'll plant more realsoonnow, we swear. And lots more of "everything" also, gradually. (It's the ants who cause us our real worries. They always win on sudden forages, harvesting all the sprouting tips in just one night, catching us with our pants down, literally, I guess.)

Everything burgeons so wildly, insects too. Natives buy enormous quantities of poison (sold them by sharp-shooting agents of chemical companies). Often, their babies are born lacking a limb - (poisoned pregnant mothers!). It doesn't worry them, they're mad to hit the jackpot, if their luck prevails. All over the tomato-growing north here, wonderfully hard-working peasants, (usually from Bolivia, now settling here) plant tomatoes and spray them regularly with poisons, and the market is flooded, so they barely break even. And it's terrible, endless work! But once in a while the weather is unfriendly, tomatoes are scarce everywhere, hence costly and the guy who's had luck with the climate in his corner, makes a killing, buys trucks and builds a lovely villa. (Palma Sola is dotted with these lucky ones. The rest still live in rickety shacks, just a few boards or sticks stuck together, waiting their turn for Pachamama's smile.)

In my ms I'll correct *cancon* - it's *canchon*. And Tony's age. He's hate to learn he's thirty-six in MENTOR's pages. He was born in mid 1960 (I was 43). So he'll be only thirty-five come this August (1995). When he came here straight from Military Service in 1983/4 he was just a kid still, really. And now with three kids of his own. But the wife's had her tubes tied, for they are amazingly fertile, these rustic Jujuy folk.

As for our two-hundred odd pigs, there's a run upon them for these yearend festivities everywhere around. While pig-mothers still breed away, swelling our pig-population, we're getting rid of some monsters - usually hard to sell, "too big", plus all sizes down to sucklings right now. Someone's always at the gate for a pig.

We really should learn to make hams, but we'd need a freezing chamber. We bought his freezer from our friendly doctor at Palma Sola, quite new, but he's bought one much bigger. (As we pay him 100 pesos - that's like one hundred US dollars - per month, it's easy enough. One medium pig's value is 100.) But it turns out it's much too small for three or four medium-sized pigs at once, already nicely cleaned, while waiting some client who swore "I'll fetch it this afternoon" but only arrives a day or so later. So, with the awful heat, and the pigs waiting indefinitely hanging from a hook, we had to have a bigger freezer at once. Next on our list of purchases will be the bigger one, and our Benjamin (number three "manager" of our enterprise by now) is taking over our doctor's freezer for himself, also paying for it little by little. A monstrous new freezer will thus soon decorate and almost fill our little front living-room.

Among our clients continues to be the diffident priest from Palma Sola. His foibles may be "many" as per reports, but I think he sounds a dear and just right for this easy-going Land of Forever around us here. One day he asked for a pig at our gate, and Tony explained they'd just had their doses of anti-parasite poison, so "Sorry". He never dared return, sure that it was a snub, but when wanting another pig asked our Benjamin who laughed heartily and explained it really was our wish to save the priest from poisoning from that parasite-poison, that we were very welcoming towards him and all pig purchasers usually. Only when pigs were "taboo" health-wise.

After all, Sylvia at her Palma Sola high school cooperates with the nun in arranging fiestas, herding the students to mass on days of fiesta (all neatly marching and chanting). If we lived in an Arab land we'd sing to Allah as friendly, why not? I just can't dislike anybody's god or way of festing him/her/it, etc. We're all aboard the life-raft of BARDO, which was mentioned in a new HABBAKUK by a loccer, as a Tibetan term for the in-between dimensions. (We're in one already of course.)

I love Chris Masters' letters. They give me an excuse to sound off myself. "Satan, Satan!" he used to chant in every other paragraph. "Our Creator, whoopee!" was my inevitable response. Still is! Warn him not to "cast his pearls" before *swine*. They might not "rend" (or bite) but poking fun is legitimate. Such challenges I enjoy! Right now dozens of slaughtered pigs have had their "wakes" in our living-room, "getting prepped". Did you read Bruce's METAPHYSICAL REVIEW when he turned a personal letter to Elaine and himself into an article titled IN CAHOOTS WITH THE CREATOR? In it I chiefly chanted the praises of our ducks. (That was several years ago). Now I've sent another, denying my earlier



boasts. The grown-up ducks (the males) killed all their females, sisters, daughters, mother, by raping them while pushing their heads down under water so they drowned. When no females remained, they tried mounting chickens, the old papa with his member hanging to the ground, dragging painfully no doubt. We were tired anyway of having chickens (never could find their hidden eggs, and they dirtied our two porches). So we gave the chicken-swarms to Benjamin. Next the male ducks tried mounting our new toddlers. (There's a limit to freedoms, me lads, believe me). We gave the sturdy males - young ones and older poppa - to Benjamin too.

My grumpiness lately was due to a big disillusionment in a grandson, age 18 when he came here around May 1994, to learn "now to raise pigs" and share our lives "forevermore". It turned out he merely planned to keep *us* trotting and eat us "out of house and home" meanwhile. Sneering at our failures to make money! Furious because our kids were "too generous" with everyone around! We should "charge, charge, CHARGE, through the nose".

He refused to see that generosity breeds generosity. All our neighbours swear by us, trust us totally, love doing little favors when they can, are ready to defend us from outside *vivos*, though still they're a little *vivo* with us themselves. (Habit). Benjamin says we're his real family (he lives across the road). We're not like his own relatives, all such *vivos* with him. His daughter keeps an eye afternoons on Tony's youngest, Robert, who is alarmingly like a mini-adult - *vivo*, *VIVO*, *V-I-V-O!* Not yet two, but tried to drive an old broken pushcart out onto the highway to compete with hurtling lumber-trucks. How Vadim had to run after him! *He* was running top speed, was Robertito! He climbs onto the high tractor and "drives" it proudly, all on his own. (We make sure the tractor can't roll downhill.

To John Alderson: No, Vadim is *not* "still on deck". He's where he's always been, up on the bridge issuing orders and good advice. His first mate drives him nuts, as also [do] all his unruly children and grandchildren, his deck-hands, but his "bridge" is located under the peaceful locust tree where you'll find him when he's not chopping firewood and busy with chores. Our kids let him take over their tasks far too easily. I try to be *vivo*, hence lazy, dodging tasks, too. He does see humans from a Russian point of view! We're all "uncumarus still", somewhat!

Oh! "Pavel, boo!" as Julie Vaux says. but still, it's great to have his regular reports from Russia - keep them coming!

Sorry no more stories. I enjoyed them - Shane Dix's MEMORY LAME is very good. One *does* forget things, more & more. "Fortunately!" I say!

Your new Futurian Society sounds promising. Discussing humor *and* religion! Religion should *only* be discussed humorously. Anything solemn is phoney in my view. (Even solemn Satan-worshippers.) "God", for me, is playful. In our lives that's how it's ever been for me. As for his (her/its) answers? Call same "mere funny coincidences". I don't mind. Satan instead, & Satanists, are so ploddingly dull and humorous.

Ah, we're the blue-haired brigade are we, Michael Hailstone? (And buddy Chris Masters?) I was called a blue-stocking by the dad of a good girlfriend when I was a girl in China. I have felt like dying myself with woad all over to scare naughty little boys, Celtic-style. But just bluing my white hair? What use?

MENTOR 85 cover. Thanks to Brent Lillie for mentioning the human those boring dinosaurs half-ate. I checked and sure enough a fellow's boot sticks out and an arm with a fist as yet uneaten. Very modest attempt to get us furious. I'm accustomed to charnel right at home. Our toddlers, (age 5 to one and a half) help Benjamin and his brats when a big task of slaughtering pigs comes up. They aren't sentimental. Our three-year-old has miniature toy farm animals from China, very well modelled. He plays with them, labelling them by their flesh's terminology: "beef, mutton" and so on. I stressed to the kids that it's part of our daily survival, eating meat still. Oh, yes, and "pork" is our speciality, of course. Easiest to raise, so far, it seems. And it all started with a gift sow (still tiny), years ago, a gift of gratitude from an oldish pair who live in two hectares cut out of our property with out help, because they'd been squatters there - formerly on summer holidays - for years and years. Now they're retired here and are so friendly and helpful. We take turns - when their pick-up breaks down, perhaps our is fixed again. Or vice versa, and so on. Actually, only now is that pick-up of ours that broke down on its way home to us, "all made new". New innards, though not from Japan. The importation was halted when we went shopping.

Actually, Tony is also skilled with preparing pigs for market, on a par with our skilled Benjamin by now. As for that grandson that knocked me for a spin months ago (for he knocked out my theory that "reincarnations can be big successes" and I knew his former identity all too well, alas), he's happily co-habiting with Sylvia's 30 year old sister-in-law in Jujuy town, and freeloading firmly and unremoveably on her mother. Living cosily and teaching the mother to "obey"! (Having failed to teach us). She hates it but endures. He's got the girl pregnant so he has a "right" to hang around. Besides, he has no wish to join us swineherds anew nor to go back to his own momma in Buenos Aires who got rid of him in the first place on *us*. She's the widow of our Robert who died before the age of 50, nagged to death, especially by his mother-in-law. The lad is no hard worker, has no plans to be one as long as he can freeload, preferably luxuriously. (Here, he could not.)

So I had to change my views after much "kicking against the pricks" (to quote Saint Paul in the older translation). The pricks /kick against right now are male. Suddenly! I'm all for nice palta types usually, but when they're too, too big, ugh! The burden is too heavy. I, for one, will pray no more for hopeless types. Rejoice, Chris Masters, Satan has saved you from "Christ". I'm *not*, NOT, praying for your soul, you blackhearted dunce. I don't give a damn any longer. I went through grief at facing the question and came out tougher than ever at long last. (Watch out, John Alderson, too! You pro-patriarchal grump. Christian, sure, you say you are, but the other side of one same coin. Get mad, John. I'll pray to *Allah* for your soul, shall I? You'd like it, wouldn't you? Dear boy....)

Well, now, sweethearts. I'll tell you who else I love or don't love, in your loc column: "Paid up atheists"? Be sure, darlings, to keep your payments up to date, not cheat! Cute, you are. I always have a special place in my heart for paid-up atheists, but wouldn't cross verbal swords with them. Love-em and leave-em, sez I! I've tangled with them for years. (77 I am, remember? Going on for 80 to catch up with Vadim, but when I'm 80, poor dear, he'll be 83 and he hates it. I get such a kick out of being old and cranky and not giving a damn, (being old one gets away with it), I don't wish I could be young again). If I had to reincarnate, I'd choose maybe to be a feline, if choice is allowed. Not human, not yet. I had enough of being a human this lifetime, thank you.

Well, of course, as a feline, I'd want to be a vegetarian, for I do love "little wild creatures" especially. A problem for future solution or choice.

I like your earnest hard-core science-fiction fans in those photos, back in the 1940s and 1950s, earnestly establishing by-laws for their clubs in a business-like way. Don't tell me they're my age today? Fifty years ago, give or take? Handsome fellers, all. Are they still? I receive from Ken Cheslin the Berry series, wonderful goons they all were at that same time. No goons in Australia? Now you have at least some chain-saw wielding cannibals, haven't you? Can't compete with the Berry weapons. You should read those tales coming forth from Ken's press!

Could you get Bill Congreve to discuss Robert Jordan's series, The Wheel of Time? Ned's been sending me the paperbacks as they appear. We (Tony, Sylvia, I) discuss details like Bible scholars discuss points-of-faith. We read and reread. Wish I could write like Jordan, but he knows things I don't know about life and struggle, so my stuff could never match. I'm another goon, just.

Ah, before I forget. Now that the Military [has] lost its clutch in this country, people no longer disappear regularly. Officially, death squads shine best in Brazil, not here. Vadim worries that our birds will come home to roost, and the non-existent death squads will arrive here next at dead-of-night. If they do, "trot me out", I say (letting the rest of the family proclaim their inability to control crazy me.) I'll handle those ucumarus better than even Vadim can. I'll muddle them silly as I preach in English-accented Spanish, and charm them with my toothless smiles. Vadim is too dignified and sane to muddle anybody. The more dignified he grows, the crazier I get to balance our long-lasting union. I refer to my remarks to Rob Marsden, which I would repeat I'm always behind. No taking it back, not till I die, nor after. Read, me lads, the Polebridge Press publications, if you want to know my current "Bible-source". Their PO box # must be unchanged, though I've received a notice they've moved to new quarters, all stream-lined same must be. Hoorah for them! *Fight on*, I say, when I think of them. True believers are so furious with them, more and more. At least, their "Jesus" doesn't ask worship, just gives his philosophy a chance in one own daily life! As J. C. Hartley writes, "It's

hard to argue with what Jesus said." I take him literally, always did. As for being "born again", it's so obvious. Each time we fail, we get another try in the flesh, to learn some more, try again. (Not that Polebridge speaks of such a mystic belief. Too hard-headed, they are.

Find me a fanzine to match THE MENTOR, especially its loccers all stirred up like the loccers of CRY OF THE READERS of Seattle back in the early 1960s when I had such fun there with everybody I somehow seemed to shock. I just haven't any fanzine but our MENTOR with its crew! to match that might come to mind. Have you?

Ah, did the terror zines lead to MAD? All's well, then, that ends well. We were MAD fanatics back when we lived in Cordoba and the kids could still buy that magazine. MAD, as Andrew Darlington puts it, "impaled the establishment not with switch-blade but with mocking satire." It was great.

Steve Jeffery: "The sense of wonder woven into song". Lovely phrase. So I come in for a lot of "immediate personal invective?" But I do love bull-baiting, you see! Human bullocks, bollocks and such! Keep it up, dear staunch defenders of liberty and artistic freedom! Don't let us down.

SFWA HANDBOOK. James Verran's article reassures me that I've been blessedly "saved" from "serving Mammon" (in the form of publishers and all the slavish chores expected of writers nowadays). I did get into correspondence with some leading editors years ago, (and a Miss Jamieson of Curtis, Brown, introduced by editor Robert Murphy of S. E. Post, in the late 50s or early 60s.) They nursed me along begging that I be a bit more serious, but finally we all gave up and I reassured them I would more happily devote myself henceforth to seeking the roots of our languages and myths. Miss Jacobson, as I recall, (I do still have her letters put away), concluded our correspondence by saying, "If anyone can do it, you will." At that time, savants insisted the task could not be done. (Silly me to try.) But I feel I did succeed, and I hope that the heavy bundles of notes and mss. I'll leave behind me on the findings will yet come to roost nicely. (Not like the birds Vadim fears will return due to my crazy, wild ways.)

Andrew asks: "Why horror?" It has an eternal fascination, he explains. (I know. I knew horror in girlhood and early childhood till I came to a turning-point thanks to the great shocks I had to face. Around the early 1960s. Another story. Having faced them I've enjoyed life and had depths of fun ever since.)

Yes.... I'm glad I skipped Mammon's toils way back then. No fretting over bank-accounts and publisher's delays. Fandom is free - and so alive, in a zine like MENTOR. Hope, Ron, you do find a way to meet expenses realsoonnow nonetheless.

Ah, Julie! You got a feline shadow too? Shake paws!

Thank you, Sydney Bounds, for hoping I'll still be writing Ron. Yes, I will. He's one of the best I ever knew. So are you all, his friends.

John Alderson: it's true Jesus was anti-priest, preacher, master, and so on. Another reason he's my role-model and always has been. How patriarchs do get annoyed that I follow Jesus so closely, even grimly at times with a nasty glint in my eye.

Teaching the Northern Irish to "forget Jesus"? As Walt Willis says, they're already forgotten him. But do those in Eire further south follow his simple dictates? Jesus did allow "two swords" to Peter, but it happens to be a proto-Chinese symbol for selfishness, ego. (I've a book length study on all that packed away.)

Are blacks superior/inferior to whites? Every black I've met has made me feel inferior. Their innate dignity and poise, their aloof understanding of our white silly ways, awes me. But then I read people as they come, inside, not their exteriors.

Yes, Danuta Shaw, wish I could join you in "sticking our hands into the earth and feeling we belong".

Catherine Mintz. Our beleaguered language will be beautiful one day, because of the constant wear and tear and pidgin style usages. It was always shaped in this same way, by invading folk in the past. By other folks nowadays trying to learn English, the world over. It will soon be the Koine of our whole Earth, embodying lovely phrases not yet borrowed, but they will be. From every tongue and everyone. I have faith! It's not that I love English best.... I think a lot in archaic Chinese symbols lately, and often borrow Spanish terms when they fit best. We all borrow Spanish thus here.

Michael Hailstone. Why should Chris Masters be afraid of us "blue-haired, vicarentertaining, etc." old ladies. We don't even really say "Boo!"

Chris: Tell us about your momma and young grandma, your aunts, your sisters, all of them. So we'll understand you, gradually.... You are a forever young boy. Satanism stunts. You dare not think unsatanic questions. I thumb my nose and say with St. Michael, "May God rebuke you" at Satan, and not at poor, duped silly Satanists.

Robert Frew: I never even heard of the Tooth Fairy in my childhood; Santa was a no-no at home as "false". Jesus was real. And he really was, even when I hated the image to which grim Fundamentalist fellow-missionaries used to cling, pronouncing me (when I was so tiny) obviously "destined to be lost". So I set about to prove them untrue. At that age. Not because I wished to be saved. I just wanted that nobody be lost. Now I'll allow Chris Masters to demand his right. I do pray for people, in passing, wishing folk well. Even Chris I still do wish well, very well. Hey, you all, shall we all hold a prayer-meeting for Chris? Anyway? Let's try praying for each other. Telepathy works, as I've had cause to recognise.

Don Boyd discusses UFO rapes, etc and fairy folk in Ireland. I'm curious. I've seen this mentioned in other fanzines lately. What's going on? I hear nothing, here.

Tonia Walden's TM 86 cover is lovely. What? No bloody corpses?

Re the "Jesus corpse getaway", there's a Polebridge book I got, by Crossan (THE CROSS THAT SPOKE), it made me realise Jesus' body was (maybe) buried *by his enemies* and probably lost. No regal, Christian burial. So what if the vultures fed on his corpse? It's possible. In Persian beliefs, Towers of Silence are where corpses end up, for the vultures.

Polebridge also had a video titled AWAY WITH THE MANGER. I'd buy *all* they put out. So challenging. As I believe what Jesus taught, he lives, for me. Not because of a fancy resurrection, virgin birth, etc.

Early Christians cluttered up Jesus' remembered sayings w/nonsense. "Fast on Wednesdays & Fridays, not on Mondays & Thursdays as the phonies do", as per the Didache (Teachings of the 12 apostles). Jesus was "a party animal", as Polebridge's publications point out. He was fun! The life of every gathering & feast. He was the perennial hippie of our past. Only, hippies today are silly, sad middleagers. Jesus stays young & real. (22.12.94)

**J. C. HARTLEY, 14 Rosebank, Rawtenstall, Rossendale BB4 7RD, England.**

Poetry in TM 86, all poetry benefits from good presentation but I'm not sure if John Haines will think my efforts supported his verse advocacy of the sub-genre or invalidated it. Nice spread though Ron. What is that typeface?

*[It's Matura MT Script C, a Microsoft Word font. Unfortunately it's not a font you can do words with all capitals, that is, if you want to read it easily. -Ron.]*

Skimmed Bradley Row's letter re BOOK FOR BURNING. Well, he's toned down the hysteria of the original review and perhaps if that review had been as measured it wouldn't have created this ongoing saga but... Brad says Ms Tepper isn't being ironic because her writing is too obviously in support of the nazi-femme society she has created, if she really wanted us to be ambivalent about that society then she wouldn't have been such an apologist for it. He sets up a curious opposition citing Orwell, More, Wells, etc. These arguments just don't proceed with any logic. I know how difficult it can be to order your arguments when you're dealing with something you feel strongly about but honestly it would have been fairer to say "look I think this is a shit book, a real piece of shoddy work, which does nothing for gender relations" rather than attempt a deconstruction which the critic doesn't have the dialectic capacity to carry off. Sorry. Brad's wriggling in his second paragraph, re BURNING and the censorship debate doesn't inspire confidence either.

Oh shit, here we go again, John Alderson, venerable Ozymandias of the outback. Don't pick me up on that John, it was a joke. Where do you stand on the issue of Father Christmas, John? (Don't worry about that, it's just the sanity clause. Aww, everyone knows there ain't no sanity clause). You live in an ordered world of logic which the previous critic can only aspire to, historical precedents skip gaily to the music of the fife. Do you really believe the Reivers didn't kill anyone or are we floundering in a muddy semantic estuary over a definition of the term

murderous? If so, forgive my imprecision. Yet what's this? The Royal Family doesn't cost the British taxpayer anything. Hot news! Today's GUARDIAN has then run its longest and most surreal misprint. A figure of £50m per year, 5 palaces upkeep of; 750 staff wages through Dept of Environment; Queen's Flight: 3 planes, 2 helicopters, 185 staff, through Min. of Defence. Every time she jets to Texas to buy bloodstock we sub the in-flight crisps and movie. It's a poor do but the whole shebang will eventually be dragged up to date because of republicanism or a desire to sweep away the class system it maintains but because of economics, you can't payroll a premiership squad (who haven't won a trophy for years) when you're in the third division-popular cultural reference there.

(1.2.95)

**CHRIS A. MASTERS, PO Box 7545, St Kilda Rd, Melbourne, VIC 3004.**

These days I don't have as much time to read all the stuff that comes in as I use to, so forgive me for skimming over most [of] TM #86. The R&R section is still the most interesting part of the magazine. It was good to see you printing some horror in the form of Andrew Darlington's article TERRORS FROM THE CRYPT [OF] HORRORS. These mags were a bit before my time, but I did read the article nonetheless. At last some horror in TM! About fucking time. We're taking over dudes! Soon we shall absorb, then obliterate sci-fi altogether. And so much for the better, for we are the superior genre.

The big yawn continues and looks like never ending. Of course I'm talking about that cure for insomnia known as THE HISTORY OF AUSTRALIAN FANDOM by Vol Mol[e]sworth (never have I seen a name so appropriate since John Dickie). This would have to be the most long-winded and boring excuse for an article I've ever come across in a sci-fi fanzine. Molesworth even takes the occult tomes of Arthur Edward Waite seem succinct in comparison. Where do you find this shit? This is pointless drivel at its most extreme. Who gives a fuck about some obscure meeting held at some convention held 40 years ago that no one remembers anyway. Come on! It's this sort of crap that gives SF Fandom a bad name. There's nothing worse than a bunch of old farts reminiscing about how things were, especially when they were so fucking boring... Ahhh, of course! Should have listened [to] that paranoid voice that seems to whisper in my left ear relentlessly. Ron, you're putting these in just to torture me aren't you?

*[Actually no. Part of the reason is to show newer fans what went wrong in the past - such as setting up National organisations in Melbourne with no committee interstate members and trying to guide the whole of fandom from there. The "Melbourne Mafia" is still alive and in conspiracy. History repeats itself because people are just too stupid to take notice. - Ron.]*

Good to see you included Rod Marsden's ridiculous advert featuring blank-faced bimbo in bikini holding skull. Good one Rod.

*[Maybe she sucked out the bloke's brains. - Ron.]*

Re your comments inserted into my letter in TM #86: No you don't come out and voice your disapproval directly (perhaps I'd have more respect for you if you did), but the inference, no matter how subtle, is there nonetheless. Not that I need your approval anyway. I maybe crass but I ain't stupid.

*[I don't disapprove of you. Fandom (which includes SF and other fandoms which split from a common heritage) is big enough for anyone and any type of zine. There are some fans around who need to get it into their heads that anyone can put out any type of zine they feel like (or prozine, for that matter). After all, they are paying for publishing it. Market forces (in the case of fanzines, the contributors and loccers) will indicate if the majority of fans think it is any good. Fan's shouldn't winge just because their pet (which they think is great, of course!) doesn't break even or get responses. Just maybe it isn't really any good.... - Ron.]*

And Ron, I'm glad you realise that A4 is half the size of A3. Here's some info overload: A5 is half the size of A4 and quarter that of A3... Whaooh! Revelation!

Now onto Julie Vaux, that most feline one: Julie, ever heard the joke about how you make a cat go "woof".... Never mind. "Displacement of negative energies". Oh how New Age. I bet you believe in channelling too. Baby, I thrive on negative energies.

Good to see you can count to three. Smeghead?!? Now I'm really upset.

Julie, you obviously have no idea of what real art is about. Only a complete idiot would make a statement like "Real art encourages

art to be more human" in the context that you do. Not only do you kill your own argument with such a statement, but you give Mae Strelkov a run for her money in the stupidity department. Let me explain (and I'll keep it simple enough so that even the likes of you will understand): being a human does not mean being nice, happy and all New Age. As humans we can also be violent, ugly and just not very nice at all. Naturally, a lot of our art will reflect this side of our nature, which also doesn't have to be pretty or uplifting. It can even be downright disgusting. Just have a look at some of the work of G. G. Allin, Henry Rollins, Lydia Lunch, Stellarc or Robert Mapplethorpe and you'll see what I mean.

Your comments on heavy metal again show total ignorance and a very high level of stupidity. For it is only the truly stupid who shoots off at the mouth (or pen) on a subject s/he has almost no knowledge of. At least do some basic research on the subject. Yeah, you are right about one thing: logic definitely isn't one of your strong points.

Onto feminists and heavy metal: I've met quite a few feminists that are not only into heavy metal (a couple even in heavy metal bands) but also heaps of other weird shit, such as scarification, body piercing (and you should see where they put those little hoops!).

Bad Karma?!? Gimme a break. Go hug a tree and play with that silly crystal hanging around your neck. Satanists don't believe in bad karma.

Steve Jeffrey:fuckfuckfuckfuckfuckfuckfuckfuck...

*[It becomes a bit repetitive after a while, doesn't it. - Ron.]*

Michael Hailstone: finally, someone has shown some intelligence and caught on! While so many of you idiots are getting upset at my ramblings in the R&R DEPT, I'm laughing at you all. In fact most of the letter writers that write to this rag (and a lot of sci-fi rags that I've come across) are so straight and tight-arsed that you take my shit-shirring seriously. You should meet me sometime. Who knows, I may even turn out to be pleasant. Not!

(5.2.95)

## SHORTIES:

**SUE SMITH, 11/75A Parramatta Rd, Annandale, NSW 2038.** By a happy coincidence my introduction to the Futurian Society of Sydney and my introduction to THE MENTOR occurred at the same time. THE MENTOR is a well presented magazine full of stimulating articles. The contents range from the history of science fiction fandom to short science fiction/fantasy stories. I particularly enjoyed the book reviews and I was overjoyed to find them detailed enough to be useful and informative to the reader in determining whether or not the book would be worth reading or not. All too often book reviews are too short to be of any real use in evaluating a book.

(Cont. p.22)

**WHITE MOON, RED DRAGON by David Wingrove. Hodder & Stoughton h/c, dist in Aust by Hodder Headline. © 1994. 434 pp. A\$35. On sale now.**

Book Six of Chung Kuo, and the eight book series is getting into top gear as it sets up Chung Kuo for the ultimate fall.

Li Yuan, the young Tang, is almost the last of the mighty Sons of Heaven - his boyhood friend (and his ex-wife's lover) is having trouble with his two young sons, one of whom it seems is planning to kill him. Lehmann, the "White Tang" is slowly taking over the Stack that are City Europe and at least war breaks out between him and Li Yuan. Hans Ebert arrives from Mars with a crew of black men as the world falls apart. Part of the cause of this collapse is DeVore, who invades

earth without anybody knowing that it is him - and it is only at the last that the origin of the creatures that age running amok are pointed out to be his.

As I keep on saying, this series is the best SF series being currently published. If you aren't reading it, you are missing on some of the best SF of the decade.

**WOLF IN SHADOW by David Gemmell, illust by Fangorn. Legend graphic novel, dist in Aust by Random House. © 1994. 94 full-colour pages. A\$19.95. On sale now.**

I have't read the novel from which this was adapted, but from reading the graphic version, it should be good.

The story starts some hundreds of year after a disaster which has turned the world topsy-turvy. The areas told about in the novel have regressed to somewhere around the mid nineteenth century of the Old West. It isn't exactly the old west - for instance there are communities holding on to the remnants of the old technology and several enclaves with libraries, but the vast majority of people have regressed. The first page of the novel starts out almost exactly as a written novel does - it commences out of the blue, with rider saying that the city he is searching for is not where he thought it would be. Shannow, the wandering gunfighter, is a man of his word, unlike his missing brother, and he helps various people along the way. He has many adventures, one of which is finding the sunken Titanic, how beached high and dry.

This edition is very well written and illustrated. The adaptation was by Stan Nicholls and the lettering by Elitta Fell.

**THE OAK ABOVE THE KING by Patricia Kennealy-Morrison. HarperCollins pb, dist in Aust by HarperCollins. © 1994. 388 pp. A\$12.95. On sale now.**

THE OAK ABOVE THE KING tells how Arthur, the lost prince, comes at last to his long-prophesied destiny: overthrowing the usurping Archdruid, Edeyrn, who for two centuries has held all Keltia in thrall by the force of his evil magic, restoring Uthyr, king in exile, to his rightful place, coming at last into his own kingship, the double throne he must share, by law and love, with the one woman in all Keltia fit to share it with him - Gweniver, princess and priestess, his own cousin... and his wife.

So it goes. As you can see, THE OAK ABOVE THE KING is also a novel of the Keltiad, the series that Kennealy-Morrison has build up with its Celtic heritage about Arthur - and we all know which Arthur we are reading about, don't we? Apart from the minute print - about the same size as in the last issue this magazine - the book is easy to read. In-depth fantasy.

**DRUSS THE LEGEND by David Gemmell. Legend pb, dist in Aust by Random House. © 1994. 346 pp. A\$11.95. On sale now.**

How come if this is (C) 1994, there was a hardcover published in 1993??

For those following the Legend in David Gemmell's earlier novels of Druss, this novel tells of Druss's early life, when he was a woodsman, felling trees and he had a lovely wife by the name of Rowena. He was not a fighter back in those days, but he had the muscles, created by his lifestyle, that would make men afearred of him. Things were going well for Druss - untill Rowena was kidnapped by slavers and Druss set out in pursuit. Those slavers would not live to rue the time that the took his wife, but by then it was too late for all, and Druss ended up with the title, Druss the Legend.

Gemmell has, with DRUSS THE LEGEND, added to his swelling ranks of loyal readers. I have no doubt that this will bring more people into those loyal to him. Though this is *another* of those really small size print books. I just hope that the average reader doesn't have failing eyes, though after reading books like this, they might get a bit strained - so read it in good light.

**BILL, THE GALACTIC HERO ... THE FINAL INCOHERENT ADVENTURE by Harry Harrison & David Harris. VGSF pb, dist in Aust by Jacaranda Wiley. © 1992. 215 pp. A\$ On sale now.**

You might not believe this, but this is the Galactic Heroes last adventure.

Bill is on a suicide mission to the planet of Eyerack. Unfortunately the ship is shot down as it approaches the planet, but after the Admiral departs in his rescue capsule, Bill manages to make it to the surface without too much trouble. The trouble starts when he is there. Bill has been on a whole series of adventures over this series of novels, and with as many different authors co-habiting with Harry Harrison. Which makes for quite a mix in the final stew.

Overall, BILL... THE FINAL... ADVENTURE is more of the comic fun filled adventure that Bill's fans enjoy.

**THE GREATEST SHOW OFF EARTH by Robert Rankin. Doubleday h/c, dist in Aust by Transworld Publishers. © 1994. 284 pp. A\$24.95. On sale now.**

The British are really churning out the comedy. THE GREATEST SHOW OFF EARTH is done in Rankin's typical style - Raymond is the protagonist, who is kidnapped by a fly-by alien and after various happenings is taken in by a travelling circus. It travels, all right - around the solar system. Raymond has a friend by the name of Simon, who is taken in by the police for questioning about him being a serial killer. Naturally they don't believe that he didn't do it, and it takes quick thinking to enable him to show a clean pair of heels.

This latest offering is up to Rankin's previous offerings and if you ar into off-the-cuff humorous writing this one is for you.

**BLOODWARS by Brian Lumley. RoC pb, dist in Aust by Penguin Books. © 1994. 776 pp. A\$13.95. On sale now.**

The vampire world continues in this saga, which is the concluding volume of the Vampire World trilogy.

BLOODWARS recounts how the two opposing armies of Vormulae Unsleep's legions which had come from Turgosheim and the other army that was under the command of Wratha the Risen Regegades, who had come out of the vast warrens of the Wamphyri. Those who were against both were Nathan Keogh (who went by the name of Necroscope), Trask, Kek, Goodly and Chung, who worked for Earth's E-Branch.

Lumley has quite a hefty chunk of novel in BLOODWARS: I think you would have trouble fitting it into a handbag, let alone a pocket. Still, the writing is as gripping as any you would get in a horror novel.

**MERLIN AND THE LAST TRUMP by Collin Webber. VGSF pb, dist in Aust by Jacaranda Wiley. © 1993. 267 pp. A\$11.95. On sale now.**

Collin Webber was a finalist in the BBC Radio 4 Bookshelf Gollancz first fantasy novel competition.

MERLIN AND THE LAST TRUMP is another novel in a wave of British comedy that has been washing ashore at various places. It tells of Merlin and several others from his age who are sucked through time by a Creature and sent forward to the present and beyond for its nefarious purpose. Merlin is the version of the magician who has real magical powers and does not hesitate to use them. It does help that they work, of course, when you are a thousand years or so out of your own time and people are getting flustered over the doings of a demon.

Webber had obviously polished this novel as it is very easy to read and makes for a light-hearted hour or so reading.

**THE TOWERS OF THE SUNSET by L. E. Modesitt, Jr. Orbit pb, dist in Aust by Penguin Books. © 1994. 536 pp. A\$13.95. On sale now.**

THE TOWERS OF SUNSET is a sequel to THE MAGIC OF RECLUSE, and follows the adventures of Creslin, who was a powerful weather-magician and who had run off rather than suffer an arranged marriage. The journeys around the countryside really made him and after various battles against the white wizards of Candar he comes to reclaim his birthright, and more.

L. E. Modesitt has created a character in Creslin who the reader can, to a point, identify with and follow his travels with interest.

**THE LIGHTLESS DOME by Douglas Hill. Pan pb, dist in Aust by Pan Macmillan. © 1993. 304 pp. A\$12.95. On sale now.**

Would you believe that THE LIGHTLESS DOME is Book One of the Apotheosis Trilogy?

The use of a sword was one of Red Cordell's banes. He was a bit player in a B-grade Sword and Sorcery film when the enchantress Aurilia calls upon the Sword of Corodel to help her out of danger. Unfortunately for Red, he is holding on to a sword from the Props Department at the time and he is drawn to her.... Another troubling thing was the spawn of a sorcerer who had called on something evil from beyond the stars, something ancient and evil....

Hill is a skilful writer and if Sword and Sorcery is your cup of tea, judging by THE LIGHTLESS DOME, the whole trilogy looks like a good read.

**LULLABY OF FEAR by Emma Lorant. Headline pb, dist in Aust by Hodder Headline. © 1994. 502 pp. A\$14.95. On sale now.**

A mainstream horror novel that is set in the Austrian Alps.

Mary Fullbridey was having a good time in her London school, that is until she was almost raped. Because of this, she was sent off to a convent in the Austrian Alps by her parents. It was there that she was introduced to the festival known as the Mothering of the Brides, the local legend being that the waters of the grotto farther up the mountain had some strange properties. In one way LULLABY OF FEAR is a retelling of the Frankenstein motif, though the Frankenstein this time is a woman professor.

Quite a well-written novel of low-key horror.

**IN THE DARK by Richard Laymon. Headline pb, dist in Aust by Hodder Headline. © 1994. 503 pp. A\$14.95. On sale now.**

A novel of dark and dirty games that almost kills the young woman and her boyfriend who are the target for the strange letters from the man who signs himself "Mog" (Master of Games).

Jane Kerry was a librarian in the small town of Donnerville and out of the blue she receives an envelope with a 50-dollar note in it, later she finds another envelope with a 100-dollar note. These two finds wet her fancy and she is soon engrossed in working out the clues that Mog sends her. By the end of the novel, however, both Jane and her boyfriend are trying with all their worth to lose Mog and his crazy friend, before they catch up to them.

If you like a bit of blood mixed with your horror, you will like this one.

**LOVE BITE by Sherry Gottlieb. Warner pb, dist in Aust by Penguin Books. © 1994. 277 pp. A\$12.95. On sale now.**

Jace Levy was a LA homicide cop. Out of the blue had come a rash of bodies drained of blood. He was on the investigation and the evidence was coming up with something that he could not truly believe - a vampire appeared to be prowling the streets. Later he met a woman who was all he desired - both sexually and emotionally. Her body was such that he eventually gave everything up to be with her and to share her body. Of course Rusty was one of the vampires, one of the two that were getting rid of some of the flotsam of the cities. Jace made a pact with Rusty that he would go along with her, but only if she concentrated on criminals for her nightly binges.

Sherry Gottlieb has what looks like a best seller with this one - there is plenty of action and sex and I would say that the viewpoints take in both those of men and women, so both sexes may find this novel a goer in as far as an interesting read.

**WIZARD'S FIRST RULE by Terry Goodkind. Orion tpb, dist in Aust by Allen & Unwin. © 1994. 611 pp. A\$19.95. On sale now.**

Westland was a land that had sealed itself away from what was known as the Midlands. The Midlands was an ancient land where it was known that magical things happened. All had been well in the Land till Richard Cypher's father was found murdered. Then Richard found Kahlan, who said that she had escaped over the Border from the Midlands, but Richard knew she did not tell the truth - for the Midlands was sealed away...

The folk of Westland had sealed magic away, but its roots were deep into the Land and they were to find that out the hard way - Richard had a potential to be a powerful wizard - and he would find that he needed all of life's skills to fight against the blood-sucking flies and sympathetic magic rules.

Goodkind has created a world that is bound to be read about by a wider audience with WIZARD'S FIRST RULE, and you can bet that this won't be left alone.

**THE PRIEST by Thomas M. Disch. Millennium pb, dist in Aust by Allen & Unwin. © 1994. 310 pp. A\$19.95. On sale now.**

I am not quite sure what category that THE PRIEST fits into. Fantasy? Horror? Real Life?? (The subtitle is *A Gothic Romance*)

The novel is dedicated to Pope John Paul II, and after you've read it you can see why. It seems there are a lot of Catholic priests who are gay - the book mentions 40% - and some of these priests are pederasts. Father Bryce is one of this lot - he has molested quite a few boys in his time as a priest and thought he was getting away with it, until a man by the name of Clay turned up and blackmailed him into having a tattoo of Satan done onto his chest. Next thing he knew the pain sent him back into the 13th Century and the midst of the Inquisition. Here he was also a priest and he found himself in the thick of things, so to speak. Meanwhile some of the priests had decided to help the Church in her crusade against abortion and decided to help some girls come to term - in the crypt of a disused Church.

I found the novel got me in - if only to see what would happen next and if Father Bryce would, to make a pun, get it in the end. I won't let you know what happens - you will have to get the book and read it.

**GODS OF THE WELL OF SOULS by Jack L. Chalker. Del Rey tpb, dist in Aust by Random House. © 1994. 352 pp. A\$19.95. On sale now.**

It has been some years since the latest Nathan Brazil novel. GODS OF THE WELL OF SOULS gives Chalker's loyal readers another taste of the Well of Souls.

Nathan Brazil is shipwrecked on a desert island with a strange girl - who is apparently innocent but whose touch saps his will and makes him forget his mission. Mavra Chang was kidnapped by a gang of drug smugglers. The two guardians being out of business is not good news for the machines running the Well, who are trying to get them back into play. However the ruling council are working against this. And then there was the Kraang, an entity ancient beyond belief, who is working to make its power more absolute.

**BLOODSTONE by David Gemmell. Legend tpb, dist in Aust by Random House. © 1994. 296 pp. A\$19.95. On sale now.**

The Jerusalem Man, Jon Shannow, had long vanished. The Deacon and his Jerusalem Riders were riding over the area they had put under their domain and creating a time of hatred and death with their war against unbelievers and mutants. It seemed the last straw when the church in Pilgrim's Valley was burnt to the ground and the inhabitants killed, then the Jerusalem Man arrived back in the countryside, track down and killing, with his guns, those who had done the deed.

David Gemmell created an enduring character in Jon Shannow, witness the graphic novel reviewed above, and with BLOODSTONE he continues the adventure.

**THE LEAFLESS FOREST by Douglas Hill. Pan tpb, dist in Aust by Pan Macmillan. © 1994. 294 pp. A\$19.95. On sale now.**

Book 2 in the Apotheosis Trilogy. In this novel, Lebarran Magister is getting together the hordes of darkness as the army of the free peoples marches towards him: Red Cordell has joined up with the allies of Prince Phaedran as they continue towards the Leafless Forest, a petrified wood in which the evil ones hide. The dwarf-giant Krost is on his way to ask the help of the giants in their quest against those who seek to enslave them, Aurilia gathers the Sisterhood together to gain their help and the wizards are engaged by Vallawn and the ordinary people join the army. Little do those marching toward the forest know

that a formless evil is waiting in the void, awaiting the call that will bring it ravaging into the countryside to tear it apart.

Hill is building this trilogy towards an eruption of a conclusion and the spare writing is easy to read and the adventure gallops along apace. Good fantasy adventure for the young.

**PEOPLE OF THE SEA** by W. Michael Gear & Kathleen O'Neal Gear. Forge h/c, dist in Aust by Pan Macmillan. © 1993. 421 pp. On sale now.

PEOPLE OF THE SEA is a book about prehistoric North America. It tells the tale of how with the glaciers melting and the climate changing all the animals are affected by the changing scene. They are melting away with the ice: the elephants, lions and bears.

The humans in the story are of this world also: Sunchaser the seer, who is one with the spirit world, Catchstraw, his rival who find power through witchcraft and uses this bent power to try to win over his people, Kestrel, a wanderer who is trying to escape from her crazed husband but with a smoked, dead baby between them there is much they need to understand about themselves and with time running out they may not be able to do it.

The Gears are archaeologists and with this solid background their stories are based on the latest theories. For those who like delving back into the romantic past.

**THE CRYSTAL STAR** by Vonda N. McIntyre. Bantam h/c, dist in Aust by Transworld Publishers. © 1994. 309 pp. A\$29.95. On sale now.

The Star Wars™ saga continues with this latest novel, by an SF writer who is well known for her well-written fiction.

Both Princess Leia and Luke Skywalker are on missions that many people depend on. Leia is searching for her three kidnapped children. She follows the trail left by the kidnapers and finds that hers are not the only children kidnapped. Later the trail seems to lead to the warren of Hethrir, an officer of the Empire who has convoluted plans to restore said Empire, with himself as a Power, of course. Luke and Han Solo, in the meantime, are searching for a lost group of Jedi who are reported to be on the planet Crseih. That planet is near a collapsing star and is in the centre of some quantum energy that create strange effects in the ether.

As most readers of TM know, McIntyre is a writer of solid SF and her venturing into the Star Wars™ universe will only serve to strengthen the SF readership.

**STAR WRECK The Series** by Leah Rewotinski. Boxtree tpb, dist in Aust by Random House. © 1989-93. 597 pp. A\$19.95. On sale now.

There have been other series lampooning STAR TREK, but most of them appeared in fanzines. This volume is actually five short novels, with illustrations by Harry Trumbore scattered in profusion throughout.

I don't want to really give the "plots" away, so I'll just quote from the blurb on the rear cover: "The crews of Captain Jean-Lucy Ricardo and Captain James T. Smirk blunder through five awesome adventures, battling against the evil Cellulites, defending earth against the alien Jargonites and seeking the secret of eternal teenybopperdom while struggling against a bizarre 'wreckie' cult of U.S.S Endocrine wanna-bes. Sustained by a diet of yogurt, Earl Grape tea and intergalactic bitchiness the space heroes drift interminably onwards". And of course I could quote the last paragraph: "These are, like, the voyages of the Starship Endocrine. Its mission: to, you know, cruise around the universe looking for totally cool situations to get into.. to search the outskirts of the galaxy for hot babes... to, like, boldly go where nobody wanted to go before!"

Not for those who like their SF serious.

**ALIEN INFLUENCES** by Kristine Kathryn Rusch. Millennium tpb, dist in Aust by Allen & Unwin. © 1994. 424 pp. A\$19.95. On sale now.

Amazing, a book with a cover illustration that actually illustrates a scene from the novel (well, almost).

The planet was named Beautiful, but it was a planet of deserts and had days filled with the head of the blazing sun. There was apparently only one reason for the colony to exist on the planet - there was an alien race on Beautiful, and they grew a plant from which the colonists distilled Salt Juice. Salt Juice was a euphoric, and induced a high that had, apparently, no side effects. When the colonists learned how to grow the plants themselves, the aliens were no longer any use to them, and were actually a hindrance.... When Justin Schafer, an alien psychologist, landed on the planet, he found that a group of children there had what appeared to be alien influences on them - they had murdered their playmates - cutting off their hands and cutting out their hearts and lungs. Schafer was determined to get to the bottom of it, but unfortunately the colonists had other ideas.

A very good "hard" sf novel, in that the science is logical and rigorous, even though most of said science is a "soft" science - psychology. \*Recommended\*

**DOWN AMONG THE DEAD MEN** by Simon R. Green. VGSF pb, dist in Aust by Jacaranda Wiley. © 1993. 221 pp. A\$12.95. On sale now.

DOWN AMONG THE DEAD MEN is set in a Forest that is many week's ride wide. In that Forest is a fort that was built to guard the outer land from the inhabitants of the forest.

Duncan MacNeil was the leader of a band of warriors that is sent to find out why a delivery of gold to the fort had not passed on. The band includes a witch and warriors of different sexes. When they get to the fort they find it deserted. Or so they believe. Whether this is true you will have to read the novel to find out.. Green has written some SF and is branching out into fantasy - he has a good grasp of writing techniques and the reading is absorbing.

Engrossing sword and sorcery.

**GREAT BIRDS OF THE GALAXY** by Edward Gross & Mark A. Altman. Boxtree trade pb, dist in Aust by Random House. © 1994. 143 pp. 215x280 mm. A\$29.95. On sale now.

This volume is subtitled *Gene Roddenberry & The Creators of Trek*.

All the photos in this volume are in B&W, which no doubt kept the price down a little, and of course, most of the photos from the 60's were in B&W. The title of the book is GREAT BIRDS OF THE GALAXY and the biggest bird of the lot was Gene Roddenberry. There is quite a bit on Roddenberry, complete with photos. Then the authors go on to others who carried on the Star Trek legend: Gene L. Coon, the writer, Fred Freiberger, Nicholas Meyer, Leonard Nimoy, William Shattner, Rick Berman, Maurice Hurley, Jeri Taylor and Michael Piller. More and more with these book about Star Trek the information is branching out and pulling in people who aren't writers and actors. This collection of "Great Birds" chronicles the history of Trek, its impact on them and their influences on the 30-year chronicle.

The book ends with an account of the new series, VOYAGER, (which I have only hear whispers of). Interesting background for the avid Trekker.

**MOTHER OF STORMS** by John Barnes. Millennium tpb, dist in Aust by Allen & Unwin. © 1994. 455 pp. A\$19.95. On sale now.

MOTHER OF STORMS has an off-putting title, but the novel itself is very good hard SF.

The scene is in the near future, next century. The UN is nearly a global power, but the US is still trying to get some of it's own imperial sovereignty back (for instance Alaska is a separate country, but the US still thinks it owns it). Some of the other countries are trying to become nuclear powers and the UN, in the first chapters, destroys some missiles in underwater silos with anti-matter missiles. Unfortunately, methane bearing deposits which have built up for umpteen hundreds of thousands of years let go and the methane build-up heats up the surrounding oceans and the weather turns nasty. A

gigantic hurricane with an eye about 350 kilometres wide forms and proceeds to devastate various countries, including Hawaii. The novel follows various people in the debacle which follows - all of who are US citizens and includes the foremost porno wedge actress, a man who is hunting the sex-slayer of his daughter, the President of the USA, the wealthiest man in the USA and various others whose paths cross in the strangest way.

This is a can't-put-down novel and it certainly kept *my* interest. There is adventure, kinky sex and solid science, as well as to people heading to be the equivalent of gods. \*Recommended\*.

**THE SNOWS OF OLYMPUS by Arthur C. Clarke. VGSF h/c, dist in Aust by Jacaranda Wiley. © 1994. 120 pp. 255x265mm. A\$45. On sale now.**

As I mentioned above, the previous book had B&W illustrations. *This* one has full colour.

THE SNOWS OF OLYMPUS is subtitled *A Garden On Mars*, and is about the colonisation and terra-forming of planet Mars. The volume is chock full of colour artwork, by various artists and also includes photographs. The book commences with background on the planet, with photos of the maps of the famous "canals" and goes on to the first photos from the Mars lander and the discovers of the outstanding features of the planet, including Olympus Mons. After setting the scene, Clarke goes on with his scenario - that Mars will be terraformed and he then goes on, with computer generated "photos" of the various large features of the planet, to show how the terraforming will progress over the centuries, ending up with a "green" Mars. Indeed, Clarke quotes from Kim Stanley Robinson's novels.

This book is the hardest of hard SF - in it, Clarke shows, as in his PRELUDE TO SPACE and earlier books such as THE EXPLORATION OF SPACE (1951) how it may all come about. I really don't think this book will be out in soft-cover, so this may be the only opportunity to obtain it. An excellent visual presentation of the colonisation of Mars.

**THE ART OF STARS WARS - Episode IV A New Hope; Episode V The Empire Strikes Back and Episode VI Return of the Jedi, edited by Deborah Call, text by Vic Bulluck & Valerie Hoffman. Del Ray soft/c, dist in Aust by Random House. © 1979, 1980 & 1983. 175, 176 & 153 pp. 230x300 mm. A\$29.95 ea. On sale now.**

I don't think I reviewed these back when they were first printed, so I'll review the re-release.

These three volumes are books that include the artwork that was done by artists in designing the scenes in the movies and illustrating the clothes, machines, scenes, etc in all three Star Wars movies. The volumes also included the scripts, so you get quite a bit of information with them. The illustrations are in full colour and there are also included original sketches of the creatures, both included and not picked. There is some very creative work in these volumes and if you can't afford to get them yourselves, make sure you pester your local library for them - believe me, you positively don't want to miss at least leafing through them. The script is in relatively small print and the editors have tried to make sure that the illustrations for the scenes talked about are those on those pages.

A set that will be a welcome addition to the visual art section of any SF reader's library.

**ESCAPE FROM JUPITER by David Ogilvy. ABC pb, dist in Aust by Allen & Unwin. © 1994. 232 pp. A\$8.95. On sale now.**

For those who have seen the new TV series produced by Film Australia and the Japanese NHK together with the ABC you won't be surprised to see this book. NHK, I would say, contributed the computer graphics of the spaceships and the colonies and the Australians the actors and actresses.

The series is aimed at pre-teenagers, with a group of five child actors, together with their parents and the officers of the ships. It is set in the relatively far future when the moons of Jupiter are being mined for various minerals. Unfortunately the mine is destroyed by the

efforts of one of the human crew and the small colony is forced to flee to a derelict space station. They are cut off from Earth and the small group later determines to try to make it to Earth by converting the space station to a make-shift spacecraft and flying it sunwards. The acting is professional enough to keep me watching, and the computer graphics fit in well with the overall direction of the show.

The book is well worth the money - and there are colour stills from the show. The video is *definitely* worth also buying.

**LITTLE DEATHS edited by Ellen Datlow. Millennium tpb, dist in Aust by Allen & Unwin. © 1994. 454 pp. A\$19.95. On sale now.**

LITTLE DEATHS is aptly titled, considering the sub-title is *24 Tales of Horror and Sex*. The collection is © 1994 by the editor, but so are also all the stories except the Clive Barker and the Ruth Rendell. The cover is a nice simple black with a stylised heart pierced by a dagger, with a drop of blood falling off the dagger's point. Nicely done.

The stories included are: THE LADY OF SITUATIONS by Stephen Dedman (!!); HUNGRY SKIN by Lucy Taylor; BECKY LIVES by Harry Crews; LOVER DOLL by Wayne Allen Sallee; THE SWING by Nicholas Royle; SAHIB by J. Cavin Pierce; THE CAREFULLY GEOMETRY OF LOVE by Kathe Koje & Barry N. Malzberg; YAGUARA by Nicola Griffith; ON AMEN'S SHORE by Clive Barker; ISABEL AVENS RETURNS TO STEPHNEY IN THE SPRING by M. John Harrison; THE PAIN BARRIER by Joel Lane; SINFONIA EXPANSIVA by Barry Malzberg; FEVER BLISTERS by Joyce Carol Oates; THE ROCK by Melanie Tem; AN OUTSIDE INTEREST by Ruth Rendell; AND SALOME DANCED by Kelly Eskridge; THE DISQUIETING MUSE by Kathe Koje; HOLES by Sarah Clemens; THAT OLD SCHOOL TIE by Jack Wornack; ICE PALACE by Douglas Clegg; SERIAL MONOGAMIST by Pat Cadigan; BLACK NIGHTGOWN by K. W. Jeter; MENAGE A TROIS by Richard Christian Matheson and THE LAST TIME by Lucius Shepard. As you can see, quite a collection of well-known and excellent authors. If you don't like dark, sardonic fiction, then don't get this. I am keeping this for my library....

**MARY SHELLEY'S FRANKENSTEIN by Kenneth Branagh; MARY SHELLEY'S FRANKENSTEIN by Leonore Fleischer. Pan soft-cover & pb, dist in Aust by Pan Books. Both © 1994. 191 pp 210x275 mm, 313 pp. A\$19.95 & \$12.95. On sale now.**

If you are wondering what the above is and why I am reviewing them together: they are the result of the latest release movie. The first listed is a full-colour soft-cover book full of colour photos from the film and which also included the script. The actual contents are: a Director's Note by Kenneth Branagh; a Biographical Note on Mary Shelley by Leonard Wolf; An introduction to Mary Shelley's Frankenstein by Kenneth Branagh; the Screenplay; Film Credits; Filmmakers and their Creations (a history and listing of previous Frankenstein movies) and an Afterword Titled THE UNDYING CREATURE by Leonard Wolf. For a history of this movie the book is unsurpassed.

The latter book is, as listed on the title page: A novel "Based on a Screenplay by Steph Lady and Frank Darabont from Mary Shelley's Novel, with an Afterword by Kenneth Branagh. So what you have is a novelisation of the screenplay. If the movie really struck you fancy, or you want a simplified version of the original Frankenstein, with more up-to-date speech, this is a good buy.

**THE FOREST HOUSE by Marion Zimmer Bradley. Penguin pb, dist in Aust by Penguin Books. © 1993. 560 pp. A\$12.95. On sale now.**

Penguin has published this novel themselves under their own trade mark, so the reader can tell that they think a lot of it.

Eilan was a daughter of the Druids and Gaius was the son of a Roman, but he had a British mother. His parents had the influence to get him into the legions and he served in Britain. Unfortunately for him he met Eilan and fell in love with her. Doubly unfortunate, for she was a virgin priestess and their love had no hope. The times were also in turmoil, with the tribes rebelling against Rome. There was another tale

from legend, though, a tale which said that from the union of the Eagle and Dragon would come a defender of the land.

Bradley's latest novels are journeys into the past from the viewpoint of some of the more famous (or forgotten) women of the past; those who shaped history but have sometimes been forgotten. THE FOREST HOUSE is another novel to join to THE MISTS OF AVALON and THE FIREBRAND as Marion Bradley's one-off novels of great deeds grows.

**TOMORROW, WHEN THE WAR BEGAN by John Marsden. Pan pb, dist in Aust by Pan Macmillan. © 1993. 286 pp. A\$8.95. On sale now.**

There have been many Australians who have said that Australian juvenile fiction is as good as adult fiction. TOMORROW, WHEN THE WAR BEGAN proves it.

The novel starts off with seven teenagers from various farms near a country town who decide to have a camping trip to explore a valley which the locals have given the name Hell, because of its rugged nature. They plan to spend about a week there, roughing it. All goes well when they arrive and their stay is pleasant. While they are there they see flights of jets in the sky on Commem Day. Their parents have gone to the Show in the local town but when the teenagers arrive back at the house of the girl who is writing the story, they find no-one there and the dogs, which had been tied up, dead. They race over to the home of another of the teens, and find it empty, also. They realise something is wrong and organise a scout of the town, which they find is in the hands of soldiers - and not ours. The rest of the novel describes how the seven eventually settle to the idea of the invasion and how they come to a decision of what to do.

I found this novel very powerful and exciting reading. Definitely a "Recommended" - get it!

**MORT by Terry Pratchett, illust by Graham Higgins. VG SF comic, dist in Aust by Jacaranda Wiley. © 1994. 94 pp. A\$24.95. On sale now.**

The sub-title on the cover is: *A Discworld Big Comic*. It is full colour, has a stiff cover and glossy paper. And you get more for your money with MORT, as there aren't any ads!

By now you should have read Terry Pratchett's novel of the same name. The comic follows the novel pretty much to the letter, and probably is clearer in some ways, with its visual imaging. As you probably remember, Mort is a fellow whose work suffers because he "thinks too much". He is apprenticed out - but the one who takes him is Death. Death, if you remember, has a daughter, who he had found as a baby alongside her murdered parents. For some reason Death took her into his care. Now she is pretty much grown up and Death decides that a male companion for her would be a Good Thing. Unfortunately, Mort and Ysabell don't quite get along. They don't actually *fight*, but they argue a lot. Along the way of Mort's apprenticeship he meets a princess, but she is a bit too agro for him. He also meets a wizard, who eventually comes on strong with the princess. And along the way Death takes a holiday...

This would make a good buy for anyone you want to introduce to Pratchett's Discworld, especially if they are into comics.

**THE DEAD OF THE NIGHT by John Marsden. Macmillan h/c, dist in Aust by Pan Macmillan. (C) 1994. 271 pp. A\$19.95. On sale now.**

The sequel to TOMORROW, WHEN THE WAR BEGAN.

The novel takes up back in Hell, with the five teenagers having a rest after destroying the bridge over which the enemy troops were supplying their forces elsewhere. The five decided to do a bit more damaged to the invaders and plan to attack the convoys when they pass through a ravine. This they do, but on the way a patrol finds them and they are forced to kill them. After the trucks in the convoy are destroyed with a combination of nails and Molotov cocktails, the five retreat to their camp in Hell and spend some time getting over the fact of the killings. Later they follow the stream as it flows out of the valley in order to make sure they have a "backdoor" out of the valley. They

come across some other insurgents, but the invaders find them and massacre the new group. The four (Chris had been left back to mind their camp) retreat back to Hell, but find Chris gone. They mope around for a week or so, then, in order to get things going, Homer comes up with a plan to destroy some houses which seem to be the headquarters of some officers.... Both this and its predecessor are excellent SF for teenagers, and are very relevant for today.

\*Recommended\* for anyone who likes good action adventure.

**MOVING MARS by Greg Bear. Legend pb, dist in Aust by Random House. © 1994. 452 pp. A\$12.95. On sale now.**

Mars is *really* featuring in the novels coming out lately. Most are about colonising Mars - MOVING MARS is about that also, but with a more a political theme.

Mars is the preserve of families - called Binding Multiples, which are somewhat like guilds, but made of families, those who first went to Mars and took out squatting rights. Earth is socially ahead of Mars: they think the Martians are pretty childlike. Earth has plans for a push to the Stars, but for that the whole Solar System must be united so as to create the economic economy. Casseia Majumbar was a student at a university when there was an attempted political coup - and when the Statists were eventually thrown out, she decided to go on to studying political systems. Because of this, she was one of two picked to go to Earth with her uncle when the proposed united Mars group was formed. It got no-where, but when her old lover, Charles Franklin, a theoretical physics genius who was doing research into the Bell Continuum discovered how to manipulate descriptors, things got hectic. Earth thought that Mars was in the position to attack it, and decided to get in a first strike. Then it was up to Casseia, acting as Vice-President of the Republic of Mars, to decide what to do.

Excellent hard SF, though it reads in part like a Doc Smith epic from the 1930's (which isn't to say that detracts from it as a novel - it is still an stimulating read for any reader who likes reading about Mars..

**VURT by Jeff Noon. Pan pb, dist in Aust by Pan Macmillan. © 1993. 344 pp. A\$12.95. On sale now.**

The blurb says that this book is a cyberpunk style novel. And it's right, but this novel is much more.

When you first begin to read VURT you have some difficulty in understanding quite what is going on. You hope that further in you will begin to pick it all up. You do. Vurt is phonetic for Virtual: reality, that is. The time is the not-so-distant future and virtual reality is here. It is obtained through drugs; said drugs are administered by stroking the back of one's throat with a specialised feather. There are different coloured feathers for different scenarios. Blue is legal and is usually sets up a situation that is much like story telling. There are other feathers though - one of the worst is yellow (for death) - if you die in a yellow feather, you are really dead - you don't come back. I won't spoil this for you by telling you about the plot. Read it for yourself. As I was reading it, I found that the storyline was fairly basic. Only now, several days after I've finished it, has it sunk in just how good it is. Give it some time to settle in. If you find it hard going, let it rest for a day or so, then come back to it. In the end you'll be glad you did. \*Recommended\*.

**INFERNO by Robert MacBride Allen. Millennium tpb, dist in Aust by Allen & Unwin. © 1994. 244 pp. A\$19.95. On sale now.**

INFERNO is the sequel to CALIBAN, also by the same author.

CALIBAN was about a robot with no Laws. This new novel takes up later, when the New Law Robots are being manufactured, but are being quarantined onto one world, and actually one island. Human beings being what they are, however, a way has been found to remove the restrictors and the robots are finding their way off and onto the mainland; running somewhat like escaping black slaves in North America. The protagonist is again Sheriff Kresh and his robot partner Donald. They are guarding the Governor of the planet Inferno. Unfortunately there are people out to get the Governor and Kresh finds himself outgunned. All that is left to him is find out who did the deed and bring them to justice.



This novel is very much like THE NAKED SUN and THE CAVES OF STEEL - and, of course, CALIBAN. MacBride Allen certainly has the feel for these robot stories down pat. I thoroughly enjoyed this novel. Excellent SF. \*Recommended\*.

**WORLD WAR: IN THE BALANCE by Harry Turtledove. NEL pb, dist in Aust by Hodder Headline. © 1994. 656 pp. A\$14.95. On sale now.**

At last! Another long SF novel that is gripping all the way through.

The scene is World War II sometime in 1941. Turtledove weaves many spot stories into the novel, taking scenes from all over the planet. Just as WW II is getting interesting, the alien invaders arrive. They land with superior weapons - guns, tanks, jet planes and several nuclear weapons. Following the invasion fleet, however, is the colonising one, so the invaders can't use nuclear weapons pell-mell to win the war. The alien history is some thirty thousand years long and they have already conquered two other star systems. Unfortunately for them, the probe that brought news of the Earth back to them had showed development some twelve hundred years before - the foremost warrior was a knight on horseback. The alien Lizards were quite surprised to find humans with the technology they had - the humans had progressed much faster than the aliens had anticipated. Though the Lizards had better weapons, the humans, having fought wars for so long, were tactically the better, though in the beginning it did not do them much good.

I found, when I reached the end of this novel, that it is a series - bugger! It still gets a "Highly Recommended", though. This one is going to win awards. Bet on it.

**ARMORICA by S. P. Somtow. Orbit pb, dist in Aust by Penguin Books. © 1992. 256 pp. A\$12.95. On sale now.**

AMORICA is the sequel to RIVERRUN, which novel told of the Etchison family who, on a journey across the Arizona desert, disappeared and everyone thought had died. They came back, though, from an alternate America. AMORICA is a continuation of that journey, as Theo is forced to go back into the strange dimension of the Darkling King Strang and meet up again with the dragon-children. This time Theo is trying to rescue his brother from those holding him. Somtow tells a tale of a strange America, which is distorted by influences beyond his belief.

Somtow appears to be concentrating on writing fantasies, though he has written the odd SF, such as the Inquestor novels. I would suggest, though, that the reader obtains and reads RIVERRUN before he or she attempts to read this one. It will help.

**RIBWASH by Collin Webber. VGSF pb, dist in Aust by Jacaranda Wiley. © 1994. 309 pp. A\$12.95. On sale now.**

RIBWASH takes up some three hundred years after the events told of in MERLIN AND THE LAST TRUMP.

The knight Sir Griswold had returned from the future to his world of Camelot. Little did he know, however, that in 4096 AD on the world of Gnomedom was a sorcerer who was determined to create a little trouble for Griswold. Not only that, he began to have trouble with a female, an Amazonian with particular abilities....

Webber has a slick style and he is well in there with the other British writers of farcical fantasy humour. This one isn't for those who like their fantasy "serious".

**STAND ALONE STAN by Phillip Mann. Gollancz h/c, dist in Aust by Jacaranda Wiley. © 1994. 288 pp. A\$36.95 On sale now.**

This novel is Volume 2 of the A Land Fit For Heroes series.

The story takes up with the young Roman, Viti and the two young Britons, Angus and Miranda, as they flee from the pursuing Romans who have destroyed the village they were hiding in. They travel on in the vast forest that covers Briton from shore to shore. STAND ALONE STAN refers to the giant stone that rises from a hill in the centre of said forest and the three find that this is their destination.

Mann has created alternate Britain, set in the 20th Century, where Roman rules the world and all roads lead to Rome. Technology is in the hands of the Roman elite and the ordinary people don't benefit. So far it's been more fantasy than SF.

**ECLIPSE by Louise Cooper. Harper Collins pb, dist in Aust by Harper Collins. © 1994. 360 pp. A\$11.95. On sale now.**

ECLIPSE is book 2 of the Star Shadow series.

Magus Vordegh had an aim in life - to destroy a certain cult. He went to it with hammer and tongs and Chaos echoed to his efforts. The people there were reeling with the intensity of the action and tried to keep their lives together. Benetan Liss had many things to do and not much time to do them in. He had to enter into the intrigues of the castle and he later found that those he knew were both more and less than he thought.

Louise Cooper wrote the well-known Indigo series; with ECLIPSE she is building her reputation more and more to the good.

**CLOUD CASTLES by Michael Scott Rohan. VGSF pb, dist in Aust by Jacaranda Wiley. © 1993. 284 pp. A\$12.95. On sale now.**

CLOUD CASTLES is packed full of action, energy and colour in its 284 pages. As well, it has relatively tiny print, so make sure that you have good light to read it by.

The tale of Steve Fisher and the effect of the Spiral on the world is told herein - of how Hy Brasil and Babylon are but a short trip along the cloud archipelgo.... Scott Rohan's writing is fast and furious and readers will find that the action will sweep them along. I found that this author creates much the same atmosphere in nearly all of his novels I've read. If you like well constructed fantasy, you'll like CLOUD CASTLES.

**HOST by Peter James. Signet pb, dist in Aust by Penguin Books. © 1993. 624 pp. A\$12.95. On sale now.**

Peter James is primarily a writer of horror novels. With HOST he is venturing into the field of SF.

Joe Messenger was an expert in artificial intelligence. He had a obsession, which was to obtain immortality for himself. His idea was to combine two technologies in this attempt: artificial intelligence and cryogenics. Then he met up with Juliet Spring, who claimed to be able to transfer human consciousness into a computer. This was enough for Joe, and his plans went into force. Unfortunately for him, though, several things happened that he had not planned on, and he found himself in a situation he really did not want to be.

SF for those just beginning to read in the field.

**MUDD'S ENTERPRISE adapted by J. A. Lawrence. Bantam pb, dist in Aust by Transworld Publishers. © 1978. 212 pp. A\$9.95. On sale now.**

MUDD'S ENTERPRISE (previously titled MUDD'S ANGELS) was the last of 14 Star Trek screen adaptation novels that James Blish had been working on before he died, leaving it unfinished. It was completed by J. A. Lawrence, who wrote roughly another half to finish it all up.

The novel itself consists of three short novelettes: MUDD'S WOMEN; I, MUDD and THE BUSINESS, AS USUAL, DURING ALTERCATIONS. All are set on the (original) Enterprise, with James T. Kirk in command. The first two stories detail the plot of the two TV episodes featuring Harry Mudd (and his three women companions). The third is a new story written specifically for this volume by J. A. Lawrence. Most readers will recall Harry Mudd, the scheming entrepreneur who travelled around the galaxy trying to make money and wreaking mischief as he did so. And the two adventures on the Enterprise. The third novelette has him getting caught again, but this time pitting himself up against the Federation itself. For trekkers everywhere.

**THE LORD OF MIDDLE AIR by Michael Scott Rohan. Gollancz h/c, dist in Aust by Jacaranda Wiley. © 1994. 253 pp. A\$34.95. On sale now.**

THE LORD OF MIDDLE AIR is not the sequel to anything.

The castle of Hermitage is a sinister one. It is set in the Borders of thirteenth-century Scotland. Walter Scot had met his cousin Michael Scot by chance. Michael Scot was a magician and had accounting with the demons of middle air. The two were later attacked by raiders, who had been destroyed by a strange fire. Later even more strange things happened, and Walter began to wonder if it was all worth it. Of course Michael is much more than Walter had thought in the beginning and the two had many adventures before Walter was transported through to another world, an enchanting world, where he met another love and a new life started.

Michael Scot was a real-life figure and the writer is a descendant of that Scot. The novel has action and adventure and is competently written. A fantasy that is a solid read.

**THE MADIGAL by Beverley Macdonald. Pan Aust pb, dist in Aust by Pan Books. © 1995. 410 pp. A\$12.95. On sale now.**

Beverley Macdonald is apparently a new Australian writer, and judging by this novel, she is someone to look out for in the future.

This novel is a fantasy, set on a planet some distance from Earth. The planet is a cold place, with slow covering most of the upper surface, except for the deep valleys where humans live, and even then the snow falls into their lands. The Madigal is sleeping a deep sleep, a sleep that has lasted years. She sleeps in a tower guarded by a non-human Keeper and a young woman called Catherine. The society is feudal, with a King and a young Prince who had a fearsome reputation - the people are feared of him. While the Madigal is sleeping the society is changing for the worst - the priests are trying out their power, first by trying to destroy all those who are not "perfect", but the mothers so far had withstood this pressure. Thus it was when the Madigal woke and the world she had set up was not quite what she expected. Even with her powers she had a hard time of exerting her will.

I liked Macdonald's style and am looking forward to seeing more of her work.

**SORROW'S LIGHT by Freda Warrington. Pan pb, dist in Aust by Pan Books. © 1993. 257 pp. A\$12.95. On sale now.**

Freda Warrington has a good grasp of the English language and uses it to the good in her novels.

The blurbs on the back of some paperbacks don't tell you much about the novel itself, that on SORROW'S LIGHT is very good in that it does tell what you need to know: On a far planet, Iolithe was born into the riches of the mother-kingdom - but her marriage to Prince Tykavn unleashed dark forces that reinforced those ravaging the countryside. It was not until their wedding night that she discovered that her husband was in the grip of a dangerous obsession and was crippled by his elaborate rites and rituals to placate the sun god Ama. Iolithe had only one chance to save her Prince. She must travel to the mother-kingdom Onafross and beg help from the King, her father-in-law. But to reach him she must cross the Stolen Land where the Unseen worship the demon-goddess Sudema, the Evening Star... and who killed any of Ama's children who were found trespassing on their domain.

Excellent written fantasy.

**GOODLOW'S GHOSTS by T. M. Wright. VG pb, dist in Aust by Jacaranda Wiley. © 1993. 215 pp. A\$12.95. On sale now.**

I don't usually read horror, but I glanced at a few pages of GOODLOW'S GHOSTS when I felt I needed a fresh perspective after reading some Ian Watson SF and found that it was just what I needed.

Goodlow was a private detective - the last thing he remembered was a large car running him down, him going up in the air, coming down, and then the car running over him again. When he woke up his fingers and toes felt as if they had lead sinkers on them and he could not remember many things. Ryerson Biergarten - a psychic investigator (that is, an investigator of paranormal activities) was asked by a man whose wife had disappeared to look at an empty hunter's hut about twenty minutes walk from the man's home. On a outing several days before his wife had gone into the hut, but not come out. Naturally

the police believed that the man had murdered the wife, but after some looking Ryerson thought otherwise. Later Ryerson met Goodlow's sister, and soon was becoming engrossed in pursuing Goodlow's ghost.

A "different" novel, and good for a couple of hours enjoyable reading.

**NEW WORLDS 4 edited by David Garnett. VGSF pb, dist in Aust by Jacaranda Wiley. © 1994. 223 pp. A\$19.95. On sale now.**

The editor says in his editorial this is the last edition of this incarnation of NEW WORLDS. I'm not sure why the price tag is \$19.95 - possibly because these are all-new stories and the authors are paid more.

I found this 4th edition to be the best of the lot - I enjoyed all the stories and finished the book thinking I'd like to read more. Said stories are: HARRINGAY by Michael Chamock; AND THE POOR GET CHILDREN by Lisa Tuttle; LEGITIMATE TARGETS by Ian McDonald; NERVES OF STEEL by Garry Kilworth; LOVE IN BACKSPACE by Barrington J. Bayley; THE LAST PHALLIC SYMBOL by Elizabeth Sourbut; THE FLESHPOTS OF LUNA by Matthew Dickens; STARLIGHT DREAMER by Peter F. Hamilton; FREE STATES by Michael Moorcock; THE CHARISMA TREE by Robert Holdstock and book reviews titled INSIDE OUTSIDE by David Langford. There is a FINAL WORD by Michael Moorcock. The stories I liked best were LEGITIMATE TARGETS by Ian McDonald and LOVE IN BACKSPACE by Barrington J. Bayley. The story likely to get more attention, though, is THE LAST PHALLIC SYMBOL, which reads like a feminist wish-fulfilment fantasy.

**NOSTRADAMUS by Knut Boeser. Bloomsbury pb, dist in Aust by Allen & Unwin. (C) 1994. A\$11.95. On sale now.**

This is billed as the novel of the movie. It is more a historical novel than one that lists and develops Nostradamus's prophecies. It follows the life of Michael Nostradamus from a youth to when to was interrogated by the Inquisition. It is a novel which follows the man, rather than the reputation, and so is a more in-depth view of the person and the period in which he lived.

Boesir has written a book that is aimed at the average reader; the writing is necessarily clear and not too convoluted - also Nostradamus's motives are made easy to understand. An interesting addition to the works about the prophet who died in 1566.

**THE WAR OF THE LORDS VEIL by Adam Nichols. Millennium tpb, dist in Aust by Allen & Unwin. (C) 1994. 372 pp. A\$19.95. On sale now.**

This is Adam Nichols first novel, and this is written in a fast and furious action sequence.

An evil army, the Veil, is sweeping across the country far to the north, its warriors wearing strange helmets which give them strength. All is not their own way, though, as a guerilla force is rising that is helping the peasants by fighting the invaders. In another part of the country, the young Tai is being held imprisoned by a sorcerer and tortured. With the aid of two fellow creatures he manages to escape. In a third plot-line Crane, a Dreamwalker, is waiting alone for the change-bringer that she is dreaming of

Nichols has a good clean style and simple plots, so the majority of fantasy readers will like this latest from Millennium.

**THE WHITBY CHILD by Robin Jarvis. Simon & Shulster pb, dist in Aust by Jacaranda Wiley. © 1994. 387 pp. A\$10.95. On sale now.**

THE WHITBY CHILD is the third book in the Whitby series. There are black-and-white illustrations throughout by the author.

Jarvis has aimed these novels to the teenage market, and those will find that he has done a good job in working the material to suit. Adults will also find that this is interesting reading. It is a horror novel of sorts - there is a dark form which comes out of Whitby harbour one night and crawls along the by-then empty streets, leaving behind a slime trail. There is Nelda the aufwader whose secret is becoming too much for her to hide and will soon be let loose on the world. And then there is Alice Beston who is lying sick in her house when the ghost of a

friend from years before appears to warn her of evil doings. "Young adult" material.

**BLOOD by Michael Moorcock. Millennium tpb, dist in Aust by Allen & Unwin. © 1994. 247 pp. A\$19.95. On sale now.**

BLOOD is subtitled "A Southern Fantasy" and is a compilation of stories that were published in the David Garnet NEW WORLDS and in THE TIME CENTRE TIMES. The novel is made up from four parts: COLOUR; FREE STATES; CODES and ROUTES. All three concern the Earth of the Biloxi Fault, that strange reality that emerged in Florida and proceeded to wipe that section of the USA off the map. The first chapter is a brief history of how this Fault developed and its nature, and it certainly makes much of what follows clearer.

The Rose is in it, which is another manifestation of the Countess von Beck. Sam Oakenhurst's story is told here as is also that of Jack Karaquazian and Colinda Dovero. Fans of Moorcock's latest writings will have to have this in their collections, as will other readers of Speculative Fiction.

**ICEBOUND by Dean Koontz. Headline pb, dist in Aust by Hodder Headline. © 1976. 373 pp. A\$14.95. On sale now.**

This novel was originally deliberately in the style of Alistair MacLean, and has been updated.

The plot is set in the near future, with drought taking most of the moisture from the land. It is suggested that icebergs be cut loose from the Arctic and steered to the continental coastlines for fresh water. Thus a team of eight scientists are setting charges to cut loose a large berg. Then a tidal wave breaks off the piece of ice they are on and starts drifting. Unfortunately the deep-set charges are already activated, so they must find a way of getting off and back to Edgeway Station. And to make it even more awkward, they find that one of their number is a killer who has a mission....

Koontz went on to writing horror after this one, so his horror fans might or might not like ICEBOUND. Try it anyway.

**LANDS OF NOWHERE by Shannah Jay. Pan pb, dist in Aust by Pan Macmillan. © 1995. A\$12.95. On sale now.**

Another Australian fantasy, LANDS OF NOWHERE is Book Two of The Chronicles of Tenbrak, the first book being QUEST.

I haven't read the first in the series, so had to concentrate somewhat to bring the story out; the back-cover blurb helps a little, as it gives a very short resume of the happenings and how they happened. The Kindred are fleeing Those of the Serpent. They had fled to the Land of Nowhere from the Twelve Claims. They were also fleeing from Robler, the man in charge of the Confederation satellite that circles the world and observes it. Herra is one of the Sisterhood, the 20,000 year old organisation of women. One wonders if there has been civilisation on the planet for that long why it is not more peaceful.

Jay has done a good job in working with the concepts that she has created and though the novel is science fantasy and may be not to all readers liking, it gives a steady and satisfying read to those in search of a well-crafted novel.

**NIGHT FEAST by Tony Richards. Pan pb, dist in Aust by Pan Macmillan. © 1995. 537 pp. A\$12.95. On sale now.**

NIGHT FEAST is a horror novel. It is set in various places in various times: ancient Egypt, Depression America, the Vietnam jungles and Paris. The story is as old as civilisation - the Gods of Egypt are walking still. Driven out of Egypt by the new religions the gods have mostly taken human form. They work on humans, creating emotions on which they feed: fear, anger and such strong passions. When the humans bring forth these strong emotions the gods feed, their golden eyes blazing with ecstasy. They have always been working alone, for they work better that way; they had been thus since Egypt. In latter days, however, they had been working on converting some humans to the new form; some of the humans that they considered suitable. And the gods had a grand plan....

The novel is well written and gripping. If you like a good horror novel to settle down with for an exciting read, then NIGHT FEAST is for you. It is a fast and engaging book.

**HEAVY WEATHER by Bruce Sterling. Millennium tpb, dist in Aust by Allen & Unwin. © 1994. 280 pp. A\$19.95. On sale now.**

HEAVY WEATHER is a blend of cyberpunk and virtual reality skydiving through the centres of storms that anyone can do, but only those in the know can do properly.

The novel starts out with a sister rescuing her brother from a clinic in Mexico to which Americans of the day had been trekking to get operations that were not available from the USA, I think because of the fact that a lot of medical procedures had been banned in the USA (not that they didn't work, but they were really only available for the rich). Jane takes Alex back with her to the Storm Troupers, a group that is tracking storms so they can jack into them via various machines and ride the wild currents as well as records them. They are after the ultimate storm - an F6, which up till then has not appeared on Earth. Jerry, their leader, a mathematician, thinks the storm will appear with the right weather conditions, and with the increasing ozone and desert landscape over the USA, it could appear any time. Of course it does appear and wreaks much havoc. The rest of the book is about how Alex and Jane meet and overcome a bunch of political-type heavyweights.

Excellent SF.

**LORDS OF SERPENT LAND by Alan Connell. Graham Stone hand-bound h/c, dist in Aust by Graham Stone, GPO Box 4440, Sydney 2001. © 1991. 188 pp. A\$30. On sale now.**

This novel was originally published in three booklets by Currawong in 1945.

Graham brought this volume along to a FSS meeting several weeks ago and told the meeting of how he had met Connell in 1991 after reading these and managed to get his agreement to allow Graham to publish the tales as a bound volume. Graham says that LORDS OF SERPENT LAND is writing that is the closest to Edgar Rice Burroughs writings that he has seen. There is everything in this - several lost races in the Amazon jungle - including one of Lemurians, and other of giant intelligent snakes who raise one of the heroes and other adventures that will get any jaded reader interested. The print is taken directly from the original Currawong pages, with some slight alteration to fit it into novel format. Considering how bad those old wartime print jobs were, this edition is very readable.

If you are a pulp collector, or even like early Australian SF, then this volume is a must for your library.

**THE SHIPS OF EARTH by Orson Scott Card. Legend pb, dist in Aust by Random House. © 1994. 382 pp. A\$12.95. On sale now.**

This is volume 3 of Homecoming.

I don't want to give too much of the plot away, so I'll quote from the back-cover blurb for you: "Above the planet Harmony, the computer Oversoul watches. But its systems are failing and the only hope of repair lies a thousand light years away on the planet Earth, which was left forty million years ago...."

"Nafai and his family have been chosen to make the great journey home, but most of them do so grudgingly. Their anger and hatreds will make the trek across the desert wastes to the long-abandoned spaceport both harder and more deadly."

THE SHIPS OF EARTH is, as noted above, the third in a series - a five book series - so the reader is about halfway through. The society of Harmony is filling out in the reader's mind and the series looks to be of high interest.

**LUCKY'S HARVEST and THE FALLEN MOON by Ian Watson. VGSF pb and H/c, dist in Aust by Jacaranda Wiley. © 1994. 537 & 546 pp. A\$14.965 & \$38.95. On sale now.**

Readers may have a problem with the paperback (LUCKY'S HARVEST), at least I did. I had a bloody hard time getting through it. At the time I thought it was the convoluted writing, but looking back on it, I

think one of the main culprits is the size of the print. I think that the pages were reduced from the hardcover pages, which gives you about 8 point print, or about this size. The story itself is fairly easy to follow, it is based on the Finnish saga the KALEVALA, and is thus set on the planet Kaleva. Earth humans had a hard time getting there, they had to travel a strange way through space, and most arrived there subtly altered by mana: the first women to be interviewed by aliens, Lucky, has apparently been granted immortality (she is 402 years old) and her daughters can bestow the gift of immortality on their male partners (though not themselves). Thus there are many aging daughters, with the non-aging (though nuttier) mother. And strange things happening on the planet with snake-like aliens who are also colonising it.

If you can get through to the end you will find the effort worthwhile.

**CONQUEROR'S PRIDE by Timothy Zahn. Bantam pb, dist in Aust by Transworld Publishers. © 1994. 389 pp. A\$11.95. On sale now.**

I've been getting a bit sick of all the "literate" SF being published, and wished to read something I could sink my teeth into, figuratively speaking; something with adventure and space opera. CONQUEROR'S PRIDE turned out to be that novel.

The above isn't to say that the novel isn't readable and enjoyable - it is, but it isn't pretentious. It starts out with human contact with another intelligent alien species - and forty minutes into the first contact the eight human ships had been destroyed and the aliens systematically moved through the debris, lasering the surviving capsules. One man is taken captive, however and awakes to find himself in an alien ship and later is put into a glass cell on one of the alien worlds. Meanwhile back in the Commonwealth the military are moving and the Parliaments are debating whether to bring back CIRCE, the "ultimate" weapon that was once used against another alien race. The father of the man caught - Lord Cavanagh - gathers his other children around as well as his friends and determines to attempt to rescue his son, if he is still alive.

When you get to the end of the novel you find that it is not a stand-alone volume, but it is satisfying all the same.

## REISSUES OF PREVIOUSLY REVIEWED BOOKS:

**BENEATH THE TREE OF HEAVEN by David Wingrove. NEL pb, dist in Aust by Hodder Headline. (C) 1993. 567 pp. A\$14.95. On sale now.** The fifth volume of the Chung Kuo series. The Han dynasty is beginning to show cracks. Though the rebellion on Mars is struck down, still there are those who survive. De Vore escapes again and in the Stacks of the Cities on Earth, the Tong power grows. The Tang themselves are losing their oldest members and the Tang of City Africa is a degenerate, though he does have a grasp of power that will shake City Europe to its foundations. As for City North (and South) America... \*Recommended\*. If you couldn't afford the hardcover, get this!

**MEN AT ARMS by Terry Pratchett. Corgi pb, dist in Aust by Transworld Publishers. (C) 1993. 381 pp. A\$11.95. On sale now.** A tale of Ankh-Morpork's City Watch. Like all the other citizens in the city, the men (and women) making up the Watch are people to watch out for... Corporal Carrot, Lance-constable Detritus, Lance-constable Angua and Corporal Nobbs are usually more than enough for the denizens that venture out at night after more than the usual fare. The Watch knows the streets like the back of their hands... and even they get into more trouble than they need. Especially Corporal Carrot and Lance-constable Angua - who is a woman, though one with a way about her that puts many men off. Up there with the best fun fantasy.

**ANGEL by Garry D Kilworth, VG pb, dist in Aust by Jacaranda Wiley. (C) 1993. 286 pp. A\$12.95. On sale now.** An outbreak of arson-like fires had broken out all over the world and in it happened in San Francisco, Dave Peters, a policeman, was vastly surprised to see a man walk out of the flames without any protecting covering. It took some time for Dave to track the man down - and man he was not. Kilworth is gaining in stature as a fantasy horror writer and this is fantasy horror for the New Age horrorophile.

**RAMA REVEALED by Arthur C. Clarke & Gentry Lee. Orbit tpb, dist in Aust by Penguin Books. © 1994. A\$19.95. On sale now.** If you missed the hardcover of this, the last Rama book, this is your opportunity to get it. As the starship journey's on through space, the humans on board are effectively destroying the various ecologies of the aliens who are also passengers. They are also fighting amongst themselves and are well on the way to exterminating themselves. By the end of the novel the aliens who are the engineers of the giant starships are forced to come out of hiding and show themselves to the small family of humans who have been trying to save the spidery aliens and as many others as they can. Excellent hard SF.

**AZTEC CENTURY by Christopher Evans. VGSF pb, dist in Aust by Jacaranda Wiley. 352 pp. A\$12.95. On sale now.** Set in roughly this year, but in a world where Cortez turned his coat and helped the Aztecs, AZTEC CENTURY (named after the Aztec century of 50 years) has as it's protagonist Princess Catherine Marlborough - the daughter of the king of England. One of the events that shook up that world was the assassination of Queen Victoria in the early years of the Eighteenth Century. The novel opens in Wales with the two princesses - Catherine and Victoria - and Catherine's husband, Alex, hiding out in a valley from the Aztecs. They had been there for about three years. I really enjoyed this novel, and put a \*Recommended\* on it.

**THE CURSE OF THE MISTWRATH by Janny Wurts. Headline pb, dist in Aust by HarperCollins. © 1993. 799 pp. A\$12.95. On sale now.** The Mistwraith is the entity that bind the sky of the world in mist - an evil entity that can endure and is almost impossible to kill - it can be thwarted, but ages later it comes again to kill and to plan world conquest. Wurts has written many fantasy novels which have received a good reception with fantasy readers, both young and not-so-young. This one is again in the tradition of the quest, and will be engrossing reading for those of her fans that have looked for her next novel.

**THE MAN IN THE MOSS by Phil Rickman. Pan pb, dist in Aust by Pan Macmillan. © 1994. 596 pp. A\$12.95. On sale now.** Strange things are happening in the village of Bridelow. The villagers had some weird ways - they were professedly Christian, but around the time of Samain, the Celtic Feast of the Dead, there were goings-on that were decidedly not those of the Anglican Church. The book is quite hefty and there are some good scenes, though the language of the writer is a bit muddy. If you are into Celtic mysteries and mist shrouded countryside, you'll probably like this novel.

**FIRST FALL by Anne McCaffrey. Corgi pb, dist in Aust by Transworld Books. © 1993. 284 pp. A\$11.95. On sale now.** FIRST FALL is made up of three novelettes: THE P.E.R.N. SURVEY; THE DOLPHIN'S HELL; THE FORD OF RED HANRAHAN; THE SECOND WEYR and RESCUE RUN. All are part of the Chronicles of Pern and are from just after the first Landing on the planet. The volume starts off with the first survey recommending colonisation, through to the when the young planet is left marooned. The stories span quite a period of interesting Pern history - a must for those interested in McCaffrey's series.

**THE OPOPONAX INVASION by John Brosnan.** The Opoponax are an alien species. The plot is set some years in the future: space is colonised and the asteroids are being mined. A miner finds a spherical object and, since she thinks it might be of value, she passes it in. The Japanese conglomerate she belongs to starts to explore it... Meanwhile the "Ghost in the Machine" - a wanderer whose bodily nanotech machines are an upgrade on anything up till then created, is playing hell with the Revenue body. The wanderer is eventually forced to hole up in an orbiting body whose inhabitants are imprisoned in a 1940's holographic Paris. The conglomerate decides to speed up its experiments on the alien genotype. Then all hell breaks loose. Excellent space opera.

**FALL OF THE FAMILIES by Phillip Mann. VGSF pb, dist in Aust by Jacaranda Wiley. © 1987. 298 pp. A\$12.95. On sale now.** I thought that this was going to be part of a trilogy but when I got to the end of this novel, all the threads were tied up, knotted and the ends trimmed. It is Book 2 of the story of Pawl Paxwax and it is in this novel that the reader finds why Pawl is known as the Gardener. The aliens who banded together in an attempt to retain some of their former glory are further along the path in their attempt to get Pawl to destroy the Families who govern human civilisation. One of the prime factors of Pawl and the

Families' downfall is Pawl's manipulation by a small alien whom he considers a friend. \*Highly Recommended\*.

## **OTHER RELEASES:**

### **ALLEN & UNWIN:**

WHEN THE SLEEPER WAKES by H. G. Wells

### **PAN MACMILLAN:**

FALLEN ANGELS by L. Niven, J. Pournelle, M. Flynn

ISLE OF WOMEN by Piers Anthony

THE ODD WARLOCK OUT by Christopher Stasheff

THE LAST WIZARD by Tony Shillitoe

ON WINGS OF MAGIC by Andre Norton

UNDERSTANDING HIEROGLYPHS by Hilary Wilson

### **HARPERCOLLINS:**

CHAOS AND ORDER by Stephen Donaldson

MIRRORSHADES ed by Bruce Sterling

FLUX by Stephen Baxter

### **HODDER HEADLINE:**

HARPY THYME by Piers Anthony

END OF AN ERA by Robert J. Sawyer

Dr WHO : FIRST FRONTIER by David McIntee

Dr WHO: EVOLUTION by John Peel.

DR WHO: THE 70'S by Howe, Stammers, Walker

### **PENGUIN:**

STALKERS ed Gorman.

### **TRANSWORLD:**

AUDIO TAPES FROM TERRY PRATCHETT.